

Consensus, followed by formal agreement on principles of rhino management is key to co-operation and development of partnerships between management authorities, custodians, and private owners, initially on a national basis. On a regional basis, co-operative management of subspecies, where countries may one day effectively share rhinos kept and exchanges under common management practices, may solve some of the problems outlined. This is one of the main objectives of the SADC rhino programme.

3.9 Priorities for Rhino Conservation (M. Brooks, AfRSG)

Dr. M. Brooks went through the AfRSG system for categorizing rhino projects, according to priority for donor funding. This system is outlined in the African Rhino Status Survey and Conservation Plan, published IUCN in 1999. This report was given to all participants and the system therefore does not have to be repeated in these proceedings.

The presentation of this priority ranking system led to some confusion at the meeting, since participants wondered how it might be applied within a regional programme that should involve even those member states that do not currently contain “key” or “important” rhino populations (as defined by AfRSG). Dr. Brooks and other members of the regional consortium clarified the debate by saying that range state representatives must be informed of the factors that give some populations a greater continental conservation priority than others, but it is not intended that these criteria should automatically apply to the SADC programme. Within this programme, attention must be given to regionally significant projects which may not currently include “key” or “important” populations but which have definite potential to do so, or which can be linked within a viable metapopulation plan (incorporating more than one population). Dr. A. Guillet endorsed this as a view that is shared by the Italian Government. He said that as far as his government is concerned, their aid should be not necessarily be used up equally in each country and nor should it be devoted only to those countries with the largest rhino populations. The funding should, first and foremost, be used to catalyse regional co-operation in rhino management.

3.10 Outline of Activities in Year 1 (R. du Toit, WWF-SARPO)

The remaining period of Year 1 is up until September 2000. Although the funding for the programme is significant, it will not go far if it is used to attempt major field projects in all the range states. If asked to state their primary requirements related to rhino conservation, most range states are likely to identify surveillance and management needs (for which the programme would not be a sustainable source of funding) and/or restocking and infrastructural needs (for which the programme simply does not have sufficient funding to achieve any regional impact). Therefore, it is the implementing consortium’s view that rather than trying to do a little bit here and a little bit there, the programme should focus on achieving a target that would be catalytic and strategic at the SADC level: the creation of a framework for the sharing of information, expertise and other resources within range states and between range states. Thus the emphasis of the programme must be on process (co-ordination, strategic planning and motivation of rhino conservation initiatives, taking advantage of the political impetus of SADC) rather than on fragmented products.

Activities within Year 1 of the programme should concentrate on developing or enhancing the institutional and co-ordination arrangements that are required within each country as well as at the regional level (i.e. Output #1 listed in the Technical Framework for the SADC Rhino Programme – see Section 6). Once such

arrangements are functional, they will generate a flow of project proposals, some of which will be sufficiently regional in nature to qualify for funding from the programme during Year 2. Baseline information on the status and distribution of rhino populations is required before national conservation strategies can be developed, and programme priorities can only be developed for a range state once a strategy has been approved.

Activities and responsibilities are suggested as follows.

1.) The Programme Co-ordinator should compile a systematic and confidential review of the existing or potential co-ordination arrangements in each range state, to answer questions such as:

Does the range state have formalized structures for co-ordination of rhino conservation at the national (or sub-national) level?

Is the range state co-ordinating its rhino conservation activities in any concerted way with any other range state(s)? Are there any existing bilateral arrangements between range states (e.g. South Africa and Malawi) of direct relevance to rhino conservation?

Is there a national rhino strategy in place, and if so how detailed and effective is it? Can the programme facilitate the development or updating of strategies by providing expert advice?

If there are no existing co-ordination arrangements, who is the focal person with whom the co-ordinator should liaise in order to facilitate appropriate arrangements?

What information gaps (including inadequate information on rhino numbers and distribution) or policy questions need to be attended to in order to develop a sensible national rhino strategy or to make an existing strategy more effective?

What priority projects, meeting the conditionalities of the SADC programme, can be identified through the national strategic planning process to put forward for programme funding in Year 2? (The Programme Co-ordinator should draw attention to issues which are identified as national priorities by more than one country). Baseline surveys should be planned for areas where the conservation status of surviving rhinos is unclear, and the programme should support such surveys in Year 2.

Another question might be: does the range state necessarily want to engage with the SADC programme in the development or review and updating of its national rhino strategy? It is of course the prerogative of each range state to decide if and how its national rhino conservation strategy should be developed, but one way or another a clear national strategy will have to be in place, and endorsed by AfRSG, in order that the country can receive project funding or technical assistance through the programme beyond what may be required for initial baseline surveys.

This review will require extensive visits to each range state, by the Co-ordinator in some cases, or by members of the implementing consortium or by consultants. The review should be completed by September 2000.

2.) For the comprehensive appraisal of the situation in some range states, or for the imparting of the full range of advice to range states that want to develop or to update their national strategies, the Programme Co-ordinator will call upon expertise from various NGO members of the implementing consortium. For instance, the appraisal of the situation in Selous Game Reserve requires a team effort by several professionals (the specific plans for which are being elaborated by AfRSG). A review of the legal and policy frameworks for rhino conservation in each range state must be undertaken, looking at issues such as management authority, ownership and custodianship of rhinos, reporting and control of rhino horns from legal and illegal sources, penalties for illegal activities, importation/exportation policies, etc. This review would also be the primary responsibility of the Project Co-ordinator and should

be completed by September 2000. WWF-SARPO would work with the Project Co-ordinator to outline the rhino conservation models (IPZs, conservancies, community projects, etc.) that have been tested within the region, and to specify the legal and policy issues that are pertinent to each model.

3.) In the light of information that is gathered during the country reviews, TRAFFIC, WWF and AfRSG might well develop a proposal for a regional project to achieve systematic, standardized reporting on horn seizures, to streamline arrangements for biochemical "fingerprinting" of horns of unknown origin, and to revive a project (that was started under CITES but has lost momentum) to develop standardized indicators of success in rhino conservation, measuring changes in levels of illegal hunting and the status of rhino populations in the range states. This will require an investment of manpower during Year 1 to establish the information needs, protocols and funding needs for the system to be put in place in Year 2.

4.) Although various attempts have been made within Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia to develop suitable collars for rhinos, no design has yet been perfected to ensure that the collar does not damage the rhino and remains on the animal for long enough to make radiotracking a cost-effective tool for routine monitoring of rhinos. A workshop should be held to pool ideas from about 5-10 regional experts and to plan a co-ordinated programme (for Year 2) for the testing of new collar materials and designs.

5.) On the basis the country reviews, any opportunities for improving and standardizing rhino population databases will be investigated and expertise will be mobilized within the programme to assist range states or the managers of sub-national populations in this regard. Zimbabwe has already requested assistance in the development of a national rhino database.

3.11 Country reports

3.11.1 Angola – An Overview of Wildlife Status (Nkosi Luta Kingengo)

Area: 1 246 700 sq km. Population: 10 920 000.

Natural Vegetation: Predominantly miombo woodland and other forms of woodlands and grassland savannas, with patches of lowland rainforest in the north, small forest patches on the western escarpment, montane forest in the highlands, and arid subdesert formations in the southwest. Due to this wide biogeographical spectrum, the country is richly endowed with a diversity of species of plants and wildlife, many of which remain to be studied, inventoried and evaluated in order to promote their sustainable use as a part of national development process.

Wildlife is recognised to be a complex natural resource that has positive as well as negative effects in relation to human needs. It has an important role in the nutrition of rural and urban populations, but also has other economic and cultural values.

The instability occurring in the country has encouraged poaching. From 1975 to 1988 hunting was not officially authorised, but from 1989 to date, hunting was legally instituted. In 1998, 140 hunting permits were issued by the Department of Wildlife and Protected Areas of the Institute of Forestry Development (IDF), providing US\$4 916 as income. According to the available data 3 302 animals of several species were shot.

Since 1975, no survey has been carried out to determine the status of the great mammals of Angola, in particular to the black rhino species. The last survey was done in 1971 at Iona National Park during which 30 rhinos were enumerated (Brian J. Huntley, 1973). According to Huntley other information related to the existence of the