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EAST AFRICA

ENVIRONMENT

East Africa is endowed with a wealth of biodiversity and natural resources, including some of the most spectacular wildlife and ecosystems in the world. When managed effectively and equitably, these vast yet fragile lands, water and wildlife resources – or natural capital – can contribute significantly to national and regional economies and improve the lives of local communities.

East Africa's tourism industry, which is almost entirely dependent on wildlife and protected areas, contributes 7.5-10 percent of GDP to the region, and it is a major driver of job creation.

The pressure of growing human populations coupled with changing weather patterns, rampant wildlife poaching and trafficking across porous borders, and disjointed management of shared natural resources threatens the conservation of East Africa's natural capital. Many priority landscapes and wildlife habitats in East Africa are crossed by political boundaries, making it critical for nations to work together on the survival of wildlife and the habitats they depend on. A regional effort is needed to address national-level problems that are exacerbating the decline in wildlife populations and habitat loss.

CONSERVING EAST AFRICA'S NATURAL CAPITAL

USAID is supporting a regional program led by the East Africa Community to strengthen regional leadership and policy harmonization to conserve and manage shared environment and natural resources in East Africa. Through two regional projects (Conserving Natural Capital and Enhancing Collaborative Management of Transboundary Resources in East Africa (CONNECT) and the Economics of Natural Capital in East Africa), USAID is providing research, data and economic analysis on the current and

potential value of natural capital in East Africa and providing East African leaders with innovative methodologies, tools and best practices to take action. The projects support stakeholder learning and advocacy and support decision makers with the evidence they need to formulate effective policy and enforcement. The projects enable the East African Community to deliver more effectively on their mandate and become a strong institutional leader for the region in support of East Africa's journey to self-reliance.

To improve awareness of conservation benefits, USAID is partnering with Internews' Earth Journalism Network to enhance the quality and quantity of reporting on threats to conservation and wildlife, and on solutions to those threats. Their work will help increase awareness in East Africa of the importance of conservation, with a focus on wildlife trafficking and on the corruption and cronyism that allows it to thrive. The partnership provides East African journalists with training, and story production and distribution support for conservation stories. It also provides promising journalists with production stipends that allow them to spend time researching and investigating important conservation pieces. The partnership will increase East African media coverage of conservation and wildlife issues.

USAID is also partnering with Wildlife Direct to raise awareness on wildlife conservation, through Wildlife Warriors. This is a show that provides perspectives on conservation conveyed through Africa's conservation heroes.

COUNTERING WILDLIFE CRIME

Wildlife crime threatens the security, economy and biodiversity of East Africa. International networks for poaching, transit and sale of illegal wildlife products target wildlife populations across borders, creating a complex problem that transcends national boundaries.

In line with the U.S. National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking and the U.S. Eliminate, Neutralize and Disrupt Wildlife Trafficking Act, USAID is supporting the East African Community and partners to enhance wildlife management and improve the enforcement and prosecution of wildlife crime in East Africa. A new wildlife crime information sharing database called the Trade in Wildlife Information eXchange (TWIX), helps law enforcement officers in the region share information to stop traffickers.

USAID has partnered with the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) on a seven-year project that utilizes DOI's expertise in law enforcement, investigation and prosecution to address the transnational threat of wildlife crime. The partnership provides expertise and training on wildlife protection, law enforcement, and prosecution at national levels in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

BUDGET: FY 2019

\$6.5 million

KEY GOVERNMENT PARTNERS:

- East African Community
- Ministries of Tourism and Wildlife, Ministries of Environment and Forestry, and Regional Development Authorities

KEY IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

- USAID missions in Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya
- Ministries of Environment in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya
- Wildlife Authorities in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- International Union for Conservation of Nature
- World Wildlife Fund
- TRAFFIC
- INTERPOL
- Environmental Incentives, LLC
- Internews
- Wildlife Direct
- Kenya Environment and Science Journalists Association

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