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**UPDATE ON THE CMS COMPONENT OF THE EC SUPPORTED PROJECT
“CROSS-REGIONAL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN” PROJECT NO. FED/2017/303-405**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

This document provides an update on the CMS Secretariat’s delivery of Specific Objective 3. “The establishment and sustainable management of Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas promoted and strengthened” of the EU supported Cross-Regional Wildlife Conservation in Eastern and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean programme. To date, sites have been selected for the programme in SADC and IGAD and an initiative has been started to establish a TFCA working group in EAC. Next steps include the support for the signing process of an MOU for the Mana Pools, Lower Zambezi TFCA and a tripartite meeting on the ZIMOZA TFCA. In addition, a mapping to identify key CMS species that are present in and will benefit from management improvements in the target TFCAs as well as a mapping of local-level stakeholders for the next round of consultations are underway.

Background

The Cross-Regional Wildlife Conservation Programme, implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, aims to support landscape-level conservation management and collaboration by strengthening governance structures within and between regions, states, communities and wild-life management agencies. It supports improved management of shared ecosystems, strengthening of law enforcement and support for coordination between the East African Community (EAC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states. The CMS secretariat is responsible for the delivery of Specific Objective 3. “The establishment and sustainable management of Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas promoted and strengthened”.

Milestones

The CMS Secretariat received its disbursement of funds to commence the CMS component in late 2018. This allowed for the programme being established and stakeholders being consulted on priorities and potential cooperation in 2019.

Stakeholder engagement

In early 2019 the CMS Secretariat consulted with each of the Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) whose Secretariats and Member States are intended beneficiaries of the programme. The RECs shared feedback and suggestions on their needs and on priority transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) that would most benefit from CMS support. This information was used to shape the programme workplan for 2020 and beyond.

The CMS Secretariat also consulted with partner conservation agencies who are also implementing projects supporting trans-frontier conservation areas in the three target RECs. These included AWF, IUCN, Peace Parks Foundation, TRAFFIC and WWF. Through these consultations a number of programmatic synergies and opportunities for collaboration were identified. This is especially true of the “CONNECT” programme strengthening TFCAs in the EAC which is being implemented by IUCN with WWF and TRAFFIC. An agreement has been made to establish a coordination mechanism between these entities and the CMS Secretariat.

Activity and site prioritization

As a result of the stakeholder consultations it was possible to identify priority activities and priority locations for support.

EAC capacity building activities

The CMS Secretariat has agreed with the EAC to invest in building “TFCA Capacity” within the EAC Secretariat. Specifically, the CMS Secretariat will facilitate the creation of a TFCA Working Group under the Sub-sectoral Committee on Wildlife Management. This Working Group will be based on the SADC model which is well established and has been effective in the promotion of TFCAs in that region. In the SADC TFCA Network, over 300 members from government authorities, the private sector, research, donors and non-governmental organisations communicate through an online knowledge management system and in working groups focusing on specific challenges or geographies. In the EAC, all but one EAC Member States have already appointed an officer to represent it on the new Working Group, and who will serve as that country’s TFCA Focal Point or Coordinator in the future.

SADC site selection

In the SADC region, two locations have so far been agreed as targets for support: the Zimbabwe-Mozambique-Zambia (ZIMOZA) TFCA and the Iona-Skeleton Coast TFCA in Namibia and Angola.

Zambian and Zimbabwean Governments have worked towards an MOU on the management of the Lower Zambezi-Mana Pools TFCA. This process is very close to completion and the CMS secretariat will support the signing activities. The CMS will also support the re-opening of negotiations on another draft MOU for the immediately adjacent ZIMOZA TFCA. This would increase the impact and scale of the protected areas. In discussions with the CMS Secretariat, Mozambique has expressed support for this idea. The CMS Secretariat has also just completed a mission to Zimbabwe during which the Zimbabwe National Government and the relevant District Government representatives indicated their support for the ZIMOZA TFCA. The CMS Secretariat will now work with ZimParks to host a tripartite meeting to further the negotiations on ZIMOZA in the second quarter of 2020.

In consultations with the CMS Secretariat, the SADC TFCA working group confirmed that Angola and Namibia have taken steps to upgrade their existing MOU on the Iona-Skeleton Coast TFCA into a full treaty. CMS will conduct consultations with country-level representatives to determine how CMS could support the upgrade of this agreement.

IGAD site selection

IGAD indicated to the CMS Secretariat that the Kafta-Sheraro/Gash Setit TFCA presents the most promising opportunity to support TFCAs in their region. To discuss this potential further, a mission is planned by CMS and CITES representatives to the relevant IGAD countries in mid-2020.

Staffing

The recruitment of the CMS Programme Management Officer responsible to implement the CMS part of the programme commenced on 26 December 2018, when a job advertisement was launched. Interviews took place in March 2019, with a preferred candidate selected. Recruitment was not immediately finalized due to delays in the process following the unexpected death of the CMS Executive Secretary, Bradnee Chambers. However, the new Programme Management Officer, Andrea Dekrout, is now in place in Nairobi and will be leading the implementation from 2020.

Outlook

In the next months the following activities are planned:

- Support for a learning mission of the new EAC TFCA working group to the SADC region to meet with SADC TFCA working group members.
- A tripartite meeting with ZIMOZA TFCA countries and participatory reviews of the existing draft MOUs.
- New consultation with the Iona-Skeleton Coast countries and participatory review of the existing MOU and possible treaty.
- A fact-finding mission to the Kafta-Sheraro/Gash Setit TFCA countries to evaluate interest in further support.
- A mapping to identify key CMS species that are present in and will benefit from management improvements in the target TFCAs.
- A mapping of local-level stakeholders for the next round of consultations on CMS support to ensure the project responds to on-the-ground conservation needs in the target TFCAs.