



**CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY
SPECIES**

UNEP/CMS/WAE/MOS3/Inf.3

Original: English

THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING
CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE WEST AFRICAN
POPULATIONS OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT (*Loxodonta Africana*)
Online, 30 November – 1 December 2021

**REPORT ON THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES
FOR THE WEST AFRICAN POPULATIONS OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT**

HELD IN MARGIN OF THE CMS COP13

REPORT ON THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR THE WEST AFRICAN POPULATIONS OF THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Informal Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (West African Elephant MOU) was held on 17 February 2020 from 18:15 to 19:30 in Gandhinagar, India in the margins of the Thirteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS COP13).
2. The objectives of the informal meeting were to update the Signatories on the current status of the West African Elephant MOU and to facilitate discussion among the Signatories to agree on possible future directions for the MOU.
3. Delegates of the Governments of Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo (all Signatories of the MOU) and the representatives of the Secretariats of CMS, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the African Elephant Fund (AEF) participated in the informal meeting.

II. STATUS OF THE WEST AFRICAN ELEPHANT MOU

4. Ms Clara Nobbe, Head of the Terrestrial Species Team, CMS Secretariat, gave an overview of the status of the West African Elephant MOU. The presentation material used at the informal meeting is contained in Annex 1 of this report.
5. She explained that the MOU had been in force since 2005, and 13 West African Range States of the African Elephant were Signatories to it¹. The Strategy for the Conservation of West African Elephants (IUCN 2005), annexed to the MOU, remained an integral part of the instrument. Since 2005, two Meetings of Signatories had been held. The First Meeting of the Signatories (MOS1) was held in Accra, Ghana in 2009. The Second (MOS2) was held in Niamey, Niger in 2011. Due to a lack of financial resources, no meetings had been organized since MOS2 and the [medium-term international work programme \(2012-2014\)](#), adopted at MOS2 as a roadmap to implement the MOU, had expired in 2014. At MOS2, the Signatories asked the CITES Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) Programme to coordinate the MOU through its West Africa Office, but due to the closure of this office, this was not possible, and the CMS Secretariat continued to coordinate the MOU. The coordination activities of the MOU depended on voluntary contributions.

¹ The 13 signatories are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

6. In the meantime, the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) had been adopted by the African Elephant Range States in 2010. As the AEAP was a document negotiated and agreed upon by all African Elephant Range States, and given that the international work programme had expired, the AEAP was endorsed as the principal strategy for the conservation of the African Elephant by CMS COP12 (Manila, 2017) through [Resolution 12.19 Endorsement of the African Elephant Action Plan](#). In the Resolution, the CMS Parties further requested the CMS Secretariat to liaise with the Steering Committee of the African Elephant Fund² to become an ex officio member and to work with the CITES Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme to promote fundraising for the implementation of the AEAP.
7. Consequently, and in light of the dire funding situation of the MOU, the CMS Secretariat had suggested implementing the MOU through the AEAP without further convening meetings of the Signatories (See [UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.26.3.3](#)).
8. In this regard, the Signatories of the MOU were invited to consider the future direction of the MOU. The CMS Secretariat preliminarily identified four possible options: continuation of the status quo; suspension of the MOU; revitalization of the MOU; and the termination of the MOU.
9. Ms Nobbe further pointed out that in 2010-2011, 12 project proposals had been prepared in the context of the MOU, none of which had attracted the necessary funding for their implementation. She noted that the West African Range States could consider revising some of these projects for submission to the AEF or other donors. The CMS Secretariat offered to assist the Range States in updating these projects under the framework of the MOU as well as Resolution 12.19.
10. In conclusion, she recommended that the Signatories present at the informal meeting discuss possible options regarding the future of the MOU. She mentioned that an opportunity existed to convene a third formal meeting of the Signatories (MOS3) back-to-back with the MIKE West Africa meeting, to be convened in late 2020. MOS3 could conclude the discussion on this matter and agree on the future of the MOU.

III. DISCUSSION

11. A delegate said that the past project concepts could be reviewed. He then asked the CMS Secretariat to clarify issues that prevented the implementation of the MOU.
12. The Secretariat responded that the lack of resources had been a major and continuing challenge for the implementation of the MOU. The Secretariat further explained that the AEAP, and its supporting AEF mechanism, had not existed when the MOU had been signed.
13. Another delegate described the history of the MOU and noted that the financial issues had been a problem since the beginning of the instrument. The delegate stated that a quick assessment on the status of the MOU could be conducted in the presence of all 13 Signatories.
14. A delegate noted that West Africa had already received funding from the AEF mechanism and the mechanism was compatible with the MOU. He said that the existence of the AEF mechanism could be an opportunity for the West African Range States to obtain funding to implement their commitments made under the MOU.
15. An observer asked why other countries, such as Cameroon and Gabon, were not included in the MOU. The CITES Secretariat explained that the geographical scope of the MOU was the 13 countries in West Africa. The initial idea was that all 13 countries would implement the Strategy annexed to the MOU with a particular focus on transboundary projects. In the meantime, all African Elephant Range States had agreed on a continent-wide Action Plan, the

² The African Elephant Fund (AEF) was established pursuant to CITES Decision 14.79 (Rev. CoP15) as a funding mechanism to support the implementation of the AEAP. See <http://www.africanelephantfund.org/> for further information.

AEAP. Thus, the Signatories were invited to consider whether a sub-regional MOU for West Africa was still even needed with the development of the AEAP.

16. A delegate noted that connectivity of elephant habitats for transboundary areas was still an important issue for the conservation of the species.
17. A delegate suggested referring the matter to the regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States.
18. The CITES Secretariat explained that in total 12 projects had been developed by 2011. At that time, the Government of France had shown interest in funding these projects. Some projects had been very well advanced but, in the end, none received funding. Now that the AEF mechanism was available, however, there could be a possibility for the West African Range States to update and submit these projects to the AEF.
19. Reaffirming that the financial matters had been the major problem of the MOU, a delegate noted that the CMS Secretariat could look for other donors to support activities such as for the conservation and restoration of corridors.
20. A delegate asked how the AEF mechanism worked. The AEF Secretariat explained that the mechanism was established under CITES as a funding mechanism for the AEAP. The Secretariat was administered by the UN Environment Programme in Nairobi. One of the objectives of the AEAP was to maintain elephant habitats and restore connectivity. The current call for funding had just been closed, and the project proposal received would be reviewed by the AEF Steering Committee at its 12th meeting, to be held in March 2020³. The AEF Secretariat organized an informal Range State meeting during the lunchtime of 17 February 2020. The presentation material used for this Range State meeting is contained in Annex 2 of this report.
21. A delegate asked whether it would be possible for the CMS and CITES Secretariats to enhance synergies for the African Elephant as was the case for the African Carnivores Initiative. The AEF and CITES Secretariats clarified that the AEAP was initially developed by the African Elephant Range States with support from CITES. The AEAP and the accompanying AEF were reflected in CITES Resolution Conf. 12.19. They had also been endorsed by COP12 through CMS Resolution 12.19, and thus both CMS and CITES Secretariats were 'on the same page' for the conservation of the African Elephant. This collaboration could be used to further address threats to the species such as habitat connectivity and poaching.
22. A delegate asked what had been achieved under the framework of the MOU, and sought recommendations as to how best the Signatories could proceed.
23. The CITES Secretariat responded that all 13 Signatories needed to discuss the matter and it would be possible to examine the possibility of convening MOS3 back to back with the CITES MIKE meeting in West Africa.
24. The delegates noted that the future of the MOU should be decided by the Signatories and it would be important to meet and discuss the matter among the Signatories.
25. A delegate noted that some countries could have different focal points for the CITES MIKE and CMS. The CITES Secretariat gave the assurance that the invitation to the meeting of the MOU would be sent to both focal points.

³ The meeting has been postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19

26. The CMS Secretariat thanked the participants and confirmed that it would work with the CITES Secretariat to explore the possibility of convening the meeting of Signatories on the occasion of the CITES MIKE meeting later this year.

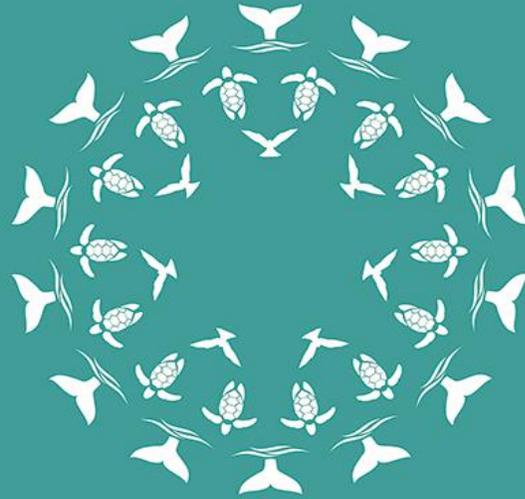
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Presentation by the CMS Secretariat made at the informal meeting

Annex 2: Presentation by the AEF Secretariat made at the African Elephant Range State meeting on 17 February 2020

Convention on Migratory Species

*Migratory species
connect the planet
and together we
welcome them
home*



CMS
COP 13
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON
MIGRATORY SPECIES

17 - 22 FEBRUARY
2020
GANDHINAGAR
INDIA



Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

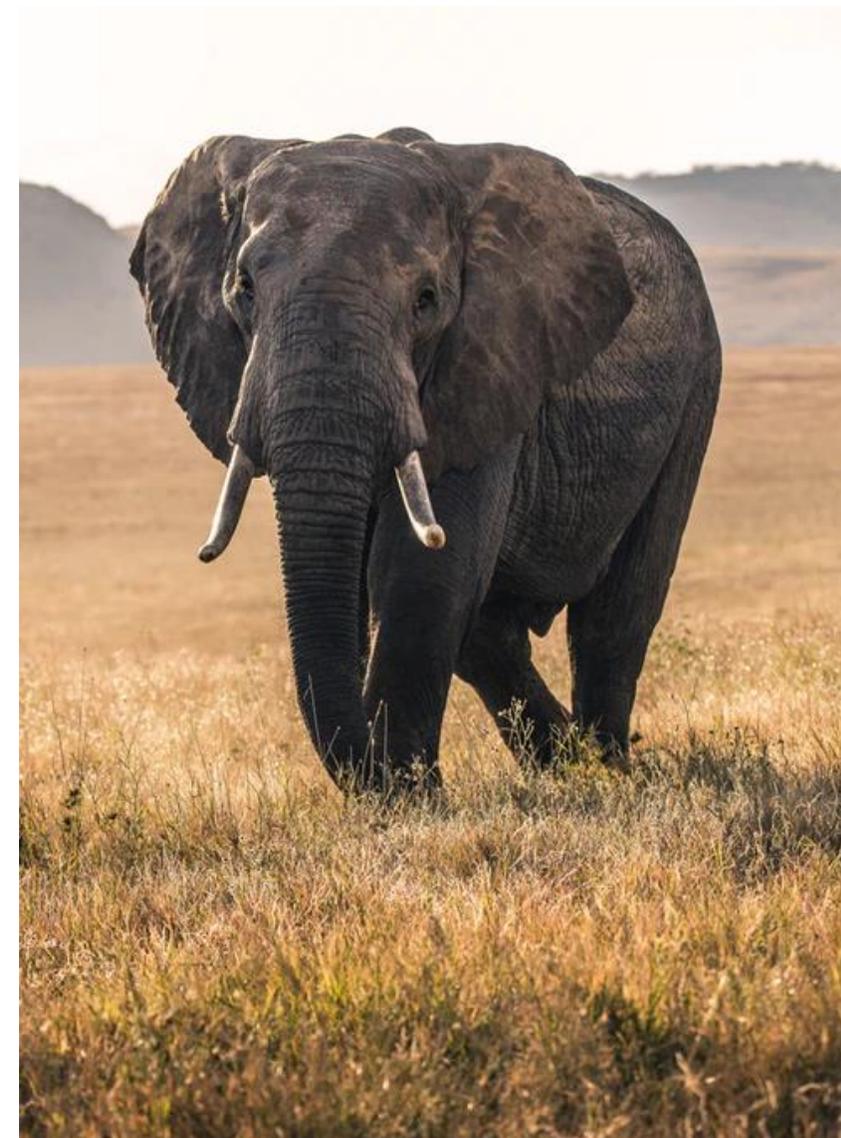


Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

Agenda

Time	Agenda item	Facilitator
13:45 – 14:00	Presentation on the status of the West African Elephant MOU	CMS Secretariat
14:00 – 14:45	Discussion on possible future directions including the preparation of projects to be funded by the AEF or other donors	CMS Secretariat





Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

Objectives of the informal meeting

- To update the Signatories on the current status of the West African Elephant MOU
- To facilitate discussion among the Signatories on possible future directions of the West African Elephant MOU



<https://www.cms.int/west-african-elephants/>





Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

What is the West African Elephant MOU?

Objective

To improve the conservation status and the habitat of the African Elephant throughout its range

Ratification status : 13 Signatories

Benin; Burkina Faso; Côte d'Ivoire; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo

Strategy

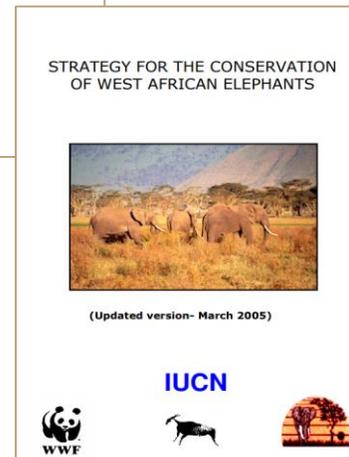
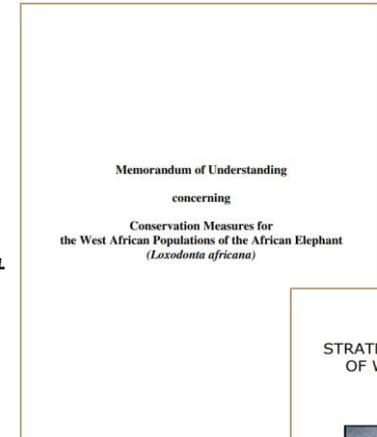
The Strategy annexed to this Memorandum of Understanding is an integral part thereof

Medium-term strategy

Expired in 2014

Contact Points

Last updated in 2017





Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

Financial and institutional matters

Financial status

- No agreed annual contributions from the Signatories for the MOU
- Coordination of MOU depends on the voluntary contributions and in-kind contributions from the CMS Secretariat
- No available funds in the CMS Trust Fund for the West African Elephant MOU

Coordination

- MOS2 requested MIKE to coordinate the MOU through its West Africa Office
 - Closure of the MIKE West Africa Office
- The CMS Secretariat provides coordination





Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

History

Year	MOU Events	Relevant Events
2005	MOU was opened for signature in Nairobi	
2009	MOS1 in Accra, Ghana	
2010		Establishment of the African Elephant Fund (AEF)
2011	MOS2 in Niamey, Niger	
2013	Letter sent to the Signatories from the CMS Secretariat on the status of the MOU	
2017		CMS COP12 Resolution 12.19 Adoption of the African Elephant Action Plan
2018		The CMS Secretariat became an ex-officio to the AEF Steering Committee
2020		CMS COP13 Doc.26.3.3 African Elephant Action Plan



Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

Draft decision to be discussed by COP

Draft Decision (Doc.26.3.3/Annex)

Directed to the Signatories of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant

13.AA The Signatories of the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant (West African Elephant MOU) are encouraged to consider replacing their Work Programme with the AEAP and to implement the MOU through the implementation of the AEAP and through the African Elephant Fund structure, without further convening Meetings of the Signatories.



Possible future options for the West African Elephant MOU

Continue
the status
quo

Suspend the
MOU

Revitalize
the MOU

Terminate
the MOU

- A MOS needs to be organized to make a formal decision on the future of the MOU



Revitalization of project proposals

- 12 project proposals prepared at MOS1 and further elaborated at MOS2
 - Contributes to the MOU objectives and AEAP
- Possibility to update and revise these project proposals for submission to the AEF and/or other donors





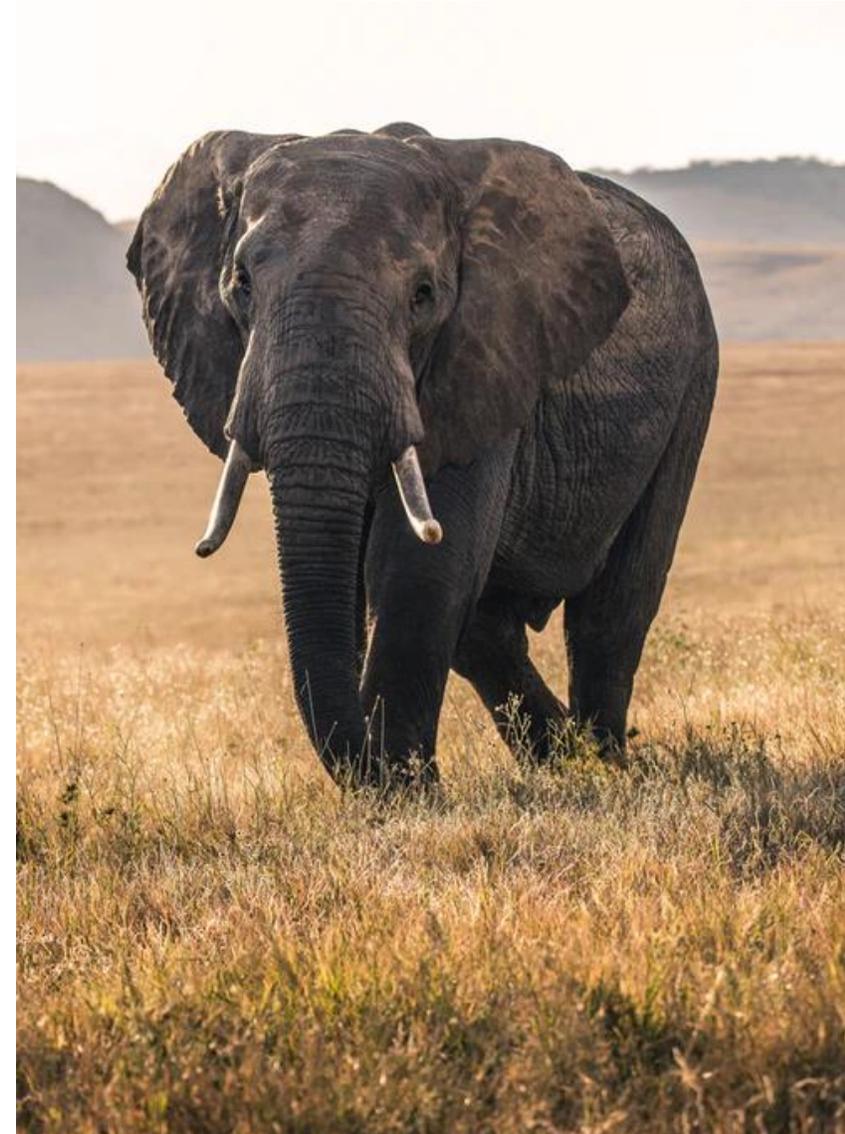
Informal Meeting of the Signatories of the West African Elephant MOU

17 February 2020, Gandhinagar, India

Recommendations

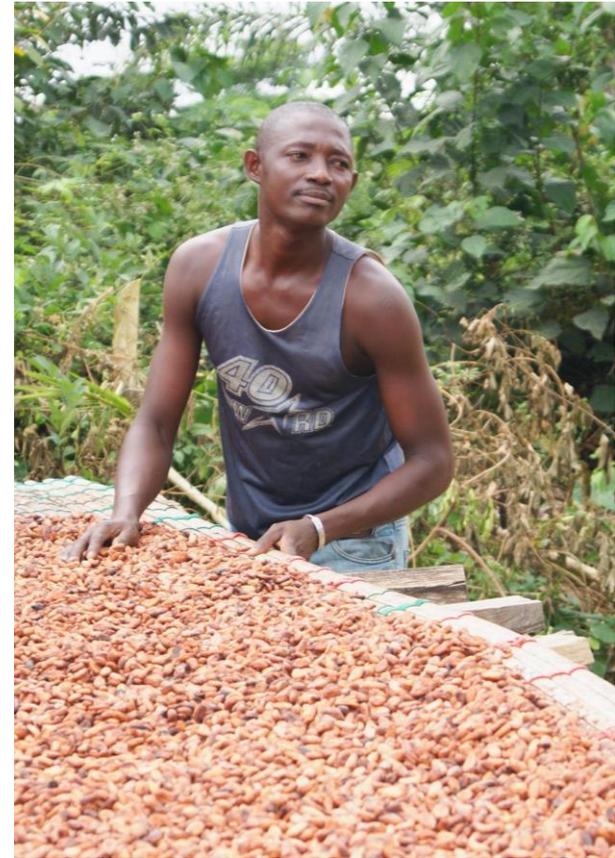
Signatories of the West African MOU are invited to:

- Consider and discuss possible options of the future of the MOU among the Signatories;
- Discuss and make a decision at the next MOS;
 - CMS Secretariat will work with the CITES/MIKE programme for a possible back-to-back meeting
- Provide updated contact points for the MOU for future communication on this matter;
- Update past project proposals and submit them for funding to implement the MOU and the AEAP.





THANK YOU



The African Elephant Fund

About African Elephant Fund

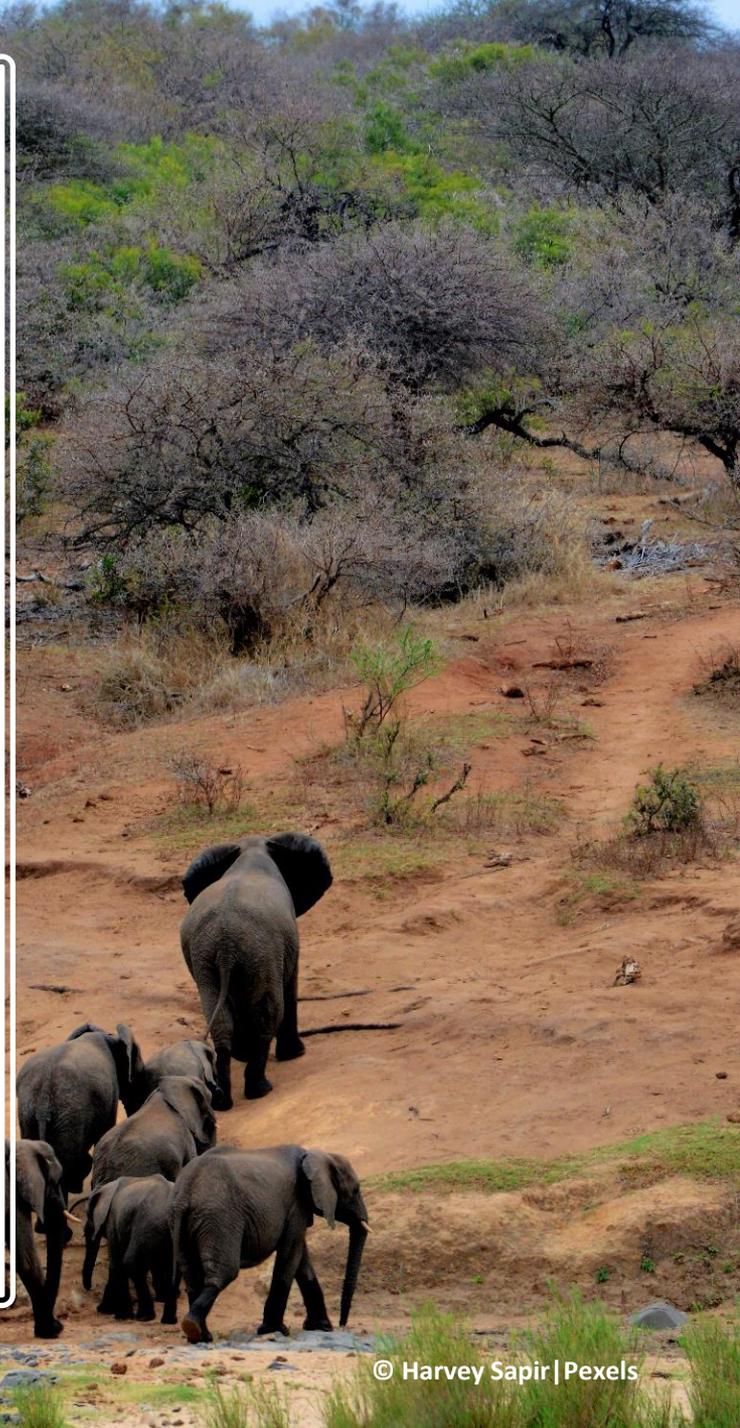
- The African Elephant Fund is a funding mechanism created under the auspices of CITES to support 38 range States to implement the African Elephant Action Plan.



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UN Decision Establishing the Fund

- At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in the Hague in 2007, the Parties adopted Decisions 14.75 to 14.79 regarding the African elephant *Loxodonta africana*.
- Decision 14.75 to 14.79 mandated the African elephant range States to, among other things, develop an African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP) and African Elephant Fund.
- At the 15th COP to CITES in Doha, Qatar, the parties adopted the AEAP drafted by range States.



AEF Global Governance

38 African Ranges States adopted the African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP):

- **Eastern Africa:** Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda.
- **Central Africa:** Central African Republic, Chad, Gabon, Republic of Congo, The Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- **West Africa:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.
- **Southern Africa:** Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Donors

Belgium, China, European Commission, France, Germany, The Netherlands, South Africa and United Kingdom.

Ex-Officio Members

- The United Nations Environment Programme
- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora- Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants
- The Convention of the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals



How AEF works

The African Elephant Fund(AEF) is governed by the **AEF Steering Committee** which make overall decisions regarding the Fund operations, funding and project implementation.

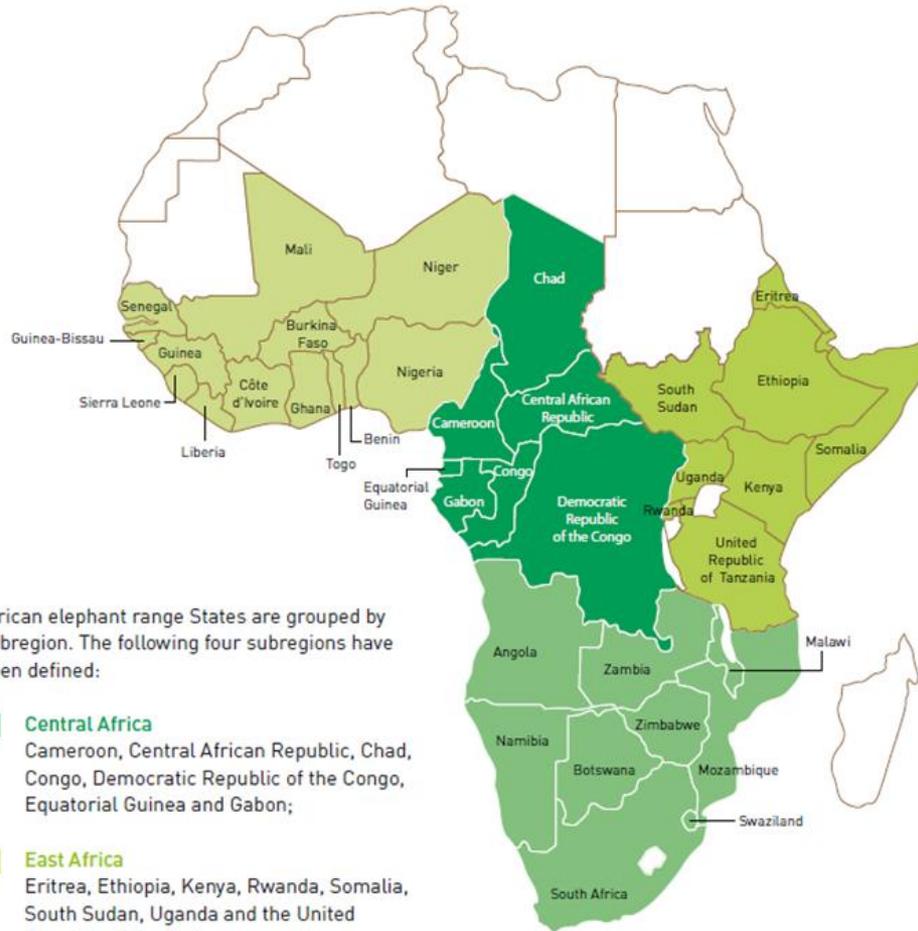
- **8 Range States** from Kenya, Uganda, Chad, Gabon, Ghana, Niger, South Africa and Namibia
- **3 Donors**; Belgium, France and European Commission
- **3 Ex-Officio Members**; UN Environment, CITES Secretariat, CMS Secretariat



AEF Funding

Donor	Amount US\$
Belgium	187,450.84
China	200,000.00
European Commission	1,052,632.00
France	264,970.58
Germany	1,178,312.90
South Africa	20,778.46
The Netherlands	972,582.20
United Kingdom	178,408.85
Total Income	4,055,135.83

62 projects across 4 sub-regions



African elephant range States are grouped by subregion. The following four subregions have been defined:

- Central Africa**
Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon;
- East Africa**
Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania;
- Southern Africa**
Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe;
- West Africa**
Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo



AEAP Priority Objectives

1. Reduce illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products.
2. Maintain elephant habitats and restore connectivity.
3. Reduce human-elephant conflict.
4. Increase awareness on elephant conservation and management of key stakeholders that include policy makers and local communities among other interest groups.
5. Strengthen range states knowledge on African elephant management.
6. Strengthen cooperation and understanding among range states.
7. Improve local communities' cooperation and collaboration on African elephant conservation.
8. African Elephant Action Plan is effectively implemented.



Implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan

1. Reduce illegal killing of elephants and the illegal trade in elephant products

Nigeria

- Equipped and upgraded monitoring systems from Cyber Tracker to SMART software, organized 195 patrols in Yankari Game Reserve and 141 arrests made for trespassing and poaching indicating a strong enforcement of the law in Nigeria.

Ethiopia

- Trained over 155 law enforcement officers in identification, collection and handling wildlife products in over 12 working sites and at Bole International Airport.

Uganda

- Established a canine department at Entebbe International Airport. This has improved tracking, ivory detection and surveillance activities and as a result, stronger law enforcement on wildlife conservation, better protection and more effective monitoring of elephants in Uganda.

2. Maintain elephant habitats and restore their connectivity

Namibia

- A first aerial census in north-west Namibia in almost 20 years which has strengthened Namibia's knowledge on elephant distribution and informed decisions regarding habitat management.

3. Reduce human elephant conflicts

Malawi

- Built a 12 km solar-powered fence in Malawi to mitigate human-elephant conflict and as a result zero crop raids and zero cases of elephants leaving the reserve for the year 2016.

United Republic of Tanzania

- Fenced using beehives at the border of Challa and Ngoyoni villages in Tanzania around a 2-km perimeter which assisted in mitigating HEC as well as improved the welfare of communities through increased household income resulting from honey and better food safety among others.

Ghana

- Developed of a biodiversity education program that helped to mitigate the conflict between farmers and elephants in Ghana.
- Trained 40 farmers fringing Mole National Park in chilli pepper and canister blasting methods of mitigating HEC.

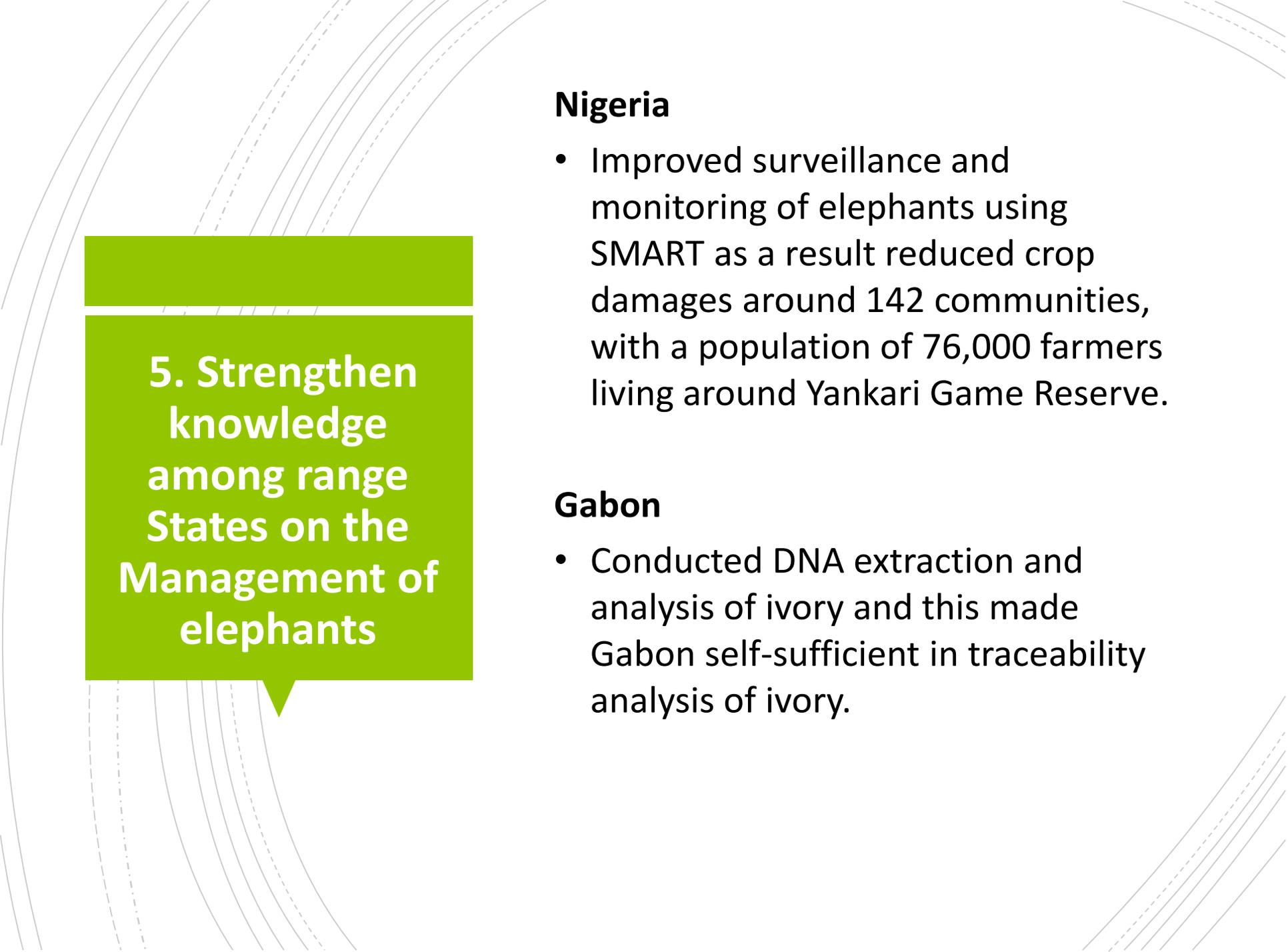
4. Improve awareness on elephant conservation and management of key stakeholders

Ghana

- Trained 125 anti-poaching staff for improved poaching missions and 40 farmers on elephant conservation strategies.
- Published a documentary “The Amazing World of Elephants.”

International Union for Conservation and Nature (IUCN)

- Consolidated and disseminated the “African Elephant Status Report 2016”.
- Modified the range maps and survey data.



**5. Strengthen
knowledge
among range
States on the
Management of
elephants**

Nigeria

- Improved surveillance and monitoring of elephants using SMART as a result reduced crop damages around 142 communities, with a population of 76,000 farmers living around Yankari Game Reserve.

Gabon

- Conducted DNA extraction and analysis of ivory and this made Gabon self-sufficient in traceability analysis of ivory.

**6. Strengthen
cooperation and
understanding
among range
States**

Lusaka Agreement Task Force

- Formulated common strategies to effectively combat poaching and trained enforcement personnel in combating cross-border trafficking at the Sangha Trinational Site in Cameroon and Congo.

7. Improve cooperation and collaboration on African elephant conservation among local communities

Burkina Faso

- Developed a national strategy on managing human-elephant conflict and improved the livelihoods of communities and improved protection of elephants.

Zambia

- Conducted human-elephant conflict vulnerability assessment and collected data in Lupande and Chiawa villages and developed a response strategy to reduce and mitigate human-elephant conflict.

**8. The African
Elephant Action
Plan is
effectively
implemented**

All Range States

- Organized successfully eleven (11) African Elephant Fund Steering Committee meetings to review over 120 proposal submissions and selection of 62 projects in 25 range States for funding projects on conservation and management of elephants.
- Fundraised over 4,000,000\$ for implementation of the AEAP by the Range States.
- Adoption of resolution 1/3 of illegal killing of wildlife and 2/14 of illegal killing of wildlife and illegal trade of wildlife products during the first and second session of UNEA;
- Adoption of AEAP by CMS Member states through resolution (CMS COP 12.19).

AEAP contributions to UN Sustainable Development Goals



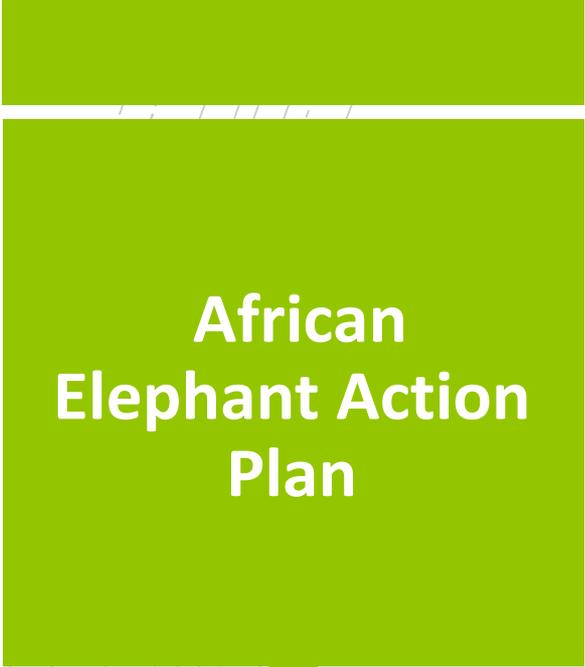
African Elephant Action Plan

- UNEP convened two Range States meeting in the margins of the CITES COP 18 in August 2019 to discuss a way-forward on the technical inputs prepared by the AfESG. These inputs were shared with all the Range States for their comments and views.
- As a follow-up to that, the AEF Secretariat conducted a survey to assess range states' opinions on the need to review the AEAP, which received a feedback from a total of twenty-eight (28) Range States, out of which twenty-six (26) supported the review, one (1) abstained and one (1) was against the revision. This outcome represented two thirds majority of the range states who agreed to initiate the process, and 92.86% of those who did vote.



**African
Elephant Action
Plan**

On 28 Nov 2019, in Nairobi, in the margins of CITES-MIKE meeting, AEF gathered inputs from the Range States, discussed a way-forward on the revision process and further obtained a mandate from the range States to the AEF Steering Committee members to oversee the revision process.

The logo consists of a green speech bubble shape with a white outline. Inside the bubble, the text "African Elephant Action Plan" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the left.

African Elephant Action Plan

Technical inputs from the range States will be presented to the AEF Steering Committee from 10-13 March 2020, during the 12th AEFSC meeting in Entebbe, Uganda and it will mark the official kick-off of the revision of AEAP.



Get Involved

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www.africanelephantfund.org

