



# Wildlife Conservation for Development Integrated Program

## The Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the interconnectedness of people and nature via zoonotic disease spillover. It has shown the vulnerability of economies and protected areas dependent on the international tourism market. And it has made obvious the value of diversification, resilience, and an integrated approach to the health of ecosystems, health of wildlife, livestock, and well-being of people.

Wildlife crime continues to be a lucrative global business, with high demand driving high prices, and with low risk of apprehension. Nearly 6,000 species of fauna and flora have been seized between 1999 and 2018, with nearly every country in the world playing a role in the illegal wildlife trade. The Red List Index shows there has been no reduction in the rate at which species are moving toward extinctions because of human impacts. Indeed, threats to species and the Key Biodiversity Areas and wider landscapes and seascapes they depend upon are growing. A complex set of drivers including land/sea use changes, climate change, overexploitation of resources, pollution, and invasive alien species are behind these declines.

## An Integrated Solution

The Wildlife Conservation for Development Integrated Program (WCD IP) will support countries to secure terrestrial, freshwater, and marine wildlife populations and key landscapes. An integrated approach to combat the illegal and high-risk consumption and trade will address key elements of the supply chain (poaching, trafficking, and demand). It will also support strategies for the coexistence of human and wildlife populations through landscape-level conservation and by managing human-wildlife conflict. At the same time, it will incorporate a new focus on zoonotic spillover risk reduction by promoting control and proper regulation of wildlife trade and unsustainable wildlife exploitation for non-trade purposes. The WCD IP will work across the human health-wildlife health nexus, providing participating countries with support and incentive to explicitly address this critical element of the Healthy Planet, Healthy People framework.

The program aims to conserve wildlife and landscapes by transforming the drivers of species loss and ensuring that countries and communities are benefiting from these natural assets. Achieving this requires an approach with both global and national dimensions, with regional coordination and engagement. The IP will directly address wildlife-health system links and support innovative cross-sectoral partnerships.

The WCD IP builds on GEF's experience with the Global Wildlife Program and will focus on three components. First, **Human Wildlife Coexistence** will support countries to conserve the extent, integrity and connectivity of key wildlife landscapes; deploy actions and policies to reduce zoonotic spillover; and avoid and mitigate human wildlife conflict. Second, **Illegal and High-Risk Wildlife Trade** takes a supply chain approach to curbing



poaching, disrupting trafficking, and reducing demand for illegal, unsustainable and high zoonotic-risk wildlife within and between countries. Third, **Wildlife for Prosperity** strives to ensure that local communities and governments value, invest-in and benefit from wildlife and habitat conservation including the recovery of nature-based tourism, landscape restoration and diversification of sustainable livelihoods and private sector engagement for building sustainable wildlife-based economies. At the same time, it will broaden attention to capture potential zoonotic spillover risks at the human-animal-ecosystem interface. A range of aligned interventions will work in globally significant wildlife habitats, across illegal supply chains, and in close partnership with local communities and multiple sectors. In so doing, the program will allow countries to achieve transformative change through sustainable management and conservation of terrestrial, coastal, and marine wildlife and ecosystems. As such, it will deliver integrated impacts for biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, and local communities.

The global program will include targeted activities in challenging areas for national projects. These include: i) international trafficking and transboundary issues; ii) behavior change for reducing consumer demand for illegal or unsustainable wildlife (prioritizing high-zoonotic risk and nationally and internationally illegally traded and consumed wildlife); iii) support for One Health approaches to reducing zoonotic spillover risks; and iv) global and regional donor coordination and knowledge management, with emphasis in South-South collaboration.

The three WCD IP components for national projects will work together, reinforcing each other with support of a global platform and targeted regional coordination and engagement. At the same time, they will consider compliance with international obligations.

WCD IP will consist of a set of national projects that will work across the IP components depending on the in-country conditions and national priorities. The platform will work at a global, regional, or transnational level. It will include a set-aside grant window to support social and

behavioral sciences approaches to demand reduction for internationally trafficked and high-risk species. Such efforts to change behavior in domestic markets should be mainstreamed in national projects as well.

## Expected Results

The GEF-8 Wildlife Conservation for Development Integrated Program is designed to achieve results across multiple sectors. This includes the conservation of globally important biodiversity (species and landscape conservation and sustainable use); land degradation (restoration of key wildlife habitats); climate change (greenhouse gas avoidance through habitat conservation); and human-wildlife health (reduce risk of zoonotic spillover from wildlife into humans, livestock or domestic animals). The program will generate the following direct global environmental benefits, (among others):

- 17.85 million hectares (ha) of terrestrial protected areas created/under improved management
- 157,000 ha of area of land restored
- 13.65 million ha of landscapes under improved management
- 44 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e) greenhouse gas emissions mitigated

The WCD IP will also explore opportunities to engage new investor groups/asset classes to support innovative financial solutions and work with the financial sector to curb wildlife trafficking. For the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises, there is also the possibility of blended finance or outside sources of concessional finance, and grant funding for technical assistance. The private sector commitments to biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land restoration, and social equity represent further opportunities for channeling resources to target protected areas/landscapes and diversified livelihood activities. The GEF's participation in relevant multi-stakeholder platforms and finance initiatives will be used to capitalize on these opportunities.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and strains on land and ocean health. Its grants, blended financing, and policy support helps developing countries address their biggest environmental priorities and adhere to international environmental conventions. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$22 billion and mobilized \$120 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 national and regional projects.

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