



# XV WORLD FORESTRY CONGRESS

Building a Green, Healthy and Resilient Future with Forests

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## Scope and objectives

The Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme puts people's rights at the centre of wildlife management. It seeks an optimal balance between conservation needs and the use of wildlife for food security and nutrition. To achieve this, the SWM Programme developed a community rights-based approach to be adapted at project sites, so that local and indigenous communities are:

- ensured equitable participation and inclusion in all project activities;
- empowered in their legal use and sustainable management of natural resources; and
- strengthened in their capacity to manage and benefit from wildlife.

The SWM Programme works in 15 countries, namely Botswana, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Mali, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## Innovative approach

The SWM Programme developed a series of far-reaching social safeguards to ensure the community rights-based approach is followed when engaging with local and indigenous communities.

Social safeguards are new to the conservation sector and have rarely been applied in large-scale conservation projects. The SWM Programme is pioneering this innovative people-centred way of working, and encouraging the meaningful implementation of social safeguards in similar wildlife management and conservation initiatives. The SWM Programme has developed the following five distinct social safeguards tools:

1. **Community rights situation analysis.** Each SWM project develops a community rights situation analysis based on the human rights information available at national and site level, thus adapted to the local context, models of sustainable wildlife management and projects workplans.
2. **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).** The FPIC protocol provides the SWM Programme teams with a practical, step-by-step approach to support the inclusive participation, engagement and decision-making of local communities and indigenous peoples in any project activity that may affect them.
3. **Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).** The GRM is a critical component of effective stakeholder engagement. It guarantees a culturally appropriate and accessible channel of communication through which stakeholders' concerns are reviewed and resolved in an effective, timely and transparent manner.
4. **Gender mainstreaming.** The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment ensures that the different roles, needs and priorities of women and men, and their different potentials, capacities and contributions are taken into consideration. This applies at all stages in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of project activities.
5. **Good practices in research ethics.** Field teams in charge of surveys are trained in research ethics, respect for interviewees' rights, and personal security, especially on sensitive topics.

In Guyana, to date, 42 of the 57 communities in the Rupununi (Region 9) have signed an FPIC agreement with the SWM Programme; i.e. 74 percent of all the communities in the region are benefiting directly or indirectly from the initiative.

In the Republic of the Congo, four FPIC agreements with four distinct communities were developed and signed. In June 2021, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights and Promotion of Indigenous People officially validated the SWM Programme FPIC process. This is the first FPIC process to be successfully validated in the country.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a hotline in local languages has been developed to increase access to the GRM in the Okapi Wildlife Reserve, comprising a population of 4500 women and men across 3 villages.

In Zimbabwe, women are included in local governance structures that preside over livestock production and marketing. The inclusion of women not only eliminates a traditional imbalance, but also empowers women to provide food for their families directly.

In Papua New Guinea, the SWM Programme facilitated the first Conservation Deed in the Bismarck Forest Corridor, making this the largest community-conserved area in the region. The agreement was signed by eight clans, representing 892 people who traditionally own 3 500 ha of montane rainforest.



## Tools and methodologies

### Community rights-based approach

#### Social safeguards



## Lessons learned

### Positive outcomes depend on iterative processes

The use of social safeguards tools is critical in conservation and development programmes. However, they are not a one-size-fits-all tools; indeed, these tools must be continuously tailored and adapted to the local context and feedback. Therefore, achieving positive outcomes for all does not depend on the tools, but on the quality of the iterative processes.

### Participatory management is key

In all SWM Programme field sites, the project teams interact with communities on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. This allows the teams to understand and interact with communities, incorporate new ideas, and adapt project activities according to community needs and priorities. The implementation of the SWM social safeguards requires time to raise awareness, discuss, build and reach agreement.

### Co-learning is empowerment

By implementing social safeguards, both community members and project team members are learning to from each other: project teams learn how to respect and enhance community rights, while communities are empowered to realize their own rights.

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<sup>5</sup> Strengthening expertise in sub-Saharan Africa on birds and their rational use for communities and their environment (RESSOURCE Project)

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