

UNDP-GEF Mid-term Review of the GEF funded Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management and Climate Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe Project (PIMS-5693)

Final Report



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Basic Report Information

Country: The Republic of Zimbabwe	Implementing Partner: Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate (MEWC) at design Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality since 2019	Management Arrangements: National Implementation Modality (NIM), with execution support
UNDAF/Country Programme Outcome:		
<p>Food and Nutrition Security: Outcome 1 - Targeted households in rural and urban areas have improved food and nutrition security; Outcome 2 - Communities are equipped to cope with climate change and build resilience for household food and nutrition security;</p> <p>Poverty Reduction and Value Addition: Outcome 1 - Key institutions formulate and implement socio-economic policies, strategies and programmes for improved livelihoods and reduced poverty of communities.</p> <p>CPD Output 3.1. Scaled up action on climate change adaptation and mitigation in vulnerable districts is funded and implemented</p>		
UNDP Strategic Plan: Integrated Results and Resources Framework		
<p>Output 1.4.1: Solutions scaled up for sustainable management of natural resources including sustainable commodities and green and inclusive value chains.</p> <p>SP Indicator 1.4.1.2 Natural resources that are managed under a sustainable use, conservation, access and benefit-sharing regime:</p>		
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	
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Actual Start Date: 27 September 2018		

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Photo credit / cover page: Project vehicle on patrol, Mbire. @Krasposy Kujinga

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANR	Assisted Natural Regeneration
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBWM	Community Based Wildlife Management
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CO	Country Office (UNDP)
CWC	CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancy
EMA	Environmental Management Agency
ESCs	Environmental sub-Committees
FC	Forestry Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF SPG	GEF Small Grant Programme
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
GWP	Global Wildlife Programme
GWP GEF TT	Global Wildlife Programme / Global Environment Facility Tracking Tool
HWC	Human-Wildlife Conflict
ILMP	Integrated Landscape Management Plan
LOA	Letter of Agreement
LPAC	Local Project Appraisal Committee
ICCF	International Conservation Caucus Foundation
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NTFPs	Non Timber Forest Products
METT	PA Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MIKE	Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants
MEWC	Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate
MECTHI	Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry
MLGRDC	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and National Housing
MTR	Mid-term Review
NCE	Nature, Climate and Energy team (UNDP)
NIM	National Implementation Modality
PA	Protected Area
PIF	Project Identification Form
PIR	GEF Project Implementation Report
POPP	Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures
PPF	Peace Park Foundation
PPG	Project Preparation Grant
RBM	Results Based Management
RDC	Rural District Councils
RP	Responsible party
SA	Safari Area
SAA	Sustainable Afforestation Association (for tobacco production)
SADC	South African Development Community
SO	Safari Operator
SAFIRE	Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SESP	Social and Environmental Screening Procedure
TFCA	Trans-Frontier Conservation Area
ToC	Theory of Change
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the core system (UNDP)
UNDP-GEF	UNDP Global Environmental Finance Unit
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WNH	World Nature Heritage Site
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
ZELA	Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association
ZimAsset	Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation
ZIMRA	Zimbabwe Revenue Authority
ZIMOZA	Zimbabwe-Mozambique-Zambia Trans-frontier Park
ZPCC	Zimbabwe's Parliamentarian Conservation Caucus
ZPWMA	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority / ZimParks

Executive Summary

Background

The objective of this Mid-term Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled *Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe* (PIMS-5693) is to assess: (i) progress towards the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes, as specified in the Project Document; and, (ii) early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR also reviews the project's strategy and risks to its sustainability.

The MTR findings are based on a review of project documents and extensive stakeholder consultations. In total, 116 people (30 female and 86 male) engaged in the MTR; 30 virtual stakeholder interviews were held, 81 people were consulted through face-to-face interviews and focus groups in the project area, and 24 people attended the preliminary findings workshop (5 of whom had not been part of the interview process).

The project seeks to address multiple threats to biodiversity and sustainable community development in the Lower Zambezi which include poaching and associated illegal wildlife trade, retaliatory killing of wildlife, deforestation and associated land degradation due to unsustainable agriculture and firewood consumption, uncontrolled veld fires and the impact of climate change. The project area covers approximately 2,300,000 ha in the northern part of Zimbabwe. It borders Zambia and Mozambique and includes parts of Hurungwe, Mbire and Muzarabani Districts as well as Mana Pools National Park, and Chewore, Sapi, Hurungwe, Dande, Charara and Doma Safari Areas. The project is under a global GEF parent programme - the Global Wildlife Programme (GWP), led by the World Bank.

The Project's Objective 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*. The project has four Components: **Component 1**. Strengthening capacity and governance frameworks for integrated wildlife and woodland management and wildlife/forest crime enforcement in Zimbabwe; **Component 2**: Strengthening Zimbabwe's PA estate and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies in areas of global biodiversity significance; **Component 3**: Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem management, and climate change mitigation, into the wider landscape; **Component 4**. Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Gender Mainstreaming.

The project is being implemented under a National Implementation Modality (NIM) by the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI) – in partnership with the UNDP. This 6-year project started on August 7th, 2018 and is due to close on August 7th 2024. The total project funding is USD 57,436,964. This includes a GEF grant of USD 10,025,964, UNDP TRAC resources (in cash co-financing) of USD 2,000,000 and in-kind co-financing of USD 47,411,000 from the Government of Zimbabwe, Private sector and NGO partners.

Project Progress

Despite a difficult operating environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the economic downturn, the project has made progress and a number of achievements can be noted at mid-term. These include:

- The provision of vehicles and equipment and training has enhanced the anti-poaching / Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) response and firefighting;
- The project's engagement with NGOs and the communities is a strong feature of project and is seen as one of its key successes so far. Work with communities is moving well through the Small Grants initiative; 7 **Small Grants** have been issued to NGOs/CSOs, amounting to USD

749,435, for sustainable livelihoods, awareness raising, and provision of alternative sources of energy to communities in Muzarabani, Mbire and Hurungwe Districts. Improving the livelihoods of communities in ways that support the natural resource base is critical to the sustainability of the projects outputs. A key measure of success of the small grants initiatives at the end of the project will however be their ability to sustain and upscale the project's initiatives, given their limited reach.

The project is also on track on a range of other activities, for example:

- The policy work, while not hitting the targets at mid-term, is on track to achieve the approval of the Wildlife Act and Policy within this parliament (i.e. by Mid-2023). This will result in systemic benefits beyond the lifetime of the project through legislative reform and will be a key achievement of the project.
- The introduction of and training on SMART, will greatly enhance ZPWMA enforcement capabilities. It will enable the whole organization to see what is happening on the ground and aid decision making.
- The project is helping CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies (CWCs) adapt to the new CAMPFIRE framework, from which lessons can be transferred to other areas.

However, many activities are behind schedule, for example: (i) it has been difficult to carryout trainings and meetings; (ii) the survey of animal populations scheduled for Year 1, is only partially completed affecting the ability of the project to measure its impact; (iii) nurseries were due to be established in the third year of the project but are not yet established partly related to the difficulties developing seedlings; (iv) Pickets (ranger camps) in Protected Areas (PAs), where rangers stay for 2-3 weeks to facilitate patrols, are yet to be completed; and, (v) the CWCs which were meant to be established in year 3, are yet to be finalised.

At the mid-term stage – targets have been achieved for 6 of the 15 indicators, 6 are on target to be achieve their EOP targets assuming the project operates more efficiently going forward, 1 is not on track to be achieved and 2 cannot be measured due to lack of data. While the project is not far off achieving some indicators and outcomes, this is out of step with the fact that only 26% of funds have been disbursed at mid-term. This is because the Responsible Parties (RPs) have used their own resources to implement time sensitive activities (e.g. the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA)), which this is not sustainable going forward.

The main challenges faced by the project to mid-term include:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic.** The COVID-19 pandemic, which hit 20 months into project implementation, has affected all aspects of the project (meetings, communications, monitoring, field activities and procurement). Most of the project activities, especially those involving groups of people, were postponed due to the country-wide lockdown and subsequent movement restrictions that followed, resulting in revisions of the annual work plan. In addition, the project had to channel more resources towards patrols as there were reports of increased incursions by poachers in the protected areas. Working from home was challenging for many stakeholders due to limited power and data for remote working.
- **Disbursement of funds.** Cumulative delivery at mid-term is around 26% of total approved amount. Disbursement of funds by UNDP to Responsible Parties for activities on the ground has suffered extensive delays affecting morale. Disbursement challenges were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, delaying implementation
- **The economic downturn** is placing increasing pressure on the natural resources base through land clearance for agriculture, artisanal mining (much of it illegal), rapid settlement at rural growth points, fuelwood collection and illegal poaching. COVID-19 makes it uncertain when communities will be able to reap a stable income from wildlife tourism.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The project has made progress despite the difficult operating environment presented by COVID-19 and the macro-economic context. A number of activities, in particular support to the communities, have progressed and the project has strengthened ZPWMA such that they are now better able to protect biodiversity.

The project adapted to the COVID-19 restrictions by buying equipment upfront (in place of training, which became very difficult) and pushing ahead with the Small Grants Programme, executed through NGOs, recognising the positive impact it could have on addressing poverty and environmental degradation.

However, the project is behind, with only 26% of funds disbursed at mid-term. Based on a list of all project activities generated by the MTR, of the project's 177 activities, 56 (32%) have been completed, 103 are on-going and 18 are yet to start or are on hold. All RPs are confident that all key areas can be delivered *if* the common challenges facing the RPs (and the project in general) are addressed including delayed disbursements which have affected implementation and slow and bureaucratic systems. However, given the extent of activities left to do and the potential risks facing the project, this will require extraordinary efficiency and commitment going forward.

The project is at critical juncture and there is an urgent need to speed up implementation if it is to meet its end of project objectives and targets. Further on-going delays will quickly build up to a point where the project will run out of time to complete activities or deliver them effectively, especially those that depend on prior activities yet to be completed. Central to the project's ability to accelerate implementation is whether the project can significantly reduce the time taken to procure goods and services and make payments. **The Project will be compromised if procurement and disbursements continue to be delayed.**

While COVID-19 has affected every aspect of the project a common sentiment expressed through the MTR was that it should not be used as an excuse. In some cases delays are more attributable to bureaucracy (at UNDP) and administration delays by all project partners than to COVID-19.

The project can make a contribution to COVID-19 recovery, as part of a build back better strategy, through the protection of the area's natural assets and their sustainable management aligned with the equitable and inclusive distribution of benefits derived from sustainable use.

Table A presents the MTR ratings and summaries the project's achievements at mid-term. Overall the project is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Table A: MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	The project is highly relevant supporting the National Development Strategy I (2021-2025) and regional and international commitments, including delivery of the SDGs. The project was based on extensive stakeholder consultations, recognized the significance of gender issues at the project site and is designed to accelerate the ongoing activities of Government agencies to reduce Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT), manage Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC), enhance livelihoods compatible with sustainable management of natural assets and protect the area's important biodiversity.

Progress Towards Results	<p>Objective: 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</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory</p>	<p>The project is reaching the targeted number of beneficiaries through training and livelihood support, while core legislation is highly likely to be approved within the project's timescale.</p> <p>The wildlife surveys undertaken by the project should be a key contribution – providing up to date information on the number and location of animals (lions, elephants and buffalo) in the study area. However the elephant and buffalo survey (due in Year 1) has just been completed and the lion survey is yet to be undertaken.</p>
	<p>Outcome 1: increased national capacity for IWT control and integrated wildlife and woodland</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory</p>	<p>Although delayed, progress has been made on updating the Wildlife Policy and Parks and Wildlife Act. Two Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Prevention Units have been established.</p> <p>Although there is a specific output to develop and implement a national system for monitoring wildlife and forest crimes, not much progress has been made so far. The establishment of SMART management centres and training is on-going and will be an important contribution of the project. However, given the inconsistent way in which enforcement data are currently collected, monitoring of wildlife and forest crimes at the national level to any level of accuracy will be difficult.</p> <p>The agreement of International treatise for Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (TFCAs) are important to protect biodiversity and have been held back by COVID-19 restriction on travel and meetings</p>
	<p>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</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory</p>	<p>While behind the various management plans being developed for the study area are due for completion mid-2022, and many activities have already been progressed to support management of the sites and surrounding area such as training, procurement and infrastructure development.</p> <p>Implementation (in terms of efficiency and effectiveness) has been negatively affected by the fact that fuel and equipment have not been procured in a timely manner are sometimes were not fit for purpose.</p> <p>Establishment of the CWCs has been delayed due to COVID-19 - but will be a core contribution of the project.</p>
	<p>Outcome 3: Increased area under sustainable management and increased benefits for local communities from CBWN, SFM and SLM in established CWCS</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory</p>	<p>Although behind the project had made progress on this outcome. While Integration Management Plans are not scheduled for completion until mid-2022 the project has progressed on a number of activities to support sustainable management such as the formation of 70 Environmental Sub-Committees (ESCs) and drafting of bye-laws for natural resource management.</p> <p>7 small grant initiatives designed to increase livelihoods while reducing pressure on the area's natural assets are well underway. Greater monitoring and reporting is needed to generate clear lessons and identify opportunities for upscaling these initiatives which are currently benefiting very few households.</p> <p>Woodland restoration is also behind, and requires concerted efforts by the FC to reach the project targets</p>
	<p>Outcome 4: Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and</p>	<p>While hitting the mid-term targets, the project needs a significantly stronger focus on knowledge management and dissemination and awareness building by project closure. Knowledge management and communication is an area that has been</p>

	internationally Achievement Rating: Satisfactory	neglected thus far. The knowledge and lessons from the project will have relevance not just to Zimbabwe, but regionally and globally. As the project is under the GWP, there is the opportunity to share lessons with a wide audience. The project currently lacks an Indigenous Persons Plan and Grievance Plan. A Gender Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and annual monitoring of the Action Plan is proposed.
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Unsatisfactory	A number of components of project implementation are holding back the effective and efficient implementation of the project. First among these is the very slow rate of disbursement by UNDP, which is unsatisfactory and has affected the project from the start and is still not resolved. Significant improvement is also needed in work-planning in order to make strategic decisions on how best to profile activities and resources in the time remaining. M&E has been limited as has communications and knowledge management
Sustainability	Moderately Unlikely	Ownership of the project is high (although improvements could be made at the community level), and the institutional and legal framework is very likely to be materially strengthened by the project. However, the ability to finance the project activities after its closure is uncertain as is financing to maintain and upscale the small grant initiatives. Land use change as a result of development pressures, the consequences of climate change and COVID-19 all pose environmental risks to the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

Table B presents the MTR recommendations.

Table B: MTR Recommendations

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT			
1/ Revisions to Results Matrix	<p>Revise indicator 2 (proposed text): Extent to which legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems: Updated Wildlife Policy; Updated Parks and Wildlife Act; Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act; Official National Anti Poaching Strategy; Environmental Management Act (EMA) consulted on and updated.</p> <p>Revise End of Project (EOP) Target (proposed text): Wildlife Policy and Wildlife Act officially approved and implemented Environmental Management Act (EMA) consulted on and updated</p>	PM	January 2022
	<p>Revise indictor 3: Revise the end of project (EOP) target to align with the Results of the 2021 survey of Elephants and Buffalo: Elephants: >=8,319 (LC level: 6,323, UC level: 10,315); Buffalo: >= 5,928 (LC level: 2,676, UC level: 9,180) Revise the EOP target for Lions as appropriate when survey is undertaken</p>	PM	January 2022
	<p>Revise indicator 6 (proposed text) Strengthened National processes on data collation and reporting Revise EOP target: Standardized national data parameters and data collection process agreed (for elephant ivory) with Government agencies and other parties responsible for IWT law enforcement data collection</p>	PM	January 2022
	<p>Consider revising indicator 10. It is noted that the EOP target will be difficult to reach if tourism does not recover in 2022/23, which is not within the project's control. A safer / back-up indicator could be introduced related to the completion of the Business Plans for the CWCs and projected income levels based on these plans.</p>	PM	January 2022
	<p>Amendment to Outputs: Remove output 3.5 Amendment to activities: Include activity to support standardization of national data (linked to indicator 3)</p>	PM	January 2022
	2/ Strengthen work-planning to enable monitoring of progress and strategic decision making on priority actions and changes that may be needed to project implementation to accelerate delivery and ensure the project meets its objectives	<p>Update and develop the Multi-Year work-plan so that it provides a complete overview of project outputs and activities under each component, including start date, anticipated time of conclusion, progress (length of any delays and explanations for delays), responsible person. The work-plan should link to a procurement plan.</p>	PM
<p>Develop more detailed annual plans linked to a detailed procurement plan that clearly indicate dates by which actions need to be completed to avoid delays and / or result in an increase cost due to seasonality or other issues. Currently the workplan is provided in the required format as a word document and includes the following fields: output/activity, timeframe (by quarter), responsibility, planned budget (funding source, budget description, amount). It therefore serves well as a summary of the workplan. It is proposed to set up a parallel workplan in Excel with additional details to inform planning, monitoring and strategic decision making. This would include, for example: Duration of activity in months, Resources (fund source, ATLAS description, budget code, proposed budget, reduction (if any), final budget expenditure, actual expenditure, remaining expenditure), procurement requirements, monitoring (progress (quarterly) challenges, mitigation action), color coded (green – on track; orange – delays but solution in place; red – delayed and remedial action needed).</p>		PM	January 2021

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
	<p>Develop strategic acceleration plan. This should be based on the updated Multi-year workplan / annual workplan to understand how the project activities might be rationalised or re-structured to ensure the project attains its outcomes (assuming that disbursement issues are resolved). A workshop could be held to discuss and agree the acceleration plan. The acceleration plan should take into consideration the recommendations for accelerating delivery and Action Plans for outcome that are off-track presented in PIR, 2021, which the MTR endorses.</p>	PM PSC	January 2022
3/ Urgently address bottlenecks in the project's payment systems, by implementing a systematic and transparent approach to managing payments and reducing the administrative burden at UNDP where possible	<p>Institute transparent and effective communication across the payment system underpinned by strict response times (e.g. 1-2 days to review of documents, 1-2 days to address any short-comings and re-submit requests, 8 working days for payment from UNDP). Escalate any delays caused at any point along the payment chain to senior management. It is important that the project works together to address the disbursement issues the project has been facing</p>	IP, RPs, PMU, UNDP	January 2022
	<p>Discuss and agree opportunities to ease the administrative burden and accelerate implementation, for example, the development of Concept Notes could be restricted to larger deliverable (perhaps over a certain value threshold) and / or deliverables that are not well specified in approved workplans.</p>	UNDP	January 2022
	<p>UNDP to proactively train, guide and support on payment and procurement issues</p>	UNDP	On-going
4/ Re-confirm co-finance and factor any changes into project implementation	<p>The Project Management Unit (PMU) to contact <i>all</i> co-financers to re-confirm their contributions for the remainder of the project and track co-financing annually. The re-confirmed co-financing commitment should feed into work-planning.</p>	PM	January 2022
5/ Address procurement challenges and look for efficiencies	<p>Explore options for ensuring procurement is efficient, for example (i) using LTAs; (ii) review activities to see if there is a bundle of services that one consultant or NGO could deliver to reduce the administrative burden, ease monitoring and potentially increase implementation efficiency</p>	PMU UND	On-going
	<p>Expediate procurement of boats / water transport to enhance river patrols / surveillance. The Zambezi River serves as the boundary between Zimbabwe and Mozambique / Zambia. The River system is very porous and effective patrols are needed.</p>	PMU, UNDP	By Q1 2022
6/ Increase involvement of senior management (UNDP, IP, RPs) to ensure efficient implementation	<p>Increase involvement of senior management <i>across organizations</i> in supporting the timely execution of project activities and efficient project management functions. While senior level involvement in the Project Steering Committee (PSC) is critical to expediate decisions and problem solving these meetings only happen every 6 months. Greater involvement of senior management in-between PSC meetings is thus necessary to keep the project on track. This requires that senior management is informed regularly of progress (potentially every fortnight) and that delays and other issues are escalated to senior management for their immediate attention and resolution. The project depends on all parties committing to their agreed inputs and being accountable.</p>	IP, RPs, PMU, UNDP	Processes / agreement in place by the end of January 2022
7/ Enhanced risk management and strategic planning feeding into work-planning	<p>The project, led by the PSC should not only acknowledge and track risks but also advise on mitigation measures and where it may make strategic sense and /or be feasible for the project to engaged in a concrete way. There are a number of external risks to project implementation which could benefit from more scrutiny and a strategic response. For example, to what extent can the project influence land use change and development pressures in the project area? Is there potentially a role for the project to articulate the risks and engage with actors / stakeholders (including concerned Government Ministries and investors who could</p>	PSU	On-going

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
	be included in an updated stakeholder engagement plan) and support MECTHI to strengthen Environmental Impacts Assessments (EIA) and better manage safeguards? It may also be possible to build support for the project by articulating how the project can contribute to COVID-19 recovery / Inclusive green growth. This more solution orientated approach to risk management by the PSC (supported by UNDP and the PMU) should inform the various systems in place to track risk such that all the mechanisms to track risks are linked up and coordinated. That is the PSC risk management activities should be well-integrated into the Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) updated annually as part of the Project Implementation Reports (PIRs), the risk register updated annually in ATLAS, and the performance risk dashboard in PIMS+ managed by the UNDP Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) Nature, Climate, Energy (NCE), team.		
8/ Enhanced, pro-active and integrated project management across the project management structure	PMU: (i) ensure dates for PSC and Technical Committee (TC) meetings are set well in advance and circulate documents for meeting 5 days in advance; (ii) Escalate matters affecting implementation to senior management as they occur for resolution; (ii) pro-actively engage with RPs; (iv) undertake closer supervision of contractors and act in good time when activities have stalled.	PMU	On-going
	RPs: (i) ensure 100% time commitment by co-ordinators; (ii) Forestry Commission (FC) to commit more personnel to the project and ensure that senior staff are engaged	RPs	On-going
	Project Director (PD) to chair monthly monitoring calls and retain close engagement with the project	PD	On-going
	UNDP Country Office to proactively address disbursement and procurement bottlenecks and engage in technical oversight of project	UNDP	On-going
	PSC to play a stronger role in risk management and strategic guidance (see above)	PSC	On-going
	TC: (i) review and strengthen composition of TC to enable it to provide technical guidance across the core area of the project, including climate change; (ii) engage more in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) at site level	TC / PM	(i) January 2022 (ii) on-going
9/ Strengthened Communications – internal and external	Internal project communications: Enhance exchange and communications between RPs and other partners so that experiences and lessons learnt are shared and so that all partners understand the macro-picture to facilitate the identification of synergies and investments contributing to the sustainability of the project. This could be through regular written briefings and workshops where feasible. A project Workshop could be arranged following the MTR to bring everyone together to present the revised workplan and build awareness of the integrated project components	PMU	On-going
	External communications: Develop communications strategy and increase public awareness of the project Rural District Councils (RDCs) and RPs can play a role in introducing the project activities to the wards which are not part of the project. Project outputs need to be shared widely so that scaling up can take place in other districts of the country and beyond.	PMU RPs, RDCs	Q1 2022/ On-going
10/ Enhanced M&E, Lessons learnt & knowledge management	Specify M&E activities in the workplan	PMU	December 2021
	Increase M&E of Small Grants initiatives to monitor progress and importantly understand opportunities and barriers to scaling up the initiatives. Some spot / unannounced visits should be put in place for monitoring, to ensure visits are not 'stage managed' and a frank picture is gained of community involvement and progress. In order to fully learn from initiatives an allocation for monitoring post project closure is needed.	UNDP-SG	On-going
	Develop and execute knowledge management plan	PMU	December 2021

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
11/Ensure all existing co-financing partners are engaged in project and explore opportunities to formally include new partners whose work is closely aligned with the project's objectives	Ensure all existing co-financing partners (e.g. Safari Operators) are engaged in the project. Formally include in the project stakeholders who are playing critical roles in conservation, such as non-hunting Conservancies Pfundundu in Hurungwe and Chitsere or Beat the Drum in Mbire. Develop and agree formal roles for these stakeholders in the project and agree on how they can be best capacitated to strengthen their activities.	PMU	
12/ On-going focus on gender	Strengthen participation of women in all the project activities including the recruitment of female rangers and scouts in all conservancies managed by wards, RDCs, safari operators and ZPWMA.	RPs	On-going
ACTIONS TO FOLLOW UP OR REINFORCE INITIAL BENEFITS FROM THE PROJECT			
13/ Develop an exit plan	Develop an exit plan detailing how the financial sustainability of the project's outputs (by RPs and RDCs) can be achieved drawing on a range of possible sources. For example, public and private sector, carbon trading (which has been a more recent source of finance for ZPWMA), re-investing fines back into system.	PMU PSC	January – June 2024
PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS UNDERLINING MAIN OBJECTIVES			
14/ Undertaken an economic assessment of alternative land uses	Develop the economic and social case for non-consumption management of the study area. The financial flows from wildlife management have been low during the pandemic due to the lack of tourism revenue, and this has coincided with an increase in the encroachment of wildlife areas for developments such as mining. A broader appreciation of the economic benefits of the landscape (quantifying and monetising where possible the area's ecosystem services) and how the resources flowing from natural assets can be equitably shared with communities could help address this. This activity is not within the scope of the project, however, such an analysis could be incorporated into an exit plan (Recommendation 13) and discussed with other possible donors to support the sustainability of the project's outputs.		Post project

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of MTR and objectives

The objective of this Mid-term Review (MTR) of the full-sized project titled *Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe* (PIMS-5693) is to assess: (i) progress towards the achievement of the project's objectives and outcomes, as specified in the Project Document; and, (ii) early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR also reviews the project's strategy and risks to its sustainability.

Further to this, as specified in the Terms of Reference (TOR)¹, as the project is being implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, the MTR assesses changes in context as a result of COVID-19 pandemic, how these changes have impacted the project and how the strategy can incorporate the COVID-19 risks going forward. The MTR also looks at any project interventions that have already or could contribute directly or indirectly to the government's COVID-19 pandemic recovery efforts both at the national level and project sites.

In line with the UNDP-GEF Guidance this Mid-term Review (MTR) was initiated before the submission of the second Project Implementation Report (PIR).

1.2 Scope and Methodology

The MTR was undertaken over the period, mid-August to December 2021 by an independent international consultant and a national consultant (who joined the team at the end of the inception phase).

The MTR assesses project progress against the following four main categories: (i) project strategy; (ii) progress towards results; (iii) project implementation and adaptive management; and, (iv) sustainability. It is based on a review of key information and stakeholder consultations.

Annex 2 presents the Mid-term Review Evaluation matrix, which sets out the evaluation questions, indicators, sources and methodology.

High level strategic questions the MTR sought to address include:

- How is the project adapting in the face of COVID-19 and what opportunities are there for the project to contribute to post COVID-19 recovery?
- Are the risks facing the project well specified and tracked given the economic situation in the country and worsening problem of joblessness and hunger as result of COVID-19 pandemic? How can the project best address deforestation pressures in this context?
- Given the disruption to implementation, which could be on-going through the second half of the project due to on-going COVID-19 restrictions on travel and social gathering, what activities can continue on-schedule, and what activities need to be delayed and / or adjusted to adapt to the new normal and ensure the overall project can be completed on time?
- Financial management. How can disbursements be accelerated given that cumulative delivery at mid-term is around 26% of the total approved amount? How can disbursements requested by Responsible Parties be expedited? Are any budget re-

¹ See Annex 1

allocations required to reflect changes in proposed activities? How cost-effectively are resources being used to deliver the anticipated results?

- How well is the M&E component working? What are the lessons learnt / emerging and how are they being reflected in adaptive management and information exchange?
- How can the project's findings and lessons be best communicated going forward and what key publications will be produced and disseminated?
- The project is classified as a gender-targeted project and the Project Document notes the need to deliberately focus and amplify women's voices. How successful has this been, what are the challenges and what opportunities are there for strengthening this going forward?
- How effectively has the project collaborated with different partners and donors, including the private sector and to what extent has this addressed financial constraints and provided a foundation for financial sustainability going forward?
- To what extent is the project complying with UNDP's Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and management of safeguards risks?

Documents reviewed are listed in Annex 6 and include:

- The project preparation documents (i.e. PIF, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure (SESP) and the Project Document).
- Project reports including Project Inception Report, Project Implementation Report (PIRs), Quarterly progress reports and work plans, Strategies and technical reports produced by the project and partners, Audit reports and other financial reports (including annual financial reports and Combined Delivery Reports (CDRs)), GEF Tracking Tools, oversight mission reports, monitoring reports prepared by the project, Financial and Administration guidelines used by Project Team, Project operational guidelines, manuals and systems, Minutes of the Project Board / Steering Committee Meetings and Project Technical Committee meetings, and Project site location maps.
- Relevant national strategic and legal documents.

The MTR has followed a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office, the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders. The MTR consultations included: the project Implementing Partner - The Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI); Responsible Partners - Forestry Commission (FC), CAMPFIRE Association, Environmental Management Agency (EMA), and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA); the participating Rural District Councils (RDCs); the senior beneficiary - Ministry of Local Government (MLGRDC); the Project Board and Technical Working Group representatives; Safari operators; NGOs engaged in the Small Grant initiative; and, project beneficiaries.

Given that the International Consultant was unable to visit Zimbabwe due to COVID-19 restrictions remote zoom interviews were conducted where feasible. In total 38 stakeholders were contacted for interview based on a representative selection of the various groups of stakeholders involved in the project, and 30 interviews were completed over a three week consultation period.

In addition, the MTR national consultant conducted a field mission to the project area in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Valley to conduct interviews with project stakeholders, verify outputs of field-based investments and observe equipment purchased by the project. Overall, 81 people (65 men and 16 women) were interviewed, 70 of which were from the communities. The field itinerary is provided in Annex 4. The field mission covered all three of the project districts, over a period of 10 days (including travel time), from 25 September to 4 October 2021. It incorporated: (i) One-to-one interviews with key informants including members of

the Rural District Councils, representatives of Responsible Authorities (EMA, FC and ZPWMA), ward councillors and traditional leader; (ii) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in each district covering (a) Environmental Sub-committee members and (b) Small Grants programme beneficiaries. In total five Focus Group Discussions were undertaken, comprised of 10 participants on average. Some of the FGDs (e.g. ward 8 Hurungwe, ward 13 Muzarabani and ward 11 in Mbire district) were mostly attended by men. The main explanation for this was the distance to the meetings which was up to 25 km on foot. This deterred women who have household tasks to perform. The Environmental sub-committee FGDs covered issues related to the operation of environmental subcommittees including their composition, the type of activities they are carrying out, the equipment that they have, their achievements, the challenges they are facing and their sustainability. The small grant FGDs focussed on the role of the communities, the benefits, challenges and sustainability of the activities being undertaken.

The preliminary findings of the MTR were shared at an on-line workshop on 26 October. This was attended by 24 people (see Annex 5), 5 of whom had not participated in the interview process. This brought the total number of people engaged in the MTR process to 116 (30 female and 86 male). A draft report was circulated for review on the 19th November 2021, with review comments received from UNDP, including the RTA, on the 15th December. All comments received were taken into consideration in finalising this MTR report.

1.3 Structure of MTR Report

The rest of this MTR report is structured as follows: (i) Section 2 provides context for the MTR with a summary of the project and its institutional structure and budget; (ii) Section 3 presents the findings of the MTR against 3 core areas – project strategy, project implementation and adaptive management and the likely sustainability of the project's outputs when it ends; and, (iii) Section 4 concludes and presents the recommendations of the MTR.

2 Project Description and Background Context

Zimbabwe has a 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 faces multiple challenges to its sustainable development associated with biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change consequences. The 6-year GEF funded project "Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe" seeks to address multiple threats to biodiversity and sustainable community development in the Lower Zambezi which include poaching and associated illegal wildlife trade, retaliatory killing of wildlife, deforestation and associated land degradation due to unsustainable agriculture and firewood consumption, uncontrolled veld fires and the impact of climate change. It is being implemented in Muzarabani, Mbire and Hurungwe Districts as well as Mana Pools National Park, and Chewore, Sapi, Hurungwe, Dande, Charara and Doma Safari Areas. The project is under a global GEF parent programme entitled "Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development (9071)," commonly referred to as the Global Wildlife Programme (GWP), led by the World Bank,²

The Project's Objective is: *to promote an integrated landscape approach to managing wildlife resources, carbon and ecosystem services in the face of climate change in the protected*

² The Global Wildlife Program, established by the World Bank and UNDP includes around twenty projects in Asia and Africa. These global projects are designed to serve as a suite of connected actions that together disrupt and reduce illegal wildlife chains and networks spanning countries and regions and promote the conservation and sustainable use of resources.

areas and community lands of the Mid to Lower Zambezi Regions of Zimbabwe. The project has four Components and corresponding Outcomes as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Project Components and corresponding Outcomes

Components	Corresponding Outcomes
Component 1. Strengthening capacity and governance frameworks for integrated wildlife and woodland management and wildlife/forest crime enforcement in Zimbabwe	Outcome 1. Increased national capacity for IWT control and integrated wildlife and woodland
Component 2: Strengthening Zimbabwe's PA estate and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies in areas of global biodiversity significance	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
Component 3: Mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem management, and climate change mitigation, into the wider landscape	Outcome 3. Increased area under sustainable management and increased benefits for local communities from Community Based Wildlife Management (CBWM), Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in established CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies (CWCs)
Component 4. Knowledge Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Gender Mainstreaming	Outcome 4. Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and internationally

The project area covers approximately 2,300,000 ha (Figure 1) in the northern part of Zimbabwe at the border with Zambia and Mozambique and includes parts of Hurungwe, Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. These three districts have a population of around 533,921 people (Central Statistics Office, 2012), with approximately 25-30% of the population living in the project area (~140,000 people). The area is predominantly occupied by the Korekore people, the Karanga (who migrated in the area in the late 1980s) and vaDoma (who self-identify as indigenous people). The poverty prevalence is 88.4% (Small Area Poverty Estimation, ZimStats 2015).

The area is home to key flagship species such as the African Elephant and other threatened species such as lion, cheetah and the Cape Wild dog, and near threatened species such as the leopard and the brown hyena. Until the 1990s, Mana Pools National Park was a black rhino conservation area, but the remaining 5 rhinos were relocated for security reasons. Nonetheless, the project area is considered to be an important habitat for the reintroduction of black rhino once poaching is eliminated, or suppressed considerably. The area is a part of the important migratory route for elephants linking Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

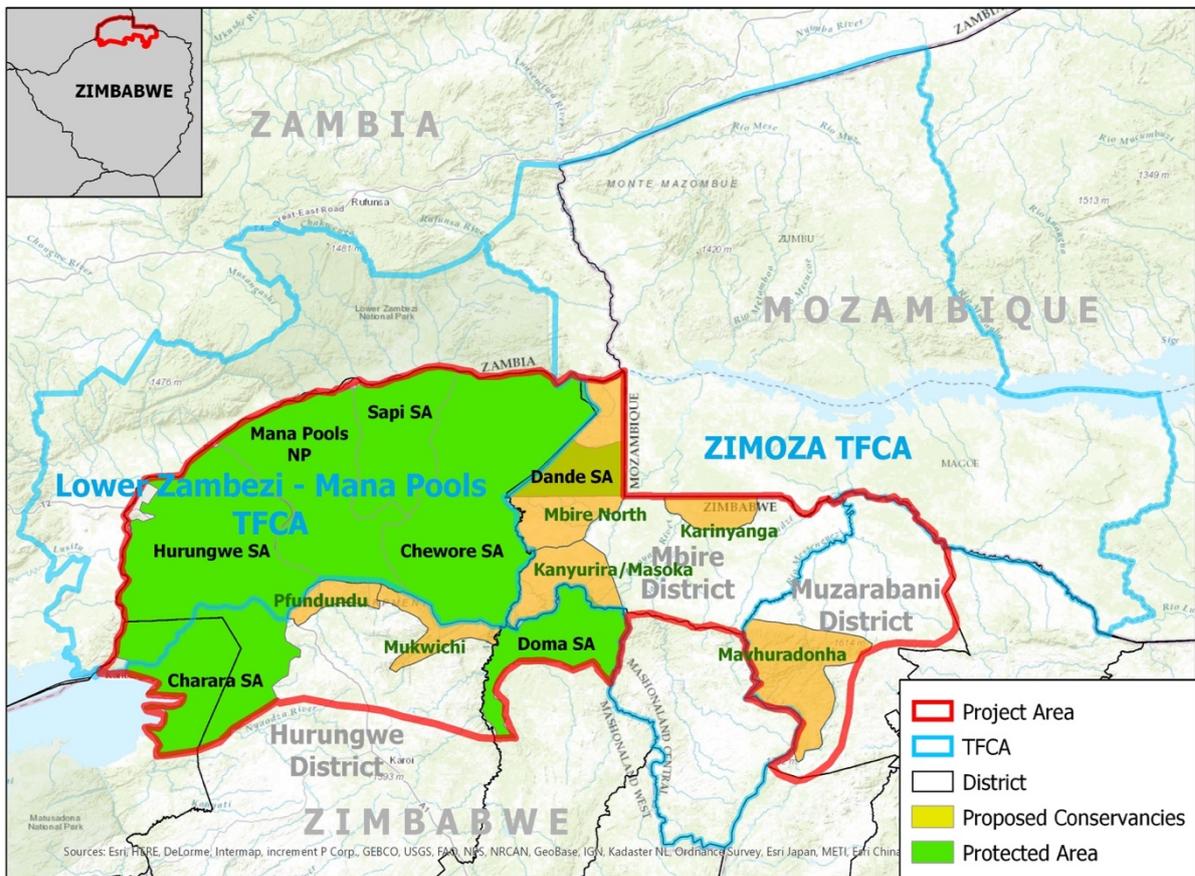
The project area is threatened by poaching and IWT and regulation of water from the Kariba Dam. As specified in the Project Document, the area has significant mineral deposits (gold, sand, chrome, and clay) and is affected by both legal and illegal mining. There is a serious threat to forest and woodlands from tobacco plantations associated with unsustainable wood consumption for tobacco curing.

The area is a designated wetland area of international importance, especially the Mana Pools National Park which is a Ramsar site and an Important Bird Area with over 350 bird species. The Middle Zambezi area (Matusadonha, Mana Pools, Sapi and Chewore) was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in June 2010. The area is also a UNESCO World Heritage site that includes Mana Pools NP, Sapi and Chewore SAs. The project area is part of the Lower Zambezi - Mana Pools Trans-Frontier Conservation Area (TFCA)

between Zambia and Zimbabwe covering Mana Pools National Park, Chewore and Sapi Safari areas. The areas closer to Mozambique (Mbire, Dande, Doma, Muzarabani) are part of the Zimbabwe-Mozambique-Zambia Trans-frontier park (ZIMOZA). The project area is one of the two Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephant (MIKE) sites in Zimbabwe.

In terms of ecosystems conservation, the area links Protected Areas (PAs) with communal conservation areas under the CAMPFIRE programme (Hurungwe, Mbire, and Muzarabani). The selected districts are among the 16 major wildlife districts within CAMPFIRE. Mbire is a major revenue earner through safari hunting and has a history of communal conservancies through two designated areas (Shange conservancy and Chivaraidze communal game ranch – set up in the late 1990s). Mbire RDC has a natural resources management plan for 2011-2021 developed with support from the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).

Figure 1: Map of project area



Project Implementation Arrangements

The project is being implemented under a National Implementation Modality (NIM)³ by the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI) – in partnership with the UNDP.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the project management structure as presented in the Project Document (with noted revisions). The project has a **Project Management Unit**, located in MECTHI in Harare, responsible for the day to day management of project operations, including implementation of activities and accountability for the delivery of the

³ According to the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between UNDP and the Government of Zimbabwe, and the Country Programme.

project's outputs and preparation of quarterly and annual work plans and reports. It is led by a Project Manager and includes a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Knowledge Management Officer, a Financial Accounting Officer, a Project Assistant and Small Grants Programme officer (located at UNDP). The PMU works closely with five **Responsible Parties** (RP) ⁴ actively present in the project area – ZPWMA, CAMPFIRE Association, Forestry Commission, Environmental Management Agency (EMA)⁵ and UNDP Country Office (CO) with support of the National GEF Small Grant Programme. The project is overseen by the **Project Board / Project Steering Committee**. In addition, in order to involve local communities in decision-making, project implementation and M&E, the project has established a **Technical Committee** in the project area consisting of representatives of RPs, target Conservancies, Rural District Councils (RDCs) staff, NGOs actively present in the project area and the private sector.

This 6-year project started on August 7th, 2018 and is due to close on August 7th 2024. The total project funding is USD 57,436,964. This includes a GEF grant of USD 10,025,964, UNDP TRAC resources (in cash co-financing) of USD 2,000,000 and in-kind co-financing of USD 47,411,000 from the Government of Zimbabwe, Private sector and NGO partners. UNDP, as the GEF Implementing Agency, is responsible for the execution of the GEF resources and the cash co-financing transferred to UNDP bank account only. An additional USD 130,000 was spent at the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) phase.

The project budget as set out in the Project Document is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Project Financing Plan

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 <i>(all other co-financing that is not cash co-financing administered by UNDP)</i>	
Government (MEWC, ZPWMA, FC, EMA, CAMPFIRE)	USD 40,100,000
NGOs (AWF, Zambezi Society, Tashinga Initiative ¹ , WWF)	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

Source: Project Document

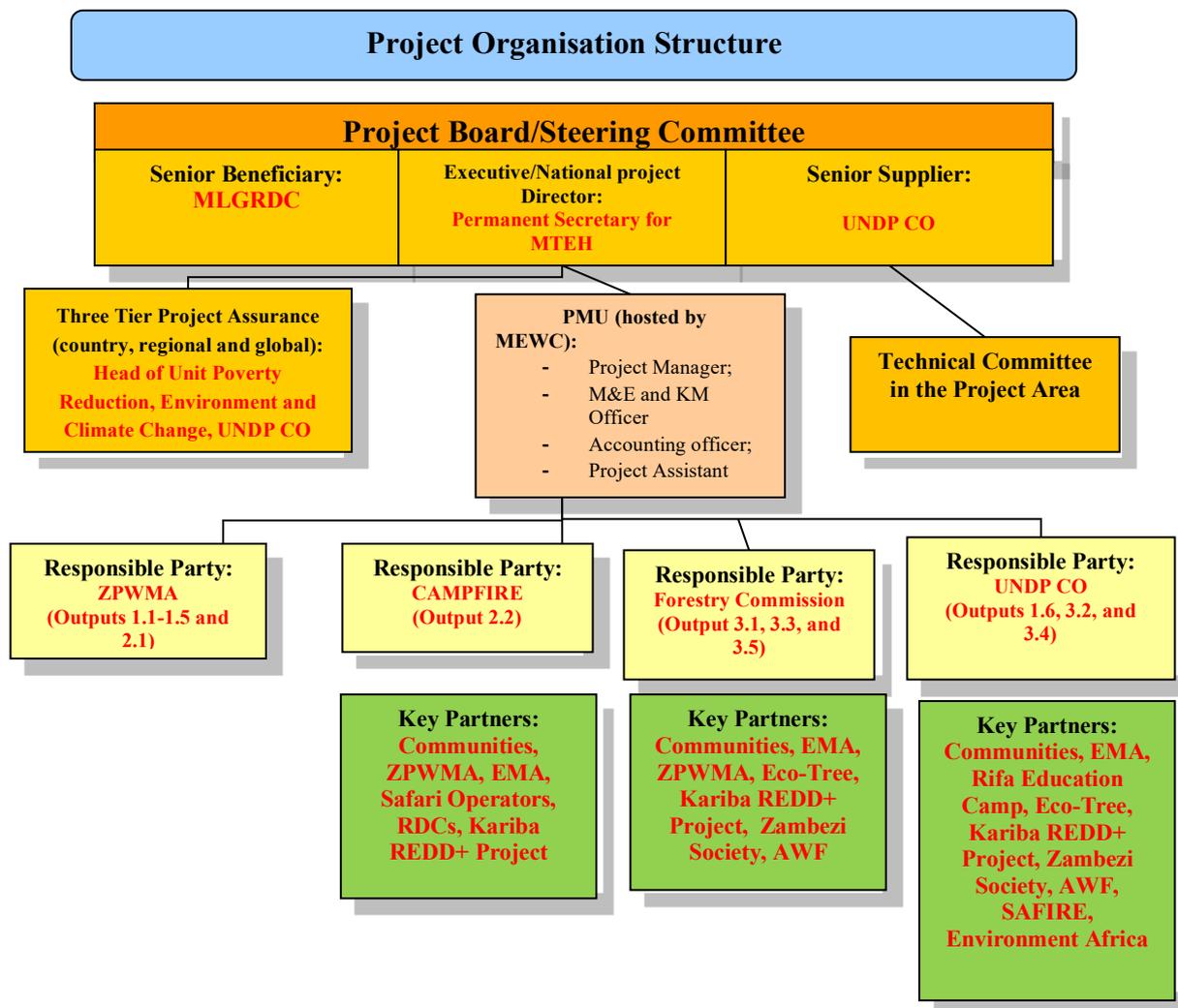
Notes: 1/ Tashinga Initiatives left the project early on in its implementation.

According to the Project Document more than 500 stakeholders were consulted during project development and around 40 organizations were defined as partners for the project (Government, Non-Government, Business Organizations and communities). The role of stakeholders in the project is summarized in Annex 12.

⁴ Responsible parties are entities selected to act on behalf of the Implementing Partner on the basis of a written agreement or contract to provide services using the project budget to implement different outputs of the project.

⁵ EMA joined during project implementation and hence are not mentioned as a RP in the Project Document

Figure 2: Overview of project management structure



Source: Project Document

Notes: The MEWC was restructured to the MECTHI in 2019; EMA was added as a Responsible Party during the Inception stage of the project.

3 Findings

3.1 Project Strategy

3.1.1 Project design

The problem the project sets out to address is well specified in the Project Document and on the whole the project is well designed (issues with the Results Framework / indicators are discussed below). The project is aligned with the GWP Theory of Change (ToC) and is expected to contribute significantly to GWP Outcomes and Targets. A detailed project specific ToC is presented, which sets out the causal pathways from Output to Outcomes to Mid-term impacts and Long Term impacts. This is supported by a Table which details the (nine) assumptions along this causal pathway. The Mid-term impacts are designed to be achieved from the project Outcomes, and therefore could be taken to be aligned with the project's Development Objectives designed to be attained within the project's timeframe, although a different set of impacts / indicators are specified to those in the Results Framework⁶.

The project is large and complex with the need to coordinate a number of Responsible Parties and a large number of interrelated activities. The operating environment for achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which struck 20 months into project implementation, and hence needs to be factored into the delivery strategy going forward.

The project is considered to be highly relevant and strategically important to the Government and other partners. The project concept is in line with national development priorities and plans. Specifically it aligns with the **National Development Strategy I (NDS1)**(2021-2025), Zimbabwe's first 5-year Medium Term Plan aimed at realizing the country's Vision 2030, while addressing delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁷ and Africa Agenda 2063 and meeting international commitments under UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). The NDS1 has an area related to the environment (which is closely linked to the area of poverty reduction and food security) focussed on environmental protection, climate resilience and natural resource management, including biodiversity conservation and the interface with community development. A priority of the plan is to have CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies (CWCs) in place. Therefore the project is addressing country priorities by supporting biodiversity conservation, creating CWCs and supporting livelihoods.

In terms of vertical funds the project is Zimbabwe's second largest project over various cycles after the on-going Green Climate Fund (GCF) project. The project builds on previous GEF projects in Zimbabwe which dealt with similar issues but in other geographical areas and reflects the Government's strategic approach to strengthening PAs. It also compliments other on-going projects by the World Bank, GEF and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

The project is designed to assist the RPs with their existing activities and objectives, thereby accelerating the time in which they can be achieved. It is considered by all stakeholders to be very significant to Zimbabwe and the Zambezi valley and its communities. Country ownership is also considered to be strong demonstrated by the co-financing committed by the Government (although co-financing is below commitments as discussed further below).

⁶ See Section III (i) of Project Document

⁷ The project is designed to contribute to the following Sustainable Development Goals: SDG1: No Poverty; SDG2: Zero Hunger; SDG5: Gender Equality ; SDG7 : Affordable and Clean Energy ; SDG10: Reduced Inequalities; SDG12 : Responsible Consumption and Production; SDG13: Climate Action and SDG15 : Life on Land; SDG 17 Partnerships.

At the project site, the project is seen as highly relevant supporting the sustainability of natural resources (trees, soil, water and wildlife) on which communities depend and improving livelihoods. It supports the RDCs to fulfil their mandates.

The project is based on extensive stakeholder consultations – reaching out to around 525 (24% female and 76% male) stakeholders in the development of the Project Document including government organizations, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs, local communities (environment management committees, village heads, traditional leaders, youth representatives and women), and private sector at the national level and in the project area. Hence the perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, were taken into account during project design processes, although actual engagement of some partners has not been at the level expected as discussed further below.

As noted in the Project Document, the depletion of natural resources in Zimbabwe has a bearing on gender relations at all levels. Approximately 70% of fuel wood collection and use is undertaken by women and girls, and as the rate of deforestation increases more time is spent collecting fuel wood. However, women are not well represented in decision-making processes concerning forest issues, hindering their ability to participate in forest management activities and development in general. Given the gender inequalities in rural communities in Zimbabwe, ecosystem degradation, wildlife depletion and climate change consequences are likely to magnify existing patterns of gender disadvantage. The stakeholder engagement exercise at project design clearly indicated insufficient women involvement in wildlife crime enforcement, wildlife and forest management and highlighted the need to deliberately focus on women as key stakeholders in order to amplify their voices. Thus, the project is classified as UNDP Gender Marker 2, that is, it has gender equality as a significant objective. Component 4 of the project incorporates Gender mainstreaming.

3.1.2 Project Results Framework / Logframe

On the whole, the project's logframe indicators and targets are "SMART" (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), however there are some indicators / targets that require amendment as discussed below.

Indicator 2: The Communal Land Forest Produce Act and National Anti-Poaching Strategy will not now be reviewed by the project and thus need to be removed from indicator 2. In line with the Government's evolving priorities since project design, the project is to review the Environmental Management Act (instead of the Forest Act), so this should be included in the indicator (Table 3).

The end of project (EOP) target is that **Parks and Wildlife Act** and **Wildlife Policy** will be approved and implemented. While the project cannot control Government approval of these documents and therefore in this respect this is not an appropriate project target, addressing wildlife poaching is a Government priority and it is anticipated that the Act will be approved well within the project timeframe. Principles of the Wildlife Act were presented to parliament in early August 2021 and it is hoped that the Act will be presented to parliament at the end of the year. The project needs to consider if approval and implementation of the updated EMA is realistic as a target given that is not within the project's control.

Table 3: Indicator 2 – proposed revisions

(text to be removed crossed out and proposed revised text in purple)

Indicator 2	Mid-term target	EOP target
Extent to which legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems: Updated Wildlife Policy; Updated Parks and Wildlife Act; Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act; Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy; Updated Environmental Management Act (EMA)	Drafted (or updated) and discussed with stakeholders	Officially approved and implemented [Wildlife Policy and Wildlife Act Officially approved and implemented Environmental Management Act (EMA) consulted on and updated]

Indicator 3: Results of the elephant / buffalo survey undertaken in 2021, show a decline in numbers since 2014 (presented in the Project Document as the baseline). However, the 2021 survey results are not considered as the mid-term target as the aerial survey originally planned in Year 1, was intended to update the baseline figures. The survey will be repeated in Year 5 to get an indication of the impact of the project. The Lion survey was not available for MTR. It is therefore proposed to revise the EOP target to align with the 2021 survey findings on elephants and buffalos and the lion survey when completed, although this will in effect only reflect progress over the last 2 years of the project (Table 4). A further complication is that the lion survey may not be completed until next year, further casting doubt on the ability to use population data to indicator project progress.

Table 4: Indicator 3 – proposed revisions

(proposed revised text in purple)

Indicator 3	Baseline (Project Document)	Mid-term and EOP in Project Document	Proposed revisions to Mid-term and EOP targets
Populations of flagship species in the project area: - Lion: - Elephant: - Buffalo:	Lions (2016): 267; Elephants (2014): 11,656 (LC level: 9,398, UC level: 13,915) Buffalo (2014): 6,330 (LC level: 2,552, UC level: 10,107)	Lions: >=267; Elephants: >=11,656 (LC level: 9,398, UC level: 13,915); Buffalo: >=6,330 (LC level: 2,552, UC level: 10,107)	Lion - tbd Elephants: >=8,319 (LC level: 6,323, UC level: 10,315) Buffalo: >= 5,928 (LC level: 2,676, UC level: 9,180)

Indicators 6 and 9 relate to enforcement statistics at the national and project level respectively – i.e. annual number of seizures; annual number of arrests; annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and illegal wildlife trade (IWT). While these are core statistics related to the illegal wildlife trade, they do not necessarily correlate with enforcement effort / effectiveness in a consistent way. For example, better enforcement may initially result in more seizures and arrest, but the number of seizures and arrests may then fall as offenders move to other less well protected areas to avoid detection. The number of successful prosecutions and the penalties incurred for illegal activity are key deterrents, however given the uncertainty around the number of seizures and arrest as parameters, a better indicator would be the % of successful prosecutions (rather than the absolute number).

Indicator 6 relates to the IWT law enforcement statistics at the national level. The project does not have control of how data are collected at the national level. ZPWMA has a different

way of reporting seizures than the project⁸ and there are many data gaps and inconsistencies. This makes it impossible for the project to measure this indicator with any accuracy.

The project has a consultancy starting in November 2021 on developing a SMART strategy, which could include an activity to help move towards a coordinated data collection process and centralized database for IWT enforcement statistics. Such a system is important to provide a clear picture at the national level of IWT threats, pressure points and progress on enforcement. This would require coordination across the many parties that collect data (including the Conservancies who have their own way of collecting data). Given that the project is behind on delivery, any additional activities need to be carefully scoped so that they are feasible within the project timeframe without impinging on other existing deliverables. This could therefore be limited to a review of the current baseline - who collects what data (how often, quality, challenges) and recommendations on a standardised set of indicators and how data currently collected could be mapped to the recommended standardized indicators. To further reduce the scope, this exercise could be limited to one key species, such as elephant ivory, to set up a process to be applied to other species at a later date (Table 5).

Table 5: Indicator 6 – proposed revisions
(proposed revised text in purple)

Indicator 6	Mid-term target	EOP target
Results of IWT law enforcement at national level: annual number seizures; annual number of arrests; annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT Strengthened National processes on data collation and reporting	Law enforcement parameters increased by at least 15% n/a	Law enforcement parameters increased by at least 30% Standardized national data parameters and data collection process agreed (for elephant ivory) with Government agencies and other parties responsible for IWT law enforcement data collection

Indicator 10 relates to the average annual revenue from CBWM, SFM and SLM per target CWC (Pfundundu, Mukwichi, Mbire North, Karinyanga, Kanyurira/Masoka and Mavhuradonha). The Mid-term target has not been met due to the collapse of tourism in the area due to COVID-19 and it is noted that the EOP target will be difficult to reach if tourism does not recover in 2022/23, which is not within the project’s control. A safer / back-up indicator could be introduced related to the completion of the Business Plans for the CWCs and projected income levels based on these plans.

The project’s objectives and outcomes or components are clear, however the scope of some activities have been revised to reflect changing strategic priorities since project design. For example, the focus of the legislative support has evolved to align with Government priorities and Output 3.4 which involved working with tobacco companies has been cancelled. Further strategic revisions will be needed to ensure the project is in the best position to reach its objectives at project closure, as discussed below.

⁸ ZIMPARKS report the total quantity (kgs) of illegal wildlife / wildlife product seized (not the number of seizures). There is also a significant time lag, as data are only reported after they are cleared by the courts which can take 3-4 years. So, information reported in 2021 could relate to events 3-4 years ago.

It is also noted that a number of Mid-term impacts specified in the Project Document, for which baseline levels are set, are not directly reflected in the project indicators, for example: (i) Decreased retaliatory killing of wildlife in the project area (individuals/year); (ii) Decreased deforestation rate in the project area (% and ha/ year and CO₂eq emissions avoided) and, (iii) Decreased annual areas under uncontrolled veld fires (ha /year) in the project area.

3.1.3 Progress Towards Outcomes Analysis

This section reviews the logframe indicators against progress made towards the mid-term and end-of-project targets and makes recommendations for the targets that are not on track to be achieved by the end of the project (colour coded red). A summary of the Progress to Results matrix is provided in Table 7, with the full matrix provided in Annex 11. At the mid-term stage – targets have been achieved for 6 of the 15 indicators, 6 are on target to be achieved their EOP targets assuming the project operates more efficiently going forward, 1 are not on track to be achieved and 2 cannot be measured due to lack of data and are not rated.

While the matrix indicates that the project is not far off achieving some of the indicators and outcomes, this is out of step with the fact that only 26% of funds have been disbursed at mid-term. This is because the RPs have used their own resources to implement time sensitive activities (EMA / ZPWMA), but this is not sustainable going forward as discussed in detail below.

The main challenges faced by the project to mid-term include:

- **COVID-19 pandemic.** The Zimbabwe government declared the COVID-19 crisis a “national disaster” on 27 March 2020 and began a nationwide lockdown on March 30 2020 to reduce the spread of the virus – this was around 20 months into project implementation. This lockdown was later eased but extended indefinitely on 16 May 2020 until 2 December 2020 when gatherings of a maximum of 100 people and local travel was allowed. A second national lockdown was declared on 5 January 2021 which was partially eased on 30 March 2021 as businesses and inter-city travel was allowed, although schools remained closed. On 13 July 2021, the country reintroduced another level 4 national lockdown due to rising infections and deaths. The lockdown was relaxed to level 2 on 7 September 2021 as businesses, intercity travel and gatherings of a maximum of 100 people were allowed. At the time of the MTR the COVID-19 restrictions were at level 2, under which inter-city travel is permitted. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of the project (meetings, communications, monitoring, field activities and procurement). Most of the project activities, especially those involving gathering groups of people, were postponed due to the country-wide lockdown and restrictions on movement that followed, resulting in revisions of the annual work plan. In addition, the project had to channel more resources towards patrols as there were reports of increased incursions by poachers in the protected areas. Working from home was challenging for many stakeholders due to limited power and data for remote working.
- **Disbursement of funds.** Cumulative delivery at mid-term is around 26% of total approved amount. Disbursement of funds by UNDP to Responsible Parties for activities on the ground has suffered extensive delays affecting morale. Disbursement challenges were compounded by COVID-19, delaying implementation
- **The economic downturn** is placing increasing pressure on the natural resources base through land clearance for agriculture, artisanal mining (much of it illegal), rapid settlement at rural growth points, fuelwood collection and illegal poaching. COVID-19 makes it uncertain when communities will be able to reap a stable income from wildlife tourism.

Despite a very difficult operating environment due to COVID-19 restrictions and the economic downturn, progress has been made and a number of achievements can be noted at mid-term. These include:

- The provision of vehicles and equipment and training has enhanced the anti-poaching / Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) response and firefighting;
- The Project's engagement with NGOs and the communities is a strong feature of project and is seen as one of its key successes so far. Work with communities is moving well through the Small Grants initiative, which is supporting livelihoods of communities around the parks.

The project is also on track on a range of other activities, for example:

- The policy work, while not hitting the targets at mid-term, is on track to achieve the approval of the Wildlife Act and Policy within this parliament (i.e. by mid-2023). This will result in systematic benefits beyond the lifetime of the project through legislative reform and will be a key achievement of the project
- The introduction of and training on SMART will greatly enhance ZPWMA's enforcement capabilities. It will enable the whole organization to see what is happening on the ground and aid decision making.
- The project is part of process to renew the CAMPFIRE framework. It is helping CWCs adapt to the new framework, from which lessons can be transferred to other areas.

However, many activities are behind schedule, for example: (i) it has been difficult to carryout trainings and meetings; (ii) the survey of animal populations scheduled for Year 1, is only partially completed affecting the ability of the project to measure its impact; (iii) nurseries were due to be established in the 3rd year of the project but are not yet established partly related to the difficulties developing seedlings; (iv) Pickets (ranger camps) in PA, where rangers stay for 2-3 weeks to facilitate patrols, are yet to be completed; and, (v) the CWCs, which were meant to be established in year 3, are yet to be finalised.

As set out in the Project Document, based on its Theory of Change the project is designed to reduce the threats to wildlife in the medium term through: decreased poaching and IWT, a decline in retaliatory killing of wildlife, reduced deforestation in the project area (sustainable firewood consumption), reduced veld fires, decreased expansion of settlements and agriculture in wild areas and sustainable grazing. This is expected to result in the achievement of the following Long Term Impacts (conservation targets) – an increase in the population of flagship species, a stable level of woodland cover and sustainable livelihood benefits for local communities. As summarised above the project is making progress towards reducing the threats to wildlife and hence attainment of the long term conservation impacts through its work with communities, support to IWT enforcement, training on fire management and planned re-afforestation efforts in the project area. Of note, the ToC rightly cites the expansion of settlement and agricultural land as a threat (along with other development pressures now evident in the project area), although the project does not have activities focussed on alleviating this growing risk to the project's outcomes. The project could however consider how to potentially support the management of this risk.

Table 7: Summary Progress Towards Results Matrix - Achievement of Objectives and Outcomes against mid-term targets

Indicator Assessment Key	Achieved	On target to be achieved by EOP	Not on target to be achieved
Indicator	Midterm Level	Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
OBJECTIVE: 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			
Indicator 1: Number of people benefitting in the project area from CBWM, SFM, and SLM (f/m)		S	As reported in PIR 2021 the project has exceeded the mid-term target of 8,000 people benefitting in the project area. The cumulative number of beneficiaries is 10,044 (4,858 Female / 5,186 Male). Since project inception, an additional 6,616 people (3,467 Male /3,139 Female) have benefited
Indicator 2: Extent to which legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems: Updated Wildlife Policy; Updated Parks and Wildlife Act; Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act; Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy; Updated Environmental Management Act (EMA)		MS	No legislation has been drafted yet as consultations continue at a slow pace. The mid-term target of having drafts by June 2021 has <i>not</i> been met. However, the Parks and Wildlife Act is seen as a priority for the Government and is expected to be approved by the end of the project The project will no longer work on the Communal Land Forest Produce Act or the Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy, but will support the EMA Act instead
Indicator 3: Populations of flagship species in the project area: Lion, Elephant, Buffalo		Not rated	Results of the elephant / buffalo survey undertaken in 2021, show a decline in numbers since 2014 (presented in the Project Document as the baseline). However, the 2021 results are not considered as the mid-term target as the aerial survey originally planned in Year 1, was intended to update the baseline figures. The survey will be repeated in Year 5 to get an indication of the impact of the project. The Lion survey was not available for MTR
Indicator 4: Number of individuals of flagship species poached annually in the project area: Lion, Elephant, Buffalo		MS	Mid-term targets reached for Lions and Elephants, but not Buffalo. The challenging economic situation may make it challenging for the EOP targets to be met. An increase in all species poached from 2020 levels was evident in 2021.
OUTCOME 1: INCREASED NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR IWT CONTROL AND INTEGRATED WILDLIFE AND WOODLAND			
Indicator 5: Capacity of National Enforcement Agencies to control IWT (UNDP Capacity scorecard, %): ZPWMA		S	UNDP Capacity scorecard was updated in September 2021. The total average score at mid-term is 63.7% The key area for improvement is the capacity to mobilize information and knowledge which scored 50% overall
Indicator 6: Results of IWT law enforcement at national level: annual number of seizures; annual number of arrests; annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT		Not rated	There are measurement issues at the national level, and hence it has not been possible to assess if this indicator is on track A new activity is proposed to harmonize data collection, analysis and reporting
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			

Indicator	Midterm Level	Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 7: Total area under improved CBWM in the project area (established CWC with implemented Wildlife Adaptive Management plans), ha		S	Based on the PIR, 2021, the mid-term target of 180,000 ha has been achieved, with the cumulative number of hectares under CBWM at 269,276.20 ha. Activities contributing to improved CBWM include – the establishing of base camps, awareness raising and establishing and strengthening community institutions/Trusts in CWCs. These activities are on-going
Indicator 8: METT score for targeted PAs: Mana Pools NP; Charara SA; Hurungwe SA; Sapi SA; Chewore SA; Dande SA; Doma SA		MS	Based on the update GWP-METT scores - 4 sites (Charara SA, Hurungewe SA, Sapa SA and Dande SA) have met the mid-term targets. The 3 sites not reaching their mid-term targets were at most a couple of points away. Of note, Hurungewe SA has attained its EOP target by mid-term.
Indicator 9: Results of IWT law enforcement in the project area: annual intensity of patrolling (inspector/days); annual number of seizures; annual number of arrests; annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT		MS	According to PIR (2021) the project is on track to achieve the midterm target of 30% increase on baseline levels. Of note, performance across all indicators improved by 30% against the baseline in 2020, but the intensity of patrols dropped slightly below target in 2021, presumably due to COVID-19 restrictions on movement. Seizures in 2021 were significantly below the baseline.
OUTCOME 3: INCREASED AREA UNDER SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND INCREASED BENEFITS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES FROM CBWM, SFM AND SLM IN ESTABLISHED CWCs			
Indicator 10: Average annual revenue from CBWM, SFM and SLM per target CWC, USD: Pfundundu, Mukwichi, Mbire North, Karinyanga, Kanyurira /Masoka, Mavhuradonha		MU	The project is not on track to achieve the EOP targets. However, the operating environment needs to be taken into consideration. This indicator is not on track due to COVID-19 impacts / economic situation.
Indicator 11: Total area of restored woodlands, ha:		MS	According to PIR 2021, the project has started to restore / reforest 9,551 ha of woodland and is therefore on course to surpass the mid-term target of 2,000ha. However, so far only 148.83 have been planted, so the mid-term target was missed
Indicator 12: Total volume of CO ₂ mitigated in the project area (tCO ₂ eq)		S	The mid-term target has been surpassed, despite being partially offset by land use changes in the project area.
Indicator 13: Number of national and district development plans that address biodiversity and ecosystem management and climate risk management		MS	The mid-term target of 2 plans has not been achieved, but the project is likely to meet its end of project target of 3 plans (Landscape wide integrated management plan, Murungwe and Muzarabani district management plan) The project is also supporting National Development Strategy 2021-2025
OUTCOME 4: LESSONS LEARNED BY THE PROJECT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY M&E AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING ARE USED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY			
Indicator 14: Number of the lessons on IWT control and CBNRM learned by the project that used in other national and international projects		S	The mid-term target of 2 has been achieved: (i) Life of a female ranger shared on World ranger Day; (ii) How GWP-Zimbabwe project works with CAMPFIRE Association to support local communities
Indicator 15: % of women among the project participants directly benefiting from the project activities		HS	The project has increased the participation of women to 47%, surpassing the mid-term target of 30% and the end of project target of 40%.

Notes: 1/ From the Logframe and scorecard; 2/ from Project Document; 5/ six point progress towards results rating scale: Highly Satisfactory (HS), Satisfactory (S), Moderately Satisfactory (MS), Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU), Unsatisfactory (U), Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)

OBJECTIVE: 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

This section provides a narrative on each of the indicators at the objective level.

Indicator 1 Number of people benefitting in the project area from CBWM, SFM, and SLM (f/m)

The cumulative number of beneficiaries in the project area at mid-term is 10,044 (4,858 female / 5,186 male), exceeding the mid-term target of 8,000 people benefitting in the project area. Since project inception, an additional 6,616 people (3,467 male, /3,139 female) have benefited through project activities. These project activities include **training** on SFM, CBWM and HWC and the **small grants initiative** (PIR, 2021)⁹, the 6 CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies (CWCs) and the formation of 70 Environmental Sub-Committees (ESCs) – all discussed in more detail below.

Indicator 2: Extent to which legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems: Updated Wildlife Policy; Updated Parks and Wildlife Act; Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act; Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy

This indicator links to **Output 1.1**. The project is behind in creating the enabling environment for IWT enforcement - the mid-term target of having drafts by June 2021 has not been met. The process of reviewing wildlife related legislation and institutional frameworks is led by the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry. It has been affected by COVID-19, as the required consultations were severely restricted.

However, the project is making good progress on the **Wildlife Policy and Parks and Wildlife Act**. Nationwide consultations on the Parks and Wildlife Act were conducted in 2020, where the issue of Human-Wildlife Conflict dominated. Following consultations with stakeholders on proposed amendments, the principles for the Act were produced by a team of lawyers and other relevant experts and submitted to the Attorney General's Office. The principles were approved by Cabinet in June 2021. A draft bill was due to be presented to the President late September 2021, before going to cabinet. If changes are proposed by Cabinet, stakeholders will again be consulted, after which a revised Act will be sent to the President and Cabinet for approval. The Act is a Government priority and is being championed by senior people. It is expected to be approved in the current parliamentary term (i.e. before the next election in mid-2023). This will be a significant achievement for the project.

A consultant was engaged by UNDP in September 2021 to review the **Wildlife Policy** which dates back to 1992. It is anticipated that the policy should be in place by the end of 2021. The revised policy will include measures to address human-wildlife conflict issues, which are increasing due to land reform and people moving closer to wildlife and are a major concern of communities. In theory, the review of Wildlife Policy should have informed the Parks and Wildlife Act, but there were delays in hiring the consultant through UNDP and so the Act is already at an advanced stage. It is important that wildlife policy review is completed before the second consultation on the Act¹⁰, such that its recommendations can be incorporated. The core team working on amendments to the Act will need to work closely with the consultant to ensure compatibility between the revised policy and the Act.

⁹ The cumulative number of beneficiaries as reported in PIR 2020 was 4,387 (F 1910/ M 2487), this includes the 3,438 who were already benefitting from CBWM, SFM and SLM in 2016 before project activities commenced.

¹⁰ The Policy will be consulted on at national level – workshops, meetings and on-line survey

In 2020 an analysis of the gaps in forestry legislation was conducted through a stakeholder workshop that was supported by the project. The key recommendation from this analysis was that the **Communal Land Forest Produce Act** (under the Ministry of Local Government), and the **Forest Act** (under the Ministry of Forestry) should be merged into a single piece of legislation (PIR, 2020). The Forest Act has already been amended by Parliament and therefore the project is no longer reviewing forest related legislation.

The **National Law Enforcement Strategy and Anti-Poaching Strategy** is under the Ministry of Defence – who do not support the strategy being reviewed by project / UNDP and therefore this has been dropped by the project as an activity.

At the start of August 2021 the project was asked to review the **Environmental Management Act**; this was approved by UNDP at the end of September 2021. The funds to review the Forest Act will be reallocated to do this. Review of the Environmental Management Act is a priority for the Government and is strategic to the project as it will support the sustainability of the project's outputs.

Indicator 3: Populations of flagship species in the project area – Lion, Elephant, Buffalo

Land Resources International of South Africa were contracted to carry out aerial surveys of elephants, large herbivores and other mammals in the Zambezi Valley. The survey initiated in October 2020 suffered a disaster with the survey aircraft crashing in the Chewore area. One team member died, two survived with serious injuries while an ecologist from ZPWMA is still missing. The survey resumed in June 2021. The survey report is expected to be approved by the end of 2021. Results of the elephant / buffalo survey undertaken in 2021 shared with the MTR team, show a decline in numbers since 2014 (presented in the Project Document as the baseline). However, the 2021 results are not considered as the mid-term target as the aerial survey originally planned in Year 1, was intended to update the baseline figures. The survey will be repeated in Year 5 to get an indication of the impact of the project.

The aerial survey of elephants and other large animals will be an important output of the project providing up to date estimates of the number of animals and their locations. This activity was supposed to be completed in Year 1 of the project, but due to difficulties securing consultant (year 1) and the accident in year 2 has been delayed.

Preparations for the lion survey are at an advanced stage. The project has identified a service provider. The carnivore survey was to be done in 60 days, but it now understood that it will take at least a year. Discussions are underway to secure additional finance, including co-finance from other partners.

Indicator 4. Number of individuals of flagship species poached annually in the project area: Lion, Elephant, Buffalo

According to PIR 2021, the midterm target of a decline in key species poached in the project area has been achieved for both lions and elephants. However the data, which are based on seizures is erratic. For example, for elephants, an increase in seizures is recorded for 2021 (Table 8).

The target on the number of **buffalo** poached is off-track. The increased poaching of buffalo is mainly by local people for meat to feed their families. This has been exacerbated by the general economic situation in the country and the worsening problem of joblessness and hunger as a result of the COVID-19 situation.

Seizure data can also be an imperfect indicator, as seizure rates can increase with better enforcement / monitoring, at least initially.

Table 8: Mid-target achieved (green) and not achieved (red) by species and year.

Year	Lion	Elephant	Buffalo
<i>Baseline (2016)</i>	1	38	6
2018	2	8	2
2019	0	6	11
2020	0	3	2
2021	1	13	5
Mid-term target	1	15	4
End of project target	0	6	2

Activities that support a reduction in the level of poaching in the project area (the protected areas and CWCs) include the provision of all-terrain vehicles, fuel and rations, construction of pickets, upgrading of Mid Zambezi Valley radio system from analogue to digital, the introduction of SMART across the landscape, establishment of Multi-Agency Units and training. These activities are incorporated under components 2 and 3 of the project and are discussed in more detail below.

The procurement of all-terrain vehicles has improved anti-poaching activities in the project area and is much appreciated by the RPs. However, the FC faces challenges for patrols and other activities as it has one vehicle shared by the officers in the three districts. Water vessels / boats are still to be procured. Given that the entire northern boundary of the project area is formed by the Zambezi River, patrolling by boat is essential.

COMPONENT 1: STRENGTHENING CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS FOR INTEGRATED WILDLIFE AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT AND WILDLIFE/FOREST CRIME ENFORCEMENT IN ZIMBABWE

This section provides a narrative on the indicators related to Outcome 1 and the activities related to its six outputs.

OUTCOME 1: INCREASED NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR IWT CONTROL AND INTEGRATED WILDLIFE AND WOODLAND

Indicator 5: Capacity of National Enforcement Agencies to control IWT (UNDP Capacity scorecard, %): ZPWMA. UNDP engaged a consultant to update GWP Tracking Tool and capacity scorecard which was completed in October 2021. There is an Inception Report which sets out the approach taken for all the tracking tools. Overall the mid-term target of 60% has been met, with total average score at mid-term of 63.7%. A relatively strong performance is evident at the systemic level with an overall score of 66.7%.

Indicator 6: Results of IWT law enforcement at national level: (i) annual number of seizures; (ii) annual number of arrests; (iii) annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT

According to available data the project is off track against the midterm target (Table 9), with a decrease rather than an increase as targeted across various parameters. According to PIR 2020, the law enforcement parameters (seizures, arrest and successful prosecution) have not increased compared to the 2016 baseline due to:

- Delays to the updating the legislation, which might be contributing to the low number of successful prosecutions.
- The number of patrol rangers is below optimum levels nationwide and recruitment levels are low such that when rangers leave they are not always replaced.
- The COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to a change in the incidence of wildlife crime and in the capacity to patrol effectively and apprehend suspects. The absence of tourists in areas such as Mana Pools has also increased the need for patrolling.

As discussed above, the number of seizures and arrests may not consistently correlate with the effectiveness of law enforcement. Improved law enforcement may well be reflected in increases in seizures at least initially, but then fall as perpetrators move to less well enforced areas. The project has little influence on law enforcement activities outside the project area and it is challenging to collect national level monitoring data due to inconsistencies and lack of data. For Zimbabwe to be able to track key IWT statistics at the national level data collection tools and methods need to be harmonised and a national database established. It would therefore be useful if the project could advise on the setting up such a system, based on an initial baseline study of what data are currently collected and who and how this can be mapped / adjusted to inform national level data sets. This will require an additional activity and budget. The performance indicator also needs to be refined as discussed above. (This indicator links to outputs 1.2 and 1.4).

Table 9: Indicator 9 data

	Baseline	Mid-term target	Data
annual number seizures	299	15% increase	2021: 17 seizures (2 at port of entry/exit; inland data not available for areas outside project); 2020 there were 266 seizures (11% decrease)
annual number of arrests	550	15% increase	2021: 485 arrests 2020: 266 arrests (31% decrease)
annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT	331	15% increase	2021: 56 successful prosecutions 2020: 190 successful prosecution (43% decrease)

Component 1 consists of 50 activities of which 5 have been completed, 39 are ongoing, 5 are yet to start and 1 is on-hold (Table 10). Expenditure (up to Q3, 2021) is at 79%, which suggest that funds may not be available to complete all tasks.

Table 10: Component 1 - Summary of progress at output level

Output / [Responsible Party]	Progress
Output 1.1. National policy and regulatory framework is reviewed, and updated [ZPWMA,FC]	Progress on Wildlife Policy / Parks and Wildlife Act [8 activities – 1 completed / 7 on-going]
Output 1.2. Two Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Prevention Units established [ZPWMA, EMA]	Established, SOP developed, [some] equipment procured [7 activities – 1 completed / 6 on-going]
Output 1.3. Key law enforcement agencies are provided with necessary trainings and tools to fight IWT and forest crime [ZPWMA, EMA]	Training of rangers / resource monitors [10 activities – 1 completed / 9 on-going]
Output 1.4. Nationwide system for monitoring wildlife and forest crimes is developed and implemented. [ZPWMA, PMU]	At project site - SMART technology 85% installed but not yet programmed Teaching of SMART supported at Muashandike College [7 activities - 1 completed, 5 on-going, 1 on-hold]
Output 1.5. International treaties on protection of ZIMOZA and Lower Zambezi - Mana Pools Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) [ZPWMA]	Limited progress. Stakeholder sensitization workshops held [12 activities – 1 completed, 6 ongoing, 4 planned]
Output 1.6. Project area awareness campaign targeting IWT, deforestation and climate adaptation/mitigation issues is developed and implemented [UNDP/PMU]	Limited progress [6 activities – all on-going]

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. (discussed above under Indicator 2).

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.

Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Prevention Units have been established in the project area (e.g. in Chinhoi) with the support of MECTHI to combat poaching and illegal wildlife traffickers in the Zambezi Valley. Standard Operating Procedures have been developed to help coordinate the activities of the numerous agencies involved including - police, border control, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, National Parks, EMA. Equipment - vehicles, LCD screen, computers, and furniture, have been procured for the unit in Chinhoi. The units are to be provided with training.

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.

According to the workplan this includes training on legislation, self-policing for community rangers, enforcement and compliance, leadership, wildlife forensics and forest crime and intelligence techniques and tools.

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

This includes the establishment of a SMART management centre at ZPWMA Head Quarters and the regional office in Chinhoi, training, and the formulation of the National SMART Development Plan. The SMART equipment has been bought but is yet to be set up. A consultant is being hired to set up the SMART system for ZPWMA. Although some aspects of SMART are working well, data are lacking (e.g. on seizures) and are not well coordinated.

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

This activity has been held up because of COVID-19. For the **Lower Zambezi – Mana Pools** a number of meetings have been held. The **ZIMOZA Agreement** is complicated by the potential need to relocate people in Mozambique. The project has put aside funds for a baseline study on land use, which is scheduled to start in 2021.

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

Not much progress has been made on this output, which may be supported through the small grants initiative.

COMPONENT 2: STRENGTHENING ZIMBABWE'S PA ESTATE AND CAMPFIRE WILDLIFE CONSERVANCIES IN AREAS OF GLOBAL BD SIGNIFICANCE

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

Indicator 7: Total area under improved CBWM in the project area (established CWC with implemented Wildlife Adaptive Management plans),

Based on the PIR, 2021, the mid-term target of 180,000 ha has been achieved, with the cumulative number of hectares under Community Based Wildlife Management (CBWM) at

269,276.20 ha. Activities contributing to improved CBWM include – updated management plans, the establishment of base camps, awareness raising and the establishment community institutions/Trusts in CWCs. Many of these activities are however behind schedule.

Indicator 8: METT score for targeted PAs

The GWP Tracking Tool – combines the GEF GWP TT with Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) set of indicators. The METT scores were updated during the mid-term review. Based on the update GWP-METT scores - (4 sites Charara SA, Hurungewe SA, Sapa SA and Dande SA) have met the mid-term targets. The 3 sites not reaching their mid-term targets were at most a couple of points away. Of note, Hurungewe SA has attained its EOP target by mid-term.

Factors that are likely to further improve the METT scores by the end of the project include: (i) On-going training to improve the capacity/resources to enforce protected area legislation and regulations; and, (ii) development of management plans of all the safari areas, and Mana Pools National Park (due mid 2022).

Indicator 9: Results of IWT law enforcement in the project area: annual intensity of patrolling (inspector/days); annual number seizures; annual number of arrests; annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT

According to PIR (2021) the project is on track to achieve the mid-term target of a 30% increase on baseline level, although targets were missed on two indicators (Table 11). Of note, performance across all indicators improved by 30% against the baseline in 2020, but the intensity of patrols dropped slightly below target in 2021. Seizures in 2020 were significantly below the baseline.

Table 11: Overview of progress of law enforcement indicators by year

Indicator	Baseline	Number / % change	
		2020	2021
annual intensity of patrolling (inspector/days)	17,801	42,749 (143%)	22,124 (26%)
annual number seizures	86	102 (20%)	16 (- 81%)
annual number of arrests	42	200 (376%)	185 (340%)
annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT	18	97 (439%)	32 (78%)

Component 2 consists of 48 activities, 19 of which have been completed, 25 are ongoing and 3 are on-hold (Table 12). Expenditure (up to Q3 2021) is at 25%.

Table 12: Component 2 - summary of progress at output level

Output / [Responsible Party]	Progress
<p>Output 2.1. Updated Management Plans 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</p> <p>[ZPWMA, UNDP, FC, EMA]</p>	<p>Management Plans (delayed) due July 2022</p> <p>Training of community rangers completed in law enforcement, first aid, veld fire prevention, specialist tracking, anti-poaching coxswain skills, HWC management</p> <p>Procurement and infrastructure construction: uniforms and field gear, constructed fireguards, detection & monitoring system for fires set up, fuels and rations, tractors</p> <p>Delayed: radio system analogue to digital, picket post</p> <p>Not all equipment provided (fuel, motor-bikes) or adequate (e.g. uniforms, and erratic provision of rations)</p>

	<p>Anti-poaching operations: fuel loading reduction projects [25 activities – 13 completed, 9 on-going, 3 on-hold]</p>
<p>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 [CAMPFIRE]</p>	<p>Conservancy boundaries mapped, consultations held, Trust models generally accepted Deeds of Trusts being drafted (with concerns raised over roles, benefit sharing, influence of <i>ex-officio</i> members) To do / on-going – develop operating manuals, business plans, training, construction of base camps, hides, weirs, water storage facilities, operationalizing boreholes [23 activities – 6 completed, 16 on-going]</p>

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

An experienced consultant, who will be supported by an ecologist and sociologist, has been hired to produce Management Plans (MPs) for the PAs, an Integrated Landscape MP for the 3 districts, and one overall integrated plan for all 3 districts. This is an important output for the project and a complex and challenging task covering 25,000 km² and incorporating a large number of stakeholders. The work started in July 2021 and is scheduled to take 12 months. The approach will need to be very practical and efficient to deliver in the agreed timeframe and budget and well supported by the RDCs and other parties. A lot of consultation in the field will be required to inform the various plans and ensure that they are actionable and acceptable to all parties and therefore this activity will be difficult to finalise if COVID-19 restrictions cause future delays.

The process will build on the few existing plans for the area namely: (i) a 12 year old MP for Mana Pools, produced by the same consultant hired for this project; and, (ii) a District Land Use Plan (LUP) for Mbire updated in 2020 which provides a good baseline and can be replicated for the other districts. The MPs will address funding issues, but do not include specific Business Plans.

This activity is behind schedule. It was originally due to be completed in 2020, but has taken 2 years to commission by UNDP. Ideally, the planning would have been done at the start of project to support natural resources management and a lot has happened since the project started (related to project activities and developments outside of the project’s control) which need to be taken into consideration in the planning process.

Output 2.1, in addition to the development of MP, includes a range of activities to enhance management of the PAs. As specified in the workplan these cover training, procurement and infrastructure construction and anti-poaching operations as discussed below. Many of these activities have already been implemented or are on-going. It is assumed that they will form part of the MP and therefore reflect a level of implementation of the yet to be developed plans.

Training of community rangers has been completed in law enforcement, first aid, veld fire prevention, specialist tracking, anti-poaching coxswain skills and HWC management. Rangers are now responding in less time to human wildlife conflict cases (now within hours instead of days) and rangers are more knowledgeable on how to manage problem animals.

- The project supported 20 game scouts (10 from Muzarabani RDC and 10 from Hurungwe RDC) to undergo training on a basic community ranger course at Mushandike College of Wildlife. Two of the 20 trainees were female.

- ZPWMA rangers and the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) officers underwent training in intensive, tactical anti-poaching **coxswain skills**. This has improved operations, with an increase in number of river patrols made possible by the increase in qualified coxswains.
- 2 trainings on first aid were held, which is important as accidents are fairly common and the area is very remote.

Procurement and infrastructure construction:

- **Uniforms and field gear.** According to PIR 2021, volunteer game scouts are being supported through equipment and bush allowance. 102 game scouts were provided with uniforms (hats, trousers, boots, socks, tech coats), mobile phones and first aid kits. However, not all equipment provided is adequate and certain items are yet to be provided (e.g. Muzarabani should have received 30 GPS gadgets by now but these have not yet been delivered).
- **Firefighting equipment** has been provided to the environmental subcommittees including fire beaters, high pressure knapsack sprayers and sickles. For example Hurungwe RDC received 300 fire beaters, 50 high pressure knapsack sprayers (which have a reach of 20m metres) and sickles (which are of poor quality). The equipment is however not sufficient as it is supposed to be shared among all the villages in the participating wards. For example, Ward 8 has 93 villages and ideally each should have 20 fire beaters, at least 1 knapsack sprayer and 15 sickles. The equipment was also received late, well after the beginning of the fire season in July 2021.
- **Communication and problem animal control.** The ESCs in the participating wards were issued basic phones from SAFIRE which are supposed to enhance communication on issues such as fire outbreaks and cases of human wildlife conflict. However, the handsets provided are not very effective as they cannot take pictures or videos to enable the initial assessment of the extent of the fire and hence mobilisation the right level of resources needed to fight the fire. Coordinates are also important to know where exactly the fire is. No airtime is provided. As a results, it is challenging for communities to report cases of fire and human wildlife conflict. Communities were also provided with solar charged torches to enable them to assist resource monitors¹¹, but the torches have a short reach and are not very useful.
- **Fuel and rations.** As specified in PIR 2021, in order to increase patrols, the project has provided rations to ZPWMA and community rangers (employed by local authorities and safari operators), although these are not being consistently provided. The project was also to assist with fuel for patrols but this has face on-going problems and ZPWMA have yet to receive any fuel financed by the project. For example, for ZPWMA Marongora Conservancy, a delivery of 9,000 litres of fuel was confirmed in December 2020 via telephone but this was never delivered.
- **Vehicles (cars and motorbikes) and tractors.** Not all equipment has been provided, for example, all the RDCs were supposed to receive 4/5 motor bikes each for rangers, to assist in anti-poaching activities. Tow graders for tractors, needed to open access roads and construct fire guards in wildlife areas and wards, have also not been provided. ZPWMA received a tractor which is currently not being used because it does not have a tow grader.
- **Pickets.** There were meant to be 3 pickets constructed in year 1 of the project, but to date there is only 1, which is 75% complete. There are no boreholes on site. They are intended to help improve the effectiveness of patrols and reduce HWC incidences.
- The project drilled 8 boreholes in Karinyanga, Mbire North and Mukwichi in Hurungwe District to improve access to water for game and households.
- The project has provided funds to upgrade the Mid Zambezi Valley radio system from analogue to digital to improve communications and thus support operations in the

¹¹ For example, ward 27 in Hurungwe was given seven solar touches.

Zambezi Valley. The work was tendered in 2020 and the equipment secured before the COVID-19 lockdowns but have not been connected. There are concerns that the consultant will not be able to deliver on this work. The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is working on the radio system on the other side of the project area and it would be useful to collaborate with the AWF team to learn lessons.

- SMART is to be introduced across the landscape, which will equip staff to collect and analyse data.

Anti-poaching operations: fuel loading reduction projects. In preparation of the 2021 fire season, the **Environmental Management Agency** held 32 awareness meetings on veld fire prevention and management, attended by at least 2,000 participants. In addition, EMA conducted 85 mobile awareness campaigns on veld fire prevention in Hurungwe, Mbire and Muzarabani Districts.

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

The project is working through CAMPFIRE to establish 6 CWCs. This activity started late as it was partly dependent on the baseline studies commissioned by the project¹² (see below), nonetheless the CWCs in all the three districts have been demarcated and there is good buy-in from communities. In 2019 the boundary for Karinyanga CWCs in Mbire East was demarcated (80 km), which also serves as a fire barrier. Further, all the CWCs cleared a combined total of 37km as firebreaks during the 2019/20 fire season using tractors procured by the project. In 2020 the 6 proposed CWCs were identified and mapped and consultation with communities in Mavhuradonha, Pfundundu and Mukwichi on the establishment of the CWCs trusts undertaken¹³. In addition the project: (i) started improving water accessibility for wildlife in 4 CWCs - Kanyurira, Mbire North and Mukwichi with a combined total of 141,875.20 ha; and (ii) 2,472 days of overnight patrols were conducted in the CWCs¹⁴ using equipment provided by the project.

In 2021 the CAMPFIRE Association carried out consultations on the establishment of Community Trusts in Mbire, Muzarabani and Hurungwe, with a total of 845 community members consulted (645 male and 200 female). The consultation process took more time than planned as they were affected by the countrywide COVID-19 lockdown. Community Trusts are to be established for each Conservancy which will be used to both support both wildlife management and improve livelihoods among the benefiting communities. Proceeds from wildlife-related activities will be used for agreed projects and activities by the Trusts. Trusts deeds have been drafted, which should be completed by Q4 2021. The Boards of trustees need to be nominated, which has been delayed by COVID-19 restrictions on meetings (Box 1).

There are 23 activities related to the CWCs, many of which are still to be done such as: (i) Restocking of wildlife and translocation to conservancies (a feasibility study has been completed); (ii) procuring field equipment such as motor bikes, tractor trailer; and (iii) Development of Business Plans for CWCs – to help establish strong business enterprises and other streams of income other than hunting, for example based on eco-tourism and NTFPs (such as traditional medicine).

¹² Goredema, et al, 2019

¹³ A total of 560 community members were consulted in the two districts, including 424 men and 136 women. The project is encouraging the participation of women during the consultations. The project could not complete the process for Mbire district due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

¹⁴ Pfundundu and Mukwichi Kanyurira/Masoka, Mbire North and Karinyanga

The CWCs have been supported with 6 vehicles, 1 per conservancy, for patrols. This has improved seizures / recoveries and the ability to react to HWCs.

Box 1: Formation of Community Wildlife Conservancy Trusts

There have been consultations in all the districts regarding the formation of wildlife community trusts, but progress towards the formation of the boards of trustees, who will manage the CWCs, has been slow and was also stalled by the COVID-19 lockdowns. The draft deeds of trusts have not yet been shared with the respective districts. However, stakeholders in the three districts are aware that the trustees for each CWC will be composed of community members with RDCs and traditional chief representatives as *ex-officio* members. Campaigning for the trustee positions has started in the wards, which will be voted on. The expectation is that the Trusts will perform as or better than the original Campfire Committees which oversaw the construction of schools, clinics and houses for teachers in the different districts. The understanding is that the Trusts will be more inclined towards conservation.

There are, however, concerns that the establishment of the CWC Trusts might be high-jacked by the powerful and influential. For example, it is planned to include traditional chiefs on the trustee boards as *ex-officio* members, but the views of such leaders may remain unchallenged given the respect and power they command in the community. Under the current CAMPFIRE programme some chiefs already make certain demands which are not in line with the programme such as the killing of wildlife for meat for certain occasions like Independence and Heroes celebrations and demanding fuel for personal use.

The RDCs currently have the Appropriate Authority as per the legislation but it is not clear what role they will play under the new CWCs structure once the trusts are formed.

Source: Field interviews

Baseline surveys. While not reflected in the original Workplan, Baseline surveys were undertaken to support Outputs 2 and 3. It was noted at the start of the project that there was not enough information on the livelihood status of communities in the project area or on the environmental challenges facing the area (PSC meeting September 2018). The surveys were conducted pre-COVID by a team of consultants, who produced a combined report.

COMPONENT 3. MAINSTREAMING BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT, AND CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION, INTO THE WIDER LANDSCAPE

OUTCOME 3: INCREASED AREA UNDER SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT AND INCREASED BENEFITS FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES FROM CBWM, SFM AND SLM IN ESTABLISHED CWCS

Indicator 10: Average annual revenue from CBWM, SFM and SLM per target CWC, USD: Pfundundu; Mukwichi; Mbire North; Karinyanga; Kanyurira /Masoka; Mavhuradonha [Links to indicator 7]

Based on the PIR 2020, the project was on track to achieve the mid-term target with 5 out of 6 of the CWCs exceeding both the mid-term and EOP target. However, the situation changed mainly due COVID-19 which affected operations by safari operators, including safari hunting from which the bulk of revenues are generated. Based on 2021 results Mukwichi is the only CWC on track to achieve the baseline target in terms of revenue paid to the communities (Table 13). The safari operators in Mavhuradonha CWC, are yet to pay any dividends to the community since the inception of the project. The Zimbabwean economy remains an extremely challenging business environment over and above challenges associated with COVID-19 pandemic and it is difficult to predict when the tourism sector will recover.

Table 13: Summary of data tracking progress on Indicator 10

	Baseline	Target	Monetary contribution USD 2020	Percentage revenue increase 2020	Monetary contribution USD	Percentage revenue increase 2021
Pfundundu	0	10,000	24,350	N/A	0	N/A
Mukwichi	0	10,000	6,655	N/A	12,000	N/A
Mbire North	450,000	10%	792,398	76%	6,600	-99%
Karinyanga	58,427	10%	281,834	399%	2,700	-95%
Kanyurira/Masoka	77,083	10%	382,040	396%	0	0
Mavhuradonha	19,000	10%	0	0	0	0

Source: PIR 2020 and PIR 2021

Indicator 11: Total area of restored woodlands (ha)

Achievement of this target at end of project depends on the enhanced efficiency and commitment of the FC. According to PIR 2021, the project has started to restore / reforest 9,551ha of woodland and is therefore on course to surpass the mid-term target of 2,000ha and the end of project target of 6,000ha. A total 264,460 trees were planted across the project area during the tree planting season covering an estimated area of 148.83 ha (PIR, 2021), that is far below the MTR target area. The project nurseries (at Mavhuradonha and Chitindiva) produced 17,131 seedlings. To date most of the trees planted are in Hurungwe and Muzarabani Districts which are tobacco growing areas. The project is initially targeting areas around CWCs and areas in communities participating in the project for restoration through planting and assisted regeneration. Farmers will be engaged to support re-afforestation efforts. To promote sustainability, woodland restoration will be linked to livelihood enhancement activities such as bee keeping under the Small Grants Programme¹⁵. The reforestation efforts will help mitigate the effects of land use changes in the project area. It is noted that communities do not want to plant indigenous trees, as they don't provide enough benefits and take time to grow, fruit trees are preferred as they provide them with direct benefits.

Indicator 12: Total volume of CO2 mitigated in the project area (tCO2eq)

The project has surpassed the mid-term term target (PIR, 2021). As of June 2021, the estimated emission reduction (using FAO Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool) resulting from the project was 561,648 tCO2eq. The clearing of 2,000 ha agricultural land in the project area for a sugarcane project in Mbire district has affected the anticipated carbon dioxide sequestration efforts by the project. Furthermore, deforestation continues to be a major problem in Hurungwe and Muzarabani district due to tobacco production. Project activities contributing to this indicator include the management of veld fires, increased patrolling in the project area, the establishment of Environmental Sub-Committees and the support to communities under Small Grants Initiatives on energy efficiency to reduce deforestation.

Indicator 13: Number of national and district development plans that address biodiversity and ecosystem management and climate risk management

As discussed above, a consultant has been hired to develop a landscape-wide integrated management plan which will include the plans for the three districts. Mbire district management plan has already been updated to incorporate biodiversity and ecosystems management, and this is being reviewed by the consultant. Therefore, 3 plans will have been developed by the end of project.

¹⁵ It was suggested that the project could also look at using Bindura bamboo – which is indigenous, fast-growing and a quickly-replenished source of firewood and building materials. As the bamboo is clump-forming and has a shallow fibrous root system, it has excellent soil holding properties which helps address erosion in degraded lands (and may be more effective in terms of restoring ecosystem function than planting only fruit trees would be). It also offers options for setting up secondary businesses such as furniture making and biochar.

The project is also supporting the development of the National Development Strategy 2021-2025 in which ecosystem integrity/resilience has been suggested as one of the outcomes - this will ensure that climate risk management and improved ecosystem management are well-integrated into the national development planning agenda.

Component 3 consists of 53 activities of which 29 have been completed, 18 are ongoing and 1 is planned and 5 are on hold¹⁶ (Table 14). Expenditure (up to Q3 2021) is at 37%.

Table 14: Component 3 – Summary of outputs

Output / [Responsible Party]	Progress
Output 3.1. Integrated Landscape Management Plans (ILMPs) for Hurungwe (northern part), Mbire, and Muzarabani Districts are developed, officially approved, and implemented	ILMPs delayed - due July 2022 But some activities supporting this already completed such as updated bye-laws and Environmental sub-committees established, trained and equipped Equipment for fire-fighting insufficient (phones, sickles low quality, lights) [20 activities – 16 completed, 4 on-going]
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 mechanisms	Zoning of fishing and non-fishing areas and training in fisheries management Gully restoration on-hold 7 Small Grants projects supporting livelihoods underway [11 activities – 8 completed, 1 on-going, 1 – planned, 1 on-hold]
Output 3.3. Model woodland restoration projects are developed and implemented in the target	Delays to establishing nurseries and re-afforestation / afforestation activities [12 activities – 5 completed, 7 on-going]
Output 3.4. Local communities in the target CWCs are provided with alternative sources of energy and energy saving equipment to decrease dependence on firewood	Small Grants [6 activities on-going]

Output 3.1. Integrated Landscape Management Plans for Hurungwe (northern part), Mbire, and Muzarabani Districts are developed, officially approved, and implemented

As discussed above, Integrated Land Use Management Plans (ILMPs) are being developed for 3 districts. This output includes the approval of the plans (which is dependent on the Government). The involvement of RDCs and other stakeholders is therefore important to facilitate timely approval. Some aspects of the plan have been advanced ahead of the consultant coming on board - for example work has started to draft bye-laws for natural resource management in the 3 districts, and 70 Environmental sub-committees have been set up (Box 2). The Committees consist of around 9-12 people per ward, selected by the Local Authority based on their environmental credentials, on a voluntary basis. Activities of the Environmental Sub-Committees include - awareness meetings with Local Council, training, fire management and gully reclamation. To **manage veld fires** the project procured tractors for the construction of firebreaks which are also to be used to manage fuel load in CWCs. In 2020, relative to 2019 levels, there was a decrease in the area burnt of 23,349ha in Hurungwe, 16,846ha in Mbire 2020 and 8,301ha in Muzarabani district¹⁷. A total of 17 fire awareness campaigns were held.

¹⁶ 4 of these relate to Output 3.5 which will not now be taken forward by the project and is not presented in Table 14.

¹⁷ The following changes in areas burnt were recorded for 2019, relative to 2018: In Hurungwe a 37.4% decrease (2018- 103,364.01ha and 2019 - 64,724.84ha); in Mbire a 62.4% decrease (2018 – 48,770.63 ha and 2019 - 18,363.69); in Muzarabani a 0.24% (2018- 13,298.23 ha and 2019- 13,266.96 ha).

Box 2: Establishment of Environmental Sub-Committees

The ESCs in the 3 districts and the 70 Environmental Sub-Committees (ESCs) in project wards were formed through the facilitation of EMA in 2019 after the project started^{18 19}. They built upon the work of resource monitors who had been raising awareness of the importance of natural resources in the wards. Membership of the ESCs in the wards visited ranges from 7 to 14 people. In ward 8 Hurungwe district, the Sub-committee is made up of 14 members (9 men and 5 women). Two women resource monitors were trained at Mushandike. Youth are also represented. In ward 13 Muzarabani district, the committee has 7 members with 2 women members. In ward 11 in Mbire district, the committee has 7 members, 4 men and 3 women. The Sub-committees in all the districts are assisted by traditional leaders and the ward councillors. The Committee members are selected by the Local Authority based on their environmental credentials, on a voluntary basis.

ESCs are responsible for resource monitoring in their respective wards and are involved in raising awareness of the need to control fires, reporting fire incidences and mobilising communities to control fires. Members have been capacitated through trainings by EMA and organisations like SAFIRE focussed on: (i) the roles and responsibilities of ESCs so that they know their mandate; (ii) fire management (e.g. fire progression, its mechanical composition and how to stop its progression), including practical training with firefighting equipment; and, (iii) how to make communities aware of problem wild animals, how to react to problem animals and reduce harm and reporting incidences of human-wild life conflict. Those trained included councillors, village heads and ESCs members. The ESCs have also been provide firefighting equipment (e.g. phones, spotlights fire beaters and high pressure knapsacks).

The ESCs are intended to play a pivotal role in the management of natural resources in the project area. However, they do not have any recognised power/authority within the community or IDs which confirm that they have the authority to engage in natural resources management, including arrests. Some violators look down on them and challenge them when apprehended.

The ESCs have a high prospect of being sustainability on account of the capacity building activities taking place within the different wards. The skills and knowledge being imparted can be passed on to other members of the ward with the support of organisations like EMA who are resident in the district.

Source: based on field interviews

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

Output 3.2 is mainly about livelihoods while output 3.4 focuses on alternative sources of energy. These outputs relate to the small grants provided to NGOs, which are working well on the whole and are starting to see results. (Links with outputs 1.6 / 4.3 / 3.5).

The project's Small Grants component has a budget of USD 1.6 million and uses UNDP's low value grant modality for projects valued at USD 25 k – 150k with a 6-24 month duration. There

¹⁸ The role of EMA is to protect and manage the environment and support local level institutions.

¹⁹ The Rural District Councils Act Chapter 29, 2013 provides for the formation of Environment Committees under Part VIII section 61. Although Environment Subcommittees are mentioned, the act highlights that the ward development committee can be delegated this role.

are 7 active grant agreements²⁰, totalling USD 750,00, in 3 district (Box 3). The projects cover the landscape outside of PA and are all supporting training, complemented with a practical project, intended to introduce innovation which can be up-scaled. Most of the NGOs were already working in the area and have been quick to move when COVID-19 restrictions relaxed, so have made some progress. However, COVID-19 has affected implementation, with some projects having asked for an extension to complete their activities.

The project has a Small Grants selection committee, who use an appraisal matrix to rate proposals and make recommendations to the PSC, who are responsible for approving the projects for funding²¹. The process is considered to work well and is transparent. The whole process (from issue of bid documents to an agreement being drawn up with UNDP) takes around 6-8 months. The project works with the GEF Small Grants National Steering Committee, which consists of 15 members (with high level representation from Ministries and parastatals), 3 of whom are on Project's Technical Committee. The Small Grants initiatives have largely avoided the disbursement delays that have affected other project activities (discussed in detail below) and the organizations on the whole feel well supported by UNDP.

To date, Muzarabani has a lower distribution of resources relative to the other districts and a special call for proposals was therefore issued, from which 3 proposals have been selected to share with Project Steering Committee. Looking forward, if there are time and resources it may be more beneficial to provide existing NGOs working in the area a follow up / second grant to upscale activities that are working well, rather than to introduce new actors.

It is critical to improve livelihood options in the study area and to reduce the pressure on the natural resource base, for example through fuelwood collection. The Small Grants is the main vehicle for doing this within the project and some early successes are evident. For example, In Muzarabani SAFIRE is facilitating the production of masawu jam, non-alcoholic drink and coffee making from baobab seeds. These projects are mainly dominated by women. Although the projects are still at a small scale, there has been a mindset change towards masawu and baobab trees as communities now see them as a resource that can support their livelihoods. Similarly, communities are now realising monetary returns from honey production (being promoted by ZAT), and are eager to preserve the forests which sustain their bees. Through the involvement of EMA communities in upper Muzabani now realise the value of grass as it can be cut, baled and sold or bartered to communities in lower Muzarabani. A bale is valued at USD2.

However the Small Grant projects face a number of challenges including:

- They are operating at a very small scale and as a result not many people are currently benefitting and it is not certain that they can be scaled up due to a number of possible barriers. These barriers include: (i) affordability in the case of fuel-efficient stoves and gasification plants, and (ii) uncertainty over markets. Market analysis (honey, jam, peanut butter) has yet to be undertaken and some beneficiaries question whether profitability will be compromised as a number of the wards are producing the same products.
- M&E has been limited to date and is needed to understand how well the demonstration initiatives are working and opportunities for scaling up and the extent to which the small grants are promoting innovation. For example, the use of energy efficient stoves is at a very small scale and no systematic monitoring on their establishment and use is being done.
- Dissemination of best practices and lessons. In some cases the results of an initiative may not be apparent until years after project. Short terms grants do not necessarily provide results within the project timeframe (for example, it may be necessary to monitor results

²⁰ 8 grants were awarded but one did not take off due to challenges on the ground in terms of co-financing

²¹ For example, in 2020, 7 out of 22 proposals met the selection criteria, 3 of which went on to be supported by the project.

over 2 harvests). In order to fully learn from initiatives an allocation for monitoring post the closure of the small grant initiative is needed.

- The RDCs were not involved in the design, selection, prioritization of sites or in M&E. While they did sign MOUs upfront, the small grants organisations did not consult with the districts on their project ideas.

Box 3: Overview of Small Grant Projects

Biotechnology Trust of Zimbabwe are providing an alternative source of energy for tobacco drying to reduce deforestation, promoting reforestation (establishing a 1 hectare woodlot) and raising community awareness of sustainable development and capacity building in Hurungwe (Ward 7). All workshops were completed under the first payment tranche before lockdown restrictions. For example, an inception meeting was held with the RDC in February 2020 attended by EMA, FC, Women's Affairs. Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Energy and Police, and more than 30 people were trained on veld fire management. However, the project is not on track. A request for the second tranche of money was submitted in July 2021, but following a UNDP M&E mission in September 2021 a meeting is being held to adjust the budget and scope of the project resulting in delays.

The project has still to construct a gasification plant, which takes 10 weeks and needs to be finished before the rains start in November / December (which now looks unlikely). Construction during the rainy season is possible, but it would require pumping water out of the dug-out area, so the process would be more expensive and take longer. If the plant is only used for tobacco curing it would be idle for most of the year (April-December)²², so it is proposed to also use it for energy production. The gasification plant is being constructed at the homestead of a tobacco farmer with a good source of cow dung (8 cattle) and water (borehole). Such plants are however considered to unaffordable and / or not an option for most farmers (as they don't have enough cows or a water source) and the availability of finance to upscale is uncertain.

Community Development Technology Organization (CTDO) are working in Hurungwe demonstrating low cost solar drier for vegetables (which preserves nutrients), introducing boar goats, poultry production, linking communities to the private sector through contract farming of fortified sugar beets (as an alternative cash crop to tobacco) and establishing community gardens. Access to water is challenging in the area so this project is very welcome as it is providing water. Three boreholes have been drilled in 3 wards and water point committees have been established to manage them. The District is affected by deforestation because of tobacco farming, for which community gardens could offer an alternative. The initiative has faced a number of challenges – the beans provided to the farmers germinated poorly because of poor quality seed and because they were planted late. Furthermore, the produce was purchased in local currency rather than the agreed rate in USD, so contracts the farmers signed were not honored. The introduction of boar goats has not been successful – with a number dying.

Environment Africa is promoting energy efficient stoves, constructing a demonstration biogas plant and providing solar lights to deter wildlife in Mbire. The project trained 50 people in 1 district, which led to the uptake of fuel efficient stoves, which use materials such as cow dung and twigs. The first demonstration biogas plant was constructed by the organization at the household level, co-financed by the beneficiaries and the local community is being trained to construct biogas. The sustainability of the biogas project is however considered to be low due to the high level of skills required, affordability constraints and limited feedstock (cow dung) due to limited cattle ownership. More solar lights are needed to effectively deter wildlife, but are considered to be too expensive for households (they cost USD 80).

Lower Guruve Development Association are undertaking a number of activities in Mbire including; (i) establishing nutritional gardens and water systems in 3 wards. This activity has faced delays - one borehole has been drilled but the solar pump is still to be installed. Fencing and solar equipment not yet delivered ; (ii) Piloting fish farms to reduce illegal fishing activities in the river and crocodiles attacks; and (iii) training in veld fires and conservation agriculture

²² Tobacco harvesting is undertaken in September - December, and then cured for 2 months.

SAFIRE Zimbabwe is a local NGO whose main objective to improve livelihoods through community management of natural resources. The project has been affected by COVID-19 and implementation is behind. The 1.5 year project (USD150,000) has been extended by 6 months to December 2021. The project is working in all 3 Districts of the project.

The project is looking at biodiversity conservation in PA, by creating a positive relationship between the PA and bordering communities. Activities include:

- Disaster Risk Reduction plan. Training of communities to strengthen capacity undertaken and early warning systems have been put in place 3 wards in each of 3 districts.
- NTFPs and income generation. Some wards, e.g. in Hurungwe, did not have the required quantity of natural resources, as suggested in the baseline, for commercial use.
- Setting up gardens in each ward where farmers grow vegetable. Procurement has been done and gardens are ready to be established.
- SLM. A few gullies have been rehabilitated to reduce soil erosion. EMA has a GIS map of all the degraded areas which highlights the large scale of the problem, but the project could only rehabilitate a small area.
- SFM. Communities have been trained to prune trees and use the twigs for fuelwood to reduce reforestation. This alleviates the need for women to carry big logs. They are also teaching women to make stoves, which has the potential to be upscaled to a women's enterprise.

Findings of the MTR include:

- In Hurungwe, the wards were given 14 basic mobile phone handsets with no lines and airtime. The phones do have cameras and cannot support WhatsApp, which would enable the sharing of pictures and locations in cases of fire or poaching incidents. The community were also given 13 torches to assist the environmental monitors in controlling wildlife during the night, but this is too low a number for the 65 villages in the ward.
- Tsoiso stoves can be sustainable as they are cheap, easy to construct and repair and use less firewood. However, more frames per village are needed to encourage uptake by households.

Challenges include:

- Delayed start due to need to register at LDC as an NGO in order to work with communities. This took 3-4 months.
- The first disbursement was slow and they were without funds for 1-2 months so could not start the work. This was also partly attributed to their own capacity to complete the paperwork required by UNDP.
- Capacity. Staff costs are not well budgeted under the small grants initiative and the project would have benefitted from a fulltime person funded to take care of the project. As an organization they do not have a full time procurement function, and this affected implementation.
- The majority of beneficiaries are middle aged, and there are not many youths. But for upscaling youth will be a strong element. There was no deliberate effort to have quota system – such as 30% youth. Youth don't come easily unless there is something in it for them and men also need to see results first. The participation of women is around 40% in the 3 districts. However, for activities such as nutritional gardens and NTFPs value addition around 80% of the participants are women.

Zim Api Trust is providing training on bee keeping (i.e. life cycle of bees, physiology and behaviour of bees), and the construction of sustainable bee hives. It is operating in 3 districts and was designed to reach 400 beneficiaries per district. ZAT has experience with similar projects in Zimbabwe. The project started in July 2020 and the first instalment was received at the end of August 2020. Because of COVID-19 it was not possible to gather farmers and reach out to the intended numbers. Therefore the project had to train smaller groups / representatives, rather than everyone. The project has trained 100 (75% women) farmers in ward 7 Hurungwe, 101 (70% women) in Muzarabani and 87 (61% women) in Mbire in bee hive making and mounting. A workshop in honey grading was held in Hurungwe and Mbire. In Muzarabani a group of eight farmers were trained in honey processing. Furthermore, District Bee Keeping Associations have been established in conjunction with the Bee Keepers Association in Zimbabwe.

The project is also constructing a honey processing center in Muzarabani and Mbire, which is being co-financed by the RDCs who are donating land while the local communities are contributing construction materials (bricks and sand). While a detailed demand analysis has not been done, the view is that demand is strong nationally, regionally and globally. Meetings with retailers are planned once the construction is finalized to help facilitate markets. It is also proposed to promote value addition exploring options such as shoe polish, candles and skin ointments.

The project is working with EMA, who are capacitating communities on fire prevention and setting up nurseries. For bee keeping to be successful, bees need access to food and therefore the project is supporting / incentivizing communities to plant trees and protect forests from fire. In the last tree planting season – 7,000 Eucalyptus seedlings were distributed in Hurungwe; 4,000 eucalyptus and 2,630 indigenous seedlings in Mbire; and 10,648 eucalyptus and 1,000 indigenous seedlings in Muzarabani. The bees are also said to deter elephants as they try to avoid being stung around their eyes and inside the trunks which are very sensitive.

Beneficiaries were selected following consultation with local leaders in the wards. The project targeted women and enlisted the support of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to identify women. Overall 43% of the beneficiaries are women (Mbire – 207 men / 170 women; Muzarabani – 227 men / 197 women; Hurungwe – 262 farmers / 165 women). In the project committees women have been elected in leadership positions (chairperson / treasurer). The income from beekeeping is helping families to pay school fees and supporting household livelihoods / security. In conjunction with Ministry of Women's Affairs women are being provided training in business management, to enable them to run beekeeping as business.

The project is moving well and in high demand. Sustainability is likely assuming honey production is a success and markets are secured. After the project, on-going technical support is likely to be needed to develop value addition. The project is providing training to farmers in processing, leadership, grading, business management, but on a small scale. For example, in each group they are training 2 educators in bee handling and managing the apiary and 2 focal people per group in bee inspector / quality control.

Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (ZELA): ZELA is raising community awareness and strengthening governance systems on sustainable wildlife and forest management and strengthening adaptation and mitigation to climate change in Mbire and Muzarabani.

ZELA started activities in Mbire by holding an inception meeting in April 2021²³. Activities undertaken in Mbire include: (i) open house discussions in all the project's wards on wildlife and forest management and climate change adaptation and mitigation (challenges being encountered, indigenous knowledge, how resource management can be improved and the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders). The discussions included members of the Ward Development Committees (WADCOs), traditional leaders, environmental, water and health committees; (ii) formation of environmental clubs in at least one secondary school in four of the six project wards. Formation of the clubs in the other two wards was delayed by COVID-19. ZELA has established fenced gardens (60m x 80m) at each of the schools where club members could grow various crops and trees. However, the trees to be supplied through the Forestry Commission have not yet been provided. The gardens were fenced with financial resources from another project being implemented by ZELA in Mbire District (2016-2022) funded by the Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF); (iii) raising awareness on the establishment of governance structures for the CWCs in Mbire District. The WADCOs in the project's districts have been trained on, for example, the role and responsibilities of the board of trustees, election of the trustees and financial management of the trusts. The last activity planned is raising awareness on the illegal wildlife trade and forest crimes using a manual developed by ZELA. The manual collates the different illegal wildlife and forest crimes and their penalties which should be known by the different stakeholders. Road shows are planned involving ZNPWM, EMA, FC and RDC.

²³ The inception meeting was attended by representatives from the District Development Coordinator's office, RDC, Zimbabwe National Parks and Wildlife Management, ZNPWM, EMA, FC, ZRP, Ministry of Women's Affairs and community leaders and other stakeholders

Activities in Muzarabani, which will be similar to those being implemented in Mbire, are due to start in 2022 and be completed in June 2022.

Output 3.3. Model woodland restoration projects are developed and implemented in the target CWCs. (Links with Indicator 11).

This output is led by the FC who are supporting community-based restoration projects through training in conservation and tree planting, planting fast growing trees raised in nurseries and mapping and monitoring survival rates. Three tree nurseries were originally scheduled to be up and running in 2019 (i.e. before COVID-19 lockdowns) in Pfundundu, Kanyurira and Mavhuradonha Conservancies, but there have been delays. The nurseries are reportedly being attacked by pests and pesticides have not be bought to address this. Three nursery areas have been fenced, but boreholes to provide the nurseries with water are not yet in operation due to procurement issues. In Mbire and Hurungwe boreholes have been drilled, but not in Muzarabani due to problems with contractors; a new contractor is now being sought. It is hoped that the boreholes will be operational by the end of the year. The FC are paying nursery workers as part of their co-financing contribution. Due to the delays in getting nurseries operational, the FC is planting 300,000 seedlings from its own nurseries in project areas. Despite the delays, the FC is confident that they can surpass the target of 2.25 million seedlings during the project timeframe.

The areas for woodland restoration have been identified and prioritized with community leaders and mapped.

Output 3.5. Corporate conservation and social responsibility programs are developed and introduced to tobacco companies in the project area to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the production sector

The project had planned to work with tobacco companies to encourage environmental and social responsibility. However, UNDP's global policy (which had not been finalized when the Project Document was approved) does not support the commercial production and sale of tobacco, and this activity has now been removed. As discussed above, the project through its small grants programme continues to support the development of alternative energy sources for tobacco curing to reduce deforestation, to help alleviate the environmental impact of tobacco production, which is being incentivized by the Government.

COMPONENT 4. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E) AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

OUTCOME 4: LESSONS LEARNED BY THE PROJECT THROUGH PARTICIPATORY M&E AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING ARE USED NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Indicator 14: Number of lessons on IWT control and CBNRM learned by the project used in other national and international projects

The project has shared two lessons, thus meeting the mid-term target, these are: (i) the experience of the life of a female ranger working in the project area with partners on World Ranger Day²⁴; and, (ii) presentation of the CAMPFIRE program, impacts of COVID-19 and how the GWP-Zimbabwe project works with the CAMPFIRE Association to support local communities at a virtual Global Wildlife Program (GWP) Annual Conference.

²⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/07/30/risking-lives-to-protect-wildlife-and-wildlands-stories-from-rangers-in-the-field>.

According to PIR 2020 the GEF 7 proposal developed by the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry has built on the project’s method and experience in engaging civil society.

Indicator 15: % of women among the project participants directly benefiting from the project activities

According to PIR 2021, the project has increased the participation of women to 47%, surpassing the end of project target. The seven Small Grants initiatives and the project activities in general all promote women participation. Of note, the **Akashinga Initiative** (an all-women anti-poaching team), is empowering women in the project area by training them to be female rangers. In Muzarabani district, 20% of the rangers trained by the project were women.

Component 4 consists of 26 activities 3 of which have been completed, 20 are ongoing and 3 are yet to start (Table 15) Expenditure (up to Q3 2021) is at 3 %.

Table 15: Component 4 – Summary of outputs

Output / [Responsible Party]	Progress
Output 4.1. Participatory project monitoring, evaluation and learning framework is developed and implemented	Aerial survey elephants, buffalo, large herbivores (report due) Safeguards – International consultant to be hired 15 activities – all ongoing.
Output 4.2. Lessons learned from the project are shared with national and international conservation programmes, including GWP	Website, comms, collation & dissemination of lessons need to be given a lot more focus going forward 8 activities, 1 completed, 4 ongoing and 3 planned
Output 4.3. Gender strategy developed and used to guide project implementation, monitoring and reporting	The project updated the gender mainstreaming strategy and action plan. The suggested activities and indicators will be used to increase monitoring of gender mainstreaming during project implementation. 3 activities, 2 completed and 1 planned

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

Activities under this output include: support to the aerial survey of elephants, buffalo and other large herbivores and the lion survey (discussed under indicator 3 above), and safeguards.

Annual Reviews have been undertaken every year, and the project has managed to meet in small groups to discuss WPs. However, M&E activities have been affected by COVID-19 as it has been harder to generate information without site visits by the PMU, PSC and TC. The project has undertaken remote monitoring where possible by tracking the social media of NGOs in area. The ability to draw out lessons from the small grants and other aspects of the project has therefore been difficult – but this will be very important to do before the project closes.

Safeguards Risk management Plan. The PSG in September 2018 noted the potential human rights risks associated with the project and recommended that a consultancy be commissioned to carry out further research to ensure proper social safeguards are put in place. Furthermore, the UNDP updated safeguards policy was published after project approval and in order to meet the requirements of this policy the project engaged an international safeguards expert to update the safeguards risk management plan. An inception report was produced and the national counterpart summited a report on the consultations held with the communities. However the International Consultant has now dropped out and the

project needs to re-hire. The project therefore currently lacks an Indigenous People plan²⁵ and Grievance Plan²⁶.

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

There are a number of important activities under this output yet to be initiated including the development of a project website (due in Year 1 of the project but yet to be developed), project publications and development and support of knowledge platforms. Knowledge management and the collation and dissemination of knowledge products and lessons learnt needs to be given more emphasis going forward, as discussed further below.

Output 4.3. Gender strategy developed and used to guide project implementation, monitoring and reporting mainstreaming.

Building on the Gender Mainstreaming Plan at project design, the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is to ensure gender equality and equal benefits to women from the project implementation. The Gender strategy and Action Plan (AP) was developed by a consultant in 2020. It is to be monitored and updated annually. It looks at gender from two perspectives: (i) key issues for communities; (ii) by project component, based on the Logframe. The Gender Action Plan and Logframe monitoring tools are being used in parallel, with the Gender AP supplementing information on gender in the log frame (i.e. the project logframe has not been revised).

Currently there are very few women in decision making / leadership in the project area, although they can contribute to biodiversity conservation. For example, Mbire RDC has only 1 women councillor, so women's issues are not well represented. Actions needed to address gender inequality include: (i) a review of gender policies and policy coherence on gender and biodiversity and the mainstreaming of biodiversity and gender across ministries; (ii) capacity building, on biodiversity and gender issues supported by gender sensitive communication strategy and knowledge products; (iii) training on monitoring on gender, especially for the RDC; (v) enhanced understanding and awareness of women's rights and disbursement of gender sensitive green technology; and, (vi) promotion of the engagement of women across the value chain. For example in the assembly of solar panels, building of fuel efficient stoves.

3.1.4 Remaining barriers to achieving the project objectives

Barriers to the project achieving its objectives include: UNDP Bureaucracy and project structure, development pressures, low co-financing, the macro-economic situation. COVID-19 and the 2023 elections. These are discussed in more detailed in the following sections.

3.2 Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

3.2.1 Management Arrangements

The overall management structure is considered to be fit for purpose, but there is room for improvement in how the different actors / components engage in the project, as discussed below.

²⁵ There is a small group of nomadic communities (probably four) as indicated in consultations in Mbire RDC, located between Ward 1 and Ward 11 in the area of one of proposed Conservancies. Potential conflicts over the use of natural resources between the nomadic group and other local communities in the area could arise after establishment of Conservancy managed by Community Trust (Project Document)

²⁶ The project was to establish a Strong Grievance Redress Mechanism in the project area to mitigate the potential adverse impact of increased law enforcement on marginalized local people as a risk group (Project Document, Annex G. SESP).

3.2.1.1 PMU

The project has a **Project Management Unit**, located in MECTHI in Harare, responsible for the day to day management of project operations, including implementation of activities and accountability for the delivery of the project's outputs and preparation of quarterly and annual work plans and reports. It is led by the Project Manager (PM) and includes a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Knowledge Management Officer, a Financial Accounting Officer, a Project Assistant (seconded from MECTHI)²⁷ and a Small Grants Programme officer (located at UNDP). The PMU has enough resources and the right skill set.

The PMU is led by an experienced PM and overall the team is technically competent and harmonious, with most members being in post from the start of the project. The PMU has developed a positive working relationship with the IP. Locating the PMU in MECTHI has been very beneficial - facilitating co-ordination and the ability to quickly address issues. On the whole the PMU is efficient and has a good working relationship with UNDP and is supportive of the RPs and consultants.

Areas for improvement include:

- **Arranging meetings.** The flow of information and interaction between project partners has been affected by COVID-19 and it has been harder for the PMU to call meetings as responses to email requests are sometimes slow. The PSC should have met by mid- October 2021 to authorize the 4th Quarter workplan. An invite was sent 27 September but most members were not available, therefore the meeting was cancelled due to the lack of a quorum. To avoid meetings being cancelled, the dates for PSC should be set well in advance (potentially as an agenda item at meetings) with the PMU following up with reminders in good time.
- **Submitting paperwork on time for meetings.** In 2020 two PSC meetings were cancelled because the PSC did not get paperwork on time. This issue was also raised by TC members who often receive documents in meetings, allowing very limited time for review. The PMU needs to ensure documents are provided (5 days) ahead of meetings.
- Given the need to accelerate implementation, the PMU needs to play a more active role and not wait for PSC or TC meetings to raise and resolve issues. They need to drive the project on a daily basis and be in constant contact with the RPs.
- As for all parties, response time to queries from UNDP / RPs needs to be rapid to avoid bottlenecks and keep the project moving.
- Work- planning needs to be given a lot more attention to steer the project through its remaining time (discussed in more detail below).

3.2.1.2 Implementing Partner

The IP (MECTHI) is committed to project success. Greater and on-going involvement by senior management is needed to closely steer the project towards a strong conclusion.

3.2.1.3 Responsible parties

The PMU works closely with five **Responsible Parties** actively present in the project area – ZPWMA (responsible for delivery of Outputs 1.1 -1.5 and 2.1), CAMPFIRE Association (delivery of Output 2.2), Forestry Commission (delivery of Outputs 3.1, 3.3, and 3.5), Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and UNDP CO with support of the National GEF Small Grant Programme (delivery of Outputs 1.6, 3.2, and 3.4). All of the RPs (except EMA) have full-time project coordinators²⁸, therefore there is effectively a team of 9 managing the

²⁷ PMU pays 100% of salary. The person seconded to undertake the project's administrative work is a technical person. The contract ends in October 2021 and it is not clear if the current secondment will continue or if a new person will need to be recruited.

²⁸ FC coordinator has been full time since March 2020

project – 5 PMU staff members and 4 RP coordinators. The project supports the RP’s mandate with additional funds so in principle this should enable them to implement their activities quickly.

Challenges associated with RPs include:

- **Capacity issues.** This is particular evident for the Forestry Commission and reflected in their slow delivery and financial disbursement rate which is at 10% at mid-term. The FC has been slow to procure project material and submit papers to the PMU for payment (for example a server was procured in November 2020 but the paperwork was only submitted to the PMU at the end of August 2021). CAMPFIRE is also behind in implementation and has been set back through staff turnover with three co-ordinators over the project period, which has slowed things down as each coordinator takes time to understand the project.
- **Inefficiencies at RP level and lack of prioritization.** The commitment of some RPs needs to be strengthened with the assigned coordinators working full-time on the project as agreed and not splitting their time across various other roles. This issue was raised by PSC meetings (July 2019 and December 2019). The participation of the FC was noted as being limited, with only 1 person involved and poor supervision. The FC has only 1 vehicle allocated to the project, which is kept in Harare. A greater level of commitment is required to deliver on its remaining activities.
- The RPs sit in their respective organisations, which make coordination harder. More regular meetings are proposed (if permitted under COVID-19 guidelines) to facilitate coordination and commitment to the project.

Despite challenges and delays to delivery all RPs are confident that all key areas can be delivered *if* the common challenges facing the RPs (and the project in general) are addressed including delayed disbursements which have affected implementation and slow and bureaucratic systems. However, given the extent of activities left to do and the potential risks facing the project, this will require extraordinary efficiency and commitment going forward.

3.2.1.4 Project Steering Committee

The project is overseen by the **Project Steering Committee (PSC)**²⁹ co-chaired by MECTHI and UNDP. The PSC includes representatives from National and Local Government (Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education and Technology Development, Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing (senior Beneficiary)), RDCs (CEOs), private sector (Safari Operators of Zimbabwe), RPs and UNDP. At its first meeting in September 2019, the decision was taken to increase membership of PSC to 15 members (from 10 as set out in Project Document) to better represent the diverse stakeholders involved in the project. The role of the PSC is to provide general guidance, approve quarterly work plans and reports and manage project risks. They may also hold *ad hoc* meetings for urgent issues.

The PSC is meant to meet twice a year, with the meetings arranged by the PMU. So far 6 PSC meetings (including 1 extraordinary meeting) have been held³⁰. The meetings are well documented. The PSC has not met in person since July 2019 and the last PSC was held in December 2020. The PSC has not met in 2021 as UNDP was unable to provide data for participants. Two PSC meetings were held via zoom (June 2020 and December 2020) however some people did not join or only connected for part of the meeting due to data issues. UNDP started providing data in July/August 2020, but only for a small number of people. In

²⁹ The Project Board was renamed the Project Steering Committee at the first Project Board meeting in September 2018

³⁰ 1st PSC – September, 2nd PSC - 2018, 3rd PSC- January 2019, 4th PSU - July 2019, Extraordinary meeting – December 2019, 5th PSC – June 2020

some instances, UNDP not able to provide data on time due to challenges with the service provider.

While the intention is that the PSC visit the project site twice a year, that has not been possible due to COVID-19. A site visit was however planned for mid-October 2021 for some members. It was widely felt that the PSC could play a stronger role in managing risks, and addressing issues such as those that have arisen regarding disbursements and RP capacity.

3.2.1.5 *Technical Committee*

The project has established a **Technical Committee** in the project area consisting of representatives of RPs, Rural District Councils (RDCs) and Universities. The Technical Committee is supposed to meet every quarter³¹, however eight meetings have been held to date. It met regularly up to December 2019, but was only able to meet once in 2020 and in 2021 (May 2021). No on-line meetings were held during the COVID-19 lockdowns due to connectivity difficulties and as UNDP was unable to provide data to enable participation.

The role of the Technical Committee is to advise on technical issues, recommend approval of quarterly and annual WPs by the Project Board, review project progress, extract key lessons, plan project activities, review community concerns and grievances and provide recommendations to the JSC, PMU, and RPs. The Technical Committee is also tasked with ensuring coordination among stakeholders and their involvement in the participatory project M&E and management under PMU and RP's guidance.

There is a general view that the composition of the Technical Committee needs to be revisited and strengthened. A number of members are seconded by the RPs (from district / field officers)³² and are involved in the day to day running of activities and are not therefore in the best position to constructively evaluate their own work. Some members do not have the right technical background. The upshot is that only a few people contribute to meetings. The TC currently lacks experts to provide advice on key areas such as climate change, despite the fact that this has been raised as an issue at TC meetings. It could also benefit from including other Government Ministries working on the ground such as the Ministry of Agriculture. It was also noted that not some organizations joined meetings for a very brief amount of time, calling into question their commitment to the project.

The TC has had a fairly limited role because of COVID-19 which has made it difficult to meet and for the TC members to be on the ground to fully understand the issues, verify activities and provide technical advice. The TC needs to be more involved going forward. More site visits are important to ensure technical advice is firmly rooted in the situation on the ground. The TC could also, for example, be involved in reviewing the concept notes developed by RPs and contribute ideas and innovations. There are a number of areas such as wildlife, energy and deforestation, where the TC could play a more active role in enhancing the results. There is the possibility of supporting research by the TC through the provision of DSA support, for example on fisheries to assist communities under output 4.

3.2.1.6 *UNDP*

There is a team at UNDP assigned (part-time) to the project to provide oversight and manage delivery consisting of a Programme Officer³³, Finance specialists, Procurement specialist and

³¹ This was changed to 3 times a year in 2019, but reverted back to 4 times a year in 2021

³² For example, at EMA the Director sits on PB, and field officers sits on technical committee and report to project co-ordinator seconded to the project.

³³ The programme Officer under the Poverty Reduction and Climate Change programme. Is responsible for managing vertical funds and reportedly spends 40% of her time on GEF, 40% GCF (a USD27 million project) and rest of time on other projects.

M&E specialist. The UNDP team mirrors the team within the PMU. Monthly meetings are held with the PMU. UNDP have been good at responding to issues, although it was also felt that they there focus was on funding issues and that more technical oversight would be welcomed. Response times on payments by UNDP is a priority area of concern for the project as discussed in detail below, as are the bureaucratic UNDP processes which greatly hinder the flow of activities. Strong and effective oversight is being provide by the RTA.

3.2.2 Work Planning

Annual workplans are being developed at the end of each year – rather than at the start of the year, and are generated in a workshop in which all RPs participate. At end of year the outstanding activities by each RP are reviewed and carried forward for implementation in the following year. The workplan is presented to the Technical Committee and PSC to approve. Expenditure is authorized against a workplan on a quarterly basis. At the time of the MTR the WP for the existing quarter (Q4 of 2021) had not been authorised. Given the need to accelerate implementation, it is critical that workplans are authorised on time and meetings are called in good time by the PMU to enable this.

Limitations of the current workplans include:

- A Multi-year plan is provided in the project document, but this has not been maintained / updated or used to strategically assess project progress. It is therefore difficult to get an overall picture of what activities have been completed, what activities are delayed (and by how much) to trigger discussions on the possible impacts of delays, and what activities are yet to start to help determine if the project is in a position to finalize all its activities or if there will need to be some rationalisation.
- The annual workplans do not detail the timeframe for the activities to be completed in, i.e. whether they are expected to straddle annual workplans or should be completed within a given quarter or across quarters associated with a given year.
- The annual workplans do not indicate if the activity is new or has been carried forward from the previous workplan so it is difficult to gauge delays and progress towards completion.
- Activities have not been consistently coded across workplans, again making it difficult to track them and to understand if they are new or carried forward. A consistent coding of activities should be maintained in the Multi-year workplan and utilised in the annual plan.

Going forward work-planning needs to be enhanced.

- A multi-year work plan needs to be developed to serve as an overview of the whole project and enable review of Annual and Quarterly workplans. This should indicate completed activities, on-going activities (and time-frame for completion), which activities are behind schedule and implications of this,³⁴ highlight activities of concern that either may not be able to finish by the end of the project, or will have knock on effects (i.e., they need to be completed before other activities can start). This could be colour coded with activities of concern coded in red for action and close monitoring. As part of the MTR process a high level update of the multi-year workplan was drafted, but this needs to be refined and developed to serve as a planning tool. The Multi-year workplan should link to a procurement plan
- The Multi-year and Annual Workplans should account for seasonality: (i) some activities are seasonal such as tree planting which is best undertaken between November to March, crossing over financial years; (ii) the project area is not very accessible in the rainy season making the delivery of some supplies difficult; and, (iii) construction of infrastructure will be slower and more costly in the rainy season. These seasonality

³⁴ For example, the aerial survey of elephants and buffalos was meant to be completed in Year 1 (2018/19), but was finalised in 2021.

issues need to be built into the workplan and linked to the procurement plan making it clear when requests need to be escalated.

- The Annual work-plan should link to the procurement plan, which should detail the scheduling of the procurement process to ensure that goods and services are available on time, avoiding activities being derailed by the seasonal effects and other issues. TORs for service providers need to be drafted and approved well in advance of the tender process.
- In general, because of on-going administrative delays a cushion needs to be built into the planning process, with actions undertaken 1-2 months in advance
- The work-plan needs to be based on a realistic understanding of RP processes, which can take a long time
- Very close tracking by the PM will be critical.

Adaptive Management

The project has adapted in various ways to alleviate the impacts of COVID-19 restrictions and changing political and economic circumstances. Adaptations by the project include:

- The project moved to full time RPs coordinators in 2020. This helped to improve administrative delays, although the commitment of the RP co-ordinator's has not been at 100% in some cases.
- The project adapted in various ways to COVID-19 impacts, including:
 - In 2020 the project put in place a COVID-19 adaptation plan to help them to procure face masks and sanitizer.
 - Equipment purchases scheduled for year 3-4 were advanced to year 2 to compensate for training that had to be cancelled due to COVID-19.
 - Connectivity in remote areas. The project sought to address connectivity issues in remote areas by using project vehicles to get stakeholders to a central place with good connectivity and UNDP sought to provide stakeholders (including PSC and TC) with data, although there was limited success with this.
 - The low tourist activity due to COVID-19 and poor economic climate made the protected areas more vulnerable to the risk of poaching and other illegal activities such as charcoal production and illegal selling of firewood³⁵. The project tried to mitigate these pressures through increased patrols especially in protected areas such as Mana Pools. The project put in place an adaptive management plan to enable ZPWMA to increase the capacity for patrols under COVID-19 (PIR, 2020).

3.2.3 Finance and co-finance

A common frustration across all project partners is the extremely slow rate of disbursements. Cumulative disbursements as of 30 June were USD 2,591,085 (25.84% delivery against approved funds). Of note is that disbursements were low before COVID-19 hit. Concerns over the low disbursement rate was first raised by the PSC in July 2019, although detailed discussion, actions, solutions to this do not appear to have occurred at this or future PSC meetings.

Based on expenditure by the **Responsible Parties** provided by the PMU (see Table 16) in 2018 (over the period August – December) only 1% of funds were disbursed due to a slow project start up, while in 2019 disbursements were still only at 60%. Some improvement in the level of disbursements are evident in 2020 (at 74%), despite COVID-19, but it is concerning that disbursements have fallen again in 2021, reaching only 26% at the end of Q3, which may be partly related to the change the UNDP payment system (discussed below).

³⁵ In 2020 the project noted a sudden increase in charcoal production in the project area, likely to be linked to increased problems with supply of electricity in the country, or people having no money to pay for electricity when it is available due to general economic hardships, worsened by the COVID-19 situation. PIR 2021 reports a total of 61 patrols resulting in the confiscation of 10,352 kgs of charcoal and 28,067 m³ of firewood.

Table 17 presents **expenditure by component**, provided by the PMU. This indicates overall expenditure at 42% of total expenditure to Q3 2021 (i.e. end of September 2021, post the project's mid-term), based on project budget of USD9,279,217³⁶. To note here is that expenditure on Component 5 is at 80%, suggesting an over-expenditure for this stage of the project. According to the PMU, Component 5 relates to UNDP Staff Costs/Direct Project Costs (DPC) and UNDP Technical Advisory Services including support to Gender Mainstreaming, Environment and Climate Change technical advisory and M&E, payment of PMU staff salaries, RP staff provisions and project management costs. These costs are therefore ongoing regardless of progress on activities and funds may need to be allocated to this budget line to support staff costs for the duration of the project³⁷. The level of expenditure by component varies, with Component 1 on legislative and institutional strengthening where progress has been made at 79%, but Component 4 only at 3% where little has been done and reflecting the need to intensify efforts to draw together and dissemination project findings and lessons.

It is evident from discussions with RPs that many have pre-financed activities in an effort to make progress, given the delays to disbursements. The value of the outstanding reimbursements was not made available to the MTR, and so their impact on the level of disbursement is not clear. The fact that RPs have pre-paid for a number of activities also explains why the project progress is better than would be expected given the level of officially recorded disbursements.

Of note, disbursements under the Small grants, which operate under a different modality have run relatively smoothly³⁸.

Co-financing

Significant co-financing of USD 47 million has been pledged over the course of the project. The bulk of this is from Government (85%). It includes USD2 million in cash from UNDP. In order to track co-financing activities, the Responsible Parties have been requested to submit their co-financing activities bi-annually. A meeting was held in June 2021 where updates from RPs were received, summarizing activities from January-June 2021. However, mid-year estimates are often adjusted at the end of the financial year. The PMU tracks co-financing from MECTHI.

In terms of the Responsible Parties and MECTHI, overall, USD 11,397,608 (38%) of co-financing commitments for the project period have been met to date (including Q3 2021). However the average masks significant variation across organisations – with the FC only providing 4% of their commitments and CAMPFIRE exceeding their commitments (185%) (see Table 18). According to PIR (2021), UNDP's co-financing contributions were USD 872,394 as of June 2021. No updated figure was provided to the MTR. There is also a discrepancy in the co-financing reported as realised in PIR 2012 – i.e., USD 16, 652,854 and the data provided to the MTR³⁹.

³⁶ It is assumed that this excludes UNDP TRAC resources (USD 2 million), although this amount is still below the GEF grant of USD10,025,964. An explanation for this was not provide to the MTR.

³⁷ UNDP staff costs cannot be charged to the project grant. However, since there is an approved Letter of Agreement (LOA) for UNDP to provide execution-support services, UNDP can recover the costs of staff time (not salaries) and other costs associated with performing these services from the DPC budget line. The costs of technical oversight, M&E support should be costed against the GEF Agency Fee, not the project grant. Confirmation was sought from the project that these requirements had been met, but was not provided.

³⁸ Under the Small Grants Initiative, funds are disbursed on a quarterly / phased basis, if 80% of the previous disbursement has been spent.

³⁹ The PIR 2021 reports that the bulk of this co-financing is from Government (through recurrent expenditures associated with staff time, provision of facilities, equipment, and servicing of the project vehicles), UNDP (USD 872,394 in cash) and smaller investments mobilized through six new CSO co-financiers (who had not been identified at CEO endorsement stage). It is not clear who these CSOs are.

Commitments from the private sector and NGOs (Table 19) are not being tracked and it is evident from the MTR that some Safari operators have had virtually no involvement in the project (discussed below). The PIR, 2021 states that Private Sector and NGO co-financiers who made commitments at CEO endorsement, have been unable to meet their commitments due to loss of tourism revenues due to COVID-19 impacts.

The ability of organisations to meet their co-financing commitment is uncertain given that many organisations are very stretched in light of the collapse of tourism and the poor macro-economic environment. For example, before COVID-19 ZPWMA was receiving income from tourism, and was in a position to pre-finance activities (such as fuel payments). From 2020 there has been no tourism and they are now struggling for cash. It is no longer possible for them to pre-pay for fuel in situations where staff have not been paid. While co-financing contributions were identified as a low-medium risk across organisations in the Project Document, such risks should be revisited and all co-financiers contacted by the PMU to re-confirm their contributions for the remainder of the project.

Table 16: Project budget and actual expenditure by Responsible Parties / year (USD)

	August-Dec 2018		2019		2020		2021 to date	
Responsible Parties	Budget	Actual (% budget)	Budget	Actual (% budget)	Budget	Actual (% budget)	Budget	Actual (% budget)
ZPMA	340,000	7,768 (2%)	1,025,000	759,936 (74%)	975,000	845,987 (87%)	954,000	343,086 (36%)
EMA	90,000	- (0%)	150,000	70,529 (47%)	100,000	65,000 (65%)	89,000	10,650 (16%)
FC	10,000	2,005 (20%)	280,000	100,002 (36%)	660,000	422,320 (64%)	567,000	167,890 (30%)
CAMPFIRE	380,000	- (0%)	647,000	325,286 (36%)	347,000	201,514 (64%)	816,150	102,815 (30%)
Total / year	820,000	9,773 (1%)	2,102,000	1,255,753 (60%)	2,082,000	1,534,821 (74%)	2,426,150	624,441 (26%)

Source: PMU

Notes: 1/ Figures have been rounded. 2/Third Quarter expenditure 2021 not yet certified

Table 17: Expenditure by Project Component (UDS/year)

Component	2018		2019		2020		2021 to date		Project overall	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Expend to date
1/ Legislative & Institutional framework	155,100	7,768 (5%)	458,400	459,936 (100%)	237,000	238,416 (101%)	533,853	372,219 70%	1,384,353	1,078,340 (79%)
2/ Protection & Management of PA-Conservancy Complex	399,000	-	1,115,758	223,529 (20%)	975,521	627,727 (64%)	1,290,750	89,238 7%	3,781,029	940,494 (25%)
3/ Sustainable CBNRM in and around Conservancy Complex	70,500	2,005 (3%)	424,00	197,592 (47%)	517,600	435,540 (84%)	1,203,600	179,660 15%	2,215,700	814,798 (37%)
4 / Lessons learnt	30,000	11,166 (37%)	318,030	55,286 (17%)	246,000	101,514 (71%)	191,250	65,174 34%	785,280	233,140 (3%)
5/ Project Management	321,000	122,441 (38%)	299,421	403,652 (134%)	221,305	164,104 (74%)	271,128	200,520 74%	1,112,854	890,717 (80%)
Total	975,600	143,380 (15%)	2,615,609	1,339,995 (51%)	2,197,426	1,567,301 (71%)	3,490,581	906,812 26%	9,279,217	3,957,488 (42%)

Source: PMU

Notes: 1/ Figures have been rounded. 2/Third Quarter expenditure 2021 not yet certified

Table 18: Co-financing by Responsible Parties (USD ¹)

	Total budget	Total expend (to date)	2018		2019		2020		2021 (to date)	
			Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
ZPWMA	20,000,000	5,156,631 (26%)	3,000,000	2,125,90 (71%)	3,000,000	1,357,205 (45%)	3,000,000	781,669 (26%)	3,000,000	891,854 (30%)
EMA	6,500,000	1,865,912 (29%)	1,083,000	401,400 (37%)	1,083,000	660,769 (61%)	1,083,000	577,179 (55%)	1,083,000	226,564 (21%)
FC	2,000,00	86,145 (4%)	330,000	13,569 (4%)	330,000	18,462 6%	330,000	36,288 (11%)	330,000	17,826 (5%)
MoE	9,000,000	4,008,500 (45%)	1,500,000	595,500 (40%)	1,500,000	1,198,000 (80%)	1,500,000	1,356,400 (90%)	1,500,000	858,600 (57%)
CAMPFIRE	1,600,000	280,421 (18%)	260,000	58,921 (23%)	260,000	90,000 (35%)	260,000	86,500 (33%)	260,000	45,000 (17%)
TOTAL	39,100,000	11,397,608 (30%)	6,173,000	3,195,293 (52%)	6,173,000	3,324,436	6,173,000	2,838,035	6,173,000	2,039,843

Source: PMU

Notes: 1/ Figures have been rounded; 2/ Third Quarter expenditure for 2021 not yet certified; 3/ The project document has a total of USD40,100,000 (this includes 1m in in-kind contributions from ZPMWA).

Table 19: Co-financing from Private Sector and NGOs		
Co-financing source (Grant)	Co-financing amount, USD	Planned Activities/Outputs
Kariba REDD+ Project	1,000,000	Outputs 1.6, 3.1 – 3.4
African Wildlife Foundation	1,390,000	Outputs 1.1-1.6, 2.1-2.2, and 3.2
Tashinga Initiative ¹	50,000	Outputs 1.4 and 2.1
Zambezi Society	400,000	Outputs 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 3.2-3.5
WWF	700,000	Outputs 1.4, 2.2, 3.2-3.5
Tree Eco Ltd	171,000	Outputs 3.3-3.5
Charlton McCallum Safaris	400,000	Output 2.2 (establishment and management of Karinyanga and Mbire North Conservancies)
HHK Safaris	800,000	Output 2.2 (establishment and management of Mukwichi and Kanyurira/Masoka Conservancies)
Nzou Safaris	400,000	Output 2.2 (establishment and management of Mavhuradonha Conservancy)
TOTAL		

Source: Project Document

Notes: 1/ Tashinga Initiative withdrew from the project, as they were expecting direct disbursements of funds to implement project activities, which was not intended at project design.

For most project stakeholders the number 1 issue for the project is the slow rate of disbursements. The RPs were working with meagre resources for years prior to the project and the project was intended to address this, but the money from UNDP is said to 'trickle rather than flow'. The slow rate of disbursement is having wide ranging implications (Box 4) and will continue to drag the project backwards if not addressed.

Box 4: The impact of disbursement delays

In the past RPs have pre-funded activities (e.g. fuel), however because money is reimbursed so slowly (one RP stated it takes 6-8 months to get their money back) they have stopped doing this. As example of delays in payment, DSA's from a meeting in 2019 is yet to be paid to CAMPFIRE.

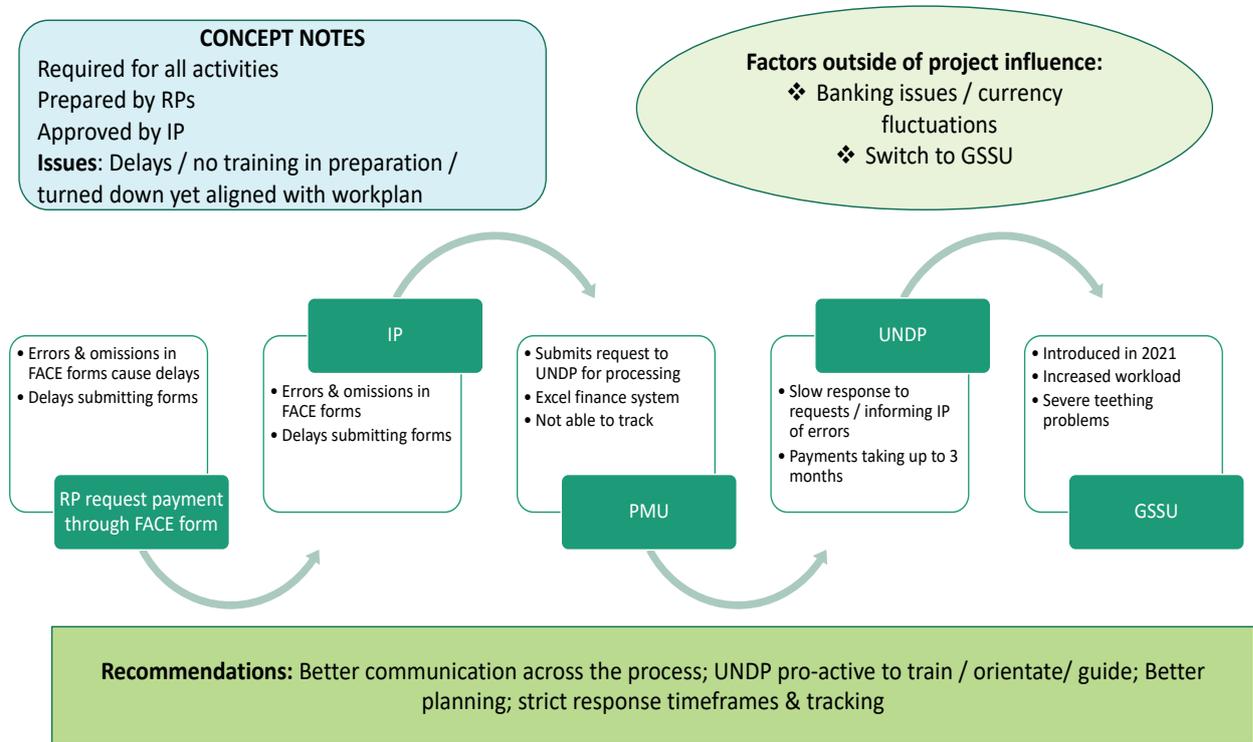
The impact of payments delays include:

- Activities are behind and in some cases the price of activities increase before they start.
- ZPWMA stopped work for 4 months from March due to lack of resources. Due to the delayed disbursement of funds to buy rations and fuel, ZPWMA have had to focus patrols on certain geographical area, leaving some areas exposed to risk.
- Resources to build the ranger camps were availed late and therefore construction took longer because of the rains.
- Staff were not provided with allowances to attend stakeholder meetings to review policy.
- For EMA money for Veld Fire Management came too late for the 2021 fire season, so they were less prepared than they could have been and there have been big fires in the project area. If they had received the money ahead of the fire season, which runs from late May to November, they would have undertaken fuel loading reduction activities (hay bailing, fresh grass harvesting for composting), fire guard construction around properties and between farms and training (which was also impacted by COVID-19). Activities started late (awareness raising etc) because money not received on time.
- Payment to suppliers are causing a lot of disruption. UNDP policy is to pay on satisfactory delivery, however some service providers / venues are not prepared to work with UNDP because their 'payment record is abysmal'. One supplier reportedly took back goods because of delayed payment.
- Negative effects on team morale.

UNDP process payments based on requests from the IP (based on approved Concept notes). The process is that RPs make requests through a Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures (FACE) from, which is sent to the IP (MOE) for review and then sent to the PMU, who also review it and send it on to UNDP who then pass on to Global Shared Service Unit

(GSSU) for approval and payment. Figure 2 provides an overview of the payment process, challenges and recommendations for improvement.

Figure 2: Overview of Payment system – challenges and solutions



Explanations for the delays in disbursements include:

- **Concept Notes.** Concept Notes are required for all activities which places a heavy administrative burden on all parties. They are prepared by the RPs and approved by the IP. Project partners reported a slow response to Concept Notes from the PMU and UNDP and in some case Concept Notes being rejected although in the RP's view they align with the workplan. Some RPs also said they had not been trained in the development of the Concept Notes.
- **Quality of documents from Government.** RPs can take a long time to submit a payment request, and then they often submit inadequate documentation. The documents (FACE forms) submitted by the IP to request payment are often incomplete or contain errors and therefore are not accepted by the GSSU (Global Shared Service Unit). The onus is therefore on the IP to initiate requests as quickly as possible and to provide adequate documentation / certification of delivery notes to verify that goods have been delivered. The IP (supported by the PMU) need to be clear on what to do and have the right checks and balance in place. Submission of incomplete documentation contributes to low delivery.
- There is no automated accounts system at the PMU. The PMU use a manual excel spreadsheet to manage the financial aspects of the project, which is not as accurate as an automated system and means that it not possible for them to track payments / financials⁴⁰. The PMU check the paperwork and then submit it to UNDP for processing and tracking.
- **Lengthy response time by UNDP.** Most interviewees reported that UNDP are slow to respond to payment (and procurement) requests, and when prompted they report that

⁴⁰ An automated accounts package was requested, but was not included in the Project Document budget so has not been bought.

changes are needed and return papers, so that weeks are lost in the process. Payments from UNDP reported take 3 months or more.

- **In 2021 UNDP moved to new system**, which was challenging, outside of the project's control and has affected all UNDP project. Under the new GSSU (Global Shared Service Unit) cluster programme – all payments are centralized and processed from Malaysia, not at the country level. UNDP submits a request to GSSU, who is then responsible for creating a voucher in Atlas and running the payment cycle. Before payments would take 5 working days if everything was in order, but now they take at least 10 working days and can take a month⁴¹. There were some teething problems with the new system, which requires more paperwork and has in practice increased workloads. The system did not work well for months and in March and April 2021 most payments stopped. A meeting was held in September 2021 between UNDP and GSSU to discuss how to harmonize processes and reduce the time taken.
- **Challenges in Banking Sector.** Changes in national banking policies and currency issues are beyond the influence of the project. Initially the government was promoting payments in local currency, but the official rate is much lower than the black market rate. In December 2020 the Government changed the framework and UN agencies were no longer able to disburse cash to beneficiaries through the Standard Charter Bank⁴² and mobile money transfers through the ECOASH platform were suspended (see Box 4).

A further challenge is that the differences in implementation practices across UN agencies can be divisive. UNDP's requirements are generally more stringent relative to non-resident organizations who tend to be more flexible and offer more attractive DSA rates than UNDP who operate in country. This is being addressed through the Resident Coordinator's office and the New Cooperation Agreement 2020 – 2026, which will see greater harmonisation of UN agency practices.

As Figure 3 seeks to emphasize, the payment process is a system that all Parties – IP, RPs, PMU and UNDP have a role to play in to ensure payments are disbursed as efficiently as possible. Actions to enable this include:

- **Concept Notes:** UNDP and Partners should review if it would be possible to reduce the need for Concept Notes to larger deliverable (perhaps over a certain value threshold) and / or deliverables that are not well specified in approved workplans. In any event concept notes should be anticipated by the RPs and prepared early to avoid delays. The TC and others could also play a role in reviewing the Concept Notes to ensure they are of a high quality and technically sound.
- **Increase Government Capacity.** Training and (annual) refresher courses have been provided to RPs / IPs to guide them on how to complete forms, develop Concept Notes and on procurement issues. However, more training is required to improve the accuracy and compliance of the forms submitted. This understanding needs to reach beyond the RP coordinators to others involved in informing / completing the required paperwork. UNDP need to be proactive to train, orientate and guide.
- **Better communication** is needed across the payment system to keep the process moving. Constant engagement with the RPs is needed. Where there are delays, this needs to be communicated quickly and addressed.
- **Turnaround times for each stage of the process should be made clear to all parties and strict tracking adhered to.** A transparent mechanism to track requests throughout the process is needed to understand the source of any delays. Where turnaround times have been missed this should be escalated to senior management within organisations. Urgent issues, should be flagged throughout the process (e.g. where requests needs to be executed well in advance of the rainy season).

⁴¹ UNDP in principle has 30 day turn-around time

⁴² Except to Standard Charter account holders

- A review of payments is now happening weekly, with a payment report submitted to UNDP by the IP via email every Monday, with status update. Such tracking needs to be maintained.
- Better work-planning is required as discussed above.

Box 4: Challenges facing DSA payments

The slow / lack of disbursement of Daily Subsistence Allowance (DSAs) for workshops and meetings has caused a lot of grievance. The disbursement of DSA has been affected by changes in Government policies, although the situation has somewhat improved in recent months.

There are 4 modalities for the payment of DSA:

- Cheques issued to recipients. At the start of the project UNDP was depositing money at Standard Charter Bank for DSA, which people would collect from the Bank on provision of their ID. Due to bank changes the project is longer able to do this;
- Mobile Money transfers through individual mobile apps. This was banned by the Government in March 2020 due to illegal transactions taking place generally in the country, but reopened mid-2021;
- Bank transfers in USD. Not everyone in the study area has a nostra account and delays occur when people have to open accounts. Furthermore, opening such accounts are not worth it for a one-off payment as they incur monthly service charges of around USD50;
- Cash advance. This has recently been introduced and can be used in exceptional circumstances where people do not have a bank account or mobile account. A couple of UNDP staff members are authorized to disburse cash advances, which is a fast way of doing things, but there is the risk of robbery especially when travelling between cities and to remote areas.

Other options discussed during the MTR are: (i) transfer of funds to a NGO. In terms of RPs this option would only be available to CAMPFIRE, as the other RPs are part of the Government; (ii) using a 'Trusted representative' with a nostra accounts who is transferred the money for a group of participants

Procurement (vehicles, equipment, fuel, consultants)

Procurement through RPs or the Ministry of Environment is required to follow Government processes – set out by the Procurement Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe. If projects have to go to tender (which is based on their value⁴³), this is a lengthy process taking around 3 months (the tender has to be advertised for 21 days). The Government develops a procurement plan with UNDP at the start of year, but may only realise certain procurement needs are over the tender threshold when developing the requirements in detail.

To facilitate the procurement process, UNDP is doing a lot of the procurement on behalf of the project. This is consistent with the approved LOA between the IP and UNDP in respect of execution services to be performed by UNDP. UNDP's tender process should be completed in 2 months, with items such as equipment being procured faster, in around 3 weeks. There are two stage to the procurement process;

- Request for good and services. A clear specification (Terms of Reference) by the IP is needed to avoided a lot of back and forth between UNDP and the IP seeking clarifications.
- Procurement. Selection of supplier off Long Term Agreements (LTA) / rosters can be used to speed up the process, as this avoids the need for an open tender. The registration process for a new vendor can take 2 weeks.

⁴³ Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets (General) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020 (No. 2) sets out the various thresholds. For example, where the price of the procurement requirement for items not covered in a framework agreement is above the equivalent of ten thousand (10 000) United States dollars, in the case of goods; or the equivalent of five thousand (5 000) United States dollars, in the case of consultancy and non- consultancy services, a competitive bidding process is required

The issue of fuel: Project implementation requires a lot of fuel for example for monitoring patrols, forest management, environmental management teams and travel from Harare to the districts. The extensive delays in the provision of fuel has greatly hindered project implementation. For example, ZPWMA has not yet been reimbursed for fuel for activities in 2020 and the first half of 2021. ZPWMA have not received any fuel from the project, despite this being a commitment in the Project Document.

The difficulties faced by the Project in providing fuel are linked to the prevailing conditions in Zimbabwe whereby fuel is in short supply. Until recently the project did not have a system where fuel was readily available but since July 2021 the project have procured fuel stocks. RPs can request fuel on a monthly bases then submit an acquittal for the fuel used, using the vehicle log sheets. The fuel used has to be reconciled before another advance is issued. Delays in payment have been caused through discrepancies in paperwork.

Procurement has been affected by COVID-19 related supply chain issue. For example, the process to procure tractors and IT equipment was initiated in February 2020 and were only received October / November, and there have been delays in importing solar equipment from China.

There is a view that things will be more stable going forward. Recent initiatives / improvements include: (i) the hiring of more people to support procurement at UNDP; (ii) training with the IP; and, (iii) UNDP joining meetings with partners to develop procurement plans to answer any queries and help ensure everyone understands the process.

Stronger planning is needed to avoid delays. The procurement plan for the whole year should accompany the annual workplan, identifying cut off times for delivery and areas where procurement may need more time so that work is done up-front to ensure all goods and services will be available on-time.

3.2.4 Project-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Component 4 of the project features M&E, and activities under M&E have been discussed under output 4.1 above. The PMU submits an annual monitoring plan, which includes the small grants. Gender indicators are being collected (e.g. related to training events) and a gender expert is being hired to undertake an annual gender review. As discussed, during COVID-19 monitoring was largely undertaken remotely and needs to be stepped up going forward to ensure the project is on track and to identify best practices and lessons flowing from the project activities.

3.2.5 Stakeholder Engagement

Participation and country-driven processes. Local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project and have an active role in project decision-making through the PSC and TC. The MECTHI is fully behind the project and appreciates its importance. However, commitment is not equally shared across the RPs and co-ordination between partners is a challenge.

Partnerships. The project has a broad range of partners committed to co-finance the project, however a number do not at this stage feel part of the project. Communications with and coordination between partners and their engagement needs to be strengthened.

The RDCs are implementing the project through CAMPFIRE. A number of **Safari operators** were involved in the preliminary discussions on project design, but some have not been involved at all in implementation as set out in the Project Document and co-financing letter, and communication via CAMPFIRE has not been clear. The expectation was that the project

would capacitate private operators, but the project is perceived by some as being implemented through RDC, who hold the equipment bought to protect the conservancy (e.g. vehicles for patrols) and use it for their own proposes. Conversely, the CAMPFIRE Association instructed Hurungwe RDC to give one of its vehicles to HHK, a safari operator who has not paid the RDC its dues for the past two years and is not performing anti-poaching activities or undertaking community activities. According to Hurungwe RDC, the vehicle is now their private vehicle and not used for anti-poaching; if it was stationed at the RDC it could be used to service all the project wards as help address problem animals and poaching. It is obviously important that the project vehicles are used effectively by all parties to support project activities.

Safari operators such as Pfundundu in Hurungwe and Chitsere or Beat the Drum in Mbire District are all involved in wildlife conservation work but they are not formally involved in the project. Pfundundu currently has a staff complement of over 100 and all the 86 rangers are women who are recruited from the surrounding communities. The conservancy also undertakes a number of community development activities which includes road and borehole rehabilitation, construction of community centres and support of sport. The conservancy is a non-hunting area where a number of wild animals are now being protected. Communities are given an opportunity to harvest grass at least once a year. Chitsere is the first conservancy of its kind in Mbire district to promote conservation without any hunting activities. The vision is to build different species of wildlife while promoting non-hunting activities such as photography, site seeing and sport fishing. As a result of their approach, the number of animals has increased in the conservancy. Chitsere Conservancy has been involved in community projects which include installation of solar power at a local clinic, construction of a classroom block at a local school and hosting the annual soccer tournament for Mbire district

Engagement with some private sector partners has thus been very limited, but this remains important to help ensure that commercial activities within the study are working sustainably.

Participation and public awareness. The project's success in engaging communities is a core feature of the project and a significant factor contributing to the attainment of the project's objectives at the mid-term (Box 5). This involvement needs to be maintained going forward.

Box 5: Community participation

Community participation is generally satisfactory as highlighted by key informants such as councillors, RDC officials and RP staff. The project is able to build on the support of communities who through resource monitors are already involved in resource conservation, and of existing RDC and traditional structures.

Women are particularly involved in activities enhancing livelihoods. Women account for 100% participation in projects related tsootso stoves, and engagement is also high for honey production, nutrition gardens, jam making, peanut butter processing and fish farming. However, there are still some barriers to women participation in districts such as in Muzarabani and Mbire due to the patriarchal culture, despite the fact that environmental issues affect women more than men. Of note, there has been a drive by Safari operators such as Pfundundu, to recruit only women as game rangers.

Communities have a preference for projects that generate income for them, rather than participating in the construction of a fire guard, for example. However, organisations like EMA try to communicate to the communities the benefits to them of such conservation work. Community participation has been enhanced through awareness campaigns, involvement in project activities and the recruitment of locals from the participating wards as rangers in all Districts. Furthermore, community participation is facilitated by community leaders such as ward councillors and traditional leaders.

Source: Based on fieldwork findings

Public awareness of the project both beyond beneficiaries at the study site and nationally is considered to be low and has been hampered by COVID-19 but is also attributed to the minimal communication and promotion of the project undertaken so far (see below). UNDP have a dedicated call under the Small Grants Initiative for awareness programme for CSOs/ NGOs working with communities and at national level in order to leverage national partnerships and increase awareness.

3.2.6 Reporting

The project has consistently completed monthly and quarterly progress reports and PIRs and documented PSC and TC meetings. Back to Office Reports (BTORs) have also been prepared. The PIRs are very detailed. Project adaptations have been reported at PSC meetings and challenges raised, but not always resolved as discussed above. An audit of the project undertaken in 2020 and was Satisfactory.

3.2.7 Communications

Internal project communication with stakeholders could improve. The Responsible Parties are not briefed on what others are doing and are not aware of activities outside of their area. Some stakeholders such as safari operators have not been kept in the loop on implementation decisions and have limited information on the project. While the PSC are provided with a macro view of the project, other stakeholders would also benefit from this to arm them with the big picture and facilitate the identification of synergies and investments supporting the sustainability of project results.

Little has been achieved in terms of **external communications** and awareness raising and this is seen as a key gap. There is no project website. At the moment the M&E anchor at UNDP is supporting communications, however in November 2021 an international communications expert will be joining the project for a year, funded by the Swiss Agency. The communications expert will help document project success, develop a website, support media assets and develop a knowledge management system.

The project has however been an active participant in and contributor to knowledge exchanges convened through the Global Wildlife Programme including annual GWP conferences and quarterly regional coordination calls. The project has also been featured in two Exposure stories published on the internet. One of the project RPs (CAMPFIRE) led a discussion panel at the 2020 GWP conference and the Project Manager has presented examples and lessons learnt during several of the regional coordination calls and in specific training sessions convened by GWP.

Development of a communications strategy, detailing how results can be communicated to stakeholders, will be important as the project covers a number of sensitive issues which need to be well communicated (e.g. Indigenous Peoples, community members being injured by wildlife (HWC) and poaching). The project needs to be clear what communication products can be produced for the project and systems put in place to collect data on lessons learnt.

The project has no visibility or promotional materials such as banners to display at meetings, car stickers, t-shirts and hats to give to communities to increase public awareness of the project at the project site.

Knowledge management is lagging behind. It had been intended to hold annual key stakeholder meetings from year two of the project to share lessons, but this has not happened because of COVID-19. The project needs a focus on **knowledge management** going forward. Good work has been done with EMA on fire management, but the project also need to address broader issues around IWT and anti-poaching.

3.3 Sustainability

The project faces a number of operational risks which need to be carefully tracked by the PSC and factored into the project strategy. Table 20 reviews and updates the risks identified at the design stage. The PSC affirmed the 5 risks identified in the Project Document in September 2018, namely: (i) unstable political and economic conditions due to limited currency and upcoming elections⁴⁴; (ii) allocation of budgetary resources to national biodiversity issues remains insufficient; (iii) potentially significant increase in externally driven pressures on forests, wildlife and protected areas; (iv) climate variability consequences; and, (v) limited local expertise to carry out implementation. In addition, two risks can be added: (i) Slow disbursement of project funds, UNDP Bureaucracy and Project Structure; and, (ii) COVID-19 disruptions.

Table 20: Status of Project Risk at Mid-term

Description	Type / Risk Level at design	Status at mid-term
Risk 1. Unstable political and economic conditions due to limited currency flow and upcoming elections	Political and Economic HIGH	HIGH The risk is not under the project control. The project is bound to work within the constraints of the county's worsening macro-economic situation (exacerbated by COVID-19). This has made it difficult to raise the expected level of funding through co-financing . The project is facing currency fluctuations and banking restrictions, finance issues and pressures on livelihoods. ZPWMA relies on tourism, so their revenue has gone down and they are not able to co-finance to the level expected. CAMPFIRE's revenue is also linked to tourism. The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's financial regulations are undermining the revenue due to communities and Rural District Councils. While Safari operators pay RDCs in foreign currency, this is automatically converted to the local currency at the official rate which is eventually disbursed to communities. The RDC and communities are not able to do much with this amount as some of the goods and services they need are paid for in foreign currency pegged at the parallel market rate. If not addressed this could discourage communities from participating in wildlife conservation, not just at the individual level but also institutionally in terms of how CWCs will be viewed. The 2023 election. Communities regard the 2023 general election as a threat to the project due to electioneering in the area which could compromise / delay activities. This highlights the importance of accelerating through the project activities in 2021 / 2022. Given the importance of the GEF project not to be politicised in anyway, the project will need to be carefully management through the run up to elections and pullback if needed
Risk 2. Allocation of budgetary resources to national biodiversity conservation activities remains insufficient for effective biodiversity conservation and management	Financial MODERATE	HIGH The risk is partially under the project control. Strong collaboration with different partners and donors, including private sector (safari operators) and agricultural companies has not been built. Output 3.5 specifically designed to increase financial support for local communities from tobacco companies via environmental responsibility programmes is not now going ahead.
Risk 3. Potential significant	Social	MODERATE – Increasing

⁴⁴ In September 2018 the PSC noted that the risk related to the elections held in July 2018 (just before project inception) had resulted to a change in the Ministries but had not disrupted the project.

Description	Type / Risk Level at design	Status at mid-term
increase in externally driven pressures on forests, wildlife and protected area resources as a result of continuing financial crisis in the country	MODERATE	Development pressures are increasing in the project area. For example the clearing of forests in Mbire for agricultural purposes and the prospecting of oil and natural gas in Muzarabani. The discovery of oil in Muzarabani was one of the potential risks identified at the PSG meeting in September 2018. At the PSG meeting Jan 2019 the development of Kanyemba town was raised as a risk to wildlife habitat. Furthermore, about 10,000ha is to be cleared for the construction of Mavhuradonha dam in the project area. EIAs are yet to be carried out. Poaching and hunting pressures have increased as a result of the economic situation.
Risk 4. Climate Change consequences	Environmental MODERATE	MODERATE – Increasing The risk is not under the project control.
Risk 5. Limited local expertise to carry out implementation and/or follow up of the project, including Conservancy management	Operational LOW	LOW Under all three key project components (1-3) the project is building capacity of law enforcement agencies, PAs, and local communities to plan, manage and monitor wildlife protection, sustainable use and restoration of woodland, and sustainable land practices.
MTR Risk 6: Slow disbursement of project funds, UNDP bureaucracy and Project Structure	Operational n/a	HIGH Disbursements are unacceptably slow and affect delivery. There is a lot of bureaucracy which is frustrating to the PMU and partners. While due diligence is paramount, UNDP procedures are seen as not flexible enough to implement the project. Concept notes are required to execute even simple activities – for example for an electrician to fix one thing on the ground or travel authorization, and take a minimum of 2 weeks. The structure of project also presents challenges. Activities are implemented on the ground by RPs. There is therefore a long chain of command from the field.
MTR Risk 7: COVID-19.	Environmental n/a	MODERATE While travel restriction are improving and vaccine rates higher than other countries in the region, the trajectory of the COVID- pandemic is uncertain and any future lockdown would affect implementation, especially of on the ground activities.

3.3.1 Financial risks to sustainability

The financial sustainability of the project after it comes to an end is unclear. Many on-going costs will need to be met to maintain the level of enforcement supported by the project, for example - internet costs to run the radio system, on-going finance of rations and fuel, equipment and other needs for rangers. While the project has built up infrastructure which will be assimilated into ZPWMA's inventory, a budget is required to maintain this infrastructure. The financial sustainability of the project is also dependent on the return of tourism to the area, which is an important source of income for ZPWMA and the CWCs.

Among the RPs, the Environmental Management Agency seems best placed to continue with activities after the project has ended because of its diversified revenue streams. The Forestry Commission is least prepared as illustrated by the fact that two of the three district forestry extension officers operate without offices with limited / no internet access and all have no regular access to a vehicle. The huge financial bill that ZPWMA requires, because of the nature of its duties, may make its operations in the future less certain. However, ZPWMA may benefit from other existing projects. Rural District Councils also benefit from other projects. Financial sustainability looks better for a district like Mbire, which has vast resources of

wildlife, but will depend on efficient and effective operators being in place, CWCs being well established and currency issues resolved. In the long term it is important that revenue generation should be based more on non-consumptive use of wildlife.

There is also the issue of how finance will be raised to afford wider coverage of the area to better protect and manage biodiversity. For example, the project covers only 3 out of 26 wards in Hurungwe District and 3 out of 26 wards in Muzarabani District.

Sustainable income generating activities are needed. The sustainability of activities under small grants has mixed prospects. Financial sustainability can be achieved if the activities are established and have stable revenue streams. This is a challenge given the short implementation periods (up to 2 years) and the delays that have characterised implementation to date because of COVID-19 and other factors. The goat improvement and biogas projects are considered to have the lowest prospect of being sustainable for technical reasons. The small grant projects will also need financial support beyond the project to upscale successful innovations and maintain a level of monitoring to inform best practice. There is however time to build on the work done so far and further support successful activities within the project's timeframe to strengthen the likelihood of sustainability.

3.3.2 Socio-economic risks to sustainability

The project is Government led and ownership and commitment by MECTHI and Government is high. The project was launched by the Vice President and updates on the project are provided up to President. Politicians are reportedly interested in the study and a visit to the study area by the Parliamentary Committee on Environment, Climate and Tourism is planned for them to ascertain project progress. The Responsible Parties are supportive of the project, although in some cases a greater level of engagement is required. The local authorities in the three project districts are engaged.

Community ownership is critical to sustainability and can be strengthened. The MTR found that limited explanation of the details of some small grant projects was provided (e.g. on biogas) and there were cases where communities did not know the budgets or resources that would be made available or have information on what was planned.

As discussed above public / stakeholder awareness needs to be strengthened to support the long-term objectives of the project and critically lessons learned need to be well documented and shared, including on the small grants to encourage replication and/or scale of successful initiatives.

Viable alternatives for deforestation caused by tobacco growing in Hurungwe and Muzarabani districts have not yet been established⁴⁵. The biogas project being promoted for tobacco curing is very unlikely to be sustainable for a number of reasons. The bio-digester is said to be the first of its kind in Zimbabwe and community members were sceptical of its viability, admitting that they were unlikely to switch from their traditional curing practices using wood and coal. Moreover, the cost of biogas digesters components are likely to be beyond the reach of many.

3.3.3 Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability

Policy and legislation is being updated under component 1, led by the Government, and will bring national benefits. If the updated legislation and policies are adopted and implemented they will provide a solid framework for supporting efforts to combat poaching and IWT, and support the sustainability of the project's outputs.

⁴⁵ Gum trees for curing tobacco can be promoted, but these take years to mature, and an alternative would be required for the period between the planting and maturing of the trees.

The project is capacitating institutions. It is important that the GEF support is internalised by the RPs so that they become stronger, and that the improvements are sustained beyond the project. The institutional support being provided to core areas of ZPWMA, for example, can take its operations to another level (through the introduction of MPs, SMART and training)⁴⁶. Senior management across the Government institutions involved in the project need to increase their engagement on the project going forward to support institutional sustainability.

The Capacity Scorecard concludes that there are an adequate number of able ‘champions’ and ‘leaders’ driving forward the anti-poaching and IWT agenda. Zimbabwe is an active participant in implementing measures adopted by regional bodies (SADAC, CITES and UNODC). This commitment will be critical going forward given the economic pressures facing the area.

Community based organizations and some CWCs will need support beyond the project.

Technical knowledge transfer needs to be enhanced. It was noted that the use of consultants by the project did not always contribute to capacity development. For example, ZPWMA have a planning unit but have very limited involvement in the development of the MPs and the aerial survey was undertaken by consultants without building Government capacity.

3.3.4 Environmental risks to sustainability

Development pressures in the area from mining (illegal artisanal mining and commercial mining), oil exploration, urban growth and agriculture are escalating. Key corridors for wildlife are being developed. Seismic surveys are currently underway for mining developments, and carefully analysis of the impacts on wildlife and nature will be needed if commercial resources are found.

Climate change consequences (increased frequency and severity of droughts, floods, and veld fires) may undermine project achievements.

COVID-19 is a significant environmental risk to sustainability. The possibility of future waves makes COVID-19 a key threat in the short to medium term.

⁴⁶ The trainings that the rangers received in animal control and anti-poaching, enhances wildlife management in the districts. The functionality of the SMART technology will makes it possible for the rangers to have real-time communication, animal detection, report of fire incidents, animal citing and concentrations and photos by providing trackers with radios and cell phones.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The project has made progress despite the difficult operating environment presented by COVID-19 and the macro-economic context. A number of activities, in particular support to the communities, have progressed and the project has strengthened ZPWMA such that they are now better able to protect biodiversity.

The project adapted to the COVID-19 restrictions by buying equipment upfront (in place of training, which became very difficult) and pushing ahead with the Small Grants Programme, executed through NGOs, recognising the positive impact it could have on addressing poverty and environmental degradation.

In total 7 **Small Grants** components have been issued to NGOs/CSOs, amounting to USD 749,435, for sustainable livelihoods, awareness raising, and provision of alternative sources of energy to communities in Muzarabani, Mbire and Hurungwe Districts. Improving the livelihoods of communities in ways that support the natural resource base is critical to the sustainability of the projects outputs. Some of the proposed projects such as bee keeping will assist in the management of woodland resources while at the same time providing a source of livelihood to communities. The grants have been described as the heartbeat of the project, creating buy-in and opening the door for discussions on conservation through the alternatives they offer. However, better monitoring of the small grants projects is needed to fully understand the challenges they face and opportunities for upscaling along with enhanced communications with communities in some cases. The small grants have moved at a faster rate than the activities with RPs, and working with NGOs has brought a different perspective and level of interaction to the project, and is therefore seen as a good model to be promoted by future projects. A key measure of success of the small grants initiatives at the end of the project will however be their ability to sustain and upscale the project's initiatives, given their limited reach.

However, the project is behind, with only 26% of funds disbursed at mid-term. Based on a list of project activities generated by the MTR, of the project's 177 activities, 56 (32%) have been completed, 103 are on-going and 18 are yet to start or are on hold.

The project is at critical juncture and there is an urgent need to speed up implementation if it is to meet its end of project objectives and targets. On-going delays will quickly build up to a point where the project will run out of time to complete activities or deliver them effectively, especially those that depend on prior activities yet to be completed. Central to the project's ability to accelerate implementation is whether the project can significantly reduce the time taken to procure goods and services and make payments. **The project will be compromised if procurement and disbursements continue to suffer delays.**

While COVID-19 has affected every aspect of the project (meetings, communications, monitoring, field activities, procurement), a common sentiment expressed through the MTR was that it should not be used as an excuse. In some cases delays are more attributable to bureaucracy (at UNDP) and administration delays by all project partners than to COVID-19.

The project can make a contribution to COVID-19 recovery, as part of a build back better strategy, through the protection of the area's natural assets and their sustainable management aligned with the equitable and inclusive distribution of benefits derived from sustainable use. The project has a core focus on reducing poaching; this has been identified as important to reducing the risk of future pandemics given that the wildlife trade, both legal

and illegal is a potential vector for zoonotic diseases (UNODC, 2020)⁴⁷. It is also widely acknowledged that it is critical to protect and restore nature and biodiversity loss to prevent future pandemics, and that such measures should be central to a COVID-19 stimulus measure and green recovery efforts. The project seeks to halt encroachment of natural areas through the development of alternative livelihoods for communities and the development of sustainable tourism models to counter land use change by commercial developments.

Table 21 presents the MTR ratings and summaries the project’s achievement at mid-term. Overall the project is rated as **Moderately Satisfactory**.

Table 21: MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table

Measure	MTR Rating	Achievement Description
Project Strategy	N/A	The project is highly relevant supporting the National Development Strategy I (2021-2025) and regional and international commitments, including delivery of the SDGs. The project was based on extensive stakeholder consultations, recognised the significance of gender issues at the project site and is designed to accelerate the ongoing activities of Government agencies to reduce IWT, manage HWC, enhance livelihoods compatible with sustainable management of natural assets and protect the area’s important biodiversity.
Progress Towards Results	Objective: 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 Achievement Rating: Satisfactory	The project is reaching the targeted number of beneficiaries through training and livelihood support, while core legislation is highly likely to be approved within the project’s timescale. The wildlife surveys undertaken by the project should be a key contribution – providing up to date information on the number and location of animals (lions, elephants and buffalo) in the study area. However the elephant and buffalo survey (due in Year 1) has just been completed and the lion survey is yet to be undertaken.
	Outcome 1: increased national capacity for IWT control and integrated wildlife and woodland Achievement Rating: Moderately Satisfactory	Although delayed, progress has been made on updating the Wildlife Policy and Parks and Wildlife Act. Two Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Prevention Units have been established. Although there is a specific output to develop and implement a national system for monitoring wildlife and forest crimes, not much progress has been made so far. The establishment of SMART management centres and training is on-going and will be an important contribution of the project. However, given the inconsistent way in which enforcement data are currently collected, monitoring of wildlife and forest crimes at the national level to any level of accuracy will be difficult. The agreement of international treatise for TFCAs are important to protect biodiversity and have been held back by COVID-19 restriction on travel and meetings
	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 Achievement Rating: Satisfactory	While behind the various management plans being developed for the study area are due for completion mid-2022, and many activities have already been progressed to support management of the sites and surrounding area such as training, procurement and infrastructure development. Implementation (in terms of efficiency and effectiveness) has been negatively affected by the fact that fuel and equipment have not been procured in a timely manner are sometimes were not fit for

⁴⁷ Are we building back better? Geneva, Switzerland.

		purpose. Establishment of the CWCs has been delayed due to COVID-19 - but will be a core contribution of the project.
	<p>Outcome 3: Increased area under sustainable management and increased benefits for local communities from CBWN, SFM and SLM in established CWCS</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory</p>	<p>Although behind the project had made progress on this outcome. While Integration Management Plans are not scheduled for completion until mid-2022 the project has progressed on a number of activities to support sustainable management such as the formation of 70 Environmental Sub-Committees (ESCs) and drafting of bye-laws for natural resource management.</p> <p>7 small grant initiatives designed to increase livelihoods while reducing pressure on the area's natural assets are well underway. Greater monitoring and reporting is needed to generate clear lessons and identify opportunities for upscaling these initiatives which are currently benefiting very few households.</p> <p>Woodland restoration is also behind, and requires concerted efforts by the FC to reach the project targets</p>
	<p>Outcome 4: Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and internationally</p> <p>Achievement Rating: Satisfactory</p>	<p>While hitting the mid-term targets, the project needs a significantly stronger focus on knowledge management and dissemination and awareness building by project closure. Knowledge management and communication is an area that has been neglected thus far. The knowledge and lessons from the project will have relevance not just to Zimbabwe, but regionally and globally. As the project is under the GWP, there is the opportunity to share lessons with a wide audience.</p> <p>The project currently lacks an Indigenous Persons plan and Grievance Plan.</p> <p>A Gender Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and annual monitoring of the Action Plan is proposed.</p>
Project Implementation & Adaptive Management	Moderately Unsatisfactory	A number of components of project implementation are holding back the effective and efficient implementation of the project. First among these is the very slow rate of disbursement by UNDP, which is unsatisfactory and has affected the project from the start and is still not resolved. Significant improvement is also needed in work-planning in order to make strategic decisions on how best to profile activities and resources in the time remaining. M&E has been limited as has communications and knowledge management
Sustainability	Moderately Unlikely	Ownership of the project is high (although improvements could be made at the community level), and the institutional and legal framework is very likely to be materially strengthened by the project. However, the ability to finance the project activities after its closure is uncertain as is financing to maintain and upscale the small grant initiatives. Land use change as a result of development pressures, the consequences of climate change and COVID-19 all pose environmental risks to the sustainability of the project's outcomes.

4.2 Recommendations

The MTR recommendations are provided in Table 22.

Table 22: MTR Recommendations

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
CORRECTIVE ACTIONS FOR THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT			
1/ Revisions to Results Matrix	Revise indicator 2 (proposed text): Extent to which legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems: Updated Wildlife Policy; Updated Parks and Wildlife Act; Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act; Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy ; Environmental Management Act (EMA) consulted on and updated. Revise End of Project (EOP) Target (proposed text): Wildlife Policy and Wildlife Act officially approved and implemented Environmental Management Act (EMA) consulted on and updated	PM	January 2022
	Revise indictor 3: Revise the EOP target to align with the Results of the 2021 survey of Elephants and Buffalo: Elephants: >=8,319 (LC level: 6,323, UC level: 10,315); Buffalo: >= 5,928 (LC level: 2,676, UC level: 9,180) Revise the EOP target for Lions as appropriate when survey is undertaken	PM	January 2022
	Revise indicator 6 (proposed text) Strengthened National processes on data collation and reporting Revise EOP: Standardized national data parameters and data collection process agreed (for elephant ivory) with Government agencies and other parties responsible for IWT law enforcement data collection	PM	January 2022
	Consider revising indicator 10. It is noted that the EOP target will be difficult to reach if tourism does not recover in 2022/23, which is not within the project's control. A safer / back-up indicator could be introduced related to the completion of the Business Plans for the CWCs and projected income levels based on these plans.	PM	January 2022
	Amendment to Outputs: Remove output 3.5 Amendment to activities: Include activity to support standardization of national data (linked to indicator 3)	PM	January 2022
	2/ Strengthen work-planning to enable monitoring of progress and strategic decision making on priority actions and changes that may be needed to project implementation to accelerate delivery and ensure the project meets its objectives	Update and develop the Multi-Year work-plan so that it provides a complete overview of project outputs and activities under each component, including start date, anticipated time of conclusion, progress (length of any delays and explanations for delays), responsible person. The work-plan should link to a procurement plan.	PM
Develop more detailed annual plans linked to a detailed procurement plan that clearly indicate dates by which actions need to be completed to avoid delays and / or an increase cost due to seasonality or other issues. Currently the workplan is provided in the standard format as a word document and includes the following fields: output/activity, timeframe (by quarter), responsibility, planned budget (funding source, budget description, amount). It therefore serves well as a summary of the workplan. It is proposed to set up a parallel workplan in Excel with additional details to inform planning, monitoring and strategic decision making. This would include, for example: Duration of activity in months, Resources (fund source, ATLAS description, budget code, proposed budget, reduction (if any), final budget expenditure, actual expenditure, remaining expenditure), procurement requirements, monitoring (progress (quarterly) challenges, mitigation action), color coded (green – on track; orange – delays but solution in place; red – delayed and remedial action needed).		PM	January 2021
Develop strategic acceleration plan. This should be based on the updated Multi-year workplan / annual workplan to understand how the project activities might be rationalised or re-structured to ensure the project attains its outcomes (assuming that disbursement issues are resolved). A workshop could be held to discuss and agree the acceleration plan.		PM PSC	January 2022

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
	The acceleration plan should take into consideration the recommendations for accelerating delivery and Action Plans for outcome that are off-track presented in PIR, 2021, which the MTR endorses		
3/ Urgently address bottlenecks in the project's payment systems, by implementing a systematic and transparent approach to managing payments and reducing the administrative burden at UNDP where possible	Institute transparent and effective communication across the payment system underpinned by strict response times (e.g. 1-2 days to review of documents, 1-2 days to address any short-comings and re-submit requests, 8 working days for payment from UNDP). Escalate any delays caused at any point along the payment chain to senior management. It is important that the project works together to address the disbursement issues the project has been facing	IP, RPs, PMU, UNDP	January 2022
	Discuss and agree opportunities to ease the administrative burden and accelerate implementation, for example, the development of Concept Notes could be restricted to larger deliverable (perhaps over a certain value threshold) and / or deliverables that are not well specified in approved workplans.	UNDP	January 2022
	UNDP to proactively train, guide and support on payment and procurement issues	UNDP	On-going
4/ Re-confirm co-finance and factor any changes into project implementation	PMU to contact <i>all</i> co-financers to re-confirm their contributions for the remainder of the project and track co-financing annually. The re-confirmed co-financing commitment should feed into work-planning.	PM	January 2022
5/ Address procurement challenges and look for efficiencies	Explore options for ensuring procurement is efficient, for example (i) using LTAs; (ii) review activities to see if there is a bundle of services that one consultant or NGO could deliver to reduce the administrative burden, ease monitoring and potentially increase implementation efficiency	PMU UND	On-going
	Expediate procurement of boats / water transport and to strengthen river patrols / surveillance. The Zambezi River serves as the boundary between Zimbabwe and Mozambique / Zambia. The River system is very porous and effective patrols are needed.	PMU, UNDP	By Q1 2022
6/ Increase involvement of senior management (UNDP, IP, RPs) to ensure efficient implementation	Increase involvement of senior management <i>across organizations</i> in supporting the timely execution of project activities and efficient project management functions. While senior level involvement in the PSC is critical to expediate decisions and problem solving these meetings only happen every 6 months. Greater involvement of senior management in-between PSC meetings is thus necessary to keep the project on track. This requires that senior management is informed regularly of progress (potentially every fortnight) and that delays and other issues are escalated to senior management for their immediate attention and resolution. The project depends on all parties committing to their agreed inputs and being accountable.	IP, RPs, PMU, UNDP	Processes / agreement in place by the end of January 2022
7/ Enhanced risk management and strategic planning feeding into work-planning	The project, led by the PSC should not only acknowledge and track risks but also advise on mitigation measures and where it may make strategic sense and /or be feasible for the project to engaged in a concrete way. There are a number of external risks to project implementation which could benefit from more scrutiny and a strategic response. For example, to what extent can the project influence land use change and development pressures in the project area? Is there potentially a role for the project to articulate the risks and engage with actors / stakeholders (including concerned Government Ministries and investors who could be included in an updated stakeholder engagement plan) and support MECTHI to strengthen EIA and better manage safeguards? It may also be possible to build support for the project by articulating how the project can contribute to COVID-19 recovery / Inclusive green growth.	PSU	On-going

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
	This more solution orientated approach to risk management by the PSC (supported by UNDP and the PMU) should inform the various systems in place to track risk such that all the mechanisms to track risks are linked up and coordinated. That is the PSC risk management activities should be well-integrated into the SESP updated annually as part of the PIR, the risk register updated annually in ATLAS, and the performance risk dashboard in PIMS+ managed by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) Nature, climate and Energy (NCE) team.		
8/ Enhanced, pro-active and integrated project management across the project management structure	PMU: (i) ensure dates for PSC and TC meetings are set well in advance and circulate documents for meeting 5 days in advance; (ii) Escalate matters affecting implementation to senior management as they occur for resolution; (ii) pro-actively engage with RPs; (iv) undertake closer supervision of contractors and act in good time when activities have stalled.	PMU	On-going
	RPs: (i) ensure 100% time commitment by co-ordinators; (ii) FC to commit more personnel to the project and ensure that senior staff are engaged	RPs	On-going
	PD to chair monthly monitoring calls and retain close engagement with the project	PD	On-going
	UNDP-CO to proactively address disbursement and procurement bottlenecks and engage in technical oversight of project	UNDP	On-going
	PSC to play a stronger role in risk management and strategic guidance (see above)	PSC	On-going
	TC: (i) review and strengthen composition of TC to enable it to provide technical guidance across the core area of the project, including climate change; (ii) engage more in M&E at site level	TC / PM	(i) January 2022 (ii) on-going
9/ Strengthened Communications – internal and external	Internal project communications: Enhance exchange and communications between RPs and other partners so that experiences and lessons learnt are shared and so that all partners understand the macro-picture to facilitate the identification of synergies and investments contributing to the sustainability of the project. This could be through regular written briefings and workshops where feasible. A project workshop could be arranged following the MTR to bring everyone together to present the revised workplan and build awareness of the integrated project components	PMU	On-going
	External communications: Develop communications strategy and increase public awareness of the project RDCs and RPs can play a role in introducing the project activities to the wards which are not part of the project. Project outputs need to be shared widely so that scaling up can take place in other districts of the country and beyond.	PMU RPs, RDCs	Q1 2022/ On-going
10/ Enhanced M&E, Lessons learnt & knowledge management	Specify M&E activities in the workplan	PMU	December 2021
	Increase M&E of Small Grants initiatives to monitor progress and importantly understand opportunities and barriers to scaling up the initiatives. Some spot / unannounced visits should be put in place for monitoring, to ensure visits are not 'stage managed' and a frank picture is gained of community involvement and progress. In order to fully learn from initiatives an allocation for monitoring post project closure is needed.	UNDP-SG	On-going
	Develop and execute knowledge management plan	PMU	December 2021
11/Ensure all existing co-financing partners are engaged in project and explore opportunities to formally include new	Ensure all existing co-financing partners (e.g. Safari Operators) are engaged in the project. Formally include in the project stakeholders who are playing critical roles in conservation, such as non-hunting Conservancies Pfundundu in Hurungwe and Chitsere or Beat the Drum in Mbire. Develop and agree formal roles for these stakeholders in the project and agree on how they can be best capacitated to strengthen their activities.	PMU	

Category	Specific Recommendations	Lead	Timeframe
partners whose work is closely aligned with the project's objectives			
12/ On-going focus on gender	Strengthen participation of women in all the project activities including the recruitment of female rangers and scouts in all conservancies managed by wards, RDCs, safari operators and ZPWMA.	RPs	On-going
ACTIONS TO FOLLOW UP OR REINFORCE INITIAL BENEFITS FROM THE PROJECT			
13/ Develop an exit plan	Develop an exit plan detailing how the financial sustainability of the project's outputs (by RPs and RDCs) can be achieved drawing on a range of possible sources. For example, public and private sector, carbon trading (which has been a more recent source of finance for ZPWMA), re-investing fines back into system.	PMU PSC	January – June 2024
PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS UNDERLINING MAIN OBJECTIVES			
14/ Undertaken an economic assessment of alternative land uses	Develop the economic and social case for non-consumption management of the study area. The financial flows from wildlife management have been low during the pandemic due to the lack of tourism revenue, and this has coincided with an increase in the encroachment of wildlife areas for developments such as mining. A broader appreciation of the economic benefits of the landscape (quantifying and monetising where possible the area's ecosystem services) and how the resources flowing from natural assets can be equitably shared with communities could help address this. This activity is not within the scope of the project, however, such an analysis could be incorporated into an exit plan (Recommendation 13) and discussed with other possible donors to support the sustainability of the project's outputs.		Post project

5 Annexes

5.1 Annex 1: MTR ToR (excluding ToR annexes)

Terms of Reference for ICs and RLAs through /GPN ExpRes

Services/Work Description: International Consultant for Project Mid Term Review

Project/Programme Title: Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe

Consultancy Title: External Mid Term Review

Duty Station: Harare, with possibility of remote working depending on Covid 19 conditions

Duration: June-July 2021

Expected start date: 1 June 2021

1. BACKGROUND

This is the Terms of Reference for the UNDP-GEF Midterm Review (MTR) of the full or medium-sized project titled Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe (PIMS-5693) implemented through the UNDP/ Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI), which is to be undertaken in 2021. The project started on the 7 August 2018 and is in its third year of implementation. This ToR sets out the expectations for this MTR. The MTR process must follow the guidance outlined in the document Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects (http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/GEF/mid-term/Guidance_Midterm%20Review%20_EN_2014.pdf)

The Government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI), in partnership with the UNDP is implementing a 6-year GEF funded project entitled “Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate-Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe.” The project is implemented under a National Implementation Modality (NIM) where MECTHI is the Implementing Partner. This is a child project being implemented under a global parent programme entitled “Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development.” The project seeks to address multiple threats to biodiversity and sustainable community development in the Lower Zambezi which include poaching and associated wildlife trade, retaliatory killing of wildlife, deforestation and associated land degradation due to unsustainable agriculture and firewood consumption, and uncontrolled veld fires. The Zimbabwe project is therefore a multifocal area project whose objective 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 communal lands of the Mid to Lower Zambezi Regions of Zimbabwe. The project has 4 components namely: Component 1. Strengthening capacity and governance frameworks for integrated wildlife and woodland management and wildlife/forest crime enforcement in Zimbabwe; Component 2. Strengthening Zimbabwe's PA estate and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies in areas of global BD significance; Component 3. Mainstreaming BD and ES management, and climate change mitigation, into the wider landscape; and Component 4. Knowledge Management, M&E and Gender Mainstreaming; There are four corresponding outcomes namely: Outcome 1. Increased national capacity for IWT control and integrated wildlife and woodland; 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; Outcome 3. Increased area under sustainable management and increased benefits for local communities from CBWM, SFM and SLM in established CWCs; and Outcome 4. Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and internationally.

The project is being implemented in Muzarabani, Mbire and Hurungwe Districts as well as Mana Pools National Park, and Chewore, Sapi, Hurungwe, Dande, Charara and Doma Safari Areas. The total allocated resources for this project is USD 12,025,964. In addition, in-kind co-financing is USD 45,411,000 from the Government of Zimbabwe, Private sector and NGO partners.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic on 11th March 2020 as the new coronavirus rapidly spread to all the world. The Zimbabwe government declared the COVID-19 crisis a “national disaster” on 27 March 2020 and began a nationwide lockdown on March 30. The lockdown was later eased but extended indefinitely on 16 May 2020. As of 15 March 2021, there were 36,504 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Zimbabwe, of which 1,504 were fatalities and 34,051 persons recovered. Covid-19 has spread in all the country's 10 provinces and cities across Zimbabwe. The country has implemented social restrictions including two national lockdowns (30 March 2020 and 5 January 2021) to reduce the spread of the virus. The COVID-19 pandemic has

affected the implementation of the project. Most of the project activities, especially those involving gathering groups of people, were postponed or cancelled altogether due to the country-wide lockdown and subsequent movement restrictions that followed. In addition, the project had to revise the annual work plan to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The project had to channel resources towards more patrols as they were reports of increased incursions by poachers in the protected area. Based on the assessment, some work can continue on-schedule, while some might be deferred and likely to delay and some may need readjustment to adapt to the new normal.

2. SCOPE OF WORK, RESPONSIBILITIES AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED WORK

C. MTR Purpose

The project has reached its mid-term according to the implementation period and therefore an independent MTR is due. The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of the project objectives and outcomes as specified in the Project Document, and assess early signs of project success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made in order to set the project on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will also review the project's strategy and its risks to sustainability.

Further to this as the project is being implemented during COVID-19, the MTR will assess how the context has changed as a result of covid and how the project has been impacted and how the strategy can incorporate the COVID-19 risks going forward. The MTR will also look at any project interventions that have contributed directly or indirectly to government's effort of COVID-19 recovery both at the national level and project sites.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

D. MTR Approach & Methodology

The MTR report must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.

The MTR team will review all relevant sources of information including documents prepared during the preparation phase (i.e. PIF, UNDP Initiation Plan, UNDP Social and Environmental Screening Procedure/SESP), the Project Document, project reports including annual PIRs, project budget revisions, national strategic and legal documents, and any other materials that the team considers useful for this evidence based review. The MTR team will review the baseline GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools submitted to the GEF at CEO endorsement, and the midterm GEF focal area Core Indicators/Tracking Tools that must be completed before the MTR field mission begins.

The MTR team is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the Project Team, government counterparts (the GEF Operational Focal Point), the UNDP Country Office, the Nature, Climate and Energy (NCE) Regional Technical Advisor, direct beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders.

Engagement of stakeholders is vital to a successful MTR. Stakeholder involvement should include interviews with stakeholders who have project responsibilities, including but not limited to the project Implementing Partner (MECTHI) and Responsible Partners Forestry Commission (FC); CAMPFIRE Association; Environmental Management Agency (EMA); and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA) and the CSO partners; the participating Rural District Councils; the senior beneficiary Ministry of Local Government, the Project Board and Technical Working Group, and Private Sector; project stakeholders, academia, and CBOs, other development partners etc. Additionally, the MTR team may require conducting field missions to the project area in Mid to Lower Zambezi Valley, if it is determined safe to do so.

In response to Covid 19, Zimbabwe closed its borders (air and land) to all human traffic except for returning nationals, with the result that tourism activities in the country almost completely stopped. Although the restrictions were eased in March 2021. The Zimbabwe government continues to monitor the situation and may reimpose the restriction if cases begin to rise again. If it is not possible to travel to or within the country for the MTR mission then the MTR team might need to develop a methodology that takes this into account the conduct of the MTR remotely, including the use of remote interview methods and extended desk reviews, data analysis, surveys and evaluation questionnaires. International consultants can work remotely with national evaluator support in the field if it is safe for them to operate and travel. This should be detailed in the MTR Inception Report and agreed with the Commissioning Unit

If all or part of the MTR is to be carried out virtually then consideration should be taken for stakeholder availability, ability or willingness to be interviewed remotely. In addition, their accessibility to the internet/computer may be an issue as many government and national counterparts may be working from home. No stakeholders, consultants or UNDP staff should be put in harm's way and safety is the key priority.

These limitations must be reflected in the final MTR report.

A short validation mission may be considered if it is confirmed to be safe for staff, consultants, stakeholders and if such a mission is possible within the MTR schedule. Equally, qualified and independent national consultants will be hired to undertake the interviews in-country as long as it is safe to do so, and applying UNDP's Duty of Care guidelines.

The specific design and methodology for the MTR should emerge from consultations between the MTR team and the above-mentioned parties regarding what is appropriate and feasible for meeting the MTR purpose and objectives and answering the evaluation questions, given limitations of budget, time and data. Considering the COVID-19 situation, the MTR team should consider flexibility in using technologies and tools to effectively engage stakeholder virtually. The MTR team must use gender-responsive methodologies and tools and ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as other cross-cutting issues and SDGs are incorporated into the MTR report.

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, field visits and data to be used in the MTR must be clearly outlined in the Inception Report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the MTR team.

The final MTR report must describe the full MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

E. Detailed Scope of the MTR

The MTR team will assess the following four categories of project progress. :

1. Project Strategy

Project Design:

- Review the problem addressed by the project and the underlying assumptions. Review the effect of any incorrect assumptions or changes to the context to achieving the project results as outlined in the Project Document.
- Review the relevance of the project strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected/intended results. Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated into the project design?
- Review how the project addresses country priorities. Review country ownership. Was the project concept in line with the national sector development priorities and plans of the country (or of participating countries in the case of multi-country projects)?
- Review decision-making processes: were perspectives of those who would be affected by project decisions, those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the process, taken into account during project design processes?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were raised in the project design. See Annex 9 of Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for further guidelines.
- Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?

Results Framework/Logframe:

- Undertake a critical analysis of the project's logframe indicators and targets, assess how "SMART" the midterm and end-of-project targets are (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound), and suggest specific amendments/revisions to the targets and indicators as necessary.
- Are the project's objectives and outcomes or components clear, practical, and feasible within its time frame?
- Examine if progress so far has led to or could in the future catalyse beneficial development effects (i.e. income generation, gender equality and women's and youth empowerment, improved governance, inclusive growth, etc...) that should be included in the project results framework and monitored on an annual basis.
- Ensure broader development and gender aspects of the project are being monitored effectively. Develop and recommend SMART 'development' indicators, including sex-disaggregated indicators and indicators that capture development benefits.
- Examine if the Log frame elements needed to be adjusted in light of the COVID-19 situation

2. Progress Towards Results

- Review the logframe indicators against progress made towards the end-of-project targets; populate the Progress Towards Results Matrix, as described in the Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects; colour code progress in a "traffic light system" based on the level of progress achieved; assign a rating on progress for the project objective and each outcome; make recommendations from the areas marked as "not on target to be achieved" (red).
- Compare and analyse the GEF Tracking Tool/Core Indicators at the Baseline with the one completed right before the Midterm Review.
- Identify remaining barriers to achieving the project objective in the remainder of the project.
- By reviewing the aspects of the project that have already been successful, identify ways in which the project can further expand these benefits.
- Examine how COVID-19 has affected progress towards results

3. Project Implementation and Adaptive Management

Management Arrangements

- Review overall effectiveness of project management as outlined in the Project Document. Have changes been made and are they effective? Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of execution of the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner(s) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the quality of support provided by the GEF Partner Agency (UNDP) and recommend areas for improvement.
- Do the Executing Agency/Implementing Partner and/or UNDP and other partners have the capacity to deliver benefits to or involve women? If yes, how?
- What is the gender balance of project staff? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in project staff?
- What is the gender balance of the Project Board and the Technical Committee? What steps have been taken to ensure gender balance in the Project Board and the Technical Committee?

Work Planning

- Review any delays in project start-up and implementation, identify the causes and examine if they have been resolved.
- Have there been any project planning issues and implementation delays caused by Covid 19
- Are work-planning processes results-based? If not, suggest ways to re-orientate work planning to focus on results?
- Examine the use of the project's results framework/ logframe as a management tool and review any changes made to it since project start.

Finance and co-finance

- Consider the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost-effectiveness of interventions.
- Review the changes to fund allocations as a result of budget revisions and assess the appropriateness and relevance of such revisions. Review the extent to which such revisions have been influenced by Covid 19.
- Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
- Informed by the co-financing monitoring table to be filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team, provide commentary on co-financing: is co-financing being used strategically to help the objectives of the project? Is the Project Team meeting with all co-financing partners regularly in order to align financing priorities and annual work plans?
- Include the separate GEF Co-Financing template (filled out by the Commissioning Unit and project team) which categorizes co-financing amounts by source as 'investment mobilized' or 'recurrent expenditures'. (This template will be annexed as a separate file)
- Examine the extent to which co-finance materialisation had been, or may be affected by Covid 19?

Project-level monitoring and evaluation systems

- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve key partners? Are they aligned or mainstreamed with national systems? Do they use existing information? Are they efficient? Are they cost-effective? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the project monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation? Are these resources being allocated effectively?
- Review the extent to which relevant gender issues were incorporated in monitoring systems. See Annex 9 of Guidance For Conducting Midterm Reviews of UNDP-Supported, GEF-Financed Projects for further guidelines.
- Review the extent to which project M&E has been affected by Covid 19 and the measure in place to effectively monitor and evaluate the project.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Project management: Has the project developed and leveraged the necessary and appropriate partnerships with direct and tangential stakeholders?
- Participation and country-driven processes: Do local and national government stakeholders support the objectives of the project? Do they continue to have an active role in project decision-making that supports efficient and effective project implementation?
- Participation and public awareness: To what extent has stakeholder involvement and public awareness contributed to the progress towards achievement of project objectives?
- How does the project engage women and girls? Is the project likely to have the same positive and/or negative effects on women and men, girls and boys? Identify, if possible, legal, cultural, or religious constraints on women's participation in the project. What can the project do to enhance its gender benefits?
- How has the stakeholder engagement plan been affected by Covid 19? Review plans in place to sustain stakeholder engagement.

Social and Environmental Standards (Safeguards)

- Validate the risks identified in the project's most current SESP, and those risks' ratings; are any revisions needed?
- Summarize and assess the revisions made since CEO Endorsement/Approval (if any) to:
 - o The project's overall safeguards risk categorization.
 - o The identified types of risks (in the SESP).
 - o The individual risk ratings (in the SESP).
- Describe and assess progress made in the implementation of the project's social and environmental management measures as outlined in the SESP submitted at CEO Endorsement/Approval (and prepared during implementation, if any), including any revisions to those measures. Such management measures might include Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) or other management plans, though can also include aspects of a project's design; refer to Question 6 in the SESP template for a summary of the identified management measures. A given project should be assessed against the version of UNDP's safeguards policy that was in effect at the time of the project's approval.

Reporting

- Assess how adaptive management changes have been reported by the project management and shared with the Project board.
- Assess how well the Project Team and partners undertake and fulfil GEF reporting requirements (i.e. how have they addressed poorly-rated PIRs, if applicable?)
- Assess how lessons derived from the adaptive management process have been documented, shared with key partners and internalized by partners.

Communications & Knowledge Management

- Review internal project communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Are there feedback mechanisms when communication is received? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of project outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of project results?
- Review external project communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the project progress and intended impact to the public (is there a web presence, for example? Or did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns?); Review how Covid 19 has effected project communication and knowledge management; and the mechanisms in place to sustain the effectiveness of the strategy.
- For reporting purposes, write one half-page paragraph that summarizes the project's progress towards results in terms of contribution to sustainable development benefits, as well as global environmental benefits.
- List knowledge activities/products developed (based on knowledge management approach approved at CEO Endorsement/Approval).

4. Sustainability

- Validate whether the risks identified in the Project Document, Annual Project Review/PIRs and the ATLAS Risk Register are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability:

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial and economic resources not being available once the GEF assistance ends (consider potential resources can be from multiple sources, such as the public and private sectors, income generating activities, and other funding that will be adequate financial resources for sustaining project's outcomes)?

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:

- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outcomes? What is the risk that the level of stakeholder ownership (including ownership by governments and other key stakeholders) will be insufficient to allow for the project outcomes/benefits to be sustained? Do the various key stakeholders see that it is in their interest that the project benefits continue to flow? Is there sufficient public / stakeholder awareness in support of the long-term objectives of the project? Are lessons learned being documented by the Project Team on a continual basis and shared/ transferred to appropriate parties who could learn from the project and potentially replicate and/or scale it in the future?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:

- Do the legal frameworks, policies, governance structures and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project benefits? While assessing this parameter, also consider if the required systems/ mechanisms for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer are in place.

Environmental risks to sustainability:

- Are there any environmental risks that may jeopardize sustenance of project outcomes?
- How has Covid 19 posed risks that may jeopardise project implementation and sustenance of the project?

Conclusions & Recommendations

The MTR consultant/team will include a section in the MTR report for evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings.

Additionally, the MTR consultant/team is expected to make recommendations to the Project Team. Recommendations should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary. The MTR consultant/team should make no more than 15 recommendations total.

Ratings

The MTR team will include its ratings of the project's results and brief descriptions of the associated achievements in a MTR Ratings & Achievement Summary Table in the Executive Summary of the MTR report. See the TOR Annexes for the Rating Table and ratings scales.

3. Expected Outputs and deliverables

The MTR team shall prepare and submit:

- MTR Inception Report: MTR team clarifies objectives and methods of the Midterm Review no later than 2 weeks before the MTR mission. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit and project management. Completion date: 15 May 2021.
- Presentation: MTR team presents initial findings to project management and the Commissioning Unit at the end of the MTR mission. Completion date: 20 June 2021.
- Draft MTR Report: MTR team submits the draft full report with annexes within 3 weeks of the MTR mission. Completion date: 30 June 2021.
- Final Report*: MTR team submits the revised report with annexed and completed Audit Trail detailing how all received comments have (and have not) been addressed in the final MTR report. To be sent to the Commissioning Unit within 1 week of receiving UNDP comments on draft. Completion date: 30 July 2021.

*The final MTR report must be in English. If applicable, the Commissioning Unit may choose to arrange for a translation of the report into a language more widely shared by national stakeholders.

4. Institutional arrangements/reporting lines

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit. The Commissioning Unit for this project's MTR is the UNDP Zimbabwe Country Office.

The UNDP Zimbabwe CO will contract the consultants and ensure the timely provision of per diems and travel arrangements within the country for the MTR team. The Project Team will be responsible for liaising with the MTR team to provide all relevant documents, set up stakeholder interviews, and arrange field visits.

5. Experience and qualifications

I. Academic Qualifications:

A Master's degree in Environment, Natural Resources Management, Biodiversity studies, Wildlife Management or other closely related field.

II. Years of experience:

- Master with more 10 years of professional experience Environment, Natural Resources Management, Biodiversity studies, Wildlife Management or other closely related field.

III. Language:

- Fluency in written and spoken English.
- Knowledge of local language would be an asset.

IV. Competencies:

- Relevant experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies;
- Experience applying SMART indicators and reconstructing or validating baseline scenarios;
- Competence in adaptive management, as applied to Illegal Wildlife Trade/Biodiversity;
- Experience in evaluating projects;
- Experience working in Southern Africa;
- Experience in relevant technical areas for at least 10 years;

- Demonstrated understanding of issues related to gender and Illegal Wildlife Trade/Biodiversity; experience in gender sensitive evaluation and analysis.
- Experience with implementing evaluations remotely will be considered an asset.
- Excellent communication skills;
- Demonstrable analytical skills;
- Project evaluation/review experiences within United Nations system will be considered an asset.

6. Payment Modality

Payment to the individual contractor will be made based on the actual number of days worked, deliverables accepted and upon certification of satisfactory completion by the manager.

5.2 Annex 2: MTR evaluative matrix

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Project Strategy: To what extent is the project strategy relevant to country priorities, country ownership, and the best route towards expected results?			
Is the project aligned with other donor and Government programmes and projects? Is the project country driven?	Degree of coherence between the project and national priorities, policies and strategies	Project Document Gender Strategy Inception Report	Reviews of progress reports, Financial Sustainability Score Card Interviews with project staff and stakeholders
Does the project adequately take into account the national realities, both in terms of institutional and policy frameworks in its design and implementation?	Adequacy of project design and implementation to national realities and existing capacities		
Were the project's expected accomplishments and indicators of achievements properly designed, timebound and achievable?	Degree to which the project supports objectives of Government and indicators SMART		
Were relevant gender issues (e.g. the impact of the project on gender equality in the programme country, involvement of women's groups, engaging women in project activities) raised in the Project Document?	Extent to which gender is adequately incorporated into project design Development of Gender Mainstreaming Strategy Appointment of a designated focal point for gender for gender		Reviews of progress reports, Financial Sustainability Score Card Interviews with project staff and stakeholders
Progress Towards Results: To what extent have the expected outcomes and objectives of the project been achieved thus far?			
How well has the project performed against its expected objectives and outcomes, and its indicators and targets?	Extent to which milestones and targets are achieved at mid-term, as laid out in the log frame and monitoring plan	Project quarterly progress reports and PIRs Minutes of Project Steering Committee Meetings Tracking tools Project reports Capacity Development score card	Reviews of progress reports, Tracking Tools, Interviews with project staff and stakeholders Review of legislative developments within project period
Which have been the key factors leading to project achievements?	Achievement of milestones and targets as laid out in the log frame and monitoring plan		
To what extent can observed results be attributed to the project or not? In this respect have there been notable changes in the enabling environment for the project?	Extent of change to the enabling environment, particularly changes affecting operations of the national PA Agency		
Do elements of the Log frame need to be adjusted in light of the COVID-19 situation	Suitability of Log Frame in light of impacts caused by COVID-19		
Has the project failed in any respect? What changes could have been made (if any) to the design or implementation of the project in order to improve the achievement of the expected results?	Evidence of adaptive management and/or early application of lessons learned		
How has the project contributed to raising capacity of stakeholders to address aims of the project or of Government?	Extent of support from local stakeholders		Review of Capacity Development score card

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
What are the views of stakeholders on the implementation and activities of the project? Are there activities missing from the implementation?	Extent to which stakeholders are actively participating in the implementation and monitoring of the project		
Do the project-related activities give the participants adequate access to the benefits and implications of the project?			
Project Implementation and Adaptive Management: Has the project been implemented efficiently, cost-effectively, and been able to adapt to any changing conditions thus far? To what extent are project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, reporting, and project communications supporting the project's implementation? To what extent has progress been made in the implementation of social and environmental management measures? Have there been changes to the overall project risk rating and/or the identified types of risks as outlined at the CEO Endorsement stage?			
<p>Implementation efficiency (including monitoring):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the project implemented as planned, including the proportion of activities in work plans implemented? What were the major factors influencing progress towards the achievement or non-achievement of project objectives? Have monitoring trips been conducted to project sites as per the M&E plan? Has monitoring data been collected as planned, analyzed and used to inform project planning? Has project implementation been responsive to issues arising (e.g. from monitoring or from interactions with stakeholders)? What learning processes have been put in place and who has benefitted (e.g. training, exchanges with related projects, overseas study visits) and how has this influenced project outcomes? Were progress reports produced accurately and timely, and did they respond to reporting requirements including adaptive management changes? Did the project experience any capacity gaps (e.g. staffing gaps)? [Difficulties hiring contractors?] Has internal and external communication been effective and efficient? How efficiently have resources and back-up been provided by donors, including quality assurance by UNDP? 	<p>Extent to which project activities were conducted on time</p> <p>Extent to which project delivery matched the expectation of the ProDoc and the expectations of partners</p> <p>Level of satisfaction expressed by partners in the responsiveness (adaptive management) of the project</p> <p>Level of satisfaction expressed by MEECC and PCU in regard to UNDP backstopping</p>	<p>Project work plans and reports</p> <p>Local partners</p> <p>Tracking tools</p>	<p>Document review, interviews with project staff and stakeholders</p>
<p>Financial efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the accounting and financial systems in place adequate for project management and producing accurate and timely financial information? 	<p>Extent to which funds have been converted into outcomes as per the expectations of the ProDoc</p> <p>Level of transparency in the use of funds</p>	<p>Project financial records</p> <p>Project audit reports</p> <p>Project work plans and reports</p>	<p>Document review and discussions with stakeholders</p> <p>Interview with financial officers for the project</p>

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have funds been available and transferred efficiently (from donor to project to contractors) to address the project purpose, outputs and planned activities? Are funds being used correctly? Are financial resources being utilized efficiently (converted into outcomes)? Could financial resources be used more efficiently? Have any issues been raised in audit reports and if so, how efficiently were they addressed? Was project implementation as cost effective as originally proposed (planned vs. actual) Has the leveraging of funds (co-financing) proceeded as planned? 	<p>Level of satisfaction of partners and beneficiaries in the use of funds Timely delivery of funds, mitigation of bottlenecks Coordination and synergies of project funds and co-financing</p>		
<p>Efficiency of partnership arrangements for the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were partnerships/linkages between institutions/organizations/private sector realized as planned? Which partnerships/linkages were facilitated? Which ones can be considered sustainable? What was the level of efficiency of cooperation and collaboration arrangements? 	<p>Extent to which project partners committed time and resources to the project Extent of communication and collaboration between partners Extent of commitment of partners to take over project activities</p>	<p>Project work plans and reports Reports of local partners</p>	<p>Document review, interviews with project staff and stakeholders</p>
<p>Is the project responsive to threats and opportunities emerging during the course of the project, with a focus on COVID-19?</p>	<p>Level of adaptive management related to emerging trends</p>	<p>Project work plans and reports</p>	<p>Document review, interviews with project staff and stakeholders</p>
<p>How well were risks, assumptions and impact drivers managed? What was the quality of risk mitigation strategies developed? Were these sufficient? Are there clear strategies for risk mitigation related to long-term sustainability of the project?</p>	<p>Extent to which project has responded to identified and emerging risks Level of attention paid to up-dating risks log</p>	<p>Risks log</p>	<p>Document review, interviews with project staff and stakeholders</p>
<p>Is a communications strategy in place? How well is it implemented and how successful has it been in reaching intended audiences?</p>	<p>Extent to which project information has been disseminated Level of awareness of beneficiaries and the general public</p>	<p>Communications documents Press articles</p>	<p>Review of communications documents Interviews with stakeholders</p>
<p>Sustainability: To what extent are there financial, institutional, socio-economic, and/or environmental risks to sustaining long-term project results?</p>			
<p>Is the social, legal and political environment conducive to sustainability?</p>	<p>Extent of supportive policies and strategies</p>	<p>Policy and legislative (review) documents</p>	<p>Document review, interviews with project staff and stakeholders</p>
<p>Are there early signs of activities being taken up by project partners, and plans being developed to sustain them?</p>	<p>Extent to which partners are considering / likely to engage in post-project actions to take forward positive outcomes resulting from the project</p>	<p>Steering Committee minutes Local partners and beneficiaries</p>	

Evaluative Questions	Indicators	Sources	Methodology
Have partners and stakeholders successfully enhanced their capacities and do they have the required resources to make use of these capacities?	Extent to which partners and stakeholders are applying new ideas outside of the immediate project context		
Is there adequate ownership of the project by the end-users, beneficiaries?	Level of commitment displayed / expressed by beneficiaries		

5.3 Annex 3: Ratings Scales

Ratings for Progress Towards Results: (one rating for each outcome and for the objective)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve or exceed all its end-of- project targets, without major shortcomings. The progress towards the objective/outcome can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets, with only minor shortcomings.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve most of its end-of-project targets but with significant shortcomings.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome is expected to achieve its end-of-project targets with major shortcomings.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	The objective/outcome is expected not to achieve most of its end-of- project targets.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	The objective/outcome has failed to achieve its midterm targets, and is not expected to achieve any of its end-of-project targets.
Ratings for Project Implementation & Adaptive Management: (one overall rating)		
6	Highly Satisfactory (HS)	Implementation of all seven components – management arrangements, work planning, finance and co-finance, project-level monitoring and evaluation systems, stakeholder engagement, reporting, and communications – is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management. The project can be presented as “good practice”.
5	Satisfactory (S)	Implementation of most of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management except for only few that are subject to remedial action.
4	Moderately Satisfactory (MS)	Implementation of some of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management, with some components requiring remedial action.
3	Moderately Unsatisfactory (MU)	Implementation of some of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive, with most components requiring remedial action.
2	Unsatisfactory (U)	Implementation of most of the seven components is not leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
1	Highly Unsatisfactory (HU)	Implementation of none of the seven components is leading to efficient and effective project implementation and adaptive management.
Ratings for Sustainability: (one overall rating)		
4	Likely (L)	Negligible risks to sustainability, with key outcomes on track to be achieved by the project’s closure and expected to continue into the foreseeable future
3	Moderately Likely (ML)	Moderate risks, but expectations that at least some outcomes will be sustained due to the progress towards results on outcomes at the Midterm Review
2	Moderately Unlikely (MU)	Significant risk that key outcomes will not carry on after project closure, although some outputs and activities should carry on
1	Unlikely (U)	Severe risks that project outcomes as well as key outputs will not be sustained

5.4 Annex 4: MTR mission itinerary

Date	District	Time	Activity	Interviewee/s	Location
Saturday 25 September	Hurungwe	10:00	Travel to Hurungwe		
		14:00	Focus Group Discussion - Environmental Subcommittee Members	ESC members	Chinditiwa Primary School
		16:00	Interview - Ward Councilor	Tavengwa Muringanisi	Chinditiwa Primary School
Sunday 26 September		08:00	Interview - Traditional leader	Chief Chundu	Mayamba Area
		10:00	Focus Group Discussion – Small Grants programme	Small Grants Participants	Nyamakate Secondary School
		14:00	Site visit - CWC		Pfundundu
Monday 27 September		08:00	Interview - RDC CAMPFIRE Officer / TC member	Tamburai Gomwe	Magunje Growth Point
		09:00	Interview - Hurungwe RDC CEO / Project Board	Luke Kalavina	Magunje Growth Point
		10:00	Interview - Forestry Commission	Best Muchenje	Magunje Growth Point
		12:00	Interview - EMA Official	Pride Rugara	Karoi Town
		13:00	Interview - District Coordinator	Andrew Tizora	Karoi Town
Tuesday 28 September		15:00	Site visit: (i) Morongora Safari/Kariba; (ii) Visit to communication base station		Marongora Parks Area
	Muzarabani	07:00	Travel to Muzarabani		
		11:00	Interview District Coordinator	John Chihobo	Centenary
		12:00	Interview - Muzarabani RDC CEO / Project Board member	Ennie Gwachiwa	Centenary
		14:00	Interview - RDC CAMPFIRE Officer / TC member	Elmon Kaombe	Centenary
		15:00	Interview - EMA Official / TC member	Tariro Mubaira	Centenary
		16:00	Interview - Forestry Commission	Dickens Mupfigo	Centenary
Wednesda y 29 September	08:00	Interview - Traditional leader	Chief Chiweshe	Upper Muzarabani	
	09:00	Focus Group Discussion - Environmental Subcommittee Members	Runga	Upper Muzarabani – Ward 21	
	11:00	Interview - Ward Councillor	Munaki	Upper Muzarabani – Ward 21	
	13:00	Site visit - Safari area		Mavhuradonha Wilderness	
Thursday 30 September	09:00	Focus Group Discussion – Small grants programme	Small grants programme participants	Lower Muzarabani, Museredza Ward 27	
	14:00	Site visit – CWCs		Mavhuradonha Wilderness	
Friday 1 October	Mbire	06:00	Travel to Mbire		
		08:00	Interview - RDC CAMPFIRE Officer / TC member	Tarcious Mahuni	Mushumbi Pools
		09:00	Interview - EMA Official	Tendai Makombe	Mushumbi Pools

Date	District	Time	Activity	Interviewee/s	Location
		10:00	Interview - Forestry Commission / TC member	Francis Lunga	Mushumbi Pools
		11:00	Interview - District Coordinator	Richard Maruta	Mushumbi Pools
		12:00	Interview - Mbire RDC CEO / Project Board member	Cladius Nyahuma	Mashumbi Pools
		14:00	Travel to Kanyemba		
Saturday 2 October		08:00	Site Visit - Doma community		Kanyemba
		10:00	Focus Group Discussion - Environmental Subcommittee	Environmental Subcommittee Members	Kanyemba
		12:00	Site Visit - CWC area		Mbire North
		14:00	Site Visit - Safari area and wildlife borehole site		Mbire North
		16:00	Travel to Masoka		
Sunday 3 October		09:00	Focus Group Discussion – Small grants Programme	Small grants programme participants	Masoka
		11:00	Interview -Ward Councilor	Chaukura	Masoka
		12:00	Interview - Traditional leader	Headmen Kanyurira	Masoka
		14:00	Site Visit - CWC		Masoka
Monday 4 October		All day	Travel back to Harare		

5.5 Annex 5: List of persons interviewed

Note: Names highlighted in yellow were interviewed remotely

Organization	Name	Position / role in project	Gender
Bindura University of Science Education	Lizzie Mujuru	Technical Committee member	f
Biotechnology Trust of Zimbabwe (BTZ)	Elias Mhlanga	Small Grants Recipient	m
CAMPFIRE Association	Kelvin Mfishani	GEF 6 Coordinator	m
Chinhoyi University of Technology	Taurai Bere	Technical Committee member	m
Chitsere/Beat the Drum Conservancy - Mbire	Cyril Meredith	Operator	m
Consultants to project	Naome Chimbetete	Consultant	f
	Ian Games	Consultant	m
	Moreangels Mbizah	Consultant	f
Environmental Management Agency (EMA)	Selina Mercy Chitapi	Small Grants Recipient	f
	Pride Rugare	District Environmental Officer (Hurungwe)	m
	Tariro Mubaira	District Environmental Officer (Muzarabani)	m
	Tendai Norman Makombe	District Environmental Officer (Mbire)	m
Forestry Commission	Alice Tafirei	GEF 6 Coordinator	f
	Best Muchenje	District Forest Extension Officer (Hurungwe)	m
	Dickens Mupfigo	District Forest Extension Officer (Muzarabani)	m
	Francis Lunga	District Forest Extension Officer (Mbire)	m
Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry (MECTHI)	Edward Samuriwo	Director Environment and Natural Resources, PSC Co-chiar	m
	Tanyaradzwa Mundoga	GEF OFF	m
Mc Callum Safaris	Myles McCallum	Safari operator	m
Nzou Safaris	George Seremwe	Safari operator	m
Pfundundu Conservancy - Hurungwe	Sandram	Manager	m
	Paradzayi	Chief Operations Officer	m
	Neya	Community Liaison Officer	f
Project Management Unit	Chipangura Chirara	Project Manager	m
	Munashe Matare	Monitoring & Evaluation and Knowledge Management Officer	m
	Jalet Paul	Financial Accounting Officer	f
	Yvonne Chingarande	Project Assistant	f
RDC Hurungwe	Luke Kalavina	Chief Executive Officer	m
	Tamburai Gomwe	CAMPFIRE Coordinator	m
	Stanley Nhodo	Assistant District Coordinator	m
	Murisa	Ward 7 Councillor	m
	Tavengwa Muvanganiswa	Ward 8 Councilor	m
RDC Mbire	Claudio Nyahuma	Chief Executive Officer	m
	Tarcisus Mahuni	District CAMPFIRE Coordinator	m
	Ishmael Chaukura	Ward 11 Councilor	m
	Enoch Chapota	Traditional Chief	m
RDC Muzarabani	Ennie Gwachiwa	Chief Executive Officer	f
	Elmon Kaombe	District CAMPFIRE Officer	m
Southern Alliance For Indigenous Resources (SAFIRE)	Simba Mandota	Small Grants Recipient	m

Organization	Name	Position / role in project	Gender
UNDP	Anne Madzara	Head of Poverty, Environment and Climate Change Unit, PSC Co-chair	f
	Madelena Monoja	Resident Representative (OIC)	f
	Mandy Cadman	RTA	f
	Mark Chirenje	Finance Specialist	m
	Mavambo Zingambe	Micro-Capital Grants / GEF Small Grants Programme	m
	Melody Saineti	Procurement Analyst	m
	Regina Huse	Project Finance Analyst	f
	Tina Sibanda	UNDP Programme Associate	
Zim-Apiculture Trust (ZAT)	Selina Mercy Chitapi	Small Grants Recipient	f
Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA)	Edson Gandiwa	PSC member	m
	Felix Chimeramombe	Technical Committee Member	m
	Cheryl Mabika	GEF 6 Coordinator	f
	Givemore Mukuya	Marongora Senior Area Manager	m
Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association	Nqobizit Ndlovu	National Legal Policy Advisor	m
FGD: EMA - Hurungwe	Tichaona Maruru Chikiyi	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Sekai Madekubveni	Ward 8 ESC Member	f
	Loveness Berewu	Ward 8 ESC Member	f
	Oclain Kanyoka	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Hamadziripi Kapuya	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Spiwe Nyamakalo	Ward 8 ESC Member	f
	Florence Musaniwa	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Florence Chundu	Ward 8 ESC Member	f
	Last Musona	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Hebert Govera	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Aaron Murisa	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Poswet Mugambera	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
	Kawangu Teddy	Ward 8 ESC Member	m
Maduviko Ishamale	Ward 8 ESC Member	m	
FGD; Small Grants _ Hurungwe	Joyce Dzapasi	CTDO beneficiary	f
	Kufainyore Matele	SAFIRE beneficiary	m
	Chanax Chagura	SAFIRE beneficiary	m
	Sianungu G. Gidion	ZAT beneficiary	m
	Gilbert Ngoshi	ZAT beneficiary	m
	Douglas Kamanga	CTDO beneficiary	m
	Claudius Makina	CTDO beneficiary	m
	Collen Manganjira	Bio Tech and ZAT beneficiary	m
E. N Kachingamire	Bio Tech and ZAT beneficiary	m	
FGD: EMA - Muzarabani	Nickson Chituwu	ESC Member	m
	Forget Mangani	ESC Member	m
	Maxwell Dausi	ESC Member	m
	After Mashonga	ESC Member	m
	Fungai Chiudzu	ESC Member	m
FGD: Small Grants - Muzarabani	Elison Chimbiru	SAFIRE	m
	Phillip Chigumira	ZAT	m
	Starman Mazonde	ZAT	m
	Makington Mahachi	SAFIRE	m
	Richmore Mazonde	Resource Monitor	m
	Lancelot Manyika	SAFIRE	m
	Dzodzi Kanhukamwe	Resource Monitor	m
	Allen Chidopasi	ZAT	m
	Landy Kasinukuse	SAFIRE	f
	Janephe Mahachi	SAFIRE & ZAT	f
	Rashiwe Katurura	ZAT	f
	Chipo Nyamimbi	SAFIRE	f
	Shamiso Choumba	SAFIRE	f
Elvis Chipangura	Resource Monitor	m	

Organization	Name	Position / role in project	Gender
	Murangana Chimanga	Resource Monitor	m
	Rosemary Matipanganisa	SAFIRE	f
	Stella Kamunhenga	ZAT	f
	Trust Mavida	Resource Monitor	m
FGD: EMA and Small Grants	Chance Kambiri	Ward ESC Member	m
	Luke Rugwaja	LGDA	m
	Livison Ngandu	Game Scout	m
	Step Coffee	Ward ESC Member	m
	Annie Chibayanzara	ZAT, SAFIRE	f
	Mavis Mhako	Game Scout, LGDA	f
	Albert Zengeretsi	ZAT, SAFIRE	m
	Stanley Fakero	Environment Africa	m
	Shadmon Chirimera	ZAT, SAFIRE	m
	Anyway Dzomba	ZAT	m
	G. Shenjere	SAFIRE	m
J. Dzomba	Ward ESC Vice Chair	m	
TOTAL	111 (30 f/ 81 m)		

UNDP-GEF Midterm Review of the GEF funded Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystem Management and Climate Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe Project

Workshop to present Preliminary Findings
 Tuesday 26 October, 2021, 11.00 - 13.00. *Via zoom*
 List of Participants

Name	Organization	Position
Alice Tafirei	Forestry Commission	Project Coordinator
Anne Mazara	UNDP	Head of Poverty, Environment and Climate Change Unit, PSC Co-Chairperson
Blessing Muchemwa	UNDP	Country Office M&E Specialist
Camille Bann	International Consultant	
Charles Jonga	CAMPFIRE Association	Project Steering Committee Member
Chipangura Chirara	PMU	Project Manager
Edson Gandiwa	Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZPWMA)	Project Steering Committee Member
Edward Samuriwo	Director Environment and Natural Resources	PSC Co-Chairperson
Elmon Kaombe	Muzarabani RDC	Technical Committee Member
Francis Lunga	Forestry Commission	Technical Committee Member
Jalet Paul	PMU	Financial Accounting Officer
Jeremiah Mushosho	UNDP	Programme Analyst - PRECC
Kelvin Mfishani	CAMPFIRE Association	GEF 6 Coordinator
Krasposy Kujinga	Local Consultant	
Lizzie Mujuru	Bindura University of Science Education	Technical Committee Member
Madelana Monoja	UNDP	UNDP- Resident Representative (OIC)
Mandy Cadman	UNDP	Regional Technical Advisor
Mavambo Zingambe	UNDP Micro-Capital Grants / GEF Small Grants Programme	Small Grants Projects Officer
Munashe Matare	PMU	M&E Officer
Stanley Mudawarima	SAFARI Operators Association	Project Steering Committee Member
Tamburai Gomwe	Hurungwe RDC	Technical Committee Member
Tarcisuis Mahuni	Mbire RDC	Technical Committee Member
Tawanda Chinogwenya	EMA	Environmental Planning Officer
Tawanda Chipere	Afri Hype	Technical Committee Member
Tina Sibanda	UNDP	Programme Associate/PSC Member
Yvonne Chingarande	PMU	Project Assistant

Note: Participants shaded in blue were not individually interviewed

5.6 Annex 6: List of documents reviewed

- Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2020, 2021
- Project Document and Annexes
- Work-plans – 2019, 2020, 2021
- Inception Workshop Report, 2018
- **Annual Reports** – 2019, 2020
- **Quarterly Reports** (June – September 2018, October – December 2018, January – March 2019, April – June 2019, July - September 2019, October – September 2019, January – April 2020, May - April 2020, September – December 2020, January – March 2020, April - June 2020.
- **Monthly Reports** – January – December 2019, January – December 2020, January – June 2021
- Project Steering Committee Minutes of Meetings 1-5
- Project Technical Committee Minutes of Meetings 1-8
- BTORs (19 separate reports)
- Draft Gender Analysis and Gender Action Plan
- Goredema, L., Emmanuel Mwakiwa, E., Phiri, M., Mbizah, M, Tozooneyi, T., Lioli Maguma, L., Anderson Muchawona, A and Muchena, R., 2019. Baseline Survey for the UNDP/GEF Project “Strengthening Biodiversity and Ecosystems Management and Climate- Smart Landscapes in the Mid to Lower Zambezi Region of Zimbabwe: Component 2 & 3.
- Audit 2020
- GEF GWP Tracking Tool / Protected Area Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT)
- Capacity Development Scorecard
- Combined Delivery Reports

5.7 Annex 7: Signed UNEG Code of Conduct form

Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

Name of Consultant: Camille Bann

Name of Consultancy Organization: Independent Consultant

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at London, UK on 20 December 2021

Signature:



Evaluators/Consultants:

1. Must present information that is complete and fair in its assessment of strengths and weaknesses so that decisions or actions taken are well founded.
2. Must disclose the full set of evaluation findings along with information on their limitations and have this accessible to all affected by the evaluation with expressed legal rights to receive results.
3. Should protect the anonymity and confidentiality of individual informants. They should provide maximum notice, minimize demands on time, and respect people's right not to engage. Evaluators must respect people's right to provide information in confidence, and must ensure that sensitive information cannot be traced to its source. Evaluators are not expected to evaluate individuals, and must balance an evaluation of management functions with this general principle.
4. Sometimes uncover evidence of wrongdoing while conducting evaluations. Such cases must be reported discreetly to the appropriate investigative body. Evaluators should consult with other relevant oversight entities when there is any doubt about if and how issues should be reported.
5. Should be sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relations with all stakeholders. In line with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, evaluators must be sensitive to and address issues of discrimination and gender equality. They should avoid offending the dignity and self-respect of those persons with whom they come in contact in the course of the evaluation. Knowing that evaluation might negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its purpose and results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.
6. Are responsible for their performance and their product(s). They are responsible for the clear, accurate and fair written and/or oral presentation of study limitations, findings and recommendations.
7. Should reflect sound accounting procedures and be prudent in using the resources of the evaluation.

MTR Consultant Agreement Form

Agreement to abide by the Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System:

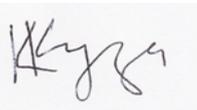
Name of Consultant: Dr Krasposy Kujinga

Name of Consultancy Organization: Self

I confirm that I have received and understood and will abide by the United Nations Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

Signed at Harare, Zimbabwe on 20 December 2021

Signature:



5.8 [Annex 8: Signed MTR final report clearance form](#)
[to be added by UNDP]

5.9 [Annex 9: Annexed in a separate file: Audit trail from received comments on draft MTR report](#)

5.10 [Annex 10: Annexed in a separate file: Relevant midterm tracking tools](#)

5.11 Annex 11: Progress Towards Results Matrix (Achievement of outcomes against End-of-project Targets)

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self-reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Objective: 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							
Indicator 1: Number of people benefitting in the project area from CBWM, SFM, and SLM (f/m)	2016: 3,438 (~f 50%/ m 50%)	The project has exceeded the mid-term target of 8,000 people benefitting in the project area. The cumulative number of beneficiaries is 10,044 (F 4858/ M 5186). Since project inception, an additional 6,616 people (3467 Male/3139 Female) have benefited through project activities that include trainings on SFM, CBWM and HWC	>=8,000 (F 4,000 / M 4,000)	>=14,000 (F 7,000 / M 7,000)			As reported in PIR 2021 the project has exceeded the mid-term target of 8,000 people benefitting in the project area. The cumulative number of beneficiaries is 10,044 (F 4858/ M 5186). Since project inception, an additional 6,616 people (3467 Male/3139 Female) have benefited

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self-reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 2: Extent to which legislation and institutional frameworks are in place for conservation, sustainable use, and access and benefit sharing of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems: - Updated Wildlife Policy; - Updated Parks and Wildlife Act; - Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act - Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy	Do not exist	<p>The project is on-track to have drafts Wildlife Policy and Parks and Wildlife Act.</p> <p>The Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality conducted a review of the Parks and Wildlife Act. The Ministry is now consulting stakeholders on proposed amendments. The principles for the Act have been produced by a team of lawyers and other relevant experts and will be submitted to the Attorney General's Office for input into the Draft Bill.</p> <p>A consultant was engaged to review the Wildlife Policy. This will include a policy position on Human-Wildlife Conflict Management. The work will commence on the 5th of August and is expected to be concluded by 31 October 2021.</p> <p>Review of the Communal Land Forest Produce Act has been shelved as there are suggestions to merge it with Forest Act which is currently being amended by Parliament.</p> <p>Progress under this indicator continues to be severely hampered by the restrictions on travel and meetings due to COVID-19 mitigation measures.</p>	Drafted (or updated) and discussed with stakeholders	Officially approved and implemented			<p>No legislation has been drafted yet as consultations continue at a slow pace. The mid-term target of having drafts by June 2021 has not been met.</p> <p>However the Wildlife Policy and Parks and Wildlife Act are seen as a priority for the Government and is expected to be approved by the end of the project</p> <p>Project to drop work on following pieces of legislation: Updated Communal Land Forest Produce Act - Official National Anti-Poaching Strategy</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 3: Populations of flagship species in the project area: - Lion: - Elephant: - Buffalo:	Lions (2016): 267; Elephants (2014): 11,656 (LC level: 9,398, UC level: 13,915) Buffalo (2014): 6,330 (LC level: 2,552, UC level: 10,107)	No new data are available because the aerial survey planned for 2020 was aborted. A contractor, Land Resources International of South Africa, was engaged to carry out aerial surveys of elephants of large herbivores and other mammals in the Zambezi Valley. The survey commenced on the 17th of October 2020 and the survey aircraft unfortunately crashed on the 23rd of October 2020 in the Chewore area. One team member died on the spot, two survived with serious injuries and another one, an ecologist from ZPWMA, is still missing as of 30 June 2021. The survey resumed on the 18th of June 2021. It is expected to be completed by September 2021. Preparations for the lion survey are at an advanced stage. The project has finalized the TORs for the survey. The survey results are expected before the end of the year	Lions: >=267; Elephants: >=11,656 (LC level: 9,398, UC level: 13,915); Buffalo: >=6,330 (LC level: 2,552, UC level: 10,107)	Lions: >=267; Elephants: >=11,656 (LC level: 9,398, UC level: 13,915); Buffalo: >=6,330 (LC level: 2,552, UC level: 10,107)	Not applicable	Not rated	Results of the 2021 survey of Elephants and Buffalo show: <i>Elephants:</i> >=8,319 (LC level: 6,323, UC level: 10,315); <i>Buffalo:</i> >= 5,928 (LC level: 2,676, UC level: 9,180) These are considered to reflect the baseline rather than mid-term target The Lion survey is yet to be undertaken.

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 4: Number of individuals of flagship species poached annually in the project area: - Lion: - Elephant: - Buffalo:	Lions (2016): 1; Elephants (2016): 38; Buffalo (2016): 6	The midterm target of having reduced numbers of key species poached has been achieved for both the lion and elephants. The project is on course to achieve the midterm target of a decline in key species poached in the project area. 2021: Lion: 1; Elephant: 13; Buffalo: 5 2018: Lion: 2 ; Elephant: 8; Buffalo: 2 2019: Lion: 0 ; Elephant: 16; Buffalo: 11 2020 : Lion: 0 ; Elephant: 3; Buffalo: 2 The project has provided funds to improve radio communication in the Zambezi Valley. Equipment has been bought and the Mid Zambezi Valley radio system is being upgraded from analogue to digital. Full migration to the digital radio system is expected to be completed by September 2021. Ranger rations and mobility support is evidently helping to increase patrol/anti-poaching efforts	Lions (2016): 1; Elephants (2016): 15; Buffalo (2016): 4	Lions (2016): 0; Elephants (2016): 6; Buffalo (2016): 2		MS	Mid -erm targets reached for Lions and Elephants, but not Buffalo The economic situation may make it challenging for the EOP targets to be met. An increase in all species poached from 2020 levels was evident in 2021.
Outcome 1: Increased national capacity for IWT control and integrated wildlife and woodland							
Indicator 5: Capacity of National Enforcement Agencies to control IWT (UNDP Capacity scorecard, %): ZPWMA	49%	There is no data available yet to report on progress.	60%	70%		S	Based on Capacity Score card assessment undertaken in September 2021. The total average score at mid-term is 60.6% The key area for improvement is then capacity to mobilize information and knowledge which scored 50% overall

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 6: Results of IWT law enforcement at national level:</p> <p>- annual number seizures;</p> <p>- annual number of arrests;</p> <p>- annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT</p>	<p>299</p> <p>550</p> <p>331</p>	<p>According to the 2021 available data the project is off track from the midterm target indicator. 17 seizures (2 at port of entry/exit; inland data not available for areas outside project) 485 arrests 56 successful prosecutions</p> <p>This data may not be reflective of the situation on the ground. The Project had little influence on law enforcement activities outside the project area and could not get reliable national data and law enforcement. There have been challenges in collecting national level data particularly during this report period. ZIMPARKS collects data on total number of items seized and do not present the number of seizures. There is need for harmonization. However, there is generally good law enforcement in most protected areas, conservancies and TFCAs. The project has started supporting ZPWMA to collect national data and to try and harmonise tools going forward.</p> <p>A Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Prevention Unit was established at Chinhoyi to combat poaching and illegal wildlife traffickers in the Zambezi Valley. Equipment that includes a vehicle, an LCD screen, computers, and furniture have already been procured for the Unit.</p> <p>The main reason for this status is data inconsistencies. ZIMPARKS does not seem to collect data needed to track this indicator. Action (i) Therefore going forward the project will support the capacity of ZIMPARKS in developing harmonised methods and establishing a database for IWT with data sets on annual number of arrests, seizures and prosecutions. this will require an additional activity and budget. (ii) In addition to supporting ZIMPARKS the project will need to refine the performance indicators of the project going forward. The discussion will be during the MTR exercise and concluded by December 2021</p>	<p>Law enforcement parameters increased by at least 15%</p>	<p>Law enforcement parameters increased by at least 30%</p>	<p>Not possible to measure</p>	<p>Not rated</p>	<p>It is not possible to measure these indicators with any accuracy and indicator is recommended for revision.</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
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							
Indicator 7: Total area under improved CBWM in the project area (established CWC with implemented Wildlife Adaptive Management plans), ha	0	<p>The midterm target is achieved. The cumulative number of hectares under CBWM is now 269,276.20 ha.</p> <p>Establishing base camps, widescale awareness in the targeted areas and establishing and strengthening community institutions/Trusts in CWCs are some of the initiatives that will improve and consolidate active CBWM in the area mentioned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The project has started constructing 3 Scout Base Camps in Mavhuradonha. These help improve the effectiveness of the patrols and reduce HWC incidences. •The project drilled 8 boreholes to provide water for wildlife in Karinyanga, Mbire North; and Mukwichi in Hurungwe District to improve access to water for game and households. •In preparation of the 2021 fire season ,the Environmental Management Agency held 32 awareness meetings on veld fire prevention and management, and these were attended by at least 2000 participants. In addition, EMA conducted 85 mobile awareness campaigns on veld fire prevention in Hurungwe, Mbire and Muzarabani Districts. • The CAMPFIRE Association carried out consultations on the establishment of Community Trusts in Mbire, Muzarabani and Hurungwe, and a total of 845 community members were consulted (645 male and 200 female). Community Trusts operate in conformity with existing legislation in their interaction with government departments as well as the private sector. • A consultant has been engaged to assist with the development of district integrated plans which will contribute to improved management of natural resources 	180,000 ha	334,500 ha		S	Based on the PIR, 2021, the mid-term target of 180,000 ha has been achieved, with the cumulative number of hectares under CBWM at 269,276.20 ha. Activities contributing to improved CBWM include – the establishing of base camps, awareness raising and establishing and strengthening community institutions/Trusts in CWCs. These activities are on-going

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 8: METT score for targeted PAs:		The project is in the process of hiring a consultant to carry out the METT score assessment. -				MS	Based on the update GWP-METT scores - 4 sites (Charara SA, Hurungwe SA, Sapa SA and Dande SA) have met the mid-term targets. The 3 sites not reaching their mid-term targets were at most a couple of points away. Of note, Hurungwe SA has attained its EOP target by mid-term.
- Mana Pools NP:	57		67	77	65		
-Charara SA:	43		53	63	58		
-Hurungwe SA:	40		50	60	60		
- Sapi SA:	41		51	61	52		
- Chewore SA:	48		58	68	56		
- Dande SA:	40		50	60	58		
-Doma SA:	39		49	59	48		

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self-reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 9: Results of IWT law enforcement in the project area: -annual intensity of patrolling (inspector /days) -annual number seizures; -annual number of arrests; -annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT</p>	<p>- 17,601; - 85; - 42; - 18</p>	<p>The project is on track to achieve the midterm target.</p> <p>annual intensity of patrolling (inspector/days): 22,124 patrolling days (+26%) annual number seizures: 16 (- 81%) annual number of arrests: 185 (+340%) annual number of successful prosecutions on poaching and IWT : 32 (+78%)</p> <p>The project provided patrol rations to ZimParks and community rangers, so as to increase extended patrols in the protected area. The project provided an additional 7 vehicles for patrols by ZimParks rangers and community rangers employed by local authorities and safari operators.</p> <p>As observed in the previous period, low tourist activity trend has continued into the reporting period. This exposes the protected area to the risk of poaching and other illegal activities. The project covered this gap through increased patrol effort to mitigate against this exposure. The project procured rations for rangers and assisted with fuel for patrols and deployment of the rangers to increase intensity of patrols in low tourist activity areas.</p>	<p>Law enforcement parameters increased by at least 30%</p>	<p>Law enforcement parameters increased by at least 60%</p>		<p>MS</p>	<p>According to PIR (2021) the project is on track to achieve the midterm target of 30% increase on baseline levels. Of note, performance across all indicators improved by 30% against the baseline in 2020, but the intensity of patrols dropped slightly below target in 2021, presumably due to COVID-19 restrictions on movement. Seizures in 2021 were significantly below the baseline.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: Increased area under sustainable management and increased benefits for local communities from CBWM, SFM and SLM in established CWCs</p>							

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
<p>Indicator 10: Average annual revenue from CBWM, SFM and SLM per target CWC, \$US:</p> <p>-Pfundundu: 0</p> <p>-Mukwichi: 0</p> <p>-Mbire North: 450,000</p> <p>-Karinyanga: 56,427</p> <p>-Kanyurira /Masoka: 77,083</p> <p>- Mavhuradonha: 19,000</p>		<p>The mid-term target for annual revenue is off-track.</p> <p>Percentage revenue increase 2021 Pfundundu: N/A Mukwichi: N/A Mbire North: -99% Karinyanga: -95% Kanyurira/Masoka: 0 Mavhuradonha: 0</p> <p>Monetary contribution Pfundundu: 0 Mukwichi: \$12,000 Mbire North: \$6,600 Karinyanga: \$2,700 Kanyurira/Masoka: 0 Mavhuradonha: 0</p> <p>The project was on track to achieve the mid-term target by 2020 reporting period. However, the situation changed mainly due COVID-19 which affected operations by safari operators Mukwichi is the only CWC on track to achieve the baseline target in terms of revenue paid to the communities. The remaining 5 CWCs are off track as of 2021 reporting period. It is important to note that during the previous reporting period 5 out of 6 of the CWCs were on track for meeting the midterm target. The safari operators operating in Mavhuradonha CWC, are yet to pay any dividends to the community since the inception of the project The Zimbabwean economy remains an extremely challenging business environment over and above challenges associated with COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>CWC revenue increase by at least 10% for Mbire North, Kanyurira/Masoka, and Karinyanga</p> <p>At least 10,000 for Pfundundu and Mukwichi each</p>	<p>CWC revenue increase by at least 20% for Mbire North, Kanyurira/Masoka, and Karinyanga</p> <p>At least 20,000 for Pfundundu and Mukwichi each</p>		MU	<p>Operating environment needs to be taken into consideration</p> <p>Not on track due to COVID / economic situation</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 11: Total area of restored woodlands, ha:	0	<p>The project is on course to surpass the midterm target of 2,000ha by 7,551ha. The project has commenced working on woodland restoration on 9,551ha. This will help in responding to land use changes that are currently underway in the project area. A total of 2,000ha were cleared for a national sugarcane project being spearheaded by government in Mbire district. Contacts have already been made with some farmers and they will be engaged to support re-afforestation of the area.</p> <p>A total 264,460 trees were planted across the project area during the tree planting season covering an estimated area of 148.83 ha (Second Quarter Progress Report April – June 2021 Page 20). Most of the trees were planted in Hurungwe and Muzarabani Districts which are tobacco growing areas. The project nurseries (at Mavhuradonha and Chitindiva) produced 17,131 seedlings.</p> <p>To reduce forest crime in the project area, a total of 61 patrols were conducted. A total of 10,352 kgs of charcoal and 28,067 m³ of firewood were confiscated during the patrols.</p> <p>A total of 17 fire awareness campaigns were held.</p>	2,000	6,000		MS	<p>According to PIR 2021, the project has started to restore / reforestation 9,551 ha of woodland and is therefore on course to surpass the mid-term target of 2,000ha. However, so far only 148.83 have been planted- so mid-term target missed</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 12: Total volume of CO2 mitigated in the project area (tCO2eq)	0	<p>The project has surpassed the mid-term term target. As of June 2021, the estimated emission reduction (using FAO Ex-Ante Carbon Balance Tool) as a result of the project was 561,648 tCO2eq. The project has achieved the midterm target.</p> <p>The project has been working towards reducing in area burnt by veld fires in the project area. In Hurungwe, there was a decrease in area burnt of 23,349ha in 2020 compared to 2019. In Mbire there was a decrease in area burnt of 16,846ha 2020 compared to 2019. In Muzarabani district, there was an increase of 8,301 ha of area burnt in 2020 compared to 2019. Forests are important as they capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere transforming it into biomass. There was a deliberate effort to increase patrolling in the project area in response to increases in forest crimes such as charcoal production and illegal selling of firewood mainly due to the effect of COVID-19.</p> <p>70 Environmental Sub-Committees (ESCs) were established in three Project districts. Three Environmental committees were established, one for each district. These committees play a pivotal role in the management of natural resources in the project area.</p> <p>The project supported communities to use energy efficient stoves (329 units constructed), solar for lighting (30 households have solar kits) and piloted a biogas project to use for cooking. These activities assist in reducing deforestation in the project area.</p> <p>Three nurseries have been fenced in the project area and boreholes have drilled at two of the nursery sites. Deforestation continues to be a major problem in Hurungwe and Muzarabani district due to tobacco being grown in the 2 districts.</p> <p>There has been clearing of agricultural land in the project area during the reporting period. A total of 2000ha were cleared for a sugarcane project in Mbire district. This has affected the anticipated carbon dioxide sequestration efforts by the project</p>	300,000	834,819		S	<p>The Mid-term target has been surpassed</p> <p>Offset partially by land use changes in the project area</p>

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 13: Number of national and district development plans that address biodiversity and ecosystem management and climate risk management	1	There are no plans developed as yet, however the project hired a consultant to develop a landscape-wide management plan including the plans for Hurungwe and Muzarabani districts, Mana Pools National Park, and the surrounding safari area. This will bring the number of plans developed by project end to 3 Mbire already has a district management plan, and this is being reviewed by the ILMP consultant.	2	3		MS	Project is on track to achieve the end of project target
Outcome 4: Lessons learned by the project through participatory M&E and gender mainstreaming are used nationally and internationally							
Indicator 14: Number of the lessons on IWT control and CBNRM learned by the project that used in other national and international projects	0	The project is on track to share two lessons by midterm. The project participated in GWP Webinars and shared lessons with local stakeholders. The Zimbabwe Project shared the experience of the life of a female ranger working in the project area. This was shared with the rest of the partners on World Ranger Day (https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2020/07/30/risking-lives-to-protect-wildlife-and-wildlands-stories-from-rangers-in-the-field). The project team participated a virtual Global Wildlife Program (GWP) Annual Conference. CAMPFIRE Association made a presentation on the CAMPFIRE program, impacts of COVID and how the GWP-Zimbabwe project works with the CAMPFIRE Association to support local communities.	>=2	>=5		S	The mid-term target of 2 has been achieved: (i) Life of a female ranger shared on World ranger Day; (ii) How GWP-Zimbabwe project works with CAMPFIRE Association to support local communities

Indicator	Baseline Level	Level in 2 nd PIR 2021 (self- reported) [Summarized here]	Midterm Target	End-of-project Target	Midterm Level & Assessment	Achievement Rating HS-HU	Justification for Rating
Indicator 15: % of women among the project participants directly benefiting from the project activities	0	<p>The project is on track to have a 30% of women benefiting from the project. The project has increased the participation of women to 47%.</p> <p>The project now has 8 NGOs working towards increasing livelihoods options for the communities all off which promote women participation.</p> <p>The project supported 320 beneficiaries (185 males and 135 females) in Mbire with small grain inputs (5kg cowpeas, 5kg sorghum and 5kg groundnuts seeds) to practice conservation agriculture during the 2020 – 2021 farming season. (2020 First Quarter Report Jan-Mar pg 16.)</p> <p>There was an increase in participation by women in project activities. A total of 622 community members (450 females and 172 males) participated in pegging and digging water trenches totaling 8km in Hurungwe District. The 3 proposed piped water schemes will be used to establish community gardens and multiple water points along the pipeline for household use by communities. The water from the scheme is from solar-powered boreholes.(Second Quarter Progress Report April – June 2021 Page 17).</p> <p>The project finalized updating the gender mainstreaming strategy and action plan. The suggested activities and indicators will be used to increase monitoring of gender mainstreaming during project implementation.</p>	>=30%	>=40%		HS	The project has increased the participation of women to 47%, surpassing the mid-term target of 30% and the end of project target of 40%.

5.12 Annex 12: Stakeholders involved in project by Outcome / Output

Output	Key partners for delivery
Component 1: Strengthening capacity and governance frameworks for integrated wildlife and woodland management and wildlife/forest crime enforcement in Zimbabwe	
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	ZPWMA (RP) , MEWC, EMA, FC, MMD, Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, EU Commission, ZPCC, AWF, ZELA, and ICCF
Output 1.2: Two Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Units are established and functional to ensure strong inter- agency collaboration to fight IWT and forest crimes (i) Multi-Agency Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit (ii) Multi-Agency Rapid Response Unit	ZPWMA (RP) , ZRP Minerals and Border Control Unit, ZIMRA, EMA, Tashinga Initiative , AWF, ZS, Aggressive Specialist Tracking Training, Interpol
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	ZRP Minerals and Border Control Unit, ZIMRA, EMA, Judiciary, Prosecutors, National Biotechnology Authority (NBA), UNODC, Interpol, ICCF, AWF, ZS, ZELA, Aggressive Specialist Tracking Training (ASTT)
Output 1.4: Nationwide system for monitoring wildlife and forest crimes is developed and implemented SMART – Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool Approach	CAMPFIRE Association, Tashinga Initiative , AWF, ZS, WWF, Panthera
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	MEWC, ZPCC, Peace Park Foundation, AWF, ZS, Tashinga Initiative , EU Commission, SADC, Governments of Zambia and Mozambique
Output 1.6: project area awareness campaign targeting IT, deforestation, and climate adaptation / mitigation issues is developed and implemented Includes UNDP Micro-Capital Grants supported by National GEF SGP, providing grants to CSOs for campaign activities	National GEF SGP mechanism, RDCs, target Conservancies, Rifa Conservation Education Camp, Kariba REDD+ Project, Environment Africa, Green Zambezi Alliance, Peza Trust, AWF, WWF, Oxfam
Component 2: Strengthening Zimbabwe's PA estate and CAMPFIRE Wildlife Conservancies in areas of global BD Significance (site level)	
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 wild fire management Includes training.	ZPWMA (RP) , EMA, Forestry Commission, CAMPFIRE, AWF, ZS, Tashinga Initiative , Ian Games (Independent Mapping and Planning Expert), UAV&Drone Solution, Local Communities, Safari Operators, ICCF
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	CAMPFIRE Association (RP) , Local Communities, RDCs, Safari Operators, ZPWMA, EMA, Forestry Commission, IUCN, ZELA, AWF, ZS, WWF, Tashinga Initiative , Kariba REDD+ Project, International Anti-Poaching Foundation
Component 3: Mainstreaming BD and ES management, and climate change mitigation, into the wider landscape [site level]	

Output	Key partners for delivery
Output 3.1: Integrated Landscape Management Plans for Hurungwe (northern part), Mbire, and Muzarabani Districts are developed, officially approved, and implemented	Forestry Commission (RP) , RDCs, ZPWMA, EMA, CAMPFIRE, Agritex, CWCs, Safari Operators, SAFIRE, IUCN, ZELA, Kariba REDD+ Project, AWF, ZS, Ian Games (Independent Mapping and Planning Expert)
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 Includes training and Small grants	UNDP (RP) with support of national GEF SGP mechanism, Kariba REDD+ Project, CWCs, CAMPFIRE, SAFIRE, Zimbabwe CBNRM Forum, Safari Operators and other private and corporate donors, AWF, ZS, WWF, Tashinga Initiative , Oxfam, Savings and Lending Group
Output 3.3: Model woodland restoration projects are developed and implemented in the target CWCs	Forestry Commission (RP) , Tree Eco, communities in the CWC wards, AGRITEX, Kariba REDD+ Project, Zambezi Society, CWCs, WWF, Zimbabwe Tobacco Association
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	GEF SGP mechanism, Tree Eco, Kariba REDD+ Project, BioHub Trust, Zambezi Society, Forestry Commission, Zimbabwe CBNRM Forum, WWF, Sustainable Afforestation Association, CWCs, Zimbabwe Tobacco Association
Output 3.5. Corporate conservation and social responsibility programs are developed and introduced to agricultural companies in the project area to mainstream biodiversity conservation in the production sector	Forestry Commission (RP) , Zimbabwe Tobacco Association, Sustainable Afforestation Association, WWF, Zambezi Society, Tree Eco, Kariba REDD+ Project, ZELA
Component 4. Knowledge Management, M&E and Gender Mainstreaming	
Output 4.1: Participatory project monitoring, evaluation and learning framework is developed and implemented	Undertaken by PMU with support of all project partners and great majority of project stakeholders.
Output 4.2. Lessons learned from the project are shared with national and international conservation programmes, including GWP	ZPWMA, FC, EMA, CAMPFIRE, and other project partners and great majority of project stakeholders.
Output 4.3: Gender strategy developed and used to guide project implementation, monitoring and reporting	Oxfam, Ministry of Rural Development, target RDCs and CWCs, ZELA, Gender Links, Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention and Support Organization (ZAPSO), CAFOD, Women's Action Group, Action Aid

ANNEX : MTR REPORT CLEARANCE FORM

Project Title: Zambezi Valley Biodiversity Project

PIMS No.: 5693

Midterm Review Report Reviewed and Cleared by:

UNDP Country Office

Name: Madelena Monoja

Signature: _____

Date: 31st March 2022

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Name: _____

23-Jun-2022

Signature: _____

Date: _____