

On behalf of:



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Implemented by:

giz Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

KFW

Engaging Local Communities to End Poaching



Context

Rural communities that live alongside wildlife are key to any conservation approach. Having the advantage of proximity to potential poaching sites and knowledge of wildlife puts local villages in the position to be the “first line of defense”. However, their role can be ambiguous, too, as it also provides necessary skills and opportunity to engage in wildlife crime. This is why criminal syndicate members regard deprived rural villages adjacent protected areas as ideal recruiting grounds for new poachers.

Conservationists and policy makers are well aware that in cases, where wildlife populations have economic and social value for local people and local communities can participate in underlying decision making processes, the motivation to support efforts to conserve wildlife is high. Nevertheless, conservation often comes with restricted access to natural resources. This implies that local communities are deprived from the use of land for agriculture or herding, access to bush-meat and income-generation from tourism. Yet they carry the burden of the costs that comes along with living close to wildlife. In some areas, conflicts with wild animals pose a daily risk, ranging from hungry elephants raiding the fields of small-scale farmers up to personal injury or loss of life.

Where local people do not play a role in wildlife management and where it generates no benefits, strong incentives for illegal use continue to exist. Even the most focused enforcement efforts will

struggle to control wildlife crime in the absence of stable and sufficient economic alternatives. There is an increasing acknowledgement that conservation efforts, which respects local people’s needs and concerns and actively involve them in the management of wildlife and of protected areas, create better conservation outcomes.

Our Approach

Germany tackles poaching and illegal wildlife trade in ivory and rhino horn, putting people at the centre of its work. German development cooperation aims at improving the establishment and management of conservation areas at the one hand but at the same time seeks to improve the living conditions of the local population and strengthen their role in natural resource and wildlife conservation. Promoting the participation of local management communities creating alternative income opportunities in adjacent areas as well as jobs in protected area management and tourism development and helping to address conflicts between humans and wildlife are all activities that help towards the prevention of poaching. The improvement of working conditions and social security of rangers are also important areas of support. Working with communities in this way is – among others – one of the key components in Germany’s support for ending poaching in Africa and securing livelihoods and habitats.

Examples of Practice

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) promotes a wide range of initiatives in elephant and rhino range states across Africa. In Tanzania “Participatory



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1. Local communities are engaged in wildlife conservation in Namibia.
2. African elephants drink water from a well of a local community in Namibia.

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Forest Management Plans have been implemented with the help of German Development Cooperation. The management plans have been developed in a participatory process including local villages and district councils and explicitly promote the sustainable use of natural resources amongst local communities. While enhancing the avenues for the sustainable use of natural resources, communities are also able to address unregulated use such as illegal charcoal production or agricultural encroachment. In total, 830 households with around 4,000 villagers now benefit from improved access to natural resources. In the framework of the Serengeti Ecosystem Development and Conservation Project (SEDCP), communities are enabled to play a key role in wildlife conservation by supporting **Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)** institutions such as Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). The aim of such community-managed areas is to contribute to the livelihoods of participating communities, build community empowerment and represent a buffer zone to ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. By protecting wildlife and sustainably managing the environment on their WMA, communities are able to attract tourism activities and generate revenues while ensuring conservation of natural resources and protection of wildlife in the long-term.

Promoting the sustainable use of wildlife can also include **regulated hunting**. German development cooperation has supported the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** in developing a road map together with local stakeholders to establish stricter hunting laws and at the same time to set the basis for a sustainable local use of bush-meat resources.

Furthermore, addressing the risk of **human-wildlife conflicts** is crucial to promoting the peaceful coexistence of humans and wildlife. "The Partnership against Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade in Africa and Asia" (Factsheet 2) is promoting innovative and affordable measures for small-scale farmers to deter elephants with chili fences or the construction of grain silos that are safe against elephants in Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, German Development Cooperation has helped to set up a "Crop Damage Relief Fund" in Tanzania that has already compensated more than 60 villagers and small-scale farmers.

In order to make local communities benefit from protecting natural resources by **creating new job opportunities**, the Partnership is providing trainings for "village game scouts" in Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia.

In Namibia, Germany has been supporting **CBNRM** for more than two decades. This approach is a leading example of rural community empowerment through the **devolution of rights and responsibilities over wildlife and forest resources**, engaging almost 10% of Namibia's population as conservation stewards. The communities benefit from a variety of tangible and intangible benefits generated by their conservancies and community forests. In 2015 conservancies generated a total cash income and in kind benefits of EUR 7 million (N\$ 102 m.). Intangible benefits include the development of ownership, responsibility and a sense of pride. Moreover, new skills are learned through formal and informal training, cultural identity and social cohesion is strengthened and indigenous knowledge systems are recognised.

International Dialogue: Beyond Enforcement

Since mid-2014, IUCN, TRAFFIC – the wildlife trade monitoring network, and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) have collaborated with a range of partners on initiatives to highlight the importance of the role of indigenous people and local communities in conserving wildlife and combating illegal wildlife trade.

These efforts have included the international meetings on "Beyond Enforcement. Communities, governance, incentives and sustainable use in combating wildlife crime". In regional conferences, practitioners and experts from African range states and Asian source countries of illicit wildlife products reflected on ways to effectively support community-based conservation to stop poaching. The efforts were supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) through the Partnership initiative together with other donors (IUCN: Beyond enforcement).

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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As at October 2018
 Printed by druckreif, Frankfurt/Main
 Design now [nau], Frankfurt/Main

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

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