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# NAMIBIA BLACK RHINO MONITOR TRAINING PROJECT

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*Black rhino populations that have been established on either private land or communal conservancies under the Black Rhino Custodianship Programme (BRCP) in Namibia require constant monitoring and protection if they are to be successful. A critical gap in the BRCP has been the availability of trained, competent and dedicated field monitors to record the daily progress and to protect these sub-populations.*



The Ministry of the Environment (MET) and Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) have identified this gap and have agreed that the solution lies in selecting suitable candidates from the custodian communities and landowners, having SRT / MET train these monitors in the field, deploying the trained monitors with suitable equipment, and following up by MET and SRT in the communal conservancies and on private land.

The first phase involves selecting those suitable for deployment, identifying candidates with leadership potential and providing basic training. SRT, MET, the respective communal conservancy committees and private landowners will select participants for the first training course, which will be run by MET and SRT at Otjovasando in Etosha National Park, and managed by staff from both. The area has sufficient rhino for the animals to be easily located, and has a population of other 'dangerous' species, namely elephant and lion.

The course currently used and being refined by SRT will then serve as a follow-up after assessment of the candidate monitors' performance in the field. The training team will also be involved with translocations of rhino as part of the Custodianship Programme.

In addition, professional surveillance and protection of black rhino populations in the communal conservancies will mean greater accessibility to the animals by guided tourists and less conflict between the rhino and members of the community. Ultimately trained monitors will ensure greater on-the-ground protection for individual rhino as well as provide relevant management information on distribution patterns and population dynamics of this endangered species.

