

**CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND
FLORA**



AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN

The attached document has been submitted by the following African elephant range States: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe*.

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AFRICAN ELEPHANT ACTION PLAN



Introduction

The African Elephant Action Plan (AEAP (2010)) was first presented in the margins of CoP 15 of CITES in 2010 by the African elephant range States (AERS). This revision of the AEAP (2023) updates the AEAP (2010) to present a contemporary framework of continental priorities and objectives for the conservation of the African elephant in light of recent developments. The AEAP (2023) remains a document that has been developed, owned and managed by the AERS, and as such, represents the issues identified and experienced by Africans and the objectives that need to be addressed in order to effectively conserve elephants in Africa across their range. This revision builds on the experience of the first 12 years of implementing the AEAP and draws on the collective expertise of the AERS as well as technical support from members of the IUCN/SSC African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG). Contributions from these groups were collated largely through the proceedings of two workshop sessions conducted in 2019. Progress in the revision was then delayed in 2020 due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Revisions to the Action Plan resumed in the latter half of 2021 and over the course of 2022, resulting in the formal adoption of the revised AEAP in March 2023.

This revision of the AEAP is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of the status of elephant populations and their conservation across Africa, but rather a concise and clear statement of those actions which MUST be taken and most urgently require funding if Africa's elephants throughout their range are to be protected from the multiple and serious threats they face.

New in this Action Plan is the ranking of the Priority Objectives to reflect the continental consensus that conflict between humans and elephants is a priority that needs to be addressed with considerable urgency. There is also increased recognition of the need to understand and address the impacts of climate change in management planning for African elephant conservation. The wording in this version of the AEAP has been improved

to better reflect the consensus on the changing context of African elephant conservation management.

There are some emerging factors affecting African elephants which have been identified during the revision process but for which it remains too early to capture them in the Plan in detail. The most significant of these factors is the recent separation by the IUCN African Elephant Specialist Group of the mono-specific African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) into two species *L. africana* (Savanna elephant) and *L. cyclotis* (Forest elephant).

In addition, the following emerging issues have been amongst the factors discussed during the revision process which have not been integrated into the Plan but which have been noted for possible further consideration during the future revisions:

1. The Covid-19 pandemic and the increasing risk of zoonotic diseases worldwide as human densities increase and contact with animals, including African elephants, becomes more common.
2. An ongoing, but unresolved, discussion around the role of trade in live African elephants.
3. The substantial recent developments in potential funding streams for African elephant conservation that are available for range States to explore.

The AERS responsible for producing this revision are: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

31 March 2023

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BACKGROUND

At the 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Parties adopted Decisions 14.75 to 14.79 regarding what, at the time, was considered to be a single species of African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). These Decisions were developed following extensive dialogue and, ultimately, in recognition of the fact that many of Africa's elephants are under threat and require coordinated and immediate action to ensure their future in African range States.

Decisions 14.75 to 14.79 mandated the AERS to, among other actions, develop an African Elephant Action Plan and an African Elephant Fund. In order to meet the requirements of these Decisions, the AERS participated in three meetings; first in Mombasa (June 2008), then in Gigiri (March 2009), and thirdly in Dar es Salaam (June 2009). This process resulted in Version 1 of the AEAP (2010). The first version of the AEAP was endorsed by the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) at its 12th Meeting, taking place in Manila, Philippines in 2017. The first version of the AEAP was also adopted by the 4th Meeting of the Signatories of the CMS Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the West African Populations of the African Elephant, taking place online in 2021.

Prior to the current revision (AEAP 2023) being drafted there was a meeting of the AERS in Nairobi in November 2019 during which an intensive World Café process was undertaken to garner the comments and inputs of the range States. The process was informed by the proceedings of a similar World Café process that had been conducted at a meeting of African Elephant Specialist Group (AfESG) members held in Pretoria in July 2019.

This revision:

- Is an update of AEAP (2010) and as such has included new content which responds to developments over the past 12 years.
- Recognizes that there is a continually changing context for elephant management and that some new developments may not be in this version of the plan but may be better understood and included in future versions.
- Has sought to ensure that the AEAP (2023) continues to represent the views of AERS and as such is a consensus document.
- Reflects a consensus of the broad objectives and activities identified as being most urgently required by AERS to protect and conserve elephants of both species across their range in Africa.
- Forms a basis by which range States can submit proposals for funding to the African Elephant Fund and other funding sources.
- Should serve as a guide for any donor wishing to contribute funding towards the conservation of either species of elephant in Africa.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Given the complexity of the issues that need to be considered (threats facing elephant populations, governance and financial considerations when implementing conservation plans, technical biological priorities, etc.), AERS believe it valuable to highlight important Guiding Principles, which establish a framework for the overall purpose and intent of this African Elephant Action Plan (2023). These are:

1. RECALLING that the intention of the Parties, through this African Elephant Action Plan (2023), is to develop and prioritize mechanisms by which elephant populations of both species across Africa are offered the recognition, protection and management support necessary to ensure their survival in their natural habitat;
2. RECOGNISING the serious and continuing threats currently facing African elephants, some of which are exacerbated by climate change, including habitat loss, habitat fragmentation and loss of habitat connectivity, loss of genetic diversity, illegal killing for ivory (for illegal trade) and meat, human elephant conflict (HEC), and in some instances local overabundance of African elephants;
3. CONVINCED that measures must urgently be taken to prevent further localized extinction of elephants in any part of their range;
4. RECOGNISING the contribution made by the *Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants* (MIKE) and the *Elephant Trade Information System* (ETIS) programmes to monitoring illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in ivory, as well as the importance of the African Elephant Database (AED), together with regular continent-wide population surveys, for informing policy and management decision making, and the need to expand all these programmes and that this will require funding resources;
5. RECOGNISING the financial and other needs of institutions, community custodians, communities co-existing with elephants and individuals mandated with protecting elephants;
6. CONVINCED that the most effective way to attract funding for elephant conservation is through commitment to, and demonstration of, good governance, transparency, accountability, co-ordination, demonstrable results and a common purpose by all AERS; and,
7. PRESENTING the international donor community with a mechanism for channeling available funds into African elephant conservation management through a process which has been developed, owned, approved and managed by all the AERS.

The following Vision and Goals have been identified by the AERS in the development of this African Elephant Action Plan (2023):

VISION AND GOALS

The following **Vision** was agreed to by all AERS in 2023:

To ensure a secure future for African elephants and their habitats to realize their full potential as a component of land use for the benefit of the human kind.

The following **Goal** was agreed to by all AERS in 2010:

To secure and restore, where possible, sustainable elephant populations throughout their present and potential range in Africa recognizing their potential to provide ecological, socio, cultural and economic benefits.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

African elephants (*Loxodonta africana* and *L. cyclotis*) are two of the world's largest terrestrial mammal species and have considerable economic, ecological, cultural and aesthetic value to many people. They are among the world's most charismatic mega-herbivores. African elephants possess high levels of intelligence and individual and collective adaptability to their surroundings as well as complex social structuring. They play an important role in African ecosystems as 'keystone' species and natural habitat engineers, while providing an environmental focus for fundraising, awareness building and stimulating action for broader conservation efforts. Culturally, Africa's elephants represent strength and power for many nations on the continent and attract visitors from across the globe.

Sadly, however, the future for African elephants is far from secure. Elephants face a multitude of threats, which vary spatially and for some African elephant populations, is so severe that populations may be lost entirely in the next 10 to 25 years. Concurrently, those empowered with protecting their country's natural heritage, or who live with elephants, are often confronted with significant challenges. The numerous threats posed to elephants and people are therefore of deep concern to all AERS.

Following extensive consultation among AERS, eight Priority Objectives, hierarchically cascaded into agreed Strategies and Activities, are recognized and adopted as the critical focus areas for elephant conservation across Africa over the period 2023 to 2027. While all the Activities in this AEAP (2023) are viewed as important to ensure the long-term survival of wild elephants, the AERS, recognizing likely funding limitations, prioritized the Priority Objectives in the order presented. The order of priorities differs from the AEAP (2010) and this reflects changes in the circumstances and understanding of AERS over the period under review.

In this AEAP (2023), AERS note the importance of capacity building as a cross-cutting activity necessary to ensure the activities documented in the plan are carried out most effectively, and for this reason capacity building is included as an integral element of all Priority Objectives.

As is the established process, AERS are invited to submit proposals to the Steering Committee of the African Elephant Fund, based on the Priority Objectives, Strategies and Activities detailed within this document. The Steering Committee will evaluate and rank each proposal based on a priority matrix developed by the African Elephant Fund Steering Committee and subsequently allocate funding based on ranking and available funding with the understanding that the funding for the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan is derived from multiple funding sources.

An indicative rough cost estimate for each of the Activities identified has been developed as a separate document to cover an initial period of three (3) years. This rough estimate may inform the various funding sources at large. It has been distributed to the CITES range States, available also from the AEF Secretariat upon request.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 1

Reduce Human-Elephant Conflict

Where African elephants co-exist with people, they can have severe impacts on local livelihoods through presenting a physical threat to individuals as well as through crop-raiding, damaging infrastructure and consumption or disruption of scarce water sources. As a consequence, many African elephants are killed annually, both legally and illegally, through formal and informal actions to limit the damage they cause. In some instances, this can cause a decline in already diminished African elephant populations.

To date, no permanent, universally reliable solutions have been identified to prevent HEC and a variety of mitigation tools must be used, taking into consideration the origin and causes as well as the extent of the conflicts.

The following have been identified by all AERS as priority Strategies and Activities for reducing HEC:

STRATEGY 1.1: Apply adaptive management approaches in addressing HEC mitigation, ensuring capacity building for managers and local communities.

Activity 1.1.1. Enhance evidence-based management of HEC through the establishment of a database using existing and new data on the types, extent, causes and impacts of HEC and mitigation measures for such conflicts.

Activity 1.1.2. Research and pilot different mitigation strategies to reduce HEC, including insurance schemes, the use of zonation and land-use planning, and develop guidelines for applying each approach.

Activity 1.1.3. Train and equip wildlife officers and local communities to ensure that appropriate HEC management approaches are implemented, and human rights are respected.

Activity 1.1.4. Undertake appropriate land use planning to minimize HEC including harmonization across sectors and among range States.

Activity 1.1.5. Evaluate the socio-economic consequences of HEC and seek ways to promote wildlife-based enterprises to incentivize local communities co-existing with elephants.

STRATEGY 1.2: Establish and strengthen participatory processes for mitigating Human-Elephant Conflict.

Activity 1.2.1. Compile and disseminate information on HEC mitigation measures.

Activity 1.2.2. Develop and improve plans to manage HEC under different scenarios,

integrating both local communities and other stakeholders in participatory planning.

Activity 1.2.3. Harness traditional/indigenous/local knowledge and other deterrent methods for HEC, including emerging technologies.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 2

Maintain African elephant habitats and restore connectivity

Across the continent, African elephant habitat is increasingly being degraded, fragmented and in some cases lost entirely, due to human activity such as housing and agricultural expansion as well as logging and mining. These losses reduce the habitat available to African elephants and restrict their movement and access to essential food and water resources. There is an urgent need to secure and maintain extensive landscapes for African elephants and to restore and maintain connectivity between these areas where possible.

Historically, for many AERS, local and national land use planning has been undertaken with limited consideration for elephant and elephant habitat. As land pressures continue to grow across the continent, a larger vision which considers African elephant and other wildlife habitat needs, as well as the socio-economic development needs of local communities, is essential.

The following Strategies and Activities have been identified as priorities by AERS as essential for maintaining and restoring African elephant habitat and its connectivity:

STRATEGY 2.1: Ensure, maintain and restore connectivity, where possible, between elephant ranges within and between range States.

Activity 2.1.1. Identify and prioritize opportunities for range expansion and creation of connectivity corridors within the broader land use planning within and between range States.

Activity 2.1.2. Identify ways to incentivize local communities to secure, maintain and rehabilitate connectivity corridors between elephant populations.

Activity 2.1.3. Create and / or restore, where possible, the connectivity between areas of elephants within, between and among range States especially within Transfrontier Conservation Areas.

Activity 2.1.4. Undertake elephant reintroduction and translocation to regions where appropriate and based on IUCN guidelines.

Activity 2.1.5. Identify dispersal areas for effective protection of the African elephant.

STRATEGY 2.2: Establish and strengthen bilateral and multilateral mechanisms and support for the management of sites and cross borders corridors.

Activity 2.2.1. Obtain bilateral and multilateral support for the conservation and management of African elephant range through meetings, workshops and other fora.

Activity 2.2.2. Develop joint programs and protocols to manage national and transboundary populations and habitats.

Activity 2.2.3. Assess and monitor habitat change and fragmentation, particularly in light of high levels of urbanization and with a focus on transboundary populations.

Activity 2.2.4. Build appropriate capacity to implement the above.

STRATEGY 2.3: Promote internal and cross border land use planning within and between elephant range States.

Activity 2.3.1. Conduct cross-sectoral planning exercises to develop land use policies consistent with large, elephant-friendly landscapes (especially those surrounding protected areas) starting from the local community to national levels, and transboundary where this is possible.

Activity 2.3.2. Coordinate and prioritize trans-boundary management efforts.

Activity 2.3.3. Establish collaborative monitoring of the movements of elephants across borders to support management, including guidelines and the standardization of data in these contexts.

Activity 2.3.4. Build appropriate capacity to implement the above.

STRATEGY 2.4: Ensure adequate maintenance of current elephant habitat within and between elephant range States taking due cognition of climate change and its effects.

Activity 2.4.1. Provide adequate resources for effective management of existing protected areas, corridors and African elephant dispersal areas.

Activity 2.4.2. Improve or maintain good management in existing protected areas in AERS ensuring that adequate consultation with and consideration of the needs of local communities is incorporated into management.

Activity 2.4.3. Investigate impacts of climate change on African elephant habitat and African elephant populations through appropriate research.

Activity 2.4.4. Investigate impacts of local overabundance where it occurs and develop mechanisms for managing those contexts.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 3

Reduce illegal killing of elephants and illegal trade in elephant products

All regions of the continent are affected by poaching of African elephants for the illegal ivory trade, and increasingly for meat, and a national, regional and continental approach to dealing with the problem is necessary. Over the past 50 years many African elephant populations, particularly in West, Central and East Africa, have been subjected to high levels of poaching resulting in some cases in the loss of 50% or more of the individual elephants in these populations and there is an immediate threat to the long-term survival of elephant in some countries. Remaining African elephant populations, from all regions, require ongoing protection if they are to persist into the future. In addition to illegal killing for ivory and meat, in many areas African elephants face threats from human-elephant conflict.

The following Strategies and Activities have been identified by the AERS as priorities for combating the threats noted above:

STRATEGY 3.1: Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement authorities/agencies to combat poaching and illegal trade in ivory and other elephant products.

Activity 3.1.1. Assess law enforcement capacity and needs including human rights and social safeguards, levels of community involvement, cross boundary collaboration and cybercrime, in range States.

Activity 3.1.2. Recruit and train staff at all levels, including on human rights and social safeguards and emerging disciplines such as community involvement and cybercrime, to combat poaching and illegal trade in ivory and other elephant products.

Activity 3.1.3. Equip wildlife authority staff on the frontline of enforcement with appropriate tools to carry out their mission as safely and effectively as possible.

Activity 3.1.4. Hold regular meetings between regional forums such as the Lusaka Agreement Task Force and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Rhino and Elephant Security Group as well as international law enforcement agencies and encourage the formation of similar such initiatives in West and Central Africa to improve the sharing and exchange of law enforcement information and experience.

STRATEGY 3.2: Harmonize national policies and laws to reduce illegal killing of African

elephants and illegal trade of their products within and across range States where possible.

Activity 3.2.1. Undertake assessments to identify gaps and overlaps of different policies and laws of the range States.

Activity 3.2.2. Convene meetings amongst neighbouring range States to discuss outcomes of the assessment and possible harmonization of conflicting policies and laws.

Activity 3.2.3. Advocate for the review and harmonization of conflicting policies and laws at the highest political levels e.g., the African Union and sub-regionally, e.g., Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Central African Forest Commission (COMIFAC), SADC, East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

STRATEGY 3.3: Develop and update national policies and laws to reduce illegal killing of African elephants and illegal trade of their products within and across range States where possible.

Activity 3.3.1. Review and/or enact national legislation to provide for adequate penalties to deter illegal killing of elephants, and illegal trade in elephant ivory and other elephant products.

Activity 3.3.2. Sensitize legislators on the importance of African elephants to assist them enact appropriate laws on conservation and management of the species, including CITES and CMS provisions relating to illegal killing of African elephants and trade in ivory and other elephant products, at national, regional and international levels.

Activity 3.3.3. Build capacity of the judiciary, to effectively adjudicate laws both at national and international levels.

Activity 3.3.4. Promote inter agency cooperation and coordination in relation to illegal killing of African elephants and trade in ivory and other elephant products.

Activity 3.3.5. Identify the origin of seized ivory and determine the pattern of illegal trade routes and networks for ivory smuggling using available DNA analysis and other forensic techniques.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 4

Increase awareness of key stakeholders on African elephant conservation and management

Essential to the success of the AEAP is the need to increase awareness and involvement of

a wider community concerning African elephant conservation and management and widely accepted guiding principles. Current information is often difficult to find, not synthesized or is too scientific and difficult for people, particularly policymakers, to fully understand. There is a need for regular updates of objective, unbiased and reliable information that can be accessed by all levels of stakeholder at a local, regional and international level.

The following have been identified by all AERS as priority Strategies and Activities for increasing awareness on elephant conservation and management:

STRATEGY 4.1: Raise awareness on the conservation of the African elephant among range States and other stakeholders.

Activity 4.1.1. Consolidate and disseminate reliable information on the conservation and management of African elephants for local communities, schools, scientific and political audiences.

Activity 4.1.2. Develop and implement awareness programs targeting schools, local communities, policy makers, NGO's, business sectors, etc.

Activity 4.1.3. Develop and implement a communication strategy, which includes field visits to local communities to explain management decisions and actions.

Activity 4.1.4. Build appropriate capacity to implement the above.

STRATEGY 4.2: Incorporate appropriate indigenous/traditional knowledge and practices into the conservation of the African elephant.

Activity 4.2.1. Survey across the four regions (West, Central, Eastern & Southern Africa) and document value systems regarding elephant conservation.

Activity 4.2.2. Incorporate relevant traditional beliefs and practices into conservation and management of the African elephant.

STRATEGY 4.3: Promote information sharing on elephant conservation and management research findings.

Activity 4.3.1. Develop and implement information, education and communication strategies for the conservation of both species of African elephant.

Activity 4.3.2. Develop a protocol for sharing elephant related information among stakeholders within and between range States.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 5

Strengthen range State knowledge on African elephant conservation and management

An understanding of elephant populations together with their historical and current distribution is essential in order to improve the effectiveness of elephant conservation policies and management interventions. Development of comprehensive national action plans for elephant conservation and management requires a good and current understanding of elephant numbers, trends and distribution. It should also be recognized that acquiring full knowledge of all aspects of individual elephant populations is unattainable, and decision-makers must work with best available information in an adaptive manner.

The following have been identified by all AERS as priority Strategies and Activities for improving knowledge of elephant populations and their habitats for management purposes:

STRATEGY 5.1: Determine and monitor the status and movement patterns of African elephant populations and their habitat within and among elephant range States.

Activity 5.1.1. Conduct African elephant population surveys in prioritized areas as identified by the regions.

Activity 5.1.2. Conduct inventories for poorly known populations of African elephant to ascertain their biological status and the state of their habitats.

Activity 5.1.3. Deploy satellite collars in selected contexts to monitor movement of prioritized populations within and between range States.

Activity 5.1.4. Investigate new and economically viable methods, including the use of citizen science, for understanding African elephant populations.

Activity 5.1.5. Ensure continued participation in the MIKE and ETIS programmes.

STRATEGY 5.2: Develop mechanisms for acquiring and disseminating relevant information within and between AERS.

Activity 5.2.1. Develop, maintain and improve databases on elephant populations and their movement for management purposes.

Activity 5.2.2. Coordinate efforts to research African elephant populations and compile and disseminate research findings.

Activity 5.2.3. Establish platforms and fora for exchanging information on African elephant populations between range States, especially those from transboundary populations.

Activity 5.2.4. Generate knowledge and materials on the values ascribed to African elephants in order to better inform decision making.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 6

Strengthen cooperation and understanding between range States

Many of the issues and challenges concerning the conservation and management of African elephants are shared by range States. Over time, AERS have progressively strengthened their understanding and their cooperation on numerous social, economic and environmental issues of mutual interest and concern including the shared resources for African elephants. This has resulted in, among other outcomes, regional elephant conservation policies and strategies. In addition, a number of transboundary plans and projects have been initiated to guide joint management activities and protection of African elephants and their habitats by neighbouring range States.

Existing political and economic frameworks can be used to increase wider public perception of the importance of elephant conservation and relevant management issues. They can also be used to enable greater information sharing, dialogue and cooperation between range States at both technical and political levels. This includes the coordination of African elephant population and movement surveys and anti-poaching activities where elephant populations move across international borders.

The following have been identified by all AERS as priority Strategies and Activities for strengthening cooperation and understanding between range States:

STRATEGY 6.1: Foster cross-sectoral, cross-border, sub-regional and continental exchanges to integrate the expanded set of perspectives and needs of elephant conservation and management into national priorities and plans.

Activity 6.1.1. Promote the exchange of information on technical and policy matters related to the conservation of African elephants at local, sub-regional and continental scale and between stakeholders at all levels (local communities to high-level decision makers and intergovernmental organizations such as INTERPOL) using appropriate fora.

Activity 6.1.2. Facilitate exchanges to promote socio-economic development and planning relevant to the conservation and management of African elephant populations, and particularly those that are trans-boundary in nature.

Activity 6.1.3. Organize inter-state meetings (including of high-level decision makers) dealing with the conservation and management of African elephants.

Activity 6.1.4. Establish bilateral or multilateral agreements to support the management of cross-border African elephant conservation areas and interconnecting corridors.

STRATEGY 6.2: Use existing political, economic, social (community) and other frameworks to promote inter-state cooperation on elephant conservation and management, e.g., AU, ECOWAS, SADC, EAC, COMIFAC, and COMESA.

Activity 6.2.1. Advocate the inclusion of African elephant conservation in national development agendas.

Activity 6.2.2. Use existing political, socio-economic and NGO platforms to promote cooperation on elephant conservation and management, e.g., AU, ECOWAS, COMIFAC IGAD, UEMOA, CEEAC, SADC and EAC.

Activity 6.2.3. Effectively implement provisions in MEAs (CITES, CBD, CMS, etc.) relevant to African elephant conservation and management.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 7

Improved cooperation and collaboration with local communities on African elephant conservation and management

While it is recognized that elephants have intrinsic value, recognition must also be given to those communities that share land and resources (coexist) with African elephants, and who are most affected by elephants on a day-to-day basis. It is often the case that these communities bear the costs of living with elephants (such as loss of food crops), while the benefits (such as revenue from tourism) are largely harnessed by people living further afield. It is important to recognize and address this issue, as the accrual of benefits should be to those at a local level who are most affected by, and bear the costs of, living with African elephants.

The following have been identified by all AERS as priority Strategies and Activities for assessing the costs of living with elephants and who should derive the benefits therefrom:

STRATEGIES 7.1: Devise/improve and implement sustainable benefits/incentive schemes for local communities who bear the cost of living with African elephants.

Activity 7.1.1. Identify and assess approaches to ensure the full participation of local people in efforts to conserve African elephants.

Activity 7.1.2. Conduct local studies to assess the costs of living with African elephants, i.e., the direct and indirect social and economic costs that elephants can impose on humans.

Activity 7.1.3. Conduct a study at continental or regional scale assessing the cost-benefit equations for communities living with African elephants.

Activity 7.1.4. Develop innovative incentive schemes that increase benefits to local

communities, while simultaneously reducing costs of living with elephants.

Activity 7.1.5. Assess and promote, as appropriate, consumptive and non-consumptive use of elephants and the sharing of benefits accrued with affected communities, ensuring that the welfare of African elephants is adequately addressed.

Activity 7.1.6. Investigate and implement sustainable alternative livelihood opportunities for communities living with elephants in order to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 8

The African Elephant Action Plan is adequately and sustainably funded and effectively implemented at all levels

This is an overarching operational objective of the African Elephant Action Plan and has the intent of promoting not only national but also regional and in cases continental funding and implementation mechanisms for the AEAP. The AERS are committed to the following procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the implementation of this Action Plan:

STRATEGY 8.1: Promote a systematic approach to implement the African Elephant Action Plan.

Activity 8.1.1. Establish a Working Group of the range States to regularly review achievements against the African Elephant Action Plan.

Activity 8.1.2. Prioritize interventions in the African Elephant Action Plan for fund raising and subsequent implementation.

Activity 8.1.3. Estimate the cost of activities and seek funding sources.

Activity 8.1.4. Develop a mechanism to carry forward the plan, ensuring sustainability, recognizing that sustainability may in instances require regional and continental cooperation and coordination of funding and implementation of the plan.

Activity 8.1.5. Establish mechanisms for coordination, collection and effective use of funds for implementing the African Elephant Action Plan.

STRATEGY 8.2: Develop and implement an effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting plan.

Activity 8.2.1. Establish clear and measurable targets for each objective and strategy.

Activity 8.2.2. Establish institutional arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the African Elephant Action Plan.

Activity 8.2.3. Report on progress in implementing the AEAP in a regular transparent manner through existing mechanisms e.g., CITES and CMS.

Activity 8.2.4. Review and update the African Elephant Action Plan every five years, to keep abreast of the challenges and changing dynamics of conserving and managing African elephants.

STRATEGY 8.3: Link the African Elephant Action Plan with the African Elephant Fund.

Activity 8.3.1. Implement the established format for funding applications to the African Elephant Fund.

Activity 8.3.2. Use the African Elephant Action Plan as a fundraising tool to encourage donors to commit funds to the African Elephant Fund and to explore a wider range of funding opportunities to cover the costs of elephant conservation .

LINKING THE ACTION PLAN WITH THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT FUND

This Action Plan seeks to establish a link with the African Elephant Fund and identifies Strategy 8.3 and Activities 8.3.1-8.3.2 to that effect.