



A White Rhino grazes with its calf at the Nairobi National Park. Photo: Liz Muthoni/KWS

KENYA

COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME IN KENYA

Wildlife conservation faces several challenges globally, and Kenya is no exception. This has further been exacerbated by the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic. Specific challenges to conservation include escalating poaching, inadequate financing for operations, increased human wildlife conflict, insufficient number of security personnel, encroachment on wildlife corridors and dispersal areas due to human population growth, and aging protected areas infrastructure. In September 2018, USAID awarded Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) a five-year grant to support the Combating Wildlife Crime in Kenya program. An organizational risk assessment of KWS found out that while KWS has the necessary operational procedures, there is an urgent need for support of legal, financial, human resource, performance management, and sustainability to strengthen the current operational network. The program was developed to respond to the risk assessment and challenges in combating wildlife crime in Kenya.

OUR WORK

Support was directed toward four key thematic areas:

- 1) Improve organizational capacity, policy implementation, and governance.
- 2) Undertake research, enhance ecological connectivity, and maintain ecosystem integrity.
- 3) Build partnerships and engage local communities to support wildlife protection and security;
and
- 4) Secure conservation financing through diversification of wildlife and tourism enterprises.

ACTIVITY AREAS

IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY, POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, AND GOVERNANCE

The program helps enhance KWS systems, operations, and internal controls and ensure they are functional and transparent. To improve governance and sector coordination, the program is implementing the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2020 on Wildlife Policy, reviewing the Wildlife Conservation

and Management Act 2013, reviewing implementation of National Wildlife Strategy 2030, and creating a framework for National and County engagement as part of intergovernmental relations.

UNDERTAKE RESEARCH, ENHANCE ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY AND MAINTAIN ECOSYSTEM INTEGRITY

A key objective of this result area is developing wildlife conservation and management plans, strategies and guidelines, the national wildlife climate change adaptation strategy, enhancing capacity of the Forensic Laboratory for Accreditation and enhancing prosecution in wildlife cases. Further, USAID supports enhancing systems for the diagnostic and forensic study of wildlife diseases by developing a list of Nationally Threatened Species (animals and plants) for Kenya. The program may also undertake an assessment of the economic value of key species impacted by illegal wildlife trade to support conservation, enforcement, and legal processes.

WILDLIFE SECURITY AND PROTECTION

KWS is improving the ability of rangers to collaborate with neighboring countries to mitigate human-wildlife conflict. The program also strengthens the relationship between KWS and communities to reduce poaching and human-wildlife conflict.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT

In response to the results of the organizational risk assessment, activities are focused on legal, governance and organizational structure, financial management and internal control systems, human resources, procurement, performance management, and sustainability.

CONSERVATION FINANCING

The program supports KWS in developing resource mobilization strategies and leveraging technology for revenue enhancement, marketing, and land and building valuations across Kenya's landscapes.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Major achievements under the program include Procured and installed an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for Wildlife Research Training Institute (VRTI). The system has improved reporting tools with real-time information for the institute. Student and customer access to information has also been improved. The program acquired a purchase and budget module in the Sun System and integrated it with the budget module to enhance accountability. The two modules will automate workflows and approvals.

The program further procured field evidence cryogenic storage equipment with accessories in four key wild meat hotspot areas. The equipment helps store samples for forensic analysis and exhibits, thus addressing a major challenge experienced by the enforcement teams: exhibit loss/deterioration due to bad weather or long travel distances from remote areas to the Nairobi headquarters for analysis. In some instances, suspects were acquitted due to lack of evidence, especially in cases where providing evidence to the court became impossible as the samples were rotten. Finally, the program procured two vehicles for project coordination both at the policy level and day to day coordination.

Budget: \$4.95 million

Duration: 2021 – 2027

Activity Locations: Key wildlife areas inside and outside the state-protected system

Implementing Partner:

Kenya Wildlife Service

Key Partners: County governments, law enforcement agencies (Police, Judiciary, Customs, Immigration), Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association

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