

Collaborative platform for African nature-based tourism enterprises, conservation areas and local communities – a response to COVID-19

Part I: Project Information

GEF ID

10625

Project Type

MSP

Type of Trust Fund

GET

CBIT/NGI

☐ CBIT

☐ NGI

Project Title

Collaborative platform for African nature-based tourism enterprises, conservation areas and local communities – a response to COVID-19

Countries

Regional

Agency(ies)

WWF-US

Other Executing Partner(s)

WWF-US

Executing Partner Type

GEF Agency

GEF Focal Area

Biodiversity

Taxonomy

Focal Areas, Biodiversity, Mainstreaming, Tourism, Protected Areas and Landscapes, Productive Landscapes, Community Based Natural Resource Mngt, Terrestrial Protected Areas, Influencing models, Convene multi-stakeholder alliances, Deploy innovative financial instruments, Strengthen institutional capacity and decision-making, Stakeholders, Type of Engagement, Consultation, Participation, Partnership, Information Dissemination, Private Sector, Capital providers, Large corporations, SMEs, Individuals/Entrepreneurs, Financial intermediaries and market facilitators, Local Communities, Beneficiaries, Indigenous Peoples, Civil Society, Academia, Community Based Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, Communications, Behavior change, Awareness Raising, Education, Gender Equality, Gender results areas, Participation and leadership, Access and control over natural resources, Access to benefits and services, Knowledge Generation and Exchange, Gender Mainstreaming, Women groups, Sex-disaggregated indicators, Gender-sensitive indicators, Capacity, Knowledge and Research, Knowledge Generation, Targeted Research, Knowledge Exchange

Rio Markers**Climate Change Mitigation**

Climate Change Mitigation 0

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation 0

Duration

36 In Months

Agency Fee(\$)

171,270.00

Submission Date

6/22/2020

A. Indicative Focal/Non-Focal Area Elements

Programming Directions	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
BD-1-1	GET	1,903,000.00	4,570,000.00
	Total Project Cost (\$)	1,903,000.00	4,570,000.00

B. Indicative Project description summary

Project Objective

To facilitate access to COVID-19 crisis funding for nature-based tourism enterprises, conservation areas and beneficiary communities in southern and eastern Africa

Project Component	Financing Type	Project Outcomes	Project Outputs	Trust Fund	GEF Amount(\$)	Co-Fin Amount(\$)
1. Data clearinghouse	Investment	<p>1.1 An online data clearinghouse facilitates access to key information on the social, environmental and economic impacts of COVID-19 on the nature-based tourism sector, and prospective COVID-19 funding resources available to help mitigate these impacts</p> <p>Indicated by:</p> <p>Number of users (hits) of the on-line data clearinghouse</p>	<p>1.1.1 Rapid assessments and critical analyses of the direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on nature-based tourism are conducted</p> <p>1.1.2 COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus opportunities available to help address impacts on nature-based tourism are profiled</p> <p>1.1.3 An online COVID-19 data clearinghouse (architecture; hardware; software development; data management; data analysis; hosting; online technical support) is designed, developed, populated, hosted and maintained</p>	GET	560,000.00	1,371,000.00
2. Facilitating links between funders,	Technical Assistance	2.1 Improved communications, cooperation and collaboration between funding institutions/ donors/potential donors and nature-based tourism	Output 2.1.1 Regular (virtual, and in-person) communications with, and discussions between, COVID-19 financial support organizations and the nature-	GET	980,000.00	2,385,000.00

and
communities and the
nature-based
tourism
sector

businesses and beneficiary
communities leads to the
growth and well targeted
distribution of COVID-19
emergency relief and stimulus
packages

Indicated by:

Number of tourism enterprises
and local communities receiving
financial support through the
efforts of the project

Value of additional funding
leveraged through the platform
to augment existing COVID-19
financial support (target USD
>15 million).

2.2 Improved integration of
tourism and wildlife sustainable
future pathways in investment
decisions by Governments and
Finance Institutions

based tourism sector are
organised, hosted and
maintained

Output 2.1.2 Specialist support
to help match COVID-19 funding
opportunities to affected
tourism enterprises and
marginalized rural communities
is provided

Output 2.1.3 New funding
sources to further assist nature-
based tourism businesses and
associated communities
address the impacts of COVID
19 are identified and developed

2.2.1 Analysis of nature-based
tourism and conservation
dependencies and development
of convincing case for
investments in nature-based
tourism and conservation as
part of economic relief and
stimulus packages

2.2.2 Engagement with key
financing institutions and
donors related to their economic
stimulus/investment packages

and with policy-makers in
relation to Government-led
economic stimulus focus

3. M&E and knowledge management	Technical Assistance	3.1 Enhanced knowledge sharing, monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of COVID-19 on nature-based tourism and affected communities	3.1.1 Project lessons and COVID-19 analysis KM products, including policy briefs, peer-reviewed and other publications, webinars, dialogues or roundtables sharing the findings	GET	190,000.00	585,500.00
		Indicated by: Number of policy briefs and publications (electronic or paper-based) summarizing the findings and lessons learned on the needs and means to support wildlife-based tourism and local communities affected by COVID-19.	3.1.2 A project-based monitoring and evaluation system - incorporating gender mainstreaming and social safeguards - to gauge the project's contribution to streamlining efforts to mitigate the COVID-19 impacts on the nature-based tourism sector in eastern and southern Africa is maintained			
Sub Total (\$)					1,730,000.00	4,341,500.00
Project Management Cost (PMC)						
GET					173,000.00	228,500.00
Sub Total(\$)					173,000.00	228,500.00
Total Project Cost(\$)					1,903,000.00	4,570,000.00

C. Indicative sources of Co-financing for the Project by name and by type

Sources of Co-financing	Name of Co-financier	Type of Co-financing	Investment Mobilized	Amount(\$)
GEF Agency	WWF-US	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
GEF Agency	WWF-US	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	220,000.00
Civil Society Organization	WWF Regional Office of Africa	In-kind	Recurrent expenditures	200,000.00
Donor Agency	MAVA Foundation	Grant	Investment mobilized	400,000.00
Donor Agency	UNDP (tbc)	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Donor Agency	Department for International Development (DFID)	Grant	Investment mobilized	250,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Jamma International	Grant	Investment mobilized	250,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Maliasili	Grant	Investment mobilized	1,000,000.00
Civil Society Organization	Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	Grant	Investment mobilized	250,000.00
			Total Project Cost(\$)	4,570,000.00

Describe how any "Investment Mobilized" was identified

WWF investment mobilised was identified from new support to recovery from COVID-19 impacts on community-driven nature based tourism in conservancies in Namibia, from foundations including BAND Foundation (included under WWF-US investment mobilized grants). UNDP investment support was provided through the Lion's Share COVID-19 Response Resilience in Wildlife Community Small Grants programme (note this is to be confirmed). DFID investment mobilised has been identified through direct support to the project from the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). Jamma International investment mobilised was identified through its support to Resource Africa, a direct project partner. Maliasili investment mobilised is through their direct support to community mobilisation in addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism in eastern Africa. Fauna and Flora International and MAVA Foundation investment mobilised was committed through agreements with the Luc Hoffman Institute, the incubator of this project.

D. Indicative Trust Fund Resources Requested by Agency(ies), Country(ies), Focal Area and the Programming of Funds

Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
WWF-US	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD Global/Regional Set-Aside	1,903,000	171,270	2,074,270.00
Total GEF Resources(\$)					1,903,000.00	171,270.00	2,074,270.00

E. Project Preparation Grant (PPG)
PPG Required



PPG Amount (\$)				PPG Agency Fee (\$)			
50,000				4,500			
Agency	Trust Fund	Country	Focal Area	Programming of Funds	Amount(\$)	Fee(\$)	Total(\$)
WWF-US	GET	Regional	Biodiversity	BD Global/Regional Set-Aside	50,000	4,500	54,500.00
Total Project Costs(\$)					50,000.00	4,500.00	54,500.00

Core Indicators

Indicator 4 Area of landscapes under improved practices (hectares; excluding protected areas)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)
0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Indicator 4.1 Area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity (hectares, qualitative assessment, non-certified)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.2 Area of landscapes that meets national or international third party certification that incorporates biodiversity considerations (hectares)

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Type/Name of Third Party Certification

Indicator 4.3 Area of landscapes under sustainable land management in production systems

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Indicator 4.4 Area of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) loss avoided

Ha (Expected at PIF)	Ha (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Ha (Achieved at MTR)	Ha (Achieved at TE)

Documents (Please upload document(s) that justifies the HCVF)

Title	Submitted

Indicator 11 Number of direct beneficiaries disaggregated by gender as co-benefit of GEF investment

	Number (Expected at PIF)	Number (Expected at CEO Endorsement)	Number (Achieved at MTR)	Number (Achieved at TE)
Female	10,000			
Male	10,000			
Total	20000	0	0	0

Part II. Project Justification

1a. Project Description

1a. *Project Description*

1) the global environmental and/or adaptation problems, root causes and barriers that need to be addressed (systems description);

Context

Travel and tourism accounts for 10.3% of global GDP. In 2019 alone, it created one in four new jobs. In 2019, travel to Africa accounted for 7.1 % of GDP, generating \$168 billion in revenue.[\[1\]](#)

The specific economic contribution of wildlife tourism is equally impressive, accounting for 0.4 percent of global GDP (US\$343.6 billion) in 2018. In 2018, wildlife tourism supported 21.8 million jobs across the world, or 6.8% of total travel and tourism jobs[\[2\]](#).

Nature-based tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the global tourism industry, and one of the few export/service sectors in which developing countries have (or can develop) a clear comparative advantage as a result of their often rich, and iconic biodiversity.

In Africa, where nature-based tourism is a major drawcard to the sector, the percentage of total travel and tourism was much higher, at 36.3%. Detailed data on the contribution of nature-based tourism in Africa to national and regional economies, and to direct incentives for wildlife conservation, are sparse, but it has been estimated that 14 African nations generate at least US\$168 million in direct revenue from tourists visiting protected areas. Furthermore, nature-based tourism is said to make up 88% of the annual revenue of specialist tour operators on the continent.[\[3\]](#) The majority of the nature-based tourism enterprises operate in southern and eastern Africa.

Many of the people employed in the nature-based tourism sector in eastern and southern Africa live in rural areas where they depend heavily on the wildlife economy for their livelihoods. The revenues from wildlife based tourism create financial incentives to conserve important wildlife populations and their natural habitats – particularly where these financial incentives are shared and conspicuous at the local community level.

nature-based tourism is also the largest market-based contributor to finance protected area management. Protected areas (PAs) receive 8 billion visits annually and generate an estimated US\$600 billion a year in expenditure and US\$250 billion in consumer surplus. In 2018, wildlife tourism in protected areas generated US\$120 billion, and the total direct and indirect benefits from the industry's supply chain are pegged at US\$344 billion.

Environmental problem

Tourism has been one of the leading economic casualties of the COVID-19 outbreak. Estimates by the African Union (AU) suggest that the economic impact of COVID-19 on Africa's tourism and travel sector alone may be as much as USD 50 billion - nearly 7 times greater than the 2008 economic crisis[4]. For many southern and eastern African countries, this means a significant loss of funding for their conservation efforts. The impacts of a decimated nature-based tourism industry will have knock-on effects for rural communities and wildlife conservation efforts across the continent.

The shutting of borders, grounding of flights and restriction on movement has now left the nature-based tourism sector across the continent hard hit and businesses, communities and individuals without incomes. Many national parks in eastern and southern Africa, as well as the many private reserves and community conserved areas have had to close their doors to both local and international tourists.

Without the funding received from guests, the operations of these conservation areas[5] are seriously compromised. The restrictions on travel, especially across provincial/state borders and internationally, may continue for months, and even when the restrictions are ultimately lifted, the nature-based tourism sector will need to deal with the impacts of perceived risks while it endeavours to once again entice the return of visitors to the region.

While the prospects for recovery in the nature-based tourism sector in the region are a matter of intense speculation, it is possible, and indeed likely, that it will take years to see a return to levels of economic activity equivalent to 2019[6].

Treats, root causes and barriers

In the short-term, marginalised communities living side by side with nature, along with laid off (or furloughed) workers in lodges, safari camps and wildlife reserves, may have little alternative but to now turn to the unregulated and unsustainable extraction of natural resources to sustain life. As household incomes suffer, wildlife faces the increasing threat of excessive and unregulated reliance on bushmeat and other natural resources for local consumption.

Most southern and eastern African conservation area authorities also rely on daily entry fees to finance rangers and help protect habitat and wildlife. None of them has adequate financial reserves, endowments, or insurance to counteract this massive decline in tourism. The frequency of patrols in community and state conservation areas have consequently decreased due to limited resources available following national lockdown measures. Some conservation areas have even reported that they only have a few months' worth of funding reserves, after which they might have to cut some conservation management activities entirely[7].

Job losses in, and loss of income from, tourism enterprises have further compounded social hardships stemming from the recent locust infestations in east Africa (e.g. Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia), as well as a series of severe weather events and floods and droughts across the region (felt most acutely in Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

With unprecedented demands on government resources to tackle more immediate and pressing health concerns, there

is apprehension that resources for nature-based tourism and biodiversity conservation may be constrained in the medium-term. The conservation and nature-based tourism sectors are competing with other key national priorities, ranging from food security to health to employment, pushing conservation and nature-based tourism - and the communities that benefit from these - needs down the priority list for emergency relief and stimulus and recovery support.

There is also a significant risk that some conservation areas may ultimately be converted to farming and other conservation-incompatible uses in order to relieve the community and conservation area dependencies on income derived from nature-based tourism.

Barrier 1: Limited understanding of, and access to, the suite of COVID-19 funding opportunities, and their application requirements, especially in marginalised rural communities and community-driven nature based tourism enterprises. While many financial relief products and stimulus packages are on offer to the hard-hit tourism sector, it is no simple feat to establish what is available, where to apply and what the terms and eligibility requirements might be. Donor agencies are also not making this work easy, as press releases confuse where the funding is coming from (department, instruments, etc.), where is it going (specific country interventions versus regional or global initiatives), and how it is getting there (loans and grants to governments or to international implementing agencies). Matching needs to opportunities presents a significant systemic barrier. Greater transparency, and more streamlined processes, are badly needed.

Barrier 2. Poor coordination of COVID-19 funding opportunities, and weak alignment to real needs on the ground

While there are many funding opportunities becoming available, there is however limited communication and seemingly no coordination among the different funding institutions. Lack of accessible information, complex trade-offs, opaque and risky funding pipelines, and an uneven playing field for all actors are further hindering a co-ordinated and equitable response to the impacts of the current pandemic on nature-based tourism and their beneficiary communities. Local managers of community conserved areas, such as conservancies, and small nature-based enterprises are often not well enough connected, or lack the capacity, to access funding opportunities.

There is thus 'opportunity and support' but no central platform where nature-based tourism enterprises and beneficiary communities can access all the information and specific support they need.

2) the baseline scenario and any associated baseline projects,

to shield the formal and informal rural economies in Africa from lasting damage, and vulnerable households from income and food shortages, funding assistance is providing a lifeline for communities and businesses to survive the impact of COVID-19. Committed funds respond to two main types of interventions: (i) direct assistance and relief to households in need (food, water, health services, etc.); and (ii) financial and monetary stimulus support to the economy, mainly led by financial institutions providing concessional financial assistance tools and instruments. Fiscal measures like public support for sick pay and health care expenditure are providing social protection to cushion against shocks; other fiscal transfers help credit-constrained households to smooth consumption where incomes have shrunk. Financial measures, such as liquidity injections, are helping firms stay in business and maintain value chain links.

(i) Inter-sectoral COVID-19 relief and fiscal stimulus

African governments have adopted various measures not only to protect people's livelihoods but also to facilitate business continuity and sustain their economies. In the short term, the bulk of government support will be provided in the form of debt relief for those businesses that have fallen into negative revenue traps as a result of COVID-19. Such measures include guarantee funds, credit programmes and fiscal stimulus (such as writing off debts and subsidies via standard tax and duty exemptions and cost-cutting initiatives). It is estimated that the scope of these monetary and fiscal measures however remains limited, ranging from 0.1% of GDP in South Africa (USD 4 per capita) to 1.1% of GDP in Kenya (USD 19 per capita).

The African Development Bank has mobilized USD 10 billion to create the *COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility*^[8]. The overarching goal of the facility is to lessen the economic and social impact of the pandemic. The African Union (AU) has also raised \$25 million for the *COVID-19 Response Fund*. The African Export-Import Bank has pledged \$3 billion in resources to help member countries, including the private sector, respond to the crisis. The set of tools includes lines of credit, guarantees, or swaps, among others. Its focus is to relieve most of the indirect effects of the pandemic including high risks of debt distress.

The European Union's contribution to the COVID-19 response in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at over \$2 billion - including the funding from the European Commission and loans from the European Investment Bank. The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) has announced the new *COVID-19 Health in Common* program for the African continent with a provision of \$1.1 billion. Ninety percent of the funds will be disbursed in the form of loans, with \$160 million in grants. While most of it will rely on Expertise France's experience and management, AFD is also open to working with development banks, civil society organizations, and other players. The United States Government has provided close to \$270 million to help countries across sub-Saharan Africa respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. This assistance will strengthen various aspects of pandemic response: risk communication, community outreach and public health messaging; the prevention and control of infections in health facilities; laboratory capacity and disease surveillance; and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs. Assistance also addresses the impacts of COVID-19. Official creditors of African government debt have mobilized up to \$57 billion - including upwards of \$18 billion from the IMF and the World Bank each - to provide front-line health services, support to the poor and vulnerable, and to keep African economies afloat. Six African countries – The Gambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania – are eligible for debt services relief for 24 months from the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. The IMF has further recently approved debt relief under the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust to provide US\$14.3 million over the next 4 months, and potentially up to USD 25.7 million over the next 23 months. UNDP has further launched a *COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility*, funded by existing resources and capitalized with an initial US\$20 million. This facility will provide up to \$250,000 per country for initial action, disbursed through a fast-track mechanism (with approval within one week).

(ii) Tourism sector COVID-19 relief and fiscal stimulus

The government of Kenya has allocated a USD 56 million package to rescue the country's ailing tourism sector in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of this, USD 9.33 million will be dedicated to 5,500 community scouts under the Kenya Wildlife Service, while a further USD 9.33 million will be used to support the management of 160 community conservancies. In addition, USD 18.66 million has been set aside to support renovation of facilities and the restructuring of business operations by stakeholders in the industry. This will be in the form of soft loans to be administered by the Tourism Finance Corporation (TFC) to the establishments. South Africa's *Tourism Relief Fund* (USD 11.53 million) provides once-off capped grant assistance (limited to USD 2,881 per entity) to Small

Micro and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMMEs) in the tourism value chain to ensure their sustainability during and post the implementation of government measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 in South Africa. The Botswana government is implementing a COVID-19 *Wage Support Scheme* to provide financial support to employees in the travel and tourism sector, with qualifying businesses accessing wage subsidies of up to USD 213 per month per employee.

The German Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH are currently developing a package of support – with an estimated value of EUR 20 million - for those suffering the loss of nature-based tourism. As of June 2020, the German Government has allocated an additional €15 million for COVID-19 relief efforts under the Financial Cooperation implemented by KfW in the community/tourism/conservation nexus in the Southern African Region (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe). In addition, the German BMZ has made €500,000 available through GIZ's SADC TFCA programme to support alternative income generation opportunities for tourism employees in the Lubombo and the Kasungu Lukusuzi portion of the Malawi/Zambia TFCA. The Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) has ongoing tourism-focused projects with governments totalling USD 6.5 million in five African countries: Liberia, Comoros, Djibouti, Uganda and Sierra Leone. UK DFID is reportedly in discussions about the establishment of a fund of up to £30 million in support of the recovery of the tourism sector in Africa from the impacts of COVID-19.

(iii) Conservation and rural community relief and fiscal stimulus

The Africa Foundation is mobilising at least USD 325,000 in support of local communities (focusing on water relief, rural clinic and food distribution) in 73 communities across South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia that are impacted by COVID-19. The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) ***Rapid Response Grants***, managed by IUCN on behalf of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States and the European Union (EU), is expected **to fund approximately 60 projects**, with a total budget of EUR 2 million. The Rapid Response Grants will address negative impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the management and governance of protected areas, while strengthening the resilience of local communities in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The SOS African Wildlife initiative, funded by the European Commission's Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG Devco), and administered by IUCN, **has also made its Rapid Action Grants available to projects responding to threats linked to the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences**. The UNDP's Lion's Share initiative has launched a call for proposals titled *Resilience in Wildlife Community Grants*, to support initiatives in communities dependent on wildlife-based tourism. The small grants will be disbursed to non-profit organizations in developing countries seeking funds to demonstrate innovative local-level action to increase resilience and well-being of communities against external shocks such as pandemic crises in wildlife rich areas.

WWF has mobilized to coalesce support for recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 on the nature-based tourism industry and associated communities. WWF-Namibia's COVID-19 support is focusing on ensuring that community conservancies can meet their most immediate needs for the next two years. It has identified a funding target of approximately USD 4.6 million (for community game guards, conservancy staff, conservation tourism enterprises and COVID-19 awareness-raising and education) to complement the Namibian government emergency funds and leverage matching funds from other stakeholders. Attention to COVID-19 financial responses is now included in WWF's East Africa Sustainable Investments Program, which operates in Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique to encourage mainstreaming of sustainability considerations into public and private finance sector priorities and decision frameworks. WWF are also raising funding for a new program to prevent future pandemics, *"Stopping Spill Over at its Source"*. The programme aims reduce the impacts of zoonotic diseases, such as the novel coronavirus, by stopping spill over at the source, with a focus on zoonotic hotspot locations.

The Natural Selection Foundation, a collection of owner-operated safari camps, has established a *COVID-19 Village Support program* which transports food parcels to remote villages living adjacent to conservation areas in order to improve the nourishment of neighbouring communities. The African Bush Camps Foundation, based in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana, has put emergency funds aside for basic services such as water and food in the communities. **African Parks**, which manages 18 parks across 11 African countries, is aiding communities with essential supplies and hand washing stations, in addition to continuing essential park maintenance duties. **Beyond's Africa Foundation** is getting crucial medical supplies to local communities and enabling access to fresh water through borehole creation and the distribution of portable, 24-gallon barrels for transporting and storing large amounts of water. The Isibindi Foundation, which falls under Isibindi Africa, has launched a COVID-19 *Courage campaign* to raise €35 170 for delivering emergency relief to approximately 30 000 vulnerable people who live in the communities surrounding three Isibindi Africa lodges. The Royal African Safaris' Royal African Foundation has raised USD 400,000 and is using its local networks of people across Kenya, Botswana and Tanzania to set up hand washing stations, distribute food relief and create employment during the COVID-19 crisis. Wilderness Safaris are implementing a series of direct interventions across Zimbabwe, Botswana, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia and Namibia to support affected neighbouring local communities through food distribution, improved sanitation, water delivery, health services and health education. There are other noteworthy COVID-19 relief programs being undertaken by other tourism operators in the region, including Intrepid Safaris, Micato Safaris, Ultimate Safaris, A&K and Thompson safaris.

The **Great Plains Foundation** recently launched its *Project Ranger* initiative to support the rangers in Africa who are on the front lines of the continent's anti-poaching efforts and are at risk of losing their jobs. The Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancy Association, (MMWCA) in Kenya has raised over \$1.2m of funding for a COVID-19 emergency operations, including payment of community game guard salaries, land leases and operating expenses. They are currently working with USAID to establish an even bigger fund to help with the stimulus and recovery phase.

(iv) Coordination of tourism, conservation and community COVID-19 information on relief measures and fiscal stimulus packages

The Africa COVID-19 Situation Room (<https://dataportal.opendataforafrica.org>) has been developed to provide data coverage on the health, social and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in African countries. The African Tourism Board (ATB) have initiated *Project Hope Africa*, a partnership between the public and private sector, to coordinate the tourism sector responses through the COVID-19 crisis. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has released a set of recommendations designed to support governments, the private sector and the international community in navigating the social and economic emergency of COVID-19. The WCPA Vice Chair for Eastern and Southern Africa is currently running an online survey of African protected areas and the impacts from the pandemic, while the WCPA Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group (TAPAS) is contributing to a study for the European Union (EU) on COVID-19 and protected area tourism to evaluate the impact on protected areas, businesses and local communities. The Green Growth Knowledge Partnership offers quick and easy access to the latest global research, case studies, toolkits, learning products, principles, and protocols to empower policy makers and advisors, small and medium-sized enterprises, and banks, insurance, and investment firms to make evidence-based decisions on COVID-19 responses.

3) the proposed alternative scenario with a brief description of expected outcomes and components of the project;

In the alternative scenario the proposed project will contribute to ensuring a facilitated transition through the COVID-19 pandemic for the nature-based tourism sector in southern and eastern Africa, supporting short-term stability while building enhanced capacity for reimagining the role of this industry for conservation and communities in the longer-term.

In this alternative scenario, the project will create an independent collaborative platform, where resources and tools are centralized, to facilitate and streamline ongoing communication at all levels in the linking of COVID-19 financial relief and stimulus products with local nature-based tourism enterprises and beneficiary communities impacted by the spread of COVID-19. The requested GEF finance is expected to catalyse additional contributions to a collaborative platform. Project outputs will be delivered through sub-grants to African-based partners.

The elements of the collaborative platform will include:

- (i) conducting rapid assessments of the current scenario and identification of the full range of affected conservation areas, nature-based tourism businesses and local communities impacted by COVID-19;
- (ii) maintaining a centralized internet-based data clearinghouse that facilitates access to key data, and provides complementary services, including searching, viewing, transferring, and ordering data;
- (iii) defining and developing analytic knowledge products that would present and disseminate conclusions and findings to inform COVID-19 emergency relief, COVID-19 stimulus packages and building resilience of the industry to ongoing and future shocks;
- (iv) convening dialogues with financial institutions, donors and potential investors to catalyse interactions and increase efficiencies to direct and connect their financial resources and relief and stimulus measures with the most urgent needs;
- (v) engaging (through active facilitation) communities and nature-based tourism operators to support matchmaking with suitable funding agencies and financial institutions;
- (vi) developing knowledge outputs including policy briefs, peer-reviewed and other publications, webinars, dialogues or roundtables sharing the findings and lessons learned on the needs and means to support wildlife-based tourism and local communities affected by COVID-19; and
- (vii) examining the current nature-based tourism and conservation dependency model and assess the feasibility of adopting alternative financing models in order to build increased resilience to future shocks.

The project will geographically focus on the southern and eastern African region, specifically some of the most visited countries for nature-based tourism (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, Rwanda and South Africa).

The project is structured around three components, as follows:

Component 1 (Data clearinghouse) has the following outcome (Outcome 1.1): *'An online data clearing house facilitates access to key information on the social, environmental and economic impacts of COVID-19 on the nature-based tourism sector, and prospective COVID-19 funding resources to address these impacts'.*

In Output 1.1.1, the project will collate and review existing information undertaken by a range of organisation to assess the impacts of COVID-19 in the region. Using this information as a baseline, the project will then conduct rapid surveys to further quantify and qualify the specific impacts of COVID-19 on nature-based tourism enterprises (including business profiles, impacts on revenues, impacts on local communities, impacts on local economies, impacts on conservation areas, critical pressures and needs and current mitigation measures) across the southern and eastern African regions.

In Output 1.1.2, the project will conduct a rapid profiling of the current COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus packages (including type and scale of funding, beneficiary selection criteria and application procedures) available to the nature-based tourism sector and associated communities and conservation areas.

In Output 1.1.3, the project will design, develop, populate, host and maintain an open-access online data clearinghouse that connects users (i.e. nature-based tourism businesses, conservation areas, conservation agencies and local community organisations), funders, financiers, with clean datasets, analytics, resources, tools, funding and expertise. The platform will be developed using existing web and mobile applications to enable the easy accessibility of data, analytical, and visualisation resources. If practicable^[9], the project may use an existing data clearinghouse platform^[10] to launch the project-specific datasets, resources and tools. The building blocks for the data clearinghouse may include datasets, maps, gateways (to other linked databases), resources (case studies, good practice guidelines, etc.) and online support (advisory services, expert advice, etc.). It is envisaged that the data clearinghouse will integrate data from many sources in a transparent public platform. It will allow for public and private groups, content sharing and user-controlled access. The project will also define and develop analytic knowledge products that would present and disseminate these findings to further inform COVID-19 emergency relief and COVID-19 stimulus packages.

The outputs under Component 1 will be directly implemented by partner organisations with a high level of expertise in collecting, curating, analysing and serving environmental, business and socio-economic data. The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) has, for example, been identified as a possible host institution for the data clearinghouse.

Component 2 (Facilitating links between funders, and communities and the nature-based tourism sector) has the following outcome (Outcome 2.1): *'Improved communications, cooperation and collaboration between funding institutions/ donors/ potential donors and nature-based tourism businesses and beneficiary communities, leads to the growth and well targeted distribution of COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus packages,'* and Outcome 2.2 *'Improved integration of tourism and wildlife sustainable future pathways in investment decisions by Governments and Finance Institutions'.*

In Output 2.1.1, the project will develop and maintain a system of ongoing communication and collaboration^[11] with COVID-19 funding sources and the COVID-19 affected nature-based tourism businesses and their beneficiary conservation areas and rural communities^[12]. The emphasis for these communications and discussions will be on fostering creativity and nurturing collaborative solutions in order to improve the coordination, speed and efficiencies of directing COVID-19 support to the distressed nature-based tourism sector. Communications and collaborative discussions will, as far as possible, be routed through local, national and regional representative organisations of the different interest groups (e.g. corporate representatives, national COVID-19 coordination platforms, government representative agencies, business fora, conservancy associations, etc.). The tools for communications and discussions may, depending on the situational context, range from electronic media (video conferencing, chats) through to in-country face-to-face dialogues, roundtables and meetings (COVID-19 lockdown conditions allowing), dependent on the idiosyncratic needs of each interest group.

In Output 2.1.2, the project will - at the request of funding institutions, communities and/or the nature-based tourism sector - deliver a specialist support services (through sub-grants to existing, national level CBNRM networks and other on-ground conservation partners as needed, to do outreach to marginalized groups and communities) to identify opportunities and catalyse matchmaking, on a needs basis. This brokering support service may include *inter alia*: (i) identifying specific COVID-19 funding/financing opportunities for the nature-based tourism sector; (ii) determining the most efficient and effective distribution channels to provide emergency support, with the fewest 'middle men' and safeguards to prevent corruption; (iii) connecting the different nature-based tourism partners (i.e. tourism business, conservation area and/or local community) to funding/financing partners (i.e. donor, investor, financier); (iv) assisting these different partners to articulate their demands and expectations from the funding/financing opportunities; and (v) helping to prepare funding applications, business proposals and/or work plans.

In Output 2.1.3, the project will help identify and develop innovative new funding sources to further assist nature-based tourism businesses and associated communities address the impacts of COVID 19. This may include *inter alia*: (i) establishing and marketing a crowdfunding platform; (ii) seeking venture capital partners for distressed, but viable, nature-based tourism businesses; (iii) seeking funds from business incubators to nurture distressed businesses; (iv) raising short-term low/no interest working capital loans; (v) seeking new 'angel investors' for distressed community-based tourism businesses; (vi) issuing covered or convertible bonds for nature-based tourism enterprises; (vii) scaling up carbon credit funding in REDD+ countries (such as Tanzania) and countries participating in voluntary carbon markets (e.g. Kenya); and (viii) using donor/grant funding to leverage commercial funding (blended finance).

In Output 2.2.1, the project will contribute to the ongoing debates on the future security of nature-based tourism in Africa, how to measure the value of wildlife tourism in Africa, the principles that underpin sustainable wildlife tourism in Africa and what could be done to future-proof wildlife tourism from unprecedented disturbances/crises such as COVID-19. It will convene and host a series of dialogues to array, evaluate and develop the business case for investments in nature-based tourism and other (wildlife based) economic ventures. It will specifically collect, collate, analyse and disseminate the knowledge learned from this project in support of the development of risk management strategies to respond to risks and uncertainties such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. In this way, the project will further contribute to the longer-term development (and sustainability) of more resilient models for nature-based tourism and conservation, and engage with key financing institutions, donors and policy-makers in relation to the focus of their economic stimulus and investment packages (Output 2.2.2). These outputs may be implemented by partner organisations, in dialogue with key stakeholder organisations.

Component 2 will be implemented through an institutional partner organisation hosting a small team that will include expertise in facilitation of open, collaborative networks, business planning and financial analysis. It will also have the ability to work with other partners in the investment space where deal making will be required.

Component 3 (M&E and knowledge management) has the following outcomes (Outcome 3.1): *‘Enhanced knowledge sharing, monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of COVID-19 on nature-based tourism and affected communities’*.

In Output 3.1.1, the project team will develop and disseminate project lessons and COVID-19 analysis knowledge products, including policy briefs, peer-reviewed other publications as well as webinars, dialogues or roundtables to share the findings. In Output 3.1.2, the project will monitor and evaluate the project’s progress. The main M&E instrument that will be used by the project is the Project Results Framework (PRF) and an independent qualitative review. The project results, corresponding indicators and targets in the project results framework will be monitored annually and evaluated periodically during project implementation. The project will, under this output, specifically implement the following M&E suite of activities: (i) collect and collate monitoring data to report on project performance indicators in the Project Results Framework (PRF); (ii) prepare six month and yearly Project Progress Reviews; (iii) monitor and report on the implementation of the project’s Gender Action Plan and conformance to the project’s Environmental and Social Safeguards; (iv) prepare and submit quarterly and annual progress reports; (v) host regular Project Steering Committee meetings; and (vi) undertake a project terminal evaluation reviews. This output will be directly implemented by WWF-US, through the Project Manager (PM).

4) alignment with GEF focal area and/or Impact Program strategies;

The proposed project is aligned with the Goal of the GEF-7 BD Strategy ‘to maintain globally significant biodiversity in landscapes and seascapes’. It will contribute to achieving Objective 1 (‘Mainstream biodiversity across sectors as well as within production landscapes and marine habitat’) of the GEF-7 BD Strategy through the outcome ‘Landscapes and marine habitat under improved management (indicator: area of landscapes under improved management to benefit biodiversity).

5) incremental/additional cost reasoning and expected contributions from the baseline, the GEFTF, LDCF, SCCF, and co-financing;

Summary of baseline scenario	Summary of GEF scenario	Increment
- The shutting of borders, grounding of flights and restriction of movement to contain the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus has led to the collapse of the nature-based tourism industry in southern and eastern Africa.	- An assessment of the impacts of COVID-19 on individual nature-based tourism enterprises, individual local communities and individual conservation areas helps better define the relief and stimulus needs of each group.	- An online data clearinghouse facilitates access to: (i) key information on the impacts of COVID-19 on individual nature-based tourism enterprises, individual local communities and individual conservation areas; (ii) profiles of COVID-19 emergency

- This collapse has resulted in significant revenue losses to, and increasing levels of unemployment in, nature-based tourism businesses.

- These nature-based tourism businesses ordinarily also create financial incentives to communities to conserve wildlife and their natural habitats, and further generate revenue streams to help cross-subsidise the costs of managing conservation areas. The loss of these financial incentives and revenue streams as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are in turn leading to further job losses and a reduction in household incomes.

- As household incomes suffer, communities increasingly resort to unsustainable levels of natural resource use, and conversion of conservation areas to more productive land uses.

- Funding assistance from national governments, donors and financial institutions is already available to help businesses and communities to survive the impact of COVID-19.

- These available funds respond to two main types of interventions: (i) direct assistance and relief to households in need (food, water, health services, etc.); and (ii) financial and monetary stimulus support to the economy.

- A diverse range of foundations, corporate donors, bilateral donors, multilateral donors, NGOs and large tourism operators are also mobilising

- A profiling of the available COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus packages helps identify prospective financial support to help address the needs in each group, and quantifies the quantum of the gap between what is available and what is needed.

- The establishment of a data clearinghouse facilitates access to key data, analyses, resources and tools required to support COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus responses in the nature-based tourism-community-conservation area nexus.

- The maintenance of ongoing communications and collaborative discussions with the nature-based tourism partners and funding partners fosters creative and innovative approaches that help improve the speed and efficiencies in directing COVID-19 support to the distressed nature-based tourism sector partners.

- A facilitated matchmaking service helps connect nature-based tourism partners (tourism business, community, conservation area) and support the preparation of funding applications, business proposals and/or work plans.

- New funding sources are identified and developed to help fill the funding gap between what is available and what is needed.

- The current nature-based tourism and conservation dependency model is critically evaluated, and alternative models to improve economic resilience to future shocks are developed.

(ii) profiles of COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus packages; and (iii) additional data, analyses, resources and tools required to guide and support COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus responses.

- Ongoing communications and collaborations with nature-based tourism partners and funding partners leads to (i) improved speed and efficiencies of COVID-19 financial support; (ii) targeted distribution of COVID-19 financial support to those low capacity nature-based tourism partners most in need; and (iii) increased funding streams to augment existing COVID-19 financial support.

- Development and dissemination of knowledge management products documenting the lessons learnt in mitigating the impacts of COVID-19 on the nature-based tourism sector, and alternative future funding models for conservation and communities.

<p>ism operators are also mobilising and disbursing additional financial and technical support to the communities and conservation areas impacted by the loss of income from tourism enterprises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The current COVID-19 funding assistance, and the additional financial resources being mobilised, are however not being properly coordinated to realise optimal impact, and are not always well aligned with the real needs on the ground. - Poorly connected and/or weakly resourced communities, tourism operators and conservation areas lack the capacity and information required to equitably access funding assistance and financial/technical support. - The extent, scale and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the weakness of the heavy dependency of communities and conservation areas on nature-based tourism income, in the face of large global scale shocks. 	<p>shocks are developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge outputs are iteratively developed, discussed and shared with nature-based tourism partners. 	
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6) global environmental benefits (GEFTF).

Delivery of global environmental benefits will be achieved through securing and/or leveraging resources to support: (i) sustaining a basic conservation management capacity in formal protected areas in southern and eastern Africa severely impacted by the loss of income from tourism; (ii) limiting the changes in land use, and unsustainable levels of natural resource use, in other conservation areas in southern and eastern Africa; (iii) containing the scale of

syndicated wildlife poaching in these protected and other conservation areas, notably of threatened species such as rhino and elephant; and (iv) maintaining basic living standards (health, services and income) of more than 5,000 households (representing at least 20,000 direct beneficiaries, of whom at least 10,000 of which are female) impacted by the loss of tourism income living in and around protected and other conservation areas in the region.

7) innovation, sustainability and potential for scaling up.

The project has been developed as a fast-tracked, flexible and effective response to help lessen the severe short-term (2–3 year) economic and social impact of the COVID -19 pandemic on the nature-based tourism sector partners across southern and eastern Africa. The project follows a similar approach to that advocated by the OECD Policy Response to COVID-19

To ensure rapid operationalisation, the project will use well-established systems and tools for platforms, and interface with ongoing government and local communication networks and efforts, ensuring sustainability beyond the project lifetime as these structures will continue after the proposed project is finished. While the concept of a platform to provide data clearing house functions and open access to information is not in and of itself an innovation, the proposed application is novel in its vision of streamlining two-way information flow to more rapidly facilitate links and deal making between those with the most pressing needs and those looking to provide financial support in the COVID relief and recovery phases. The proposed project envisions that the sub-national, national and regional partners would be able to build continuing contributions and participation in the platform in their ongoing programmes. It is also the intent of the platform to stimulate the maximum amount of creativity and innovation in developing collaborative responses to the impacts of COVID-19 on the sector.

Conceptually the project will contribute to efforts to address the 3 R's - Response, Recovery and Resilience – for the nature-based tourism sector in southern and eastern Africa. It focuses the GEF investment support on the initial Response and Recovery stages. Although untested as yet, should stakeholders find value in continuing the platform – or elements of it (such as the data clearinghouse) – beyond the lifetime of the GEF project, the nature-based tourism industry and funding partners may consider the feasibility of, and support efforts to, sustaining it as a collaborative mechanism help to address the Resilience stage.

The project had initially been designed to cover the geographic footprint of sub Saharan Africa, but it is anticipated that demand for financial support may rapidly overwhelm the project capacity. The geographic footprint for the project has thus subsequently been further contained to the eastern and southern African regions only. Even this geographic scale may still prove challenging, considering the information emerging daily from the field about the extent and intensity of socio-economic impacts due to the collapse of the nature-based tourism industry. So, the potential for increasing the geographic scale of the footprint is very limited at this stage. Equally, the scope of the project, and the range of prospective partners, will already place considerable pressure on the short implementation timeframe for the project, so – unless additional resources are leveraged during the early stage of implementation – there is limited

scope to scale up the project scope or the range of project partners. It is however possible that other regions may set up similar collaborative platforms (although this is speculative at this stage). If so, the project will freely share lessons learnt, resources and good practices, in order to expedite the establishment of similar platforms.

It is envisaged that the project will lay a foundation to identify and implement COVID-19 market correction opportunities. By encouraging a re-think of the tourism model, the proposed project will contribute to the creation of more resilient, sustainable solutions for tourism and conservation (including the associated efforts and investments of the last two decades) and improve links among capital and biodiversity conservation, climate, social inclusion and circular economy initiatives.

[1] World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). 2019. *Travel and Tourism Economic Impact Report*

[2] WTTC. 2019. *The economic impact of Global Wildlife Tourism*

[3] UNWTO. 2015. *Towards Measuring the Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa*

[4] *African Union (AU) Commission. 2020. Impact of the Coronavirus (COVID 19) on the African Economy*

[5] Including formal protected areas and any other conserved area **under some other form of conservation management**

[6] According to the Global Rescue | WTTC's 2019 *Crisis Response and Preparedness* study the average recovery time for public health industry disruptions is 19 months. The upside range is 36 months and COVID-19 is likely to be on the far end of the recovery spectrum.

[7] Eurata consortium. 2020. (draft) *COVID-19 and Protected Area Tourism: Data Analysis*

[8] Specific country provisions under this facility have not yet been made public

[9] The feasibility will be assessed during the PPG phase.

[10] Such as the *Africa COVID-19 Situation Room* at <https://dataportal.opendataforafrica.org/>

[11] While communication facilitates the connection between different people with unique specialities and knowledge, collaboration is what allows two or more people to interact together on the same project. Collaboration is a gateway, designed to bring different modes of thought and creativity together on the same page or task.

[12] Including relevant local, national and regional government institutions and agencies directly involved in: (i) providing COVID-19 emergency relief and stimulus packages; (ii) management of protected areas and nature-based tourism enterprises; and (iii) delivering COVID-19 social and health support services to rural communities. Intended focus is on marginalized communities/beneficiaries and criteria for prioritization of efforts to link beneficiaries will be developed in project preparation phase/early implementation.

[13] [coronavirushttp://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/](http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/the-territorial-impact-of-covid-19-managing-the-crisis-across-levels-of-government-d3e314e1/)

1b. Project Map and Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project interventions will take place.





2. Stakeholders

Select the stakeholders that have participated in consultations during the project identification phase:

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Yes

Civil Society Organizations Yes

Private Sector Entities Yes

If none of the above, please explain why:

An initial virtual consultation, convened by the Luc Hoffmann Institute, was held in late May 2020 to discuss COVID-19 impact on nature-based tourism and solicit feedback on the initial project concept. The invitation was extended to any interested party following a network cascading process. Various stakeholders across different sectors, geographies and disciplines participated, including local CBOs such as Mozambique CBNRM and the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organizations (NACSO), UN Agencies (UNEP, UNDP), international conservation organizations (AWF, IUCN, TNC, WWF), research institutions (African Leadership University, University of Oxford, University of Florida, IIED), capital investors (Okavango Capital Partners, Conservation Capital) tourism businesses (Wilderness Holdings) among others^[1]. Some stakeholders were invited to share perspectives on the proposed platform at the outset of the consultation. Some of the main messages received were:

- The crisis will only be overcome through collective effort that is evidence-based in a fluid environment – need credible information dissemination;
- The significant job loss in urban areas and people returning to extended families in rural areas where employment opportunities are equally reduced, is creating a vicious cycle of increased need and dwindling income;
- The cost to individuals, communities and nations would be far greater than short-term impact and investment required to make sure that the conservation tourism industry can bridge this crisis – thinking of our communities in transboundary conservation areas, this is not any one nation's problem, it is a southern-Africa problem;
- Now more than ever, conservationists need to speak the language of business so countries can think in longer term;
- Facing an unprecedented opportunity to make conservation relevant to people – the only way to do this is by taking immediate actions and responding to people's needs now; and
- The biggest challenge is that tourism-dependent conservation model in Eastern and Southern Africa is not working – there is a need to rethink the flow of investments being put towards the problem.

Stakeholders discussed strengths of the proposed initiative to provide a platform for connecting and brokering recovery support with needs on the ground, how the initiative could be further strengthened, what contributions stakeholders could make to the initiative, and steps to take the initiative forward.

On the *strengths and opportunities* of the initiative, stakeholders suggested that the collaborative platform is an opportunity to: speak with a collective voice and act strategically at multiple scales and sectors; push nature-based solutions and unlock resilience of wildlife economies beyond tourism, broadening the perspective on Africa's ecosystems and value; and to avoid duplication and minimize perverse competition for limited resources. Strengths of the platform include the learning of experiences shared across countries, and the ability to act fast on the short term and deliver immediately.

According to stakeholders on the call, the initiative could be *further strengthened* by: a clear definition of parameters and what the platform will do and ensure long-term change remains in focus; including voices beyond conservation (e.g. health, finance and business sectors, investors) and ensure large representation of community voices; streamlining processes to facilitate donors investing in consolidated approaches (need to ensure alignment with local and national government structures and processes to avoid unnecessary conflicts and perverse incentives); including experts with experience in setting up successful platforms; and using the power of networks and champions to amplify the platform. These strengths and ideas for further improvement have influenced the design of the project proposed in this PIF.

Finally, in terms of moving the initiative forward, stakeholders raised the following steps: establishing a clear governance for the proposed platform; identifying the leverage points/methodology to engage communities effectively; identifying the boundaries of the system; clarifying leadership in terms of enabling and catalysing the various ongoing efforts; and submitting a global proposition that brings together African and international champions to announce the initiative.

The above feedback from stakeholders helped to revise and shape the narrative of this proposed project. Stakeholders agreed that there is an urgent need to connect the dots between Public Health, Livelihoods and Conservation, and that the platform should be a “safe” convening space where stakeholders can openly share their opinions. Stakeholder feedback from the virtual consultation and further discussion among key project partners (Luc Hoffmann Institute, WWF ROA, WWF US) helped to focus the three pillars of the GEF proposal: 1) A data-clearing house to facilitate access to key information on impacts of COVID-19 on nature-based tourism sector; 2) Facilitating links between funding institutions and communities in the nature-based tourism sector (facilitated by an online platform), and 3) Monitoring and Evaluation and Knowledge management.

In addition, provide indicative information on how stakeholders, including civil society and indigenous peoples, will be engaged in the project preparation, and their respective roles and means of engagement.

Early in the project design phase, the team will prepare a plan to engage stakeholders throughout the project development stage and will continue to use a participatory approach for ongoing consultations. Stakeholders' feedback will be incorporated into the final project design. The project team will also prepare the comprehensive project Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) to be implemented during project execution. During the project development phase and throughout the life of the project, it is important to note that consultations will always be made gender-responsive and inclusive.

A list of stakeholders and possible roles in the proposed project is appended in Annex D.

3. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

Briefly include below any gender dimensions relevant to the project, and any plans to address gender in project design (e.g. gender analysis).

Emerging data shows that the global recession, produced by COVID-19, will result in a prolonged decline in women's incomes and labor force participation, with a more significant impact on women already living in poverty. The situation is worse in the developing economies of southern and eastern Africa where the vast majority of women's employment is in the informal economy with limited access to social protection. To earn a living, these workers often depend on public space and social interactions, which are now restricted to contain the spread of the pandemic. The current situation is also showing an increase in gender-based violence cases, mainly because many women are being forced into "lockdown" at home with their abusers.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women working in the tourism industry in eastern and southern Africa is devastating. Tourism in the region supports employment generation directly through hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, aircraft, cruises, resorts, and shopping outlets, and indirectly through its multiplier effects on restaurant suppliers, construction facilities, and handicraft producers. Women make up most workers in the tourism industry, though they tend to be clustered in low-skilled jobs. Women constitute more than half of those employed in the accommodation and food services sectors and are more likely to be entrepreneurs in tourism than in other areas of the economy thanks to lower entry barriers. Their enterprises, however, are mainly small-sized[1].

The present project takes into account the Ebola epidemic experience, and the useful lessons on policy options to further build women's economic resilience in Africa[2].

The proposed project will promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in several ways. Activities will be designed to take into account the context of these southern and eastern African countries and to address critical gender imbalances as they relate to the project, including: (i) access to education, (ii) equal representation and participation in the decision making for management of resources and (iii) access to financial services.

The project team will seek to ensure the inclusion and involvement of women through all the project activities. The project team will use data from the gender analysis[3] and the stakeholder consultations to develop the gender action plan. The gender analysis and action plan developed in the project development phase will be used in the project implementation to influence the progress of the financial solutions to be proactively gender inclusive. Overall, gender issues will be included in the different outcomes, outputs, and activities of the project, and that will be identified in the gender action plan. The gender action plan will ensure mainstreaming of gender into the project results framework, throughout the project activities, collecting gender disaggregated data everywhere relevant as well as identifying gender-sensitive indicators for the proposed project, which will be an integral part of the project's M&E plan. The GEF policy on gender equality will be applied throughout the development and implementation of the proposed project.

[1] <https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2370>

[2]. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/africacan/supporting-african-women-through-economic-consequences-covid-19>

[3] Please see the Annex for the full gender desktop analysis

Does the project expect to include any gender-responsive measures to address gender gaps or promote gender equality and women empowerment? Yes

closing gender gaps in access to and control over natural resources; Yes

improving women's participation and decision-making; and/or Yes

generating socio-economic benefits or services for women. Yes

Will the project's results framework or logical framework include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes

4. Private sector engagement

Will there be private sector engagement in the project?

Yes

Please briefly explain the rationale behind your answer.

The project will actively engage with those commercial tourism companies and destination management companies (DMCs) in eastern and southern Africa that: (i) contribute substantial funding for private reserves, communal conservancies, and public protected areas; (ii) support conservation programs; and (iii) provide employment opportunities in local communities.

It will support these commercial tourism companies to connect with suitable financial institutions, donors and potential investors providing COVID-19 relief and stimulus packages in order to address their most urgent needs. It may even, if requested, deliver a specialist support service to small commercial nature-based tourism entrepreneurs to help identify specific funding opportunities, catalyse matchmaking with prospective funders and financiers and/or prepare funding applications, business proposals and/or work plans.

The project will further engage these commercial tourism companies to collaboratively identify and test innovative measures to future proof nature-based tourism from unprecedented disturbances/crises such as COVID-19.

5. Risks to Achieving Project Objectives

Indicate risks, including climate change, potential social and environmental risks that might prevent the Project objectives from being achieved, and, if possible, propose measures that address these risks to be further developed during the Project design (table format acceptable)

Risk	Risk level	Risk mitigation measures
1. The affected nature-based tourism businesses, conservation area managers and local communities benefiting from tourism activities/income who require COVID-19 financial support may overwhelm the collaborative platform's capacity to meet expectations	High	<p>Initially it was anticipated that the project would cover the geographic footprint of sub Saharan Africa. To address the increasing concern that demand may rapidly overwhelm project capacity, the geographic footprint for the project was subsequently contained to eastern and southern Africa.</p> <p>However, even this geographic scale may still prove challenging considering the information emerging daily from the field about the extent and intensity of socio-economic impacts due to the collapse of the nature-based tourism industry.</p> <p>During the PPG phase, a rapid survey will thus be undertaken to better quantify the needs, and likely demands on the project to help address these needs. An assessment of partner agencies and institutions who may commit to investing additional resources into further strengthening the collaborative platform to meet demand will also be undertaken during the PPG phase. This information will then be used to further refine the geographic scope of the project (if required), based on a better understanding of the likelihood of the risk and the capacity/resources available to manage the platform.</p>
2. Because WWF-US is the executing agency for the project, there is a perception that this is an NGO-driven initiative which may lead to a lack of buy-in from some communities, government agencies, private sector partners and more traditional financial institutions	High	<p>The project has been designed to ensure that the data clearinghouse in component 1 and the facilitation services in component 2 are undertaken by reputable, independent organisations with a strong presence in, and experience of, the southern and eastern African context.</p> <p>The project will also establish a Project Steering Committee, with representation of all the key stakeholder, to oversee the project implementation.</p> <p>It is further envisaged that WWF-US largely fulfil only an administrative role.</p>

		<p>It is further envisaged that WWF-US largely fulfil only an administrative project management function.</p> <p>During the PPG, additional measures will be identified and developed to further mitigate this risk.</p>
<p>3. Large commercial tourism operators and well capacitated conservation agencies and community organisations optimise the services of the collaborative platform, while small entrepreneurs and low capacity conservation areas and communities struggle to access the platform and get their needs addressed</p>	Moderate	<p>These low capacity conservation areas and communities are priority stakeholder groups for the project.</p> <p>The project will thus develop targeted approaches in component 2 to ensure that these low capacity conservation areas and communities have equitable access to the facilitation services offered by the platform. While these approaches will be further refined during the PPG phase, they will need to include face-to-face interactions in the field where technology and connectivity are significant constraints, COVID-19 protocols notwithstanding.</p>
<p>4. Large donor agencies and financial institutions, with well-established links to nature-based tourism businesses, conservation area managers and local communities in southern and eastern Africa will not be interested in using the project's collaborative platform</p>	Low	<p>While it is hoped that these institutions will share, or make available, information for the data clearinghouse, they are not the target beneficiaries of the collaborative platform. These institutions are already largely achieving the platform's objective of streamlining emergency relief and stimulus support to the most needy tourism operators, communities and conservation areas. While the project does not envisage the need for a facilitated connection between these well-established donor/financial institutions and the nature-based tourism businesses, conservation area managers and local communities it will engage them in collating lessons learnt and best practices.</p>

6. Coordination

Outline the institutional structure of the project including monitoring and evaluation coordination at the project level. Describe possible coordination with other relevant GEF-financed projects and other initiatives.

WWF will self-execute this project through the WWF US office. This is to expedite the project development process and project start. Time will be saved by not requiring due diligence of the primary grant recipient or development and negotiation of an external grant agreement. WWF US will quickly procure key services, such as the IT work. WWF US can sub grant efficiently to project partners, globally and in the project's geographic region, further expedited by existing agreements or relationships that WWF has with many key stakeholders and potential project partners.

WWF-US, through its WWF GEF Agency will: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaise between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, financial, M&E); (iv) approve budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds; (v) organise the final evaluation and review project audits; and (vi) certify project operational completion.

This project execution will be firewalled from the WWF GEF Agency. The Project Management Unit will be housed within the Conservation Program which reports up through to the Chief Conservation Officer. As the WWF GEF Agency reports up through to the Chief Operations Officer, the implementing/executing firewall has been respected.

WWF-US will appoint a Project Manager (PM) to provide the strategic oversight and guidance to project implementation. Reporting up to the Chief Conservation Officer, the PM will be responsible for: (i) preparing the overall project work plan; (ii) preparing annual budgets and work plans; (iii) managing project expenditure in line with these annual budgets and work-plans; (iv) recruiting partner institutions and specialist support services to implement outputs and activities (primarily African based); (v) ensuring technical quality of products, outputs and deliverables; (vi) producing quarterly expenditure and cash advance requests from project partners; (vii) reporting to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the WWF GEF Agency on project delivery and impact via six-month and yearly Project Progress Reports; and (viii) liaising and working closely with all partner institutions to link the project with complementary national, regional and local programs and initiatives.

Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be constituted to serve as the project oversight, advisory and support body for the project. The final composition of the PSC will be determined at the Project Inception Workshop, but will include representatives of the different project partnering agencies, and will be mainly comprised of African-based partners, and the GEF Secretariat. The PSC will ensure that the project remains on course to deliver the desired outcomes of the required quality. The PSC provides overall guidance and policy direction to the implementation of the project and provides advice on appropriate strategies for project sustainability. The PSC will play a critical role in project monitoring and evaluation by quality assuring the project processes and products. It also advises on any conflicts within the project or to any problems with external bodies.

The project will coordinate and align its communication and collaboration approach with the existing knowledge management platforms already established under the GEF Sustainable Forest Management impact program (CBSL and DSL), the Inclusive Conservation Initiative and the Global Wildlife Program, notably for Child projects in eastern and southern African countries which support nature-based tourism enterprise development in conservation areas. It will

specifically identify, and coordinate financial support to, individual GEF-funded project beneficiaries that have been detrimentally impacted by the collapse of income streams from nature-based tourism enterprises (e.g. the GWP Child project '*South Africa Biodiversity Economy and Illegal Wildlife Trade*').

7. Consistency with National Priorities

Is the Project consistent with the National Strategies and plans or reports and assessments under relevant conventions

Yes

If yes, which ones and how: NAPAs, NAPs, ASGM NAPs, MIAs, NBSAPs, NCs, TNAs, NCSAs, NIPs, PRSPs, NPFE, BURs, INDCs, etc

The outcomes under the proposed project contribute to the priorities of two central intergovernmental organizations that represent African countries: The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC). Both organizations focus on promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development to improve the quality of life of people of East Africa and Southern Africa.

The EAC, which comprises the states of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda, promoted the region as a single tourism destination in its Treaty, in line with the implementation of the EAC single visa scheme. In 2012, the East Africa Tourism Platform was established to reduce barriers to inter and intra-regional tourism, promote a regional marketing approach, and encourage capacity building and skills transfer. The EAC 2050 Vision document (published in 2016) established a goal to “Enhance tourism, trade in goods and other services within the EAC region and with the rest of the world.” The number of jobs supported directly or indirectly by the tourism sector is projected to increase from 1.7 million in 2008, to 2.3 million in 2025, and 5.6 million by 2050[1]. Further, the project aligns with the EAC’s COVID-19 Response Plan (April 2020) which highlights the need to mitigate fundamental impacts of the pandemic on the various vital economic and social sectors of the EAC region, including ensuring sufficient supply of essential food; keep businesses afloat especially Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); maintain employment; adapt and reorient businesses; promote and utilize locally made products as much as possible...”[2].

Given the rapid growth of the tourism industry in the region in recent years, the Southern Africa Development Community has prioritized tourism as a way to promote sustainable economic development goals and regional integration. The Protocol on the Development of Tourism of 1998 establishes the official policies and tourism priorities of the region, and aims to foster the industry for livelihoods improvement.[3] The Protocol also established the Regional Tourism Organization of Southern Africa (RETOSA) with the aim of promoting SADC as a preferred tourism destination. In 2016, RETOSA was integrated as a full directorate in the SADC Secretariat, and in 2018 SADC member states requested the SADC Secretariat to fast-track RETOSA’s charter and the MOU between the two secretariats. Although RETOSA has contributed to increasing tourism numbers in the region, SADC still lacks “an efficient network of wholesalers to design and package comprehensive multi-destination tours that attract international tourists to the region”[4]. With tourism expected to grow in the coming years, the Regional Infrastructure Development Master Plan proposed the creation of Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) as key drivers for regional integration and to promote tourism in the region. Further, the purpose of the Tourism Sector Plan of 2012 is to outline an integrated plan for the sustainable development of these TFCAs through 2027. TFCA development through tourism is highlighted as “a tool for biodiversity conservation and economic empowerment of rural communities”[5]. SADC’s Vision for its TFCA Program is to “be a model of community centred, regionally integrated and sustainably managed network of world class transfrontier conservation areas”[6].

The African Union (AU) and sub-regional communities have also put tourism at the top of their agendas. The African Union has endorsed the continent's Tourism Action Plan (TAP) developed by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), renamed the African Union Development Agency (AUDA). The TAP recognizes tourism development among priority sector strategies of AUDA across Africa and aims to make Africa the destination of the 21st century. The Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration that was held in 2018 is closely aligned to the existing project and the action plan on ecosystem restoration adopted by the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Action Agenda will guide and support African countries to meet, in a synergetic and integrated manner, their ecosystem restoration objectives and commitments under various international agreements and processes, including the three Rio Conventions – the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement – as well as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the New York Declaration on Forests, the Bonn Challenge on Forest and Landscape Restoration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Fourth National Report of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) showed that 49 countries in Africa had national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and 35 states have also completed their fourth national reports, which provide information on measures taken for the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the effectiveness of these measures[7].

The project is fully aligned with the medium-term National Development Strategies/ Plans/ Programmes (or equivalent), the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans (NBSAP) and the Tourism Master Plans/ Strategies (or equivalent) of the individual East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) states. These plans all emphasise the significant contribution of the nature-based tourism sector to the economic development of the country, the social development of rural communities and the revenue streams to cross-subsidise the operating costs of conservation areas (including formal protected areas). They emphasise the necessity to create the enabling environment for these nature-based tourism businesses to operate profitably, and the regulatory requirement to ensure the equitable distribution of benefits from these tourism enterprises to communities and national conservation efforts.

[1] East African Community, 2016. ECA Vision 2050: Regional Vision for Socio-Economic Transformation and Development, pg. 74. <https://bit.ly/2UXHZ8L>

[2] East African Community, 2020. ECA COVID-19 Response Plan, pg. 8. <https://bit.ly/2YbqxzO>

[3] <https://www.sadc.int/themes/infrastructure/tourism/>

[4] Ibid.

[5] SADC, 2012. Tourism (TFCAs) Sector Plan, pg. 5. .
https://www.sadc.int/files/6813/5293/3534/Regional_Infrastructure_Development_Master_Plan_Tourism_Sector_Plan.pdf

[6] KAZA TFCA, 2015. KAZA TFCA Master Integrated Development Plan 2015-2020, pg. 3. <https://www.kavangozambezi.org/en/publications/6-kaza-tfca-treaty/download>

[7] <https://www.cbd.int/reports/nr4/>

8. Knowledge Management

Outline the Knowledge management approach for the Project, including, if any, plans for the Project to learn from other relevant Projects and initiatives, to assess and document in a user-friendly form, and share these experiences and expertise with relevant stakeholders.

The project will maintain a data clearinghouse to distill, disseminate and communicate knowledge about the impacts of COVID-19 on the nature-based tourism sector in eastern and southern Africa. In addition to being hosted on the data clearinghouse, project information will also be disseminated through a variety of methods and formats, including written publications, video material, blogs, webinars and social media.

The project will bring together donors, financial institutions, nature based tourism businesses and local community organizations and networks working to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. It will do this by building a community of practice through facilitated virtual interactions and in-person activities. It will also contribute to further strengthening the networks and collaboration between and across national organisations and international partners involved in the nature-based tourism - community - conservation nexus.

The project will seek to contribute to building the evidence base on the effects of large-scale natural (e.g. disease epidemics, extreme weather events, economic (e.g. global recession), political (e.g. civil war) and other shocks on the financial viability of nature-based tourism businesses, and the downstream impacts on their dependent rural communities and conservation areas. It will thus generate evidence, lessons learned, best practices and innovative solutions to link emergency financial relief and stimulus products with local nature-based tourism enterprises and beneficiary communities impacted by large-scale shocks. It will also explore and pursue opportunities for continental-scale analysis to fill knowledge gaps and marshal impactful evidence on nature-based tourism and their dependent communities and conservation areas.

A project-wide communications strategy, including needs assessment and performance tracking tools, will be developed in collaboration with partner organizations. Marketing and branding materials will be developed to build both local and regional recognition and awareness of the project's aims, results and relevance. The project will also develop a strategy to expand the audiences engaged in nature-based tourism, including national government policymakers and agencies, donors and other partners.

9. Environmental and Social Safeguard (ESS) Risks

Provide information on the identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project/program based on your organization's ESS systems and procedures

Overall Project/Program Risk Classification*

PIF

CEO Endorsement/Approval MTR

TE

Low

Measures to address identified risks and impacts

Provide preliminary information on the types and levels of risk classifications/ratings of any identified environmental and social risks and potential impacts associated with the project (considering the GEF ESS Minimum Standards) and describe measures to address these risks during the project design.

Given the available information on current outputs, the proposed project is indicatively categorized as Category C, low risk, as there is no field-based work. A preliminary screening will be included as a supporting document.

The safeguards categorization may be revised during project development once activities have been explicitly defined. If mitigation plans or measures to address identified risks are needed, they will be developed during the project development phase.

Supporting Documents

Upload available ESS supporting documents.

Title

Submitted

CategorizationMemoCOVID_01 July 2020

WWF Safeguards Screening Tool_GEF_Platform for Resilience Tourism Conservation_290620

Part III: Approval/Endorsement By GEF Operational Focal Point(S) And Gef Agency(ies)

A. RECORD OF ENDORSEMENT OF GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT (S) ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT(S): (Please attach the Operational Focal Point endorsement letter with this template).

Name

Position

Ministry

Date

ANNEX A: Project Map and Geographic Coordinates

Please provide geo-referenced information and map where the project intervention takes place



