



AWF WILDLIFE ECONOMY PROGRAM

WHAT ARE WILDLIFE ECONOMIES?

Wildlife economies use wildlife—plants and animals—as assets to create economic value in ways that align with conservation objectives and contribute to sustainable development. They are tools to change the narrative from wildlife being a resource to wildlife being an asset that governments, communities, and businesses can invest in for the long-term security of people.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

African countries are developing at nature's expense. Commodity production systems are trending towards overuse of the environment to meet food security and other economic growth targets. These production systems are increasingly driving habitat conversion and fragmentation, replacing nature-based land use with monocultures and other extractive activities. In addition, protected areas that are the centers of biodiversity richness are surrounded by poverty-stricken communities, demonstrating a lack of effective strategies to harness the transformative economic potential in biodiversity-rich areas.

A robust wildlife economy that is low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive can significantly reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities, provide incentives for biodiversity conservation, and increase human well-being. Such economies are instrumental in advancing a people-centered approach to conservation, achieving global biodiversity protection targets such as 30 by 30, and securing the viability of wildlife as an economic land use.



Targeting three levels—landscape, national, and continental—AWF works to ensure wildlife-economy activities are ethically undertaken and underpinned by the best policy and management practices, including effective, transparent, and justifiable wildlife management systems.

OUR APPROACH

AWF's wildlife economies program helps local communities and governments unlock value and benefits from wildlife and habitat conservation. We are supporting countries in the recovery of nature-based tourism, landscape restoration and diversification of sustainable livelihoods, private-sector engagement for building sustainable wildlife-based economies, and the application of legal and science-based standards for the harvest and use of wildlife. Specifically, we:

- Support assessments of the status and contribution of wildlife economies to livelihoods and larger economies and produce integrated development plans, growth strategies, and investment blueprints that promote nature-based economies
- Develop products with appropriate data and knowledge to support decision-making for policies that drive and safeguard wildlife economies
- Share learnings and collaboration to build capacity among countries and institutions working to develop wildlife economies

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

At the national level, AWF is supporting Zimbabwe's Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry to produce an inaugural *State of the Biodiversity Economy* report. The report will illustrate the current and potential value of biodiversity to the Zimbabwean economy. The inaugural report will include an innovative finance and investment blueprint for providing environmental/biodiversity benefits, supporting social objectives, contributing to the national economy, and providing opportunities for sustained private-sector engagement and investment.



WILDLIFE ECONOMIES

ECOTOURISM

Non-consumptive tourism related to nature/wildlife.

PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Payments to landowners who have agreed to take specific actions to manage their land or watersheds to provide ecological services such as water purification, flood mitigation, or carbon sequestration.

FOREST PRODUCTS

Timber and non-timber forest products used commercially and for subsistence purposes.

HUNTING

Trophy hunting and game meat hunting.

FISHING

Artisanal, recreational, or small-scale fishing.

WILDLIFE TRADE

Wildlife ranching with breeding wild/indigenous animals for hunting, game meat, wildlife products, tourism, and other uses.

CARBON MARKET

Projects that earn income through REDD+ and other mechanisms that sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and conserve/preserve natural systems of carbon.

BIOPROSPECTING

The search for plant and animal species from which medicinal drugs and other commercially valuable compounds can be obtained for products such as personal hygiene, cosmetics, complementary medicines, food flavorings, and oils.

At the landscape level, working closely with the government of Rwanda, AWF is supporting work to develop the Volcanoes Landscape Conservation and Development Masterplan. The partners seek to leverage wildlife assets and other economic opportunities within production sectors in the landscape to support sustainable and resilient community livelihoods.

At the continental level—working with partners including the African Leadership

University, United Nations Environment Programme, African Wildlife Economy Institute, and South African Biodiversity Institute, among others—AWF led the creation of the African Wildlife Economies Working Group, a platform for interested institutions and other stakeholders to collaborate, promote best practices, and collectively build common capabilities that help advance the wildlife economy discourse across Africa.



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People and Wildlife Thrive*

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