

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	9525
Project Name:	Strengthening Institutions, Information Management and Monitoring to Reduce the Rate of Illegal Wildlife Trade in South Africa
Countr(ies):	South Africa
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

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I. Overview

A. Description

Project name

Strengthening Institutions, Information Management and Monitoring to Reduce the Rate of Illegal Wildlife Trade in South Africa

Country

South Africa

GEF ID

9525

Implementing Agency

UNEP

Executing Entity

Department of Environment Affairs (DEA)

Trust Fund

GET

Project Type

FSP

PIR Submission

9/16/2025

Fiscal Year , PIR Number

FY 2025 , 6th PIR

Objective

To fight against illegal wildlife trade through institutional strengthening, improved information management and monitoring (and collaboration at an international level), thereby influencing the supply system at local (protected area), national (South Africa) and regional levels

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress

Satisfactory

Development Objective

Satisfactory

Overall risk

Low Risk

Project Financing

5,325,750.00

Cumulative Disbursement

3,627,614.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval

5/8/2018

Agency Approval

3/1/2018

Implementation Start 2/26/2019	First Disbursement 11/20/2019
Expected MTR 10/31/2024	Actual MTR 11/30/2024
Expected Completion 12/31/2026	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

Project Management Unit (PMU) The PMU received resignation letter from the Administration Officer, Mr Siphso Mabunda who went on to join SANBI. The plan is to advertise for the positions of Project Coordinator and Administrative Officers who will man the PMU for the remainder of the project term. PCA2019/1014 GEFID9525 Amendment No1 Addendum Number 2 to PCA 2019/1014 was initiated. The addendum's aim is to request the DG to countersign to countersign the addendum that indicates that the total project budget as originally signed will be reduced by \$200 000 to an amount of US\$ 4 686 009 (four million, six hundred and eighty-six thousand and nine US Dollars). This is to allow for the sub-allotment to UNEP- World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) of project funds to the amount of US \$200 000 (two hundred thousand US Dollars) to assist with supplementing the recently launched E-permitting system. The legal instrument was signed by DG in August 2024. Request for the project extension till the end of 2027 was initiated. The submission to request signature of Director General (DG) on the letter of request to UNEP was initiated. Appointment of Independent Auditor to conduct an external audit of the GEF6 project funds The Terms of Reference for the appointment of an external service provider were drafted and shared with the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE) Supply Chain Unit to initiate the convening of the Bid Specification Committee. The service provider to be appointed, will begin by auditing the 2023 and 2024 financial expenditures, which are already due for submission to UNEP. Mid-Term Review The Project Management Unit (PMU) participated in and accompanied Ms. Doreen Mnyulwa (Reviewer) on the mission for the Mid-Term Review, which took place from 26 September to 4 October 2024. The mission included interviews with partners and site visits. These site visits covered all communities within the three clusters of the Kruger National Park: North, Central, and South. A draft Mid-Term Review report was circulated to partners for their input in October 2024. The final MTR report was submitted in January 2025. Inputs on management plan for the implementation of the MTR recommendations was coordinated with Partners. Fund Draw down and Requisition for project partners: South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) and South African National Parks (SANParks) UNEP approved the tranche transfer of \$ 2,319,131.00 on 28 May 2024. The funds were then drawn down to the DFFE and payments made to partners viz SANBI, PPF and SANParks. Invoices of \$403 587 (SANBI), \$174 090 (PPF) and \$232 918 (SANParks) were paid out during the reporting period. UNEP-WCMC Meetings between DFFE and UNEP-WCMC were held to discuss the sub-allotment of \$200 000 of project funds to UNEP-WCMC to assist with implementing the recently launched E-permitting system under Component 2 of the GEF 6 project. A letter addressed to UNEP authorizing the sub-allotment was prepared and submitted to DG for approval. A collaboration agreement will be entered into between DFFE and UNEP- WCMC on delivering activities worth US\$200,000 for the South Africa GEF6 project. The amount will be paid directly from UNEP to UNEP-WCMC after an agreement has been signed between DFFE and UNEP-WCMC. The SMALL-SCALE

FUNDING AGREEMENT (SSFA) between UNEP and UNEP- WCMC was signed in April 2025. Project Steering Committee (PSC) The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was held on 19 to 21 November at Awelani Resort 2024. Minutes of the meeting were approved. Another PSC meeting was held on the 10th to the 11th of June 2025 in Skukuza, Kruger National Park. The minutes of the meeting are still being compiled. Financial reporting PMU facilitated the submission of expenditure reports from partners for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 of 2024 and Q1 in 2025. Half Yearly Reports PMU facilitated the submissions of 2024 July-Dec Half Yearly Reports from Partners. Global Wildlife Programme (GWP) PMU attended the following webinars as invited by the GWP:

- 30 October: GWP Legacy Webinar-Lessons from landscape management and community engagement in Malawi and Zambia
- 13 November: Behavioral Approaches to Engage Communities
- 10 December: GWP Knowledge Exchange: Lessons in combating poaching
- 17 December: GWP Pre-Annual Conference Information Call
- 20 to 24 January 2025: Attendance of the GWP Annual Conference in Panama

19 June 2025: GWP Regional Connect Calls, formerly known as coordination calls, to bring together GEF-6, GEF-7, and GEF-8 GWP projects across Africa for networking, peer learning, and exchange. Communication and Awareness: The project received an invitation from GEF Secretariat to attend and present and showcase the South Africa Wildlife Project at GEF South Africa Regional Workshop Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECW) in Johannesburg in January 20 to 23, 2025. A presentation on the project and its achievements thus far. Component 1: SANBI (Component 1) For Output 1.1 Output 1.1. SAoSA members are trained in effective wildlife trade monitoring and assessment

- The Groen Sebenza Programme has officially concluded, with the contracts of the 147 young professionals having ended in December 2024. Of those hired, 55% were female. Before the conclusion of the programme, a skills mapping spreadsheet was developed to identify the specific capacity needs and skills of the young professionals, prioritised according to their provincial work programmes. This information was integrated by the African Wildlife Economy Institute (AWEI) into the project's Capacity Development Strategy to support long-term institutional strengthening across provinces. Of the 147 young professionals, 20 were assigned to support SAoSA's work and were paired with mentors during the internship period.
- During their placement, the young professionals played a vital role in data management, particularly in supporting the population and quality assurance of data within the South African Wildlife Population System (SAWPS). Under the mentorship of SANBI and their provincial supervisors, they developed technical competencies in data cleaning, uploading, and visualisation. Additionally, SANBI co-designed data management guidelines for SAWPS and worked closely with the interns through a structured tracking system to identify and troubleshoot data-related challenges, thereby enhancing the accuracy and usability of wildlife population data.
- Another group of six young professionals will be recruited to take over and continue the work carried out by the previous group, who exited the project in December 2024. Their salaries will be covered by the GEF-6 project.
- The final version of the Capacity Development Strategy (CDS) has been completed by AWEI, which incorporated feedback from SANBI and the Scientific Authority workshop. The final "Introduction to CITES" course has also been developed and is now available on AWEI's e-learning platform.

For Output 1.2. A centralized system for monitoring wildlife in trade is established

- The design stage is completed. The system has now been developed and piloted. It is now awaiting migration to the Azure cloud server at SANBI. The bid evaluation for the Azure services took place around April 22nd to 23rd, and we expect the process to move forward to the BAC, which is likely scheduled to meet around July 2025
- The first training workshop was held at the Garden court hotel on 8-9 May 2024 with provincial management authorities, attended by 52 participants from all management authorities. The training covered all aspects of the system, including registering and setting up organisations, uploading data, and using the reporting functions. All participants were highly motivated to use SAWPS, and a list of feedback to be integrated into the system was compiled. Training workshops will continue once the system is live.

Component 2: The Electronic permitting system for CITES-listed species has been developed and went live on 01 April 2023. Since its implementation, the system has demonstrated significant adoption and

utilization, with a total of 29,122 permit applications lodged and processed to date. The system process applications for international trade in CITES listed species, registrations for breeders and traders of CITES listed species, and registrations for scientific institutions who exchange scientific specimens of CITES listed species. The deployment of the system has yielded substantial improvements in permit processing efficiency, completely eliminating human error when processing CITES permit applications while streamlining the application process to ensure optimal efficiency. Additionally, the system has significantly reduced reporting fatigue experienced by issuing authorities, representing a major administrative improvement in the CITES permitting workflow. Training sessions have been conducted with both issuing authorities and industry stakeholders to ensure effective utilization of the system. The system features an integrated online help manual that provides guidance to applicants on how to navigate and use the e-permitting system effectively. Currently, internal IT support capacity within the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is not available. Technical support for the system is presently provided by the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), which serves as both the system developer and maintainer. Internal DFFE staff have been allocated to the project and assigned system administrator roles, with these officials responsible for addressing operational challenges such as system downtime, processing system change requests, and managing day-to-day system administration tasks. World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) activities commenced in January 2025, marking significant progress in international system integration. The annual reporting comparative analysis has been completed, and draft country profiles for the SADC CITES trade analysis report have been developed. A workshop to discuss the draft report is scheduled for September 2025, with logistical arrangements currently underway. The integration of the CITES permitting system with the UNEP-WCMC Species+/CITES Checklist API represents a key milestone and forms part of the new Service Level Agreement with SITA for Enhancement, Support and Maintenance of the CITES e-permitting module. This integration will enhance the system's connectivity with international CITES databases and improve data sharing capabilities with relevant global monitoring systems.

Component 3: South African National Parks:

Activity 3.2.1 & 3.2.2: Carry out a review of existing community conservation programmes and identify scope of Environmental Monitor Programme per target site & Select, recruit and train additional Environmental Monitors with existing ones - The GEF 6 project supports 74 EMs (36 females and 38 males) appointed by SANParks as co-finance. The number of EMs is reduced to 67 because of resignation of 6 EMs who moved to better positions and a loss of 1 EM due to illness. The vacant positions have not been filled due to financial challenges faced by the Biodiversity Social Project (BSP). The EM 3-year term ended on 31 March 2025 and the EMs are currently on a year contract which started on 01 April 2025 and will end on 31 March 2026.

Activity 3.2.3: Identify and recruit additional capacity to strengthen Environmental Monitors programme - The GEF 6 project has 4 project team (Coordinator and 3 Stewardship Supervisors) members who support the strengthening of the environmental monitors programme in the Kruger National Park. The project Coordinator resigned last year in January, and the new GEF 6 project coordinator (Lazaro Sibiya) was appointed in August 2024. He was promoted from a Stewardship Supervisor position (central cluster). The new Stewardship Supervisor for the Central cluster (Bridget Masina) was appointed in January 2025. She was working as a Groen Sebenza Intern under GEF 6 project when she got a promotion into a supervisor position.

- 3 Stewardship Supervisors provide daily oversight and support to EMs, capture weekly incident reports from EM WhatsApp groups, compile monthly reports and submit them to the project coordinator.
- The monthly reports are consolidated to compile quarterly reports that are submitted to the GM-Regional Integration and Planning.
- The quarterly reports are shared with Ranger Services and State Veterinary Services.

Activity 3.2.4: Procure uniforms and equipment for community rangers/environmental monitors - Procurements of 20 new bicycles & spare parts (20 rear and 20 front rims, 80 tyres and 100 tubes), safety gloves, and fence equipment (40 pliers, 40 side-cutters and 32 wire stretchers) were successfully concluded. Bicycles and fence equipment were distributed to the environmental monitors. The EM uniform will be procured by the Biodiversity Social

Project.Activity 3.3.1 & 3.3.2: Create and implement a communications strategy to raise awareness, share lessons and strengthen knowledge transfer between the target sites & Produce, publish, and disseminate examples of community ‘programmes’ to all relevant engagement platforms, including for CITES Community Working Group purposes – The PSC rejected the communications strategy that was developed by WWF SA Khetha. SANParks has appointed someone who is currently busy with the draft strategy. The initial workshop with all GEF 6 stakeholders was held on 14 May 2025. The draft will be shared with all stakeholders as soon as completed. Peace Parks Foundation (PPF):Engagements and Key Developments- Service Level Agreement (SLA) Extensions: The existing SLA between SAWC and PPF expired at the end of August 2024. The SLA has been extended through a no-cost extension, ensuring the continued delivery of activities under the GEF6 project until November 2026. - Second Tranche of Funding Received - In November, PPF received the second tranche of funding, to the value of R 3,288,003, which is crucial for the continuation of project activities. The receipt of these funds allows for the resumption of planned activities without further delay. The Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the Projects Oversight and Support Officer (POSO) consultant was extended at an additional cost to ensure continued implementation support for the livelihood’s projects in the new year. This extension will enable the consultant to provide ongoing guidance and assistance, ensuring that the projects remain on track and aligned with the overall goals of the GEF6 project.- Budget Reallocation and Contract Finalisation: In early Q1 of 2024, project budgets were reviewed and reprioritised to ensure the delivery of essential activities within the remaining implementation timeframe. A meeting was held with Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) to discuss the budget review, this process enabled the strategic contracting of Conservation Synergies for the development of Governance Guidelines and the contract extension of Biovista for livelihoods project support. As a result, procurement processes have been realigned to a revised implementation plan with a stronger focus on long-term sustainability and impact. In addition to this PPF also conducted a budget review with SAWC to realign budget support requirements to enable the effective delivery of the Governance guidelines operational support and livelihoods projects procurement and further support.Mid-Term Review Process – Developments and Findings- Commencement of the Mid-Term Review Process (August – September 2024) - The mid-term review for the GEF6 project officially began in August 2024. A consultant was appointed to facilitate the process, and an initial virtual meeting with project leads, DFFE, and the consultant was held to outline the review framework. A field visit to project sites was conducted in late September, which included interviews with key personnel and follow-up surveys. The review team conducted interviews with key project personnel and gathered feedback on the progress and challenges of the project. The team made valuable recommendations, especially regarding the livelihood’s projects and governance guidelines. These recommendations are being incorporated into the revised work plans and strategies for the next phase of the project.- Mid-Term Review Report and Action Plan (October – December 2024) - The mid-term review process concluded in October 2024 with a comprehensive assessment of the project’s alignment with its objectives and expected outcomes. A final report was circulated to all stakeholders in December, and the project team is now focusing on addressing the recommendations outlined in the report to ensure the successful completion of the project’s remaining phases.- Following the conclusion of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) in November, which provided key recommendations to guide the remainder of the implementation phase, the GEF6 team—together with DFFE and implementing partners—began aligning outstanding activities with the MTR findings. This process includes budget reallocation, the development of updated concept notes for livelihood projects, and a renewed focus on sustainability and effective results delivery.Governance Guidelines Co-Development- Request for Proposals (RFQ) – Governance Guidelines (July 2024): In July, PPF issued a Request for Proposals (RFQ) for the co-development of governance guidelines. However, no proposals were received by the deadline. A follow-up meeting with key stakeholders in the Kruger landscape was scheduled to reassess the approach and develop a clear path forward for the development of the governance guidelines.- Governance Guidelines – Next Steps

(August – December 2024): Despite the lack of responses to the RFQ, discussions regarding the governance guidelines continued through various meetings with stakeholders. These engagements will inform the revised strategy for moving forward with the co-development process. The team plans to schedule a follow-up meeting in early 2025 to refine the approach and ensure successful completion of this key project component.- Conservation Synergies was formally appointed in February to lead the development of Governance Guidelines over a 20-month period. An inception meeting was held on 24 March at SAWC with representation from DFFE, SANParks, GKEPF, PPF, SAWC, and others. An Advisory Group has been established, and the Appreciative Inquiry approach has been adopted as the methodology to be used for this process going forward. This deliverable supports improved co-development practices and stakeholder inclusion across the landscape. Livihoods Projects – Development & Support- Swikoxeni Cleaning and Greening Project (July 2024) - During the PMT meeting in July, the Swikoxeni Cleaning and Greening project was visited. The project made significant progress with the construction of a shelter, funded through the GEF6 initiative. Additionally, the project has successfully attracted further support from corporate donors, leveraging GEF6 funding to enhance its sustainability.- Nthakeni Livihoods Creche Support (August 2024) - Procurement for the Nthakeni creche rooftop, part of the Nkowatsi early childhood development center initiative, is nearing completion. The revised concept note for this project has been followed, and the procurement process has advanced. However, further procurement for livihoods projects is on hold pending the release of the next tranche of funds.- Hoedspruit Hub Permaculture training for the Bende Mutale Women's group - Plans are in place to provide permaculture gardening practices training for the Bende Mutale Women's Group, with quotes for this training already obtained. However, following the mid-term review, the project team was advised to reassess the effectiveness of the support provided to this group, as concerns were raised regarding their motivation. As a result, the team intends to conduct a revisioning exercise with the group following the receipt of funds, facilitated by the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC). This exercise will help determine the group's readiness and the long-term sustainability of continued investment in their development.- Site Visits and Recommendations for Livihoods Projects (September 2024) - As part of the mid-term review, site visits to all three project clusters were conducted. Key recommendations were made regarding the livihood's projects, particularly in terms of strengthening their governance structures and enhancing community involvement. These recommendations will be addressed in the next phase of project implementation. Stakeholder Engagement – Project Sensitization- Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement (July – December 2024) - Stakeholder engagement continued throughout the reporting period, guided by the co-developed Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (SES) and the Greater Kruger Strategic Development Programme (GKSDP 2020). Engagements at the cluster level focused on supporting livihoods projects and strengthening community-based conservation efforts. The Third Iteration of the Situation Analysis (SA) will be reviewed, with updates provided on key project activities and the challenges faced. While project funds were limited during this half of the year, prioritized activities for the Q3 and Q4 reporting periods included targeted support for livihoods projects. Key engagements took place with communities, ensuring the continued alignment of project activities with local needs and enhancing awareness of the project's objectives. This ongoing engagement helped inform decisions about future project priorities and adaptation- Between 5–8 May, the GEF6 core team visited all three livihood clusters. These visits provided valuable insights into project progress and challenges and helped reset relationships and expectations with beneficiaries. Updates were shared on the MTR outcomes, governance guidelines process which include workshops in October (to which livihood project reps would be invited), and upcoming support interventions. These engagements were critical in reaffirming project alignment with GEF6 objectives and re-establishing trust with partners, particularly the Matsulu THO, Bende Women's agricultural group and Benji co-op. Training and Capacity Building- Training Sessions for Environmental Monitor on Safety (July – November 2024) - Under the GEF6 project, the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) organised safety

training for 74 Environmental Monitors working on the western boundary fence of Kruger National Park. This training was initiated in response to a request from SANParks and aimed at building capacity in safety management, thereby enhancing on-site protection for field staff and contributing to overall project success.-

Awelani Environmental Monitors Training - Kirsty Redman, a specialist environmental educator from the Letaba Elephant Hall Education Facility in KNP, has kindly agreed to provide environmental education presentation training to the Awelani Environmental Monitors (EMs). This generous contribution is part of her role with SANParks, enabling the provision of additional training to the EM group and enhancing their capacity within the project. The training is scheduled to take place early in January following the receipt of project funds.-

Enhancing Environmental Stewardship Through Youth Engagement and EM Capacity Building at Awelani: Awelani Environmental Monitors - In January, 20 participants—11 males and nine females, the majority of whom were youth, with one participant over the age of 35—attended a 7-day foundational conservation training held at Awelani Lodge. The training covered key topics including water systems, food chains, climate change, and permaculture. It was well received, with several young participants identified as potential conservation champions. Planned follow-up actions include mentorship support and their involvement in awareness-raising initiatives aligned with the broader GEF6 environmental education (linked to using the Nthakeni creche as a center for environmental education) and governance components.-

The 2024 Training Report (Pending) - Due to financial limitations, only one training session (EM Safety training) took place during the reporting period. The draft 2024 Training Report will be finalized.

Communication, Awareness and events- WWF Khetha Community Engagement Practitioners Annual Conference (October 2024) - The GEF6 project leads attended the 2024 WWF Khetha Community Engagement Practitioners Annual Conference at Wits Rural. This event provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with key stakeholders and community practitioners involved in the project's implementation. Discussions focused on the mid-term review findings and strategies for advancing the project's next phase.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Just a few but strong challenges as below: It takes long for money to come from the national treasury to DFFE. It took long for the SSFA between UNEP and WCMC to be signed. As a result, the project may have to be extended again to allow WCMC complete its work.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

PMU:

The PMU works with partners viz, SANBI, SANParks and PPF in implementing the project. Recently it has been noted that the project has connection with Transboundary unit in the DFFE. The Unit was invited to the recent Project Steering Committee meeting hosted in June 2025 to present on its collaboration and connection to the GEF 6 project.

SANBI:

The System Build Committee (SBC) for the development of the South African Wildlife Population System (Component 1) has been established, and its terms of reference have been finalized. SBC comprises two sub-committees: an Advisory Sub-Committee, which assists in problem-solving, unblocking high-level issues, and providing strategic guidance; and a Technical Task Team, responsible for testing system functionality and providing feedback. The SBC is multi-institutional and operates at a high level, contributing to sound governance, reporting structures, and potential future investment in the system. SBC members have actively participated in the system build sprints and have provided feedback on features and other aspects of SAWPS.

PPF

- Project Management Team (PMT) Meeting (July 17-18, 2024) - PPF participated in the PMT meeting held at the SANParks offices in Skukuza, providing a progress update on activities for the quarter. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment (DFFE) reported that the cash advance is currently with National

Treasury, and no updates were provided on when the next tranche of funding would be released. As a result, some project activities may be delayed until the funds are received.

- WWF Khetha Community Engagement Practitioners Annual Conference (October 2024) - The GEF6 project leads attended the 2024 WWF Khetha Community Engagement Practitioners Annual Conference at Wits Rural. This event provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with key stakeholders and community practitioners involved in the project's implementation. Discussions focused on the mid-term review findings and strategies for advancing the project's next phase.
- GEF 6 Strategic Planning Meeting (12 November) –The GEF 6 Strategic Planning Meeting was held at Letaba Camp in Kruger National Park (KNP) and primarily attended by KNP team members, including GEF 6 Supervisors, the GEF 6 Coordinator, and some members of the Socio-Economic Transformation (SET) team. Mercedes from DFFE also participated in the meeting, and Louise Swemmer facilitated the session. PPF was represented by the Project Oversight Support Officer (POSO). The main purpose of the meeting was to assess the status of all aspects of GEF 6 Component 3 and to prepare for the upcoming Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting.
- PPF's Participation in the 8th GEF6 Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting - from November 19-22, 2024, the 8th GEF6 Project Steering Committee meeting, hosted by PPF, was held at Awelani Lodge in the Northern Cluster. PPF presented the project's progress and led PSC delegates on site visits to the livelihoods project locations in the north, where in-depth discussions took place on how support for these initiatives can be strengthened to align with the project objectives. Additionally, PPF presented the project's cash co-finance eligibility request, which included support for SANParks' KNP Postcode Meerkat Wide Area Surveillance System, the Greater Kruger Environmental Protection Fund, and the GLTFCA Coordinator position. The PSC reviewed and approved these requests, confirming eligibility for PPF's cash co-finance contribution toward the GEF6 project.
- GKSDP – K2C Network Meeting – The annual K2C Network Meeting, part of the Greater Kruger Strategic Development Programme (GKSDP), was held at the Radisson Hotel in Hoedspruit on 25 November 2024. The event included presentations and a networking session where participants visited a stall showcasing GEF6-related initiatives. Attendees were encouraged to identify collaboration opportunities and complete a brief Google Form. This event contributed to the GEF6 project by fostering stakeholder engagement, promoting collaboration, and aligning local initiatives with the project's conservation and livelihoods objectives.
- An inception meeting was held on 24 March at SAWC with representatives from DFFE, SANParks, GKEPF, PPF, SAWC, and others. An Advisory Group has been established, and the Appreciative Inquiry approach has been adopted as the methodology to be used for this process going forward. This deliverable supports improved co-development practices and stakeholder inclusion across the landscape.
- A GEF6 communications workshop was held in May, led by SANParks, following internal challenges with WWF's strategy rollout. Partners contributed to the development of a new framework that will guide content creation and dissemination for the remainder of 2025. At least two to three stories or articles are planned by Q3, focusing on transboundary waste efforts; community-led recycling and transboundary work supported by the GEF project at Makulele Contractual National Park that will be disseminated in line with the communications strategy framework.
- Stakeholder Relationships Rebuilt and Strategic Re-engagement Initiated: The GEF6 team, SANParks KNP, and Luis Schwemmer held a strategic meeting to determine the best approach to re-establish collaboration with the Matsulu Traditional Healers Organisation (THO). Recognising the THO community as key stakeholders in the Kruger landscape, concerns were raised about expectations previously created and the reputational risk to KNP if these are unmet. It was agreed that GEF6 will lead direct engagements with the THO, with KNP participating as observers to support relationship building and signal long-term partnership. A recent meeting on 27 May 2025 at Mpumalanga Regional Training Trust marked the first re-engagement, ending positively despite the long gap in engagements. Key next steps include co-developing tailored training on IWT, HWC, and responsible resource use, with a focus on identifying community champions for a 'train-the-trainer' model, supported by WWF and SAWC. As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen community-based livelihoods and build sustainable partnerships, the GEF6 and SANParks KNP teams have successfully re-

engaged with the Bende Muthale Women's Agricultural Group (BMWAG). A desktop stakeholder analysis was completed to build on previous mapping efforts. This exercise identified the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve as a strategic partner, with strong potential for alignment with Coca-Cola's support and broader regional sustainability initiatives. A courtesy outreach was conducted to reconnect with BMWAG to reaffirm their interest and gather updated group membership information following the passing of some members. A preliminary in-person meeting was held on 5 May 2025. The meeting was conducted in Venda to ensure accessibility and cultural appropriateness. BMWAG members were highly receptive to the proposed re-visioning process and expressed their commitment to participating in the co-creation of a refreshed group vision and business model. Next steps will include the co-development of a participatory visioning session, identification of training needs in governance and responsible resource use, and coordinated stakeholder support from partners such as Vhembe Biosphere, WWF, SAWC, and the Coca-Cola Foundation to foster long-term group sustainability.

•GEF6 9th Project Steering Committee Meeting

The 9th GEF6 Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting took place from 10–11 June 2025 in Skukuza, with participation from key partners including DFFE, SANBI, SANParks, PPF, and the GEF6 coordination team. The first part of the programme included field visits to an Environmental Monitors (EM) site and the Timele Livelihood Project, allowing PSC members to engage directly with beneficiaries and observe implementation progress. During the visit, DFFE raised concerns about a collapsed structure that previously housed a waste baling machine and now presents a safety risk to the Timele team. In response, PPF agreed to investigate the matter with supporting the refurbishment of the structure as a priority. SANBI also pledged support for alien invasive plant clearing in the area by offering training, providing advice on the correct protective gear, and contributing to long-term sustainability planning, strengthening inter-agency cooperation at the site level. The second part of the meeting focused on project progress reporting and financial oversight. While positive strides were acknowledged, PSC members raised concerns about the lack of consolidated reporting on cumulative results and expenditure across the project years. In response, the GEF6 coordination team committed to preparing a dedicated report to address these concerns, ensure transparency, and strengthen alignment between results and financial reporting.

D. Gender Equality

The project does not have a gender mainstreaming strategy in place. Process is underway to appoint a consultant to develop the gender mainstreaming strategy. The process followed in reporting is more on indicating statistics (ie the number of females and males involved in the implementation of the project). This is in line with the requirements set by government that require that gender statistics should be mentioned in any project that is being implemented.

E. Knowledge Management

For Output 1.1, the Scientific Authority induction course is now available as an e-learning module on the African Wildlife Economy Institute e-learning environment AWEI (Introduction to CITES | African Wildlife Economy Institute (sun.ac.za)

Induction course

<https://wildlifeconomy.info/study/learn/cites>

Capacity Development strategy is attached

For Output 1.2, A centralised system for monitoring wildlife in trade is established the minimum viable product of SAWPS, along with the national elephant database, is available at sawps.sta.do.kartoza.com/The user guides and manuals for the system can be found both within the system and on YouTube, which

include: 1) for data consumers – from registering to viewing data, trends and reports SAWPS Testing video for Data consumers - YouTube ; 2) for organisation members – from registering to digitising properties and uploading data – SAWPS Testing video for Organisational members - YouTube; and for organisation managers – from registering to digitising properties and uploading data (same video as above) plus manager features SAWPS Testing video for Organisational managers (youtube.com).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqXLAju0zoA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRSbhtwlaXw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Y9WLEpkJcw>

The project will develop knowledge management material in the form of the SADC trade analysis report, which will serve as a repository of critical information on scale and trade trends of CITES listed species across the region.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	
Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Makuya	-22.5051	30.9779	

Location Description:

Makuya

Activity Description:

Environmental monitor fence monitoring and area integrity reporting Makuleke Contractual National Park area integrity management Mutele livelihood projects (agriculture. greening. Awelani Management Plan)HWC management Environmental monitor fence monitoring and area integrity reporting HWC management Livelihood project support and environmental awareness – waste economy. livestock -wildlife interface

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Sabie river at Lisbon	-25.03333	31.1	

Location Description:

Sabie river at Lisbon

Activity Description:

Environmental monitor fence monitoring and area integrity reporting HWC management Livelihood project support and environmental awareness – waste economy. livestock -wildlife interface

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
Matsulu	-25.52297	31.35693	

Location Description:

Matsulu

Activity Description:

Environmental monitor fence monitoring and area integrity reporting HWC management Livelihood project support and environmental awareness – waste economy. Traditional Healers. Youth Environmental Forum

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document	
Document Category M and E Document	Title 9525-PIR-UNEP-2025-South Africa Illegal Wildlife Trade

