



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Launching Protected Area Network Management and Building Capacity in Post-conflict South Sudan

Project Coordination Meeting

1. MEETING MINUTES

Date and time: 15th May 2013; 10.00 – 12.15

Location: UNDP Meeting Room, Juba, South Sudan

Participants:

- ▶ Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang, Minister (Chair), MWCT
- ▶ Lt Gen. Alfred Akwoch, Advisor, MWCT
- ▶ Joseph Oroto, Director General – Tourism, MWCT
- ▶ Giel Thier Waar, Legal Advisor, MWCT
- ▶ Col. Minasona Lero Peter, Director of Wildlife Management, MWCT
- ▶ Ding Larn Yual, Assistant Director Tourism, MWCT
- ▶ Tom Rhodes, Director – Economic Growth, USAID
- ▶ Balazs Horvath, Country Director, UNDP
- ▶ Amanuel Gebremedhir, Chief CPRU, UNDP
- ▶ Martin Dramani, Programme Analyst, UNDP
- ▶ Proscovia Dira, Project Associate, UNDP
- ▶ James Kahurananga, Technical Advisor, MWCT/AWF
- ▶ Dr Paul Elkan, Country Director, WCS
- ▶ Rob Craig, Deputy Director, WCS
- ▶ Dave Henson, Protected Area Project Coordinator, WCS (rapporteur)
- ▶ Michael Lopidia, Boma N.P. Coordinator, WCS
- ▶ Paul Peter Awol, Badingilo N.P. Coordinator, WCS

Introductions and welcoming remarks

- Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang, opened the meeting by welcoming the project partners and to the second quarterly coordination meeting supporting the implementation of the GEF Project.
- A minute of silence was observed to remember Brig. Kolor Pinto and the other wildlife forces that were recently killed in Boma.
- UNDP Country Director then spoke and highlighted that this project is an important project for UNDP and demonstrates how donors, NGOs and government agencies can work well together.
- Rob Craig, WCS Deputy Director, then briefly provided an overview of the agenda for the meeting, and a review of the minutes from the last meeting, which were endorsed as accurate by participants.

Summary of Discussions and Presentations

- WCS Country Director, Dr Paul Elkan, began the meeting by providing participants with an update of the security situation in Boma National Park. He clarified that as of about 2 weeks ago much of Boma National Park has been under control of the David Yau Yau group. MWCT and WCS staff of the Murle

group have remained in place, and that a small number of casualties have been incurred by wildlife forces.

- Dr Elkan also raised concerns about the circumstances of Brig. Kolor Pinto's death, and accusations that the SPLA may have been involved. Once the situation in Boma has calmed, he highlighted the need for an inquiry to ascertain the facts around this incident. In addition, a high level visit will be needed by WCS and MWCT to Boma to assess the impact of current events on PA operations and plan recovery.
- Rob Craig then provided an overview of progress made supporting the MWCT at the central level. This was followed by a brief review of each focal protected area by:
 - Dave Henson, WCS Protected Area Project Coordinator reviewing Southern National Park;
 - Michael Lopidia, Boma N.P. Coordinator providing an overview of Boma; and
 - Paul Peter Awol, Badingilo N.P. Coordinator, review Badingilo activities.

An overview of these presentations is provided in the Annex.

Closing and Next Steps

- Discussions were held following the presentations, and a number of resolutions and action items were discussed and/or agreed. These were summarized by Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang as the meeting drew to a close and are set out below in the following section.
- Tom Rhodes concluded with remarks from USAID by inviting the MWCT will be invited to participate in events planned in Juba following on from the recent South Sudan Economic Partners Forum in Washington.
- Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang then closed the meeting by appreciating WCS for their efforts in implementing the project and by thanking those present for their time and effort participating in the meeting.

2. MEETING RESOLUTIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Technical Priorities

- Convene consultative workshops for the draft bills for Tourism and Wildlife & Protected Areas in June. Once the Wildlife Bill is approved this will provide the legal framework for the implementation of the PAN Strategic Plan and subsequent demarcation of protected area borders.
- Investigate potential to support MWCT operations through purchase of VSAT equipment to enable internet connection and possibility of procurement of a pre-fabricated building to increase office space and house the proposed MWCT Media Centre on an interim basis.
- Begin development of Protected Area Network Strategic Plan. This will identify any new protected areas that should be established, any existing areas that should be degazetted, and outline potential revisions to the borders of existing areas to optimize their effectiveness.
- Develop publicity materials to promote South Sudan. Building on recent progress with newsletters, calendar and documentary filming, this should include MWCT website, brochures and posters and be linked to training and the provision of media equipment under the GEF project
- Investigate feasibility of supporting training of additional 20 MWCT Tourism Directorate staff in Kenya on a three month training course being provided by the Kenya Wildlife Service under the GEF project budget.
- Collect equipment to support development of publicity materials, and carry out ecological surveys and protected area planning/monitoring activities that are ready for hand over but are currently being stored on behalf of the Ministry by WCS.
- Carry out visit to Boma National Park once the security situation has improved to assess the impact of the current situation on park infrastructure, equipment and operations and make plans to facilitate the recovery and normalization of park management operations.

MWCT Administrative Issues

- Badingilo N.P. requires a senior officer to be appointed to the area as park warden to oversee all operations and serve as a focal point for project activities
- Deployment of ranger forces:
 - Badingilo N.P. requires more than the current actual deployment of around 60 rangers to the park to enable effective management of the area
 - Southern N.P. requires more than the current deployment of around 65 rangers in the Lakes State section to enable effective management of the area (ideally around 250)
- Clarification is needed of reporting lines and chain of command with regard state or central government management of national parks, and the staff deployed in these areas.

Project Management

- Proper coordination in project planning and implementation, and regarding information sharing, remains important between MWCT, donors and partners.
- The next project coordination meeting will take place in July. As the secretariat, WCS will send of the necessary documents, including the agenda in advance of the meeting.

3. ANNEX: SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY PROGRESS AND PLANS

Central MWCT Support and Capacity Building

Policy & laws:

Tourism and the Wildlife Conservation & Protected Area Policies and Bills:

- 300 copies of Policies produced for distribution to the Parliament for endorsement (already approved by Council of Ministers)
- Drafts of Bills submitted to Ministry on 18 March
- Ongoing work on development of tourism master plan to guide the development of South Sudan's tourism products and subsidiary regulations to support the tourism bill
- Stakeholder consultation workshop to review the bills with representatives from the ten states as well as central government and international partners for bills planned for June/ July 2013

Natural Resource Management Group (NRMG)

Support given with Dr Brian D'Silva in formalizing this inter-ministerial natural resource management policy, advisory and coordination body with a clear mandate and roles. He met with senior government representatives (Vice-president, Governors, and Ministers, constitutional review commission) to build political support. Also, used 2010 NRMG concession mapping to explain the cross-sectoral role that the NRMG can play compiling and disseminating information from the various line ministries and informing investment decision-making. NRMG to be discussed at Washington conference of GOSS/ USG.

Law enforcement

WCS expert came for 2 weeks in April to undertake assessment and training for developing a standardized Law Enforcement Monitoring system for South Sudan's PAs. This will support an overall strengthening of law enforcement capacity and operations at both protected area (strategic planning and motivation of rangers) and national level (standardized reporting, improved communications). The system will utilize software called SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) and mobile hand-held data collection devices to help simplify and standardize mapping and reporting. Information needs and system requirements will be developed with Ministry in coming months.

- **Lantoto N.P:** End March – six poachers were arrested with bushmeat and 4 AK47s confiscated at Pakari boma (Lasu payam) and prosecuted to six months in prison (those with guns) and SSP150 (those without)

Media

- Monthly WCS newsletter “News from the Bush”. Four editions: January, February, March and April produced and distributed.
- WCS 2013 calendar was finalized and distributed
- Support to Cosmos /National Geographic filming in April and May

Next Steps

- Elephant collaring and aerial survey work to be undertaken later in May and June according in line with workplan
- Tourism expert to visit in June to discuss tourism master plan and priority regulations. Also to support the review of the bills.
- PA assessment and development of the strategy with MWCT to guide rationalisation of the country’s protected area network, with the aim of identifying areas to be degazetted, new areas to be gazetted and any revisions of borders needed, will be a priority, with a planned workshop on this subject later in the year
- The option for supporting an institutional review/ assessment process for MWCT of potential management models and mechanisms that could be utilized to improve the effectiveness of PA management in South Sudan.
- The MWCT website will be completed and work will start on developing brochures and other targeted conservation messages (especially relating to key species at risk of extinction in the coming years).
- The equipments procured by the project to support the wildlife management, research, training and media departments ready to be handed over at an agreed date and follow-up training provided as required.

Key Challenges

- Contracting for construction and the procurement of equipment under the Akobo – Pochalla Road conservation mitigation intervention is on hold pending security stabilisation
- Government austerity measures have restricted the operations and ability of MWCT and other government counterparts in undertake their role in project activities.

Southern National Park

Community Engagement

- Socio-economic surveys and awareness raising activities completed in/around the borders of Southern National Park in Wulu County, Lakes State
- Estimated that nearly 3,000 people reached, including community leaders, local politicians, and wildlife forces

Infrastructure and equipment

- SNP headquarters construction is now nearing completion, with only internal wiring and other minor tasks remaining.
- Aerial survey and subsequent ground truthing carried out of new ranger outpost location in Western Equatoria State, in collaboration with state wildlife forces and FFI. Meeting also held with State Minister Local Government and Nagero County Commissioner.
- Aerial survey of new outpost location completed in Warrap State, and route of access road mapped out; meeting held to Director Wildlife Warrap state to brief him on the project and road clearance is set to begin next dry season.

- Construction of airstrip at park headquarters is now well underway and should be completed within the following quarter.

Law enforcement

- WCS expert visited SNP for four days to assess potential for developing centralized LEM system to be implemented in PAs across South Sudan.
- Training of 16 rangers carried out at Bhar Gil outpost in GPS and camera use, and the completion of LEM forms
- Patrols carried from two outposts, but scope limited to small number of men deployed to the park and limited ammunition.

Next Steps

- Need to build on past collaboration with the new SNP Park Warden for Lakes State, include review of work plan and identification of new priorities
- Also need to engage with and inform new Commissioner of Wulu County following promotion of previous commissioner to Lakes State Government
- Continued improvements to SNP infrastructure to help enable operations to continue throughout the rains, focusing on road improvements and airstrip construction
- Additional training and equipping of ranger forces as/when they are redeployed to the park to help establish systematic and regular patrol regime
- Support ongoing construction of Zumwe Ranger post in Western Equatoria State, which will hopefully continue during the rains.

Key Challenges

- Insufficient men deployed to SNP to enable management of the area. Around 250 requested, and have been ordered to the park but are not yet deployed.
- Many of the 45 rangers trained by MWCT/WCS in SNP have been redeployed. Ideally these men should be included in any men redeployed to the park, where possible.

Boma National Park

General situation

Areas in Boma were generally calm in January 2013, but from 1st February 2013 the armed conflict that started in Pibor areas spilled over to Labarab village and gradually spread all over Boma which then brought to a halt all conservation activities by the MWCT and WCS in Boma.

Law enforcement:

- On 24th February 2013, 5 poachers were arrested at Khor Gana (7 Km northeast of BNP HQ); the poachers were cautioned by the park authorities. 4 AK47 rifles and 200 Kg of bushmeat were confiscated.
- WCS staff delivered refresher training for 11 personnel (5 rangers and 6 WCS staff) on how to use LEM tools (GPS, digital cameras, compass, law enforcement monitoring forms, and binoculars) from 4th to 5th April 2013.

Infrastructure and equipment:

- Terrain Construction Company completed construction of the BNP HQ workshop and latrine by mid April 2013, only remaining completion of wiring and fitting workshop table.
- WCS delivered office assets to BNP HQ to facilitate their work. The items delivered includes tables, chairs, office furniture and meeting tables.

Next Steps

- Continued monitoring of events in Boma, with assessment visit as soon as the security situation stabilises.

Badingilo National Park

Law Enforcement:

Notable success were achieved by covering a larger area of the park than previously, these include:

- On 17th February 2013 a poacher arrested in Lafon and with an AK47 rifle and 12 kg of bushmeat.
- On 20th February 2013, 4 poachers arrested 8 km south of Lafon for killing and transporting 100 kgs of bushmeat in a truck- the case is awaiting trial in Torit.
- On 8th March 2013 2 SPLA soldiers were apprehended for killing and transporting 80 kgs of bushmeat on a motorbike and were handed over to SPLA command in Mangala.
- On 17th March 2013 a patrol from Bala Pools HQ discovered a poaching camp suspected to be SPLA from Mangala and seized 70 kg of bushmeat.
- On 17th March armed poachers left 2 AK47 behind after seeing rangers approaching on patrol.
- Arrest of 3 SPLA soldiers on Moger-Lafon road on April 16th 2013 (handed to Division HQ in Moger for trial)
- Ivory dealer arrested in Eastern Equatoria State, prosecuted and trial (2 years imprisonment and fine of 3000 SSP)

Visit by Dr. Emma Stokes, WCS-Africa Program regional Advisor/Conservation Scientist and discussion on effective LEM system for protected areas and country's levels.

Infrastructure and Construction work:

- Garage and fencing of the Park HQ are nearing completion - platforms for accommodation tents at HQ are underway and fencing of area is nearing completion
- Construction of ranger administration post in Lafon area is nearing completion, and the clearance of Lafon airstrip is continuing
- Panamkor ranger site identified and process to start construction are underway (this is in the tiang migratory corridor)

Community Awareness and Security:

- Community awareness raising and community security partnership in Gemaiza is progressing through community livelihood programmes (fisheries project)

Next Steps

- Training of rangers in LEM in Badingilo 15 rangers in Bala (HQ), Lafon, and Gerkeki.
- Continued support to law enforcement and patrols
- Delivery of more equipments to operationalise the HQ
- Community leadership training to be re-scheduled for the following quarter
- Continued community awareness raising and development of security partnerships in Gemaiza

Key Challenges:

- Unresolved issue of there being no park warden for what is now an extensive period of time.
- Insufficient number of wildlife forces for effective control and management of the area.
- Lack of a ranger posts north of park's HQ (there is an urgent need for one at Sudan Safari).
- Increasing tree felling, charcoal production and agriculture by rangers, SPLA and communities.
- Need for cooperation with SPLA, including initiation of joint patrols and sharing of information.