



**TRAFFIC**



# Conserving of Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT)

## Mid-Term Review Report

Prepared for  
The International Union of Conservation Network – East and Southern Africa Region  
P.O Box 68200-00200  
Nairobi

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>AMEP</b>	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
<b>AWF</b>	African Wildlife Foundation
<b>CONNECT</b>	Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa Community
<b>COVID-19</b>	Corona Virus Disease - 2019
<b>CA</b>	Contribution Analysis
<b>CMS</b>	Conservation of Migratory Animal Species
<b>DPP</b>	Director of Public Prosecution
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EAAP</b>	East Africa Association of Prosecutors
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FLoD</b>	Local Communities: First Line of Defence Against Illegal Wildlife Trade
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>IGAD</b>	Inter-Governmental Authority of Development
<b>FZS</b>	Frankfurt Zoological Society
<b>IUCN ESARO</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
<b>KIIs</b>	Key Informant Interviews
<b>KWS</b>	Kenya Wildlife Service
<b>LVBC</b>	Lake Victoria Basin Commission
<b>MTR</b>	Mid - Term Review
<b>ODPP</b>	Office of the Director of Public Prosecution
<b>OECD-DAC</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
<b>RDCS</b>	Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
<b>RCMRD</b>	Regional Centre for Mapping Resource for Development
<b>SADC</b>	Southern Africa Development Community
<b>TWIX</b>	Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange
<b>USAID</b>	United States of America International Development
<b>USAID/ KEA</b>	USAID/ Kenya and East Africa
<b>USG</b>	United States Government
<b>RDOAG</b>	Regional Development Objectives Grant Agreement
<b>WCS</b>	World Conservation Society
<b>WWF</b>	World Wildlife Fund

## Executive Summary

### Introduction

The Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) is a four-year (2019-2023) project being implemented by IUCN ESARO, WWF and TRAFFIC. The project is funded by USAID/ KEA at a cost of USD 4,900,000.00. The project aims at capitalising and building on existing conservation initiatives, information, methodologies, best practices, resources and approaches as well as injecting new and innovative thinking to strengthen wildlife conservation action and policy at the regional level for the benefit of the EAC member states.

The CONNECT project is in its second year of implementation. However, the project experienced a slow take-off which was attributed to the global COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing mitigation measures. The unprecedented spread of COVID-19 led to containment measures that resulted into a general slowdown in the implementation of activities. For instance, restrictions on movement imposed by EAC countries as part of global initiatives included banning international travel and strict adherence to the health protocols requiring social distancing, use of face masks, and personal hygiene. These measures therefore meant that project implementers were not able to freely move around to implement the CONNECT project. Overtime, the project implementers adopted innovative approaches such as online/web-based platforms to deliver on the components of the project.

In 2021, the IUCN ESARO contracted PerFomex East Africa Limited to conduct a Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the project. The purpose of conducting the MTR was two-fold. In addition to reporting to the donor (USAID/ KEA) and to the implementing agencies and counterparts on the project implementation, it had an accountability purpose, enabling an assessment of the progress made towards realizing the expected outcomes, identifying corrective measures needed to improve project implementation, optimising its effects and guiding the project team in future decision-making.

In undertaking the MTR, PerFomex EA applied a number of tools to better collect necessary information, analyze and present the progress being made in the implementation of the project. This was alongside flagging out areas that need to be addressed going forward or emerging opportunities that could be tapped into for greater conservation outcomes. These approaches were guided by the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria which emphasize on the assessment of project/intervention relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and mainstreaming of normative values (participation, youth and gender inclusion) during the project implementation. In the following section, we present the findings of the MTR, the key findings are categorized by criterion and various evaluation questions.

Across each of the CONNECT project outcomes, the output achievement was measured against set targets at the output level. In order to arrive at an outcome rating, all outputs under the outcome had a cumulative rating of 100%. For example, in an outcome of four outputs, each output was pro-rated at 25% each. If progress was made on two outputs, the outcome is rated at 50%. It should however be noted that this nominal measure was to give an indicative progress and therefore does not take into consideration the quality of delivery. Outcome rating is an average of the sum of ratings of all outputs under that outcome. The following was the interpretation of the rating above 100% (Excellent), 75%-100% (Highly satisfactory), 60%-74% (Satisfactory), 50%-59% (Moderately satisfactory), below 50% (not satisfactory).

**Overall rating of results: Satisfactory<sup>1</sup>**

### Relevance

**Evaluation question 1:** Were the project strategies and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all the stakeholders involved in matters of collaborative management and conservation of transboundary resources, enhancing the value of wildlife as well as reducing wildlife poaching and trafficking in the EAC?

### **Total relevance rating: Highly Satisfactory**

The project design displayed good vertical consistency with all activity lead thematic focus. Further, implementation and design of the project objectives, outcomes and outputs are closely aligned with and relevant to USAID/ KEA's RDCS intermediate result 1.1 on improvement of conservation and management of natural capital. The project

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<sup>1</sup> Overall rating of the project in terms of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.



also shows a close convergence between the strategic objectives of EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Product and the African Union's African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa which provides a framework for the development and implementation of regional anti-poaching strategies in the continent.

### **Effectiveness (Progress towards achieving outcomes)**

**Evaluation question 2:** What outcomes (both intended and unintended) has the project achieved by the time of the MTR, and are they contributing to and/ or positioned to contribute to the achievement of the project's goal?

**Total effectiveness rating: Satisfactory**

### **General considerations**

There is a strong correlation between IUCN ESARO's CAS thematic area priorities, TRAFFIC's current programme, WWF's objectives on natural resource governance and USAID/ KEA's RDCS priorities. These institutional priorities are contributory to the objectives of the EAC's Anti-Poaching strategy regarding the transboundary natural resource management. The connections to the project outcomes, outputs, and activity leads, has a general effect of project execution. This is demonstrated by the performance of activities and how they contribute to the commitments to conserve wildlife and habitats in East Africa, in line with its Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill of 2010 and Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products of 2017. The degree of progress towards the ultimate goals and the level of activity implementation is considered satisfactory for each of the objectives and for most of the outputs of the project.

### **Objective 1: Collaborative Management of Transboundary Natural Resources**

On average, 71% progress has been made in the achievement of the outcomes and activities. The rate of progress is considered high. The ratings within outputs average between 50% and 100% for this objective. The outputs realized in this objective lay the foundations and represent essential inputs for progressing towards the creation of policy and legal instruments while at the same time strengthening the collaborative management of transboundary/ transfrontier natural resource in EAC partners states. Along these lines, the next step would be to place special emphasis on and speeding up the execution of any lagging and leading activities.

### **Objective 2: Perceived Value of Wildlife Increased**

An average of 63% rate of progress has been made in the achievement of the outcomes and activities. This is considered high delivery rate. The ratings within outputs are between 60% and 70% for this objective. Despite wildlife in economies studies having been completed, both outputs about policy briefs and actions taken by EAC from the wildlife in economies studies have not been delivered. There has however been an over-delivery of one of the outputs by 59%. The results and recommendations from the wildlife in economies studies provide key lessons for the region as essential building blocks for increasingly influencing perception on the value of wildlife among EAC partner states. Along these lines, the next step would be to place great emphasis on the recommendations of the wildlife in economy studies as a driver towards livelihoods improvement both at micro and macro levels.

### **Objective 3: Poaching and trafficking reduced**

An average of 51% rate of progress was recorded in the achievement of the outcomes and activities. The outputs are rated between 0% to 72%. The outputs realized under this objective lay the foundations and represent essential inputs for progressing towards the reduction in demand for illegal wildlife products in EAC partners states. The comparatively low progress in this objective is as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions which impaired the delivery of the outputs. With travel restrictions increasingly being lifted, the next steps will be to place special emphasis on continuing the execution of sub-activities with a focus on the measurement of change in consumption of illegal wildlife products in target audiences.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation and Information dissemination.**

#### **Total monitoring and evaluation rating: Moderately Satisfactory**

Good practice foresees data management and safeguard plan that stipulates strategies to safeguard confidentiality, systems to store/ maintain original data sources/ project records, database entry procedures and Data management coordination across partners. The project has developed a robust Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that is functional that is followed from when the data is generated from the field to archiving.

IUCN EASRO provides USAID/ KEA with progress reports generated in collaboration with WWF and TRAFFIC. However, a reported challenge was with the coordination of parties involved in project management and reporting. These annual reports are minimal on outcome-based reporting.

### **Efficiency**

**Evaluation question 3:** Have the intervention methods, institutional structure and financial, technical and operational resources and procedures available helped or hindered the achievement of the project outcomes and objectives?

There is a forward-looking organizational structure and a chain of accountability. IUCN EASRO takes lead on issues of governance, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and also oversees procurement processes that go beyond a threshold of over USD60,000. Otherwise, WWF and TRAFFIC are response for all their procurements. WWF and TRAFFIC are firmly involved in direct implementation. The parties know the terms of association which are captured in the MOUs. The absence of a dedicated project implementation unit (PIU) bringing together all partners is a limitation at the moment. Annual work planning and budgeting is on the basis of submission by individual implementers and final consolidation by IUCN ESARO. This involves a back-and-forth kind of engagement that can be illuminated through a joint work planning session. Where resources have been used, the cost of the interventions justify the results. In certain instances, for example EAAP and activity 3.1 on patterns of use of threatened wildlife in EA phase II, the implementing agencies have gone beyond the available resources to achieve greater results/outputs.

**Total efficiency rating: Satisfactory**

### **Implementation and execution quality<sup>2</sup>**

**Implementation and execution rating: Satisfactory**

At the start of the project there was a time loss of 10 months between contract signing and the start of implementation. This was because of the delays in the finalization of project sub-contracting with TRAFFIC and WWF. Project staffing also took a longer time thereby contributing to the delays in the start of implementation. Further, there were two general elections (Burundi and Tanzania) during the same period. As expected of EAC the engagement with the socio-political issues meant that priority was placed on the election and therefore other activities lagged during that time. The situation affected the re-appropriation and connection with the stakeholders related to the CONNECT project requiring the project team to start a lobbying process with the different institutional stakeholders where they are expected to implement activities.

### **Sustainability of the outcomes**

**Evaluation question 5:** How sustainable are, and/or will be, the outcomes achieved to date at the environmental, social, financial and institutional level?

There is high level of key project stakeholders' involvement in the project. The current stakeholders including EAC, USAID/ KEA, IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC and WWF actively participate in the project under the coordination of IUCN ESARO. As a result, the outputs are showing signs of crystallization around expected outcomes. At this time, it is not possible to arrive at a definitive finding on sustainability given that institutional, economic and social sustainability are long term and cannot at this time.

**Sustainability of outcomes rating: Moderately Likely**

### **Risks and Risk management**

**Overall likelihood of risks to sustainability: Likely**

Both the project document and the annual reports describe and update the risks that may occur during the project implementation. The documents specify the likelihood of occurrence and potential impact. However, risk mitigation measures are not articulated elaborately. The MTR team and key informants in this assignment viewed this action of risk planning as positive, although the implementation of mitigation measures must be expedited on, particularly those related to political and institutional risks.

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<sup>2</sup> Execution and implementation quality was considered as a whole, given that IUCN-ESARO, TRAFFIC and WWF directly executes the project.



## Lessons learned

In the end, the following lessons can be gleaned from the MTR:

**Lesson learned 1:** An effective and planned co-creation at inception phase is needed to review the project document, assess needed capacity and changes in context and make any adjustments in the project logical/ results framework that may be needed before starting technical implementation of a project. The activity leads and implementation teams at this phase get to be properly selected and together get trained and agree on the methodologies, standards and technical and administrative procedures of the parties in charge of the project. The implementing partners would then revisit the stakeholder analysis with a focus on gaining complementarity among each of them.

**Lesson learned 2:** Having a branding and communications strategy with clear objectives as well as templates for various collaboration at the onset of the project has helped to guide the project identity and allow structured internal and external communications, which are aligned to the project key messages. Specific project key messages allow partners to speak for the project more broadly beyond the focus activities.

**Lesson learned 3:** Project technical teams need to be trained together during the inception phase on cross-cutting perspectives such as gender, age and social safeguards. This is a widespread practice in most lead institutions. In addition to making greater efforts in the socialisation of project policies and manuals, alongside national and regional level strategies, it creates greater adherence and synergies to cross-cutting principles in terms of inclusivity, youth and gender.

**Lesson learned 4:** It is not possible to adopt good practices in conservation and sustainable management of transboundary/transfrontier resources and maintain them in the long term if this does not entail a change in the welfare of communities where such practices are adopted. Given the scope and duration of CONNECT project, making a significant change in conservation and sustainable management of transboundary/transfrontier resources in the EAC are never going to be feasible without appreciating the need for economic development. This is one of the reasons why the design of a new larger scale programme that the EAC requested IUCN ESARO to mobilize resources for the development of local livelihoods and on-the-ground nature-based solutions. Projects focusing on sustainable management of transboundary/ transfrontier resources natural resources like this must contemplate and be aligned with this reality in their design and implementation.

## Conclusions

**Conclusion 1** (Criterion: Relevance): It was found that the implementation and design of the outcomes and outputs of the project are closely aligned with and relevant to EAC's anti-poaching strategy, IUCN ESARO's CAS thematic area priorities, TRAFFIC's current programme, WWF's objectives on natural resource governance and USAID/ KEA's RDCS priorities. Furthermore, the intervention logic indicates that the three specific objectives of the project will be achieved, which, in turn, represents a contribution to the expected long-term impact. This will perfectly contribute to the USAID/ KEA RDCS and the EAC Anti-poaching strategies. As a result of this scenario, the project relevance is rated as **satisfactorily on track**. This is largely due to the relevance and quality of the design of the intervention, progress of implementing the planned activities at the mid-term and active engagement by stakeholders involved. Despite this, at the design stage, it would have been more beneficial if targeted partners were brought together to co-create the project in a way that fits each partner context and needs.

**Conclusion 2** (Criterion: General Effectiveness): The CONNECT project interventions targeting transboundary/transfrontier natural resources are placed within the department of productive and social sector. The EAC secretariat has a limitation in human resource spread over various institutional engagements. The quality of engagement between EAC and CONNECT project is therefore affected by this human resource limitations. It was extremely difficult to engage EAC staff during the MTR. It is possible that this limitation also affects the decision-making processes. Certain decisions may take too long to make due the absence of a dedicated team at EAC to handle issues related to the project. Despite the observations made in this regard, the degree of progress towards the ultimate goal, the level of activity implementation and, therefore, the project's effectiveness, is considered **satisfactory** for each of the objectives and outcomes and for most of the outputs of the project. At mid-term, the project has managed to promote the values of transboundary conservation, information sharing and sustainable use of biodiversity among strategic decision-makers, public servants and beneficiary producers. Thus, it can be

confirmed that the project has taken a fundamental step in consolidating its outcomes despite the Covid-19 pandemic challenges. Effective engagement of the EAC secretariat to spearhead the project to help achieve the target EAC Anti-poaching's strategic objectives strategy remains weak.

**Conclusion 3** (Criterion: Objective 1 Effectiveness): At mid-term, participating institutions led by the respective activity leads were found to have developed skills and improved the tools expected to enhance and strengthen the collaborative management and conservation of transboundary natural resource management in the region. They also displayed a predisposition to establishing institutional commitments to regional policy dialogues, learning and decision-making on management of transboundary natural resources in order to improve sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes. The next two years of implementation will be essential in solidifying and formalizing these commitments, providing a regulatory framework for them and institutionalizing promotion relevant instruments.

**Conclusion 4** (Criterion: Objectives 2 and 3 Effectiveness): The participating institutions are aware of the values of living wildlife. They further appreciate that these values get eroded by lack of access to new knowledge and tools that present evidence for perceived values for wildlife. Therefore, the lead implementers have actively participated in the identification of key aspects of wildlife economy at various levels, in addition to adopting good practices for anti-poaching and trafficking strategies. These achievements are deemed satisfactory in the MTR because they focus on accomplishing expected results.

**Conclusion 5** (Criterion: Efficiency): The project efficiency is rated as **satisfactory**. The design is adequate in structure (in terms of management and operations). The quality of the technical team is robust with clear view of the roles and targets for which they are responsible. The direct technical and financial implementation by activity leads has afforded effective, efficient, results-based management to the project. These positive features have provided a strong capacity to respond to drawbacks such as the initial delays in implementation.

**Conclusion 6** (Criterion: Sustainability): **Moderately Likely**. Progress has been made in the right direction, this includes raising awareness, building knowledge, developing skills and tools and implementing good practices in governance, transboundary/ transfrontier biodiversity conservation and sustainable management. However, two years into project implementation, social, institutional and economic sustainability has yet to be fully secured. Along these lines, the EAC engagement has not been optimized, due to the issues outlined in Conclusion 2. It will be crucial and decisive for the EAC to provide the necessary leadership for the economic and institutional sustainability to the project activities. Social sustainability will be dependent upon the ongoing mentoring and technical assistance given to participating institutions.

## **Recommendations**

It was clear that Covid-19 pandemic greatly affected the project at the inception point. However, the implementing partners were quick to innovatively rollout the project against these odds. The project is currently on the right track, but the following recommendations will provide further impetus in the implementation.

### ***Strategic recommendations***

**Recommendation 1:** As a measure focusing on ensuring the continuity and sustainability of the project benefits, co-creation especially in the next phases of engagement is strongly encouraged. When designing such a complex project, all strategic partners ought to be identified up-front and brought together in the co-creation process for the project and also to facilitate ownership.

**Recommendation 2:** The CONNECT project should strategically build the EAC secretariat's capacity to address the limited staffing needs. If adopted, this move can help address the EAC's leadership and capacity issues. The secretariat is overburdened and cannot deliver effectively. When planning a regional project like this, a project of this nature should consider seconding staff to the EAC secretariat to ensure adequate attention is given to the project while filling technical gaps related to biodiversity conservation.

**Recommendation 3:** The project did not solely target gender and age as an intervention tool despite the fact that these cross cutting aspects of interventions did matter in some critical activities. Constructing a framework to integrate gender and age issues into activity leads' institutional policy on gender and youth in the EAC context is

recommended. A gender and age analysis would help the project by providing current evidence of potential beneficiaries' needs. This would allow for effective cross-cutting dimensions inclusion in the project.

**Recommendation 4:** USAID has committed a further USD 2.9 Million for the next phase of the project. However, this is contingent upon implementers absorbing at least 75% of the current allocation. It was established that the current burn rates stand at; IUCN ESARO (83%) and TRAFFIC (82%) and WWF (50%). The MTR has established that the WWF burn rate is low, and hence they should be engaged to fast-track implementation. Where challenges exist, alternative avenues to expend resources be considered. This could include virement of funds to other activity budget lines.

#### ***Operational recommendations***

**Recommendation 5:** Although the CONNECT project was designed to address regional issues, some key informants felt it should have facilitated local action. We suggest that the project learn from the SADC region, which established a transboundary conservation network focusing on transboundary ecosystems known as transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs). The project provided the EAC with a conservation network learning opportunity based on lessons from the SADC region. Thus, EAC's Working Group for Transboundary Wildlife Protection has validated an EAC Transboundary Conservation Areas Network concept note, which will be tabled for approval at the next EAC Sectoral Council meeting. After the CONNECT project, IUCN ESARO should help operationalize this concept to help catalyze actions at both the policy and operational levels on the ground.

**Recommendation 6:** The MTR noted that each activity lead had an obligation to conduct and deliver a baseline study activity and also track the performance of each activity. The IUCN ESARO is obligated to compile all components as described in the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP), in the results framework/ matrix. Incorporating an effective means of tracking the performance and potential impacts of the project into the project monitoring system should be constructed and adopted by the sub-grantees while considering their needs.

**Recommendation 7:** It is recommended that the CONNECT project supports the partner states through EAC secretariat to take a step and borrow lessons from the SADC region, and focused on clearly defined transfrontier conservation areas. Focusing action in these landscapes might also help direct more resources and efforts on on-the-ground tangible activities for the benefit of biodiversity and livelihoods. The efforts to mobilize resources for a new nature-based solutions initiative, jointly designed by EAC and IUCN ESARO, should also be intensified.

**Recommendation 8:** The EAC has always emphasized the need for consistent project impact to target populations. To facilitate improved project impact and also expenditure, the CONNECT project leadership at different levels should focus on two key elements. It is recommended that the project management team be reviewing situation as it emerges by holding pause and reflect sessions to facilitate any necessary adjustments that would facilitate community level benefits. By doing this, local level tangible results including bankable projects at the community level can be realized based on targets from the ministries have strategic plans and priorities in each partner state.

**Recommendation 9:** According to the CONNECT project TOC, the Covid-19 pandemic posed a huge threat to activity execution, affecting the project's pace and potential for achieving results at all levels. This means that the project management team should monitor the situation and adjust as needed. If this significantly impacts the project partners' ability to implement activities, the project should consider seconding a staff member to the EAC secretariat.

**Recommendation 10:** The project has done very well reporting at the output level results. However, at the second year, it would be important that the project start looking at the wider effects resulting from the outputs being generated. The MTR recommends that the project starts reporting on the trends towards the achievement of the outcomes. This is in addition to looking at what answers are being achieved with respect to the learning questions proposed by the project at the beginning.

## **Structure of the report**

This report is composed of five sections. The first part of the report begins with an introduction, this is followed by a section on the project background data. This describes the context in which the MTR took place and also presents a reconstruction and analysis of its theory of change.

The following two sections describe, analyse and discuss the main findings of the MTR arranged by evaluation questions (section 4) and lessons learned, conclusions and operational and strategic recommendations (section 5). The appendices and annexes mainly provide information about the MTR process, methodology and the analysis conducted to back the findings, conclusions and recommendations in the report.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Mid-Term Review Purpose and Questions**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (IUCN ESARO) contracted PerFomex East Africa Limited to conduct a Mid-Term Review (MTR) for the 'Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT)' Project. This is a 4-year project implemented by a consortium of partners focusing on select East African Community partner states namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. IUCN ESARO is the lead implementing partner, working with TRAFFIC and WWF to implement specific activities. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development - Kenya and East Africa (USAID/ KEA) and receives policy guidance from the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat. The project, which commenced in May 2019, is part of a larger portfolio of projects funded by USAID/ KEA to the East African Community under the Regional Development Objectives Grant Agreement (RDOAG) and USAID/ KEA's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS). The goal of USAID/ KEA Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) is to enhance Africa-led sustainable economic growth and resilience.

### **1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Mid-Term Review (MTR)**

The purpose of the MTR was two-fold. In addition to reporting to the donor USAID/ KEA and to the implementing agencies and counterparts on the project implementation, it had a learning purpose, enabling an assessment of the progress made towards accomplishing the objectives and outcomes proposed, identifying corrective measures needed to improve implementation, optimising its effects and guiding the project team in future decision-making. The review covered select East Africa Community partner states of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda for the 2-year period the project has been implemented.

Specifically, the MTR sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Review the project design, its validity and strategic fit to assess whether the project management structure, partnership and implementation arrangements were sufficient for the effective delivery of the objectives.
- Assess the project implementation in terms of the progress towards the achievement of expected outputs and outcomes relative to set targets.
- assess the extent to which the institutional infrastructure in EAC partner states and non-state actors had ownership and capacity (technical and financial) to continue supporting the interventions.
- Establish whether the activity outputs contribute to the overall goal, changes, both anticipated and unanticipated.
- Draw lessons from program implementation experiences and challenges to guide on the possible adaptive management models.

The findings of this MTR, at different levels, extract lessons learned, diagnosis and an analysis of issues including the influencing or hindering factors towards the achievement of the project progress. The findings also formulate recommendations towards remedial actions to improve the project implementation and performance.

The intended users and uses of the MTR include:

- Project team: they will use the findings and lessons identified in the MTR, where possible, to adjust the project activities and to decide, in conjunction with the implementing stakeholders and the USAID/ KEA, the path to follow.
- The EAC Secretariat, the partner states involved, partners and local community beneficiaries: they will use the results and conclusions of the MTR to improve the scope of the outcomes in the remaining period of project implementation.
- USAID/ KEA (donor): in consultation with IUCN ESARO, they will use the conclusions and recommendations of the MTR to aid in strategic decision-making about the path to follow in the future. Furthermore, the MTR will serve as a resource for future similar assignments by the IUCN ESARO of its interventions.
- IUCN ESARO: they will take the main outcomes of the MTR into account in future strategic planning.
- Other development partners interested in supporting similar interventions on integrated management of natural resources in East Africa.

## **2. Background and Context of the CONNECT Project**

### **2.1 Project Context**

East Africa region has rich biodiversity and natural resources that transcend national boundaries. These include vast landscapes, iconic wildlife species, watersheds, arable lands, minerals etc. Broadly defined as natural capital, these resources are an important source of economic revenue and critical to East Africa's economic growth. The region's nature-based tourism industry, which is almost entirely dependent on wildlife and protected areas, contributes 7.5-10% of GDP to the region and supports local communities depending on the natural capital for their livelihoods. Wildlife contributes both economically and intrinsically to the region's natural capital and is therefore a critical asset for East Africa's future growth and sustainable development. Loss of habitats and species, the disruption of wildlife migratory, poaching, and wildlife trafficking are major threats in East Africa.

Habitat and species loss, disruption of wildlife movements due to human-caused activities, poaching and wildlife trafficking are all major challenges to East Africa's natural resources and the lives of local people who rely on wildlife and natural ecosystems. Protecting transboundary natural capital is a challenging task that necessitates strong coordination between public and non-state actors, such as non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and commercial sector partners, who have access to high-quality data on which to make strategic decisions.

Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources (CONNECT) is a project developed by USAID/ KEA in collaboration with the IUCN ESARO, WWF, TRAFFIC and the East African Community (EAC). The project supports regional policy leadership and learning platform for transboundary natural resource conservation and management in East Africa, by providing technical and analytical support to the EAC's mandate to coordinate and convene partner states to address policy and strategic bottlenecks using evidence-based decision-making and strengthen regional dialogue on transboundary natural resource management. The project also supports the implementation of the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade, and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products, and IUCN ESARO collaborates closely with TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring



network and WWF. Working closely with the EAC Secretariat and appropriate EAC bodies, the project also promotes the development of the EAC's technical capacities, leadership and political will to address a wide variety of transboundary natural resource management issues.

The purpose of the Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) is to strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources including wildlife and landscapes in the region. The project seeks to strengthen East African Community (EAC's) institutional leadership to deliver on its regional mandate and commitments to conserve and manage shared environment and natural resources in East Africa. The project works to strengthen existing regional conservation initiatives through generating evidence-based information, innovative methodologies, tools, and best practices for the benefit of the EAC Partner States and their citizens.

## 2.2 Project Background

The CONNECT Project aims to use existing conservation initiatives, information, methodologies, and best practices to inject new innovative thinking to strengthen wildlife conservation action and policy at regional level for the benefit of the EAC partner states. A significant part of the project is being implemented through the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife referred to as the "EAC Anti-poaching Strategy". Linked to the CONNECT project, the EAC Secretariat and Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) are implementing the Improving Collaborative Conservation and Management of Transboundary Natural Resources in East African Community project, which is also funded by USAID. The project is supporting the East African Community in the implementation of its commitments to conserve wildlife and habitats in East Africa, in line with its Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill of 2010 and Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products of 2017.

This project MTR was undertaken in order to review the implementation of the CONNECT project with a view to identify challenges to performance, adaptively enhance project performance improvement, accountability and learning. The MTR included anecdotal information from sampled beneficiaries about their experience of such issues as the increase of women at strategic levels of decision making, inclusion of gender in national action plans, and the inclusion of gender roles and language in key wildlife conservation activities. This MTR was guided by the OECD/ DAC Criteria for good evaluation practice which tests the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, potential impact and inclusivity/equity of interventions.

The CONNECT Project has three specific objectives with accompanying expected outcomes. These are;

**Table 1 - CONNECT Project Objectives and Outcomes**

Outcomes	Activities
<b>Objective 1: Collaborative Management and Conservation of Transboundary Natural Resources management enhanced</b>	
Outcome 1: Strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary natural resources.	<i>Activity 1.1: To strengthen cross-sectoral decision making for sustainable development of transboundary natural resources</i>
	<i>Activity 1.2: To provide technical Support to EAC Secretariat, Working Groups and Sub Committees</i>

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Outcome 2: Improved sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes.	<i>Activity 1.2B Sharing lessons and building capacity of the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation areas building on best practices in the wider region (e.g. Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, SADC Transfrontier Conservation Programme and Network).</i>
	<i>Activity 1.3 Resource mobilisation for the implementation of priority initiatives</i>
<b>Objective 2: Perceived Value of Wildlife Increased</b>	
Outcome 3: Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife.	<i>Activity 2.1 increase political support for wildlife and natural ecosystems by undertaking "Wildlife in the economy" studies.</i>
<b>Objective 3: Poaching and trafficking reduced</b>	
Outcome 4: Reduced demand for illegal wildlife products.	<i>Activity 3.1: Patterns of Use of Threatened Wildlife in East Africa, Phase II.</i>
	<i>Activity 3.2: Building capacity for stronger engagement of local communities in combating Illegal Wildlife Trade</i>
Outcome 5: Improved regional and bilateral collaboration on enforcement and prosecution.	<i>Activity 3.3: Organize a workshop to discuss the Role of women and youth in combating illegal wildlife trade</i>
	<i>Activity 3.3A: Develop a compilation of case studies of youth and women's engagement in addressing wildlife crime in East Africa contributing to a broader evidence base for the role of women and youth in improving natural resource management surrounding protected areas.</i>
	<i>Activity 3.4: Development of an East-African TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange)</i>
	<i>Activity 3.5: Establishing a Permanent Forum and Secretariat for wildlife prosecutors in East Africa on Wildlife Crime and Corruption</i>
	<i>Activity 3.6. Enhancing existing initiatives combating wildlife crime and corruption at ports through a data-driven analysis of typologies of seizures related to wildlife crime as they affect ports.</i>

The project design rightly considered joint actions would raise the likelihood of success and impact of the initiative, besides promoting dialogue and participatory environmental governance. For this reason, coordination with public and non-public institutions was encouraged at the onset of the project.

### 2.3 Theory of Change

The CONNECT Project anchored its Theory of Change (TOC) on a three-pronged approach aimed at improving conservation and management of natural capital by drawing lessons from existing interventions in transboundary natural resources management. These included;

- i. Strategies to enhance collaborative management and conservation of transboundary natural resource such as strengthening regional policy dialogue and improving sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes.
- ii. Increasing perceived value of living wildlife, by creating awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife.
- iii. Reduction of wildlife poaching and trafficking by designing and implementing interventions aligned with the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products.

The CONNECT project hypothesized that if the policies of EAC member states addressing management of transboundary natural resources are harmonized, and communities realize the economic value of living

wildlife coupled with improved capacity on law enforcement, illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products would decline and population of key wildlife species would rise and that wildlife would contribute significantly to economic growth of partner states.

Looking at some of the pathways in the TOC (marked by red boxes), the three strategic areas are markedly behind schedule. Unless deliberate measures are taken to address the bottlenecks, the immediate results may not be fully delivered. Firstly, there is the expected improvement of sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes. Although there are ongoing discussions on the development of a transfrontier conservation area, the concept notes addressing priority needs towards implementation of the EAC antipoaching strategy have not been developed. This is notwithstanding the emerging reality that the Anti-poaching strategy expires in 2022.

The second intermediate result that is lagging behind is the reduction in demand for wildlife products. To achieve this intermediate result, the project was supposed to conduct awareness and demand reduction campaigns in the community, develop training materials, training the community on FLoD methodology and further hold workshops to discuss the role of women and youth in the fight against IWT. The training materials and the FLoD training have largely been conducted. However, awareness raising campaigns were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic because they needed physical engagements.

Finally, for the intermediate result on the regional and bilateral collaboration on enforcement and prosecution for illegal wildlife crimes, the concern is only on the sustainability of the TWIX and the combating of wildlife crimes and corruption at the ports. The CONNECT project mandate was not to stop corruption. This therefore calls for collaboration with other governmental agencies that work directly to combat corruption this is resource intensive.

Upon evaluation of the TOC, two strategies identified to drive the path of change were:

1. Political influence and institutional strengthening for participatory environmental governance. This has facilitated the strengthening and harmonization of relevant regional policy dialogue among EAC partner states.
2. Awareness creation and promotion of information and knowledge on the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife thereby resulting in increased perceived value of living wildlife. This provides motivation to participate in the conservation and sustainable management of transboundary natural resources among EAC partner states.

The review appreciated the fact that each of these strategies is linked to a set of project outcomes, which, through implementation, drive a chain of changes in the short, medium (pre-conditions) and long terms (impact). These changes, in turn, are directly or indirectly dependent upon the fulfilment of a series of assumptions made during design.

The review of the ToC, does not prompt any changes in the outcomes and objectives of the project. However, it would be important to propose practical ways of managing the transboundary natural resources knowing that not all the EAC partners states are at the same level in their national policies and laws. The project assumed that policy absorption is same across the partner states. Therefore, this kind of a project would have benefitted from incorporation of additional variables, relevant to partner states and understood as intermediate states, mid-term changes and assumptions that are needed to achieve

the national and regional changes that such a project implementation endeavours to generate (*see figure 1*).

An analysis of the pathways provides mixed results of the extent to which the project objectives will likely be achieved. The synthesis below provides the details;

- i. Collaborative management and conservation of transboundary natural resource.  
Under this pathway, it was expected that the project would organize seminars to discuss policy recommendations that are developed with support from the project to ensure effective transboundary natural resource management. The MTR was of the opinion that these were very successfully delivered. The planned regional policy dialogues were strengthened iteratively, these were meant to complement improvement in the sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes. However, to achieve this, some anti-poaching priority needs were meant to be addressed. It was also expected that a transfrontier conservation area would be agreed upon. This has not taken place despite having an opportunity to learn from SADC. Under this pathway, IUCN ESARO was meant to provide strategic guidance and technical support to the EAC secretariat on the development and review of selected key policies, strategies and legislation. Key among these was the EAC Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill and the Regional Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Despite this bill being critical, the project was only able to engage relevant technical advisors who worked very closely with the EAC secretariat. However, the delivery of the law has not been possible. The term for the current EAC Anti-poaching strategy is coming to an end in 2022, what is more urgent would be the need to renew its term or develop a new strategy based on lessons drawn from the current one's implementation. This means that the pathways along this objective will be partially realized as certain aspect of the strategy may take a different perspective.
- ii. Increasing perceived value of living wildlife, by creating awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife. This pathway was the most delivered and has proved to be a shot in the arm towards realizing the project goal. The project, through ALU has delivered a number of wildlife in economy studies and has gone ahead to effectively disseminate the findings to raise awareness. These have been taken positively by stakeholders on the industry. This means that the pathways in this objective will be fully realized.
- iii. Reduction of wildlife poaching and trafficking by designing and implementing interventions aligned with the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products. This pathway is dependent on a reduction in the demand for wildlife products as a result of improved regional and bilateral collaboration on the enforcement and prosecution. These two have benefitted from increased awareness as a result of various targeted campaigns, trainings and workshops conducted with support from the project. In addition, the establishment of the EAAP was very instrumental in ensuring that prosecution is coordinated across the region. However, because of the limitations in terms of the USG funding conditions, the EAAP faces a funding challenge given the membership of EAC is six against the three currently supported by the project. Some EAC partner states such as South Sudan have been left out of the project interventions. This means that the pathways under this objective will not be achieved comprehensively. This requires long term engagements with the EAC secretariat and other stakeholders. It would work better if the TFCA was realised.

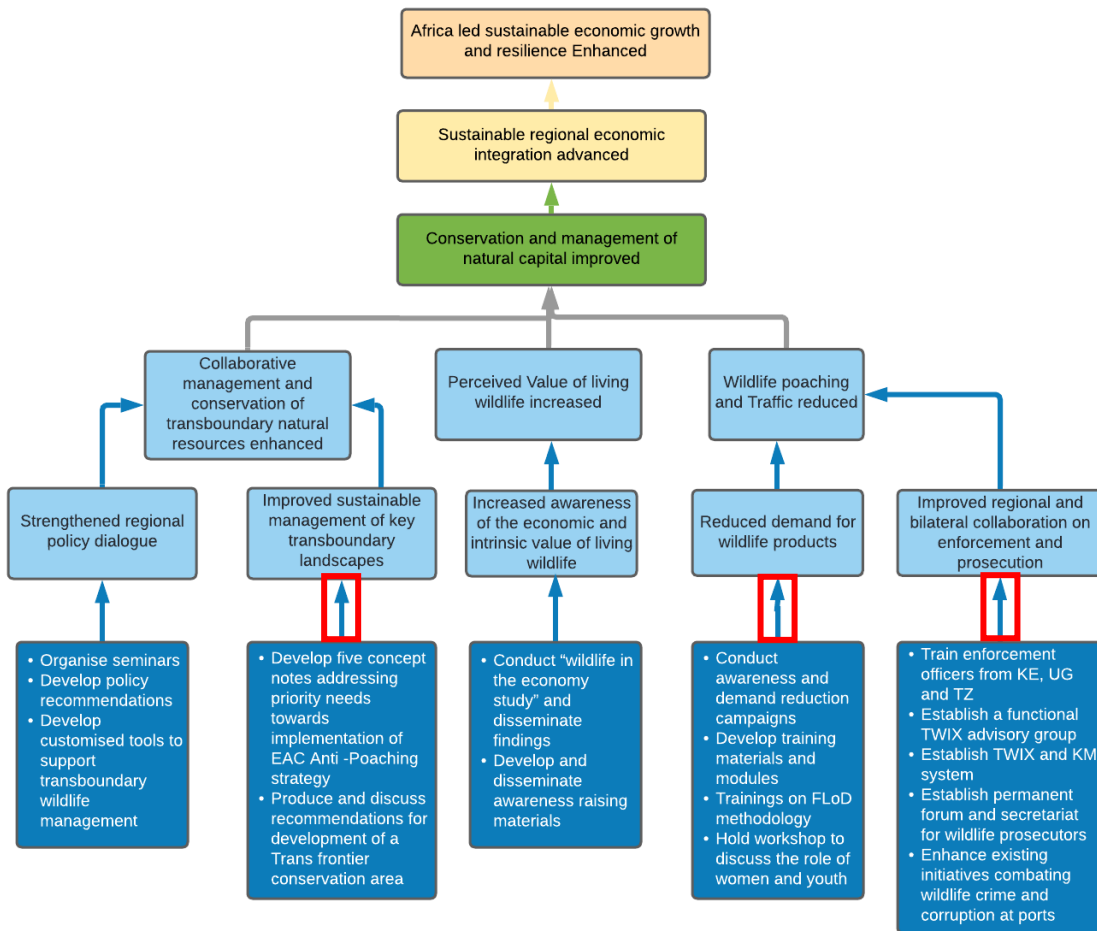


Figure 1 - CONNECT Project Theory of Change

### 3. Mid-Term Review Methodology

In order to fulfil the objectives of the MTR, a mixed, learning-oriented, participatory approach was used based on the project theory of change. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were applied. Analysis of data collected also followed a mixed approach involving triangulating to better support the findings. The reporting needs of the MTR are determined by the OECD/ DAC criteria and related evaluation questions and sub-questions. Each of these was answered based on description, analysis and measurements. This took into consideration the programme design, management structure, processes driven and mid-term results of the intervention.

#### 3.1 Methodology Approach and Design

The MTR principally benefitted from a rigorous desk review of secondary project documents process. Thereafter, face-to-face, telephone and virtual interviews of project stakeholders and implementers via zoom platform were conducted. The MTR team together with the IUCN ESARO developed an evaluation matrix that set out the information needed from each stakeholder. In addition, a detailed interview plan structured by stakeholder was developed and this set out the indicators against which the MTR team sought evidence. The MTR team also developed a detailed topic guide for each respondent prior to interviews to guide conversations. Additional tools that were developed to facilitate data collection

included Focused Group discussion (FGD) guide, case studies, topic guide and document register that facilitated secondary data collection and analysis.

### **3.1.1 Theory-based evaluation**

The entire MTR exercise was guided by theory-based evaluation approach to help in meeting the project learning objectives. The theory-based approach was assessed against multiple theories of change: the overarching CONNECT project theory of change as well as the TRAFFIC & WWF institutional theories of change. This enabled the considerations and contributions of each consortium member against their own theory of change, as well as the overarching contributions of the partners as a whole to the CONNECT theory of change. The theory-based approach addressed the following;

- Elaborated, tested and re-tested the project outcome level theories of change through a structured contribution analysis in order to assess the contribution the interventions made to observed changes in the results framework and reported in the annual progress reports.
- Used Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) to draw learning conclusions that are applicable across different contexts since the project is being implemented by different partners and in different EAC partner states.
- Undertook case studies to develop a deep understanding of why and how observed changes happened in specific cases and to identify and understand any potential synergies across the project objectives.

### **3.1.2 Contribution Analysis (CA)**

The MTR team undertook a structured contribution analysis to assess the contribution of activities implemented through IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC & WWF to the overall observed results. The CA enabled the MTR to test hypotheses and assumptions from the CONNECT Project's theory of change around how project activities were expected to produce given outcomes. The CA allowed for the assessment of non-project explanations for change to test the extent to which the project activities contributed to observed change.

The structured CA approach had the following six steps:

- Step 1: Elaborations of the connection and contribution of the different theories of change to the CONNECT Project theory of change.
- Step 2: Based on the evaluation questions, the MTR set out attribution needs to the project.
- Step 3: Gathered evidence against key aspects of interest within the theories of change such as integration of youth and women.
- Step 4: Assembled and assessed the contribution narrative and challenges to it.
- Step 5: Gathered additional evidence as they were narrated by respondents.
- Step 6: Revised and strengthened the contribution narrative.

As the project partners work in complex and dynamic settings, with results that are to some extent intangible such as policy level results, the precise potential for impacts of their work were predicted to be difficult to attribute. For this reason, structured CA, based on rich theories of change, was the most robust and appropriate method to assess the contributions of implementing partners' work and accountability to observed results. The structured CA benefitted from the desk review and also primary data collected to contextualize understanding of CONNECT project activities.



### **3.1.3 Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)**

Building on the structured CA, this MTR also undertook QCA<sup>3</sup> to assess the causal contribution of different factors relating to the CONNECT project and implementing partners' theories of change to the outcomes achieved by project across contexts. Doing this enabled the identification of key contextual factors (internal and external) which contributed to the success or limitation of potential CONNECT project impacts across different contexts.

QCA enabled the systematic cross - context comparisons, which considered the internal complexity of cases, allowing complex causations and counterfactual analysis. It also allowed the MTR team to identify key factors (or contextual conditions) which are necessary but not sufficient for a given outcome in a given context as well as across contexts, along multiple causal pathways and at multiple levels (regional, national and local). By doing this, the MTR team sought to understand how to address case and context-specific causations (what works for whom, in what contexts and how), and identify multiple paths to a given outcome. The QCA is a powerful approach that facilitates increased external validity power.

### **3.1.4 Process Evaluation and Value for Money (VfM)**

Complementing the theory-based evaluation, the MTR also benefitted from the process evaluation to meet IUCN, TRAFFIC & WWF accountability objective for this MTR, assess the effectiveness and efficiency of CONNECT Project delivery and to ensure the project represented a good VfM for the donor, USAID/ KEA. The balance struck between Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity, popularly known as the "4 E's" approach guided the VfM analysis. This approach assessed four critical, interconnected components of VfM defined along the factors of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. This approach enabled MTR to assess the extent to which the project partners have done the right things, in the right ways, at the right price, for the right people.

The VfM was assessed at different levels. The USAID/ KEA has an objective of improving conservation and management of regional transboundary natural resources in the EAC region. Therefore, funding a regional project meant a good value for money. To the EAC Secretariat, having an overarching regional Anti-Poaching strategy and engaging with more than USAID/ KEA and other INGOs to implement the strategy meant that synergies and making networks and partnerships rather than operating in silos brings individual actors together to provide good value for money. To the CONNECT Project, the cost-benefit analysis, cost effectiveness analysis and other tools was found to be relevant. The project has achieved varying levels of progress in applying the concept of value for money. The project is therefore encouraged to focus on taking the discussion further in order to raise the bar in practice and achieve as much as possible with the grant.

### **3.1.5 Political Economy Analysis**

Building on the desk-based literature review and based on the project indicators, the MTR team conducted a light touch political economy analysis. This was informed by the literature review and rooted in the MTR framework, to ensure relevance and focus, especially with respect to the ecological futures aspect of the project. It generated contextual understanding of the CONNECT Project implementing countries, in order to anchor the findings of the MTR and provide insight into the wider critical change factors. The political economy analysis was also incorporated into building conditions for QCA through

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<sup>3</sup> Ragin, Charles. "What is Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)? University of Arizona Department of Sociology and Political Science. Retrieved from website: [http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/250/1/What\\_is\\_QCA.pdf](http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/250/1/What_is_QCA.pdf).

development of composite indicators that were used by relevant governance indices of each CONNECT implementing country.

### **3.2 Data Types and Sources**

Data types are important concepts as they enable us to apply statistical measurements correctly on data and assist in correctly drawing conclusions based on certain assumptions. The knowledge of data type allowed us to arrange various types of variables. In the methodology, it was proposed that both qualitative and quantitative data would be used. During the implementation, it was clear that only qualitative data would be collectable. For this reason, the entire analysis was based at nominal<sup>4</sup> and ordinal<sup>5</sup> data.

The MTR used two sources of data, primary and secondary sources. Data from primary sources were largely collected by way of questionnaires, and interviews with different respondents. Sources of secondary data included the progress reports, the project document, baseline information among other project covenants.

### **3.3 Sampling strategy**

Although the list of stakeholders provided by the IUCN ESARO gave an indication that a census of all partners/ beneficiaries would have been the most appropriate, this was not tenable during the MTR for two reasons. First, some of the partners were non-responsive to the numerous calls to interviews. Second, because the implementing partners were implementing specific activities such as training, the respondents who were largely trainees gave similar feedback and interviewing a larger number of such trainees would not generate variability in feedback. Therefore, this informed sampling of trainees but taking cognisance of institutional, geographic/regional and gender representation across the participating countries in the EAC.

As the MTR exercise evolved, a comprehensive list of participating stakeholders/ partners was developed. This was done randomly with a focus on each activity in a stratified manner. The respondents included implementing partners' key delivery partners, beneficiaries, and subject matter experts. The MTR team also identified voices through review of secondary literature provided by IUCN ESARO and the implementing partners. The sampled respondents were aligned to different evaluation questions and also considered statistical significance.

Having anticipated a scenario of a smaller sample, the MTR took into consideration a confidence level of 95% with a margin of error of 1%, the ideal sample size where the population is less than 1,000 observations as indicated in the last column in table 2 below.

In terms of FGD, this MTR invited a total of 12 prospective discussants for each FGD for a total 2 FGDs comprising beneficiaries of the beneficiaries of the FLoD and webinar on the role of women and youth in combatting IWT as well as training on TWIX. The process started by assigning of random numbers to all the agencies targeted for FGDs, once this was done, the simple random approach was applied to identify the actual representation.

#### **3.3.1 Sample size for KII and FGD Respondents**

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<sup>4</sup> The only numerical activities that perform on nominal data is to state that perception is (or isn't) equivalent to another (equity or inequity), and you can use this data to amass them.

<sup>5</sup> As ordinal data are ordered, they can be arranged by making basic comparisons between the categories, for example, greater or less than, higher or lower, and so on.

The table below presents a sample size by names of the key informants and focus group discussions for this MTR.

**Table 2 - Sampling Frame - Stakeholder Organizations**

Activity	Data Collection	Interviewed Stakeholder	Lead Partner
Activity 1.1 Ecological Futures	KI	WWF, African Leadership University, Well Made Strategy, Boston Consultant Group, UNDP	WWF
Activity 1.2 Technical Support EAC Technical Working Groups and Sectoral Sub Committees	KI	EAC, IUCN ESARO, USAID	IUCN ESARO
Activity1.2A Develop EAC Regional Reference Information system	KI	RCMRD, IUCN-BIOPAMA	IUCN ESARO
Activity1.2 B: Sharing lessons and building capacity of the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation areas building on best practices in the wider region	KI	EAC, IUCN ESARO	IUCN ESARO
Activity1.3 Resource mobilisation for the implementation of priority initiatives	KI	EAC, IUCN ESARO, Kilimanyika, USAID	IUCN ESARO
Activity2.1 Wildlife in the economy" studies	KI	WWF, KWS, UWA, TANAPA, RDB	WWF
Activity 3.1: Patterns of Use of Threatened Wildlife in East Africa, Phase II	KI	TRAFFIC, Muhimbili University, - Institute of Traditional Medicine, Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism – Wildlife Division	TRAFFIC
Activity 3.2: FLoD training	KI	IUCN ESARO, KWS, UWA, RDB, Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, Tanzania, TANAPA	IUCN ESARO
	FGD	Beneficiaries of the FLoD training.	IUCN ESARO
Activity: 3.3: The Role of women and youth in combating illegal wildlife trade.	KI	WWF, Stand Up and Shout Out, Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association	WWF
	FGD	Beneficiaries from the webinar	WWF
Activity 3.4: Development of an Eastern Africa-TWIX	KI	TRAFFIC, KWS, KFS, INTERPOL NCB (Nairobi), UWA, and Tanzania and customs, Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority, Tanzania Forest Service	TRAFFIC
	FGD	TWIX - KWS, KFS, INTERPOL NCB (Nairobi), ODPP, UWA, Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda National Forestry Authority, UWA, Tanzania Customs, Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority.	TRAFFIC

Activity	Data Collection	Interviewed Stakeholder	Lead Partner
Activity 3.5: Establishing an Eastern Africa Prosecutors Forum	KI	TRAFFIC, EAAP, Judiciary KE, Judiciary UG, Judiciary TZ, Tanzania NPS, ODPP Kenya, and ODPP Uganda	TRAFFIC
Activity 3.6: Enhancing existing initiatives combatting wildlife crime at ports	KI	TRAFFIC, USAID, Ports official Mombasa and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), and KWS	TRAFFIC

### 3.4 Data Collection Tools and approaches

Different data collection techniques (interviews, focus groups, and review of literature) were applied, based on the information that each of the key stakeholders could supply. The instruments were designed on the basis of the evaluation questions, judgement criteria and consulting objectives.

Although the MTR tools and some of the sub-questions were designed specifically for each project activity to its logical framework and evaluation type (final or mid-term), whenever possible, the MTR team used shared methods and tools to optimise the resources used. The final output of this MTR is the report in accordance with IUCN ESARO requirements. An additional output of the MTR is a joint document that combines the lessons learned about the management of the project portfolio.

The following methods were used to collect information needed for the MTR;

1. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) – An interview guide was administered to the key informants addressing specific areas of their involvements in each project activity. Because of the Covid-19 concerns, the KIIs took the form of phone interviews and Zoom meetings. A total of 51 KIIs were conducted with different stakeholders as outlined in the table 2 above.
2. Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) - These were used to understand the relevance, needs and feasibility, the collaboration of others, and the anticipated contribution of the project to the trainees of TWIX and FLoD. During the discussions, a guide of key questions was developed and used. The participants were invited to a zoom meeting and engaged in discussing among other issues the appropriateness of training received and the involvement of youth and women in facilitating project activities at different levels. Two FGDs were conducted as outlined in table 2 above where key issues on specific activity design and implementation discussed.
3. Documents/ secondary data review – The IUCN ESARO provided various documents including *ad hoc* study reports, EAC regional policy and legal instruments, project document, logical framework, progress reports and the table of data - results framework. Documents reviewed were logged in the document register. Additional data provided during the MTR including the latest annual progress report for the financial year 2020/2021.

Quantitative data was collected via analysis of project reference documents, policies, policy briefs and the results framework. On the other hand, qualitative data was collected from reviewed literature, KIIs and FGDs.

### 3.5 Quality Control

In this MTR, we engaged two main processes during data collection. One was the standardization of data collection instruments. The other is population quality control, which monitors the sample to make sure it is representative of the target population.

### 3.6 Data Cleaning and Analysis

The MTR team used qualitative data analysis software (*n-vivo*) to collate data according to the relevant evaluation questions, specific judgement criteria and conditions for Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). Data analysis involved the identification of patterns and processes among clusters of outcomes across each project activity and rigorous examination of the corresponding theory of change used in project implementation. The information was analysed and results presented in relevant formats, interpreted and discussed. It is believed that the findings generated from the stakeholders, key informant interviews and review of documents will be used to inform the implementation of the project for the remaining time.

The evaluation matrix is premised on both the process and theory-based components of evaluation and served as the framework for analysis. The matrix was designed to ensure that the assignment is objective, systematic and transparent and that the findings provide reliable basis for recommendations. The MTR matrix is structured according to the OECD - DAC Criteria for Evaluation and the evaluation questions. The MTR team systematically mapped the emerging evidence against the evaluation questions so that the resulting analysis was as comprehensive and detailed as possible. This ensured that the analytical framework drove the analysis of the evidence, upholding the integrity of the theory-based evaluation.

As expected some of the data collected was politically sensitive and subjective. The MTR addressed this by triangulating and cycling back to relevant stakeholders to clarify its analysis before including a finding in the MTR report.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations During Data Collection

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the norms and standards of the IUCN ESARO and the guidance and requirements of the USAID/ KEA. It adopted a consultative and transparent approach in close collaboration with the IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC and the WWF. Before any interview appointments were sought, project activity leads held introductory meetings with at least one MTR team member. The purpose was to ensure agreement on prospective respondents and also to facilitate contact sharing with the MTR team. The prospective respondents were then introduced to the MTR team by the activity leads via email communication. Upon contact activation, the MTR team sought permission from each prospective respondent, to inform scheduling an online interview at a time of their convenience but within the suggested timelines. Those who accepted to be interviewed were further taken through an informed consent process before an interview can progress. The confidentiality of their participation was emphasised and that there would be no profiling of respondents by ensuring no identifiers would be allowed into the report. Interviews were recorded for those who consented while those who declined recording were never recorded.

After each interview or meeting, a detailed transcript was professionally prepared to document the contents of the interview.

### 3.8 MTR Limitations

During the MTR, certain limitations affected the collection and analysis of data relating to project progress. These are isolated factors that do not compromise the work or quality of the investigation. The limitations are as follows:

- a) **Time:** due to MTR budget limitations, logistical and procedural challenges including longer durations to secure appointments for key informants, the four-week duration was not sufficient to interview

more people. A longer duration would have provided an opportunity to interview more people. However, it is unlikely that this would have significantly changed the results.

- b) **Overlapping engagements by partners:** The MTR was conducted when the target activity leads and other implementing stakeholders had their usual work going so as to optimise the MTR process. While this method was advantageous because of being able to contrast opinions and prepare joint lessons learned, holding simultaneous interviews with certain key stakeholders, as well as with IUCN ESARO, compromised the degree of detail with which certain relevant questions could be discussed.
- c) **Cross-cutting perspectives:** A crucial element of any intervention is analysing the gender and age-related setbacks in the community within the project territory. The project implementers were of the opinion that this was not gender focused and hence the gaps between men and women and boys and girls was not analyzed, thus hindering an assessment of the possible closing or widening of such gaps in the context of specific activities.

## 4. Findings of the MTR

The findings are presented following the structure of the evaluation matrix. The questions and sub-questions related to each of the six evaluation criteria are answered. In some cases, the sub-questions, which are included as footnotes, have been grouped together and have an aggregate response.

### 4.1 Indicator Tables

The table below shows the CONNECT Project indicators. The table presents the performance of each of the indicators and any emerging unexpected findings for the past two years.

**Table 3 – USAID/ KEA Reporting Indicators**

USAID/ KEA Reporting Indicators	Baseline	Target	Achieved
<b>IR 1.1 Conservation and management of natural capital improved</b>			
<b><i>Sub-Purpose 1: Collaborative management and conservation of transboundary natural resources enhanced</i></b>			
Outcome 1: Strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary natural resources.			
Number of laws, policies, strategies or regulations that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance	0	2	<b>1 (50%)</b> A policy brief ‘Building forward better in East Africa.’ Has been developed to guide future development in Eastern Africa. A draft biodiversity strategy and action plan has been prepared through the EAC.
Number of customized tools to support transboundary wildlife conservation and management priorities by Regional Resource Hub and the EAC Regional Reference Information System.	0	2	<b>1 (50%)</b> An EAC anti-poaching strategy tracking tool has been developed.
Outcome 2: Improved sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes			
Number of best practices or lessons learned shared or adopted to enhance management of natural capitals in East Africa	0	6	<b>5 (83%)</b> Case Study videos of the engagement of women and youth to prevent wildlife crime were developed
<b><i>Sub-Purpose 2: Perceived value of living wildlife increased</i></b>			
Outcome 3: Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife			



Number of policy briefs on the role and value of wildlife in the economy developed and shared	0	2	<b>0 (0%)</b> No concrete achievement as data collection and a top-line analysis are underway based on existing published literature
Number of actions taken by EAC and partner states out of the wildlife in economy studies to promote and enhance economics benefits from living wildlife.	0	10	<b>0 (0%)</b> No achievement observed. The project needs to clearly specify the actions to be taken by EAC and partner states out of the study.
Per cent of target audience that expressed desired attitude(s) specifically to reduce purchase and/or consumption of illegal wildlife products"	0%	2%	<b>0%</b> Behaviour change advisory group and demand reduction strategy being formulated for partner states
Number of media and other outreach campaigns focused on wildlife conservation and/or demand reduction developed and implemented	0	3	<b>2 (67%)</b> <b>Four</b> briefing papers on the results of the Patterns of Use of threatened wildlife in East Africa have been developed and shared with partner states. Validation meetings of the Patterns of Use study have been held with three government partners. Two behaviour change advisory groups have been formed. Campaigns will be undertaken in years 3 and 4
Number of people trained in sustainable natural resource management/ biodiversity conservation as a result of USG assistance.	0	160	<b>254 (159%)</b> An over delivery of the target on trained individuals. However, it is not possible to determine the effects of the training.
Number of institutions with improved capacity to apply law enforcement practices as a result of USG support	0	25	<b>18 (72%)</b> On track to delivery. However, there is need to provide evidence of improved capacity as a result of training.
<b>Outcome 5: Improved regional and bilateral collaboration on enforcement and prosecutions</b>			
Number of people that apply improved conservation law enforcement practices as a result of USG assistance	0	60	<b>40 (67%)</b> On track to delivery. Need to present the application of knowledge acquired data.

**Table 4 - CONNECT Project Custom Indicators**

<b>CONNECT Project Custom Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Number of regional forums held to exchange information on sustainable management of natural capital.	0	3	No workshops held
A (broad) proposals developed	0	1	<b>0</b> The draft regional programme on Nature based Solutions for resilient communities in East Africa was presented and validated by EAC
A "Wildlife in the economy" study developed and findings disseminated	0	3	<b>3</b>

			Three studies have been finalised for Rwanda, Uganda, & Kenya. Tanzania study being finalised.
Number of people reached through awareness and disseminate of the findings of wildlife in the economy study	0	1 Million	<b>902,328</b> 433,548 – Print media 468,780 – Webinars on the roles of Women and Youth in combating IWT.
Number of new tools/ technologies developed and/or shared to combat wildlife crime in conservation sites	0	3	Green light to pilot FLoD methodology in Uganda
Number of women and youth engaged to discuss their role in wildlife conservation and combating illegal wildlife crime.	0	200	<b>140</b> Webinar on <i>The Role of women and youth in combating IWT</i> conducted
Number of potential projects for expanding the meaningful engagement of women and youth in wildlife conservation and combatting IWT are identified.	0	3	<b>3 Projects</b> Identified in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda
East Africa-TWIX Advisory Group with EAC Secretariat established and functional.	0	1	<b>0</b> No achievement outlined
Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX) and knowledge management system established for KE, UG, and TZ.	0	1	<b>1</b> TWIX system was established with a mailing list and Kenya-7, Tanzania including Zanzibar-11, Uganda-9, and Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Eastern and Southern Africa) have been connected to the Eastern Africa-TWIX mailing list.
One action developed by the Forum Secretariat	0	1	<b>1</b> EAAP website established
A report finding on Analysis of wildlife seizures among ports focusing on East Africa conducted and typologies presented	0	1	<b>1</b> A report containing the data driven analysis of seizures related to wildlife crime and ports was produced and shared

## 4.2 Evaluation questions

The reporting needs of this MTR are determined by 6 OECD - DAC evaluation criteria and related evaluation questions and sub-questions. Each of these was answered based on description, analysis and measurements, taking the project design, management structure, processes driven and mid-term results of the intervention into consideration. A list of the evaluation questions related to the evaluation criteria is as shown in annex 2. To ensure a comprehensive analysis, sub-questions were developed that, in association with indicators, assessment criteria, collection methods and information sources, shaped the matrix of this MTR.

### 4.2.1 Relevance

**Evaluation question 1:** Were the project strategies and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all the stakeholders involved in matters of collaborative management and conservation of transboundary

resources, enhancing the value of wildlife as well as reducing wildlife poaching and trafficking in the EAC? Including the causal logic of the theory of change still valid and realistic?<sup>6</sup>

***Finding 1:*** *The project design displayed good vertical<sup>7</sup> consistency and the implementation and design of the activities, outputs and outcomes of the project are closely aligned with and relevant to the expected outcomes at institutional level, in addition to responding to the needs and interests of the respective activity leads, the EAC partner states and the EAC secretariat.*

The project design displayed good vertical consistency, and the implementation and design of the objectives, outcomes and outputs of the project are closely aligned with and relevant to USAID/ KEA's RDCS intermediate result 1.3 on improvement of conservation and management of natural capital.

In addition, the project has a close convergence between the strategic objectives of EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Product and the African Union's African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa which provides a framework for the development and implementation of regional anti-poaching strategies in the continent.

#### **4.2.1.1 Political, institutional and strategic relevance for the EAC region.**

A review of the documentation and interviews with key stakeholders in the MTR process confirmed that the design and implementation of the project outcomes were highly relevant to IUCN ESARO's Conservation Areas and Species programme (CAS) thematic area, USAID/ KEA's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) -2025 - IR 1.3 (Conservation and Management of Transboundary Natural Resources Improved), and the policy environment of the East African Community (EAC). Details of this alignment are described below.

The CONNECT project further supports the development of the EAC's technical capacities, leadership and political good-will to address a wider range of transboundary natural resources management priorities working closely with the EAC Secretariat and appropriate structures such as the Terrestrial and Aquatic Ecosystems Working Group and the EAC's Sectoral Sub-committee (SC) on Wildlife Conservation and Management. Specific activities being implemented to realize this includes:

1. Supporting priority needs for conservation and management of transboundary natural resources by sharing best practices and providing expert advice to strengthen and coordinate the development and implementation of relevant EAC policies and strategies. This activity involves strategic guidance and technical support to the EAC secretariat on the development and review of key policies, strategies and legislation;
2. Raising awareness and promotion of the engagement of youth and women in wildlife conservation and combating wildlife crime in the region;

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#### **<sup>6</sup> Sub-evaluation questions**

- Is the project consistent with the needs, priorities, policies and strategies of EAC, project partner states, Beneficiaries, and USAID?
- To what extent are the project focus, strategy and outcomes aligned with the priorities of EAC and AU's Anti-poaching strategies and how have they contributed to it?
- Does the project still meet the needs of the EAC, partner states and other beneficiaries with which the activities are implemented?

<sup>7</sup> Suggests alignment with hypothesized results at different levels in the ToC and consistent with sub-awardees priorities

3. Increasing political support for wildlife and the value of natural ecosystems role in driving EAC's economic development through learning and reflection seminars, studies and targeted awareness-raising campaigns;
4. Informing regional interventions and implement campaigns that address the use of threatened wildlife in EAC region;
5. Building capacity for stronger engagement of local communities in combatting wildlife crime in the EAC region;
6. Developing an East-African Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX) mechanism, having learnt from prior similar work;
7. Establishing a Permanent Forum and Secretariat for wildlife prosecutors in East Africa on Wildlife Crime and Corruption; and,
8. Enhancing existing initiatives to combat wildlife crime at ports within the EAC region.

**Alignment with EAC's Department of Productive and Social sector planning and AU's Anti-poaching strategies.**

Overall, the CONNECT project links well with the Africa Union (AU) anti-poaching strategies with component 2 - Regional and International; component 3 - Enforcement and Compliance; component 4 - Training and Capacity Development; component 5 - Awareness and Advocacy; component 6 - Knowledge, Information and Technology and component 7 - Governance. The project, in terms of both design and implementation, is closely related and provides responses to the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy's strategic objectives 5 and 6 which recognizes the importance of raising awareness of the value of wildlife and wildlife habitats. EAC has a convening power advantage for its partner states that the project leverages on to increase political support for wildlife and natural ecosystems, sentiments that were also expressed by the EAC secretariat.

*"The Anti-poaching Strategy is expiring currently. The strategy is very much in congruence with this project. Therefore, the project can support the review of the strategy and take advantage of the EAC's convening power to bring stakeholders together to support the review. I am sating this because the CONNECT project still has some two years of implementation. The project would be important to bring together other development partners who are not necessarily USAID to ensure that all partner states benefit unconditionally" Key Informant*

The regional strategy is a component of national conservation strategies produced and formulated by conservation actors from partner states and is based on practical and highly viable procedures targeted at reducing threats to transboundary wildlife, as well as combating wildlife crime. The project provides an avenue to involve and engage communities in joint conservation efforts. These are central to the regional strategy, in order to obtain, harness and leverage conservation knowledge and expertise in a broad sense and collaborative manner, while also building relevant capacities to undertake conservation efforts and initiatives independently.

*"In terms of community involvement and impacts, the we expected that the project would end up with tangible results in the communities. Although we are not opposed to the documentary products that are being produced, we were of the opinion that soft products do not take the space of tangible results." Key Informant*

Therefore, the three project objectives and the five outcomes, the activities implemented and the mid-term effects achieved, the initiative was found to be closely consistent with the commitments to conserve wildlife and habitats in East Africa, in line with its Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill of 2010 and the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products of 2017. This relevance is specified below.

#### **Alignment with the IUCN ESARO's Conservation Areas and Species (CAS) thematic area**

The CONNECT project draws on evidence-based and best practice approaches to enhance the conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystems in Eastern and Southern Africa. The project is part of the larger CAS portfolio at IUCN ESARO that engages in a diverse set of biodiversity conservation actions that targets to influence policy and institutional frameworks at national and regional levels. The project aligns very well with the CAS programme's focus on influencing policy through action across the region, and enhancing management, effectiveness, governance of protected and conserved areas, strengthening stakeholder engagement to improve biodiversity conservation and local community engagement.

#### **Alignment with USAID/ KEA's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS).**

The initiative, in terms of both design and implementation, is closely related and provides responses to IR 1.3 on Conservation and Management of Transboundary Natural Resources Improved in the USAID/ KEA's (RDCS) - 2025.

In the biodiversity industry, wildlife and wildlife habitats are foundational for providing healthy ecosystem services and economic development for EAC region. Key wildlife species and their habitats are transboundary by nature and hence improving bilateral and regional collaborative transboundary natural resource management and conservation is an important strategy of the project. The CONNECT project makes contribution through support for all the activities.

The project was found to respond to the interest and needs of key stakeholders, who especially appreciated:

- Strengthening of the leadership, technical capacities and the political will of institutions to effectively engage in the development and implementation of biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and action plans.
- Supporting priority needs for conservation and management of transboundary natural resources by sharing of best practices and providing expert advice to strengthen and coordinate the development and implementation of relevant EAC policies and strategies.
- The project is also working with EAC secretariat to develop a funding proposal to help support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and other priority actions to strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources
- The access to knowledge and development of techniques and skills to implement key regional policy instruments for instance the EAAP platform for information exchange.

The high level of responsiveness to the stakeholders needs reflects a deliberate effort to engage stakeholders in the formulation of similar projects. This could be attributed to lessons learnt in other countries where similar projects have been implemented or being implemented by organizations such as TRAFFIC and WWF and other non-governmental stakeholders. They all have a history of working in the EAC region and knowledge of natural resource conservation needs. This enabled the issues identified

and possible solutions to be aligned with the interests of the EAC and organisations that implement the activities of the project. The seamless working relationship with lead agencies is a strong indication of alignment of institutional strategic interest, vision in conservation of nature. This was one of the success factors identified and a great driver to the implementation of the project.

#### **4.2.1.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the CONNECT project design.**

##### **Strengths**

The project design displays good vertical consistency, strong alignment with the policies and strategies of the stakeholders involved, is highly coherent with the needs and interests of the EAC, has adequately identified partners and rightly supported the continuity of processes underway. The design also fits well with the strategies of the implementing partners.

The strengths are described as follows:

- **Vertical consistency:** The top-down logic of the intervention aim (impact) – objectives (outcomes) – processes (outputs) is highly consistent with the fulfilment of the project objectives at several levels. In other words, achieving the outputs contributes to reaching the outcomes and if the outcomes as a whole are reached, the aim would be accomplished. This is demonstrated by the fact that each activity leads have a coherent and consistent engagement with implementing agencies with clear reporting mechanism to the activity lead, who also have a clear reporting mechanism to IUCN ESARO.
- **Alignment:** The project outcomes and outputs, are consistent with the needs felt by the activity leads and implementing agencies and are aligned with the strategic interests of the participating institutions – IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC and WWF.
- **Identification of partners:** The selection of strategic allies and partners in the project was appropriate, as they have a history of working in the industry and area, are committed and hold an interest in the project activities, and are predisposed to generate synergies. This assertion arises from interviews held with the leaders of the institutions and also activity implementing agencies. However, more institutions with strength with gender and youth programming would have buttressed the project
- **Process continuity:** The project was designed and is being implemented with the intention of supporting and strengthening processes already underway (such as the supporting the EAC Secretariat in the implementation of the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products referred to as the "EAC Anti-poaching Strategy"), and this strategy of continuity has made it possible to bolster the progress of other interventions by like-minded NGOs and cooperation agencies, optimise resources and expand the prospects for the project success.

##### **Weaknesses**

The weaknesses in the project design are mainly related to timing (lag between design and execution), the formulation of certain indicators and broad subject-matter. It was clear that implementing partners were able to change the project scope by introducing new components or dropping some of the



components in the course of implementation. The rationale behind the weaknesses identified is shown below:

- **Time between formulation and execution:** The IUCN ESARO and USAID/ KEA signed the CONNECT Project agreement for implementation to commence in May 2019. However, evidence points at implementation having started in April 2020. A period of 10 months elapsed between contract signing and the start of implementation. This was necessitated by the fact that it took longer than expected to finalize the sub-contracts with the implementing partners (TRAFFIC and WWF). The project had to also undertake staffing and this delayed implementation. Further, the EAC's socio-political settings were subject to a number of general elections being held thereby nearly stalling activity start ups. Although this would have had far reaching operational consequences, the CONNECT project management was able to re-appropriate and connect with the stakeholders related to the project through negotiation and brokering process with local level institutional stakeholders where activities were expected to be implemented.
- **Management of delays and down time:** Despite the delay, the project implementation timelines had room to recover lost time since at design stage, the project had built in period and hence activity implementation was never envisaged to start from contract signature date. During the project design, a 6-month project mobilization phase was built in for technical and administrative adjustment. During this time, formation and consolidation of technical teams, setting up operational and logistical needs to facilitate activity implementations and an inception phase to clarify roles, responsibilities, the project intervention logic and engagement with EAC secretariat took place.
- It is worth highlighting that the involvement of other numerous institutional stakeholders, such as SUSO, RDB, Well Made Strategy and others in implementing the activities beyond the activity leads, has facilitated the achievement of the project targets, outcomes and objectives. The willingness of the parties and the collaboration strategies developed have made it possible to establish synergies, managing to enrich the processes, optimize available resources and jointly plan the activities.
- **Horizontal consistency<sup>8</sup>:** Some targets and their associated outputs display formulation challenges and have not been adjusted in the logical framework during the two years of the CONNECT project implementation. This was occasioned by some activities having been added or changed. It was not clear what level of consultation was undertaken and how that would have affected the implementation timelines and budgets. The varied activities may have been aligned to the wider objectives of the project, however, without clarity of their alignment to the log frame and the entire project document this gave rise to serious gaps in terms of,
  - a. What evidence informed the conceptualization of the new activities? There was no evidence to suggest that illegal wildlife use or bushmeat consumption had gone up and this was attributed to Covid-19.
  - b. The scope of the additional projects in terms of time was one year (for the case of bushmeat), it was not clear what would happen after the 12 months implementation period had elapsed.
  - c. The subsequent progress reports do not give a revised log frame/result framework to clearly support tracking of the results associated with the added activities.

*"We completed this component in September 2021 and now we are doing analysis. The only thing remaining is to share the report with government agencies. We hope USAID can fund the*

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<sup>8</sup> Sub-awardees are consistent with each other in terms of their industry priorities

*scaling up of the project. We are thinking another year of monitoring will be ok, but the project was only for one year.” Key Informant*

*“It would have been better if all partners would physically meet at the end of the year to develop and scrutinize work plans so that the back and forth that we currently experience is avoided. Currently partners develop their plans and budgets and share with IUCN ESARO. The alternative of a physical meeting would be better.” Key Informant*

- **Broad subject-matter:** The high number of outcomes (a total of 5) and related outputs (12 total) has generated dispersion in the execution and disparity in the relationship between activities and dedicated staff. Each of the agencies seem to only focus on their specific activities without understanding how each of the activities and their implementers interact. As such, cross learning is a challenge and an integrated approach to tackle any of the activities is not practical. This has made it difficult for the project activity leads, technical advisors and activity implementing agencies to understand the comprehensive nature of the project and the objectives it seeks to achieve as opposed to the siloed approach being used in activity implementation.
- **Youth and Women involvement approach:** The project document mentions specific actions for promoting the participation of youth and women which includes activities focusing on combating illegal wildlife trade, a compilation of case studies of youth and women’s engagement to address wildlife crime. However, based on interaction with representatives of the youth focused organizations supporting the project, the youth would have benefitted more with interventions that act as demotivators from engagement in illegal wildlife activities, including some socio-economic activities through the proposed micro-projects. Key informants, who work with youth and women focused institutions, consider the current youth and women elements in the project activities as minimal. Based on these sentiments, IUCN ESARO has an opportunity to rally the sub-awardees to satisfactorily re-assess how the project partners can refocus the youth and gender strategies.

*“Youth engage in illegal wildlife activities because they lack source of income and they see harvesting the God given natural resources as an alternative. Some of these trades are lucrative and they feel they can get away with it. Some take advantage of the weak systems to evade the law. The women on the other hand see some of the wildlife products as source of livelihoods – food. If these can be fixed with interventions as agriculture and other forms of local level enterprises then, these people will find an alternative and will be pulled out of IWT. It is a Push/Pull issue. Their understanding they do not look at systems and future generational benefits.” Key Informant*

**EAC Secretariat involvement:** The project as designed was meant to support the EAC Secretariat in the implementation of the EAC’s Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife referred to as the “EAC Anti-poaching Strategy”. However, it emerged across the interviews that the EAC secretariat has not been optimally involved in ensuring the activities are delivered and in the coordination of the project. A major challenge for the project is that the EAC Secretariat seems too overloaded with multiple responsibilities to be able to effectively engage in CONNECT activities on a day to day basis. As a consequence, the governance and coordination between EAC and CONNECT partners has been suboptimal e.g. as the Secretariat has often not been able to attend regular coordination meetings. In addition, the demands placed on the EAC secretariat to serve the Partner States are constantly changing and require their full attention. This means that CONNECT-related activities are often

put on the backburner by the EAC Secretariat, leading to delays, as it is frequently not possible for the CONNECT partners to proceed with activities without guidance and agreement from the EAC.

*“The project is providing expected technical capacity in supporting EAC with respect to Tourism and Wildlife in the region. The CONNECT partners are supportive of activities being implemented and this is in support for the EAC. In technical terms, the EAC is conversant with the priorities and procedures of the partner states. So, the project provides a vehicle for developing key legal and policy instruments but the EAC presents a platform to disseminate and share with partner states.” Key Informant.*

*“The CONNECT Project needs to come up with a balance on what resources and capacities to share and leverage to partners states. Ideally, there needs to be more resources going into activity implementation but there is a feeling that more is dipped into administrative operations. The partners states have very many experts in different aspects of the project through different ministries. However, the project does not adequately involve them. This being the case, these experts look at the project as being imposed on them.” Key Informant.*

#### **4.2.2 Effectiveness**

**Evaluation question 2:** What outcomes (both intended and unintended) has the project achieved by the time of the MTR, and are they contributing to and/or positioned to contribute to the achievement of the project’s goal<sup>9</sup>?

**Finding 2:** *The project implementation ran into Covid-19 head winds barely a year into implementation. This was a global challenge. However, the project was able to adapt and engaged innovative online means to deliver activities. Although this was not the preferred mode of delivery for most respondents, they appreciated that it was helpful to bridge the gap on lost time. The degree of progress towards the ultimate goal, specific objectives and the level of activity implementation is considered satisfactory as demonstrated by each output results in the project annual reports. This performance is seen as a contribution to the Improving Collaborative Conservation and Management of Transboundary Natural Resources in EAC region project.*

**Finding 3:** *Some public servants and key decision-makers have incrementally adopted and promoted some of the lessons learned through the project at their institutions. They competently understand the concepts that facilitate dialogue and agreement with other national-level stakeholders and civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as with specialists in the fields of biodiversity, conservation and sustainable natural resource use like the CMS, Muhimbili University, and the Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that institutional understanding and awareness of the*

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#### **<sup>9</sup> MTR Sub-evaluation questions**

- To what extent is the CONNECT project achieving its objectives?
- What specific project interventions or activities have effectively contributed to achieving these objectives?
- What mid-term outcomes has the project achieved in strengthening regional policy dialogue on management of transboundary natural resources?
- How are the understanding and awareness of the values of wildlife and sustainable use of biodiversity reflected by the decisionmakers and beneficiaries?
- Have the knowledge and native practices and/or those introduced by the project been established in a sustainable communication system to disseminate them throughout the partner countries in order to stimulate dialogue about the lessons learned and good practices, to bolster and replicate them?

values of wildlife and sustainable use of biodiversity is reflected by the engagement of some decisionmakers at national levels and also by beneficiaries who steer the management of Regional Resource Hub and the EAC Regional Reference Information System.

**Finding 4:** Some CSOs that were engaged by the CONNECT project sub-awardees have been strengthened in many ways such as involvement of young people to protect game parks as they also campaign against illegal wildlife activities. This has become important for regional biodiversity economy dialogues, learning and potentially viable decision making with regards to the management of transboundary natural resources.

*“There is a lot that needs to be done by CSOs especially the youth. The project would have hired the youth as scouts which also provides training and employment. However, with women, a lot is yet to be done and this project can be a pilot project to ensure women involvement. In Some countries like Tanzania, there must be some equal representation of women in all engagements. Donors need to insist on this aspect of inclusion.” Key Informant*

**Finding 5:** One of the unintended achievements come out during the EAAP conference. It was possible during this meeting to have a case presented to EAC on the adoption on the need to approve EAAP as one of the organs of EAC. EAC in its charter has special organs. If this is approved, it will further strengthen the role of EAAP and more beneficial for the case of prosecutors involved in wildlife prosecution.

#### **4.2.2.1 General considerations.**

There is a strong correlation between the goals of IUCN ESARO, USAID/ KEA and the objectives of the EAC’s Anti-Poaching strategy regarding the transboundary natural resource management. The connections to the project outcomes, outputs, and activity leads, has a general effect of project execution. All these structures focus energy towards the commitments to conserve wildlife and habitats in East Africa, in line with its Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill of 2010 and Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products of 2017. Of priority across all of them is the development of leadership skills, technical capacities and the political will of all the parties to effectively engage in the development and implementation of biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and action plans that will help strengthen regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making regarding the management of transboundary natural resources and their sustainable management. Consequently, a result institutionalizes the collaborative management of transboundary natural resources.

Implementing agencies continue to cite challenges resulting from inability to conduct physical stakeholder consultations and countries’ pre-occupation with immediate health sector needs and Covid-19 crisis response. Despite this challenge, the project increased use of web-based tools besides other tools for remote supervision. This was to provide implementation support, engage with stakeholders and ensure the verification of project outputs. It was reported that, in some cases, the new modalities have resulted in more engagements than was anticipated with the physical means and have facilitated more efficient engagement.

The Covid-19 intervention and mitigation measures introduced by the EAC partners states involved in the implementing the CONNECT project led to a general slowdown in the implementation of activities.

For instance, restrictions on movement imposed by countries, banning international travel and new requirements for sanitation and maintenance of social distance added complications to activity implementation. There were also particular concerns regarding the variability of the challenges faced in different partner states in the course of implementation; activity delays depended heavily on the country specific Covid-19 measures that majorly prioritized the containment of the pandemic.

In terms of the objectives, the effectiveness across each of the CONNECT project outcomes, the output achievement was measured against the set targets at output level. In order to arrive at an outcome rating, all outputs under the outcome had a cumulative rating of 100%. For example, in an outcome of four outputs, each output was pro-rated at 25% each. If progress was made on two outputs, the outcome is rated at 50%. It should however be noted that this nominal measure was to give an indicative progress and therefore does not take into consideration the quality of delivery. Outcome rating is an average of the sum of ratings of all outputs under that outcome. The following was the interpretation of the rating above 100% (Excellent), 75%-100% (Highly satisfactory), 60%-74% (Satisfactory), 50%-59% (Moderately satisfactory), below 50% (not satisfactory). The measurement relied entirely on the results framework as presented by the project status on performance. Table 3 presents the achievement proportions per outcome.

#### **4.2.2.2 Objective 1: Collaborative Management of Transboundary Natural Resources**

An average of 71% rate of progress has been made in the implementation of the outcomes and activities. This is considered high delivery rate knowing that the range of output delivery is between 50% to 100% for this objective. The outputs realized in this objective lay the foundations and represent essential inputs for progressing towards the creation of policy and legal instruments while at the same time strengthening the collaborative management of transboundary/ transfrontier natural resource in EAC partners states. Along these lines, the next step would be to place special emphasis on and speeding up the execution of any lagging and leading activities.

#### ***Outcome 1: Strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary natural resources.***

#### ***Activity 1.1: Strengthen cross-sectoral decision making for sustainable development of transboundary natural resources by organising East African “Ecological Futures” Seminars with Ministries of Natural Resources and Finance.***

Based on reviewed quarterly reports and an Ecological Futures Report by the African Development Bank, EAC and other regional economic commissions, WWF reviewed existing African ecological futures outputs aimed at developing environmentally sustainable response and recovery plans to the Covid-19 pandemic. Though it will be a long-term recovery process, the analysis by WWF provides important reflections related to the inter-dependency of human population, health and the environment in the lenses of the region’s economic development patterns and growing globalization. This was a great contribution to the development of a project concept for a proposal on “*Harnessing Nature Based Solutions for Integrated Landscape Management in East Africa.*” This was at the request of the EAC secretariat and was facilitated through the conduct of Wildlife Economy Studies conducted with leadership from the Africa Leadership University (Rwanda). The CONNECT project in collaboration with Capital Coalitions also held five (5) series of the webinars on natural capital for SMEs and local communities dubbed “*Valuing Natural Capital & Local Communities for Business in Eastern & Southern Africa.*”

One of the major products of this was also the policy brief (*Building forward better in East Africa*) by the Boston Consultancy Group to guide future development in the Eastern Africa region. Further, IUCN ESARO under the auspices of the WCPA and the TAPAS have supported studies in the region on the impacts of Covid-19 on the tourism sector which generated valuable data and insights and which the EAC can potentially capitalize on. In addition, during the same period, CONNECT participated in reformulation of the EAC Vision statement.

These initiatives provide the basis for policy dialogues with Governments in the region, as well as their supporting institutions like International Finance Institutions, Economic Commissions among others regarding the policy and investment decisions to be taken now to secure a better, resilient and sustainable development for the future.

***Activity 1.2 Technical Support to EAC Secretariat, Working Groups and Sub Committees by providing strategic guidance and technical support to the EAC secretariat on the development and review of selected key policies, strategies and legislation (e.g. the EAC Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill and the Regional Biodiversity Strategy).***

EAC has been implementing the Anti-poaching strategy since 2017. As a way to prioritize the technical support needed for EAC, the project sought to measure the level of implementation of the strategy. The project supported the development the strategy tracker tool to track its implementation. It was circulated to EAC partners states for their input. However, only one-member state (Kenya) was able to give feedback on the tool and hence cannot be used officially until all relevant countries provide input and validate it. All this information is missing and a database unavailable to track the extent to which the strategy has been implemented. However, a detailed inventory and mapping of conservation activities and initiatives in the EAC priority transboundary landscapes was agreed upon to be developed. Another important tool, which is in its draft stage is the EAC Regional Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This has been shared with IUCN ESARO and partners for their review and feedback. It is understood that it may take time for its adoption and implementation. The MTR suggests that the final evaluation of this project tries to understand the impact of such a delay on the project ToC.

Although the expectation was that the CONNECT Project identifies specific policies, strategies and legislation on which to provide strategic guidance and technical support, only a webinar was organised where a total of 218 attendants discussed recommendations to address the challenges resulting from Covid-19 in the region. The product of this webinar was a policy brief summarising the key highlights from the discussions and policy recommendations for further engagement and uptake at national and regional level. In addition, the project also facilitated a virtual learning event for 40 participants from SADC and EAC regions on Establishing and Managing an Effective Transfrontier (Transboundary) Conservation Areas Network together with Conservation of Migratory Wildlife Species (CMS). As part of the stock taking, the EAC engaged the participation of the CONNECT project in the re-formulation of its vision statement and made it more inclusive.

*"We are implementing the natural capital programme. We have the conservation component, which is being led by the secretariat through the LVBC. In the CONNECT Project which has complementary partners, our expectation was that we take activities and divide like we have done in another programme led by a complementary partner. In this project, we are sharing activities. Which to us is more like pulling from two ends. The design of this project was somewhat different with such*



arrangement. The CONNECT project management does not refuse to divide activities but they do not action” Key Informant

It is worth noting at this point that the project supported the IUCN ESARO’s network including the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group (TAPAS) which have been consistent with their technical support a number of learning activities such as surveys for example the ‘Impact of Covid-19 on tourism and hospitality sector in the region.’ These learning events bring together public, private and academic entities such as the East African Business Council (EABC) with the support of African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) and Trade Mark East Africa<sup>10</sup>. The report of this important survey is here attached.

**Activity 1.2A Develop EAC Regional Reference Information system and the BIOPAMA Resource Hub to provide decision-support tools and guidance material for strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary wildlife resources in the EAC**

The IUCN ESARO supported the creation of the first Observatory node in the Eastern and Southern African region as part of the EU-funded Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) program. In the context of the CONNECT project, the BIOPAMA, LVBC and the RCMRD are working with the EAC to develop a regional reference information system and resource hub. These are expected to provide decision-support tools and guidance material to support an evidence based regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary wildlife resources in the EAC region. The EAC observatory, situated within the EAC Secretariat is already supporting policy and decision makers on key threats to protected areas and biodiversity. In November 2020, a regional resource hub (RRH), a knowledge hub for the eastern and southern African region was launched. In the EAC region, it provides dash boards and data that supports better decision making for fair and effective management and governance of protected and conserved areas for Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan. The RRH provides a variety of tools to measure the progress towards conservation and development goals, or focus on protected area performance, or analyze conservation scenarios, or simply browse facts, figures and maps.

As at the mid-term, the project has developed a tool - Ecological Mapping and Monitoring (EMMT), together with BIOPAMA and the RCMRD. The tool incorporates a *Map Builder*, the *Alien Invasive Species and the Land cover Time Sync*. The EMMT has a *Digital Observatory for Protected Areas (DOPA)* and the *Reference Information System (RIS)* platforms whose functionalities include a set of web services and applications that can be used primarily to assess, monitor, report and possibly forecast the state of and the pressure on protected areas at multiple scales for the region. The EMMT tool will be piloted in the Mara -Serengeti landscape for possible adoption and use by EAC partner states.

**Outcome 2: Improved sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes.**

The CONNECT project is expected to support priority needs for conservation and management of transboundary natural resources through the sharing of best practices and providing expert advice to strengthen and coordinate the development and implementation of relevant EAC policies and strategies. To achieve this, the project, working with the EAC secretariat were to develop funding proposal to help

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<sup>10</sup> [https://aercafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AERC-Working-Paper-COVID-19\\_018.pdf](https://aercafrica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/AERC-Working-Paper-COVID-19_018.pdf)



support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and other priority actions to targeting the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources.

***Activity 1.2B Sharing lessons and building capacity of the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation areas building on best practices in the wider region (e.g. Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, SADC Transfrontier Conservation Programme and Network).***

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the IUCN ESARO has co-facilitated a series of virtual learning events on the establishment and effective management of transfrontier (transboundary) conservation area networks between the SADC and the EAC regions. Drawn from the two regions, the participants attend webinars, which looked at case studies of efficient transfrontier (transboundary) conservation areas, including the Kavango-Zambezi TFCA and the Greater Limpopo TFCA.

The webinars allow participants to discuss their experiences with transfrontier conservation areas perspectives and challenges, as well as learn from the experiences and progress made in both transfrontier conservation areas. One of the greatest lessons drawn from SADC so far is the community-centred model vision, regionally integrated and sustainably managed network of transfrontier conservation areas as well as the network's main action areas: policy harmonization and advocacy, sustainable financing, capacity building, data and knowledge management, local livelihoods, climate vulnerability, and TFCAs as marketable tourism products.

***Finding 6:*** *The MTR established that the EAC Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Areas Working Group (EAC TBWCA-WG) chaired by the IUCN ESARO and CMS engaged six EAC partner to discuss two main issues.*

- *Establishment of a Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Areas Network:* the EAC Secretariat presented a draft concept note for the establishment of a TBWCA network modelled around a similar network in the SADC region. EAC Secretariat, with support from IUCN ESARO and CMS was expected to present a revised concept note to the EAC Sectoral Committee for approval so that it would proceed to proposal stage.
- *Further Capacity Building webinars and exchanges for the EAC TBWCA-WG:* Capacity building events targeting the EAC TBWCA-WG focussing on specific transboundary landscape(s) in the EAC region, with experience sharing by EAC partner states.

A key informant was positive about the support to the EAC partners states that focus on strengthening transboundary protection of seven priority EAC transboundary landscapes.

*“This kind of a study will definitely catalyze the arrangement with the EAC TBWCA whose purpose is to elaborate, finalize and assist in implementation of bilateral and multilateral agreements for the co-management of specific TBWCAs.” Key Informant*

***Activity 1.3 Resource mobilisation for the implementation of priority initiatives by producing project concept notes to address priority needs to help support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and other priority actions to strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources.***

At the conception of the project, this activity was intended to produce a number of short concepts building on the CONNECT activities such as those involving TWIX, Women and Youth. However, the EAC advised that this be changed and that IUCN ESARO to help develop a new USD 50 million initiative. This in essence is a very ambitious initiative relative to the CONNECT project resources. Despite this, WWF has been able to secure about USD 20 million to support this initiative within the relevant landscapes supporting the project activities. Additionally, the project has only been able to deliver a concept note and a consultant already engaged to develop the proposal *“Harnessing Nature Based Solutions for Integrated Landscape Management in East Africa.”* None of the prospective key informants selected for interviews was available to shed more light on the status of this noble assignment.

*“We have received a lot of support from IUCN regarding the regional biodiversity strategy. We then developed the Nature Based Solution programme for the region. The CONNECT project is claiming that they are the ones who supported this. Which is not true because this was an idea of the secretariat. We as the secretariat treat this as complementing our efforts with the larger IUCN engagement.”* Key Informant

#### **4.2.2.3 Objective 2: Perceived Value of Wildlife Increased**

An average of 63% rate of progress has been made in the implementation of the outcomes and activities. This is considered high delivery rate knowing that the range of output delivery is between 60% to 70% for this objective. Despite wildlife in economies studies having been completed, both outputs about policy briefs and actions taken by EAC from the wildlife in economies studies have not been delivered. There has however been an over-delivery of one of the outputs by 59%. The results and recommendations from the wildlife in economies studies provide key lessons for the region as essential building blocks for increasingly influencing perception on the value of wildlife among EAC partner states. Along these lines, the next step would be to place great emphasis on the recommendations of the wildlife in economy studies as a driver towards livelihoods improvement both at micro and macro levels.

#### **Outcome 3: Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife.**

This outcome is intended to contribute to Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy which recognizes the importance of raising awareness of the value of wildlife and wildlife habitats.

*“Enhance collaborative management of transboundary natural resources, while increasing awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife.”* Sophie Kutegeka (CoP – CONNECT Project via twitter).

The following is the status of the activities that contribute to the second objective.

#### **Activity 2.1 Increase political support for wildlife and natural ecosystems by undertaking a “Wildlife in the economy” studies to highlight the contribution of East Africa’s wildlife and protected areas to East Africa’s economy.**

Natural resources and wildlife are traditionally seen as inputs and not as assets in a national economy thereby receiving limited government resources invested in the wildlife support wildlife resources through tourism, forestry, hunting and fisheries, ecosystem services, and other wildlife economy activities. Through WWF, the CONNECT project sought to change this by demonstrating to governments and other stakeholders the economic contribution of wildlife resources to local, national and regional economies. With support from WWF, ALU aims to generate compelling evidence using these studies to illustrate the

value of wildlife to economies and use such evidence to encourage investment in this important economic asset. So far, ALU has conducted three state of the wildlife economy in Eastern Africa – Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. Key outcomes in these studies have been around;

- i. Without proper ownership or consumptive rights and incentives to landowners, whether community or private landowners, will be reluctant to invest in wildlife use outside of the protected areas. However, fostering wildlife utilization on private and communal properties is critical for conservation and community development.
- ii. If policymakers are serious about enabling national and international markets for wildlife goods and services, they must address specific hurdles to markets development around them. The policymakers will be expected to evaluate how market mechanisms may affect landscape management and wildlife stocks.
- iii. Concerns about injustice and conflict among important stakeholders, such as local community landowners and private landowners, who may or may not limit policymakers' capacity to activate the wildlife economy.
- iv. Government measures aimed at improving the efficiency of livestock systems will incentivize landowners to convert their property to livestock especially in the climate impacted environment.
- v. Conducive regulatory environment at national and regional levels is required for the trade in wildlife commodities and services.
- vi. The issue about demographic and economic development here is whether wildlife ranching, breeding or game farming has an absolute or comparative advantage in different sections of the region.

Multi-stakeholder dialogues that involved Governments, Community, Private Sector, Non-Government Organizations, academia and Development Partners on Diversifying Kenya's Wildlife Economy on Diversifying Kenya's Wildlife Economy have been held resulting in an environment that enables political support for wildlife and natural ecosystems. In addition, WWF continues to support advocacy events aimed at promoting the value of wildlife in the economy as countries across the region and the EAC develop response plans. In Kenya for instance, this background on the wildlife economy, including an overview of the wildlife and conservation management Act (2013) and the Sessional Paper No. 01 of 2020 on Wildlife Policy was a great step towards influencing political environment.

At the time of MTR, the CONNECT project through the ALU has supported the conduct of three Wildlife Economy studies. These studies are aimed at creating an enabling environment for unlocking the potential for the wildlife economies and the promotion of legal and sustainable use of natural resources including logging, fishing, and wildlife trade in order to capture the benefits from exporting ecosystem services such as carbon storage and ecotourism. The wider adaptive learning from the studies by different stakeholders is hypothesized to improve local livelihoods, increase fiscal revenues, expand job opportunities while at the same time promote conservation in the EAC partner states.

***Activity 2.1A Develop and disseminate awareness-raising materials on the role and value of wildlife in the EAC economy.***

This activity leverages on a series of opinion pieces in print and social media. The project engaged about 100 journalists through their Associations on the value of biodiversity during the Biodiversity Week of Freelance Journalists (AfJ) MESH.A.

CONNECT in collaboration with Capital Coalitions held 5 series of the webinars on natural capital for SMEs and local communities dubbed “*Valuing Natural Capital & Local Communities for Business in Eastern & Southern Africa.*” The webinars brought together key actors including private sector, local community representatives, CSOs, as well as development partners. There were Transforming Decision-making for SMEs, Capitals Impacts and Dependencies of the Tourism Industry and Natural, Social and Human Capital and its relevance for SMEs. A key informant at the EAC secretariat was of the opinion that the EAC region was going through rapid industrial and economic transformation and that natural capital was key to sustainable future. The informant was categorical that nature-based solutions do not have to be mega initiatives but can also be community level interventions that can on aggregate.

*“The CONNECT project report on the Wildlife Use Patterns (WUP) has been useful. In the case of Kenya, it emerged that IWT was taking place in Burma Market in Kenya. Given the closed network of players, it was originally not possible to break this network and expose it. However, using the information gathered and shared, it was possible for the KWS to undertake an independent investigation and impound wildlife meat, thereby deterring the business players.” Key Informant*

The law enforcement agencies are using *WUP* reports to gain more ground in the reduction of demand for IWT. A review of project documents also points to the production of four short video case studies on the role of women and youth in preventing wildlife crime. Two of the clips have been released focusing on the *Ruaha Carnivore Project* in Tanzania and *Adopt of Park change-makers* in Kenya. Case studies from Uganda and Rwanda are being developed. The success so far for the delivery of these case studies can be attributed to the engagement of youth-led implementing agencies which use youth orientated strategies to deliver messages effectively. These however, leave out the women component of the activity, which are starting later in the remaining implementation period.

Data from the different studies produced by the CONNECT project have been used to support the development of global studies such as the *GBV-ENV Linkages Center: A Trade of Violence*, which gives an understanding the gendered dynamics and gender-based violence in the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT).

The creation and management of communication products such as guides, manuals and systematisation of experiences focused on disseminating and replicating knowledge, good practices and lessons learned through project implementation shall be a crucial contribution to expanding the impact, replicating successful experiences and bolstering project sustainability.

#### **4.2.2.4 Objective 3: Poaching and trafficking reduced**

An average (51%) rate of progress rate is recorded (0% to 72%) in the achievement of the outcomes and activities. The outputs realized under this objective lay the foundations and represent essential inputs for progressing towards the reduction in demand for illegal wildlife products in EAC partners states. This average record was attributed to the low window of opportunity that existed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Along these lines, the next step would be to place special emphasis on continuing the execution of any lagging and leading sub-activities but most importantly the measurement in community-wide change in desired attitude on the reduction of consumption of illegal wildlife products. Since the project is still under implementation, behaviour change campaigns have now been planned to take place in year three and four of the project implementation. The project intends to focus on in-depth campaign on wild meat consumption in Tanzania. On the other hand, awareness raising will specifically leverage

on the use of information education and communication activities on indigenous medicinal values and marine species consumption in Uganda and Kenya.

**Outcome 4: Reduced demand for illegal wildlife products.**

With regard to this outcome, the focus of this project is on demand for wildlife products from local markets within the EAC region and not for global market demand reduction. The following are the findings of the MTR with respect to the level of achievement and effects for each activity.

**Activity 3.1: Patterns of Use of Threatened Wildlife in East Africa, Phase II**

The activity focused on the behaviour change communication building leaning on the lessons from an earlier study in phase I for the East Asia Community. The key informants were unanimous that some of the planned activities in the main project document were changed at the beginning of the project. All changes that were made before the implementation of the project were communicated to the donor, other CONNECT partners as well as government stakeholders through the behaviour change advisory groups.

**Finding 7:** *The project, through TRAFFIC commissioned a study: Phase I Wildlife Use Patterns (WUP) which would guide phase II of the study. The project has also developed info-graphic briefing papers for Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the region. The study reports were summarized into briefs for the countries and validated through meetings. During the validation meetings with government partners, it was agreed due to the sensitive nature of the findings, not to be shared with the public instead the government will use the findings to strategize and strengthen their enforcement mechanisms.*

Even though the global report was presented to USAID/ KEA, their feedback was that the number of seizure cases was not as high at the ports as previously thought. One of the key informants reported that;

*“The global report was presented to USAID who also acknowledged the low number of seizures at the ports. Maybe the ports are not being used for trafficking or perhaps the illegal wildlife is passing at the ports without being noticed or it is not being reported. It was time to look at the issue of corruption at the port while also collecting all other information on seizures across the countries. The biggest challenge is that it is a fine line to write the report giving out strong and useful recommendations to address the issues of corruption without being seen as insulting to the officers who will be implementing the recommendation.” Key Informant.*

**Finding 8:** *A detailed behavior change mitigation measures is planned for Tanzania. This is because of additional financing from other partners. In the case of Kenya and Uganda, the plan is to have sensitization/ awareness raising initiatives as a way of influencing behavior change. Other EAC partner states are entirely omitted from this activity for instance because of the fact that there exist restrictions of using any USAID funding in EAC members states like Burundi or South Sudan. In the future it would be important to reflect on the aspect of leaving out the other EAC partner states. Other ongoing bush meat monitoring, even though this was not part of the initial proposal also omit other EAC partner states.*

*“Even though in Tanzania, a limited number of wild meat restaurants are licensed, in the case of transboundary strategies, this might go against the laws of contiguous countries hence reversing the gains that would have been made by these other countries. There are indications that they sell illegal meat. This is despite the reported regular checks by the conservation Agencies.” Key Informant*

*“The CONNECT project has the capacity to mobilize resources through USAID and other development partners. We think that the project can support the EAC to mobilize some of these resources to bring other development partners on board. The USAID does not have a problem with the countries like Burundi and South Sudan being supported only that the USG has strict foreign policy that has to be followed.” Key Informant*

The above sentiments of the above informant were consistent with those of one of the activity leads. They held that IWT manifests itself differently across the region. Key informants from the EAC secretariat and TRAFFIC agreed and affirmed that;

*“In Kenya for instance, the trade is undertaken within a closed network of users and traders. Communities also differ in the way they consume the wildlife products. Trophy, medicine etc. In Tanzania, some licensed restaurants and meat selling outlets undertake illegal trade in wildlife meat products. Some restaurants are strongly suspected of trading in lion oil. Despite these not being verified with data, the project has instituted strategies to monitoring bush meat trade in the region.” Key Informant.*

**Finding 9:** *The study focused on IWT among the East Asia Community working in the urban area. However, it is also important to note that the East Asia Community also work in the rural areas where they are constructing roads, bridges and other development infrastructure. For effective messaging, it will be important that this group and the communities in these areas are targeted with behavior change messages.*

**Finding 10:** *The perception of government agencies on the report. From the interviews undertaken, it was clear that government agencies present during the validation meeting considered the report to be useful. For example, in the Kenyan case, the report brought out the network approach to IWT. In the case of Uganda, the report identified licensed traders of wildlife meat could also be propagating IWT.*

It was however noted that there is no mechanism in place (or indicators) to measure report usability. It is not clear how the result of the survey has influenced the actions of government agencies to address the issue of IWT.

**Finding 11:** *Whether the remaining time is sufficient to complete the remaining activities. The design of behaviour change communication relating to IWT is ongoing. Two workshops for the behaviour change Advisory Group were held in Uganda and Tanzania with officials from government and private institutions. It has been targeted that Tanzania will have a wide-scale behavior change interventions on IWT. This is emerging due to financial support from another donor to complement what the CONNECT project is doing. In Kenya and Uganda, the BCC plans are that awareness creation will be done during the next phase of the project using a multi-pronged approach including using the media.*

A number of issues should be considered going forward;

1. The need to come up with a framework for assessing the contribution of CONNECT projects viz a vis the new partner who will support the in-depth behaviour change activities in Tanzania. Designing mutual separable/ attributable impact evaluation indicators at this stage will be appropriate. This calls for a re-look at the log-frame to determine the efficacy of the end-term evaluation.



2. Clarity on how to measure the effectiveness of media campaigns needs to be considered before the roll-out. One of the proposals made during the mid-term review is to conduct an assessment to determine the levels of understanding on IWT. Currently, it is only confirmed that a rapid assessment will be done for the case of Tanzania mainly because implementation will be piloted in a wildlife corridor where WUP study did not take place/ collect data before. For the case of Kenya and Uganda, WUP study data will be used to inform about BCC planning and implementation.
3. Given that transboundary nature of IWT, it will be important to consider the inclusion other EAC partner states.

It has been anticipated that while the time left will be sufficient to undertake the activities, the available budget may not be sufficient to allow for a comprehensive or effective intervention.

**Finding 12:** *Existing/ potential collaborative opportunities: Across various activities, it is coming out that a number of partners working in the area of conservation are willing to support some of the components of the project. On further inquiry, partners such as the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Frankfurt zoological Society (FZS) and Wildlife Conservation Society. In the case of activity 3.1, already some partners working with TRAFFIC would want to support the expanded behaviour change communication in Tanzania. In Uganda, there is also on-going engagements with behaviour change advisory group members who have been selected from different government and private institutions; for example, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Uganda.*

*“We need more support from others too, it can be technical or money. This is a heavy task that needs concerted efforts from others. Organizations like African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) and Wildlife Conservation Society. We even know that AWF and another partner are starting a law enforcement project in both Kenya and Tanzania. The CONNECT project closely collaborate with them for learning purposes.” Key Informant.*

It will be important that an understanding (MOU) or a framework of collaboration is drawn out and clear output and outcome indicators developed to specify the intended contribution of each of the parties that may want to be involved.

**Activity 3.2 Building capacity for stronger engagement of local communities in combating Illegal Wildlife Trade by developing training materials and modules to support implementation of the FLoD guidance and tools.**

IUCN ESARO convened conservation organizations from EAC partner states in seven online learning events between September and December 2020 on the application of the ‘Local Communities: First Line of Defence against Illegal Wildlife Trade’ (FLoD) initiative. The initiative’s purpose is to support designers and implementers of anti-poaching and anti-wildlife trafficking approaches, strategies and projects to effectively engage local communities as partners. As a result, the CONNECT project is promoting the implementation of FLoD in Tanzania, Uganda, through the Uganda Wildlife Authority and in Rwanda through the Rwanda Development Board.

**Finding 13:** *Effectiveness of the training. The training brought together officers working in conservation including the police, prosecutors, wardens from different parks and other law enforcement agencies. Some of the gaps that existed was that IWT was not being considered as a serious crime as other crimes such as terrorism and drug trafficking. Even though there are very progressive laws to deal with IWT, the variations in law enforcements have been the biggest hindrance. For instance, at the ports of Tanzania*



(Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar), there is a high volume of cargo being handled. It is therefore highly vulnerable to trafficking. In Kenya, the northern frontier plays transit route and this is similar with Uganda and South Sudan both along the Kidepo national park. Therefore, the training in Rwanda and Uganda although not universally mitigating, was able to address some of these incapacities.

*“EAC is pleased with the way the project is engaging local communities with respect to seminar series on First Line of Defense (FLoD). These are substantial ways that are proving to be effective. The project has also gone ahead to involve the EAAP which is also a link to the war against IWT. Also, the project was able to facilitate the creation of TWG for transboundary wildlife conservation areas together with CMS to provide technical guidance to member states.” Key Informant.*

It was reported that not much had been done or planned to be done to reach communities with the message on the need to combat IWT. This is important because as a key component of the TOC, awareness creation on the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife was expected to facilitate positive behaviour change that would lead to reduction in demand of wildlife and wildlife products and hence poaching and trafficking will be reduced. At community level, women and youth play an important role in the conservation of wildlife for sustainability. The youth are better placed to understand the value of wildlife and if well sensitized they are likely not to get involved in IWT. Women are the ones who prepare the poached meat and in other instances fetch firewood from the protected areas. It is therefore clear that if well involved then they can be helpful in combatting IWT at source.

*“This is exactly what the FLoD initiative helps to achieve with communities because for instance in Kenya, about 75% of wildlife are found on community land outside protected areas. However, this has been affected heavily by the Covid-19 pandemic and hence the delays being experienced. Consequently, the ability for CONNECT to catalyze on the ground implementation is impacted negatively.” Key Informant.*

#### **Outcome 5: Improved regional and bilateral collaboration on enforcement and prosecution.**

Under this objective, the project partners are proposing to implement a series of targeted interventions to strengthen responses to the wildlife poaching and trafficking challenges in the EAC region focusing on specific strategic objectives of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy.

#### **Activity: 3.3: The Role of women and youth in combating illegal wildlife trade**

Integral to the FLoD methodology is to bring out the voice of women and youth, so that the implementation of FLoD also contributes to empowering women and youth to explore their productive roles in combating IWT. IUCN ESARO has documented some case studies of FLoD piloted in Kenya before the project was started<sup>11</sup>. As at the MTR assignment, the project has attempted to adopt strategies including producing short video case studies of the youth and women engaging to combat wildlife crime. Apart from the individual activity leads being sensitive to indigenous people and local communities and their respective implementing agencies having gender sensitive staffing outputs, there is minimal understanding of gender roles in the project arrangement. This was occasioned by the fact that the project never did a gender analysis. A justification was provided that the project was not heavy on gender and hence reason for not conducting a gender analysis. As per the project design and also confirmed by key informant from IUCN ESARO (Finance department), the CONNECT project is providing financial support to some two

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/2018/guidance\\_for\\_implementing\\_the\\_flood\\_methodology.pdf](https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/content/documents/2018/guidance_for_implementing_the_flood_methodology.pdf)

pilot micro-projects with the hope that these may be scaled up to increase the sustainability of efforts if they are successful.

In Kenya, Stand Up Shout Out (SUSO) are developing a framework to scale up efforts for youths to adopt a national park. In Rwanda, the Rwanda conservation wildlife association are focusing on training community liaison officers and further developing an education center in Kigali to further promote crane conservation. In Uganda, the CONNECT project will focus on developing a business plan for reformed poacher groups living around Queen Elizabeth national park while in Tanzania, the Ruaha Carnivore programme will shortly be doing a feasibility study to expand its approaches into the Selous Mikumi ecosystem. These are very good initiatives that are targeting youth and women involvement in combating IWT. However, it calls for more efforts to really go past the surface.

**Activity 3.4: Development of an Eastern Africa-TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange).**

The establishment of *Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange* in Eastern Africa (TWIX) was initially requested by Customs and regional Forestry Agency representatives attending the East Africa Timber Trade Stakeholders' Forum in 2016. TWIX is also aligned to the EAC's strategy of 2017 of Combat Poaching and Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products. The tool is a follow up to the EU-TWIX (European Union Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange), AFRICA-TWIX and SADC-TWIX (Southern African Development Community Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange) models.

Eastern Africa-TWIX was developed and is being managed by TRAFFIC on behalf of law enforcement agencies of Eastern Africa Countries. The tool consists of two components: a secure mailing list enabling agencies engaged in the fight against illegal wildlife trade to communicate with one another in real time, as well as a website that holds useful resources, such as training materials, identification guides and a centralized database of wildlife seizures made by East Africa partner states. Until 2020, most of the EAC partner states did not understand the Eastern Africa TWIX. However, a regional meeting convened by the project in February 2020 provided a forum to enlighten EAC partner states. Since then, Burundi and Rwanda have joined Africa – TWIX. As funding permits, Horn of Africa countries would be encouraged to join the Eastern Africa - TWIX.

*"Many of us exhibit knowledge of TWIX and appreciate the value of the platform in information exchange to facilitate the fight against wildlife crimes and aid in coordination of players (judges, prosecutors, wildlife protection agencies). What would be useful is a blended form of online and physical trainings. Officers from TRAFFIC provide personalized support by visiting our offices. I personally have shared at least three messages on the platform. It was very exciting to me and I am longing for the period when the users of TWIX will relieve TRAFFIC from driving the whole process because this is our tool. They (TRAFFIC) can design user paced online training so that anyone can access it at their own time. This will enhance the usability of the shared information."* Key Informant

**Finding 14:** *The development of Eastern Africa - TWIX is one of those activities that have progressed very well as at the midterm. The website and the mailing list were developed and users trained on how to use these tools. The TWIX system has seen 205 law enforcement officers from 29 institutions across the region trained and over 100 messages exchanged via the mailing list. Most of those interviewed across the various activities including FLoD and EAAP have been able to express knowledge about the TWIX and its use. A number of success stories were also reported.*

*“A success story reported was the case where the Ugandan Agencies used TWIX mailing platform to facilitate investigation and apprehension of individuals engaging in smuggling of 210 reptiles using fake CITES certificates. The individuals were traced back to Tanzania through the bank accounts.” Key Informant*

Another information shared was the Operation *Usalama* which netted approximately USD 100,000 worth of ivory hidden in a personal vehicle, in August 2021. Four of the traffickers were arrested and the case is in court.

**Finding 15:** *Sustainability of the platform. Currently TRAFFIC manages the website and the mailing list. There is no budget provision to support the management of the website in future. It was reported that there are ongoing activities in mobilizing resources to support TWIX.*

**Finding 16:** *Clarity on information sharing. It was clear that there are ongoing initiatives to expand the number of countries participating in TWIX. However, it was established that some of the Agencies have reservations in sharing the information at their disposal where there is no MOU. Others were even reluctant to nominate users. As many more countries and institutions are brought on board, it would be important to have in place MOUs or a way to guarantee information security.*

In order to expand the platform, it will be important to bring in more institutions and countries given the nature of wildlife trade. As more people come on board, the increased information flow can be analysed to inform policy. It was also recommended that a national wildlife management agencies' structure be created to coordinate these activities at the country level. Continuous engagement with the TWIX team is important. An incentive structure can also be explored to motivate people to post, update or share information in the platform.

According to the agency representatives from Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda who were key informants in this assignment, the success of Eastern Africa-TWIX is largely attributed to the regular updating of data relating to new seizures and offences by national law enforcement agencies in EAC partner states. The involvement of all designated enforcement officers in each EAC partner states is strongly encouraged. As a result, there has been learning and experience sharing by TWIX users in Europe, central Africa and South Africa. A total of 205 representatives of law enforcement agencies have been trained, with 82 messages having been exchanged through the mailing list. The messages include stories on seizures, sentences passed by courts of law related to IWT. A success story reported was the case where the Ugandan Agencies used TWIX mailing platform to apprehend individuals engaging in smuggling of 210 reptiles using fake CITES certificates. The culprits were traced back to Tanzania through the bank accounts.

*“The platform provides a great platform to share real time information, I have been a user for some time now and it provides me with intelligence information for quick response to illegal use of forest resources. I also learn from experiences that others go through without compromising the quality. This platform provides a good avenue of identifying concealing models and also a signal to smugglers of the multi-agencies approach to the fight against illegal trade in wild resources.” Key Informant*

As a forecast, it emerged that there is no budget allocation to sustain the operations of the activities of EA-TWIX beyond the lives of the two projects funded by USAID/ KEA. However, there are ongoing funding proposals being developed to support Eastern Africa TWIX. This is a precarious position for this

noble initiative that supports the implementation of the EAC's Combat Poaching and Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products and the EAC partners states should start thinking about its sustainability.

**Activity 3.5: Establishing an Eastern Africa Prosecutors (EAAP) Forum on Wildlife and Related Crimes.**

The EAAP forum for wildlife prosecutors was established and launched in the year 2020 with the directors of public prosecution endorsing the need to develop a platform for wildlife related prosecution. All prosecutors of six EAC partners states are members of the EAAP. It is a secure online platform designed to enhance virtual interactions among prosecutors and help them speed up the trial process through digital communication and processing of Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) and extradition requests." Art. 124 (5) of the Treaty Establishing the East Africa Community, and many other regional conventions and treaties are the benchmarks to this end. The website is linked to an online training course (an e-course produced by TRAFFIC under GIZ) for enhancing regional prosecutors' capacity on investigating and prosecuting wildlife crimes. Since its preliminary launch in November 2020, over 1000 people visited the website to access useful information and materials and 73 prosecutors accessed and attended the course. The collection of wildlife and related court cases including judgments, charge sheets, and orders from Kenya and Tanzania for the Wildlife Case Digest was completed. In total, 408 (84 judgements and 324 charge sheets and orders) cases were collected from Arusha, Manyara, Lindi, Mtwara, Ruvuma, Mbeya, Dodoma, Singida, Mara, and Mwanza in Tanzania and from 11 courts in Kenya. The analysis of cases and drafting of the WC Digest are ongoing.

*"This platform is very good. I hear there is another information exchange for seizure (TWIX) platform with agencies such as KFS, KWS, TANAPA, and UWA. If these two can be aligned, then it would be very good. They would complement each other and would not be looked at as separate information sharing platforms but one." Key Informant.*

**Finding 17: Progress of activities:** *One of the EAC anti-poaching strategic objectives was to get a network of the prosecutors in the region who were working on wildlife prosecution. There was already an existing EAAP in place at the inception of the project. The initial discussions were therefore on the need to develop a website with microsites, one being the Wildlife and Environmental Crime Prosecutors' Forum (WECFP) for the Eastern Africa prosecutors as part of the original strategy for EAAP.*

*"Despite the many years of EAAP existence, it had never had a website. We agreed we do a website for them that would include a platform for wildlife prosecutors. We could not just create a single microsite for wildlife because prosecutors cover many other crimes." Key Informant*

CONNECT support in the development of EAAP website provided a great opportunity to roll out this intervention within the EAAP platform. Within the new website a secured portal/microsite for prosecutors dealing with wildlife crime was established. This microsite was populated with wildlife and other conservation resources. This also included cases, and legislations for mutual legal assistance. These materials were approved by the EAAP secretariat before they could be uploaded. The platform is easy to update and the EAAP secretariat is able to login and update information given that credentials have been handed over to them. Currently, the hosting of the website is being financed by TRAFFIC through the CONNECT project. Every microsite is having a contact person. Within the wildlife crime microsite, each country has a point person. This is the most active microsite of the website. The original content of the website was created by TRAFFIC, currently prosecutors have been asked to generate content for

uploading (state of wildlife prosecution papers). The EAAP Secretariat has the mandate to review and approve the website contents, including the articles to be uploaded. All publicly available documents do not need the EAAP approval prior to being uploaded to the website. So far, news features articles have been uploaded, more articles are being developed and will be uploaded in due course. In addition, the project was supposed to collect wildlife court cases under this activity. As at the time of this review, a total of 416 cases have been collected from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. These informed the development of a "Wildlife Case Digest", an online capacity enhancement and learning tool targeting to enhance the capacity of prosecutors in handling wildlife related cases.

The next activity was to develop an online course for wildlife prosecutors and partly funded by GIZ. This had been approved by EAAP. The course was partly funded by GIZ. Once developed, an online training (e-course) was undertaken. In the region, there are about 3,000 prosecutors. About 100 of them handle issues related to wildlife. However, during the online training, more than 300 prosecutors were able to log in and be part of the course. About 73 prosecutors attended and completed the e-course since its launch in May 2021. The e-course was one of the strategies aimed at ensuring that the website was relevant. Up to now, about 1,000 people (including prosecutors) have visited the EAAP website.

*"Originally, we just settled to train the core people who handle wildlife crime per country. This was something like less than 100, but we ended up having close to 300 logged in. The e-course was advertised to all the prosecutors. This could have been the case. Prosecutors do not choose what to prosecute and so being a topical submit, more prosecutor were involve. The e-course was one of the ways to make the website relevant." Key Informant.*

Another activity was to organize the first Eastern Africa Prosecutors Conference and a 9<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the EAAP. The conference was held in Arusha from 29<sup>th</sup> August to 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021. It was brought on board 60 participants comprised of DPPs, Senior State Attorneys, State Attorneys, Attorney Generals and prosecutors from 11 countries namely Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia, DR Congo, Mozambique and Uganda. The theme of the conference was "Combating Wildlife Crimes as Economic/Organised Crime in East Africa." The forum will now expand to include other countries outside the EAC and include some of the SADC members. Five Countries (Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, DRC, and Ethiopia) were admitted to the EAAP platform at the Conference. As of now, the platform has 11 members. One of the conference outputs was the passing of six resolutions on enhancing regional and international collaboration on investigating and prosecuting wildlife crimes. The report of the conference is now being finalized. The report provides details of the conference proceedings such as the presentations, plenary sessions, discussions and the data presented.

**Finding 18:** *The project is supposed to benefit the EAC partner states which are currently six. However, the way the project funding is designed, only three (3) countries are targeted to benefit from the project, leaving out the other three.*

The EAAP secretariat reported that they were skeptical on approving any activities that do not involve all the prosecutors for the EAC partner states. The CONNECT project only target the three<sup>12</sup> EAC partner states where TRAFFIC has a presence. The EAAP secretariat pointed to the need to scale up the original

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<sup>12</sup> "How we have managed to go around this funding restriction to other countries is to get funding from other donors" -As reported by a key informant

intervention using additional finances from other partners such as Space for Giants, GIZ, UNODC and AWF among other development partners. An informant gave an example of South Sudan, an EAC partner state that is not supported under this project. According to the informant, there is enough evidence that South Sudan has stockpiles of ivory which are currently being sold illegally. However, it is not easy for the project to engage in any interventions in the country because of USAID/ KEA fund restrictions on use of the USG funds in the country. In that regard, where the cases are in courtrooms of Uganda while the evidence in South Sudan, nothing can be done. Therefore, the project would engage with the EAC secretariat and other development partners who might not have funding restrictions for South Sudan to intervene on the legal assistance and capacity strengthening.

**Finding 19:** *Ambiguity of planned activities: The lack of a clear work plan makes it very difficult to know which projects will be coming up in the next phase of the project. It was reported that all planned tasks under this activity have been done. This includes the setting up of the website and holding the first regional conference on prosecution of wildlife crimes. It is not clear what activities would be carried out during the new financial year. However, there are on-ongoing planning sessions to come up with new activities which will be forwarded to USAID/ KEA through IUCN ESARO for financing, which should be based on the findings from this report. It is not clear if the project document is guiding the development of these new activities.*

**Finding 20:** *Effectiveness of the EAAP wildlife forum. One of the tasks under this activity was to collect wildlife and environmental related cases. A number of cases, including judgements, orders, and charge sheets, were collected both outstanding and concluded. This currently stands at 416 cases. Some of these cases were discussed robustly with the DPPs during the conference. Despite the slow justice process, most of the collected cases were determined.*

While the materials have been uploaded it is not easy to tell whether these materials or tools are being used to aid investigation and prosecution. It will be important to come up with a measure of success or impact in this activity.

### **Activity 3.6: Enhancing existing initiatives combatting wildlife crime at ports**

This activity supports Strategic Objectives 3 “Strengthen regional and international collaboration” and 5 “Promote research and development in the fight against wildlife crime” of the EAC anti-poaching strategy. When the activity was conceived, the idea was to do a data driven analysis of seizures that took place at the ports of Zanzibar, Dar Es Salaam and Mombasa in order to understand the role of the port in IWT. This was to understand the countries and species involved, as well as the concealment methods used. The report includes background information regarding the focal ports, such as size, security and plans for expansion.

As a result of the implementation of this activity, a draft analysis of seizure data was validated by port stakeholders and subsequently a draft report was shared with key development partners including USAID/ KEA. In these data presented, there was a recommendation to improve the collection and sharing of data by port stakeholders. The report provides some level of evidence on how governance lapses at key ports could facilitate IWT, which will require the mobilization of political and institutional support to address it.



During the stakeholder workshops held at the three ports in 2020, TRAFFIC staff presented on the nature of IWT, and the role ports can play. From the discussions, and from preparatory meetings, it is clear that the port stakeholders have a different capacity and institutional needs.

Port stakeholders highlighted issues with manifests not being submitted electronically. Problems with seizure case and evidence management was also raised, as well as a lack of collaboration and information sharing between agencies. The need to tackle corruption in the ports was also discussed. Others reported that what they lacked are equipment such as scanners, more staff and further training to identify IW and or related products on transit.

The issue of lack of a work plan also came up under this activity. A respondent at one of the ports mentioned that they were not aware of any upcoming activities or if there were to be any at all. This was however clarified by one of the activity leads that a work plan exists and probably it has not just been updated accordingly.

### **Challenges with activity 3.6: Enhancing existing initiatives combatting wildlife crime at ports**

It emerged that working with stakeholders, especially certain Government Agencies was not always easy, regarding the sharing of seizure data. It was only Zanzibar's port officials who appeared to be more receptive and appreciated the information in the stakeholder workshop and preparatory meetings. The stakeholder workshop in Mombasa was held virtually due to Covid-19 (unlike the case of Tanzania) which likely contributed to difficulties in engaging stakeholders.

Governance issues especially corruption could be contributing to the low numbers reported on seizures. Corruption is a very sensitive issue in governance and the EAC region is not left out in treating it as a sensitive issue. Even though there is no tangible evidence to support this position, certain port stakeholders and experts are confident that some level of corruption is taking place, sentiments that are supported by available literature. Matters of governance at the port were not a focus of this project, and require expertise to fully investigate and intervene appropriately. However, without addressing corruption in the ports, the impact of any interventions to reduce IWT are likely to be limited. Interventions such as introducing more scanners or switching to electronic manifests may reduce opportunities for corruption but they should be complimented by specific anti-corruption interventions. Changing the behaviour and social norms of port stakeholders offers one such path.

### **Activity 4.0: Bushmeat Monitoring in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya**

A new activity on measuring the impacts of Covid-19 on the illegal trade in bushmeat and other wildlife products in East Africa was initiated in November 2020. This was because of the Covid-19 situation causing concerns that bushmeat was growing and there was less enforcement due to reduced funding for enforcement and people having no money due to loss of employment. The project was therefore aimed at tracking the level of bushmeat trading and consumption during the Covid-19 period. The focus was on Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

Travel into and out of most countries in Africa was restricted as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic. This limited wildlife-related revenue including those from tourism. Consequently, countries that relied on such revenue faced challenges of financial resources for the management of protected and preserved areas. A few studies on the association between poaching and Covid-19 have provided such evidence. Poaching for bushmeat and regional sale has increased in some parts of East and Southern Africa due



to increased livelihoods needs and reduced monitoring. At the same time, travel limitations may have hampered trans-national wildlife trafficking. In Kenya for instance, for the first time since 1999, no rhinos were poached in 2020 (KWS).

At the time of the MTR, enormous data had been collected from the identified hotspots as they were in the six study sites that had been selected in each target country. Based on the draft report, data was collected from villages around Murchison, Queen Elizabeth, and Lake Mburo National Parks as well as Kampala, Masindi and Kasese urban centers in Uganda. In Kenya, the sites included communities next to Tsavo National Park, Laikipia Conservancies and Masai Mara Reserve as well as Voi, Narok and Nairobi urban centres. In Tanzania, the sites included Katavi, Mkomazi, and Serengeti National parks; and Dar es Salaam, Musoma and Kigoma urban centres. It was reported to the MTR team that the actual data collection in the study sites started in November in Tanzania and December in both Kenya and Uganda. To date, 1200 interviews have been conducted in Kenya, 9460 interviews have been conducted with bushmeat consumers in Tanzania. In addition, 480 interviews were conducted in Kenya, 9420 have been conducted in Uganda and 380 have been conducted in Tanzania with bushmeat traders/ hunters. Preliminary findings including targeted species and trade trends were shared with the wider audience and particularly the EAAP during their conference in Arusha on 30<sup>th</sup> August to 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2021. The MTR established that the final report from the bushmeat monitoring is being finalised.

**Finding 21:** Scope of the Activity. The original scope of the project was to collect data and see what the trends in trade and species were involved in the IWT. This was broken down into four reporting quarters. The results were to be shared on a quarterly basis. The results were to be communicated to EAC and the partner states, and the USAID/ KEA (so that they consider scaling up funding and plan other interventions). The activity was to run for a year and while the data collection ended in September 2021, there is a need that the monitoring be extended by another year for capturing the trends. The report is yet to be shared with government agencies. This was because of the enormous time required for data quality management, analysis and presentation. Both quarters one and two findings were shared with CONNECT partners, including USAID/ KEA and with the EAAP.

**Finding 22:** *The project fits into TWIX, EAAP, FLoD and other activities as IW utilization is a key area of discussion. The findings will enrich the demand reduction campaigns. Currently the behaviour change strategies are being developed using some of the results obtained from this activity.*

#### **4.2.2.5 Observations of the MTR findings regarding the effectiveness of the project**

Many of the targets envisioned by mid-term were placed at the same level as final targets, so if this parameter was used to issue an opinion on effectiveness, the rating would be negative. However, in the MTR team's opinion, these unsatisfactory results are attributed to the restrictions brought about by the global Covid-19 pandemic, weaknesses associated with virtual engagements and delivery of project activities, and absence of physical engagements. These are not an actual problem in activity implementation rates. This is because in almost all the EAC partner states, Covid-19 positivity and infection rates have dropped significantly compared to the year 2020 and early 2021. Nearly all the EAC partners states have adopted the Covid-19 vaccination policy where majority of the people have accessed a variety of vaccines, but the vaccination uptake is still low (11.2%) within the EAC partners states, with Rwanda leading at 29.7% of the population having got at least a vaccination.

Considering the data from the monitoring system from the IUCN ESARO office, quarterly reports and project verification sources, and comparing this information with interviews with key informants in this assignment, it is verified that the degree of implementation is satisfactory for the three objectives in terms of execution of the initiative activities.

#### **4.2.2.6 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Component of the project**

Reviewing the project documents, the project has a standard operating procedure (SOP) for data management which provides an indication of the existence of a data management and safeguard plan stipulating strategies to safeguard data confidentiality, systems to archive source data files/ project records, database entry procedures and data management coordination across partners. The SOP guides data generation to archiving. IUCN ESARO provides USAID/ KEA with aggregate project progress reports generated in conjunction with WWF and TRAFFIC. The project also has an online tracking system for all indicators including the USAID standard and the project custom indicators. This system provides the performance measurement status and all the means of verification for each of the indicators at each level (outcome and output). The project milestones are tracked and reported on a weekly (Thursdays) basis through the online platform, which is accessible to partners and USAID/ KEA. This forms the basis for triangulation of achievement reported in a given quarter or year.

A review of the documentation confirmed that the annual reports include a section containing result matrixes that presents the level of progress made in the technical implementation of each activities and associated outcomes. This draws sharply on the quality of the results presented in the quarterly reports relative to the project results matrix. The project updates and shares a weekly milestone performance report. This frequency is relatively high for a project of this nature. Therefore, the project is advised to design a DQA plan that will be standardised for use by all activity leads and spearheaded by the IUCN ESARO. This will facilitate quality improvement in the remaining implementation period of the project by presenting high quality data that is reliable for effective decision making. The USAID has a robust DQA framework that the project can learn from.

The MTR points to the fact that even though the project progress reports provide data at output level, reporting at outcome levels is minimal across all the quarterly and annual reports presented for review. It would be important for the project to start thinking about how this will be reported in the coming years.

At design, the project management indicated that there would be a learning component, which upon review is outlined in the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP). Three learning questions are specified;

- i. What policy gaps/ bottlenecks and challenges exist that hinders development and implementation of action plans on poaching, illegal wildlife trade and management transboundary natural resources?
- ii. In what ways would engagement of women and youth in combating illegal wildlife trade reduce wildlife poaching and trafficking?
- iii. What approaches have been tried and what was the performance/outcome?

The first and the third learning questions are lagging questions and would have been answered by this time of the project implementation. This is because their answers exist - either contemporary or delivered in the past. However, the second is a leading question and hence the project would benefit from

prevailing data to answer the question. It would be important for the project management unit to start reporting on some of these learning questions at strategic levels.

### 4.2.3 Efficiency

**Evaluation question 3:** Have the intervention methods, institutional structure and financial, technical and operational resources and procedures available helped or hindered the achievement of the project outcomes and objectives?<sup>13</sup>

**Finding 23:** *There is a forward-looking organizational structure and a chain of accountability. IUCN ESARO takes lead on issues of governance, monitoring, evaluation and reporting and also oversees procurement processes that go beyond a threshold of over USD 60,000. Otherwise, WWF and TRAFFIC are responsible for all of their procurements. WWF and TRAFFIC are firmly involved in direct implementation. The parties know the terms of association which are captured in the MOUs. Given that the parties do not have a dedicated project implementation unit (PIU) that brings together all parties, IUCN ESARO would have to make a back-and-forth engagement with individual implementers on reporting and management of the project components. This is likely to be time consuming and repetitive which will need to be addressed in the next phase of the project. Where resources have been used, the cost of the interventions justify the results. In certain instances, for example EAAP and activity 3.1 on patterns of use of threatened wildlife in EA phase II, the implementing agencies have gone beyond the available resources to achieve greater results/outputs.*

The intended CONNECT project structure has performed as expected so far, particularly in project management and operation, allowing for effective, efficient implementation and output-based management. This progress can be seen in the project's ability to respond quickly to initial delays, the development of strategies to address the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the generation and execution of activities in collaboration with sub-awardee's local organizations. These characteristics have made a substantial contribution to the road towards the achievement of the project's outcomes.

### The CONNECT Project Structure

The CONNECT project structure and accountability chain have performed to expectation so far. The team from IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC, WWF and the stakeholders are familiar with the project management, the responsibilities of each party and the defined procedures to deliver on their activities. The coordination and discussions between the project management team, special advisors and the EAC secretariat, as well as vice versa, has been noted as a weak point.

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#### <sup>13</sup> MTR Sub-evaluation questions

- Can the cost of the interventions be justified by the results? (i.e. value for money)
- What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
- The CONNECT Project's organizational structure, managerial support including gender aspects
- Does the institutional infrastructure in EAC members states, non-state actors and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?
- Has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?
- Has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional etc. changes in the project environment?
- Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?
- To what extent has the down time in implementation and execution facilitated or hindered the achievement of the project objectives?
- Are there constraints, problems and areas in need of further attention?

It should be mentioned that the project design successfully included results-based management, resulting in the project's activities and outputs being implemented effectively and efficiently. For each of the outputs for which they are responsible, each of the project partners have a clear understanding of the time bound targets and outcomes established in the project plan, and they have used a work approach that focuses on timely compliance, reducing possible implementation deviations and optimizing the resources and time devoted to performing the activities, as much as possible.

The project team across all agencies have a clear understanding of the targets, outputs, outcomes, and deadlines for which they are responsible. Despite the effects of Covid-19, they have used a work approach that focuses on timely compliance, reducing potential implementation deviations and optimizing the resources and time devoted to performing the activities.

### **Controlling activity delays and downtime**

There was a long technical and administrative adjustment period early on in the project's inception phase (approximately 10 months). The causes for the delay include sub-contracting and hiring of key staff for the project. Additionally, it was also a time for technical advisors' integration and role clarifications with the EAC secretariat. Finally, it's worth noting that the participation of several institutional players in the activities has aided the project's attainment of its outputs and outcomes. The parties' desire and the developed collaboration strategies have allowed them to generate synergies, particularly with the EAC partner states, allowing them to enrich procedures, optimize available resources, and plan the intervention collectively.

It was noted that all parties have made every attempt to streamline the project activities. This is despite the very difficult period that the project was being implemented. This was occasioned by Covid-19 which disrupted a number of elements of the project's planned activities in the project document. For example, some activities were dropped while new activities such as bushmeat monitoring were introduced. In another case, an activity such as 3.5 was expanded to include collection of seizure information beyond the ports as well as looking into how future expansion of the ports would influence trade in illegal wildlife. These changes and many more raise the concern of the need to re-evaluate the project document to determine effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of the project. It also raises the issue of whether the project is still addressing the original outcomes. It may be necessary that a new result-based management system is incorporated. Arising from the above, while the project teams have clear idea of what their current targets, outcomes and deadlines are, some of these have deviated from the original project ideas. It was clear that some of the technical staff were not aware of certain tasks in the project document.

**Finding 24:** *TRAFFIC, IUCN ESARO, and WWF were involved in the day-to-day implementation of the project. IUCN ESARO was the overall project overall lead with USAID/ KEA financing the implementation. A functional organization structure is expected to deliver on the project management and operation that enables an effective and efficient implementation and result-based management.*

The CONNECT project is providing financial support to examples of best practices to scale up efforts and to increase the sustainability of efforts. In Kenya, Stand Up Shout Out are developing a framework to scale up efforts for engagement of youths to adopt a national park while in Rwanda, the Rwanda conservation wildlife association are going to focus on training community liaison officers and further developing an education center in Kigali to further promote crane conservation. In Uganda, the project

will focus on developing a business plan for reformed poacher groups living around Queen Elizabeth national park while in Tanzania, the Ruaha Carnivore programme will shortly be doing a feasibility study to expand its approaches into the Selous Mikumi ecosystem.

**Finding 25:** *Financial issues: The proposed approach for the determination of value for money assessed four critical, interconnected components of value for money. These included economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. In order to address the issue of effectiveness, it was important to look at financial issues including planning and budgeting. It was established that the implementing agencies have an annual planning and budgeting process at the beginning of every year. There is an annual work plan. Partners do their own planning which is then shared with IUCN ESARO.*

It was however established that the planning and budgeting happened at the various institutions. It would be very effective if it was done together. Electronically the back and forth was too common. In other projects at IUCN ESARO, annual work planning is done together. Partners retreat for 3 days to develop a work plan which is agreed upon. It was further established that there has been delays in the implementation of activities which has also affected the rate of absorption (the burn rate) of project resources.

**Finding 26:** *Financial Accountability systems: Financial spending is monitored on a quarterly basis. All partners report their expenditure every year. In the last two-year, one audit is currently being done.*

The IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC and WWF are aware of the financial audits which also contribute to financial prudence. So far, there is no evidence of any financial malpractice reported in whatever form. This is because these institutions have existing robust financial systems, which were complemented by the inception meeting engagements and project management instruments provided by USAID/ KEA. All the financial requests for activities are attached to deliverables on a monthly basis. As part of VfM, the existing accountability systems are adequate in ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of the project outputs and outcomes. All procurement reports reviewed showed optimum combination of whole-life cost and quality (or fitness for purpose) to meet the project requirements by striking a balance between economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

**Finding 27:** *One way to evaluate economy is to look at the burn-rates, which is also a major KPI. In the first 2-years of the project, USAID/ KEA is committing USD2.9 million. The USAID/ KEA condition is that the implementers must spend at least 75% of the USD 2.9 million before they can be able to unlock the remaining USD 2 million. It was established that the current overall burn-rate is 71.67%: IUCN ESARO (83%), TRAFFIC (82%) and WWF (50%). Therefore, IUCN ESARO and TRAFFIC are meeting the targeted 75% and 82% respectively. However, WWF at 60% is lagging behind. Due to Covid-19 limitations in travel and meetings, activities have been completed however, there is underspend due to restrictions. There have been attempts to understand what is happening with WWF and come up with remedial measures and they have been pushed to fast track their spending. The push has improved spending from 32% to the current 50%. Previous discussions indicate that if they did not spend up to 75%, then they may be required to reallocate the funds to other activities such as building on the wildlife in the economy roll out, focusing on advocacy around key themes (valuing nature, building forward better and youth and gender) and scaling up youth and gender activities in key ECA priority landscapes.*

**Finding 28:** *The project is fully financed by USAID; however, it is emerging that a number of partners are interested in co-financing certain components of the project for instance behaviour change activities being implemented by TRAFFIC. While CONNECT project is supporting sensitization and behaviour change messaging in three countries, a third-party partner has come on board to finance an expanded scope of the behaviour change communication in Tanzania. It is therefore important that as a way of leveraging on the existing opportunities, thereby advancing economy, a tripartite or multi-agency accountability system be put in place to support co-financing. As the project moves into the final two years of implementation, it will be important that the issues affecting WWF in terms of burn rates are addressed.*

It is clear that where resources have been used, the cost of the interventions justify the results. In certain instances, for example EAAP and activity 3.1 on patterns of use of threatened wildlife in EA phase II, the implementing agencies have gone beyond the available resources to achieve greater results. The planning and budgeting at the beginning of each financial year has also played a role in ensuring that resources are used efficiently. But more should be done to enhance collaboration and ownership by holding joint sessions at the beginning of financial year. It may be important to bring on board even the EAC technical arm to these sessions so that they can own the process. It is important though to acknowledge that USAID/ KEA and IUCN ESARO have robust systems to facilitate timely disbursements.

#### **4.2.4 Normative values**

The normative values assessment in evaluations are meant to look at the extent to which the gender and age inclusion are integrated into the project design and hence implementation. The MTR appreciates that the CONECT project was not deeply focused on gender and youth programming. The MTR established that IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC and WWF have cross-cutting institutional guidelines and policies in place to promote gender and age participation in their operations. An analysis of the data emerging from the MTR showed that the project had a small component in terms of activity on gender and youth engagement, which can only be reported as outputs of engagement of women and youth in micro-projects aimed at providing them with sustainable livelihood options that may pull them from engaging in bushmeat trade and activities.

#### **4.2.5 Sustainability of the outcomes**

**Evaluation question 5:** How sustainable are, and/or will be, the outcomes achieved to date at the environmental, social, financial and institutional level<sup>14</sup>?

On similar trajectories, the EAC secretariat has benefitted from various forms of technical support that are also aligned to the objectives of the CONNECT project. They include;

1. EU funded [BIOPAMA](#) programme, within IUCN ESARO supporting EAC's Ecological Mapping and Monitoring Tool (EMMT), which also jointly supports the [FLoD](#) training.
- a) An existing IUCN ESARO partnership with Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) to facilitate learning for the EAC within the excellent achievement by SADC on the TFCA establishment and management by running a series of webinars to share lessons between the two economic regional blocks. This already has benefitted the region through the EAC TWCA Network concept. The EAC

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<sup>14</sup> **Sub-evaluation question**

- In what way is EAC secretariat, other structures and partner states and local institutions ensuring the sustainability of the project interventions?

Secretariat led the endorsement of the concept was subsequently endorsed by the EAC TWG paving the way for Ministerial approval at next Ministerial meeting. CMS already committed to support financing the EAC's TWCA Network at an approximate budget of US\$40,000. CMS committed further financial support to co-finance the EAC Pavilion at the African Protected Area Congress (APAC) which will be used to share and exchange information about biodiversity conservation work in the EAC with the rest of the region, including showcasing CONNECT activities, help forge new partnerships. UNODC, Space for Giants and the African Wildlife Foundation have provided substantial financial resources for the APAC.

2. IUCN ESARO has also partnered with Capital Coalitions to bring in their technical support and webinars on natural capital for small/ medium enterprises and local communities [Valuing Natural Capital & Local Communities for Business in Eastern & Southern Africa.](#)"
3. In Kenya, the Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism has already incorporated [FLoD](#) into their programme on [Combating Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trafficking through an Integrated Approach](#) funded by the UNDP GEF Trust Fund through GEF-6 in the Greater Mara Ecosystem. On the other hand, in Tanzania, the National Prosecution Service and Space for Giants have been providing technical support for the EAAP components. The UNDP GEF project has a total budget of USD3,826,605 and will also enjoy additional benefits from parallel co-financing by the national government of Kenya, county governments of target counties and key wildlife associations at a total project value of USD 19,392,268.

Further, there already are existing funding opportunities within the region supporting similar initiatives that the CONNECT project leverages on. These are;

Other development partners such as the GIZ, TRAFFIC's Reducing Trade Threats to Africa's Wild Species and Ecosystems (ReTTA), and International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) have financially supported work on going on the bushmeat monitoring work and the wider regional combating of IWT. USAID Tanzania through the RTI project, *Tuhifadhi Maliasili*, is covering the financial costs for the behaviour change component under CONNECT in Tanzania. These are mechanisms that the CONNECT project can leverage on with other development partners in the region.

**Finding 29:** *After two years implementing the project, the key project stakeholders including the EAC, IUCN ESARO, TRAFFIC and WWF, as a result of their active participation and ongoing coordination with the project and partner staff, have begun to crystalize effects of the project separating clear attributions from confounding factors and this is a positive trend. However, institutional, economic and social sustainability is not yet guaranteed at this time. It will be dependent upon proper mentoring for results producers i.e. partners engaged by different sub-awardees to deliver the activities and whether the new practices adopted yield returns in terms of improving the effectiveness and effective mitigation of the risks identified by the project.*

#### **4.2.6 Evaluation of Risks and Assumptions**

The pre-defined risks have been well managed in the last two years and are largely included in the project document and adequately reviewed in each quarterly report. Both the formulation document and the annual reports on the project describe and update the risks that may occur during the project implementation, specifying the likely impact, likelihood of occurrence including the required mitigation measures. The key informants in the MTR viewed this action in a positive light because it represents risk



planning in line with prevailing circumstances. However, the implementation of mitigation measures will need to be expedited, particularly those related to political and institutional risks. The table below provides insightful description of the review of the risks.

**Table 5 - CONNECT Project Risk Review**

<b>Risks</b>	<b>Risk Level</b>	<b>Mitigation plan</b>	<b>Were the risk mitigation plans sufficient</b>
Unwillingness or lack of resources in the EAC secretariat, technical working groups, sub committees, partner states and other development partners to adopt or implement the policies and tools developed to strengthen conservation and management of natural resources.	Medium	The project interventions deliberately target a wide variety of actors: partner states, the EAC secretariat, regional bodies/ institutions, technical partners and the civil society organizations. As such, the policies, tools, knowledge and skills are continuously promoted and disseminated at scale, to strengthen conservation and management of natural resources.	The mitigation measures are sufficient. Multi-stakeholders approach provides the opportunity to reach a wider audience. It also provides a window of circumventing potential barriers to interventions that could be occasioned by an actor
Ability of EAC to support the two Partner States who are under USAID funding restrictions	Low	Leverage for support from other regional programs and encourage EAC to set aside budget line for this in their financial year planning.	The mitigation measures may not be sufficient given that it is indeterminate when or whether such regional programs may be interested in leveraging. It also complicates outcome attribution. However, at the moment, it seems to work well.
Covid-19 pandemic	High	The Covid-19 response plan has been drafted by the project. Activities such as trainings, meetings are being conducted virtually while activities are pushed until restrictions on movement is lifted	The mitigation plan may require to integrate medium to long-term plan. In the short-term, leveraging on technology (virtual training) will be important. However, it is not certain when Covid-19 will subside or when the restrictions will be removed. Alternative strategies will be needed.

During the design of the CONNECT project, it was assumed that the EAC Secretariat and the EAC Technical Working Groups and Sub-Committees would continue to engage with the project partners and apply the learning and capacities built by the project to help strengthen wildlife conservation and management policy and practice in the EAC region. It was also assumed that the EAC secretariat, EAC partner states, development partners and technical partners would continue to prioritise the need for sustainable natural resources, including the conservation and management of wildlife resources and remain committed to and willing to actively engage in the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching

Strategy. It was further assumed that key information and data providers would be willing to share their experiences, tools, data and information to contribute to the project activities.

**Table 6 - CONNECT Project Assumption review**

Outcome	Assumptions	Do the assumptions hold?
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary natural resources	Existence of policy gaps or policy review needs on the implementation of regional and global biodiversity commitments	The assumption still holds. There are existing policy gaps on biodiversity conservation that still require attention.
	Ongoing support from the EAC will be maintained.	This assumption may not hold. It was not possible at the MTR to observe genuine support from EAC to the project. It is likely that EAC is overwhelmed by the ongoing projects or that they lost that enthusiasm that came with the project. This could as an issue of unmet expectations.
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Improved sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes	Political will to support the development of transfrontier conservation area programme.	The assumption holds. Across the Partner states, there is political will to conserve the flora and fauna.
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife	Full participation of policy makers and other key stakeholders in the dissemination forums	The assumption partly holds. In the last two years, a number of policy makers have participated exuberantly in some of the activities of CONNECT for example EAAP. However, this has not been the case with EAC secretariat.
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Reduced demand for wildlife products	Continuous support from EAC and partner states	The assumption partly holds. The EAC partner states have shown commitment to conservation of wildlife and wildland. However, the from EAC has not been as explicit.
	People trained in FLoD methodology and tools will continue working in their respective organisations and roles and apply the lessons learnt	This assumption does not hold in the long-term. It was clear that employee mobility was a fact. It was even recommended that more staff be trained and trainers of trainers be trained as well. This is to take care of staff mobility which was evident at the time of MTR.
	Organisation applying FLoD methodology and tools are willing and able to give feedback on lessons learned.	The assumption still holds. There is a lot of excitement around information sharing. It will be important is to strengthen information sharing protocols for purposes of information security.
<b>Outcome 5:</b> Improved regional and bilateral collaboration on	Ongoing support from the EAC will be maintained	The assumption does not hold
	The East African Association of Prosecutors	This assumption still holds. EAAP show clear support to the project. The project fits well in their programming

Outcome	Assumptions	Do the assumptions hold?
enforcement and prosecutions	supports the creation and functioning of the Forum and Secretariat.	
	Support from the Ministries and governmental agencies linked to wildlife management, transport and trade enforcement is provided and maintained	This assumption holds. It is an important pathway to strengthen in the even EAC support is not forthcoming. The Agencies have shown their desire to work with CONNECT and therefore more engagement with them would likely yield better conservation outcomes

## 5. Lessons Learned, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Lessons learned

As a result of the MTR conducted, it was possible to glean the following lessons learned:

**Lesson learned 1:** An effective and planned co-creation at inception phase involving all project partners is necessary for joint review the project document, assess needed capacity and changes in context and make any adjustments in the project logical/results framework that may be needed before starting technical implementation of a project. The activity leads and implementation teams at this phase gets to be properly chosen and together get trained and agree on the methodologies, standards and technical and administrative procedures of the parties in charge of the project. The implementing partners would then revisit the stakeholder analysis with a focus on gaining complementarity among each of them. This applies more to EAC.

**Lesson learned 2:** Having a branding and communications strategy with clear objectives as well as templates for various collateral at the onset of the project has helped to guide the project identity, allowing for structured internal and external communications aligned to the project key messages. Specific project key messages allow partners to speak for the project more broadly beyond the focus activities.

**Lesson learned 3:** Project technical teams need to be trained together during the inception phase on cross-cutting perspectives such as gender, age and social safeguards. This is a widespread practice at the activity most lead institutions. In addition to making greater efforts in the socialisation of project policies and manuals, as well as the national and regional level strategies, greater adherence and synergies to cross-cutting principles could be achieved in terms of inclusivity, youth and gender.

**Lesson learned 4:** It is not possible to adopt good practices in conservation and sustainable management of transboundary/ transfrontier resources and maintain them in the long term if this does not entail a change in the economic development situation of where they are adopted. Given the scope and duration of the CONNECT project, making a significant change in conservation and sustainable management of transboundary/ transfrontier resources in the EAC is never going to be feasible without appreciating the need for economic development. This is one of the reasons why the design of a new larger scale programme that the EAC requested IUCN ESARO to mobilize resources for the development of local livelihoods and on-the-ground nature-based solutions.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Taking into consideration the main findings related to the questions and criteria in this mid-term review, the following conclusions can be reached:

**Conclusion 1** (Criterion: Relevance): It was found that the implementation and design of the outcomes and outputs of the project are closely aligned with and relevant to EAC's anti-poaching strategy, IUCN ESARO's CAS thematic area priorities, TRAFFIC's current programmes, WWF's objectives on natural resource governance and USAID/ KEA's RDCS priorities. Furthermore, the intervention logic indicates that the three specific objectives of the project will be achieved, which, in turn, represents a contribution to the expected long-term impact, translated into the USAID/ KEA RDCS and the EAC Anti-poaching strategies, which is evidence of the high vertical consistency of the project. As a result of this scenario, the project relevance is rated as **satisfactorily on track** and, thanks to the relevance and quality of the intervention design.

**Conclusion 2** (Criterion: Effectiveness - general): The CONNECT project interventions targeting transboundary/ transfrontier natural resources are placed within the department of productive and social sector. The EAC secretariat, which is the main regional institutional partner for the CONNECT project operates under very thin human resource capacity vis-à-vis the overall scope of their responsibilities. The EAC secretariat is expected to be responsive to the needs of the partner states, particularly with regard to Ministerial meetings, and multiple other partners, and these needs seem to be taking precedence over the implementation of the project, leading to continuous delays in delivery of activities. In this context and with respect to the EAC's annual plans, the secretariat faces numerous competing engagements and scheduling challenges. Despite the observations made in this regard, the degree of progress towards the ultimate goal, the level of activity implementation and, therefore, the project's effectiveness, is considered **satisfactory** for each of the objectives and outcomes and for most of the outputs of the project. Some strategic recommendations have however been made in this report aiming to further improve delivery which are outlined in the following sections.

At mid-term, the project has managed to promote the values of transboundary conservation, information sharing and economic benefits of biodiversity among strategic decision-makers, public servants and beneficiary producers. Thus, it can be confirmed that the project has taken a fundamental step in consolidating its outcomes despite the Covid-19 pandemic challenge. Effective engagement of the EAC secretariat to spear head the project to help achieve the target EAC Anti-poaching's strategic objectives strategy remains weak.

**Conclusion 3** (Criterion: Effectiveness- objective 1): At mid-term, participating institutions led by the respective activity leads were found to have developed skills and improved the tools expected to enhance and strengthen the collaborative management and conservation of transboundary natural resource management in the region. They also displayed a predisposition to establishing institutional commitments to regional policy dialogues, learning and decision-making on management of transboundary natural resources in order to improve sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes. The next two years of implementation will be essential in solidifying and formalizing these commitments, providing a regulatory framework for them and institutionalizing promotion relevant instruments.

**Conclusion 4** (Criterion: Effectiveness- Objectives 2 and 3): The participating institutions across the whole project continuum, besides being aware of the values of living wildlife and that these values get eroded by lack of access to new knowledge and tools that present evidence for perceived values for wildlife, have actively participated in the identification of key aspects of wildlife economy at various levels, in addition to adopting good practices for anti-poaching and trafficking strategies. These achievements are deemed satisfactory in the MTR because they focus on accomplishing expected results.

**Conclusion 5** (Criterion: Efficiency): The project efficiency is rated as **satisfactory**. The design of an adequate project structure (in terms of management and operations), combined with a quality technical team with a clear view of the roles and targets for which they are responsible and direct technical and financial implementation by activity leads has afforded effective, efficient, results-based management. These positive features have provided a strong capacity to respond to drawbacks such as the initial delays in implementation.

**Conclusion 6** (Criterion: Sustainability). **Moderately Likely**. While progress has been made in the right direction, raising awareness, building knowledge, developing skills and tools and implementing good practices in governance, transboundary/ transfrontier biodiversity conservation and sustainable management, two years into project implementation, social, institutional and economic sustainability has yet to be fully secured. Along these lines, the EAC engagement has not been optimal, due to the issues outlined in Conclusion 2 It will be crucial and decisive for the EAC to provide the necessary leadership for the economic and institutional sustainability to the project activities. Social sustainability will be dependent upon the ongoing mentoring and technical assistance given to participating institutions.

### 5.3 Recommendations

The Covid-19 pandemic struck at a time when this project was at its inception phase. The whole world was thrown into confusion. Despite these difficult circumstances, it was possible to deliver the project however the project had to be redesigned and the implementation adapted based on national guidance in the right pace. This was facilitated by the quick nature by which implementation was able to adjust to the new normal. However, it affected the burn rate and the timing of activities. The additional complication is that Covid-19 has affected the driver, threats and assumptions of the project, which have necessitated a prioritisation of activities and has decreased government and partner agencies ability to participate in the project as designed.

#### 5.3.1 Strategic Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** As a measure focusing on ensuring the continuity of the project benefits, co-creation between CONNECT Project partners, EAC and USAID/ KEA, especially in the next phases of engagement is strongly encouraged. When doing this, key partners need to be brought together in the co-creation process to jointly agree and define the priority activities for the remaining duration of the project, ensuring full ownership by the partners. As part of this process, the project should develop a stronger governance and coordination mechanism to ensure that the current capacity gaps are acknowledged and addressed. This could be done through project secondment of individuals with technical skills to the EAC secretariat. These individuals would help in accelerating the speed with which the EAC delivers some of the project specific priorities, monitoring of the project activities and achievements on behalf of the EAC secretariat.

**Recommendation 2:** The EAC Secretariat seems too overloaded with multiple responsibilities to be able to effectively engage in the project activities on a daily basis. As a consequence, the governance and coordination between EAC secretariat and the project partners have been sub-optimal. This was evident mostly by the inability of the secretariat to attend regular coordination meetings. In addition, the demands placed on the EAC secretariat to serve the partner states are constantly changing and require their full attention. This means that project related activities are often put on the backburner by the EAC Secretariat, leading to delays, as it is frequently not possible for the project partners to proceed with activities without guidance and agreement from the EAC. In light of this, it is recommended that the project or any other activity leads, to bring in additional capacity into the EAC Secretariat to strengthen and fill current staffing gaps in coordination to ensure timely implementation of activities and follow-up of deliverables. Such a role should be to have a dedicated and well qualified technical liaison person resourced by the project to ensure momentum is maintained through regular face-to-face meetings with the EAC secretariat. The technical liaison officer could also help provide technical support such as assisting with the development of technical documents, terms of reference and meeting agenda.

**Recommendation 3:** Although this project was not entirely focused on gender and age interventions, some critical activities were. It is recommended that the CONNECT project draws up a manual that integrates to a large extent all activity leads' institutional policy on gender and youth to the EAC context. This project was meant to come up with micro-projects targeting women and young people, who are potential pull factor of illegal wildlife activities in the project scope. By conducting a gender and age analysis, specific contextual needs and dynamics of potential beneficiaries would benefit the project by providing contemporary evidence. Further, the project may focus on supporting the National implementing partners to understand the role of gender and youth in their wildlife strategies and support the implementation of strategies which are gender sensitive within priority landscapes. This would make it possible to ensure effective inclusion of these cross-cutting dimensions into the project at national levels and within transboundary landscapes.

**Recommendation 4:** USAID has committed a further USD 2.9 Million for the next phase of the project. However, this is contingent upon implementers absorbing at least 75% of the current allocation. It was established that the current burn rates stand at; IUCN ESARO (83%) and TRAFFIC (82%) and WWF (50%). The MTR analysts suggested that the WWF burn rate was low, and hence they should be engaged to fast-track implementation of its activities so as to realize higher burn rates. Given that some of the activities were affected by COVID-19, a consideration can be made for variation of funds in different budget lines to activities that can enhance deeper absorption.

### **5.3.2 Operational Recommendations**

**Recommendation 5:** Although the CONNECT project was intended to address strategic issues at the regional level, a number of key informants felt that the project should have facilitated action at the community and site level. It is therefore a recommendation that the project takes a step and borrows lessons from the SADC region, which formed a transboundary conservation network focused on clearly defined transboundary ecosystems known as transfrontier conservation areas. The project, through the IUCN ESARO has provided this conservation network learning opportunity to the EAC region, based on lessons from SADC region. This has culminated in the validation, by EAC's working group on Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Areas, of a concept note for the establishment of an EAC

Transboundary Conservation Areas Network which will be tabled for approval at the next EAC Sectoral Council meeting. It is recommended that in the next phase of engagement after the end of the CONNECT project, IUCN ESARO helps to operationalize this concept to help catalyze actions both at both policy and at operational levels on the ground.

The project should also include in their reporting system, a report to the sectoral council on tourism and wildlife management, which can be presented in their meetings to incorporate means of tracking the effects and impacts of the project into the monitoring system. This would provide openness to members states in terms of their understanding of the budgets involved in a project and they can also put a face to what has been achieved to the resources invested. Along with this, more communication materials that focus on disseminating good practices, rather than project outputs should be generated, thus fostering replicability, up-scaling the effects and additionally contributing to the sustainability of the project.

**Recommendation 6:** The MTR noted that each activity lead had an obligation to conduct and deliver a baseline study activity and also track the performance of each activity. The IUCN ESARO is obligated with compiling all components as described in the Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP), in the results framework/ matrix. Incorporating an effective means of tracking the performance and potential impacts of the project into the project monitoring system should be constructed and adopted by the sub-grantees while considering their needs. Along with this, more communication materials that focus on disseminating good practices, rather than project outputs should be generated, thus fostering replicability, up-scaling the effects and additionally contributing to the sustainability of the project. Although it might need some substantial capacity strengthening on strategic communication among the EAC partner states, domestication and socialization of Eastern Africa TWIX could be a starting point to allow each partner state to share information deemed appropriate and continue training and re-training their officers as would be appropriate. The existing Eastern Africa TWIX platforms do not have an information sharing policy although they have users' guidelines. The MTR suggests that for future purposes, having an information sharing policy for the emailing list and the website for EAAP and Eastern Africa TWIX would provide a good knowledge management opportunity for the platform users. Further, it suggests that the project draws up a quality assurance mechanism to aid standardization of shared information and ethically preserve the stored information. As part of the training modules, the issue of information security needs to be included.

**Recommendation 7:** During the implementation of the project, EAC secretariat had conducted a landscape level prioritization exercise which led to the identification of priority transboundary ecosystems. This prioritization emerged from the work led by Environmental Incentives on Valuing Natural Capital in the EAC and the national wildlife in the economy studies, which is also funded by USAID/ KEA and is closely linked to CONNECT project.

CONNECT project has supported the EAC with developing a concept note for the establishment of a Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Area (TBWA) network, which the EAC's TBWA has endorsed, paving the way for this concept to be approved at Ministerial level. This evolved from the successful learning exchange webinars conducted by CONNECT project together with the EAC and SADC Secretariat and the Convention on Migratory Species. In particular, SADC has in place a well-established transboundary conservation network, focused on clearly defined transfrontier conservation areas. and this has served as a model on which to build a similar network for the EAC region. In this respect, there



is an opportunity to build on existing transboundary coordination and governance structures already in place (e.g. in the Virunga and Great Plains landscapes) and to encourage the adoption of best practices in the other priority landscapes.

In targeting more on the activities, these landscapes would be a logical evolution and should also help direct more resources and efforts to on-the-ground tangible activities for the benefit of biodiversity and livelihoods. In this respect, CONNECT could benefit from closer engagement with partners already active on the ground in these priority landscapes. These include WWF, one of the CONNECT partners, which is active in two of the priority landscapes.

Finally, efforts to mobilize a new large-scale nature-based solution initiative, jointly designed by EAC and CONNECT project partners, should also be intensified as it focuses on the same transboundary landscapes and could help channel more financial and technical resources to these landscapes, beyond what CONNECT can achieve while upscaling the work that CONNECT has catalysed during the first half of its implementation.

**Recommendation 8:** The EAC has always emphasized the need for consistent project impact to target populations. To facilitate improved project impact and also expenditure, the CONNECT project leadership at different levels should focus on two key elements.

- i. Supporting recommendation 4: Focus on expanding delivery of pilot projects and gaps identified in the EAC wildlife and Anti-poaching strategies in EAC priority landscapes. These activities can build on youth and gender pilots, FLoD, wildlife in the economy and bushmeat monitoring studies as well as the recommendations of the TWBA working groups.
- ii. Support recommendation 1, to have a liaison officer based in Arusha to ensure greater coordination between the EAC and CONNECT partners to improve alignment of activities.

Therefore, the CONNECT project should start engaging partners states experts in technical ministries such as wildlife. This would ensure ownership and also dispel the fears that the project could be imposed on the partner states. By doing this, local level tangible results including bankable projects at the community level can be realized based on targets from the ministries have strategic plans and priorities in each partner state.

It is recommended that the project management team be reviewing situation as it emerges by holding pause and reflect sessions to facilitate any necessary adjustments. Further, should this drastically affect the implementation of activities especially from the EAC secretariat perspective, then the project should consider seconding a staff at the EAC secretariat to facilitate speedy actions as may be needed by the project partners.

**Recommendation 9:** Based on the analysis of the CONNECT project TOC, risks and assumptions posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the project faced a huge threat in activity execution thereby resulting in long term effects on the pace and potential for achievement of the project results across different levels. It is therefore recommended that the project management team be reviewing situation as it emerges and hold pause and reflect sessions to facilitate any necessary adjustments. Further, should this drastically affect the implementation of activities especially from the EAC secretariat perspective, then the project should consider seconding a staff at the EAC secretariat to facilitate speedy actions as may be needed by the project partners.

**Recommendation 10:** The project has done very well reporting at the output level results. However, at the second year, it would be important that the project start looking at the wider effects resulting from the outputs being generated. The MTR recommends that the project starts reporting on the trends towards the achievement of the outcomes. This is in addition to looking at what answers are being achieved with respect to the learning questions proposed by the project at the beginning.

## Annexes

### Annex 1: Evaluation Statement of Work

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**Terms of Reference for Midterm Evaluation**  
**The Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of**  
**Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) Project**

<b>Organisation</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
<b>Project</b>	Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources (CONNECT) Project
<b>Position type</b>	Short term consultancy
<b>Study/assessment</b>	Midterm Performance Evaluation
<b>Duration</b>	35 days
<b>Reporting to</b>	Sophie Kutegeka, Chief of Party, CONNECT
<b>Working with</b>	IUCN Nairobi, TRAFFIC Arusha, WWF Nairobi and East Africa Community Secretariat Arusha
<b>Application deadline</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Consultancy contacts</b>	<a href="mailto:Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org">Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org</a> and <a href="mailto:info.esaro@iucn.org">info.esaro@iucn.org</a>

#### 1. Background

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization that focuses on finding pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN has three programme areas: (1) Valuing and conserving nature; (2) Effective and equitable governance of nature's use and (3) Deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. IUCN's mandate is achieved by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and creating a platform for governments, NGOs, the UN and companies to work together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN's Eastern and Southern African Regional Office (ESARO) have thematic programmes with various projects and programmes in the region. One such programme is The Conservation Areas and Species programme (CAS) that draws on evidence-based and best practice approaches to enhance the conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystems in Eastern and Southern Africa.

#### 2. Project Description

The Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) project falls under CAS programme. CONNECT is a 4-year project implemented by a consortium of partners focusing on some of the East African Countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) is the lead implementing partner, working with TRAFFIC and WWF. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Kenya and East Africa, and receives policy guidance from the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat.

The project, which commenced in May 2019, is part of a larger portfolio of projects funded by USAID/KEA to the East African Community under the Regional Development Objectives Grant Agreement (RDOAG) and USAID's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS). The goal of USAID/KEA's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) is to enhance Africa-led sustainable economic growth and resilience.

The CONNECT project has a specific focus on supporting the EAC Secretariat in the implementation of the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife referred to

as the “EAC Anti-poaching Strategy”. Linked to the CONNECT project, the EAC Secretariat and Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) are implementing the Improving Collaborative Conservation and Management of Transboundary Natural Resources in East African Community project, which is also funded by USAID. The project is supporting the East African Community in the implementation of its commitments to conserve wildlife and habitats in East Africa, in line with its Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill of 2010 and Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products of 2016

### **3. CONNECT Project Objectives and Outcomes**

Objective 1: Collaborative Management of Transboundary Natural Resources

**Outcome 1: Strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary natural resources.**

The project activities under this component of the project are designed to help strengthen the leadership, technical capacities and the political will of the EAC to effectively engage in the development and implementation of biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and action plans.

- Activity 1.1: To strengthen cross-sectoral decision making for sustainable development of transboundary natural resources
- Activity 1.2: To provide technical Support to EAC Secretariat, Working Groups and Sub Committees

**Outcome 2: Improved sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes.**

The CONNECT project supports priority needs for conservation and management of transboundary natural resources through the sharing of best practices and providing expert advice to strengthen and coordinate the development and implementation of relevant EAC policies and strategies. The project is also working with EAC secretariat to develop a funding proposal to help support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and other priority actions to strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources

- Activity 1.2B Sharing lessons and building capacity of the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation areas building on best practices in the wider region (e.g. Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, SADC Transfrontier Conservation Programme and Network).
- Activity 1.3 Resource mobilisation for the implementation of priority initiatives

Objective 2: Perceived Value of Wildlife Increased

**Outcome 3: Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife.**

The activity under this outcome is designed to contribute to Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy which recognizes the importance of raising awareness of the value of wildlife and wildlife habitats.

- Activity 2.1 increase political support for wildlife and natural ecosystems by undertaking Wildlife in the economy" studies

Objective 3: Poaching and trafficking reduced

**Outcome 4: Reduced demand for illegal wildlife products.**

With regard to Outcome 4 on Demand Reduction, the focus of this project is on demand for wildlife products from local markets within the EAC region and does not aim for global market demand reduction

- Activity 3.1: Patterns of Use of Threatened Wildlife in East Africa, Phase II.

- Activity 3.2: Building capacity for stronger engagement of local communities in combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

#### **Outcome 5: Improved regional and bilateral collaboration on enforcement and prosecution.**

Under this objective, the project partners are proposing to implement a series of targeted interventions to strengthen responses to the wildlife poaching and trafficking challenges in the EAC region focusing on specific strategic objectives of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy. Action activities.

- Activity 3.3: Organize a workshop to discuss the Role of women and youth in combating illegal wildlife trade
- Activity 3.3A: Develop a compilation of case studies of youth and women's engagement in addressing wildlife crime in East Africa contributing to a broader evidence base for the role of women and youth in improving natural resource management surrounding protected areas.
- Activity 3.4: Development of an East-African TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange)
- Activity 3.5: Establishing a Permanent Forum and Secretariat for wildlife prosecutors in East Africa on Wildlife Crime and Corruption
- Activity 3.6. Enhancing existing initiatives combating wildlife crime and corruption at ports through a data-driven analysis of typologies of seizures related to wildlife crime as they affect ports.

#### **4. Objectives of the Midterm Performance Evaluation**

The purpose of this midterm Performance Evaluation is to review the implementation of the project with a view to adaptively enhance project performance improvement, accountability and learning.

The evaluation will also extract lessons learned, diagnose and analyse issues including the influencing or hindering factors of the project progress towards achieving the goals. Based on the evidence, the review will formulate recommendations towards improving the project implementation and performance.

It is expected that the evaluation will compare targeted outputs/outcomes of the Project to actual outputs/outcomes and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project objectives

The Evaluation will use the OECD 1 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) international evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. It will evaluate the efficiency of Project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency

The specific elements to be reviewed include the following;

- Project design, its validity and strategic fit to assess whether project management structure, partnership and implementation arrangements are sufficient for the effective delivery of the project.
- Project implementation progress to establish achievement of expected outputs and Outcomes, in accordance with set targets. This includes the inputs, processes and the resulting outputs/outcomes.
- Sustainability: Assessing whether the institutional infrastructure in EAC (including government agencies and non-state actors) have ownership and capacity both technical and financial to continue supporting the interventions
- Impact: To establish whether the activity outputs are contributing to the overall goal, Changes, both planned and unanticipated
- Learning: Drawing lessons from program implementation experiences and challenges

## 5. Users and Stakeholders of the Evaluation

The primary users of the review include the management/leadership of IUCN including Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), implementing partners (WWF and TRAFFIC), project component leads, Project Coordination Committee, IUCN Monitoring & Evaluation and Risk Management Unit and USAID/ KEA. These are also the key stakeholders in the evaluation who will play a role in providing information, and evidence throughout the process.

## 6. Methodology

The evaluator will propose a methodology that will sufficiently address the issues and questions outlined in the ToR. The evaluator will address, the following aspects among others:

- **Literature review:** The consultant will review among others, Project document, Annual and quarterly reports, the results Matrix, baseline report on capacity of TWIX users and weekly bulletins to USAID/ KEA.
- **Sampling procedure-** The consultant will design the most effective technique to sample from the project beneficiaries and implementing partners. Key respondents will include, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Uganda Wildlife Authority, Rwanda Development Board, Tanzania National Park Authority, EAAP and the Ports, among others.
- **Field interviews:** The consultant is expected to use the most appropriate approaches to obtain data from all the collaborating partners
- **Data analysis:** The evaluator will propose suitable methods for analysing both qualitative and quantitative data.
- **Reporting:** The evaluator will develop a draft report in line with the report structure that will have been agreed upon by the Client. The draft report will be reviewed before the generation of the final report.

The consultant will develop an Evaluation Matrix which will include key evaluation questions, evaluation sub-questions, indicators, sources of information and methodology. Indicative key evaluation questions are provided below. The consultants are expected to develop detailed subsidiary evaluation questions.

### Relevance

- Is the project consistent with the needs, priorities, policies and strategies of EAC, partner states and USAID?
- Is the causal logic of the theory of change (including the indicators) still valid and realistic?

### Effectiveness

- Is the CONNECT project achieving its objectives?
- How is the COVID- 19 pandemic likely to affect the overall objective of the project
- What specific project interventions or activities have effectively contributed to achieving these objectives?

### Efficiency

- Can the cost of the interventions be justified by the results? (i.e. value for money)
- How well has the project utilized available resources to generate the project outputs?

### Sustainability

- What measures have been taken to make the program sustainable?
- In what way is EAC secretariat, other structures and partner states and local institutions ensuring the sustainability of the interventions?

## Impact

What are the effects of the project (intended or unintended, positive or negative, short term or long term) on;

- Improvement of Enforcement and prosecution
- Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife
- Strengthening Regional Policy framework for management of transboundary natural resources

## Lessons Learnt

- What are the main lessons drawn from this project that have a generic application in implementation, management and design of similar projects?

## 7. The Scope of the Mid Term Performance Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation will cover all project activities undertaken from 1st May 2019 to May 31st 2021.

## 8. Evaluation deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs to be approved by IUCN at all relevant stages of the consultancy:

- 1) An inception report that details the evaluation matrix and methodology, draft instruments, data collection plan, data analysis plan among other elements;
- 2) Draft evaluation report;
- 3) A final report that will have addressed stakeholder review comments
- 4) Datasets and supporting documentation such as code books, data dictionaries statistical codes and syntaxes

The consultant will also be guided by [Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report](#)

## 9. Duration of the assignment

The assignment is expected to take 35 days. IUCN will provide administrative and logistical support required to carry out the exercise.

## 10. Proposed qualifications and profile of the review team

The suitable team/consortium of consultants should have a mix of expertise in;

- a. Wildlife conservation and management, natural resource management or equivalent and
- b. Programme or project monitoring and evaluation.
- c. Social sciences, socio-economics or equivalent

Key considerations include the following:

- An advanced degree in wildlife conservation or natural resource management, social sciences, socio-economics from recognized university,
- Over ten years' working experience in wildlife conservation or natural resource management in the East Africa region
- Substantial (Over 10 years) experience executing similar tasks and assignments (i.e. project evaluations)
- Strong qualitative data analysis skills and sound experience in rigorously testing projects/Programmes Theory of Change,
- Proven experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes (Baseline, midterm and End term evaluation),
- Should be able to interact and communicate with all parties involved in the review.



- Have good skills in synthesizing technical documents and writing quality technical and policy-oriented reports.
- Proven communication and presentation skills.
- Demonstrated high level of professionalism and ability to work independently in high pressure situations under tight deadlines,
- High proficiency in English language both written and spoken

### **11. Conflict of interest**

The evaluation team members should provide a written disclosure of conflicts of interest (COI), as part of the proposal.

### **12. Submission of proposal**

Interested candidates should email their technical and detailed financial proposals (quote in US Dollars), along with detailed CVs of their team members not later than 5.00 p.m. EAT, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to;

Sophie Kutegeka – Mbabazi, Chief of Party - CONNECT Project

Email: [Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org](mailto:Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org) and copy [info.esaro@iucn.org](mailto:info.esaro@iucn.org)

## Annex 2: Evaluation Questions

Key evaluation question	MTR specific/ sub-evaluation questions
<b>Relevance</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Were the project strategy and actions appropriate for meeting the needs of all the stakeholders involved in matters of collaborative management and conservation of transboundary resources, enhancing the value of wildlife as well as reducing wildlife poaching and trafficking in the EAC?</li> <li>• Is the causal logic of the theory of change (including the indicators) still valid and realistic?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the project consistent with the needs, priorities, policies and strategies of EAC, project partner states, Beneficiaries, and USAID?</li> <li>• To what extent are the project focus, strategy and outcomes aligned with the priorities of EAC and AU's Anti-poaching strategies and how have they contributed to it?</li> <li>• Does the project still meet the needs of the EAC, partner states and other beneficiaries with which the activities are implemented?</li> <li>• What are the strengths and weaknesses of the project design in terms of achieving the expected outcomes?</li> <li>• Was risk management integrated into the project planning and implementation?</li> <li>• Does the baseline highlight need of the beneficiaries in relation to the project?</li> <li>• How appropriate and useful are the indicators described in the project document in assessing the project's progress?</li> <li>• Are the targeted indicator values realistic and can they be tracked?</li> <li>• Are indicators gender and age sensitive where appropriate?</li> <li>• Are the means of verification for the indicators appropriate?</li> <li>• What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving project objectives?</li> </ul>
<b>Effectiveness</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What outcomes (both intended and unintended) had the project achieved by the time of the evaluation, and are they contributing to and/or positioned to contribute to the achievement of the project's objectives?</li> <li>• How is the COVID- 19 pandemic likely to affect the CONNECT project goal.</li> <li>• How have relationships between the project partners hindered or facilitated the achievement of change?</li> <li>• Have other methodologies and approaches been identified that could be more effective in delivering the types of change sought and achieved by the CONNECT project?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the CONNECT project achieving its objectives?</li> <li>• What specific project interventions or activities have effectively contributed to achieving these objectives?</li> <li>• What signs prove the above?</li> <li>• How useful are the outputs to the needs of the direct beneficiaries?</li> <li>• Is there general acceptance of the outputs by these beneficiaries?</li> <li>• What mid-term outcomes has the project achieved in strengthening regional policy dialogue on management of transboundary natural resources?</li> <li>• How are the understanding and awareness of the values of wildlife and sustainable use of biodiversity reflected by the decisionmakers and beneficiaries?</li> <li>• What progress can be identified in the development of capacities in governance and the use of natural resources by key stakeholders?</li> <li>• What mid-term outcomes has the project achieved in the promotion of awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife?</li> <li>• Was a monitoring and evaluation plan containing baselines, indicators and SMART goals with a focus on gender and youth designed and implemented? Are the indicators appropriate or is there a need to establish or improve these indicators?</li> <li>• Have the knowledge and native practices and/or those introduced by the project been established in a sustainable communication system to disseminate them throughout the partner countries in order to stimulate dialogue about the lessons learned and good practices, to bolster and replicate them?</li> </ul>
<b>Efficiency</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the intervention methods, institutional structure and financial, technical and operational resources and procedures available helped or hindered the achievement of the project outcomes and objectives?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well has the project utilized available resources to generate the project outputs?</li> <li>• What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?</li> <li>• The CONNECT Project's organizational structure, managerial support including gender aspects</li> <li>• Does the institutional infrastructure in EAC members states, non-state actors and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project?</li> <li>• Has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional etc. changes in the project environment?</li> <li>• Have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</li> <li>• Has the project experienced delays in execution that hindered the achievement of the project objectives?</li> <li>• To what extent has the down time in implementation and execution facilitated or hindered the achievement of the project objectives?</li> <li>• Are there constraints, problems and areas in need of further attention?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Potential Impact</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the effects of the project (intended or unintended, positive or negative, short term or long term)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the effects of the project on improvement of Enforcement and prosecution</li> <li>• What are the effects of the project on Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife</li> <li>• What are the effects of the project on Strengthening Regional Policy framework for management of trans boundary natural resources?</li> <li>• What are the effects of the project on Collaborative management of trans frontier natural resources and establishment of transboundary conservation areas and management plans?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What measures have been taken to make the program sustainable?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In what way is EAC secretariat, other structures and partner states and local institutions ensuring the sustainability of the project interventions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inclusivity/ Equity</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How sustainable are, and/or will be, the outcomes achieved to date at the environmental, social, financial and institutional level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have equity dimensions of change been achieved by the CONNECT project?</li> <li>• To what extent were the gender issues integrated into the delivery of the project objectives?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project instituted the Collaborative Learning and Adaptation structures</li> <li>• In what ways and to what extent has EAC partner states expressed, throughout the first two years of project execution, the importance of improved management of key transboundary landscapes through the allocation of resources and planning specific programmes?</li> </ul>

### Annex 3: List of documents consulted

- i. Project Document with Theory of Change and Logical Framework
- ii. Logical Framework
- iii. CONNECT Project Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
- iv. Results Framework
- v. Project Activity Reports
- vi. Project Annual Reports
- vii. EAC Anti-poaching Strategy
- viii. African Union's African Common Strategy on Combatting Illegal Exploitation and Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora in Africa

#### Annex 4: List of Key Informants Interviewed

Name of Key Informant	Institution	Contacts
ADEN Jelle	Kenya Wildlife Service	<a href="mailto:ajelle@kws.go.ke">ajelle@kws.go.ke</a>
AGNES Nabwire	Uganda Revenue Authority	<a href="mailto:anabwire@ura.go.ug">anabwire@ura.go.ug</a>
ALLAN Mashala	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:allan.mashalla@traffic.org">allan.mashalla@traffic.org</a>
ALLEN Mgaza	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:Allen.Mgaza@traffic.org">Allen.Mgaza@traffic.org</a>
ANDREW Chege	INTERPOL NCB Nairobi	<a href="mailto:achege24@yahoo.com">achege24@yahoo.com</a>
BRIAN Otiende	USAID/ KEA	<a href="mailto:Botiende@usaid.gov">Botiende@usaid.gov</a>
CATHERINE Mburu	Judiciary Training Institute - Kenya	<a href="mailto:katemburu@gmail.com">katemburu@gmail.com</a>
CHRISTINE Mentzel	BIOPAMA	<a href="mailto:Christine.Mentzel@iucn.org">Christine.Mentzel@iucn.org</a>
DREW McVey	WWF Kenya	<a href="mailto:amcvey@wwfkenya.org">amcvey@wwfkenya.org</a>
EMANUEL Tuyishime	Rwanda Development Board (RDB)	<a href="mailto:emmanuel TUYISHIME04@gmail.com">emmanuel TUYISHIME04@gmail.com</a>
FRANCIS Musau	IUCN ESARO	<a href="mailto:Francis.musau@iucn.org">Francis.musau@iucn.org</a>
GACHERI Ndumba	Well Made Strategy	<a href="mailto:gacheri.ndumba@wellmadestrategy.com">gacheri.ndumba@wellmadestrategy.com</a>
GODWEL Ole-Maingataki	TANAPA	<a href="mailto:olemeingataki@gmail.com">olemeingataki@gmail.com</a>
IVAN Kagambo	Port Official Dar Es Salaam	<a href="mailto:ivankagambo@gmail.com">ivankagambo@gmail.com</a>
IZEYIMANA Fidele	Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association	<a href="mailto:nizeyifca46@yahoo.fr">nizeyifca46@yahoo.fr</a>
JAMAL Juma	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:jamal.juma@traffic.org">jamal.juma@traffic.org</a>
JANE Shuma	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:Jane.Shuma@traffic.org">Jane.Shuma@traffic.org</a>
JANVIER Kwizera	Rwanda Development Board (RDB)	<a href="mailto:kjanvier2010@gmail.com">kjanvier2010@gmail.com</a>
JOWARD Baluku	Ministry of Tourism - Tanzania	<a href="mailto:jobaba21@gmail.com">jobaba21@gmail.com</a>
JULIE Thomson	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:julie.thomson@traffic.org">julie.thomson@traffic.org</a>
KATTO Wambua	EAAP Forum Advisor	<a href="mailto:kattoloo@yahoo.com">kattoloo@yahoo.com</a>
KEVIN Ngibuini	Tanzania Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism	<a href="mailto:ngibuinikevin@gmail.com">ngibuinikevin@gmail.com</a>
KWAY Sanford	President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government Tanzania (PO-RALG)	<a href="mailto:kwaysanford@gmail.com">kwaysanford@gmail.com</a>
LADISLAUS Leonidas	East Africa Community (EAC)	<a href="mailto:kleonidas@eachq.org">kleonidas@eachq.org</a>
LAZARO Msowelo	Tanzania Forest Service	<a href="mailto:msowelo@gmail.com">msowelo@gmail.com</a>
LINAH Clifford	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:linah.clifford@traffic.org">linah.clifford@traffic.org</a>
MARION Mangeni	The Judiciary - Tanzania	<a href="mailto:marionmangeni@yahoo.com">marionmangeni@yahoo.com</a>
MARTIN Adimile	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:Martin.Andimile@traffic.org">Martin.Andimile@traffic.org</a>
MCHA H. Mcha	Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA)	<a href="mailto:mmcha@tra.go.tz">mmcha@tra.go.tz</a>
MICHAEL Kimani	Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)	<a href="mailto:mkimani@rcmrd.org">mkimani@rcmrd.org</a>
MIKALA Lauridsen	USAID/ KEA	<a href="mailto:MLauridsen@usaid.gov">MLauridsen@usaid.gov</a>
MOURICE Mbunde	Muhimbili University	<a href="mailto:mouricevictor@gmail.com">mouricevictor@gmail.com</a>
MURANG'A Gitonga	ODPP - Kenya	<a href="mailto:murangagitonga@gmail.com">murangagitonga@gmail.com</a>
NISKANEN Leo	IUCN ESARO	<a href="mailto:Leo.Niskanen@iucn.org">Leo.Niskanen@iucn.org</a>
OMBENI Mbisse	Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority	<a href="mailto:ombeni.mbise2018@gmail.com">ombeni.mbise2018@gmail.com</a>
PAMELA Anying	Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)	<a href="mailto:pamela.anying@wildlife.go.ug">pamela.anying@wildlife.go.ug</a>
PAUL Harrison	Kilimanyika	<a href="mailto:paul@kilimanyika.com">paul@kilimanyika.com</a>

PAUL Thomas Kadushi	Tanzania National Prosecution Service	<a href="mailto:pkadushi@gmail.com">pkadushi@gmail.com</a>
PETER Moll	Stand up and Shout Out (SUSO)	<a href="mailto:petermoll@suso.world">petermoll@suso.world</a>
RASHID Majaaliwa Abdalla	Zanzibar Ports Corporation (ZPC)	<a href="mailto:majaaliwa.rashid@zpc.go.tz">majaaliwa.rashid@zpc.go.tz</a>
SETH Ncube	Regional Intelligence Liaison Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (RILO ESA)	<a href="mailto:SNcube3@zimra.co.zw">SNcube3@zimra.co.zw</a>
SIMON Kiarie	East Africa Community (EAC)	<a href="mailto:SKiarie@eachq.org">SKiarie@eachq.org</a>
SOPHIA France	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism	<a href="mailto:sophia.france@maliasili.go.tz">sophia.france@maliasili.go.tz</a>
SUDI Mwasinago	General Manager Operations KPA Mombasa	<a href="mailto:ca@kpa.co.ke">ca@kpa.co.ke</a>
SUE Snyman	African Leadership University	<a href="mailto:ssnyman@alueducation.com">ssnyman@alueducation.com</a>
SULEIMAN Ali	Tanzania Revenue Authority- Zanzibar Customs	<a href="mailto:suleiman.said@tra.go.tz">suleiman.said@tra.go.tz</a>
SUSANNE Dekrout	Conservation of Migratory Animal Species (CMS).	<a href="mailto:dekrout@un.org">dekrout@un.org</a>
TAMRINI Said	Zanzibar's forestry department	<a href="mailto:tamrini@yahoo.com">tamrini@yahoo.com</a>
THOMAS Jatiko	ODPP - Tanzania	<a href="mailto:tjatiko@yahoo.co.uk">tjatiko@yahoo.co.uk</a>
WILLOW Outhwaite	TRAFFIC	<a href="mailto:willow.outhwaite@traffic.org">willow.outhwaite@traffic.org</a>
WILSON Leboo	Kenya Forest Service	<a href="mailto:wilson.leboo@yahoo.com">wilson.leboo@yahoo.com</a>
WOLFGANG Salia,	Tanzania Revenue Authority - Tanzania	<a href="mailto:wsalia@tra.go.tz">wsalia@tra.go.tz</a>
WYCLIFFE Kirui	IUCN ESARO	<a href="mailto:Wycliffe.Kirui@iucn.org">Wycliffe.Kirui@iucn.org</a>
ZAPHINDA Chege	ODPP - Kenya	<a href="mailto:zaphida23@gmail.com">zaphida23@gmail.com</a>

#### Annex 4: Data collection instruments

##### i. Key Informants Interviews (KII) with project partners (WWF, TRAFFIC & IUCN)

Name..... Gender .....

Institution/ Organization .....

##### A. Engagement of the communities in combatting illegal wildlife trade

- A1. There has been a growing recognition among practitioners and policy makers for the need to engage and invest in rural communities that neighbour or live with wildlife as key partners in tackling IWT. How has the CONNECT Project excelled in this? What challenges has the project encountered so far?
- A2. How has information sharing in TWIX improved seizures and prosecution of wildlife offenders? What are the likely bottlenecks to information sharing and how should the CONNECT Project address them? What synergies and complementarities, if there are, between seizure rates and judicial trainings and successful prosecution rates?
- A3. The establishment of the Eastern Africa Prosecutors Forum on Wildlife and Related Crimes was meant to catalyze prosecution of illegal wildlife offenders in the region. How successful has this been especially with a focus on the collaboration between member states in prosecution? What

gaps has the CONNECT Project precipitated from this platform? What is the likelihood that these gaps will be addressed in the remaining life of project?

#### **B. Testing the Theory of Change (ToC)**

- B1. How do you see the CONNECT Project key partners' understanding of the different incentives and disincentives that influence whether local people engage in IWT or help to prevent it?
- B2. What are some of the key threats, opportunities and responses to East Africa's development futures? What are the discourses on the consequences and dependencies on the ecological resources of the region? How has the CONNECT Project addressed the concerns above?
- B3. What are the institutional arrangement enablers or constraints in the effective resource governance in terms of the existing collaborative conservation and management of transboundary natural resource perceived values?
- B4. How has the natural resource governance, in EAC member states, coped with changes (socio-economic, political and ecological) to indigenous people and local community lives and their livelihoods over time?
- B5. How has CONNECT Project informed policy formulation in transboundary biodiversity and natural resource management in the wake of economic development, population growth and dynamism
- B6. What is the reception on TWIX/ FLoD within EAC member states? Reflecting on the CONNECT Project ToC, what would you say are the enabling actions to the trajectories for community-level actions in combatting IWT?
- B7. How else does the CONNECT Project's ToC consider efforts to reduce IWT other than through community-based interventions?
- B8. How well has the CONNECT Project contributed to increased effort & risks; reduced the rewards & provocation, and removal of excuses? What positive incentives for "good behaviour" such as wildlife stewardship and alternative livelihoods has the CONNECT Project realized?

#### **C. The First Line of Defense (FLoD) process**

- C1. How useful has the training of law enforcers on illegal wildlife trade been? What changes has the training led to among those trained relative to those who never trained. How has enforcement changed since the training? Trends? Any challenges in harmonizing the content across the EAC partner states?
- C2. How has the data and information from the resource hub influenced / catalysed accelerated/impacted decisions and policy legislation within EAC on transboundary resource management.
- C3. What gaps has the study identified? Is CONNECT able to address these gaps? Do the gaps need additional legislation?
- C4. How can the roles of youth and women in combatting IWT be integrated and catalyse wildlife conservation and management?

#### **D. The institutional and legislative framework for wildlife management**

- D1. What is the existing collaborative conservation and management of transboundary natural resource authorities and enforcement structures, which govern and underpin the various rights of resource users in your country and East Africa? How is CONNECT promoting collaboration for trans frontier resource management? Are there policy proposals and enabling legislation to catalyze and establish collaborative management framework of these transboundary resources?

- D2. What policy measures exist that seal the operation gap between the pluralistic resource governance arrangements?
- D3. What policy options would you suggest that would inform improved management, control, and policy regarding natural resource governance?

**E. Lessons Learned**

- E1. How many project concept notes have been developed to address priority needs that support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources? What are these priority needs?
- E2. How has the CONNECT project supported women and youth in non-traditional occupational roles to personify the “outsider-within” perspective in order to inform more creative and innovative solutions to reduce wildlife trafficking risks across all geographies?

**ii. Key Informants Interviews (KII) with EAC Partner States (Relevant state agencies in Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, & Tanzania)**

Name.....Gender.....

Institution.....

1. What are some of the key threats, opportunities and responses to East Africa’s development futures and their consequences and dependencies on the ecological resources of the region?
2. How has CONNECT project been able to address the above?
3. What social and cultural aspects driving demand of wildlife products were identified for CONNECT Project intervention? How has the interventions changed them?
4. How many project concept notes have been developed to address priority needs that support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources? What are these priority needs?
5. The CONNECT Project was ..... How has the ‘wildlife in the economy’ study elicited discussions on protection and management of wildlife and economic performance in East Africa? Has the study sparked up discussion on policy gaps that need to address funding in wildlife conservation and management?
6. How has been the reaction or reception of awareness raising materials on role and value and of wildlife in the economy? How best can this be done to amply the reaction?
7. Has the modules and training materials catalysed uptake of FloD methodology? What other tools are state agencies using to engage communities in abating poaching?
8. How effective is FLoD tools in combatting poaching? What would impede FLoD adoption?
9. What is the potential impact of the campaigns launched, if any, on wildlife consumption demand in EA? How have the campaigns influenced behaviour change among Asian communities living in EAC and the general population?
10. What are the trends of demand for wildlife products and trafficking before and now?
11. How can the roles of youth and women in combatting IWT be integrated and catalyse wildlife conservation and management?



12. What changes would you suggest to ensure emerging gender related issues are addressed effectively?
13. Were the criteria for selecting beneficiaries acceptable?
14. What are some of the indications for change of behaviour that can be attributed to the CONNECT Project?

### iii. Key Informants Interviews (KII) with EAC Secretariat

Name.....Gender.....

Institution.....

- 1) How adequate is the commitment of the CONNECT Project to EAC in supporting policy and strengthening coordination and collaboration mechanisms within EAC on matters transboundary natural resource management?
- 2) What role has CONNECT played in formulation and refining of key regional policies and legislation supporting transboundary natural resource management? (e.g.
  - a. Development of a Regional Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (RBSAP);
  - b. Review the EAC Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources Management, 2006;
  - c. Review the EAC Transboundary Ecosystems Management Bill, 2012;
  - d. Harmonize Regional Policy, Strategy and Legislation on Wildlife Conservation & Management; and
  - e. Support ratification of the East African Community Forests Management and Protection Bill, 2015
- 3) How does the technical support and the partnership between the CONNECT project and EAC secretariat working? How has this partnership helped EAC secretariat to push their agenda for instance the development and review of selected key policies, strategies and legislation?
- 4) What are some of the key threats, opportunities and responses to East Africa's development futures and their consequences and dependencies on the ecological resources of the region?
- 5) Has the collaboration, information and lessons from SADC, Greater Virunga informed/shaped establishment and management of trans frontier conservation areas within EAC? What were impediments to effective management of these trans frontier areas.
- 6) How has the 'wildlife in the economy' studies elicited discussions on protection and management of wildlife and economic performance in East Africa?
- 7) How has been the reaction or reception of awareness raising materials on role and value and of wildlife in the economy? How best can this be done to amply the reaction?
- 8) What is your view of the way the CONNECT Project technically supports the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy with respect to resource mobilization?
- 9) What are some of the capacity challenges that the EAC secretariat currently face? How can the CONNECT Project support the EAC Secretariat to address these challenges?
- 10) What actions would you recommended to follow-up or reinforce initial benefits from CONNECT project to ensure sustainability of the gains?

- 11) What adjustments would you recommend for the re-design of the project cycle and replication of the CONNECT Project in the prevailing circumstances? In what ways can the CONNECT project improve its implementation for the remaining time to be able to deliver project effectively?

#### iv. Focused Group Discussion Guide (Women and Youth)

Name.....

Group .....

1. Deliberate on access to natural resources prior to the CONNECT Project? In other words, how has the CONNECT Project impacted you in terms of your access to skills, knowledge and management of natural resources?
2. Thinking specifically about the activities of the CONNECT Project, (in terms of meetings and decision-making processes) how would you describe your involvement and what would you like to see done differently?
  - a. Do you attend CONNECT Project meetings? Why?
  - b. To what extent are you involved in CONNECT Project decision-making processes?
  - c. What are some of the things you would like see done differently as far as the CONNECT Project is concerned?
3. Under what circumstances do communities play the roles of agents for positive change?
4. What roles do the women and the youth play in promoting IWT? What is pushing them to participate in IWT?
5. Since establishment of wildlife management institutions in EA, women have not been represented effectively. How has the CONNECT Project contributed to a more equal society in the context of conservation? How has CONNECT Project supported women and youth involvement in wildlife management? What opportunities are still available for women and youth involvement in wildlife management? What has been the greatest impediment for women and youth involvement in wildlife management?
6. What has the CONNECT Project done to support women and youth to influence behaviour change in the context of IWT? How have the workshops and their contents impacted on behaviour change? How sustainable are the proposed interventions by CONNECT Project?
7. What makes FLoD unique from other anti-poaching methodologies and tools? What's your preference?
8. How effective were the FloD training materials and content in addressing poaching in your locality?
9. What would be the main challenges that FloD adoption by the wildlife management institutions face and how would these be addressed?
10. What was exciting in FloD that would catalyze anti-poaching efforts?



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## Re-advertisement

### Terms of Reference for Midterm Evaluation

### The Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) Project

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<b>Organisation</b>	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
<b>Project</b>	Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources (CONNECT) Project
<b>Position type</b>	Short term consultancy
<b>Study/assessment</b>	Midterm Performance Evaluation
<b>Duration</b>	35 days
<b>Reporting to</b>	Sophie Kutegeka, Chief of Party, CONNECT
<b>Working with</b>	IUCN Nairobi, TRAFFIC Arusha, WWF Nairobi and East Africa Community Secretariat Arusha
<b>Application deadline</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Consultancy contacts</b>	<a href="mailto:Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org">Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org</a> and <a href="mailto:info.esaro@iucn.org">info.esaro@iucn.org</a>



## 1. Background

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization that focuses on finding pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN has three programme areas: (1) Valuing and conserving nature; (2) Effective and equitable governance of nature's use and (3) Deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. IUCN's mandate is achieved by supporting scientific research, managing field projects all over the world, and creating a platform for governments, NGOs, the UN and companies to work together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN's Eastern and Southern African Regional Office (ESARO) have thematic programmes with various projects and programmes in the region. One such programme is The Conservation Areas and Species programme (CAS) that draws on evidence-based and best practice approaches to enhance the conservation and management of biodiversity and ecosystems in Eastern and Southern Africa.

## 2. Project Description

The Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) project falls under CAS programme. CONNECT is a 4-year project implemented by a consortium of partners focusing on some of the East African Countries namely Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) is the lead implementing partner, working with TRAFFIC and WWF. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) East Africa, and receives policy guidance from the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat.

The project, which commenced in May 2019, is part of a larger portfolio of projects funded by USAID to the East African Community under the Regional Development Objectives Grant Agreement (RDOAG) and USAID's Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS). The goal of USAID Kenya and East Africa's (USAID/KEA's) Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS) is to enhance Africa-led sustainable economic growth and resilience.

The CONNECT project has a specific focus on supporting the EAC Secretariat in the implementation of the EAC's Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife referred to as the "EAC Anti-poaching Strategy". Linked to the CONNECT project, the EAC Secretariat and Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) are implementing the



Improving Collaborative Conservation and Management of Transboundary Natural Resources in East African Community project, which is also funded by USAID. The project is supporting the East African Community in the implementation of its commitments to conserve wildlife and habitats in East Africa, in line with its Transboundary Ecosystem Management Bill of 2010 and Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products of 2016

### **3. CONNECT Project Objectives and Outcomes**

#### **Objective 1: Collaborative Management of Transboundary Natural Resources**

##### **Outcome 1: Strengthened regional policy dialogue, learning and decision making on management of transboundary natural resources.**

The project activities under this component of the project are designed to help strengthen the leadership, technical capacities and the political will of the EAC to effectively engage in the development and implementation of biodiversity conservation policies, strategies and action plans.

- Activity 1.1: To strengthen cross-sectoral decision making for sustainable development of transboundary natural resources
- Activity 1.2: To provide technical Support to EAC Secretariat, Working Groups and Sub Committees

##### **Outcome 2: Improved sustainable management of key transboundary landscapes.**

The CONNECT project supports priority needs for conservation and management of transboundary natural resources through the sharing of best practices and providing expert advice to strengthen and coordinate the development and implementation of relevant EAC policies and strategies. The project is also working with EAC secretariat to develop a funding proposal to help support the implementation of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy and other priority actions to strengthen the conservation and management of transboundary natural resources

- Activity 1.2B Sharing lessons and building capacity of the establishment and management of transfrontier conservation areas building on best practices in the wider region (e.g. Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration, SADC Transfrontier Conservation Programme and Network).
- Activity 1.3 Resource mobilisation for the implementation of priority initiatives

#### **Objective 2: Perceived Value of Wildlife Increased**

##### **Outcome 3: Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife.**



The activity under this outcome is designed to contribute to Strategic Objectives 5 and 6 of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy which recognizes the importance of raising awareness of the value of wildlife and wildlife habitats.

- Activity 2.1 increase political support for wildlife and natural ecosystems by undertaking "Wildlife in the economy" studies

### **Objective 3: Poaching and trafficking reduced**

#### **Outcome 4: Reduced demand for illegal wildlife products.**

With regard to Outcome 4 on Demand Reduction, the focus of this project is on demand for wildlife products from local markets within the EAC region and does not aim for global market demand reduction

- Activity 3.1: Patterns of Use of Threatened Wildlife in East Africa, Phase II.
- Activity 3.2: Building capacity for stronger engagement of local communities in combating Illegal Wildlife Trade

#### **Outcome 5: Improved regional and bilateral collaboration on enforcement and prosecution.**

Under this objective, the project partners are proposing to implement a series of targeted interventions to strengthen responses to the wildlife poaching and trafficking challenges in the EAC region focusing on specific strategic objectives of the EAC Anti-poaching Strategy. Action activities.

- Activity 3.3: Organize a workshop to discuss the Role of women and youth in combating illegal wildlife trade
- Activity 3.3A: Develop a compilation of case studies of youth and women's engagement in addressing wildlife crime in East Africa contributing to a broader evidence base for the role of women and youth in improving natural resource management surrounding protected areas.
- Activity 3.4: Development of an East-African TWIX (Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange)
- Activity 3.5: Establishing a Permanent Forum and Secretariat for wildlife prosecutors in East Africa on Wildlife Crime and Corruption



- Activity 3.6. Enhancing existing initiatives combating wildlife crime and corruption at ports through a data-driven analysis of typologies of seizures related to wildlife crime as they affect ports.

#### 4. Objectives of the Midterm Performance Evaluation

The purpose of this midterm Performance Evaluation is to review the implementation of the project with a view to adaptively enhance project performance improvement, accountability and learning.

The evaluation will also extract lessons learned, diagnose and analyse issues including the influencing or hindering factors of the project progress towards achieving the goals. Based on the evidence, the review will formulate recommendations towards improving the project implementation and performance.

It is expected that the evaluation will compare targeted outputs/outcomes of the Project to actual outputs/outcomes and assess the actual results to determine their contribution to the attainment of the project objectives

The Evaluation will use the OECD 1 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) international evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability. It will evaluate the efficiency of Project management, including the delivery of outputs and activities in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness and cost efficiency

The specific elements to be reviewed include the following;

- Project design, its validity and strategic fit to assess whether project management structure, partnership and implementation arrangements are sufficient for the effective delivery of the project.
- Project implementation progress to establish achievement of expected outputs and Outcomes, in accordance with set targets. This includes the inputs, processes and the resulting outputs/outcomes.
- Sustainability: Assessing whether the institutional infrastructure in EAC (including government agencies and non-state actors) have ownership and capacity both technical and financial to continue supporting the interventions





- **Impact:** To establish whether the activity outputs are contributing to the overall goal, Changes, both planned and unanticipated
- **Learning :** Drawing lessons from program implementation experiences and challenges

## 5. Users and Stakeholders of the Evaluation

The primary users of the review includes the management/leadership of IUCN including Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), implementing partners (WWF and TRAFFIC), project component leads , Project Coordination Committee, IUCN Monitoring & Evaluation and Risk Management Unit and USAID. These are also the key stakeholders in the evaluation who will play a role in providing information, and evidence throughout the process.

## 6. Methodology

The evaluator will propose a methodology that will sufficiently address the issues and questions outlined in the ToR. The evaluator will address, the following aspects among others:

- **Literature review:** The consultant will review among others, Project document, Annual and quarterly reports, the results Matrix, baseline report on capacity of TWIX users and weekly bulletins to USAID.
- **Sampling procedure-** The consultant will design the most effective technique to sample from the project beneficiaries and implementing partners. Key respondents will include, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Uganda Wildlife Authority, Rwanda Development Board, Tanzania National Park Authority, EAAP and the Ports, among others.
- **Field interviews:** The consultant is expected to use the most appropriate approaches to obtain data from all the collaborating partners
- **Data analysis:** The evaluator will propose suitable methods for analysing both qualitative and quantitative data.
- **Reporting:** The evaluator will develop a draft report in line with the report structure that will have been agreed upon by the Client. The draft report will be reviewed before the generation of the final report.

The consultant will develop an Evaluation Matrix which will include key evaluation questions, evaluation sub-questions, indicators, sources of information and methodology. Indicative key evaluation questions are provided below. The consultants are expected to develop detailed subsidiary evaluation questions.



## Relevance

- Is the project consistent with the needs, priorities, policies and strategies of EAC, partner states and USAID?
- Is the causal logic of the theory of change (including the indicators) still valid and realistic?

## Effectiveness

- Is the CONNECT project achieving its objectives?
- How is the COVID- 19 pandemic likely to affect the overall objective of the project
- What specific project interventions or activities have effectively contributed to achieving these objectives?

## Efficiency

- Can the cost of the interventions be justified by the results? (i.e. value for money)
- How well has the project utilized available resources to generate the project outputs?

## Sustainability

- What measures have been taken to make the program sustainable?
- In what way is EAC secretariat, other structures and partner states and local institutions ensuring the sustainability of the interventions?

## Impact

What are the effects of the project (intended or unintended, positive or negative, short term or long term) on;

- Improvement of Enforcement and prosecution
- Increased awareness of the economic and intrinsic value of living wildlife
- Strengthening Regional Policy framework for management of transboundary natural resources

## Lessons Learnt

- What are the main lessons drawn from this project that have a generic application in implementation, management and design of similar projects?

## 7. The Scope of the Mid Term Performance Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation will cover all project activities undertaken from 1st May 2019 to May 31st 2021.

## 8. Evaluation deliverables

The consultant is expected to deliver the following outputs to be approved by IUCN at all relevant stages of the consultancy:



- 1) An inception report that details the evaluation matrix and methodology, draft instruments, data collection plan, data analysis plan among other elements;
- 2) Draft evaluation report;
- 3) A final report that will have addressed stakeholder review comments
- 4) Datasets and supporting documentation such as code books, data dictionaries statistical codes and syntaxes

The consultant will also be guided by [Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report](#)

### **9. Duration of the assignment**

The assignment is expected to take 35 days. IUCN will provide administrative and logistical support required to carry out the exercise.

### **10. Proposed qualifications and profile of the review team**

The suitable team/consortium of consultants should have a mix of expertise in;

- a. Wildlife conservation and management, natural resource management or equivalent and
- b. Programme or project monitoring and evaluation.
- c. Social sciences, socio-economics or equivalent

Key considerations include the following:

- An advanced degree in wildlife conservation or natural resource management, social sciences, socio-economics from recognized university,
- Over ten years' working experience in wildlife conservation or natural resource management in the East Africa region
- Substantial (Over 10 years) experience executing similar tasks and assignments (i.e. project evaluations)
- Strong qualitative data analysis skills and sound experience in rigorously testing projects/Programmes Theory of Change,
- Proven experience in monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes (Baseline, midterm and End term evaluation),
- Should be able to interact and communicate with all parties involved in the review.
- Have good skills in synthesizing technical documents and writing quality technical and policy oriented reports.
- Proven communication and presentation skills.
- Demonstrated high level of professionalism and ability to work independently in high



pressure situations under tight deadlines,

- High proficiency in English language both written and spoken

### **11. Conflict of interest**

The evaluation team members should provide a written disclosure of conflicts of interest (COI), as part of the proposal.

### **12. Submission of proposal**

Interested candidates should email their technical and detailed financial proposals (quote in US Dollars), along with detailed CVs of their teams members not later than 5.00 p.m. EAT,

4<sup>th</sup> June 2021 to;

Sophie Kutegeka - Mbabazi

Chief of Party

CONNECT Project

Email: [Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org](mailto:Sophie.Kutegeka@iucn.org) and copy [info.esaro@iucn.org](mailto:info.esaro@iucn.org)