Annex B – Stakeholder Engagement Plan

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

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1. Introduction

In 2018, global wildlife tourism accounted for $120 billion in the global economy and directly provided 9 million jobs worldwide. African nature-based tourism is the largest contributor to this economy and accounted for over half of the global revenue. The African tourism landscape is dominated by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the revenues from nature-based tourism have been helping simultaneously to support the livelihoods of rural and often marginalized communities of Africa while delivering biodiversity conservation.

The COVID-19 pandemic created an extraordinary situation, where nearly all global travel, and so global tourism, was suspended. In Africa, the pandemic changed the trajectory of the majority of national and many local economies. The project's stakeholders recognize that the crisis has disproportionately impacted the tourism economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, where nature-based tourism creates jobs, empowers communities, supports livelihoods and drives conservation goals. Gender roles within the tourism industry has also led to gender-differentiated impact (see Gender Analysis for more details).

While navigating the COVID-19 crisis, partners and local organizations are also aspiring to use this moment as a turning point for building longer term capacity and reimagining the role of nature-based tourism for a more sustainable future for women and men in communities and nature in Sub-Saharan Africa. By seeking an inclusive and diverse stakeholder base, the project is working to design an approach that is context sensitive, inclusive and gender-equitable and informed from the ground up. This will be critical for data collection, designing communication, ensuring equity, mitigating risks around only large actors gaining access to support, as well as building long term buy-in and capacity with actors from 11 selected countries.

With already large sums of funding flowing into nature conservation, tourism businesses and communities, it is often hard to identify smaller or less well resourced actors who will be the most vulnerable to the impact of the pandemic. Furthermore, data on geographical relationships to place and wildlife, who is most at need (taking into account gender equity), what they need, and how best to connect with them is either inaccessible or inadequate for those who would make best use of it. Donors determined to support a recovery effort also require assurance of good, de-risked investment providing rapid aid on the ground and transparent disbursement of funds. For the most part, donors operate autonomously and may unintentionally create a dysfunctional or counterproductive funding landscape where stakeholders compete for disjointed investments.

In order to meet these challenges as well as invest in a more resilient future for nature and communities, this international collaboration will work via parallel streams. Grounded in local networks and trusted and neutral actors, novel and comprehensive data collection will help to inform the development of a platform - a virtual 'place' to connect, share information, gain visibility, monitor progress, and find a cohesive, strong voice for smaller actors in the post-COVID-19 recovery. Stakeholders will draw on their existing and collaborative strengths to leverage additional funding and provide complementary technical expertise to ensure the platform aids those most in need. In parallel, the partners will draw on their expertise and networks to convene inclusive conversations with particular focus on gender equity; and generate a shared understanding of how Sub-Saharan African nature-based tourism could be redesigned for the future.

The project will have to act in a highly dynamic environment and as the crisis in nature-based tourism is unfolding. It therefore aims to implement activities and avert emergence of any worst case scenarios. By bringing together a diverse and inclusive range of actors, this initiative does not seek to be the only initiative working on these issues, but to be highly complementary to other efforts and allow the space for a strong point of advocacy and voice for smaller actors and marginalized groups who might potentially be overlooked

with such an inclusive and gender-equitable approach. The initiative has been also cross-referenced with other efforts in search for synergy, complementarity or to assess where similar projects might create unhelpful competition or negative impacts that need to be mitigated to ensure project's success.

2. Regulations and Requirements

The project team is responsible for ensuring compliance with the GEF and WWF standards on Stakeholder Engagement. The WWF Standard on Stakeholder Engagement requires that WWF-US, the Executing Agency, involves all stakeholders, including project affected groups, women and men in local communities, and local CBOs and CSOs, as early as possible in the preparation process/ throughout project implementation and ensures that their views and concerns are made known and taken into account. WWF-US is responsible for implementation of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The GEF Project Implementing Agency will thus oversee that WWF-US ensures implementation of the project in the eleven countries, continuing delivery of consultations and collaborating with a range of regional, national and local stakeholders from diverse communities (CBNRM forums, CBOs, CSOs, conservancy associations, etc.), private sector, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental bodies, ensuring gender equity in participation, particularly at community level. Stakeholder engagement will include ensuring prior consent from target groups, proper disclosure of information, registering and responding to grievances, and reporting to stakeholders.

3. Summary of any previous stakeholder engagement activities

The project development team has engaged in a series of online (zoom and email) information sharing and consultation activities with a range of stakeholders throughout the project development phase, ranging from local to international NGOs, national and sub-national level community forums and networks, international bodies, private sector (including tourism operators, potential investors), research institutions, regional bodies. Those consultations that took place starting with May 2020 and the stakeholders involved are summarized below.

➢ **Initial one-to-one consultations**

Between 22nd of April and 19th of May 2020, conducted a series of virtual meetings with a representative selection of stakeholders to assess how efforts could be better coordinated in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and conservation, with a focus on the African continent. Stakeholders were invited to provide details of other people of interest that should be consulted. Consulted individuals and organizations shared their concerns over the growing impact of the crisis on the conservation sector in Africa, which has been symbiotically linked to the tourism industry.

➢ **Stakeholder Convening Event**

Following initial one-on-one consultations, it became clear that there is a need for stakeholders to join forces and address the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.
On the 20th May, the Luc Hoffmann Institute convened an online meeting with more than 75 participants across different sectors, geographies and disciplines, to discuss the possibility of building a "collaborative platform" to alleviate the loss of income from tourism, and sustain conservation and local communities in the face of COVID-19, with a focus on the African continent.
The meeting convened relevant stakeholders (40% women) from several continents, but had a particular focus on African stakeholders who comprised 47% of those present. A feedback survey

following the event enabled stakeholders to provide further contacts of people of interest to the initiative to be consulted and to contribute their thoughts on the direction of the initiative. Those involved were invited to further shape the development of the initiative by providing vital feedback, identifying the challenge, identifying primary beneficiaries, co-designing responses and contributing to the engagement of other stakeholders, or beneficiaries or donors.

The key points that emerged during the stakeholders' convening can be summarized as follows:

- The crisis will only be overcome through collective effort that is evidence-based in a fluid environment – this requires credible information and timely 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 problem for many neighboring countries in Eastern and Southern Africa;
- Now more than ever, conservationists need to speak the language of business and engage policymakers from diverse sectors 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, responding to people's needs now and thinking more holistically for the future; and
- The biggest challenge is that the longstanding, tourism-dependent conservation model in Eastern and Southern Africa is inadequate – there is a need to rethink the flow of investments being put towards the problem.

➢ **Follow up one-to-one consultations**

To keep the momentum going and following the success of the convening event, between May and October 2020, over 300 virtual meetings were convened with over 200 organizations' representatives as the stakeholder list continued to expand. These calls enabled the project team to explore stakeholders' appetite for involvement in the project and their potential role in development and performance of the platform. This included review of synergies in agendas and streamlining efforts to avoid duplication of support. As in the initial phase, snowball sampling was used to acquire new contacts. These new leads will be contacted further in order to map as many interested parties as possible and simultaneously promote the platform. Within this consultation phase, a leading group of contributing stakeholders has emerged.

➢ **Periodical updates**

From within the group of one-to-one consultations, a strong leading group was identified that could contribute substantial resources to the project. The consultations happened after the positive assessment and sign off of the PIF and before the finalization of the Project Document. The group has been invited to a series of consecutive meetings (more than 30) between late July and late October 2020.

A detailed 126-page list of meetings, main points and outcomes has been documented throughout the consultation process to ensure a systematic way of capturing the information and to provide a reference on how the consultation informed the proposal development. It is available for consultation if required. To summarize the consultations, the groups consulted consisted of representatives of the private sector, community conservation associations (including CSOs and CBNRMs), intergovernmental organizations,

conservation NGOs (including WWF country and regional offices), government agencies, and research think tanks. All groups reiterated concerns over the immediate situation of nature-based tourism and impacts in the near and long-term future. Community conservation organizations stressed the immediate need for support, capacity building and development of non-tourism based conservation models to sustain local communities and small SME's currently dependent on international tourism. INGO and NGOs were sympathetic to the cause and expressed their will for collaboration, partnership on development of the platform, access to networks and funding for beneficiaries. Similarly, government agencies expressed their concern over the current trajectory of the nature-based tourism sector and reiterated their support for the platform. On the technical side research think thanks and individuals corroborated the concerns by providing research on the current situation in the regions, as well as supported development of tools that will be incorporated into the platform on later stages of the project.

In parallel, the Gender Assessment process builds on previous consultations with a variety of regional, national and sub-national stakeholders from government, donors, civil society and academia that highlight challenges to, and the need for, gender mainstreaming in all development activities in the target countries. This was complemented by particular conversations that highlight the gender implications of the COVID-19-induced impacts on nature-based tourism in east and southern Africa (for more details, see the Gender Assessment).

4. Project Stakeholders

Stakeholder Analysis

Considering the nature of the COVID-19 crisis and the urgency to act as quickly as possible the stakeholder analysis has been a more fluid process compared to normal circumstances. The project development team has conducted a series of activities to identify, prioritize, engage and monitor how the interests of stakeholders should be addressed.

Below are presented a series of activities conducted by the project development team that contributed to the stakeholder analysis process.

In the inception phase of the project, a list of potential stakeholders was generated based on existing networks and a snowball sampling technique was used to expand this list. The initial stakeholder identification exercise was expansive in order to be as inclusive as possible. This initial list of identified stakeholders was verified, modified and enhanced through interviews with key informants (e.g. government representatives; local, national and regional CSO representatives, technical experts etc.) and consultations with already identified stakeholders. In parallel, the team conducted a background research including: literature review on impacts of COVID-19 on nature-based tourism in Africa, potential donors and partners, other initiatives in the nature-based tourism sphere and general overview of existing institutions that have access to communities and nature-based tourism operators or SMEs. This enabled the institute to gain a broader overview of the stakeholder dynamics and to expand the list of potential stakeholders to be consulted.

The stakeholders identified are wide ranging (see **Table 1**) and they have been involved from the early stages of the project (see **Section 3** of SEP). A significant focus and special attention has been placed on identifying entry points to the communities (referred to as beneficiaries in **Table 1**) impacted by the crisis through organizations with knowledge and access to the beneficiaries, including: national and sub-national community forums and networks, including regional community support organizations, national CBNRM networks, individual CBOs, associations of conservancies. The team has worked extensively to sustain engagement with these organizations. Given the complex nature of the business models in nature-based tourism, various arrangements involving communities have been identified, predominantly including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and tourism operators (referred to as beneficiaries in **Table 1**). A few early

surveys identified the scale and severity of their situation, and the implications for women and men, which was further confirmed by stakeholders engaged in the consultations.

The **categories of stakeholders** identified, their interest in the project, the project's effect on them and their expected engagement during project implementation is presented below.

<u>Beneficiaries</u>

The project will have the main group of beneficiaries comprising two interrelated groups. The first group comprises women and men in communities living within and adjacent to nature-based tourism areas that make livelihoods or whose livelihoods are substantially supported by operations of tourism. These include women and men who themselves run nature-based tourism operations and others who provide services to conservation efforts and the tourism sector, in some instances offering concessions or leasing the land that underpins tourism. Secondly, the small and medium nature-based tourism enterprises (SMEs) and others that provide services to such operations, including accommodation, logistics, bookings and in some instances catering.

For each of the two subgroups of beneficiaries, the project plans to set up forums (one for nature-based tourism SMEs and another for community associations at regional, national and local levels) to represent the views and perspectives of women and men in both beneficiary groups. The platform staff will actively support their convening and coordination efforts in as inclusive and gender-equitable way and their collection and sharing of relevant and accurate information on impacts of pandemic on the ground, disaggregating data by sex wherever possible.

<u>Donors (Funders and Investors)</u>

African governments, bilateral and multilateral aid organizations or lending institutions, philanthropic and private investment initiatives are already involved in providing support to the nature-based tourism sector in Africa, however, there are many more that are ready to help provide the support required on the ground. This is a diverse group of international or intergovernmental bodies that align their goals with the project. They will provide support either through direct funding of components of the project, or will be engaged in supporting its beneficiaries through grants or other instruments specified through their operational capacities.

<u>Project Partners</u>

Through WWF, the Host Institution, the project is aimed to involve a variety of local actors that have expertise in working and researching at the community level, especially in the nature-based tourism sector. On the data and information management side, the Regional Centre for Mapping Resources for Development (RCMRD), also a project partner, will be responsible for establishing and running the platform that will serve to inform both donors and beneficiaries. Others will be involved in providing information on funding opportunities in their networks or providing technical expertise. Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) associations, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations as well as associations of Conservancies will help to secure the vital engagement from community beneficiaries.

It is important to note that in some instances there is an overlap between the intermediary stakeholder group and the executing partners. This has been an emergent process dictated by the nature of engagement with the different stakeholders.

<u>Intermediaries</u>

In order to operate within a constantly growing wave of efforts to support the collapse of nature- based tourism in Africa, the project team recognized that national, regional and international actors active in this

space should be engaged in order to provide legitimacy for the project and ensure alignment or complementation of initiatives.

General supporters

The most diverse group of organizations from various countries supportive of the project and its vision and objectives. They will act as promoters of potential donors and beneficiaries.

A detailed information on stakeholders is presented in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Project stakeholders, their interest in the project, the project effects on the stakeholders and their engagement during the project implementation

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
Beneficiaries			
Women and men in communities	Beneficiaries of the project as (differently) affected by COVID-19 impacts; strong interest in supporting livelihoods sustained through nature-based tourism and currently at critical risk	Positive: Gender-equitable restored revenue, livelihoods and financial security Negative: contested and possibly gendered benefits; support not equitably reaching identified beneficiaries; lack of capacity building and analysis of long term resilience	Direct beneficiaries and determinants of the collaborative platform effectiveness, inclusive of women and men
Nature-based tourism SMEs	Beneficiary of the project affected by COVID-19 impacts; have strong interest in supporting business continuity as providing vital services in the nature-based tourism sector either through women and men in communities or in collaboration with them	Positive - restored revenue and built up resilience to future shocks in nature-based tourism Negative - lack of viable support and bankruptcy;	Beneficiaries in areas overlapping with community based conservation operations
Donors (Funders and Investors)			

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
National governments in target countries	- management of the natural resources, parks, reserves and protected areas, including natural resources; -alignment of national tourism and conservation related priorities with the project; - support in financing overstretched national budgets for natural resources, parks, reserves and protected areas; streaming the funds into nature-based tourism, opportunity to contribute to gender-equitable "building back better" that leaves no one behind	- facilitation of financial support and provision nonfinancial support from donors and other stakeholders; - support on the nature - based tourism sector and alternative business modelling	- Major financiers in the COVID-19 stimulus and recovery funding - Potential collaboration on managing state-owned tourism operations; -provision of information on nature based tourism, most affected regions, businesses and communities; - provision of financial data and coordination of national level support

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development/ Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)	BMZ/KfW are instituting a major injection of emergency funding to assist relief efforts in the Eastern & Southern Africa in the community-tourism-conservation nexus. They also have a large project "Digital Africa" that may interface with this project. They are currently in the process of finalizing the selection of projects they will support. KfW also supports the SADC TFCA Financing Facility for SADC, managed by IUCN ESARO, which may commit some funding to support COVID-19 responses	Valuable contribution aligned with development plans	Clear opportunities for additional financial support from their growing COVID-19 response funds for Eastern and Southern Africa
European Union	A critical donor operating in this sphere - with a Regional Support Program, and also BIOPAMA and SOS Rapid Response and Action grants to respond to COVID-19	Valuable contribution aligned with development plans	Potential for funding to flow through the platform
FCDO	Synergies between strategic priorities of FCDO and platform. The FCDO Malawi office funds African Parks to provide alternative livelihoods to communities living around the NPs to	Valuable contribution aligned with development plans	Potential for funding to flow through the platform

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
	mitigate engagement in the illegal wildlife trade.		
UNDP	Streamlining existing funding into support for pandemic impacted communities	Provide streamlined support for the UNDP initiative: Lion's share	Co-financing of the platform, potential for funding to flow through the platform, and has a strong working relationship with governments and decision makers.
MAVA Foundation	MAVA works to support innovation through the Luc Hoffmann Institute	This is strongly aligned with MAVA's interests and concerns	Financial contribution
International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Interested in exploring potential of granting, investments, loans or debt equities	Streamlining of the emergency response phase by effective matching of investors and beneficiaries. Without close continuing coordination could result in real or perceived competition for the same space in the conservation investment realm	Synergizing efforts to leverage finance for beneficiaries and gaining support from investors;
Fauna and Flora International (FFI)	Work in Africa and access to Africa - based conservancies	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	Links to donors and investors; Potential participants in NGO roundtable
Frankfurt Zoological Society	Work in Africa and access to Africa - based conservancies Close contacts with the German government donor agencies	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	Sharing of information from close working relationships with PA Authorities in Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe
Africa Safari Foundation	Operates in Africa. Promotes linkages between eco-tourism enterprises and local suppliers of goods and	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
	services. Lobby governments, industry associations, civil society organizations and others to adopt measures that enhance the ability of ecotourism operations to contribute to sustainable development.		
Resilient Waters	Program funded by USAID/Southern Africa to build more resilient and water secure southern African communities and ecosystems in the Limpopo River Basin and Okavango River Basin. Improve the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services in southern Africa.	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	
IUCN Save Our Species	Contributes to the long-term survival of threatened species, their habitats and the people who depend on them, by supporting civil society organizations.	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	
UNEP	Main intergovernmental body operating through a variety of local and international programs supporting biodiversity conservation. Streamlining existing funding into support for pandemic impacted communities.	Project will help delivering Building Back Better programme (UNEP)	Supporting the resilience component

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
Conservation Capital (CC)	Conservation Capital has expertise in deal making and investment between communities and SMEs in Eastern and Southern Africa	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects and very interested in the opportunity presented by the Platform to provide for "safe" sharing of key information vital to supporting sound investments to key communities and SMEs	Bring investment opportunities to the Platform
SystemiQ	Supporting the development of loans to SMEs to inject some liquidity in the current crisis	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	Build coalitions, accelerate business innovation and catalyze large-scale capital.
Okavango Capital Partners (OCP)	Community development activities with focus on the Okavango sub-district, with particular attention to 21 villages and settlements.	Valuable contribution aligned with organizations mission and projects	Bring investment opportunities to the Platform
Other donors: organizations interested in supporting beneficiaries including: USAID Eastern and Southern Africa, African Development Bank, and World Bank Global Wildlife Program	Aligning the developed platform for investors with the collaborative platform	Dedicated funds will be delivered to a selected communities	Providing funds for beneficiaries selected via collaborative platform
Project Partners			
WWF US	The GEF Implementing and Executing Agency.	Proposal development lead and project management unit	PMU; Overall project lead.
WWF Regional Office for Africa	Africa - based host Institution for the Collaborative Platform	Support coordination among all platform partners.	Will oversee and manage the work of the Platform in convening,

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
		Continuous support and engagement in delivering project components on the ground.	coordinating, matchmaking donors and beneficiaries and providing business support to beneficiaries.
Regional Centre for Mapping Resources for Development (RCMRD)	RCMRD will host and manage the data clearinghouse for the project. Serve as the data repository for the data in this project.	Developing a framework for improving technical and institutional approaches to conserve biodiversity, in protected and conserved areas, through regional cooperation and capacity building activities. They are also becoming engaged in other data-related needs for the Eastern and Southern African responses to COVID-19	Serving as the Data Clearinghouse, it is anticipated that they will design, develop and host a dedicated data repository for geo-spatial information on financial needs and potential sources as well as provide an interactive platform to enable ready matchmaking.
National CBNRM networks - Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) - Mozambique CBNRM Forum (GCRN) - Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organizations (NACSO) - Zambia CBNRM Forum - Zimbabwe, CAMPFIRE Association - NCONGO – Botswana - KAWICCODA – Malawi A number of sub-national associations in the region have also been consulted	- Building strong systems for community governance - Helping to diversify and build resilience into livelihood opportunities - Facilitating collaborations and growing community voice for relevant policy advocacy at the local, national and international level	Would assist them in their work to bring emergency relief, stimulate recovery and build greater diversification and resilience to those local livelihoods often heavily reliant on NBT in the past.	Through consultations on the project strategy, national and sub-national and national community forums will: - help secure realistic, timely and vital information on revenue losses and current needs - bring voices/reality from the ground - links to communities and local partners - Proposal development
Coastal Oceans Research	Organization directly	Valuable contribution	Access to marine and

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO)	involved in research on coastal communities with vast repository of knowledge	aligned with mission and projects	coastal community organizations in focal countries of the project that are equally impacted by the pandemic: Eastern and Southern Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa)
Resource Africa	Work in a number of African countries in conservation with a particular interest at the community level. Help coordinate the community leaders network, a group of national CBNRM networks in southern Africa	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects	Supporting CBNRM networks with data collection and proposal development for the Platform
Maliasili	Direct work on the ground providing support to local communities through building the capacity of CBOs/CSOs on the ground in key conserved areas across Eastern and Southern Africa	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects. They have already demonstrated their ability in assisting local communities in the conservancies of Masai Mara to articulate their funding needs for the purpose of securing donor support in the aftermath of the pandemic.	Facilitating the Lessons Laboratory, and assistance with data collection and proposal development
The Nature Conservancy/ NatureVest	Coordinating funding for SMEs through the Africa Conservation & Communities Tourism Fund (ACCT), a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and ThirdWay Africa.	Valuable contribution aligned with mission and projects. Opportunities for one of its investment partners in the region	Co-financing; potential support for the platform through outreach and proposal development for SMEs, sharing of networks, on-ground management support for communities and SMEs, technical expertise on innovative

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
			impact financing models, potential sharing of opportunities with its investment partners and experiences in both terrestrial and marine protected area
International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)	Leads policy research and shapes policy around sustainable markets, and natural resources management	Advancing research on nature-based tourism, impact of pandemic on local populations and solutions for more diversified and resilient livelihood models in future	Developing knowledge products and assisting with technical support to policy dialogues and roundtables
Vizzuality	A company focused on data visualization committed to working on projects related to conservation; with experience in setting up a number of platforms; - work in Africa on similar projects	A repository of nature-based tourism and communities on vital meta-data sources for the most affected areas	Working with RCMRD on development of geo-spatially based analytics and visualization tools
Intermediaries			
African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN)	South Africa currently holds the AMCEN Chair (until December 2021)	South African Minister of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries hopes to promote platform as an implementation modality for AMCEN's "African Green Economy Stimulus Programme"	South Africa could play a pivotal role in formalizing support for the Platform at the AMCEN level and within the African Union's processes (they are also currently the Chair of the AU)
Southern African Development Community (SADC) & East African Community (EAC)	SADC & EAC will be essential in providing political support to the efforts of the Platform	In the process of developing COVID-19 response strategies, including tourism recovery which efforts should align with	technical and diplomatic support from the relevant governments for the Platform

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
African Parks Network (APN)	Assisting national PA authorities in the devolved management of mostly state-owned conservation areas in various African countries	APN feels that assistance to local communities and NTB SMEs in and around conserved areas in which they work is vital to sustaining these systems through the current crisis.	Assisting with deepening the understanding of tourism losses at the local level, providing support in certain countries
African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)	Involved in community conservation and wildlife conservation in Africa, particularly state-owned and managed protected areas	Valuable contribution aligned with organizations mission and projects	Provide data to inform the platform database; data and body of work to support the formulation of positions and initiatives that focus on resilience; potential financial contribution to the platform funds
Peace Parks Foundation (PPF)	Management of various parks in Africa; Support communities working for the parks	Valuable contribution aligned with organizations mission and projects	Actively partner with communities living in and around the areas they are working or helping to manage in southern Africa
WWF International/Luc Hoffmann Institute	Incubated project idea and initiated proposal development	Incubated the project idea	Support the initiative while assisting the initiative with expert knowledge, networks and funding
Ride Botswana	Operations in Africa; directly involved in support on the ground	Supporting local communities	Provide insight into local conservancies in Botswana
Royal African Safaris	Tourism operators in East/Southern Africa with relationships to communities on the ground. Strong on logistics and have insights into community tourism ventures and conservancies, especially in Kenya and Botswana	Valuable contribution aligned with organizations mission and projects	Providing access to local communities and key information on the flow of capital between tourism operators and communities in their areas of operation

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
General supporters			
Individuals and organizations from private, public and non-governmental sector that have participated in consultations			May become future donors or investors, intermediaries or implementers of the project
The African Union (AU)	Interested in international collaboration on easing impacts of pandemic on 55 member states; Political support for the Platform via the Government of South Africa who currently hold the Chair of the AU and AMCEN		Potential interest of national governments in Africa to adopt the Platform as a contribution to their African Green Stimulus Initiative and as a part of the annual reporting framework
African Leadership University	Research on the nature-based tourism, conservation economies and other issues linking conservation and livelihoods	Advancing research on nature-based tourism, impact of pandemic on local populations	Supporting the long-term progress of the project impact, focusing on the resilience component (Component 3). Potential work: -Awareness raising in Africa and globally (e.g. ALU's Business of Conservation Annual Conference) - Building African capacity in the Wildlife Economy - Access to resources (data, networks, human capital)
University of Florida University of Oxford	Research on the nature-based tourism, conservation economies and other issues linking	Advancing research on nature-based tourism, impact of pandemic on local populations	Expertise in nature-based tourism related research

Stakeholder	Interests in the Project	Project Effect(s) on Stakeholder	Engagement During Project Implementation
Other academic institutions in Africa and beyond	conservation and livelihoods		
Blue Ventures	Expertise on coastal ecosystems and communities reliant on marine life and have worked on establishing ventures between communities and tourism and other markets		Access to marine and coastal community organizations that are equally impacted by the pandemic
International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP)	The IGCP calls for the development of a resilient action plan in the face of COVID-19 impact on tourism and livelihoods to support national and local partners to ensure the long-term survival of the now endangered mountain gorillas.		Links to communities, community entities management and governance structures directly and indirectly engaged with tourism related to mountain gorilla

5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The purpose of the Plan is to ensure appropriate and consistent involvement of an inclusive range of diverse stakeholders, including women and men in target communities, in every stage of the project implementation, supporting effective communication and working relationships. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will ensure that the views and inputs of stakeholders will be taken into consideration as early as possible and throughout project implementation.

The consultation processes will be continued throughout the project as required by the nature of the collaborative platform ensuring steady growing interest of beneficiaries and donors and maintaining inclusive and diverse representation, including among women and men in target communities. The PMU will ensure that the information disclosed, the format, language and the methods used to communicate the information will be tailored to each stakeholder group (see **Table 2**). Women and men in local communities and indigenous groups are intended to receive information about the project via appropriate channels chosen to reflect preferences (for example gender differences in access to technology and language), such as the internet, public notices, SMS, social media, as well as national guidelines and traditional mechanisms for consultations.

The plan also anticipates that there will be a constant flux of activities to popularize the project among potential beneficiaries and donors and collect sex-disaggregated data on experienced losses among women and men in order to assess potential scale of support required and ensure its distribution is gender-equitable.

The stakeholder engagement plan will be aligned with the gender analysis and gender action plan and will ensure that views of women and other relevant groups will be appropriately considered.

Proposed Strategy to incorporate views of women and other relevant groups (minorities, elderly, young other marginalized groups)

It is expected that community interaction will be realized primarily through intermediaries such as the national CBNRM networks. Capacity development training on gender-sensitive methods for consultation will be conducted with the intermediaries when necessary to ensure that they are equipped to enable gender-equitable engagement. This will ensure the use of methods that will allow for the views of women and vulnerable groups to be incorporated in the project design, planning and implementation of activities at community level.

Proposed guidance and methods to be used by intermediaries:

- A combination of methods will be used when consulting and engaging local communities, whilst respecting all participants' views and knowledge. This will include sex-disaggregated focus group discussions using various criteria depending on situation (per economic activity, age group, geographical locations etc.), ideally facilitated by someone of the same gender to increase willingness to participate freely; key informants discussions with emphasis on women on specific topics (e.g. to understand historical perspective of certain activities, gender perception and realities etc.). The project will be gender-sensitive in its application of these methods, ensuring that the timing, duration and location of engagements does not discriminate against certain groups (e.g. due to disability, some may come from far) to ensure there is participation of all intended members of communities. This will avoid the risks of women and other relevant groups being excluded to take part due to: being excluded from public gatherings as a result of their disability, gender orientation, economic activity, religion or tribalism and, in turn, will prevent results reinforcing existing inequalities.

- In consulting and engaging women and other relevant groups, communication will be tailored to suit local realities, for example in appropriate local languages to ensure effective inclusion of women (whose typically lower levels of education means they may not be confident in English or French). The discussions at community level will be led by women or men representatives from the community.

- A community forum will be set up; comprising sub-groups of women and men and a gender-balanced overall composition, that will provide regular updates and feedback systems to ensure gender-equitable inclusion in consultations, that will benefit from the project and be informed on the progress of the project.

Contingency arrangements for all data collection in communities within the focal countries:

Consultation will be delivered within the prescribed COVID-19-related country or regions regulations. However, noting that the proposed engagement methods involve in-person work in some countries and given the continued uncertainties around the ever-evolving restrictions and regulations regarding management of the COVID-19 pandemic in the focal countries of this project, the project needs an adaptive, contingency planning approach. To this end and in consultation with proposed project partners, data collection will proceed through remote means where necessary and possible. Where necessary simple forms will be used in the absence of face-to-face meetings; these will be completed directly online with the help of

others living in the nearby environs or through the use of email exchange. In the worst case scenario, telephone interviews or group Zoom calls will be conducted for the purpose of data collection. Notably, there have been no significant breakdowns in the provision of connectivity by primary internet providers in these countries since the beginning of the pandemic. If travel and face-to-face contact is allowed, project partners or intermediaries will comply with the WWF's Field Work Guidelines.

Key stakeholders categories and engagement methods are outlined in **Table 2**.

TABLE 2 Categories of stakeholders and proposed engagement methods

Stakeholders		Engagement Methods/Means Engagement, frequency and milestones	Activities	Responsible Party(ies)	Required Resources
Beneficiaries	Women and men in communities	Primary engagement will be through the national CBNRM networks for communities, and SME networks for SMEs.\n\nCBNRM networks will collect data from communities (in person where conditions allow) and assist with proposal development, assisted by regional NGOs.	Data collection (sex-disaggregated where possible), proposal development, capacity building	WWF (PMU and platform host), RCMRD, CBNRM networks, supporting NGOs	Staff time, travel and meeting costs, IT infrastructure costs, communications costs
	Nature-based tourism SMEs	SMEs will be invited to register on the platform through various networks, including in-country tourism associations and the IUCN WPA Tourism and Protected Areas Specialist Group\n\nAdditional methods:\n\nWorkshop, virtual or/and face-to-face meetings, local radio, newspapers, SMS and social media\n\n**First 6 months:**\n- Online surveys and on-site interviews with communities and SMEs on	Data collection and proposal development	WWF (PMU and platform host), RCMRD, CBNRM networks, supporting NGOs	

Stakeholders		Engagement Methods/Means Engagement, frequency and milestones	Activities	Responsible Party(ies)	Required Resources
		their losses and help needed; - Workshops and meetings ensuring inclusion of vulnerable groups, their access to information on the project, and to benefits **Milestone** 1: baseline data for beneficiaries distributed across range countries **First year:** - Workshops and meetings promoting platform and benefits **Milestone 2**: 50% of the beneficiaries reached and supported **Second and third year:** - Workshops and meetings for project and platform promotion at least every 6 months; **Milestone 3**: 100% of the beneficiaries reached and supported - Collection of data and analysis of best long term support, including development of new, resilient business models **Milestone 4**: Supported beneficiaries collaborate and test new business models			
Supporters	Donors (Governments, bilateral & multilateral agencies)	Emails, virtual and in person (where possible) meetings, the platform	Sharing data and proposals from communities	WWF (PMU and platform host), RCMRD,	Staff time, travel and meeting costs, IT infrastructur

Stakeholders		Engagement Methods/Means Engagement, frequency and milestones	Activities	Responsible Party(ies)	Required Resources
		Pre-project: - consultations **First 6 months:** - intensive promotion campaign, potential convenings and presentation of the data collected every three to six months - technical advice on engagement with the platform - presentation of funding proposals **Milestone 5:** Amount of funds and other support generated through platform supporting 30% of beneficiaries **Second and third year:** - Periodic (3 - 6 months) convenings promoting the platform and latest data - presentation of funding proposals **Milestone 6:** amount of funds and other support generated to support 100% of beneficiaries by the third year	and SMEs, keeping engaged in platform activities	supporting NGOs, consultants	e costs, communications costs, Fundraising capacity
	Investors		Sharing data and proposals from communities and SMEs, keeping engaged in platform activities	WWF (PMU and platform host), RCMRD, supporting NGOs, consultants	
	NGOs (International and national)	Emails, virtual and in person (where possible) meetings, the platform	Sharing data and proposals from communities and SMEs, keeping engaged in platform activities	WWF (PMU and platform host), RCMRD, supporting NGOs, consultants	

Stakeholders		Engagement Methods/Means Engagement, frequency and milestones	Activities	Responsible Party(ies)	Required Resources
	State Protected Area Authorities	Emails, virtual and in person (where possible) meetings, the platform	Sharing data and proposals from communities and SMEs, keeping engaged in platform activities	WWF (PMU and platform host), RCMRD, supporting NGOs, consultants	
General		Emails, virtual meetings, periodic newsletter, other tools to sustain interest

Frequency:
- monthly newsletter providing update on the project and support given
-website updates | Project appraisal | | Communication costs (e.g. produce newsletters, reports) |

6. Timetable

The schedule of interaction with various stakeholders is presented in **Table 2**. The dates by which the activities will be undertaken will be decided in collaboration with project partners at the inception of the project.

As outlined before, the implementation of this stakeholder engagement began at very early stages of project document development to ensure ownership, confidence, and reflection of priorities over time.

The stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the project cycle including during identification of beneficiaries (including women and other relevant groups) and during periodic monitoring to allow for reflection of the progress, adjustment and corrections.

7. Resources and Responsibilities

WWF-US, the project management unit, will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the project's Stakeholder Engagement Plan at the whole-project level.

WWF-ROA, the platform host, will be responsible for SEP implementation in the 11 project countries including the convening and active support of the beneficiaries, supporters, and project steering committee.

A 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 aim to have gender parity in representation, and include representatives of the different project partnering agencies, and will mainly consist 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.

8. Grievances Mechanism

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will establish a process at the project inception workshop for resolving any and all grievances related to the project.

Instructions are provided on WWF website (as below) with contact details and procedures.

All grievances will be reviewed and responded to in writing within 10 working days of receipt. Both complaints and responses will be recorded into the project monitoring. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the WWF US - GEF project agency.

A grievance can be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the Project Team, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at:

Email: SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org

Mailing address:

Project Complaints Officer
Safeguards Complaints,
World Wildlife Fund
1250 24th Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

The PCO will respond within 10 business days of receipt, and claims will be filed and included in project monitoring.

Stakeholders may also submit a complaint online or over the phone through an independent third-party platform at https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html.

9. Monitoring and Reporting

The target beneficiaries and project affected groups will not only be the source of information but also provide situational analysis for monitoring and reporting purposes. Given this, the process to monitor and report on progress of the stakeholder engagement will include and involve target beneficiaries and affected groups throughout the project cycle.

Throughout the project, the following will be involved in monitoring:

- Activities related to stakeholder engagement will be documented and reported by the PMU on a half-yearly basis (as part of regular reporting), with sex-disaggregated data where possible. The monitoring visits and meetings conducted will be documented and feedback reported back to the local communities and stakeholders with concerns or interest in the site or activity.

- Independent third parties may be invited to confirm the implementation of this stakeholder engagement plan and other project targets. This will enable transparency, build confidence and encourage open opinions.

- WWF GEF Agency will also take part in monitoring for the purpose of supporting the project and support on issues affecting timely and quality project implementation. WWF US will review the quality of outputs and progress against the stakeholder engagement plan.

- The PSC will also take part in monitoring the project's compliance to the plan at least twice a year and advises (or take decisions) appropriately and as per the standards set forward for the stakeholder engagement plan.