

Proposal to the African Elephant Fund

1.1 Country: **Namibia**

1.2 Project Title: **Aerial Survey of elephants in the northwest of Namibia**

1.3 Project Location: **Namibia**

1.4 Overall Project Cost:

AMOUNT Requested from African Elephant Fund:

1.5 Project Duration: **12 months**

1.6 Project Proponent: **Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Namibia**

1.7 Name of Project Supervisor: **Mr. Kenneth Uiseb**

1.8 Address of Project Supervisor: **Private Bag 13306, Windhoek, Namibia**

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1.12 Date proposal submitted: **11 September 2015**

2.0 Project Summary: (not more than 250 words)

A population of elephants inhabit the inhospitable areas of North-West Namibia where their ability to survive the harsh conditions has earned them the name "desert elephants".

Obtaining a good estimate of the numbers of these elephants has been difficult because of their sparse distribution and rough terrain. In 2011 a country-wide aerial survey of elephants produced an estimate of $314 \pm 68\%$. The confidence limit was very wide because of the small size of the population and the low sampling intensity, occasioned by the vast area in which it lives. Many of these animals move extensively between the ephemeral river catchments while others move in and out of farming areas where they occasionally cause problem. Increasing human-elephant conflicts are also being observed due to below average rainfall being experienced since 2014.

A survey that combines total counts of the ephemeral rivers and block counts using a helicopter, and a sample count at various intensities using the fixed wing aircraft is planned to estimate the population of the northwest elephants. A number of sources will be used to ascertain relative density distributions of

elephants in NW Namibia. These include satellite telemetry, local field knowledge, information from interested NGOs and private researchers, “event book” records from Conservancies and data from annual road strip counts in all Conservancies. This information has shown that the range is larger than previously thought.

3.0 Which Priority Objectives and Activities (there may be more than one) in the African Elephant Action Plan does this project fall under? (For ease of reference, Priority Objectives are attached under Appendix 1)

- Priority Objective 5: Strengthen range States knowledge on African elephant management
- **Strategy 5.1.** Determine and monitoring the status of African elephant population and their habitats within and among elephant range states
- Activity 5.1.1. Conduct population surveys in prioritized areas identified by the regions
- Conduct inventories for unknown/less known population to ascertain their biological status and their habitats
- Activity 5.1.5 Continue participating in the MIKE and ETIS programmes
- **Strategy 5.2.** Develop mechanisms of acquiring and dissemination of information within and among elephant range states
- Activity 5.2.1. Maintain and update databases on elephant populations for management purposes.
- Activity 5.2.3. Establish fora for exchanging information between and among range States for better monitoring of transboundary movements of elephants.

4.0 Project Rationale – why is this project necessary and urgent? What threats face this elephant population (give, for example, what information you have regarding population details, trends in population (downward or upward), ivory seizure information, details about levels of poaching, human/elephant conflict, etc.)

It is important from the management, protection, and community-based conservation perspective that the elephant populations in the north-western Namibia is monitored regularly. Most of the range of these elephants lies outside of the formally protected areas on the land managed by the traditional communities.

Due to increasing incidents of human-elephant conflict recorded in the area especially over access to water resources, there is a perception that elephant numbers have increased. This perception is further enhanced by the sightings of the elephant in the areas from which they were absent for many years. A survey that combines different survey techniques such as total, block and sample counts is required to estimate the population density and the distribution of elephant across the north-western landscape.

Elephant poaching has been observed in north-eastern Namibia with no such incidences recorded in the north-western of Namibia. The aerial survey will be used to assess presence or absence of illegal hunting of elephants for their ivory in the inaccessible remote and rugged areas of the northwest.

Below average rainfall was recorded in the north-western Namibia since 2012 with 2013 being recorded as worst drought year since early 1980s. The aerial survey of the area is urgently required to assess the impact of drought on the density and distribution of elephants in the area. Number of elephant carcasses where detected during the rhino dehorning operation in the area in 2014 indicating the possibility or more mortalities resulting from the dry conditions experienced over the three years.

Linked to the above, the survey is required to help implement the MIKE programme related activities in this remote area by detecting elephant carcasses, establish cause of death, and also for the recovery of ivory.

Most important factor for conducting the survey is the cover the known elephant range in the northwest to obtain as far as possible an accurate estimation of the elephant population.

5.0 Detailed Proposal – including activities to be carried out, milestones (at least quarterly milestones), timelines, equipment to be purchased, reporting procedures, etc. (not more than 1000 words). It will be helpful in evaluating this Project Proposal if you to divide it into Phases such as planning; Procurement; Implementation; Evaluation and Reporting)

(Should include anticipated benefits (including benefits to the conservation and management of elephant populations and communities) and outputs from the project, and how the project will be monitored and evaluated)

This project proposes to carry out aerial survey of the elephants occurring in the remote and rugged north-western part of Namibia. The Namibian Government is in the process of updating elephant density and distribution for better management and protection of elephants. All other elephant range in Namibia is planned to be surveyed in September – mid-October 2015 except the north-west elephant range due to unavailability of sufficient funds.

Three techniques will be used in surveying the area that totals up to 60,000 km²: block sample count for the mountainous areas using a Jet Ranger helicopter, total count of the rivers using a Jet Ranger helicopter and systematic transect sample count using Cessna 182. Sampling intensities will average around 10% but will be varied from 100% - the total counts in the ephemeral river courses – to 25% in the central “core” area, and around 5% in the low elephant density areas. The anticipated density distribution of elephants will be taken into account to some extent, but as the numbers are generally very low, there will have to be some modifications to normal practices to increase the chances of seeing the sparsely scattered groups.

The project is planned over four phases:

Planning Phase - The survey design will be reviewed, and all local knowledge on distribution of elephants in the area will be sourced and considered during the planning phase. Action plan for the implementation of the project which will include also the logistics such as the procurement of helicopter services, identification and selection of experienced survey crew and independent aerial survey expert (for credibility), identification of field base stations etc. will form part of the planning phase. Inventory of all items required for successful implementation of the survey will be made and integrated in the action plan.

Procurement phase – important items identified under the planning phase will be procured during this phase. Key amongst the items are the following; helicopter at a wet rate that includes the pilot and fuel, fuel for the fixed wing aircraft and services of independent aerial survey expert to advise on the process and also to review the final survey report.

Implementation phase – will entail the actual conducting of the aerial elephant survey and writing of the aerial survey report. A minimum of 25 days of surveying will be required with extra 20 days for data processing, analyses and report writing.

Evaluation and reporting phase – the implementation of the project will be evaluated during this phase. Lessons learned and any possible best practices in terms of conducting aerial surveys in remote and rugged areas while counting species occurring in low densities over a vast areas will be recorded and recommendations communicated to ministerial survey unit and also with the other African elephant range states. Both financial as well as technical progress report inclusive of the aerial survey report will be produced and submitted to the African Elephant Fund.

Following are the anticipated benefits from the project:

- Adequate coverage of the known elephant range – this will be the first attempt in many years where all known elephant range will be covered by a survey at the same time.
- Better understanding of the density and distribution of elephants in the arid north-western Namibia.
- Contribution to the national elephant population estimates by adding to the Etosha National Park and the northeast elephant surveys.
- Appropriate and informed conservation planning for elephants based on the information including that of demographics, generated from the survey.
- Contribution to the MIKE Programme through the provision of data on carcasses discovered during the survey.
- Recovery of valuable ivory from carcasses.
- Contribution to the IUCN coordinated elephant database for use in the estimation of the national, regional and continental elephant populations.
- Contribution to the management of increasing human-elephant conflict in the area.

6.0 Project Timeline – outline the timeline for proposed activities within this project. You may find it helpful to relate the timeline to the Phases identified in Section 5.0 above.

The aerial survey project is planned to last over a period of eight (8) months from February-September 2016.

Phases	Key Activities	Timelines (Months)
Planning Phase (1)	Develop comprehensive survey design inclusive of the local knowledge on elephant distribution, develop survey implementation plan, identify and develop inventory of all items and integrate this with the action plan	February – March 2016
Procurement Phase (2)	Procure helicopter services through competitive bidding process, procure aircraft fuel, prepare ministerial aircraft for the survey, procure services of independent aerial survey expert	April – June 2016
Implementation Phase (3)	Conduct aerial survey, analyse data and produce a survey report	July-August 2016
Evaluation and Reporting Phase (4)	Evaluate outcome of the implementation of the project, prepare financial and technical progress reports to African Elephant Fund	August – September 2016

BUDGET

7.0 Has this project received or been pledged any other sources of funding (external)? Give all relevant details (for example, amount, source of funds, timetable, any restrictions):

7.1 Please provide a detailed proposed budget for this project (in US\$). You may find it helpful to relate expenditure to the Phases you have set out in Section 5.0

Full Proposal Budget				
Budget line		Expected source of funds and amounts (USD)		
		MET	AEF	Other (please specify)
1.	Allowances (DSA for the survey crew)	7,416.00	0.00	
2.	Helicopter Rental (Wet rate inclusive of pilot)	0.00	72,000.00	
3.	Fixed Wing aircraft	27,000.00	0.00	
4.	Aircraft fuel (fixed wing)	8,819.71	0.00	
5.	Aircraft fuel transport	1,254.00	0.00	
6.	Camera equipment	8,000.00	0.00	
7.	Professional Fees (Survey Expert)	3,681.00	3,681.00	
8.	Total	56,170.71	75,681.00	

7.2 Please specify the proponent's contribution towards the project;

The Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia's contribution to the project is USD 56,170.71.

Please submit the completed proposal, either by:

Email:

Fax:

You should receive acknowledgement of receipt of your proposal within 14 days. If you do not receive such an acknowledgement, please telephone:

Further details on any of the above details may be requested by the Steering Committee of the African Elephant Fund.