

2.2 **Presentation: Existing regional institutions/bodies for rhino conservation, and options for the role and function of SADC Regional Rhino Bodies (Martin Brooks, AfRSG Chair)**

Introduction

The session Chair (Yemi Katerere) introduced this presentation, stressing that any development of institutional arrangements for rhino conservation at a regional level should not undermine any progress made at National Level. The SADC Rhino Consortium had debated options for regional structures, including the SADC regional rhino body or bodies with a life extending beyond the currently funded programme, and these would be presented as options for discussion. It was appropriate that there was support and synergy for all SADC range states in order to build on the success of RMG, and benefit from the SADC umbrella, as a political catalyst, and also for raising funding for rhino conservation in the region. The proposal is summarised using the slides presented below.

Existing structures for rhino conservation

1. *IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG)*

IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG)

"To promote the long-term conservation of Africa's rhinos and where necessary, their recovery to viable levels"

- **Membership**
 - ▶ Range State Reps
 - ▶ Rhino experts
- **Main Activities**
 - ▶ Continental objectives and strategy
 - ▶ Assist with national rhino plans
 - ▶ Determine rhino status and trends
 - ▶ Identify conservation priorities
 - ▶ Develop techniques
 - ▶ Provide information, advice and cooperation

2. *Rhino Management Group of Southern Africa*

Rhino Management Group of Southern Africa

"To provide coordination, research and management advice to assist the conservation agencies and private landowners in achieving the various national metapopulation goals for black rhino".

- **State conservation agencies:**
 - ▶ South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland & Zimbabwe
- **Private rhino owners**
- **Rhino experts**
- **Rhino and Elephant Security Group of Southern Africa**

Activities of the RMG

RMG - Main Activities:

- Ensure conservation objectives & programmes in place
- Develop and promote appropriate techniques
- Debate key / controversial issues
- Evaluate performance of populations

Options for SADC Regional Rhino Groups

Option : SADC Rhino Groups

- Bring existing **Rhino Management Group** (operational since 1989) under SADC
- Deals only with black rhino
- Primarily concerned with large metapopulation monitoring & management; management for high population growth, desirable stocking rates, carrying capacity constraints, resource use -hunting, sales

Option : SADC Rhino Groups

- Strategic need to create **Rhino Recovery Group** under SADC which can focus on issues such as surveys, re-establishment of rhinos, development of national rhino plans, creation of Sanctuaries/IPZ's
- Rhino Recovery Group could focus on both black and white rhino
- Proposed sharing of information and expertise between AfRSG, RMG and RRG via some shared members
- Set up initially under SADC rhino programme

Option : SADC Rhino Groups

- RMG and RRG therefore would focus on different issues and problems
- Both RMG and RRG would avoid duplication with African Rhino Specialist Group at the Continental level. Continental perspectives and strategy can be shared if Groups have some shared members with AfRSG (as is the case with existing RMG)

Option: SADC Rhino Groups

- Precedent for Splits
 - AsRSG → Due to different species, habitats, and conservation problems, and increase focus and be more cost effective, the AsRSG split into 2 Regional Groups {India&Nepal} & {SE Asia: Malaysia, Indonesia & Viet-Nam}
 - AERSG → Split into separate Rhino and Elephant Specialist Groups
 - Both examples similar - a few shared members, still have access to same experts.
 - Key advantage = Groups can focus on problems/activities most relevant to them

Proposed Framework for Rhino Conservation Institutions

