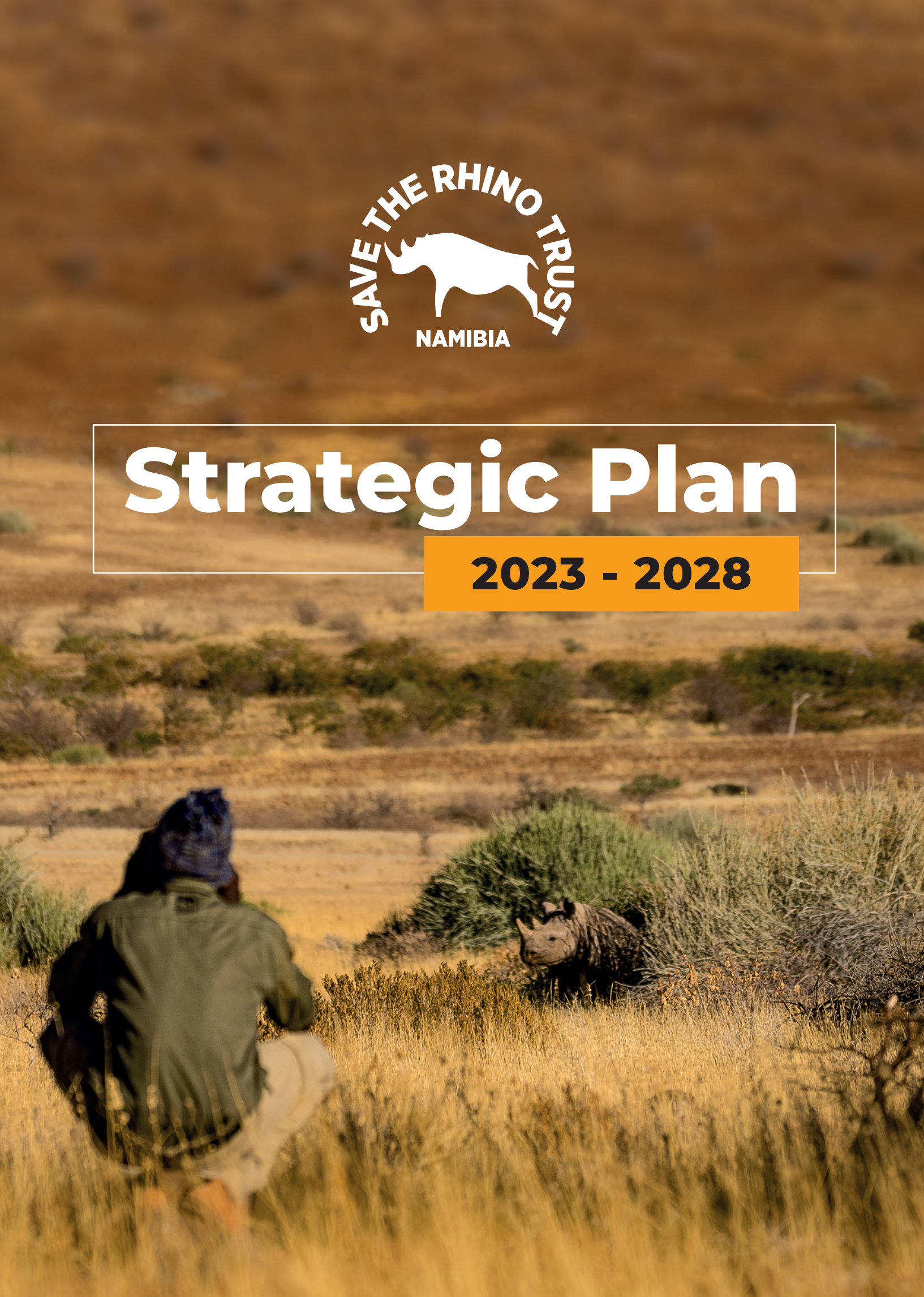




Strategic Plan

2023 - 2028





Contents

Introduction	4	Our Approach	28
What is Save the Rhino Trust?	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ The Challenge▶ Our Goal▶ Our Vision▶ Our Mission▶ Our Value Proposition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ What We Do:			
Achievements	12		
Initiatives	14		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ 1. Conservancy Rhino Ranger Incentive Program (CRRP)▶ 2. Rhino Pride Campaign▶ 3. Expansion to Nyae Nyae Conservancy			
Our Partners	18		
Situational Analysis: Understanding the Context	20	Theory of Change	30
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Strengths▶ Challenges and Weaknesses▶ Opportunities▶ Threats		Strategic Goals and Objectives	32
Our Values	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Pillar 1: Participatory Rhino Monitoring▶ Pillar 2: Community Involvement▶ Pillar 3: Research and Evaluation▶ Pillar 4: A Well-functioning SRT	
		Operational Implementation	40
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Our Structure▶ Resourcing Needs	

A black rhinoceros is shown in profile, facing left, standing amidst a dense field of tall, green, spiky grasses. The rhino's thick, greyish-brown skin is clearly visible, and its two horns are prominent. The background consists of more of the same vegetation and some bare, brown branches, suggesting an arid or semi-arid environment. The lighting is bright, casting soft shadows.

Introduction

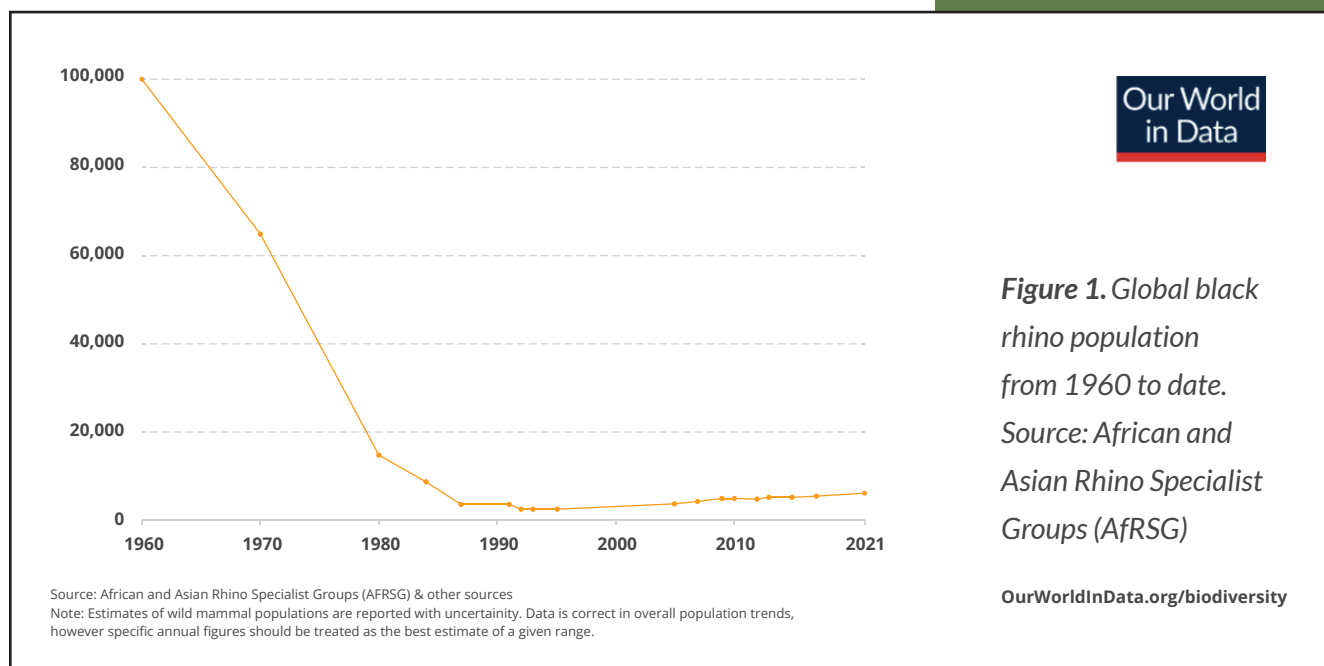
In northwestern Namibia, an area slightly larger than Wales in the UK, survives the world's largest remaining population of free-roaming black rhino. The Kunene Region is a vast and open landscape with an arid climate – a place that is inhospitable for many. It is not surprising that it is one of the least densely populated areas in the world. The Kunene Region is not a high-security national park. People live here and they graze their livestock on the rocky plains beneath dramatic granite dome mountains.

In 1982 when the Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) was established, a severe drought, combined with uncontrolled hunting left the Kunene Region with hardly any wildlife. SRT mobilised teams of men, most of whom had grown up there, to monitor the remaining black rhinos. During the late 90s, numerous communal conservancies were set up which strengthened local people's control over and responsibility for wildlife. The communal conservancies allowed for local people to make decisions over the management of their wildlife.

This approach fostered a newfound, locally-grown pro-rhino attitude and, alongside efforts to build a local 'community game guard' system with traditional leaders, helped reduce poaching in the area. This was a true grassroots approach. The level of trust by the government towards local communities is truly remarkable and has happened nowhere else in the world, opening the door for one of Africa's greatest rhino recovery stories. Between 2005 and 2010, through the rhino custodianship program, over 40 rhinos were released across 13 communal conservancies expanding the range by roughly 20%, which helped further increase population growth.

Today, the number of black rhinos in the landscape has tripled since SRT started its efforts. Moreover, the global black rhino population has increased over the past few years (Figure 1). This is due to concerted conservation efforts and strategic relocations and introductions throughout the continent. Thanks to this effort, Namibia is now recognised as the global stronghold of black rhinos.

The government-led Black Rhino Custodianship Programme and the Community Rhino Ranger Incentive Program is aimed at engaging and empowering local people in rhino protection efforts. This is a central piece to the community-based rhino conservation model under a partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism.

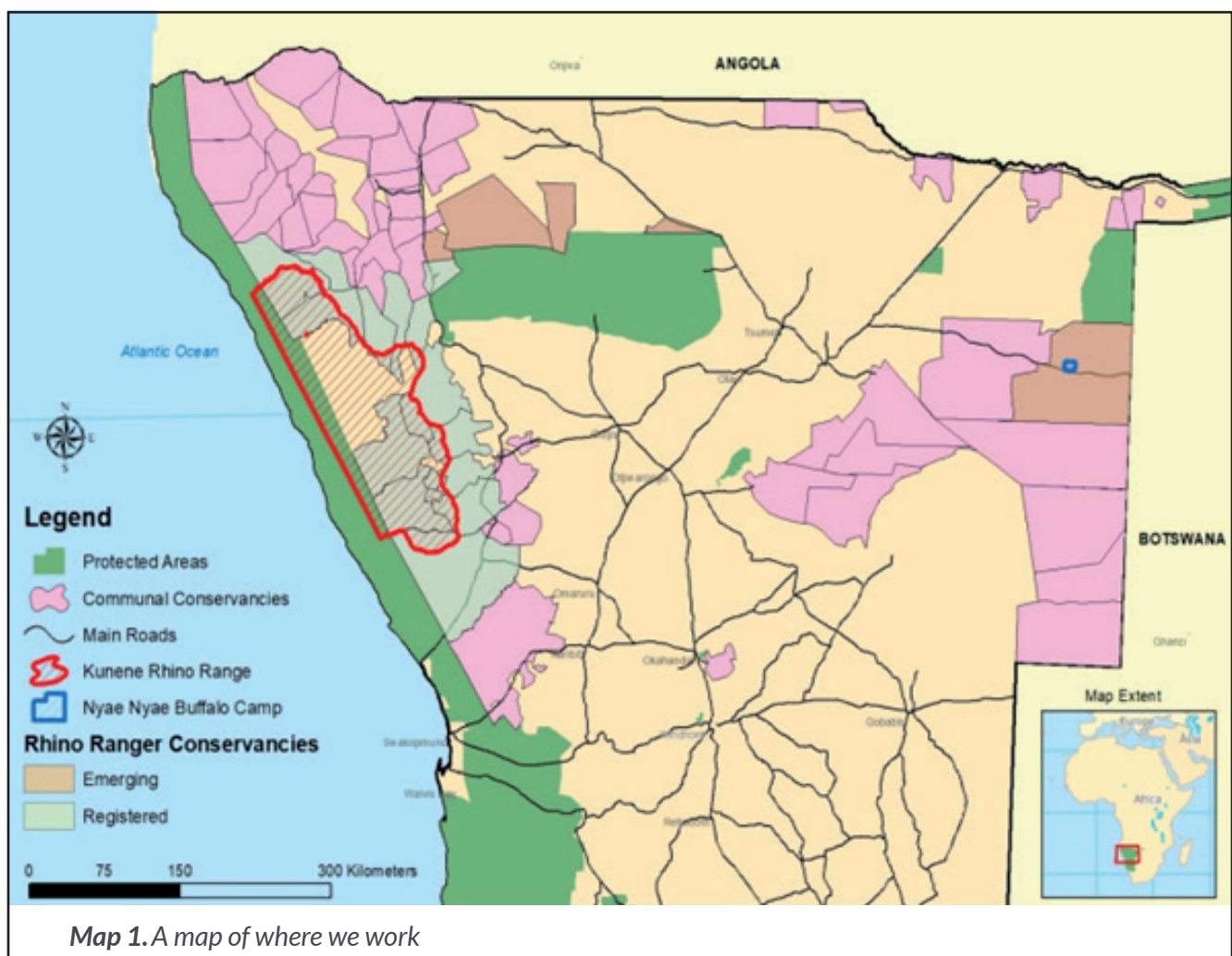


Our key to success can be attributed to local communities' sense of ownership and pride for their rhino, a strong level of trust and partnership with the Namibian government, partnerships with various civil society organisations, and most importantly, our grassroots approach.

SRT works in a unique and harsh terrain which is vast, remote, rugged, logistically challenging and puts a strain on both people and wildlife. We employ 45 staff. The majority of these (40 people) are trackers, drivers and camp support staff and all are from local communities.

Our trackers possess a deep knowledge of rhinos and their surroundings. They cover an area of 25,000 km² (Map 1), enduring extreme conditions during long patrols. These patrols are mainly done on foot in rough terrain, in an area with no national park status, no fences, and no controls over who enters and exits. It is a place where people reside alongside wildlife and primarily make a living from livestock farming. Residents here have decided to share their landscape with black rhino, elephants, lions and other wildlife because they have an innate sense of pride in and value wildlife. The income they receive, which is generated from activities such as tourism, is an important addition to the local economy.

This strategy outlines the work that SRT intends to carry out over the next five years to further secure the gains we have made over the past four decades.

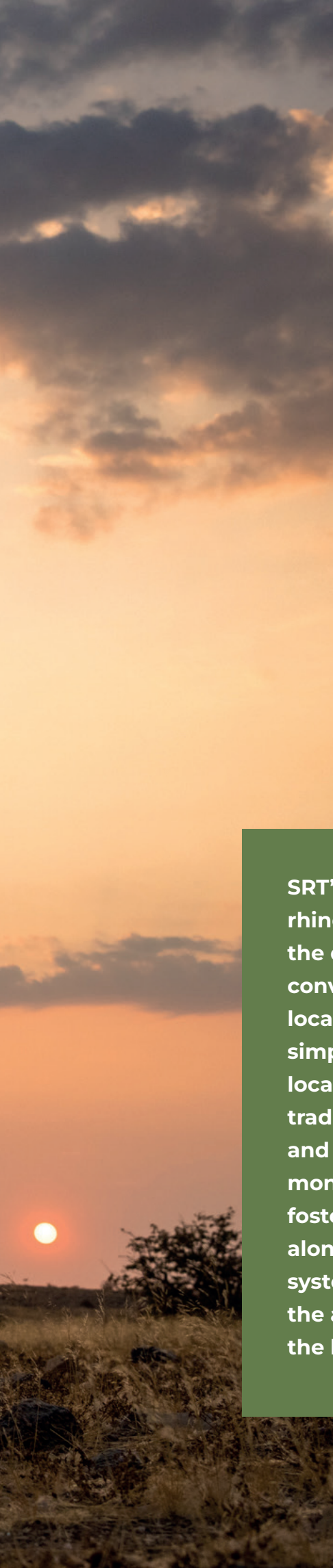




What is

Save the Rhino Trust?





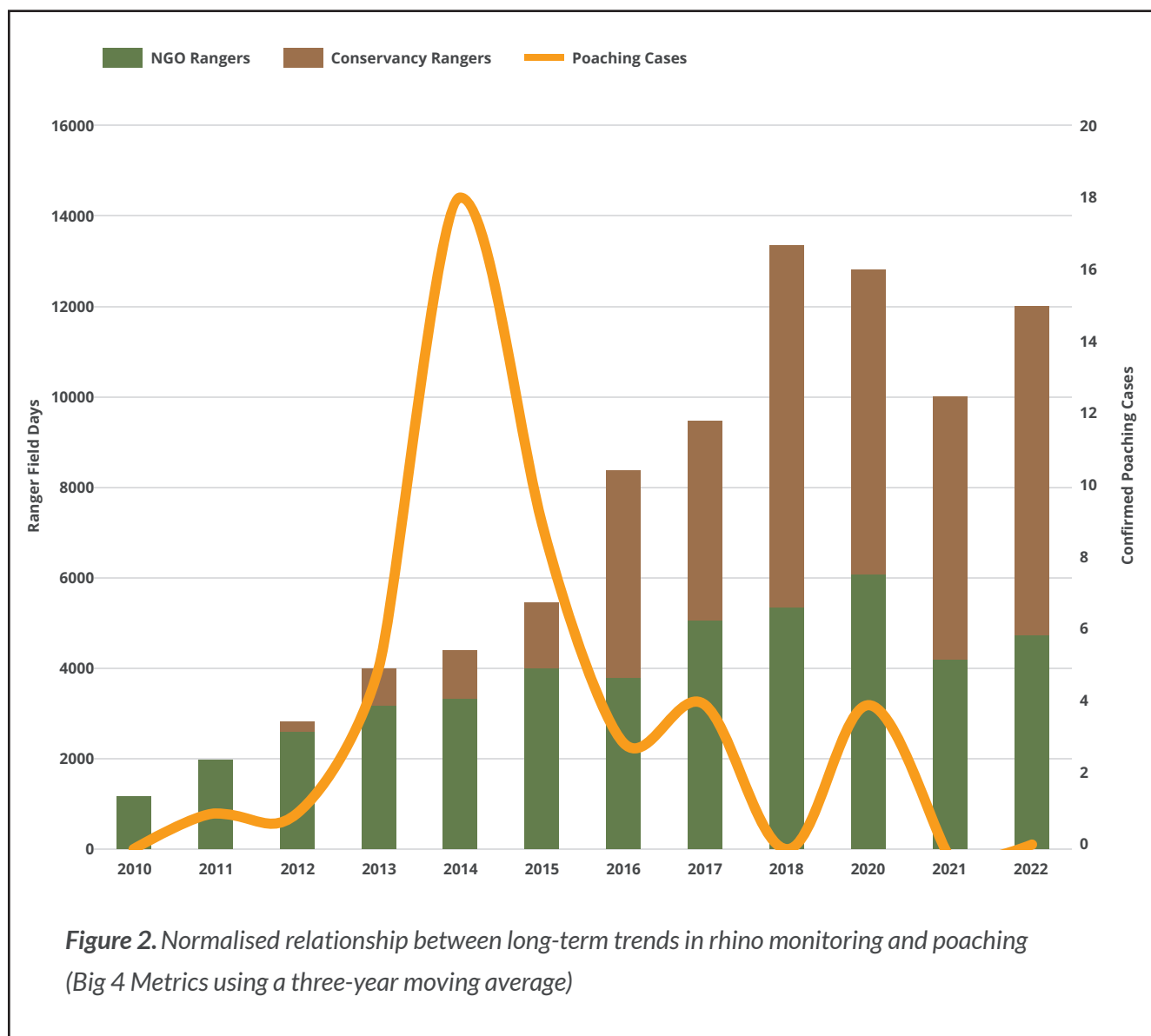
During the past century, Africa's black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis*) suffered one of the most dramatic population declines ever documented. Between 1970 and 1993, roughly 96% of the world's black rhinos were killed primarily for the use of their horns. Today, there are around 6,000 black rhinos left on the planet (IUCN, 2022). Even Namibia's remote north-west communal rangelands, one of the least densely populated places on earth, were not immune to rhino poaching and suffered significant losses, not only from poaching but also from the worst drought in living memory in the 1980s.

Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) Namibia was established in 1982 to combat the rampant poaching of black rhino taking place across the Damaraland and Kaokoland homelands of north-west Namibia (which were still under South African rule), by using a community driven approach. The dominant response to the poaching crisis had been to 'fight fire with fire'. What this generally translates into is a 'fortress' and paternal mentality, whereby state-owned rhino were protected by centralised law enforcement regimes which typically patrolled fenced protected areas aiming to catch poachers.

SRT's approach challenged the conventional military-style rhino protection tactics which in many cases exacerbated the divide between local people and rhinos, as these conventional anti-poaching regimes perceive and target local people as part of the problem. SRT, therefore, took on a simple, but highly effective approach. It employed respected local people to harness their unrivalled skills, such as traditional foot tracking techniques honed over generations, and knowledge of the landscape and animal behaviour, to monitor and protect, rather than poach rhino. This approach fostered a newfound, locally-grown pro-rhino attitude and, alongside efforts to build a local 'community game guard' system with traditional leaders, helped reduce poaching in the area. It also created a new sense of the value of rhinos by the local people.

SRT evolved to capitalise on new opportunities presented through Namibia’s emerging Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) movement in the late 1990s, and the subsequent eco-tourism boom. As CBNRM took hold, the development and implementation of the conservancy model provided an opportunity for SRT to scale up its impact and enhance rhino recovery. Along with the realisation of and interest in new opportunities embedded within the conservancy legislation for improved local livelihood options, SRT’s outreach efforts resulted in an increased demand from conservancies to receive rhino back on their land. The conservancy programme had a great impact on the return and increase of wildlife populations that were almost decimated in the Kunene Region.

SRT works in close collaboration with the Namibian government, the Namibian Police Force, local communities, as well as national and international partners. Poaching in the area where SRT operates has, as a result, reduced by 80% since its peak in 2015 (Figure 2). Furthermore, during the most recent poaching crisis that started in 2012, more rhinos were poached in National Parks than in the communal conservancies where SRT operates.



What We Do:

-
- ① **We monitor black rhinos as our core function**, capturing data on population dynamics and distribution of these critically endangered animals.

 - ① **We put boots on the ground 365 days a year**, deploying teams of rangers and trackers (over 70 individuals at 15 camps) over an area the size of a small European country.

 - ① **We collect quality rhino data which is captured into the longest running black rhino database anywhere on the planet**, contributing to evidence based management in black rhino conservation.

 - ① **We are experts in establishing successful community ranger programmes and have recently expanded our area of operations to north-east Namibia**, replicating and scaling our programme to increase rhino rangeland and create additional sustained employment opportunities.

 - ① **We are leaders in community outreach programmes.** Falling under the banner of Rhino Pride we have successfully established the 'Rhino Friend Forever' concept which includes youth clubs, farm visits, football tournaments and music videos. These activities are all based on a rhino theme to build appreciation, gratitude and respect for the environment that sustains us.

 - ① **We are collaborators**, recognising that conservation success is a result of working with partner NGOs, Traditional Authorities, communal conservancies and the Namibian government.

 - ① **We are innovators**, pioneering sustainable rhino trekking tourism led by community rangers and unlocking millions of dollars for local communities.

 - ① **We are scientists**, contributing to dozens of peer reviewed journal articles during our 40 years of existence.

 - ① **We are people focused**, placing the welfare of our field staff and rangers high up on our list of organisational priorities.

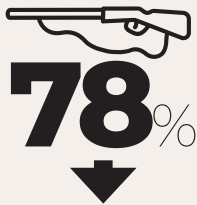
 - ① **All of our work is underpinned by long-term funding partnerships** that emphasise the relationship building necessary to maintain an NGO for four decades.
-

Achievements

SRT has had a number of achievements over the years and, in particular, the last five years. These include:



SRT has become the go-to rhino conservation NGO in Namibia and has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Namibia Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) which shows that we have been able to build a good reputation and are trusted partners in conservation.



Poaching has reduced by 78% over five years. Between 2012 – 2016 a total of 38 rhinos were reported poached in west Kunene, whereas between 2017 – 2022, a total of eight rhinos were reported poached in west Kunene. Overall SRT has maintained patrol efforts over the landscape, resulting in the single biggest achievement – the absence of reported poaching since August 2020, marking 26 months without poaching at the end of October 2022.



The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), **Simson Uri-Khob**, was awarded the **Prince William Award for Conservation in Africa**, in recognition of the 30 years he has worked to save black rhinos.



Through the Rhino Ranger Programme, SRT has been able to cover more ground for patrolling and monitoring rhinos which has dramatically reduced the number of rhinos poached.



13 scientific papers have been published in the past five years.



Along with partners, SRT has initiated the Rhino Pride Campaign, engaging thousands of youth and community members including:

- Reading with Rhinos (300 Grade 1 and 2 learners).
- Kunene Youth Rhino League (16 teams representing six custodian conservancies playing in the NFA-approved league, in tandem with Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Tanzania).



The Ranger Welfare Programme has provided first aid training to 80 rangers and supplied comprehensive first aid kits at each camp.



SRT has built strong leadership and a team that has been able to sustain the organisation for over 30 years.



SRT has installed innovative hydro-panel technology at all its camps to save water, reduce emissions and improve ranger welfare.



SRT has expanded its work and support to the Nyae Nyae Conservancy.



The team has made the shift to the Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART technology). SRT is the first organisation in Namibia to achieve this.

SMART was designed for law enforcement-based patrolling but could be adapted to suit many applications including individual-based wildlife monitoring. SRT adopted SMART in 2015. While SRT's initial focus was on establishing a desktop database, a custom SMART Mobile app has been released to further improve data collection in the field by frontline rangers.

Initiatives

1. Conservancy Rhino Ranger Incentive Program (CRRP)

Since its inception, SRT's work has evolved to capitalise on new opportunities presented through Namibia's emerging Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) movement in the late 1990s, and the subsequent eco-tourism boom.

The Conservancy Rhino Ranger Incentive Programme is a shining example of how SRT has worked within the current CBNRM programme to innovate and involve community rangers directly in the monitoring of a high value species, and unlocking employment and additional benefits for local rangers.

Although the government still owns the rhinos, under the management of SRT, the recipient communities are trained and equipped through the program to monitor and help protect the rhinos. The CRRP requires each of the selected communal conservancies to choose a minimum of two local people to be trained in rhino monitoring. Since 2012, SRT and partners have provided training, equipment and bonus payments to 52 local rhino rangers in 13 communities. These local rangers work alongside the SRT trackers. This has helped triple the number of trained rangers protecting rhinos.

Now, 100% of rhinos living on community lands in the Kunene Region are being protected by the people that live alongside them. They are incentivized to protect the rhinos because of a sense of ownership and responsibility, and because they receive income from rhino monitoring – through the provision of incentives to rangers – and rhino tourism which provides employment and direct cash payments to conservancies.

The CRRP is spearheaded by SRT and supported in the landscape by Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) and the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF).



-
- Through close collaboration with local community leaders, team patrol efforts and rhino sightings increased by over 1,200% and 425% respectively (figures from 2018).
-
- Five private sector tourism operators have established formal partnerships with five conservancies, with the result that more than one third of the rangers are now leading rhino tourism activities on behalf of their community. This has generated a net income of over USD 1,000,000 for their respective communities and helped to offset rhino management costs between 2019 - 2022.
-
- There has been an increase in conservancies' investment into rhino protection, illustrated by an increase of conservancy contributions towards overall program expenses. This has also helped fuel an increase in patrol efforts and rhino sightings.
-

2. Rhino Pride Campaign

In March 2017, a consortium of field-based conservation organisations operating in north-western Namibia (SRT, IRDNC and NNF) launched the Rhino Pride Campaign. The goal was to improve the value that local people attach to saving rhinos by increasing their knowledge and their attitude towards rhino, which would ultimately catalyse more pro-rhino behaviour and norms, particularly the willingness to report suspicious activities.



ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Inspiring unemployed youth to become Rhino Friends Forever. Between March and December 2017, 14 Rhino Friend Youth Clubs were established in nine communities engaging roughly 200 unemployed youth in bi-monthly activities.
 - Building Relationships with Rural Farmers through 'Rhino Farm Visits'. Results from a survey conducted in 2015 showed that farmers felt alienated from rhino protection. 'Rhino Farm Visits' with SRT patrol teams were conducted, in order to strengthen the farmers' connection with rhinos and their willingness to protect them, and to build better relationships based on trust and gratitude. Since the inception of these farm visits, several rangers have received calls and messages from Rhino Friendly Farmers who voluntarily provide information on suspicious activities on their farms.
-

3. Expansion to Nyae Nyae Conservancy

After 40 years of working in Kunene, SRT is expanding.

In 2021 SRT was asked by the MEFT to establish a rhino ranger programme in Nyae Nyae Conservancy, in the far north-east of Namibia. Our success in the Kunene Region in reducing poaching, our robust rhino monitoring system and outreach programme along with our MOU with MEFT to monitor black rhino, were cited as reasons for this request.

Our aim is to build a new rhino ranger cohort in preparation for the introduction of black rhinos into the Khaudum National Park (Map 1), following an expansion assessment which determined that there are favourable conditions for rhinos in the park. The porous southern boundary of the park means that it is likely rhinos will move south into the conservancy area. When this happens the Nyae Nyae rhino rangers will be there to ensure rhinos are safe and properly monitored.

Following a comprehensive training session, the conservancy identified six new rangers and several patrols have since been conducted with the new rangers, using SRT vehicles and senior staff as mentors and drivers. Several exchange visits by new rangers from Nyae Nyae to Kunene have taken place.

We are cognisant of the fundamental importance of our relationship with our new partner, Nyae Nyae Conservancy, and after initial consultations and agreement to begin the programme we plan to set up an engagement strategy with the conservancy highlighting sustainability and an eventual reduction of SRT support. We are aware of the need to learn from our Kunene experience and are keen to implement this strategy.



Our Partners



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND TOURISM

MOU to monitor and collect data on black rhinos in Namibia. We are the only NGO in the country with this agreement in place.

INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATURE CONSERVATION

landscape partner providing key resources (patrol support through vehicles and rangers) and support to the CRRP and the Rhino Pride Campaign in northern Kunene.

NAMIBIA NATURE FOUNDATION

landscape partner providing key resources (mainly financial, but also human and technical support) to the CRRP and Rhino Pride Campaign in southern Kunene.

NAMIBIA ASSOCIATION OF CBNRM SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS (NACSO)

The national coordinating body for CBNRM in Namibia. NACSO has provided opportunities to access funding and technical support. NACSO also provides a useful platform to discuss national conservation success and challenges facing CBNRM in Namibia.

LOCAL COMMUNITY LEADERS

support of traditional leadership in the region is critical to ensure continued success and the goodwill of local people. Traditional leaders have proven to be key allies in awareness raising on the importance of conservation. Local people respect and value their traditional leaders, making them important to ensuring the long-term survival of wildlife in communal areas.

14 CONSERVANCIES AND THEIR RANGERS

Critical partners to our conservation success.

Communal conservancies pay their rhino ranger's salaries and provide support for SRT's conservation efforts on the ground. Our relationship with communal conservancies is underpinned by the national Black Rhino Custodianship Programme. Partner conservancies are:

- Puros
 - Ehirovipuka
 - Sorris Sorris
 - Otjikondavirongo
 - #Khoadi-//Hôas
 - Tsiseb
 - Sesfontein
 - Torra
 - //Huab
 - Anabeb
 - Doro !Nawas
 - Nyae Nyae
 - Omatendeka
 - Uibasen
-

MINNESOTA ZOO

provides science leadership to the organisation for close to 20 years. SRT's Science Advisor is an employee of the Minnesota Zoo Foundation whose position is embedded within SRT's structure. Our approach to conservation is underpinned by science and research, making this partnership, and the presence of our Science Advisor, key to our continued success.

Situational Analysis:

Understanding the Context



Strengths

STRONG TEAM

One of the greatest strengths SRT possesses is its team. They are talented Namibian experts, most of whom are from the Kunene Region. They have immense integrity and a genuine passion for what they do. The team possess the following expertise:

- Unrivalled rhino knowledge – foot tracking skills and rhino behaviour
 - Unparalleled local knowledge – environment, springs, migratory routes
 - Immersion in local communities – an understanding of social dynamics
 - Passion and drive to protect these animals
-

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

SRT works with a network of partners with whom they collaborate to deliver 'impact at scale'. One of SRT's greatest strengths is the partnership they have built with the Namibian government. This partnership has resulted in SRT being the only organisation in Namibia to have an MOU with the government to safeguard black rhinos. This level of trust by the government in civil society organisation is rare and speaks to SRT's dedication and approach over the years.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SRT has, over many years, through the rhino ranger program, built trust with the communities in which they operate. This has been a key component of their success. Reducing poaching in communal areas is only effective if there is trust with the community and a sense of ownership by the community over the rhinos. Local people have access to information related to rhinos, and are involved in decision making and program design. The community are the eyes and ears on the ground (i.e. more 'boots on the ground').

CLEAR FOCUS

"If you hear SRT, you do not need to ask what this organisation is about." SRT is clear on their focus which means they have a clear strategic direction. They know what they are and are not, what they aim to achieve, and they have been able to hone in on that focus. They do not seem to get too distracted in trying to do other things.

WORLD CLASS MONITORING AND DATA COLLECTION SYSTEMS

SRT currently uses world-class technology for their monitoring and data collection activities. The organisation has integrated and uses SMART for their patrols. Opportunities, however, do exist for them to strengthen the use of newer technologies.

LONG-TERM FUNDING PARTNERS

SRT has been able to maintain the same donors over many years, and also increased the diversity of new donors. This shows their ability to build and maintain strong relationships and trust with donors. Furthermore, donors continue to speak highly of the organisation – a testament to their strong leadership and demonstrable results.

Challenges and Weaknesses

SRT's major organisational weaknesses and challenges fall into the following categories:

GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS

The limited geography in which SRT operates doubles as both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in that they have been able to specialise in that particular area and not spread themselves thin. It is, however, a weakness because it limits their range of operation by excluding other rhino strongholds in the country. This is, however, changing with the expansion into the Nyae Nyae Conservancy.

SIZE OF STAFF

The management team is relatively small with many responsibilities due to the vast area in which SRT operates. This results in the team being pulled into different directions with management having to wear different hats, and making it more difficult to prioritise activities and focus on their core duties. Furthermore, SRT does not have a dedicated Human Resources person or team to assist with work planning, staff grievances and other HR functions.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

Succession planning is a challenge that is not unique to SRT. The current CEO will be stepping down in a couple of years and it will be difficult to replace him. He has been with SRT for 30 years and has been the CEO since 2016. He has built trust and strong relationships among the various stakeholders for many years. SRT's challenge is to consciously build and direct, at both the board and management level, in such a way that there is a good succession plan to ensure that the organisation continues to play its important role, even after the current leaders have moved on.

RELATIONSHIP WITH CONSERVANCIES

Rhino rangers are paid directly by the conservancies from their tourism and hunting revenue. While this is a big help, there is a need for SRT to communicate more effectively with the conservancies, bolstering trust through continuing to build on the foundations of trust.

COMMUNICATIONS

SRT has, for many years, struggled to communicate their impact. The organisation has to work harder on improving their communications. More needs to be done to communicate their work and impact, and spread their story.

Opportunities

The following opportunities exist for SRT:

EXPANSION OF GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

SRT is currently known for rhino conservation in northwestern Namibia, but there is scope for them to support conservancies in other areas in the future. They have started expanding their rhino ranger programme to other regions and SRT has started training in the Nyae Nyae Conservancy. Further expansion will have to be done cautiously as it will require more manpower, vehicles and building trust with the communities. It will also be dependent on funding and their ability to grow as a team. Expansion into other areas may become critical as the range of the rhino in the northwest expands. Changes in climatic conditions, land-use change, etc., may push these rhinos into new territories.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Although collaboration with organisations working in the same geographic area is good, this same level of collaboration is not developed at the national level. SRT has the opportunity to amplify its work at the national level through its membership in NACSO. SRT can tap into the collective strength of NACSO by being more active and engaged in NACSO platforms. SRT has done well in having a strong presence in the northwest, but can do more to cement their presence at both the national and international level through stronger collaborations. Working with international funding partners is beneficial as they have a broader reach - they can use their social media to touch a mass audience. Collaboration with larger organisations and donor trips offer opportunities for more exposure to their work.

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN RHINO CONSERVATION

SRT has the potential to be the leading black rhino organisation in the world. This is especially more relevant and possible through the TUSK Award which Simson received. This award has spread their impact to a newer and bigger audience. SRT will, however, have to work harder on improving their communications. More needs to be done to communicate their work and impact, and spread their story. SRT has struggled with communications in the past. Being recognized by the world as a leader in rhino conservation provides them with better opportunities for more diverse funding. It also provides an opportunity for them to share their model and lessons learned with rhino and other heavily poached species conservation efforts in other areas.

ALTERNATIVE FINANCING

There are opportunities for SRT to leverage alternative sustainable financing opportunities such as impact bonds based on performance or sightings. There is a caveat though, as rhino data is extremely sensitive. Creative workarounds need to be identified in order for us to potentially tap into the wave of 'nature funding' which is currently changing the way conservation is financed.

INCREASED IMPACT THROUGH THE CONSERVANCY RHINO RANGER INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Great strides have been made by SRT to engage more with the communities in their areas of work. There is an opportunity to use the CRRP as a gateway to bring more communities on board and take more ownership of the rhino monitoring programme, with SRT playing a supporting role. It would also reduce SRT's financial burden if conservancies could pay more towards supporting their rangers in the field.

COMMUNICATING IMPACT BEYOND RHINOS

SRT has a unique opportunity to tell the human stories of the work they do. This includes highlighting the stories of the rangers that patrol on foot and the passion they exude for their work. SRT's work has not only impacted the rhinos, but also the communities. People understand the intrinsic value of their rhinos and show immense pride in them. These types of stories matter to donors and the broader public and are worth telling.

CONSERVANCY GOVERNANCE

There is an opportunity for SRT to cultivate and increase partnerships for the purpose of addressing governance issues in conservancies. Because SRT does not have the capacity to play a lead role in improving conservancy governance, they need to rely on partnerships with other organisations such as IRDNC, NNF and others in order to be able to support conservancies indirectly with governance.

Threats

The following internal and external threats exist for SRT:

INFORMER NETWORK SYSTEM

The current informer network system was established in response to heightened poaching. Through the employment of several approaches (including, but not limited to, informer payments) poaching has been reduced. Consideration should now be given to whether management of informer networks is SRT's remit. Their success heavily relies on the trust they have built with communities over many years, which may be jeopardised by the continuation of this activity. While intelligence gathering is a necessary component of their work they should look to shift this work to the relevant Namibian law enforcement agencies.

CONSERVANCY GOVERNANCE

One of SRT's biggest threats is poor conservancy governance. Without functioning conservancies, SRT cannot adequately monitor rhinos as their work heavily relies on conservancies reinvesting into conservation through the provision of rhino rangers for patrols and keeping rhino areas free from settlement and unsustainable tourism. Conservancies are also custodians of wildlife and have a responsibility to ensure transparency and good governance in their activities.

DONOR DEPENDENCY AND DIVERSITY

Much of the work SRT is doing is dependent on a few donors with restricted funding. Although SRT is working on sourcing more long-term, unrestricted sustainable financing, they still run the risk of running out of funds if donors pull out. Furthermore, many donors do not pay for expenses such as fuel, tyres, and general vehicle maintenance. Funding for these expenses is a core need for SRT as they work in harsh terrain and these costs are high. A key consideration for SRT will be diversifying their funding.

POACHING

Poaching will continue to be a threat for black rhinos and thus, is an important consideration for SRT, particularly as SRT moves into newer areas where they may not have the long-term relationships and trust with the local people.

LONGER-TERM THREATS

Climate change, droughts, pandemics, etc., can disrupt rhino populations. More and more people are using the rhino range areas for emergency grazing, not because they want to, but because they have to. Prolonged droughts and changing climates are forcing people to move into areas that have more grazing for their livestock. Climate change may result in areas which rhinos currently occupy, becoming uninhabitable for rhinos, pushing them into different areas. Global pandemics such as COVID-19 may result in tourism revenue drying up – revenue that has been essential for conservancies and conservation.

LAND-USE CHANGE AND COMPETITION

Land-use planning at the national level has been weak and unregulated, particularly because the areas in which SRT works are communal land and the inhabitants do not have the rights to control access and settlement. Furthermore, the dynamics of communal areas are changing – there is increased pressure from other land uses such as prospecting for mining and agriculture. This may result in competition for resources between people and rhinos, thus disrupting the movement and population growth of rhinos.

Our Values

1

We have a **strong connection with nature** and a love for the outdoors.

We fully **believe in and are passionate and committed** to the work we do. We are Rhino Friends Forever.

2

3

Family first. We have a deep respect for staff members' families and help where possible.

Respect. We respect each other's opinions and viewpoints.

4

5

Trust and teamwork. We operate on trust and believe that our team is only as strong as the trust we have for each other.

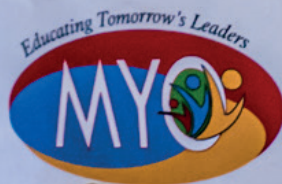
Honesty and authenticity. We value honesty and authenticity, even when it is difficult.

6

READING WITH RHINOS



With select stories from Reading A-Z



Our Approach



The Challenge

How can we improve the value local people attach to protecting rhinos?



Our Goal

Our goal is to improve the value that local people attach to saving rhinos by increasing their knowledge of and improving their attitude towards rhinos. This ultimately catalyses more pro-rhino behaviour and improves stewardship.



Our Vision

We envision a world with a healthy and free roaming metapopulation of black rhinos in Namibia, with local people at the frontline of rhino conservation.



Our Mission

To secure a future for Namibia's black rhinos by harnessing local values, indigenous knowledge and technology.

Our Value Proposition

- ① We are the only organisation focused entirely on working with free roaming black rhinos in communal areas.
- ① We have developed a trusting relationship with the Namibian government and are the only organisation holding a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism for our work.
- ① We have a strong focus on community-led non-militarised approaches.
- ① We have the longest running black rhino database with robust monitoring and data collection tools.
- ① Our team mostly (90%) consists of local people with a rich history of indigenous knowledge and of the landscapes we work in.
- ① We develop our own leaders and have a low staff turnover.
- ① We are internationally recognized and considered the go-to rhino conservation organisation in Namibia.
- ① We have been making meaningful contributions to rhino science for over two decades.

We define values using Lasswell's Value Definition for Policy Sciences:

Value	Description
POWER:	Desire to make and carry out decisions or have influence upon them
KNOWLEDGE:	Desire to give and receive information
WEALTH:	Desire to control resources either money, land or human capital
WELL-BEING:	Desire for mental, physical and spiritual health
SKILL:	Desire to develop talents and special abilities
AFFECTION:	Desire for friendship, loyalty or love
RESPECT:	Desire to give and receive recognition within a community
RECTITUDE:	Desire for moral or ethical standards

Theory of Change

The positive value of keeping rhinos alive has primarily resided with rangers that track and monitor rhino, and local people who play an active role in the rhino custodian conservancies. They have realised the positive value of keeping rhinos alive, not only because of the monetary value this brings, but also as a result of a sense of ownership and pride they've placed in having rhinos on their land. Furthermore, local people are empowered to look after their black rhino as part of the conservancies and CRRP. The custodianship programme is the foundation of rhino conservation in communal areas.

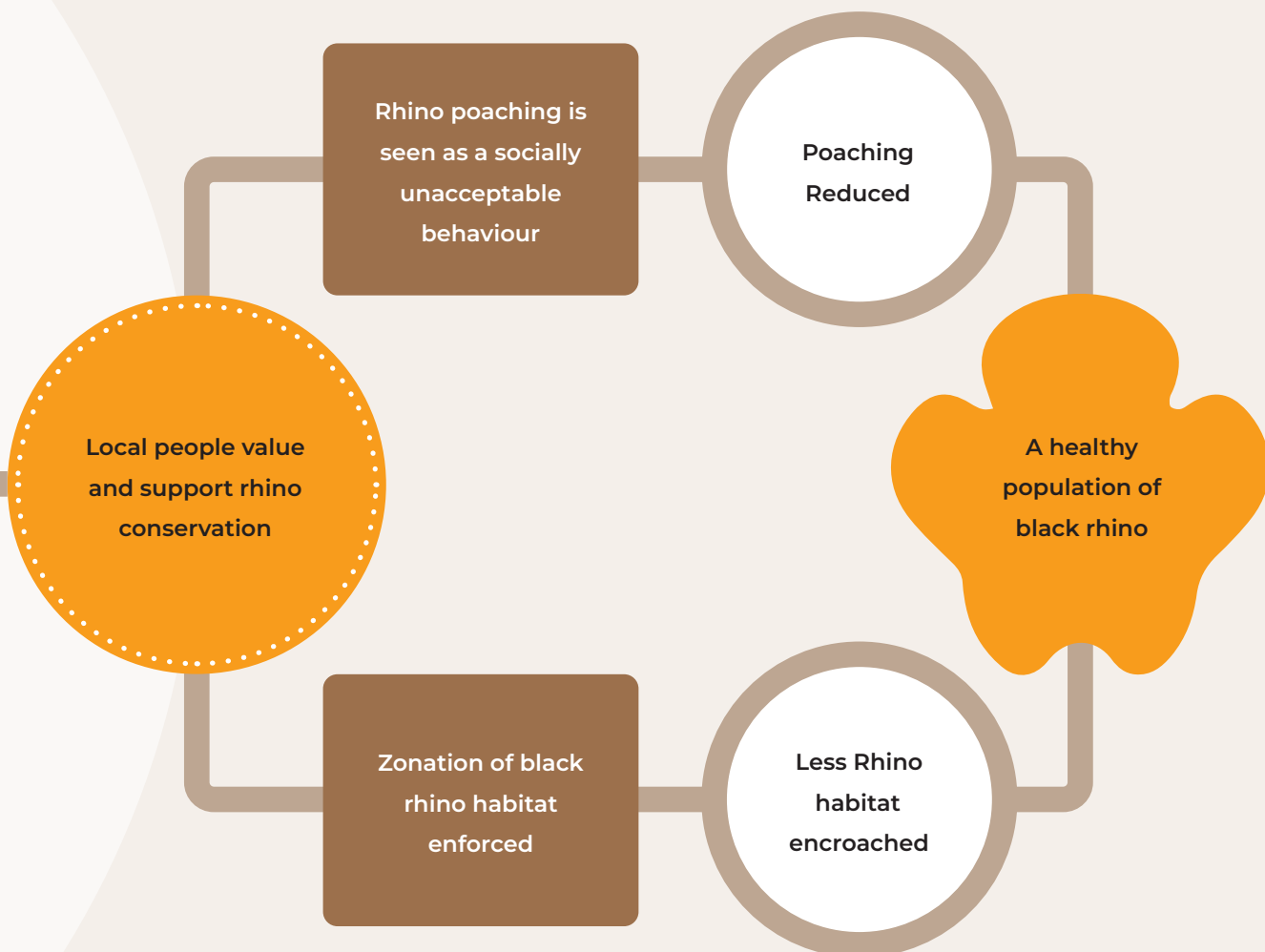


Figure 3. SRT Theory of Change

Barriers to fully protect and look after the black rhino population continue to exist. These include the pressing effects of a decade-long drought that has put enormous financial strain on people and increased pressure to gain tangible benefits from conservation. More people are needed on the ground to monitor the black rhino population and own the collection of data that informs decision-making on black rhino conservation.

We believe that when **people actively participate in the monitoring of their wildlife**, are aware of the ecological importance (through engagement and education from activities of the Rhino Pride campaign), as well as potential monetary benefits that come with conserving rhinos, **they further deepen the connection and sense of pride and stewardship for the species**. As their awareness of rhinos and other species grows, they are better able to make sound decisions pertaining to the protection of their wildlife.

We also know that we cannot secure the future of the black rhino alone, **we rely on our organisation functioning fully**, so that our partners and local people continue to be the stewards of their black rhinos and make decisions based on the best available information. This will, in turn, protect the future of rhinos and people as outlined in our Theory of Change.



Goals and Objectives

'By 2023' refers to the 'end of 2023', unless otherwise stated

Pillar 1: Participatory Rhino Monitoring

SRT has provided consistent patrolling and monitoring of black rhino in the Kunene and northern Erongo Regions over the past four decades. These activities are delivered by teams of trackers operating out of field camps on foot, supported by vehicles. Rhino monitoring will remain SRT's core function.

GOAL:

There is effective rhino monitoring in community conservancies and tourism concessions in Namibia, so that there is good information on the rhinos that we work with.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS:

- To continually monitor rhinos in our landscapes through effective deployment of rhino teams in the landscapes.**
 - ▶ **By April 2023:** First annual Operational meeting takes place which maps and sets out dates for mini-census and other work related to monitoring.
 - ▶ **By 2024:** 25 000 km² covered and 25% of Nyae Nyae Conservancy area added to the area that is monitored in order to understand the distribution of rhino.
 - ▶ **By 2024:** At least 65% of all rhinos seen on average each month in the Kunene Region. This data feeds into the population viability modelling which informs management and decision making.
 - ▶ **By 2025:** Expansion project in Nyae Nyae is fully resourced which will allow for the complete implementation of the project.



2. To improve communication with the conservancies we work with so that they can take on more responsibility for rhino monitoring.

- ▶ **By 2024:** Annual joint cluster meeting with rhino custodian conservancies held in all regions, leading to clearer communication between SRT and partner conservancies.
- ▶ **By beginning 2024:** A permanent rhino coordinator is recruited for all landscapes to help improve communication. They will be the link between the programme and custodian conservancies. Conservancy monetary and in kind contributions into the programme increased by 15%.
- ▶ **By 2024:** 50% of Annual General Meetings and 100% of all induction training for new Conservancy Management Committees in rhino custodian conservancies attended to strengthen relationships and improve communication.

3. To have a world class and accurate rhino database to support decisions based on science. We are recognised as leaders in rhino conservation and need to uphold good standing in rhino monitoring and data collection.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Monthly quality control visits conducted by senior staff result in a drop in reported discrepancies and 100% data accuracy being achieved, and in turn improve data accuracy.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Through annual refresher training for rhino rangers and SRT trackers, the monitoring team have the skills and competencies needed to do their work.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Annual stock taking of equipment takes place and a replenishment plan is drafted, ensuring that there is a constant supply of functioning equipment.

4. To improve the health of rangers through the welfare programme which includes first aid checks and health screenings. A healthy team, both physically and mentally, is fundamental to our success.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Maintain inventory system, annual doctor visits and an annual refresher training to ensure rangers are healthy and performing at their best.
- ▶ **By end 2023:** Provide a short course on personal financial management for all team members to contribute to their wellbeing.

Pillar 2: Community Involvement

As a cornerstone of its strategy for increasing the local value of rhinos to communities, and increasing support for rhino protection and conservation, SRT will continue to engage and involve a range of local community stakeholders in collaborative activities, particular those which (a) are endorsed by Traditional Authorities and Leaders, and (b) develop the capacity of conservancy members (rhino rangers and community game guards), tourism operators and community/private rhino custodians to monitor rhinos and maintain high standards of collection of data and information and awareness programmes for visitors and young people in Namibia.



GOAL:

Local communities are actively involved in rhino conservation in a manner that improves the value they attach to saving and protecting them.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS:

- 1. To create a platform for the exchange of information by strengthening and building trusted relationships with farmers, Traditional Authorities and conservancy managers.**
 - ▶ **By 2023:** Re-establish farm visits. SRT drivers are regularly meeting farmers who communicate rhino related information to SRT.
 - ▶ **By 2023:** At least one annual visit to all Traditional Authorities has been conducted to ensure that they are well informed about the value and status of rhinos.
 - ▶ **By 2023:** One steering committee platform has been created and includes conservancy managers and support group members with the aim of being a platform for learning and exchanging ideas.



2. To raise awareness and harness emotions, through the rhino pride campaign, amongst youth that create positive associations with rhino.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Continuation of A-Z Reading with Rhinos program extending to additional grades (3 and 4) resulting in 500 learners linking the process of learning to rhinos.
- ▶ **By 2023:** The Rhino Cup Youth League has convened, involving 500 youth from six custodian conservancies. The cup demonstrates how rhinos can positively impact their lives.
- ▶ **By 2023:** A parallel women's league is established and potential to expand has been explored.
- ▶ **By 2024:** 500 hundred people pledge as Rhino Friends Forever and take responsibility for safeguarding rhinos.

3. To improve the value placed on rhinos by providing non-monetary incentives to custodian conservancies and rangers. Diversifying incentives by designing and implementing non-monetary schemes. Also showing respect to rangers by recognizing the work they do motivates performance.

- ▶ **By mid 2023:** Conservancy recognition scheme established leading to 13 conservancies receiving recognition for their efforts in rhino conservation.
- ▶ **By mid 2023:** One Rhino Ranger and SRT ranger annual awards ceremony takes place based on performance which is verified by SMART.

Pillar 3: Research and Evaluation

Since 1994, SRT's rhino monitoring information continues to provide long-term data on population dynamics status and distribution trends. Utilising the vast wealth of knowledge and information captured and collated by SRT to improve our efforts to better protect rhinos is a fundamental aspect of our work. We will further expand our research into the human dimension, which will make our work more impactful as people are a key component to achieving our mission.



GOAL:

Decision making (at different levels, including SRT, MEFT and conservancies) on management strategies and learning on black rhino conservation, as well as social impacts, are based on evidence for the sustainability of rhino populations and their habitats.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS:

1. To align research and data collection with management needs.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Annual research planning workshop takes place to identify research priorities.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Two to three biological and social research projects are carried out annually with results feeding into management plans.
- ▶ **By 2023:** One Namibian MSc or PhD student is co-supervised annually, publishing at least one research article per year in a peer reviewed journal and at least one grey literature article.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Upgrade of research centre at Wereldsend complete.

2. To ensure management decisions are made based on the best available data/evidence.

- ▶ **By 2023:** A minimum of two peer-reviewed articles are translated into policy briefs and/or summaries that feed into management and other high level reports.
- ▶ **By mid 2023:** A quarterly monitoring report is produced for conservancies to know the status and distribution of their rhinos.



- ▶ **By 2023:** Annual briefing with the Rhino Technical Advisory Group (RTAG) is conducted.

3. To generate best practices and facilitate knowledge sharing and learning internally to evaluate our impact and ensure we are reaching intended milestones.

- ▶ **By 2023:** All team members have received feedback on the performance of their projects based on a project management tool which is to be established and implemented.
- ▶ **By beginning 2024:** A system to evaluate and monitor project effectiveness is developed. Using a project management system, a Theory Of Change is developed for every project, with indicators on how we assess our work.
- ▶ **By 2024:** Attend at least one international conference to seek out more collaborative opportunities with scientists working in similar disciplines.

4. To maintain understanding of the rhino population and provide feedback to SRT field staff, MEFT and conservancies.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Provide monthly oversight on data management (SMART) to ensure data accuracy.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Annual population assessment produced for the MEFT to inform parameter information on key performance indicators on rhino populations.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Run quantitative projection scenarios for management and decision making.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Create a rhino impact assessment to provide MEFT with ad hoc information from our database that will inform their decision making.



Pillar 4: A Well-functioning SRT

This pillar is a combination of the former capacity building, governance, fundraising and communications pillars. Improved coordination, collaboration and communication within the organisation, and externally with other key stakeholders and local partners, will enable SRT to build a robust and trusted position for achieving its key strategic objectives and outcomes over the period of the plan.

GOAL:

SRT is a strong and effective organisation that is able to achieve impact through support to community-led rhino conservation.

OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS:

- 1. To have a functional board who are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and are motivated to carry out those responsibilities.**
 - ▶ **By mid 2023:** A board workshop is conducted to revise and develop the board charter as well as establish a Terms of Reference.
 - ▶ **By 2023:** A minimum of two in-person Trustee meetings take place annually, one of which is a field visit for board members to meet the team and vice versa. The meetings will also be used to provide general updates and provide guidance on high level issues and governance.

2. To design and implement effective HR policies and systems for a stronger, more robust and resilient organisation that has a culture aligned to employees' values.

- ▶ **By mid 2023:** HR review of policies and systems.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Establish annual goals and design a performance review system, that is communicated to staff and implemented (trackers and drivers). This will inform additional performance bonuses.
- ▶ **By 2023:** A vehicle management plan is designed, communicated to staff and implemented to ensure vehicles are well maintained.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Annual communication to staff on pay grades and promotions are clarified and communicated to staff. Pay grade and staff benefits posters are developed and shared.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Succession plan for CEO developed.

3. To ensure there are sufficient skilled and resourced staff (capacity, money, equipment) to fill positions in order to achieve our mission.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Staff training plan developed which identifies training needs through performance reviews and how to address capacity gaps and links to professional development opportunities.
- ▶ **By 2023:** Develop a Terms of Reference for a new field technician to provide assistance with research coordination and data management in the field.
- ▶ **By 2024:** Review vehicle needs on an annual basis.
- ▶ **By 2024:** Bursary programme for Namibian candidates set up and supporting our work.
- ▶ **By 2024:** Stables for the mules and staff houses have been built at !Axab Camp.

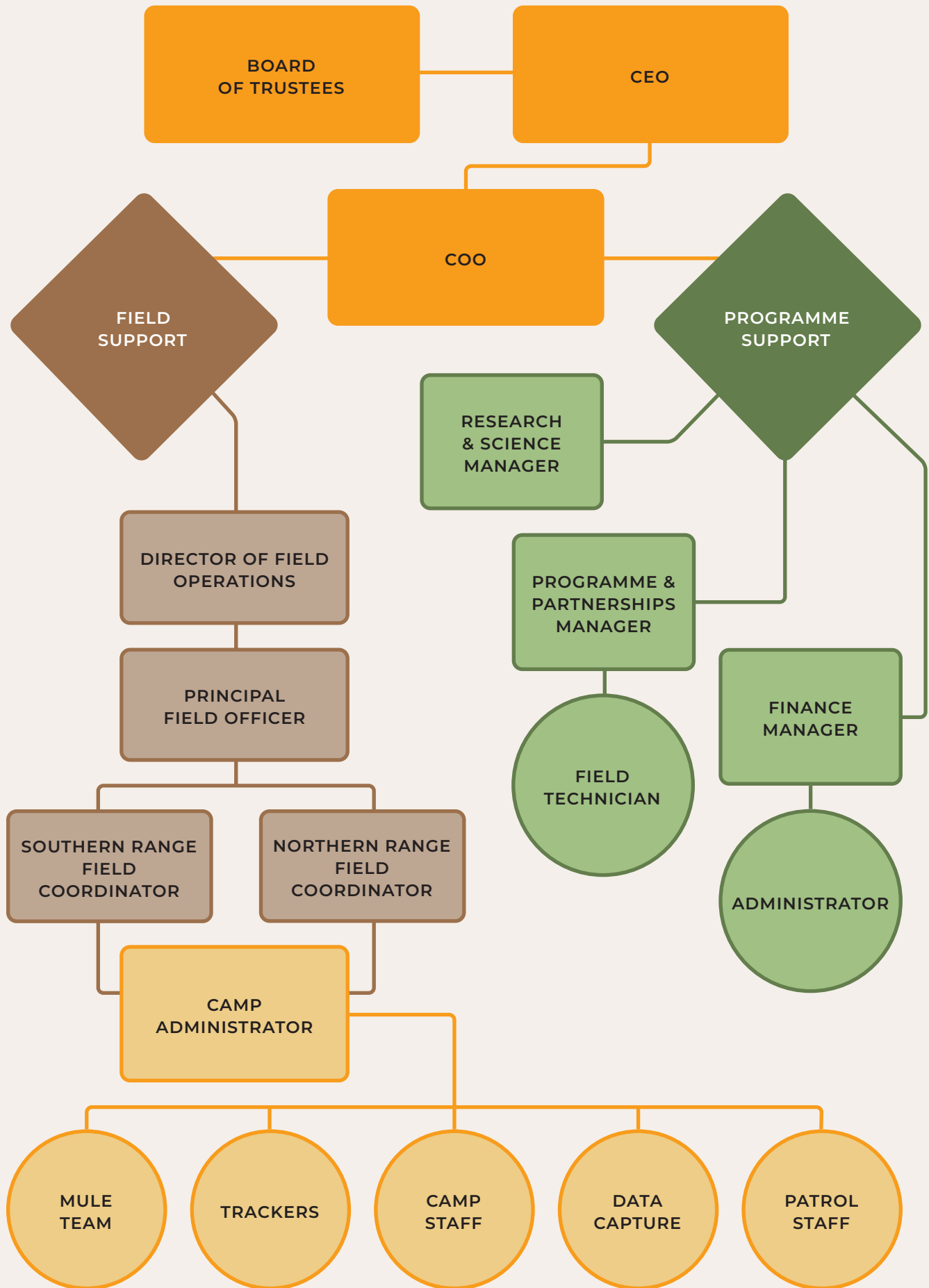
4. To diversify and increase funding through communications and relationship building to ensure a steady flow of non-restrictive funding.

- ▶ **By 2023:** Communications strategy developed to identify our communications needs, audience and impact.
- ▶ **By 2023:** At least two new financing mechanisms have been identified and explored to diversify our funding.
- ▶ **By 2023** 20% increase in unrestricted funding achieved to allow for a greater scope to cover all essential costs and deal with challenges quickly and effectively.
- ▶ **By 2024:** Annual fundraising trips are essential for cultivating and maintaining relationships with donors. At least one fundraising trip undertaken by the CEO to the United Kingdom and the United States of America.
- ▶ **By 2024:** Host at least one annual information sharing session on best practices with Tourism Operators.

Operational Implementation



Our Structure



Resourcing Needs

1. SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SRT recognises that it has shortfalls in HR, such as not having an HR manager and a clear grievance reporting mechanism for the employees. An HR needs assessment will, therefore, be conducted in order to determine the current needs and how to address them.

In addition, clear policies and systems will be put in place for maintaining internal records and ensuring knowledge management. This will help improve the management of field equipment such as the SMART devices, solar charging station, tents, etc.

A succession plan will be developed that fully outlines the CEO's transition, identifies the skills required to fill that position, as well as potential candidates, their skills and skills gaps that need to be filled. This will create an inventory of skills and attributes that will serve as a checklist to audit what succession candidates presently offer and what skills they need to develop. The succession planning process will look at building the competencies and skills for current and future organisational needs. Succession planning is about "what is next?" and not only "who is next?".

2. STAFFING

For SRT to fully function, the following additional roles, need to be added:

- Human Resource Manager who will oversee the organisational functions of SRT and will work closely with the CEO and COO. This role could be outsourced to an HR company.
- Field research technician who oversees the Wereldsend camps, identifies research needs and supports the research lead.

3. FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNICATIONS

SRT can only fulfil its mission and purpose with external support, both through raising adequate financial resources for the core costs and operational expenses of the organisation. A total of approximately USD 1,000,000 per annum is needed.

A revised fundraising strategy that focuses on the establishment of a threshold of unrestricted funding to cover core/operational costs and salaries will be developed.

The fundraising plan will also prioritise a diversity of trusts/foundations, donor individuals, private companies and statutory/government funders that do not place an undue load on the organisation (e.g. administration and reporting), and those sources which provide multi-year funding and enable proactive and targeted forward budget planning efforts to raise unrestricted or endowment funding for SRT. Finally, the fundraising plan will highlight the need to mobilise more conservancy financial input into rhino conservation, relieving the fundraising burden from SRT and our partners to a certain extent.

A communications strategy that aligns with the strategic goals and objectives will also be developed. The plan will reinforce SRT's external communications and profile (including the SRT website and social media) with relevant, topical and positive stories and reports derived from local rhino monitoring and community involvement efforts, highlighting collaboration with other local agencies and organisations.

4. PARTNERSHIPS

Improved coordination, collaboration and communication with other key stakeholders and local partners, will enable SRT to build a robust and trusted position for achieving its key strategic objectives over the period of the strategic plan. SRT will continue to foster partnerships and opportunities for collaboration with local and international organisations.

A stakeholder mapping exercise will be conducted to determine any other key stakeholders with whom SRT should be working. This stakeholder mapping exercise will also help with clarifying roles and duties between SRT and their partners.

Furthermore, it has been recognized that conservancies need to take on more responsibilities for tracking/driving/supply of teams as this will reduce the responsibilities (both financial and human) for SRT. A detailed plan will be drafted relating specifically to the roles and responsibilities of the conservancies vis a vis SRT.



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