AFRICAN RHINO RANGE STATES' AFRICAN RHINO CONSERVATION PLAN

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Contents

Executive Summary

All eleven current African rhino range States and one ex-range State attended at least one of three range States meetings held in September 2014 and July and November 2015 that developed a continental African Range State's African Rhino Conservation Plan.

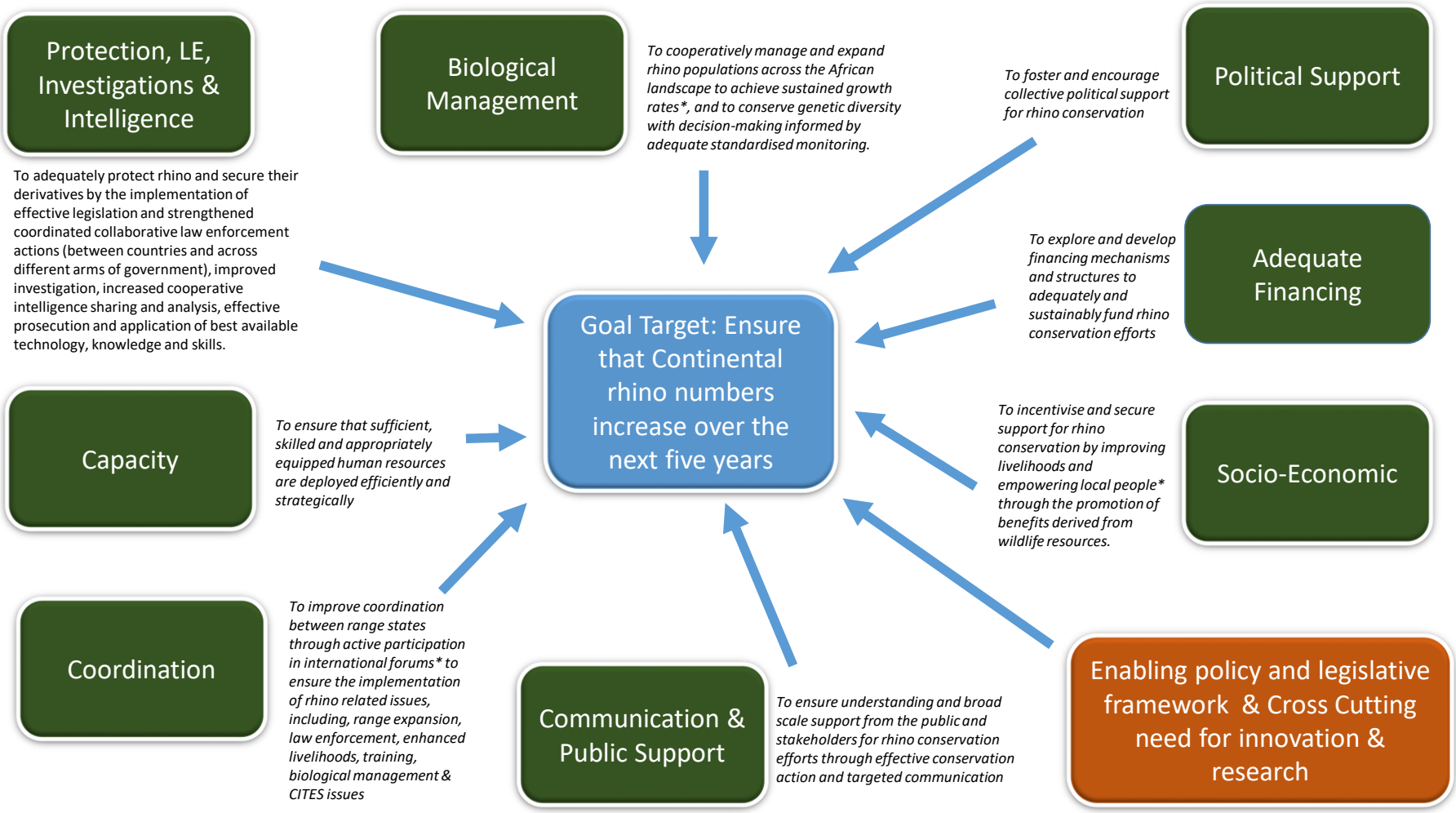
The continental Range States' plan does not seek to duplicate existing more detailed national rhino plans; but rather seeks to complement them by providing an overarching higher level umbrella plan under which all the national plans can fit. The continental plan also seeks to identify and focus on areas where collectively and cooperatively there may be opportunities for range States to work together to enhance rhino conservation (such as enhancing effective funding for conservation, increasing cooperative sharing and analysis of intelligence information, and boosting political will and support for rhino conservation across the continent). The plan has a similar structure to a number of existing national plans long term setting out a long term Continental Vision with a Life of Plan Goal Target, and then identifying the Key Components necessary to achieve the Goal target and in so doing make progress towards achieving the long term Vision. Associated Key Component Objectives, Actions and KPI's are indentified, specifically highlighting areas where range State cooperation and collaboration is needed. Some potential projects of continental importance were also identified.

Range States are to be accountable for oversight of the plan and are encouraged to make use of AfRSG official range State reps to report back to principals to ensure the plan is being implemented.

The structure of the plan is illustrated by Figure 1 below.

Plan at a Glance

Figure 1 below illustrates the eight selected key components in the African Rhino Conservation Plan and their associated objectives that together were identified by Range States as needed in order to achieve the goal over the five-year life of the plan.



Glossary

AfRSG IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group

ARCP Range States' African Rhino Conservation Plan

Biological Management Management of populations to achieve demographic and/or long term genetic conservation goals. Biological management primarily focuses on growing rhino numbers rapidly through appropriate rhino translocations.

CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (an international agreement between governments that aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival)

CoP Conference of the Parties (main CITES meetings)

EAC East African Community

ICCWC International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime

IUCN World Conservation Union

IWT Illegal Wildlife Trade

RESG/InterpolECWG Rhino and Elephant Security Group/Interpol Environmental Crime Working Group

RhODIS Rhinoceros DNA Indexing System (for Rhino DNA forensics)

RMG Rhino Management Group (there are SADC and EAC Rhino Management Groups)

SADC Southern African Development Community

SSC Species Survival Commission (of IUCN)

WEN Wildlife Enforcement Network

1. Background – Range States Meetings

The first African Rhino Range States Meeting was held in Kruger National Park from 30th September to 2nd October 2014. This meeting shared information and lessons learned relating to interventions implemented to secure rhino populations and to ensure rhino's long-term conservation. Priority actions to be implemented and key areas of cooperation were also discussed and identified. The meeting then discussed and developed a draft framework for an action plan for the conservation of rhino in Africa. While there had been conservation successes, the meeting recognised that the demand for horn was fuelling escalating poaching; with the increased involvement of transnational organised

crime syndicates now also posing a threat to national and regional security. Range States expressed a desire to cooperate and look for common approaches. It was agreed that Range States should lead the process of developing a continental plan.

Follow up second and third African Rhino Range States Meetings were held in Kempton Park, South Africa from 15 to 17 July 2015 and 25 to 27 November 2015 with the intention of further developing a draft continental plan for the conservation of rhino in Africa. All eleven current rhino states and one ex-range State attended at least one of these Range State meetings, with all participating countries also being sent a draft of the Plan for comment[1]. On request the second and third Range State Meetings were facilitated by the Chair and Scientific Officer of the IUCN SSC African Rhino Specialist Group[2]. The draft framework from the first meeting, and visions, goal targets, key components and objectives of all the various national rhino strategic plans were taken as starting points for the development of the continental plan.

Following a recent stakeholder workshop in Uganda, all current African rhino range states with the exception of Mozambique have or soon will have comprehensive national strategic plans covering all key aspects of rhino conservation. Most rhino range states also regularly review and update their plans every five to ten years, adjusting their focus over time as needed to adapt to changing circumstances and needs. Mozambique (which currently has a small number of rhinos that have walked in from Kruger National Park) however does have a short-term National Ivory and Rhino Action Plan aimed at addressing problems of rhino and elephant poaching and trafficking of ivory and rhino horn.

These national strategic rhino conservation plans invariably set out a longer term ***Vision*** and list measurable shorter term ***Goal Targets*** for the life of the plan. Most national plans then list a set of ***Key Components*** deemed essential to achieving the Goal(s), with associated ***Objectives.*** The plans usually include an illustrative list of detailed ***Actions*** for each key component, with key actors identified and associated indicators. Plans also provide sources of further detailed information. Some plans list the most important two to three ***Key Performance Indicators*** (KPI's) for each key component.

[1] The first meeting was attended by ten African rhino range States and ex-range states, Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Kenya and Uganda could unfortunately not attend due to challenges experienced in acquiring visas. The second meeting was attended by nine African rhino range States and ex-range states (Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda). Swaziland sent their apologies due to a clash with field operations and Kenya and Zimbabwe unfortunately were unable to attend due to delays in getting permission to travel. The third meeting was attended by seven African rhino range States Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia.

[2] Specifically Dr Mike Knight and Dr Richard Emslie

The African rhino range States' African Rhino Conservation Plan (ARCP) does not seek to duplicate these more detailed national plans; but rather seeks to complement them by providing an overarching higher level umbrella plan under which all the national plans can fit. The continental plan also seeks to identify and focus on areas where collectively and cooperatively there may be opportunities for range States to work together to enhance rhino conservation (such as enhancing effective funding for conservation, increasing cooperative sharing and analysis of intelligence information, and boosting political will and support for rhino conservation across the continent).

The second and third range States meetings focused on developing a long term Continental Vision with a Plan Goal Target, and then identifying the Key Components necessary to achieve the Goal target and to make progress towards achieving the long term vision. Associated Key Component Objectives, Actions and KPI's where range State cooperation and collaboration is needed were also developed. Some potential projects of continental importance were also identified.

The basics of the plan were also presented to the February 2016 IUCN SSC AfRSG meeting with a revised draft also being sent out to members for comments.

Range States have differing conservation philosophies. This continental plan has therefore deliberately focused on general principles and approaches that all range States can support and agree on for the good of rhino conservation across Africa.

2. Background – Global, Continental, Regional and National Coordination of Rhino Conservation Efforts

Figure 2 below illustrates the major groups involved with coordination of rhino conservation at a range of spatial levels.

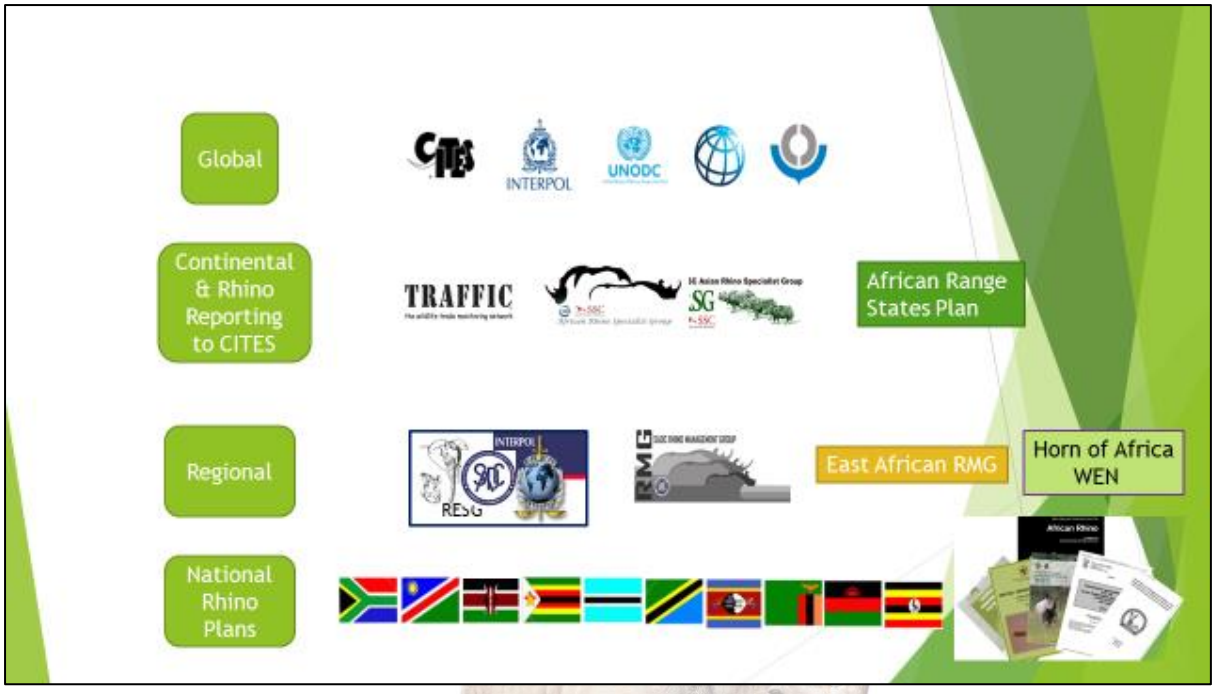


Figure 2. Organisations and countries involved in African rhino conservation from the global to national level.

2.1 INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON COMBATING WILDLIFE CRIME (ICCWC)

At the Global level, ICCWC is a relatively new collaborative effort of five inter-governmental organisations working to bring coordinated support to the national wildlife law enforcement agencies and to the sub-regional and regional networks that, on a daily basis, act in defence of natural resources. The ICCWC partners are the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Secretariat, INTERPOL, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization (see Fig. 2). The mission of ICCWC is to usher in a new era where perpetrators of serious wildlife and forest crimes will face a formidable and coordinated response. In this context, ICCWC works for, and with, the wildlife law enforcement community, since it is frontline officers who eventually bring criminals engaged in wildlife crime to justice. ICCWC seeks to support the development of law enforcement that builds on socially and environmentally sustainable natural resource policies, taking into consideration the need to provide livelihood support to poor and marginalized rural communities.

2.2 IUCN SPECIES SURVIVAL COMMISSION'S AFRICAN RHINO SPECIALIST GROUP (AFRSG) AND OTHER REGIONAL COORDINATION AND ADVISORY INITIATIVES

All African Rhino Range States have official representation on IUCN SSC's African Rhino Specialist Group (AfRSG) together with a range of expert members which provides coordination at a continental level. The AfRSG jointly with IUCN SSC's Asian Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) and TRAFFIC also fulfils an important reporting mandate[3] on rhinos to CITES CoP's on behalf of Parties.

In its African Rhino Status Survey and Action Plan[4], IUCN SSC's AfRSG outlined recognised strategies for the successful conservation of African rhinos. The AfRSG has over the years at its meetings shared knowledge and lessons learned. Workshops and presentations at AfRSG meetings have also helped update and revise recommended best practices. The AfRSG has also played a facilitatory role with expert members, on request, assisting range States review and revision of their national strategic rhino plans. Critically the AfRSG has always recognised that ownership of these national plans and the responsibility for their implementation remains vested with Range States themselves and their key stakeholders. The draft ARCP was presented in plenary at the Feb 2016 AfRSG meeting where it largely met with favourable comments. A draft of the plan was also sent to members for comment.

Regionally, Range States are also represented on the SADC Rhino Management Group (RMG) and also SADC Rhino and Elephant Security Group/Interpol Environmental Crime Working Group(SADC RESG/Interpol ECWG), as are a number of AfRSG members. These two regional groups have also over the years have helped share information and lessons more widely. Close links exist between these groups, the AfRSG and range States participating in them. Hopefully in due course the East African Community Rhino Management Group (EAC RMG) can fulfil a similar positive regionally role as the SADC RMG. It held its second meeting in January 2016.

In addition to these there are also international initiatives such as the intergovernmental meetings in Kasane[5], Botswana focused on addressing Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). They call for a focus on: improved law enforcement and strengthened judicial systems across the value chain including

[3] As mandated in CITES Resolution 9.14 Rev.

[4] https://portals.iucn.org/library/node/7613

[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417231/kasane-statement-150325.pdf

sourcing, trafficking and consumption stages; reduced demand and consumption of illegally sourced wildlife products and; support for sustainable livelihoods and local economic development.

2.3 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL INITIATIVES TO REDUCE ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE

The draft African Strategy on Combating Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa, May 2015 developed out of the African Union's (June 2014 Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.832 (XXV) during its 23rd Ordinary Session) and the International Conference on Illegal Exploitation and Illicit Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna in Africa, 27-30 April 2015 in Brazzaville (referred to as the Brazzaville Declaration). It arises from concerns of the unsustainable use of African wild fauna and flora, and increase of IWT in recent years and its undermining of sustainable development, peace, security, rule of law and good governance on the continent. It builds upon international commitments and declarations made in relation to the challenges posed by illegal wildlife trade, a rise in security and governance concerns and the need to take action on both the supply and demand sides.

In a similar vein, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Law Enforcement and Anti-Poaching Strategy: 2015-2020 (SADC LEAP) has five strategic areas. These are: 1) Enhancement of legislation and judicial processes; 2) Minimization of wildlife crime and illegal trade; 3) Integration of people and nature; 4) Sustainable trade and use of natural resources, and; 5) Improvement and strengthening of field protection. It calls for the establishment of a regional SADC Wildlife Crime Wildlife Crime Prevention and Coordination Unit, to facilitate the implementation of the strategy.

The SADC RESG/Interpol ECWG is an advisory group composed of government agency representatives, specialised police, wildlife investigators and invited rhino experts. The group seeks to co-ordinate and enhance regional efforts to improve the security, viability and promote the increase of rhino and elephant populations in Southern Africa. As the need arises other species threatened by IWT such as cycads and pangolins are however also considered and discussed. The group has been operational in various forms since 1989 and recently held its 28th meeting in January 2016 in Arusha Tanzania. It has for a quarter of a century been effectively the regional Wildlife Enforcement Network (WEN). It seeks to develop guidelines, strategies and databases for the effective and efficient protection of African rhino and elephant populations; to assist the various conservation agencies, communities and private landowners to minimize rhino and elephant poaching and the illegal trade in rhino horn and ivory; to enhance and improve investigations and

provide advice, training and co-ordination. The group also seeks to enhance cooperation with and use and value of INTERPOL for dealing with wildlife crime. The SADC RESG/Interpol ECWG Chair also sits on the AfRSG and SADC RMG.

2.4 NATIONAL RHINO CONSERVATION PLANS

Approved national rhino plans provide key guidance to rhino conservation programmes in Range States. With their generally limited life span and regular updating and revision, these are kept relevant and focused on addressing current identified needs. In some countries with more than one formal conservation agency, there may also be separate organisational plans. Individual reserves may also have specific more detailed plans. In general the national plans operate at a broader strategic level and set out the coordinating structures under which more detailed budgeting and annual action planning can take place.

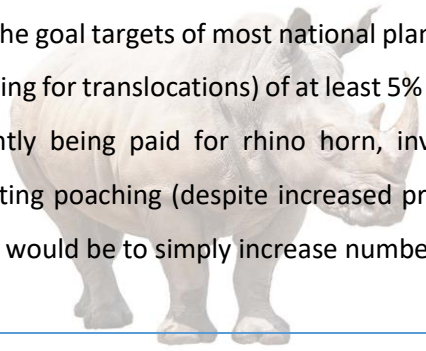
The African rhino range States' African Rhino Conservation Plan (ARCP) does NOT seek to replace the all-important national strategic rhino plans. Rather it seeks to provide an overarching higher level umbrella framework (linked to other continental strategies to address the IWT) under which these more detailed national plans fall. It also provides a vehicle for expressing collective ways rhino range States have identified where they can and should be cooperating together to further enhance rhino conservation on the African continent. Thus, the aim is to complement existing national plans through a focus on international collaborative aspects of rhino conservation. The ARCP fully recognises that much of rhino conservation coordination and action can best be done at the national level where detailed guidance and direction is given in approved national plans.

Long-term Vision for the Future of the African rhino

Secure, viable, growing & valued rhino populations across the African landscape

Goal Target for Life of Plan

Until the recent upsurge in poaching the goal targets of most national plans set out to achieve at least an underlying growth rate (after allowing for translocations) of at least 5% per annum. However, given the high black market prices currently being paid for rhino horn, involvement of transnational organised crime and resultant escalating poaching (despite increased protection efforts) it was felt that a realistic continental goal target would be to simply increase numbers over the life of the plan.



Ensure that continental rhino numbers of southern white rhino and each of the three remaining black rhino subspecies increase over the next five years (by end 2021)

Cross-cutting issues

Some issues were identified as cross-cutting. As a general principle, the need to investigate innovative options for rhino conservation and adaptively manage is recognised. Applied research should also be undertaken as needed to inform decision and policy making. It is also essential to have enabling policy and legislative frameworks in place.

Key Components

After reviewing the outputs from the first Range States meeting and examining the Key Components and associated objectives from various existing National Rhino Plans; Range States decided to include the following eight Key Components in the African Rhino Conservation Plan:

- Protection, law enforcement, investigations, prosecutions & intelligence;
- Biological management guided by effective monitoring, including range expansion;
- Capacity;
- Coordination;
- Adequate sustainable finance;
- Support – Political;
- Support – Local communities and livelihoods;
- Support through public communication and actions;

Table 1 below provides a summary of the key subject headings for the key components from various national plans and those selected for inclusion in the ARCP. It shows that while individual national plans are tailored to specific country situations and stage in rhino conservation (e.g. re-establishment phase or management of multiple extensive established populations) a high degree of overlap between existing plans.

Plan	Protection	Monitoring	Biological Management	Capacity	Coordination	Communication	Sustainability & Support	Range Expansion	Other & Enabling
Continental Draft Range States Plan	Protection, LE, Investigations, Prosecutions & Intelligence	Biological Management including range expansion (guided by effective monitoring)		Capacity	Coordination	Support: Public through Communication & Action	Support: Political Adequate Sust. Finance Support: Local communities & Livelihoods	Included in Biological Mgmt	Cross-cutting (Research, Enabling Policy & Legislation, Innovation and Adaptive mgmt.
Botswana	Protection	Monit for Mgmt	Pop Mgmt	Capacity building	Coordination	Public Awareness and Communication	Support, Incentives & Partnership		
Kenya	Protection and LE	Monit for Mgmt	Biol. Mgmt	Coordination and capacity			Awareness and public support	Population expansion	
Namibia BR	Protection and LE		Biological management	Capacity & Sustainability (Overall Enabling Objective)	Coordination and Collaboration		Support and Incentives	Expansion of range	Enabling Policy & Legislative Framework in place
Namibia WR	LE and Security		Population Management for high fin. return				Legal trade in horn & high income frm WR	Increasing WR num and range	
S Africa BR	Protection	Popn Monit (Enabling for Biol Mgmt)	Biol Mgmt	Human Resources	Coordination of cons. mgmt		Economic & social sust.		
S Africa WR	Protection	Monit, Permitting & Stock Control	Biol Mgmt		Effective communication and collaboration		Sustainability		Hunting
Tanzania	Protection and Security: LE	Biological Monitoring and Evaluation	Biol Mgmt	Capacity building	Coordination and Internat. Relations		Economics and Socio-Cultural		
Zambia Draft	Security + LE	Biological Monitoring & Management		Capacity	Coordination	Communication	Sustainability & Support	Rhino Sourcing & Range Exp	Enabling Policy & Legislative Framework
Zimbabwe	Effective Protection and LE	Biological Monitoring & Management		Building Consery Capacity	Coordination Collab. and Prog Mgmt		Socio-economic Sust		
Uganda Draft	Security Protection + LE	Monit for Mgmt	Biol Mgmt	Capacity	Coordination & Collaboration & Partnerships	Community & Education	Sustainability, Resource Mobil & Econ Support	Reintro & Establish-ment	

Table1 : Matrix compiled by IUCN SSC AfRSG showing Key Components included in various national African rhino plans as well as the new African Rhino Conservation Plan.

Delegates attending the second and third range States meetings rated the relative importance of the various Key Components (Fig. 3). As expected, given the current levels of poaching, rhino protection, law enforcement, investigations and intelligence scored highest. Having adequate financing was rated next highest. Biological management remains a key aspect of all national rhino plans and its continued importance was recognised with it being placed in third place.

Relative importance ratings at a national level were similar, although Coordination scored a little less important.

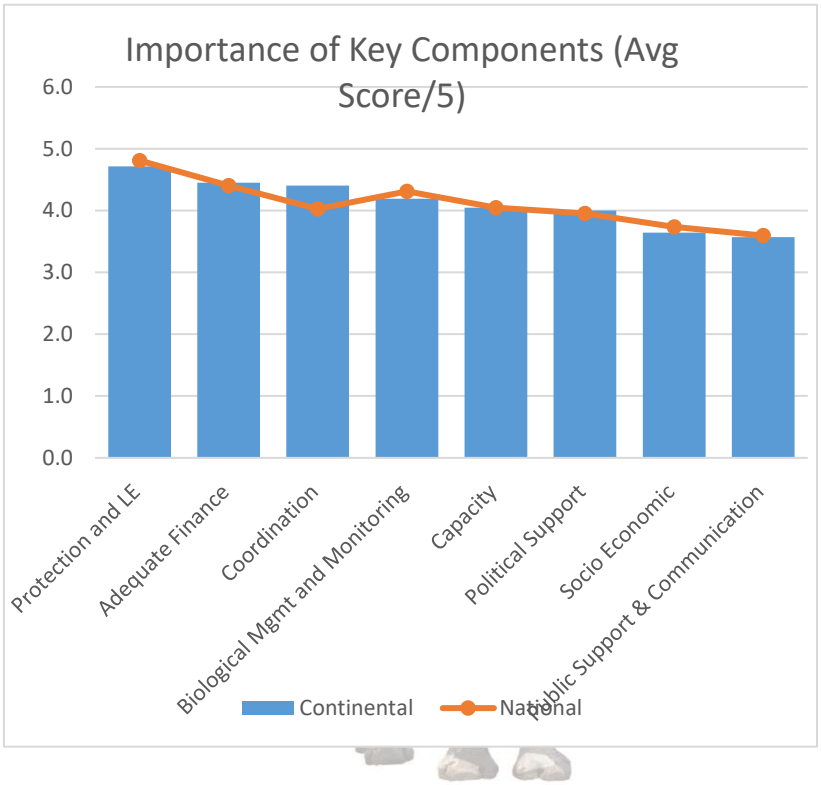


Figure 3. The relative importance of the various Key Components at the continental and national levels as ranked by delegates at the third rhino range State meeting. Values are average scores received out of 5.

The remainder of the plan sets out the eight chosen key components, their associated objectives and associated main actions identified by the participants at the range States meetings (see Fig. 1 in Executive Summary for a Plan at a Glance). Actions deemed to require international collaboration and cooperation between range States have been emphasised using red font.

Additional actions identified by range State participants, but deemed to be primarily of national importance will be best dealt with in existing approved national rhino conservation plans. The latter have been included but in lighter grey for information. These should however only be seen as illustrative examples of national level actions, and do not represent an exhaustive list. Of course many actions will be cross cutting requiring actions both nationally and internationally. Interested readers wanting to examine identified national actions should consult the various national rhino conservation plans. In time, as national plans are revised and updated it is hoped that all elements requiring international collaboration outlined in this plan will be included in national plans if they are not already included.

Key component objectives were developed to provide guidance at both the continental and national level. However, elements of specific continental relevance have been highlighted in red font.

In what appears to be a useful addition, in recent years some national plans are now including a small number of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-based) Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for each key component. Selected KPI's of continental relevance that build upon what is already in national plans, but which relate to specific areas identified by range States as

requiring range State collaboration and cooperation and reporting have been included and again highlighted in red font.

A number of key components such as a Capacity – while essential and appropriate to mention in a higher level continental plan, are best dealt with at the national level, but opportunities to ensure regional / continental training on key aspects should be identified and pursued.

Finally, initial potential desirable projects have been listed with continental ones shown in red font.

1. Key Component: Protection, law enforcement, investigations and intelligence

Objective:

To adequately protect rhino and secure their derivatives by the implementation of effective legislation and strengthened coordinated collaborative law enforcement actions (between countries and across different arms of government), improved investigation, increased cooperative intelligence sharing and analysis, effective prosecution and application of best available technology, knowledge and skills.

Rationale:

As Figure 4 shows, reported rhino poaching has increased continentally for six consecutive years from 2009-2015 with 6,062 rhinos reported poached from 2006-2015. Unless the increase in poaching can be brought under control, rhino deaths are destined to start exceeding births and to start declining at a continental level. With some carcasses likely to have been undetected in very large areas reported numbers represent a minimum.

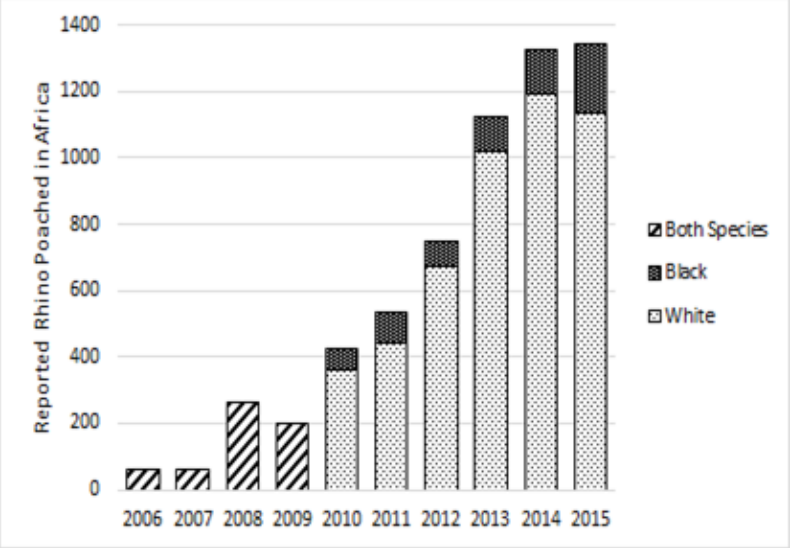


Figure 4: Total numbers of rhino reported poached across Africa per year since 2006 including animals that later died from wounds or where calves subsequently died after their mothers were poached with breakdown by species from 2010 onwards (Data compiled by IUCN SSC AfRSG)

The task of reducing poaching and trafficking has been made harder by the involvement of well-organised transnational organised crime syndicates with efficient distribution systems, combined with increasing disposable income, increased demand for illegally sourced rhino horn and high prices being paid in South East Asia. The involvement of aggressive organised criminal networks that are also involved in other forms of crime also threatens national security.

The poaching has also negatively influenced incentives to conserve rhinos leading to increasing numbers of private rhino owners and custodians (who conserve a significant proportion of the continent's rhinos and who have in recent years provided much of the land for range expansion) getting out of rhino conservation. If this trend continues it could threaten to reduce rhino range and numbers.

In addition to augmenting and boosting efforts to secure their rhino populations, range States need to effectively safeguard rhino horn stockpiles to prevent leakage of horn onto illegal markets.

At a national level range States seek to, where possible, proactively apprehend poachers before they kill rhinos through the deployment of effective law enforcement techniques (including local/international intelligence gathering and analysis), field surveillance and monitoring of rhino populations augmented by sufficient modern law enforcement equipment and appropriate firearms.

It is also necessary to have standard operating procedures in place when poaching occurs and to try to catch and convict as many rhino poachers and traffickers as possible as well doing everything possible to help ensure that deterrent sentences are handed down to those convicted. This requires effective investigation and prosecution as well as the implementation of laws with adequate penalties at the national level.

However, the nature and scale of rhino horn poaching across Africa requires increased co-operation with other security wings not just at a national level but also regionally, continentally and at international levels through participation in various meetings and increased intelligence sharing and improved intelligence analysis.

Much of rhino security and protection is dealt with at a national level in range State national plans. However, there is also a need to better understand trade routes and to seek to disrupt syndicates by maintaining collaborative intelligence networks both within and outside national borders, strengthened by the support of local communities.

Actions:

- Reduce poaching
    - Secure rhino areas (achieve threshold ranger density levels)
    - Reduce corruption in conservation staff via vetting (layered voice analysis, polygraphing, security clearances etc.)
    - Establish informer networks
    - Effective investigation & crime scene management
    - Use of technology
    - Increase the completion and conviction rates for rhino crimes.

- Secure rhino horn stocks
  - Rhino horn stock analysis
  - Secure horn stocks

- Range states encouraged to review and amend legislation as necessary and appropriate so that offences connected to the illegal wildlife trade are treated as serious crime.

- Intelligence: Increase sharing of information between range States and improve the analysis of data with a view to combatting transnational wildlife crime by identifying and prosecuting perpetrators of these crimes, through:
  - Analysis of trade routes and structure of networks (link charts), including Social Network Analysis based on an integrated collaborative approach, including all relevant sections of government (national intelligence, police, revenue services etc.).
  - Improved understanding of each country's structures and approaches to storing, sharing and analysing information.
  - Analysis of money trails / transactions (follow the money)
  - Asset seizures / forfeiture interventions (national and international).
  - Facilitating exchange of information, including on criminal investigation methodology and information (e.g. new concealment methods) on a formal and informal basis for key individuals.
  - Identification of focal points to facilitate cross border sharing of information.
  - A process to obtain in-principle approval from range States to develop of informal information sharing network.
  - Sharing of experience and skills in intelligence data analysis between countries.
  - National needs analysis of analytical skills & gaps in intelligence data analysis nationally then engage regionally to improve.
  - Skills transfer – training and sharing.

- Effective investigations, support by:
  - Crime scene management training.
  - Strengthened / improved investigator-prosecutor relationship.
  - Improved investigative skills.
  - Vetting of investigators.

- Improved conviction rate, facilitated by:
  - Skilled prosecutors (includes use of multiple charges).
  - Magistrates informed on the magnitude and impact of illegal wildlife trade.
  - Evidence in aggravation of sentences

- Reduce demand for illegally sourced specimens through:
  - Share information regional/internationally on impacts and pros/cons of various actions / approaches.
  - Active engagement between range & implicated States.
  - Sharing information on success/failures of alternative methods to reduce demand for illegally sourced horn.

- Improve processes relating to seizures:

- All seizures properly investigated and coordinated to maximise benefits and information obtained from them (e.g. sharing information and controlled deliveries)
- Standard Operating Procedures to be developed and adopted by the various countries involved.
- *Compliance with CITES decisions and resolutions promoted.*

- Strengthen the role of DNA forensics through:
  - The supply information into a coordinated & standardised continental (and / or international) RhODIS DNA database (RhODIS is being used by a number of range States and the use of a single compatible system and global database has been promoted by IUCN SSC AfRSG, SADC RMG, EAC RMG and SADC RESG/InterpolECWG).
  - The proposed development of methods and standardized validated protocols to facilitate RhODIS compatible DNA forensic analysis at multiple laboratories across the world linking to a global rhino DNA profile database is supported.
  - Engagements with relevant countries to ensure information relating to DNA profiles obtained from all international seizures (MLA, CITES and Veterinary permits required) are included in a database or shared in a timely manner to facilitate investigations (Standard Operating Procedures to be developed in this regard and use of e-RhODIS to capture and submit data is recommended where possible (to obviate the need for expensive data capture and risk of transcription errors.
  - Funding that will allow for analysis of routine RhODIS DNA samples from range States to increase chances of matches to seizures, and hence to assist law enforcement and understanding of trade routes (Note: Need for funds. Current inadequate funding available to cover costs of analysing all routine samples).
  - Regional training - capacity building to ensure the actions above can be implemented.Regional Training opportunities identified and funding secured.
  - Range States capacity to implement actions associated with protection, law enforcement, investigations and intelligence improved

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- % population of each subspecies reported poached over time
- Number of arrests and successful prosecutions (especially of levels 3 & 4 /5 in the criminal pyramid) that have occurred due to internal and cross boundary information sharing and analysis.
- Proportion of range States equipped and having access to appropriate intelligence software and analytical capability and actively sharing information with at least one other range State.
- % of reported international seizures/year from which DNA samples were supplied to a recognised rhino DNA laboratory using the standardised RhODIS microsatelite marker system for checking against profiles in the international database.
- Proportion of horn stock data collated & updated and RhODIS DNA sampled
- % of DNA samples supplied/year with DNA profiles derived using standardised continental system (both forensic, seizures and routine) by country.
- Number trained and accredited in DNA sample collection by country at year-end.
- Number of DNA sample collection training courses (using standardised international system)
- Number of live and dead rhinos on standardised international database (would requires system where RhODIS notified of death of sampled animals).
- % of live rhinos by country at year end with analysed profiles on the international database.
- % of seizure samples analysed/year with positive matches to animals on database.
- % of recovered horns returned to country of origin

Possible Projects

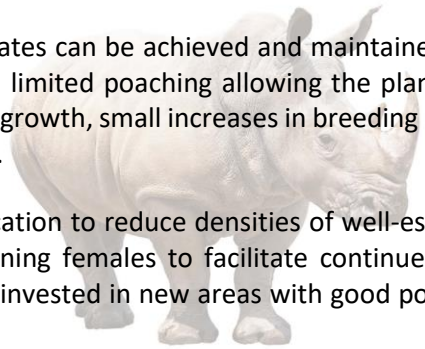
- DNA RhODIS sample collection training at continental level (using Standard Operating Procedure).
- Securing funding to pay for analysis of routine samples that currently sit unanalysed.
- National and regional ranger capacity building programme developed and funding secured. Funding secured to ensure two meetings of the SADC RESG/Interpol ECWG can take place and action plans emanating from these meetings implemented.
- Funding for operation of network of intelligence / investigators and provision of tools as needed. (Interpol assistance and modelled around Operation Cobra)
- Long term nominated national representatives cleared by national security to work together on a regular basis and identification of software and analytical needs.

2. Key Component: Biological Management

To cooperatively manage and expand rhino populations across the African landscape to achieve sustained growth rates, and to conserve genetic diversity with decision-making informed by adequate standardised monitoring.*

*Sustained growth rates increase the ability of the meta-population to withstand a given amount of poaching and also minimises loss of genetic diversity through genetic drift

Rationale:



If high underlying biological growth rates can be achieved and maintained it will provide a buffer to better enable countries to withstand limited poaching allowing the plan's goals/targets to be met. Thanks to the effects of compounded growth, small increases in breeding performance can over a few years translate into many more rhino.

This primarily relies on using translocation to reduce densities of well-established rhino populations to free up food resources for remaining females to facilitate continued good breeding. This also provides surplus animals that can be invested in new areas with good potential for rapid population growth.

Translocations and stocking rate management are key to biological management aimed at achieving rapid metapopulation growth rates. This is because breeding performance can start to decline once densities exceed threshold levels. In overstocked rhino areas, the quality of nutrition available for breeding females can decline resulting in longer inter-calving intervals, longer ages at first calving and increased mortalities of calves and old animals. As nutrition becomes limited, fighting deaths may also increase. The combined net effect is lower and possibly even negative net population growth rates and a failure to meet plan goal targets. Overstocking can also lead to declines in habitat quality possibly leading to increases in unpalatable species/size classes over more palatable and accessible ones. Assessing habitat suitability and carrying capacity of new areas is also part of determining whether a potential new area is suitable for rhino restocking. When setting up new populations it is also desirable to follow recommended best practices as outlined in IUCN's Rhino Reintroduction Guidelines, such as introducing at least 20 unrelated founders where possible.

A lost rhino is a rhino lost whether or not it was poached or simply not born or died as a result of sub-optimal biological management. Rhino conservation needs both good protection and biological management.

A growing number of studies show a general correlation between genetic diversity and various traits related to reproduction, survival, disease resistance and general fitness. Individuals with lower levels of genetic variation often have higher mortality rates and lower reproductive rates than individuals with greater diversity. Population management also seeks to maintain long term genetic viability to maintain fitness of a population and its ability to evolve in future.

Rapid breeding is desirable as it minimises loss of genetic diversity due to genetic drift.

Biological management also seeks to limit inbreeding. To maintain genetic diversity it is advisable to occasionally introduce new blood into populations and possibly to removal bulls that may have dominated breeding for many years. For genetic conservation reasons it is recommended that sub-populations are managed as a single metapopulation. A metapopulation is not just the sum total of rhinos in multiple populations and requires active transfer of animals and gene flow between sub-populations. This can be across international boundaries within the range of subspecies' concerned.

Apart from the importance of not overstocking and use of translocations to keep populations productive; where the policy environment allows, the sale of surplus rhino can have a positive spin off by generating revenue to help fund and incentivise conservation efforts.

To achieve the long term vision will also require the spreading of rhinos across the African landscape and this will at times require the occasional international translocation and sharing of founder rhinos expertise between countries.

Biological management requires good monitoring in order to make informed decisions to maintain population growth rates. It is also required in order to assess progress in meeting plan goals. Apart from assessing changes in numbers over time a number of performance metrics (such as average inter-calving interval, age at first calving, mortality rate, proportion of cows with up to one year old calves and others) can be used to assess population performance. The IUCN SSC AfRSG and SADC RMG have provided guidance on how to interpret such data.

Standardised condition assessments by trained observers can also assist in identifying issues requiring action. While condition naturally fluctuates over the seasons, poor condition can be associated with overstocking.

The use of IUCN SSC AfRSG and SADC RMG standardised age classes throughout Africa facilitates direct comparison of performance between populations and also within a population on over time.

In smaller areas where individual ID based rhino monitoring is possible this can provide a useful audit function and early warning of possible missing and/or poached animals or problems with demography.

SADC RMG Status Reporting has also found that effective monitoring is an indicator of good management and leadership in a Park and vice-versa with the former being essential in effectively fighting poaching. The knowledge that a rhino population is being kept under close monitoring surveillance, so that any poaching incursions will be quickly detected, can act as a deterrent to would be poachers.

Monitoring has other opportunistic spin-offs such as ear-notching exercises providing opportunities to get samples for DNA analyses that facilitate effective investigations and prosecutions.

Law Enforcement monitoring can also help inform and guide rhino protection efforts, as well as allowing management to make adjustments where necessary.

Actions:

- Range expansion (including suitability assessments) including to former range states. Obtaining founders will require bilateral international support from range States providing founders.
- Training and skills transfer to ensure effective biological management.
- Genetic interchange and limiting inbreeding.
- Regional metapopulation management for sub-species encouraged and can be promoted via SADC RMG and EAC RMG.
- Monitoring (numbers and performance with standardised ageing, reporting to AfRSG by Range States continues). Cross border cooperation with monitoring (especially in cross border conservation areas)
- Subspecies range. (Include continental map for Black Rhino sub-species based on distribution maps in approved national plans).
- Recommended translocations of surplus animals from established populations to maintain growth rates.
- Minimum founder numbers used to set up new populations, where possible.
- Surplus males to be managed based on national plans or exchanged with range States for genetic management purposes.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of populations and rhinos in populations in former range founded with animals from other donor range states.
- Performance of these populations (% growth rates after allowing for settling in period and translocations).
- Number of genetic interchanges across international boundaries.

Possible Projects

- Range expansion – specific projects based on agreements reached between range States following recommended IUCN rhino reintroduction guidelines.
- Genetic reinforcement for long-term viability – specific projects to be identified.
- Monitoring of key populations (nationally important but these may provide founders for international translocations)
- Biological management workshops

3. Key Component: Coordination

To improve coordination between range states through active participation in international forums to ensure the implementation of rhino related issues, including, range expansion, law enforcement, enhanced livelihoods, training, biological management*

*(IUCN SSC AfRSG, SADC RMG, EAC RMG, SADC RESG/Interpol ECWG, SADC Sub-Committee on Wildlife Crime & Southern African Police Chiefs Cooperation (SARPCCO), East African Police Cooperation Organisation, UN Resolutions, LATF, relevant multilateral environmental agreements etc.)

Rationale:

Much coordination occurs at the national, organisational and park level and is often facilitated by specific coordination committees. A number of range States also have nominated Rhino Coordinators. Effective coordination helps stakeholders share experiences and information as well as develop and implement area annual work-plans that are in line with organisational and national plans as well as this continental plan.

Each range State also has an official representative on the IUCN SSC AfRSG (usually the National Rhino Coordinator if there is one) who will be expected to attend and be an active participant in IUCN SSC AfRSG, SADC Rhino Management Group, EAC Rhino Management Group and the SADC Rhino & Elephant Security Group/Interpol Environmental Crime Working Group.

History has shown it is advisable to maintain the same individuals as National Rhino Coordinator at meetings of the above groups in order to ensure continuity and build relationships that can enhance conservation success.

The building of links between countries and agencies at international and national rhino coordination forums has also helped facilitate the spread of rhinos across international borders and within countries contributing towards achieving the long term vision.

With increasing pressure on budgets, foreign and internal travel has been tightened up on by many African governments and agencies. Some countries and agencies now require travel and attendance costs to be covered before allowing representatives to travel. This is making it hard for some groups to function effectively as in the absence of funding for travel and accommodation some key delegates may not be able to attend regional or international coordination meetings regularly. While some support is support is required to allow all groups to function as effectively as possible this is especially the case with the SADC RESG/Interpol ECWG that ideally should be meeting biannually.

Effective intelligence sharing and analysis aiming at criminal syndicates requires full cooperation and coordination between all agencies of government and between countries.

Bilateral MoU's also can help address issues between countries not just in Africa but also between Africa and significant transit and implicated consumer States.

Where possible, countries whose citizens have been implicated in poaching and trafficking in rhino horn should cooperate with range States to try to jointly address what in essence is a global and not just an African problem.

Actions:

- Active participation in established international, continental and regional forums.
- Increasing need identified for financial support to enable regular attendance at some regional and international forums.
- Seizure notifications (and Standard Operating Procedures on international transfer of DNA samples from confiscated specimens be implemented with necessary sample, CITES and veterinary documentation and packaging).
- Ensuring national legislation elevates the seriousness of crimes so they contain sufficient penalties and legislation is implemented to act as deterrent.
- Implement CITES Resolution Conf 9.14 (Rev CoP15) and CITES decisions
- Range States to collaborate in assessing pros and cons of conservation and management options.
- National implementation of relevant regional and continental strategies eg AU and SADC, Kasane Declaration, WCC Rec 138, CITES Res Conf. 9.14 (Rev CoP15) where relevant to rhino conservation.
- Need to improve process of international transfer of DNA samples and associated metadata for analysis using standardised international RhODIS system – and use of Standard Operating Procedures for international transfer.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- % meetings attended of specified forums and country
- % of international DNA samples received that followed Standard RhODIS Operating Procedures.
- % of rhino range states submitting required rhino related reports and information to CITES and AfRSG.
- Identification and appointment of agency to manage and admin of funds (a cost effective and possibly free (depending on extent of work required) option has been identified).

Possible Projects

- Attendance of relevant regional/international meetings.
- Equipment needs to be addressed to assist range States to collect DNA and record information (battery operated drills and kits for DNA sample collection - also covered training and sample analysis costs).

4. Key Component: Socio-Economic

To incentivise and secure support for rhino conservation by improving livelihoods and empowering local people through the promotion of benefits derived from wildlife resources.*

*People living with or near wildlife under different land tenure systems (rural and private sector)

Rationale:

It is of concern that the necessary increasing militarisation of anti-poaching efforts may be negatively affecting relations with neighbouring communities. Poachers are also often being recruited from poor rural areas where there are few prospects for legal economic empowerment and jobs. Ultimately the success of wildlife both outside and inside Parks is going to depend upon the attitude of local people. Thus the more local people can be incentivised to conserve wildlife and benefit from it the better. In addition, in some countries state Parks suitable for rhino have well established populations, with the only prospect for growing rhino numbers and range on communal and private sector-owned lands. Conservation is a competing land use, and ultimately the extent of land with wildlife outside of formal protected areas is to a significant extent likely to depend upon cost / benefits of conservation compared to other forms of land use. The thinking is that if local people see and share in benefits from rhinos and wildlife, they should be more likely to help work towards its successful longer term conservation.

Actions:

- Share lessons as to how rhinos and wildlife can be used to generate sustainable income and jobs.
- Identify and share information on governance models (especially ensuring communities receive benefits and know they have been derived from wildlife conservation) that have worked and not worked.
- Assess attitudes of communities to wildlife conservation, poaching and tourism to poaching and sharing of lessons learned.
- Focus on enhancing livelihoods in problem areas (where poachers are coming from).
- Promote community participation in governance.
- Where possible seek linkage of benefits to rhino performance (promoting culture of responsibility rather than entitlement/tokenism).

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of international meetings where lessons learned about rhino conservation and management and incentives to conserve them, livelihoods and benefits for local people are shared.
- Numbers of surveys of attitudes (incl. sustainability) of local people to rhino conservation and parks and specific initiatives – attitudes improving or deteriorating.
- Numbers of rhinos and populations on and managed by local people or where people stand to benefit from rhino (and trends in numbers).

Possible Projects

- Beyond Enforcement SULi type session at AfRSG meeting and a possible workshop focused on rhinos and the socio-economic consideration relating to conservation of rhinos
- Multiple surveys to determine whether and how community attitudes change over time.

5. Key Component: Political support

To foster and encourage collective continental political support for rhino conservation

Rationale:

Successful rhino conservation in both Africa and Asia has been closely linked to political will and expenditure by governments. Range States recognised that there were opportunities at international level whereby senior politicians and heads of state could help foster and encourage collective continental and global support for rhino conservation and in so doing contribute to AU goals.

A number of range States have also expressed disquiet and frustration at what appears to have been the increasing unilateral attempt of non-range States from other continents to impose approaches or to introduce bans without adequate consultation with key range States; and sometimes without any consideration or understanding of the likely consequences of such actions. Thus it would help if greater dialogue and consultation between range States and countries that don't conserve wild rhino could take place, to try to ensure efforts of the global community compliment and do not harm range State's rhino conservation efforts.

Actions:

- Range States should motivate for and identify opportunities for a high level segment at international multilateral forums.
- Range States to motivate to be properly involved and consulted by other non-range States seeking to advocate policy or actions that will impact upon rhino conservation in range States.
- International diplomatic engagement on rhino issues encouraged (range, transit and consumer states)
- Rhinos as a standing agenda item at high-level meetings such as the African Ministers Conference on the Environment and Regional meetings (eg SADC and EAC).
- Encourage collaborative discussions relating to international issues requiring range State support (eg UN resolutions).
- Raise the profile of transnational wildlife crime (significance and seriousness of international wildlife crime) at enforcement meetings, including meetings of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation (SARPCCO) and East African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation.
- Build capacity in wildlife investigations across range States through Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation (SARPCCO) and East African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organisation.
- Ministers and Presidents/Prime Minister's of range States to make more overt statements on rhino issues and threats facing rhino conservation.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- % of Regional African Ministers Conferences on the Environment (within SADC and EAC) where rhino and illegal wildlife trade are on the agenda.
- % of SARPCCO, EAPCCO meetings where rhino and illegal wildlife trime are on the agenda.
- % of range and implicated States where rhino crimes have been raised to a priority level nationally
- Numbers of co-sponsored resolutions or declarations by range States in international fora (matrix showing buy in by countries by resolution)

Possible Projects

- Make SARPCCO and EAPCCO aware of international resolutions and significant impact of illegal wildlife trade (Informing)

6. Key Component: Communication and public support

To promote understanding and broad scale support from the public and stakeholders for rhino conservation and law enforcement through targeted communication

Rationale:

Communication remains a key element in realizing attitude and behavioural changes and is thus an essential element in achieving rhino management outcomes. In simple terms, requirements can range from making people aware of concerns and issues to seeking to change in the behaviour of an individual/group/community/organisation. Communication is not a simple issue, as it remains critical to understand:

- WHO should one communicate with;
- WHY need to communicate with specific stakeholders. This would depend upon a combination of their relative importance and ability to influence outcomes;
- WHAT message does one want to convey to each stakeholder;
- HOW will the message be effectively communicated;
- WHEN it should be communicated;
- WHOM should do the communicating.

Attitude change is a key component of behaviour change and in some instance attitude change could be enough to achieve rhino conservation outcomes. Attitude is generated from cognition (a source of information), affect (feelings and emotions an object or subject may instigate) and past behaviours. To change attitude, there is a need to present consistent and congruent information to stakeholders. Changing attitudes requires the use of multiple methods that disseminate information using messages that are high in affect or emotion, or messages that connect attitudes to past behaviours. These theories highlight that communication must install confidence in stakeholders and that communication should be in stages depending on the desired individual outcome sought for each stakeholder. In some instances behavior and attitude need to be maintained, in others attitude only needs to change, while others may require behavioural change.

What has come very much to the fore is how important local peoples and civil society are and that their support is essential in obtaining positive conservation outcomes.

Actions:

- Identify and pursue opportunities for national and joint range State communication.
- Sharing experiences relating to the implementation of communication strategies and techniques used.
- Use Pachyderm to communicate continentally.
- Target audiences – Messages designed to meet *Inform, Persuade* and *Do* objectives.

- Exploring different avenues for conveying messages effectively – e.g. Use celebrity/sports ambassadors to promote messages.
- Engage media and be proactive in putting out balanced, correctly interpreted information through developing relationships with reporters.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of joint campaigns by more than one range State.
- % of such campaigns where impact is assessed.

Possible Projects:

- Possible multiple range State communication on use of standardised continental rhino DNA system
- Use of website to report on progress with projects.
- Use of website to publicise projects that need funding.
- Identify joint event to launch strategy and appeal for funds.

7. Key Component: Capacity

To ensure that sufficient, skilled and appropriately equipped human resources are deployed efficiently and strategically

Rationale:

To successfully implement the continental and various national, organisational and park rhino conservation plans requires a variety of people with a wide range of expertise from a lower level staff to top management. Successful rhino conservation also requires adequate staffing levels, equipment and operational budgets. Resources and skills necessary for effective and efficient management of rhino populations need to be strategically allocated and sustained. Building the necessary human resource capacity includes equipping staff with the necessary equipment and skills. The latter can require specialised training.

Successful field rhino conservation (especially protection and monitoring) requires that field staff that are proficient in bush craft and tracking and monitoring skills that are prepared to work under strenuous and when confronting poachers dangerous field conditions. For staff to a good job, they will require motivation that comes with good leadership.

It is important that people with significant field experience and informal field skills are duly recognised and retained, and that recruitment and remuneration of field staff is not only based on academic qualifications and literacy levels.

Management authorities within Africa may not possess all the skills and experience necessary and therefore may benefit from international collaboration and training by experts from other range States as needed.

Training and capacity building also should be undertaken in response to a needs analysis by senior management and as outlined in this and national plans.

A problem in the past has been the transfer or promotion of recently trained staff to new positions where they no longer are in a position to use the rhino conservation skills they have been trained in. Retention of trained staff is therefore key to maintaining capacity.

Finally great care needs to be taken in deciding who to train in some aspects of rhino conservation (especially relating to law enforcement) to make sure that information does not end up in the wrong hands.

Actions:

- Share information on technological applications in rhino conservation and anti-poaching interventions.
- Identify key training needs as part of needs analysis, prioritise & source funding.
- Achieving threshold manpower densities (e.g. strive for at least 1 ranger per 20 km^2 and preferably 1 per 10 km^2 in smaller areas up to a desirable 1 ranger / km^2 area in very large areas)

- Identify key equipment needs as part of needs analysis.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

- Number of international meetings and training workshops where information and knowledge shared by multiple range States

Possible Project

- Needs analysis together with range states to identify capacity shortfalls, prioritise and budget to address identified needs including identification of international capacity building or training needs.

8. Key Component: Adequate Financing

To explore and develop financing mechanisms and structures to adequately and sustainably fund focused on collaborative regional and priority national rhino conservation efforts

Rationale:

Rhino conservation is very expensive and requires substantial financial and material resources. For example, rhino protection costs in South Africa recently were estimated in the range of $1,125 to as much as $10,000 /rhino/year. Therefore, sustainable and innovative financing is a key perquisite to successful rhino protection, monitoring and management. Translocations and establishment of new founder populations is also very expensive.

Individually, range States as part of their national plans seek finance to fund their conservation efforts and preferably on a sustainable basis. However, there are some initiatives and projects that also involve all range States (such as standardised DNA collection and analysis) or facilitating regional and or continental coordination meetings that require funding.

African rhino range States note that the African Elephant Action Plan has set up a fund which although to date has only attracted limited funding, it has nonetheless managed to fund a number of useful projects in the same way as the previous Italian funded SADC Regional Programme for Rhino Conservation was able to do much for rhino conservation in the region with limited funds. However the poaching challenge now being faced by African rhino range States requires a different level of support.

In discussions, concerns have been expressed regarding possible competition for funds from traditional donors, but range States supported the development of an African Rhino Fund to facilitate the funding of a suite of identified continental projects. Range States also agreed that such a fund should also make potential donors aware of some identified national priority projects requiring funding.

Range States sought the assistance of an IUCN SSC AfRSG steering committee to assist with priority rating and assessment of project proposals.

In addition to pursing more traditional funding; range States recognised the potential for novel methods of financing to possibly raise significant funding from non-traditional sources.

Actions:

- Assess the arrangements relating to the African Elephant Fund and consider the possible development of African Rhino Fund (with IUCN SSC AfRSG steering committee to assist with assessment and prioritisation of projects to be funded).
- Impact investing options to be investigated.
- Consider the development of a Portfolio of Projects that could be used to solicit funding.
- Raise funds to perform country needs analyses and investigate structures.

- To help coordinate efforts between donors and management agencies, IUCN SSC AfRSG Web Page could have a link to the continental plan with links to national plans and country websites where countries could also list priority national projects they have identified.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Funding mechanism options assessed
- Appropriate mechanism and institutional arrangements selected and implemented
- % of identified projects funded and total additional funding raised
- Priority international projects identified at a continental level

Potential Projects:

- Alternative funding mechanisms (including impact investing) investigated and if appropriate funding mechanisms developed and implemented with range State support.
- Develop national and regional project documents to (with AfRSG assistance) be prioritised and promoted via brochure of projects (printed and online).
- Support for AfRSG steering committee for supporting and managing this component (transport and accommodation to be provided)

Approval of Plan

The need for the formal ratification and approval of the African Rhino Conservation Plan by range States was identified with approval at Permanent Secretary (Director-General) or Minister level. The plan was submitted to the range States for consideration and approval; and to date has been approved by Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, and Uganda. It is hoped United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe will also approve it in due course.

Implementation of the Plan

Range States are to be accountable for oversight of the plan and are encouraged to make use of AfRSG official range State reps to report back to principals to ensure the plan is being implemented.

A number of KPI's are listed at the end of each Key Component section in the plan. Range States are represented at the IUCN SSC AfRSG meeting and this meeting or (an add on meeting to this meeting) can provide a forum for Range State reporting of their implementation of the plan against the KPI's every two to three years. SADC Rhino Management Group and EAC Rhino Management Group meetings also will provide forums where progress can be discussed and opportunities for regional collaboration identified.

Range States are to identify focal points in their country to have oversight over implementation. Range State focal points are encouraged to interact with their counterparts in other range States to give effect to the plan. It is recommended that the existing structures within range States that manage national plans should be used. For example, should a country have a national rhino coordinator, this person could be tasked with assessing and following up on the continental plan implementation as part of their work.

Acknowledgements

South Africa's Department of Environmental Affairs provided the venue and accommodation for the rhino range States meetings.

The delegates who attended the three rhino range States meetings from Angola, Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe that helped develop this plan are thanked.

IUCN SSC's African Rhino Specialist Group Chair and Scientific Officer are thanked for facilitating the development of this plan at the second and third range States meetings. The Group's Scientific Officer is also thanked for drafting the plan based on the input and consensus agreements reached at the range States meetings; as well as for presenting the basics of the plan to AfRSG members at its recent meeting that took place in February 2016. The AfRSG Chair would like to acknowledge the support of SANParks and The AfRSG Scientific Officer would like to thank the support of the consortium of core funders WWF's African Rhino Programme, US Fish & Wildlife Service's Rhino and Tiger Conservation Fund, Save the Rhino International, International Rhino Foundation and UK's DEFRA. The AfRSG Chair and Scientific Officer would also like to acknowledge support in kind received from SANParks, Endangered Wildlife Trust, Save the Rhino International and Ecoscot Consultancy Services.

The range State representatives and AfRSG members that commented on drafts of the plan are thanked.

Key References

In addition to complimentary Range State National plans the following are a few key references on aspects of rhino conservation.

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