

## **5.2 Presentation and discussion of project proposals for funding in semesters 8-10 (Martin Brooks – AfRSG Chair)**

Each of the project proposals developed by range states and members of the SADC consortium were described in brief by the proponents (if present) or by the range state focal points or consortium representatives involved. Each presentation was followed by queries, comments and discussion from plenary.

Each proposal was given a serial number and all are listed in Annex D, including summary information on each. The project proposals themselves (including subsequent revisions) have been compiled into a separate document for information and circulation to range state focal points.

### **Project Proposals**

*Proposal 104 – Evaluation of monitoring, security and management of the Mombo IPZ rhino population (M Tjibae/M Masedi)*

*Proposal 107b – Creating awareness of rhino conservation in rural schools II (R du Toit)*

*Proposal 108 – Towards a long-term plan for a viable rhino population in Liwonde NP, Malawi: Establishment of a rhino stakeholders committee and an ecological monitoring plan (R Bhima)*

*Proposal 109 - RESG Administrator (S Pillinger/R Emslie)*

Discussion: There was support expressed for RESG's activities by country members present. Dr Brett confirmed the funding request and endorsement from the RESG Chair (L Mungwashu) for the proposal from private consultants, highlighting the importance of covering costs of organising meetings and administration, and funding participation at meetings. RESG meetings were scheduled and to piggyback on INTERPOL meetings where possible. Mr Enock asked for more information about the RESG, and requested a copy of the agreed Terms of Reference for the group so that these can be endorsed by member states formally at the SADC technical committee.

Mr du Toit queried the sustainability of RESG funding, including the possibility of ploughing back ivory funds into conservation. There was need to institutionalise the group so that it did not become dependent the private sector. Some indication of sustainability was needed. Dr Brooks proposed that the RESG Chair attend the next range states meeting, and make a presentation. He also requested that the Terms of Reference of the RESG be attached to the proceedings of the meeting (**Annex E**). Dr Kampamba expressed scepticism about use of consultants and access to information. Dr Brooks suggested the need for RESG members to address confidentiality at the next RESG meeting.

It was agreed that the RESG should be asked to formally report back to range states at future SADC range states meetings. An RESG presentation would also be given at the next AfRSG meeting, including comprehensive report. The RESG would also be asked to submit regular reports to SADC range states meetings.

*Proposal 112 – Improved training for rangers and rhino monitoring in the Selous GR, Tanzania (M Maige)*

*Proposal 113 – Purchase of a computer and training of Khama RS staff on rhino database management (M Tjibae)*

*Proposal 114 - National Rhino Database for Namibia (P du Preez).*

Discussion: Mr du Preez said that the project would address one of the strategic objectives of Namibia national rhino plan, and focus on the rhino populations of Etosha, Waterberg and Kunene. Additional data would be incorporated into a national database structure similar throughout Namibia. The database format would be developed from a workshop with consultant input, including external expertise from region. Namibia had unique requirements for its database, since much of the rhino monitoring was based on waterholes (e.g. Etosha NP). Thus it was first necessary to decide on a database for use (e.g. the regional SADC database WILDb), and then customise it for use in Namibia. A workshop would provide additional regionality in terms of possible subsequent use of the database developed elsewhere in the SADC region with similar requirements.

*Proposal 115 – Mobile rhino boma for the translocation of rhino in communal areas in north west Namibia (P du Preez)*

Discussion: Mr du Preez said that the Kunene region had the largest rhino population on communal land in the world, and there was commitment to biological management of the Kunene population. Most critically there was need for range expansion, and a need to take animals and boma-train them in order to relocate them to different areas within the Kunene range. Dr Knight suggested that the mobile boma system used by SANP may be of interest or application. Mr du Preez added that the proposal had regionality in terms of potential future use of the mobile boma in reintroducing rhinos to the Iona NP/transfrontier park with Angola. Mr du Toit said that it was important to address the whole question of establishment of rhinos in arid areas, and that development and use of a boma should be part of a process of reintroduction of rhinos to desert areas, including design and management of controlled release procedures, and establishment of 'best practice, including boma design and management.

*Proposal 116 – Law database programme: completion of development of database for the storage and retrieval of incident information, report writing and training (R Hamilton/R Emslie)*

*Proposal 117 – Law database programme: adding configuration routine for easy adaptation for use in other range states (R Hamilton/R Emslie)*

*Proposal 118 – Law enforcement/intelligence database: training (S Pillinger/R Emslie)*

Discussion: Dr Brett queried the potential regional extension of law enforcement data, and range states input (reserve level and national level) and also the possibility of bilateral information access between countries. Mr du Toit said that the database should be available for large private operators. Dr Knight asked for any examples of successful prosecution of prosecution from data exchange between countries. Mr Reilly said that there was a valid fear of leakage of information; Swaziland worked with the Endangered Species Protection Unit (ESPU) of the South African Police. Dr Knight suggested that RESG provide an outline plan for regional law enforcement at next meeting. Dr Emslie added that the ESPU had now been disbanded and dispersed.

*Proposal 118 – MircroTrack programme: microchip database development, implementation and training (R Emslie)*

Discussion: There were questions about the implementation and use of a regional transponder database, and how to institutionalise arrangements, possibly using TRAFFIC as central repository. Individual versions could be housed with central control agency in each SADC country. Dr Brett suggested that the only shared information needed was (a) country and (b) serial number of transponder. Retrieved transponders could be then referred to country databases. Updates would be needed on any regional movements of rhinos. With regional buy-in from all range states, TRAFFIC could be approached to be the clearing house for transponder numbers. It was agreed that the Programme Coordinator would approach TRAFFIC about their potential hosting of a regional transponder database.

*Proposal 119 – Funding of SADC delegate attendance at 2004 AfRSG meeting (M Brooks/R Emslie)*

Discussion: Dr Emslie said that the AfRSG was the continental coordinating body for rhino conservation, which held 6-day meetings every two years. It was an important forum for networking, and a learning experience for range state delegates. The 2004 meeting envisaged a focus on the SADC RRG, with the inclusion of Mozambique and Angola as well as other RRG countries. Funds were needed for attendance costs of representatives of the SADC range states and the SADC rhino consortium. Mr du Toit said capacity building and networking at was needed at a regional level, and the meeting would need to debate on key themes from SADC region (e.g. arid areas, schools awareness, database integration, staff development). Maybe this could be used as leverage towards motivating for a similar regional approach for East African rhino, which would promote collaborative regional efforts for the conservation of *D.b.michaeli* and *C.s.cottoni*.

*Proposal 120 – Black rhino exchange between Namibia, South Africa and Botswana (M Knight)*

Discussion: Dr Knight said that the proposed translocation would have strong regionality, and be the first phase in developing a viable population from founder populations. The project would be composed of two phases, the movement of 4 *D.b.bicornis* from Namibia to South Africa and the movement of 4-6 *D.b.minor* from South Africa to Botswana. There were queries about the possible use of Khama RS for receiving black rhinos due to its maximum carrying capacity of only 4 rhinos.

Mr du Toit said that the regional translocations were a very positive development. Mr du Preez said that MET would need to be informed that if SANP would not move the rhinos from South Africa to Botswana in 2003, since this was a prerequisite for approval from Namibia. Mr du Toit said that there were issues of phasing the reintroduction of black rhinos in Botswana. A small number could be held for small period at Khama RS. There would be reduced risk if small groups were released from different boma sites at Moremi, and there were concerns about drib-and-drab introductions. Mr Tjibae said that Botswana did not want to make any mistake. He recommend that the rhinos go to sanctuary first, where capacity and security was demonstrated. There were plans to increase Khama RS to 78 sq km. Dr Brett added that the SADC evaluation had confirmed that Khama RS was not large enough to hold a viable population of black rhinos even with the extension proposed. A more appropriate relocation site (e.g. Mombo) was required Mr du Toit suggested that the reintroduction could be broadened to include Zimbabwe, and give consideration to providing rhinos to Botswana. Dr Brooks said that there could be link in terms of approval by donor country (e.g. Zimbabwe) of the release area. Mr Tjibae said that Mombo would be good destination if Zimbabwe are going to contribute additional animals to make up a viable founder population

*Proposal 121 – Translocation of the initial black rhino population from South Africa to North Luangwa NP, Zambia (M Knight)*

Discussion: Dr Knight said that this project had origins in 1999 origins, when SANP were approached by the Frankfurt Zoological Society NLCP, looking at possibility of establishing a rhino sanctuary in North Luangwa. Apart from being the first phase in the reintroduction project for black rhinos in North Luangwa, the project would further the regional metapopulation of black rhinos managed by SANP, Zambia, Liwonde, Zimbabwe and Botswana.