

U.S. Technical Comments: GEF Project 9525 South Africa

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

The United States appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the GEF child project **9525**. We seek clarification on the points below.

| U.S. Technical Comments/Questions | Agency response/Answers |
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| <p>Question 1: Could UNEP/GEF explain what has delayed South Africa’s progress so far in establishing an e-permitting system, and if any element of this delay will negatively impact the development of the e-permitting system moving forward? The e-permitting system has been a goal of the department of environmental affairs dating back to COP 16 of CITES (2010) and should have already been implemented.</p> | <p>Please note that the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) has an existing electronic permitting system for biodiversity legislation which has been developed with the assistance of the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) and undergoing continual improvement. The e-permitting system to be developed by the project will therefore form part of this larger system of biodiversity legislation monitoring that includes information and data on threatened and protected species, bioprospecting access and benefit sharing and alien and invasive species, among others. It should also be noted that some Provincial authorities have developed their own CITES permitting systems and these systems need to be aligned to the national system to be developed by the project. The delay in the development of the e-permitting system was due to the operational arrangements and the prioritization, due to limited resources, of the electronic permitting system for biodiversity legislation and a broader environmental electronic system. DEA did invest in the development of the Business Service Specification on National Environment Permit Management – Manage CITES and CITES Permits report in 2016 which will be used as basis for the development of the new system. This report addresses the operational arrangements of how the e-permitting system will operate. The Government of South Africa, through the Department of Environmental Affairs, is confident that the ground work and system specification work have been completed and that the project will provide the additional resources needed to finalise the e-permitting system and ensure its integration within other government administration systems. Also, worth noting is that there is a government commitment to an e permitting system through the ‘Operation Phakisa’¹ programme which reports to the presidency every 2 weeks on progress. The operational systems for</p> |

¹ Operation Phakisa is an initiative of the South African government. This initiative was designed to fast track the implementation of solutions on critical development issues. This is a unique initiative to address issues highlighted in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 such as poverty, unemployment and inequality. Operation Phakisa is an innovative and pioneering approach to translate detailed plans into concrete results through dedicated delivery and collaboration. “Phakisa” means “hurry up” in Sesotho and the application of this methodology highlights government’s urgency to deliver. It plays a crucial role in accelerating the delivery of some of the development priorities. Through Operation Phakisa, Government aims to implement priority programmes better, faster and more effectively.

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| | ensuring success and high level follow-up and use of the system are in place. |
| <p>Question 2: Could UNEP/GEF clarify if they intend to align the GEF’s work with communities with USAID’s Khetha project in the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (or Kruger region with South Africa and Mozambique)? Community engagement is one of the focal areas of USAID’s project, which is being implemented by WWF with EWT and TRAFFIC as sub-partners, and may provide useful information for the current GEF project implementation</p> | <p>In its co-financing letter dated 1st November 2017 (attached), WWF South Africa expressed its commitment and willingness to support the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in implementation of this GEF 6 project. The letter further confirms that WWF’s co-financing contributions, both in cash and in-kind, are aligned with their on-going WWF South Africa programme of work including the new USAID – funded Khetha program. DEA affirms that through this project it will work with WWF South Africa and with its sub-partners (TRAFFIC and EWT). Further, reference is made to paragraph 299, page 89 of the Project Document, where it is stated that the work on the community governance of the GEF project will provide support to among others, the community clusters supported by the WWF Khetha project. Similarly, under Output 3.2, paragraph 327, page 94, the alignment work with communities supported through WWF Khetha project regarding strengthening the Environmental Monitors Programme is mentioned.</p> |