



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

A decorative graphic on the left side of the page, consisting of several concentric, semi-circular arcs in shades of green and yellow.

# **SWM SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

# **A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE**

**THE MUCHENI COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY PROFILE**



A photograph of an elderly man with a weathered face, wearing a colorful plaid shirt. He is holding a long wooden spear with a dark, pointed tip in his right hand. In his left hand, he holds a large, dark, oval-shaped shield made of animal skin. The background shows a traditional thatched-roof hut and a clear blue sky. The lighting is warm, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

“

Community-based sustainable wildlife management is premised on the fact that if local communities derive economic benefit from managing natural resources, they will protect those resources.

”

Patrice Grimaud, SWM Programme KaZa site coordinator



# Reconciling people and wildlife: The underlying challenges

Wildlife populations have been declining in Zimbabwe during the last 30 years due to consecutive droughts, habitat loss, and poaching for wild meat and sale of wildlife products. In addition, human–wildlife conflict, such as crop-raiding by elephants and livestock lost to carnivorous predators, presents multiple challenges for rural communities.

For the last three decades, a number of far-sighted wildlife biologists and rural development practitioners have believed that the native Zimbabwean wildlife is an incredible natural resource and that it can and should be sustainably used by rural communities to generate income and improve the quality of their lives.

These benefits, they argue, would encourage rural people to see wildlife in a more positive light. This, in turn, would help incentivise community-based conservation efforts and halt the

destruction of natural habitats and loss of wildlife populations that are being driven by rural poverty.

The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme seeks to address these challenges and develop innovative community-based solutions. Local community participation, support and leadership are critical. The SWM Programme follows a community rights-based approach, which puts people's rights at the centre of wildlife management activities.





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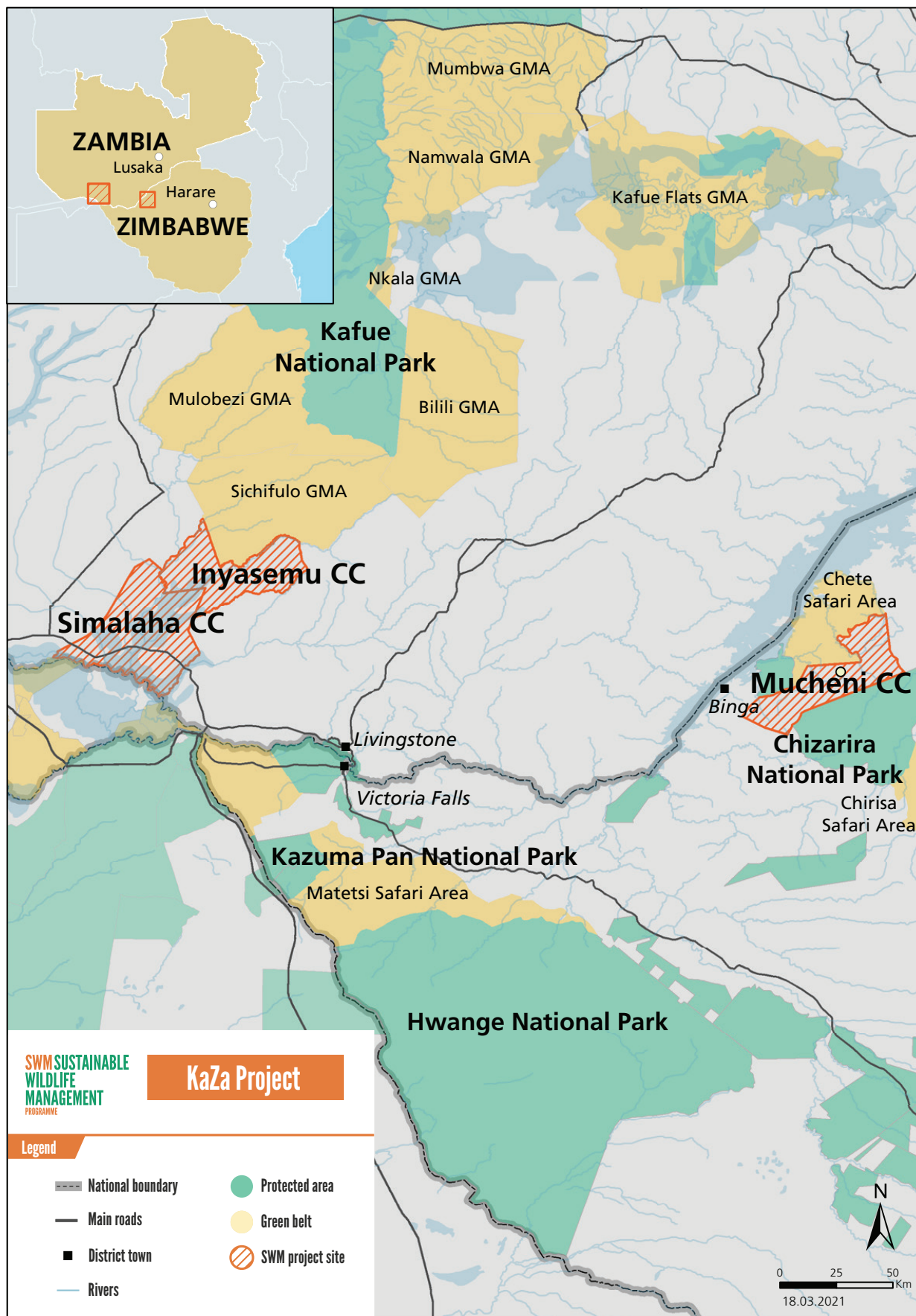
# The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme

Around the world, overhunting for wild meat is driving hundreds of wildlife species into extinction. As wildlife populations decline, many rural communities and indigenous peoples lose their traditional source of food and income. This situation is becoming more critical as the demand for wild meat grows in towns and cities.

The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme is a seven-year (2018–2024) international initiative to improve the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife in forest, savannah and wetland ecosystems. The SWM Programme is an Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) initiative, which is funded by the European Union, with co-funding from the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM) and the French Development Agency (AFD). The SWM Programme is being implemented by a dynamic consortium of four partners with expertise in wildlife conservation and food security. These are the Food and Agricul-

ture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). For more information see [www.swm-programme.info](http://www.swm-programme.info)





Source: CIFOR modified to comply with United Nations map 4170 R19, October 2020

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# Sustainable wildlife management in Zimbabwe and Zambia

**Community-based sustainable wildlife management in Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe and Zambia, recognises the rights of local people to manage and benefit from their resources, ultimately conserving the resources.**

The SWM Programme assessed potential project sites in the Kavango-Zambezi (KaZa) Transfrontier Conservation Area in Southern Africa. This assessment led to the selection of three implementation sites, Mucheni in Zimbabwe and Simalaha and Inyasemu in Zambia.

The SWM KaZa Project in Mucheni is being implemented in three wards of Binga District, Matabeleland North Province. The project site was chosen due to the health of the environment and the potential for wildlife and other natural resources to be used by local communities. Site selection was also based on the functional landscape approach, whose thrust is on integrated and holistic management of natural resources across different land use types and areas.

## What is a landscape approach?

The approach seeks to manage wildlife and other natural resources through integrated land use planning at a landscape level. The aim is to minimise conflicts, encourage harmony between different types of land use, and improve community livelihoods.

The SWM KaZa Project uses the landscape approach to address multiple natural resource challenges by establishing community conservancies. Community conservancies have been successfully implemented in Namibia, and the approach is being adapted and developed in neighbouring countries in Southern Africa. By working with traditional chiefs, local communities and government authori-





ties to establish a Mucheni Community Conservancy, the SWM KaZa Project will:

- improve the sustainable management of wildlife and domestic animals;
- introduce affordable and appropriate technologies to protect livestock and crops from wild animals; and
- support sustainable fisheries and hunting practices that provide new livelihoods and sources of income.

## What is a community conservancy?

**Community conservancies are legally-recognised, geographically-defined areas that have been formed by communities that have united to manage and benefit from wildlife and other natural resources.**

Community conservancies are run by the community and managed by a group of people elected to serve the interests of all its members.

The seven guiding principles for a community conservancy are that it should be:

1. a legally registered entity with clearly defined boundaries and a constituted management body run by the community;
2. an entity managed by an elected group to serve the interests of all its members;
3. an entity through which services and development can be channelled and integrated;
4. a place where residents can derive income from natural resource management (wildlife, tourism) and traditional farming;
5. a place where wildlife populations increase as they are managed for productive gain;
6. a place where the value of natural resources increases, enhancing the value of land; and
7. a place zoned for multiple uses to minimise conflict and maximise the interest of all stakeholders.

# Why the need for a community conservancy?

## Socially

- Create a representative, decision-making institution
- Secure land tenure and strengthen right of access to land
- Maintain culture and traditions
- Respond to a request from a conservation organisation or a tourism investor
- Prevent encroachment by non-landowners or neighbours

## Ecologically

- Keep the land open for wildlife and livestock
- Manage natural resources effectively to ensure long-term productivity (forests, grasslands, water, fish)
- Protect wildlife by reducing threats such as poaching
- Reduce conflict between people and wildlife
- Protect endangered species

## Economically

- Diversify sources of income for communities and landowners
- Create employment for local communities
- Enable tourism development
- Access partners to support rural development
- Access consumptive or non-consumptive wildlife user rights
- Secure rights to access the land through formally negotiated agreements
- Improve infrastructure (roads, bridges)





“Wild animals destroy our crops and kill our cows and goats. Just recently I lost two goats to crocodiles.”

Shupa Muchimba, small-scale farmer

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# Sustainable wildlife management in Mucheni – A “catalyst” for development

For more than 20 years, Shupa Muchimba of Siakabin-ga Village, in Ward 4 of Binga District, has watched helplessly as carnivores kill his cattle and elephants destroy his maize and cotton crops.

Today, with support from the SWM KaZa Project, a mobile *boma* has been mounted in Ward 4 to help farmers protect their livestock from predators and improve soil fertility. A mobile *boma* is an enclosure made of opaque material to prevent wild animals from attacking livestock.

*“We’re very happy with this initiative; bomas are helping us reduce livestock predation,” explains Muchimba.*

Muchimba is an inspiring farmer who is trying to improve local agricultural practices and wildlife conservation in Mucheni. His community relies on the land for food and income. However, they are not always able to make ends meet due to frequent droughts, pests and conflict with wildlife.

## The Mucheni Community Conservancy is about empowerment and access to resources.

The Mucheni Community Conservancy promotes natural resource utilisation, including wildlife, as an economic and sustainable land use option. It is an extension of the existing Mucheni Conservancy, which is a hunting safari area currently being leased to a private safari operator, Tokoloshe Safaris. Mucheni Community Conservancy will return the management of wildlife and other resources to the local inhabitants. However, the Mucheni Community Conservancy is also about empowering rural communities to coexist with wildlife and develop local skills and institutions to manage wildlife. It builds on the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) that was successfully implemented in Zimbabwe.



**Binga District endures some of the harshest climatic conditions, which limit agricultural crop production/productivity and make the district more suitable for extensive livestock and wildlife management.**

The district experiences a low and often erratic annual rainfall of 400–600 mm. Soils are generally shallow and sandy. The natural vegetation includes mopane woodland and mixed thickets on the valley floor. Much of the district falls within the Zimbabwean agroecological classification of Natural Region V – described as unsuitable for agriculture except extensive grazing. The current land use includes agricultural crop production, fallow land, and forests and bushland for grazing, wildlife management, and forest products (timber for construction, firewood, non-timber forest products, handicrafts, etc.).



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# Quick facts



<b>Region:</b>	Binga District in Matabeleland North Province of Zimbabwe.
<b>Size:</b>	100 000 hectares (1 000 km <sup>2</sup> ) – a landscape dedicated to wildlife and agriculture-based activities with an integrated strategy of managing wildlife together with existing and planned land uses such as human settlements, crop and livestock farming, as well as infrastructural and other development initiatives taking place in the area. This landscape approach has been adopted as a more sustainable strategy, which recognises the need for harmonious coexistence of humans and their natural resources.
<b>Population:</b>	13 620 inhabitants (3 332 households) (ZIMSTAT, 2012) for Wards 3–4–5.
<b>Main language:</b>	Tonga, Ndebele and Shona.

## Mucheni Community Conservancy objective

To support socio-economic development of the communities in the three wards through sustainable utilisation of natural resources and agricultural development.

## Main partners

Binga Rural District Council (BRDC), CAMPFIRE Association, Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Tokoloshe Safaris and Forestry Commission.

## Major highlights

- ▶ **2018** The initial wildlife conservancy applied for a hunting quota through BRDC. The application was approved and the BRDC entered into a partnership with a safari operator (Tokoloshe Safaris) through a contract.
- ▶ **2018** The safari operator built a hunting camp and sunk a borehole for the provision of water for wildlife.
- ▶ **2020** Two boreholes were established and another one rehabilitated to enable access to safe and clean water for communities and livestock in the three wards.
- ▶ **2020** Three social centres were rehabilitated in the three wards, where people meet and discuss sustainable wildlife and natural resource management issues, among others.
- ▶ **2020** Mobile *bomas* were introduced to communities to protect livestock from wildlife.
- ▶ **2021** Mucheni Community Conservancy boundaries were marked and well defined as per the seven principles of a community conservancy.



“The Mucheni Community Conservancy is set to empower the local community to play a more central role in the management and decision-making of various conservation-based enterprises.”

Patrice Grimaud, KaZa site coordinator



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# People and parks: Wildlife, conservation and communities

The Mucheni Community Conservancy represents a further step in the devolution of user rights to natural resources from Binga Rural District Council (BRDC) to the Mucheni community. In this landmark initiative, the conservancy is being devel-

oped jointly with BRDC, traditional chiefs and local communities, with support from government authorities responsible for wildlife, fisheries, forest management and animal production.

## Mucheni Conservancy offers a fascinating mix of...



A variety of cultures and dynamic communities committed to sustainability. People living in Mucheni share a common vision for managing their area and its resources.



Vast, diverse and spectacular landscapes, which include gorges and river systems, beautiful vegetation types, and Binga sand beach and hot springs.



Fascinating, free-roaming wildlife, including elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard, wild dog, bushbuck, impala, antelope and abundant birdlife. Other natural resources include fish and non-timber forest products.





## Key benefits

The Mucheni Community Conservancy will:

- reduce human–wildlife conflict;
- diversify income and economic opportunities for local people;
- contribute to the conservation of endangered and protected species; and
- enhance community livelihoods and bring positive change.

The SWM Programme is also working on community conservancy projects in Botswana and Namibia. This is part of a landscape approach, which encourages regional cooperation in line with the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Wildlife. The Mucheni Community Conservancy will also benefit from this regional collaboration.

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# The Future

The SWM Programme has embraced the landscape approach to enhance ecological connectivity and genetic flows between habitats and protected areas. The KaZa Transfrontier Conservation Area brings together a complex and diverse mosaic of land uses spanning international borders. During the establishment of the Mucheni Community Conservancy, the SWM KaZa Project focuses on three major opportunities.

## Non-timber forest products (NTFPs)

A baseline study in 2019 showed that few people gather NTFPs in Binga due to limited market access (poor road infrastructure) and market information. There is potential to develop NTFP markets, livestock (cattle and goats) value chains with improved management practices, and indigenous wild fruit (baobab, tamarind and others) harvesting and sales.

## Wildlife-based activities

Safari hunting is the dominant land use in the nearby Chirisa and Chete Safari Areas and Sijarira Forest. No hunting is allowed in the adjacent Chizarira National Park. Hunting activities are also being carried out in the

Mucheni Conservancy, which is currently being leased to Tokoloshe Safaris. The Conservancy will benefit the inhabitants through consumptive and non-consumptive safari operations.

## Tourist attractions

Binga could be a prime tourist destination given its location by Lake Kariba, abundance of wildlife, rugged terrain in Chizarira, rich cultural heritage, hot springs and sandy beach. The Lake Kariba shoreline remains relatively undiscovered; however, a range of accommodation and lodges is available. Community and private-sector nature-based tourism partnerships are being supported by the SWM KaZa Project to benefit the local inhabitants and the district.





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# SWM PROGRAMME

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