



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



SWM SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Executive Summary

Progress and impact 2018–2024

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Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme overview

The European Union’s 2015 publication *Larger than elephants: Inputs for an EU strategic approach to wildlife conservation in Africa*¹ highlighted the urgent need to protect biodiversity while supporting sustainable livelihoods. In response, the Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme,² launched in 2018 and funded by the European Union, was established to develop solutions that effectively address these intertwined challenges.

Building on the people-centred principles and ecosystem-focused strategies of the European Union’s NaturAfrica initiative,³ which was launched in 2021, the SWM Programme has sought to balance and strengthen wildlife conservation with the well-being of rural communities through an approach emphasizing the rights of local communities. This summary highlights the programme’s progress from 2018 to 2024.

Community-led initiatives are critical to conserving wildlife while improving the quality of life for people in remote rural areas. Between 2018 and 2024, the SWM Programme developed and tested innovative approaches across strategically selected field sites in 15 countries.



15 COUNTRIES
Working with:

- governments
- public services
- researchers
- Indigenous Peoples and local communities

3

Donors

16

National partners

4

Implementing partners

81

Local communities

¹ Murray, M., Paolini, C., Olivier, R., Aveling, C. & MacKinnon, J. 2015. Larger than elephants: Inputs for an EU strategic approach to wildlife conservation in Africa – Regional analysis. Brussels, European Commission. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2841/123569>
² See <https://www.fao.org/in-action/swm-programme>
³ See https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/programmes/naturafrica_en

Working in diverse regions

Community hunting zones in forested areas



The aim is to sustainably manage hunting and the demand for wild meat by regulating the supply, promoting alternative sources of protein, promoting alternative livelihoods and by reducing the demand for wildmeat in urban settings in the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar and Papua New Guinea.

37 000 km²
of forest

Community conservancies in savannah lands



The aim is to promote the legal and sustainable use of wildlife (e.g. through game ranching or ecotourism) to reduce rural poverty while mitigating human-wildlife conflicts (HWCs) in Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

17 000 km²
of savannah

Sahelian wetlands management



The aim is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Sahelian wetlands, which are particularly important for migratory waterbird populations, through the RESSOURCE⁴ Project component of the SWM Programme in Chad, Egypt, Mali, Senegal and the Sudan.

32
major Sahelian wetlands

Key contextual features

Mostly in forest areas, challenges in husbandry development, high dependence on wild meat for food and income, complex jurisdictions and land use, and potential for high-value/low-volume trade.

Mostly in savannahs, economic diversification, limited dependence on wild meat, wildlife valuation and economic activities, human-wildlife conflict (HWC) caused by predators and elephants, economic diversification, and collective income and more equitable sharing of benefits.

Biodiversity hotspot, globally threatened migratory waterbird species, ecosystems crucial for climate change mitigation, economic activities, and use of waterbirds for food.

Key management features

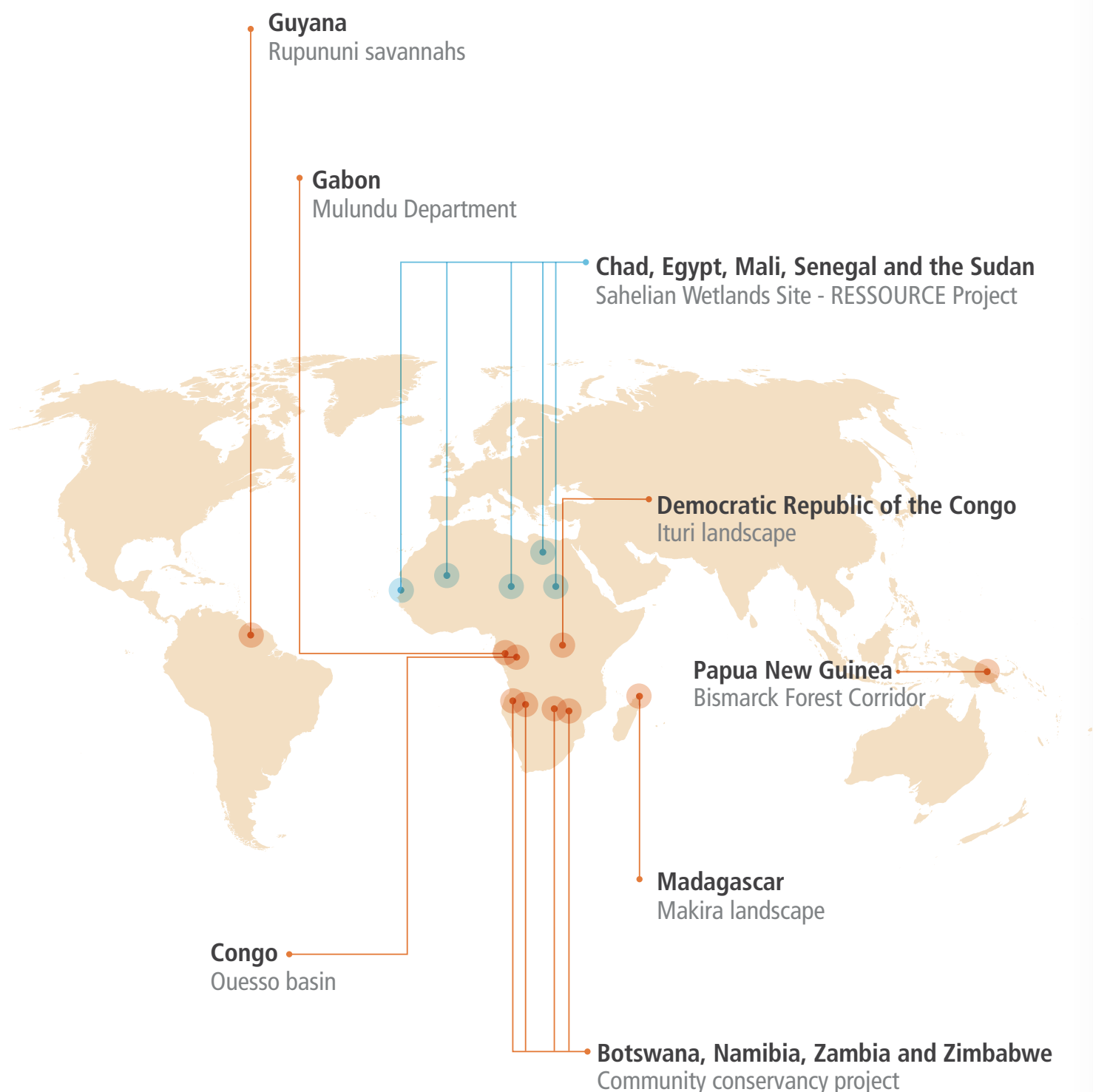
Co-management partnerships, sustainable hunting practices, offtake and trade control, alternative protein sources, capacity building, eligibility of sustainably managed hunting zones as Other Effective Area-base, Conservation Measure (OECM), and legal wild meat value chain.

Co-management and business partnerships in tourism and game ranching, improved livestock management and value chains, capacity building, eligibility of community conservancies as OECM, and legal wild meat value chain.

Capacity building and biodiversity monitoring, alternative natural resource value chains to alleviate pressure on wildlife, community management of wetland resources, and adaptive hunting management for a limited number of waterbird species.

⁴ The RESSOURCE Project stands for "Renforcement d'Expertise au Sud du Sahara sur les Oiseaux et leur Utilisation Rationnelle en faveur des Communautés et de leur Environnement."

Geographic focus



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of FAO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers and boundaries. United Nations Geospatial. 2023. Map of the World. [Cited 9 September 2024]. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/file/3420/download?token=TUP4yDmF>

Results and impacts



Result 1

Improve institutional and legal frameworks

The SWM Programme provided tailored support to strengthen national legislation on sustainable wildlife management. Legal country profiles are now available on the SWM Programme Legal Hub (see www.swm-programme.info/legal-hub), which was launched in 2021 to facilitate access to and understanding of existing statutory laws and regulations at the national level as well as customary norms and practices at the sites where the SWM Programme works and their recognition by statutory law. The Legal Hub is of interest to many people, and not just to lawyers, with more than 30 000 visitors in 2024 and with more than half of those being from Africa. As a result, government-led participatory law and policy reform processes have gained traction in eight countries (Botswana, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Zimbabwe) supported by local and scientific knowledge. The legal analysis has also helped inform reports by international conventions and the implementation of relevant decisions and action plans.



A community consultation workshop informed by the SWM Programme Legal Hub to support legislative reforms in Zimbabwe. © Eugenio Sartoretto

At a glance

13

Legal country profiles were published on the SWM Programme's Legal Hub

7

Sector specific legal analyses were submitted to governments for consideration

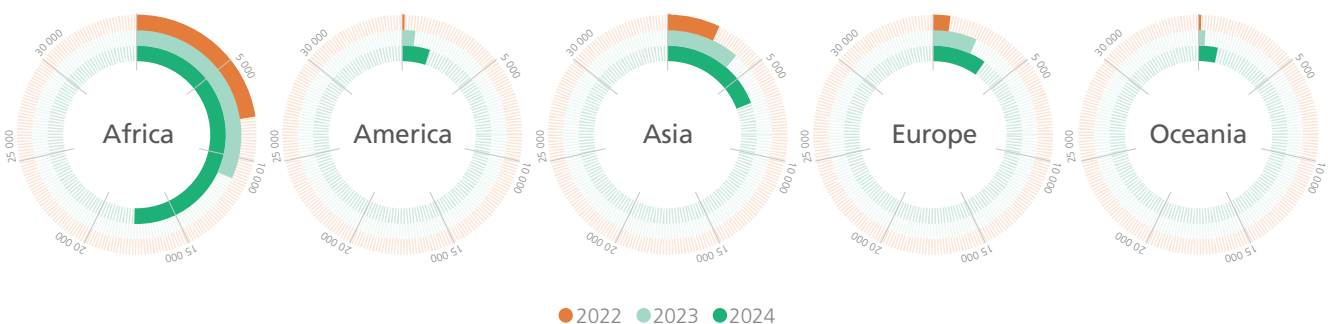
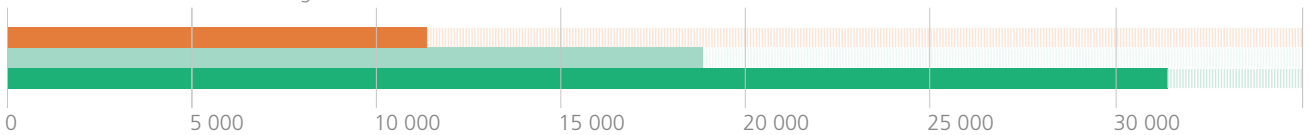
8

Countries used the legal analyses and other technical analyses to initiate or inform participatory **policy development** or **law reform** processes to improve sustainable wildlife management

4

Legal and regulatory texts were adopted in Gabon to help enable sustainable wildlife management and associated value chains

Total Number of visits to the Legal Hub



Result 2



Improve the management of fish and terrestrial wildlife

The SWM Programme has strengthened community-led adaptive fish and wildlife management systems, including devolving management rights to communities. Significant progress was made in training communities in natural resource governance and supporting land-use and hunting management plans, particularly in the Congo, Chad, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Namibia, Papua New Guinea, Senegal and the Sudan. HWC mitigation strategies have been implemented where wildlife pose threats to communities, and tools such as remote camera trap sampling and games to encourage sustainable hunting have been developed and tested.

10

The programme contributed to ten new and/or formal **institutional arrangements**

Applications were made for three **community forests** in Gabon.

29

Twenty-nine **community-based sustainable wildlife management units** strengthened their fish and wildlife management systems. The size of these units varies from a hunting group to a cluster of villages or communal lands

In Southern Africa, one **multipurpose use area** (Botswana), one **community conservancy** (Zambia) and one **community trust** (Zimbabwe) are being established in line with current laws.

Two **conservation deeds**, which are legally binding contracts between clans, were signed in Papua New Guinea.

20
million ha

International efforts to **monitor waterbird populations** in over 20 million ha of Sahelian wetlands (Chad, Egypt, Mali, Senegal, the Sudan) were supported using innovative methods developed by the RESSOURCE project

One co-managed **wildlife check point**, as part of the Wapichan Wiizi Wildlife Management Plan (Guyana).

The Khor Abu Habil Inner Delta wetland (the Sudan) has been established as a **Ramsar site** covering an area of 946 400 ha.

At a glance

Result 3



Improve the supply of alternative protein

The SWM Programme directly supported income generation and protein production (e.g. poultry, goats, livestock and insect farming) as a substitute or alternative for wild meat consumption. Support has taken many forms, including strengthening producer associations, procuring and distributing inputs at lower costs, improving access to veterinary services, building linkages with the private sector and training. Encouraging progress was made, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guyana, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

7

Seven sites introduced improved **poultry farming** and livestock husbandry techniques

5

Five **fish farming** groups were established in Zambia, with one registered as a cooperative in 2022

200

Two hundred **micro-businesses** were created in the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

+1000

More than 1 000 households have diversified their **incomes** with support from the SWM Programme



Experimentation and promotion of the cultivation of the **white water lily** in Senegal, with positive impacts for wetlands, waterbirds and income for local women

At a glance



Ensure that consumption of wild meat becomes sustainable

To understand dietary dependence on wild meat and to explore alternatives, the SWM Programme carried out consumption surveys and value chain analyses to follow the flow of wildmeat traded from rural to urban areas. Behaviour-change campaigns were also organized in some countries to help ensure that wild meat consumption levels are within sustainable limits and to encourage domestic livestock production and consumption. The SWM Programme collaborated with the WILDMEAT project (see www.wildmeat.org) to analyse the levels and drivers of wild meat consumption across Central Africa.

At a glance



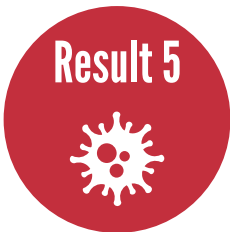
Consumption surveys of wild and domestic meat and fish were undertaken, often for the first time, in villages and towns in thirteen participating countries



Value chain analyses were conducted in four countries (the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Guyana)



Behaviour-change campaigns to achieve sustainable consumption focused on three countries (the Congo, Guyana and Madagascar)



Reduce the spillover risks of zoonotic pathogens

The SWM Programme began working on One Health measures following growing concerns about zoonotic risks related to wildlife trade and consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities focused on the Congo, Gabon and Guyana. They include raising awareness of wildlife-related health risks, promoting community-based surveillance and early warning systems, integrating wild meat into food safety regulations, supporting research for zoonotic risk assessment.

At a glance



One pilot **community-based surveillance** system was established in Gabon



Zoonotic risk assessments surveys along wildmeat value chains were carried out in the Congo and Gabon



A **One Health platform** was created in Guyana on wildlife-related zoonoses, including zoonotic disease assessment protocols and risk mitigation measures

Community-rights-based approach

The SWM Programme prioritizes the rights of people in wildlife management, aiming to balance conservation needs with wildlife use for food security and cultural practices. The initiative has created a community-rights-based approach, which identifies governments, institutions and civil society as accountable duty bearers for respecting and protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. It also focuses on empowering these communities to exercise and claim their rights. Recognizing the importance of gender equality and social inclusion, the SWM Programme incorporates these principles across its activities, ensuring equitable participation and benefits for women, youth and marginalized groups.

To this end, the SWM Programme has developed a series of social safeguard tools, which are being systematically used, adapted and documented in diverse settings. This standardized approach is particularly new for multipartner and multicountry conservation initiatives.



At a glance



Free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) processes have been implemented in all sites and FPIC agreements were signed and regularly renewed with the communities with which the SWM Programme works



Six sites (the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guyana, Madagascar, Namibia) completed or were finalizing appropriate **grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs)** with communities. All the other sites are developing GRMs



Gender and social inclusion strategies have been developed across all sites



An SWM Programme participatory community meeting in Kwiop village, Papua New Guinea.
© FAO/David Mansell-Moullin

Testimonials



Cristelle Pratt
Assistant Secretary-General
Environment and Climate Action
Organisation of African,
Caribbean and Pacific States
(OACPS)

“ Promoting the sustainable management and use of our natural capital while supporting biodiversity conservation is crucial and central to my current responsibilities in serving the 79 member states of the OACPS. The SWM Programme’s lessons learned and recommendations should enable the wider OACPS to adapt and replicate some of the viable solutions. ”



Chantal Marijnissen
Head of Unit,
Directorate General for
International Partnerships,
European Commission

“ The SWM Programme proposes an integrated approach to address the complex issue of wildlife conservation and sustainable use and plays an important role in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework and the international dimension of the European Union’s Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. ”



Rosalie Matondo
Minister of Forest Economy,
the Congo
Video link (French)

“ This platform [Legal Hub] allows us, the decision makers, to see what developments we have made within the legislation and regulations framework for the management of wildlife and protected areas, and to question ourselves and propose the reforms that we have talked about. ”



Jacques Trouvilliez
Executive Secretary,
Agreement on the Conservation
of African-Eurasian
Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)

“ The RESSOURCE Project fills the gaps in our knowledge of waterbirds in Africa. It also sheds new light on their use by local communities, which will improve sustainable management. In so doing, it directly contributes to the implementation of the five objectives in the AEWA Strategic Plan. ”



An SWM Programme event during the 27th Session of the Committee on Forestry at FAO in Rome, Italy.
© FAO/Roberto Cenciarelli

Knowledge exchange and learning

The SWM Programme has a comprehensive knowledge management and outreach approach, which is essential to keeping stakeholders regularly informed about progress and to support the uptake of innovative practices.

97

Publications

167

Stories and news articles

2

Animations

64

Videos

22

Scientific papers

Innovation case studies

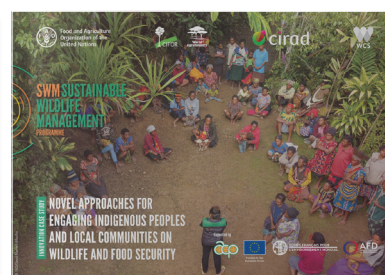
For the SWM Programme, “innovation consists of doing something new and different, whether solving an old problem in a new way, addressing a new problem with a proven solution, or bringing a new solution to a new problem”. (United Nations Innovation Network, 2019)



Play more, live better! Using sustainable wildlife management games to help adults and children collaborate and solve complex problems together



Turning legal analysis and information into a catalyst for change



Novel approaches for engaging Indigenous Peoples and local communities in wildlife and food security



More publications can be found on the SWM Programme knowledge hub: www.fao.org/in-action/swm-programme/knowledge

Progress and next steps

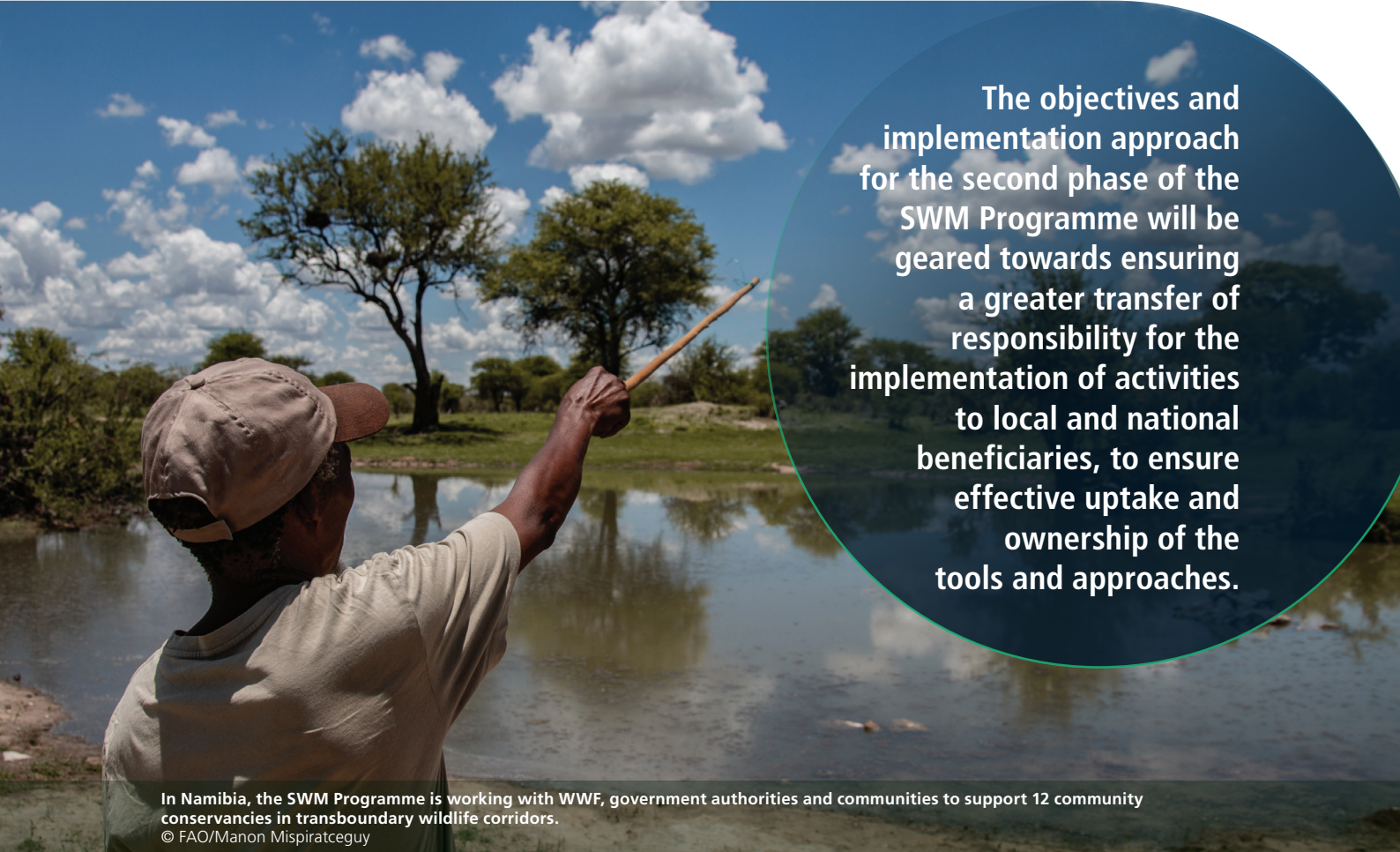
The operationalization of community-based wildlife management approaches takes time. A second phase of the SWM Programme was approved in 2023 to consolidate the community-managed initiatives and to increase the impact and durability of the current results.

The second phase of the SWM Programme has received additional funding from the European Union (EUR 37 million) for the period August 2023 to July 2028. In addition, the European Union provided a further EUR 9 million to continue supporting law reform processes, extend the Legal Hub to new countries and sectors and test innovative methods to measure biodiversity. Additional co-funding is also being sought from the French Facility for Global Environment and the French Development Agency.

The SWM Programme will continue to work in the same core field sites. However, there will be a stronger focus on:

- consolidating and enriching the wildlife management models and tools co-designed during this first implementation period, or co-designing and testing other models and tools in new sites; and
- supporting the scaling-up at the national level of models and tools with proven effectiveness, through policy and legal reforms and capacity building, to increase their impact and sustainability.

New sites will also be added, including Cameroon, Mauritania as well as a new regional project expanding the SWM Programme further into Asia and the Pacific.



The objectives and implementation approach for the second phase of the SWM Programme will be geared towards ensuring a greater transfer of responsibility for the implementation of activities to local and national beneficiaries, to ensure effective uptake and ownership of the tools and approaches.

In Namibia, the SWM Programme is working with WWF, government authorities and communities to support 12 community conservancies in transboundary wildlife corridors.

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The SWM Programme is a major international initiative that aims to improve the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife in forest, savannah and wetland ecosystems. It is being funded by the European Union with co-funding from the French Facility for Global Environment and the French Development Agency. Projects are being piloted and tested with governments and communities in 15 participating countries. The initiative is coordinated by a dynamic consortium of four partners: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry (CIFOR-ICRAF); the French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD); and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

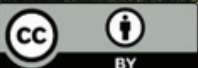


FIND OUT MORE

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