



## African Wildlife Forensics Network

### Regional Sharing of Wildlife Forensic Services

17 – 19 May

Phakalane Hotel, Gaborone, Botswana



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



**UKaid**  
from the Department for  
International Development



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents the process and outcomes of a workshop on wildlife forensics held in Gaborone, Botswana from 17–19 May 2016. The workshop forms part of the ‘African Wildlife Forensics Network’ project, a two year initiative supported by the UK Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund. The work is led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with TRACE Wildlife Forensics Network (TRACE) as the primary implementing partner.

The project aims to begin assessing, establishing and coordinating wildlife forensic capacity within several Central and Southern African countries, namely Angola, Botswana, Gabon, Malawi, Namibia, Republic of Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These goals will be met through the implementation of a series of needs assessments, training and regional workshops, undertaken to support the implementation and enforcement of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora (CITES) and the long-term African commitment to the development of wildlife law enforcement.

This workshop brought together senior representatives from national agencies as well as key regional experts in the fields of wildlife law enforcement and forensic science, to discuss how wildlife forensic services could be developed on a regional basis.

A series of presentations and discussions throughout the workshop generated a wealth of information relating to wildlife forensic science, regional wildlife law enforcement efforts, national needs and possible models for establishing cross-border forensic services.

Based on the information presented and the expertise within the workshop, participants identified a range of issues that would need to be addressed across areas of Enforcement, Science and Prosecution, to implement a network of wildlife forensic service provision.

On the final day of the workshop, participants focused on identifying solutions to each of the issues identified across the Enforcement, Science and Prosecution categories.

Based on these discussions, the project team have distilled the next steps required to increase the implementation of wildlife forensic analysis more broadly within Africa.

### **1. Integrated wildlife forensic strategy**

There is a recognised need to increase the uptake and use of forensic analysis for wildlife law enforcement in many African countries. This must ultimately involve training and capacity building on the ground. However, to implement a regional model in southern or west-central Africa, and to extend such an approach continent-wide, it is important to consider a strategic plan for how the African Wildlife Forensics Network will develop. This should include an understanding of how law enforcement officials, forensic science practitioners, capacity building partners and donors will interact to minimise duplication of effort, competition and bureaucracy, and to maximise the integration and impact of forensic science in wildlife law enforcement. Given the interdependency between forensic science, law enforcement and prosecutions, a strategic plan should also refer to the timing of principle activities in relation to other capacity building measures within the larger law enforcement framework.

As a next step, UNODC and TRACE will devise a strategic plan for implementation of the African Wildlife Forensics Network.

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## 2. Project activities

At an operational level, a number of activities have been identified during the workshop to address issues arising in relation to the development of an African Wildlife Forensics Network with regional service provision. These activities are considered as necessary steps to take irrespective of the outcomes of high level strategic planning and therefore there is an argument for seeking to implement these without delay. This report summarises the proposed activities and provides estimates of timescale for delivery. Activities are identified as those that are expected to be actioned during the current project cycle (until May 2017) and those that would require longer-term implementation and management.

It should be stressed that these activities were identified by national representatives and regional stakeholders with experience of capacity building in the region. As such, the project ideas are considered to be both warranted and feasible.

Overall, the workshop served to highlight the interest and commitment of the African partner countries to support this project to develop wildlife forensic capacity at national and regional levels. UNODC and TRACE will continue to provide expert technical assistance to develop an African Wildlife Forensics Network, to facilitate the employment of forensic techniques to support CITES enforcement and tackle the illegal wildlife trade.