
**AFRICAN WILDLIFE
ECONOMY INSTITUTE**

**STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY**

IMPACT REPORT 2022



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AWEI

African Wildlife Economy Institute

Foreword



Research and engagement with impact

At Stellenbosch University we are committed to research for impact and purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks. It is exciting to see how much progress AWEI made in 2022 regarding impactful research, partnerships, and networks.

A highlight has been AWEI's research on liberalising intra-African trade in wild meat. We are particularly encouraged by the engagement across the continent in our events, notably our series of Zimbabwean wildlife economy dialogues and our sessions at last year's African Protected Areas Congress in Kigali. AWEI's focus in 2022 on wild plants was pathbreaking encouraging all of us to explore the potential for benefiting from the use of both wild fauna and wild flora.

Prof Kennedy Dzama, AWEI Chair and Vice-Dean of the Faculty of AgriSciences, Stellenbosch University



Connecting disciplinary dots to promote sustainability outcomes

Though there is a considerable interest in undertaking interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, actually doing it can be quite challenging. In 2022, AWEI succeeded in building a programme of research and engagement with experts from a number of disciplines including trade law, conservation leadership, philosophy, conservation biology, economics, rural development, terrestrial ecology, and business management. Using our dialogues and blog posts to provide thought leadership, we have started to connect disciplinary dots to better understand how wildlife enterprise can drive landscape conservation and improve livelihoods. A highlight for me from 2022 were our three workshops at last year's Conservation Symposium on standards for wildlife products, community-based wildlife enterprise, and delivering the SDGs at the landscape level.

Dr Francis Vorhies, AWEI Director and Professor Extraordinary, Stellenbosch University



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The rubber hits the road

This impact report looks back at 2022, our first full year of activities. Supporting this report is a detailed activities report for the same period.

Building on the start-up of OGRC-funded activities in the second half of 2021, AWEI's research, engagement, and capacity development programs took off in 2022. We can comfortably say that the rubber hit the road, and we are most definitely on our way!

But where are we headed and what will be our impact? As an academic 'think-do tank,' we aim to inform, engage, and empower key wildlife conservation and rural development stakeholders to restore landscapes and enhance livelihoods by enabling the wildlife economy and promoting wildlife enterprise. In 2022, a key objective was to let stakeholders across the continent know that AWEI is on the road and heading their way.

As the COVID-19 lockdowns moved engagement online, AWEI benefited from this new capacity and was able to reach out to stakeholders across the continent through online dialogues and events. Our series of Zimbabwe dialogues attracted not only Zimbabweans from across the country and beyond but also stakeholders from countries like Madagascar and Tanzania. Our online consultations and policy presentations on non-tariff barriers facing intra-African wild meat trade engaged stakeholders from across Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia.

We were also fortunate that we could host and participate in live events including our in-person wild food dialogues in Stellenbosch and Victoria Falls and our sessions and presentations at the African Protected Areas Congress in Kigali and the Oppenheimer Research Conference in Johannesburg. Further away, we also participated in the General Assembly of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation in Riga, Latvia; the World Trade Organisation Public Forum in Geneva, Switzerland; and a wild meat indicators workshop at the University of Oxford.

Though we are playing a long game, we have already seen wins along the way on key topics such as wild meat, trade policy reform, and sensitive issues. A single year is too brief of a period to demonstrate systemic impact, but by looking back to see where we are coming from, we now have better idea of where we are going. We are not there yet, but the indicators are that we are heading in the right direction.

Seeing the forests and the trees

AWEI aims to support the transformation of African landscapes that deliver sustainable development outcomes through facilitating the growth and diversification of inclusive wildlife economies. We have effectively changed and broadened the way stakeholders across Africa are seeing the role of wildlife economies and have raised awareness of range of opportunities across several sectors from wild plant harvesting to mangrove carbon sequestration to wildlife ranching.

During 2022, we established our position as a thought leader on wildlife economies and broadened our influence on key decision-makers and stakeholders, notably in countries such as Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. We have started new partnerships with key organisations such as the Atlas Network, the Southern African Wildlife College, and the Wildlife Producers' Association of Zambia. We have been active in international networks including the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group and the newly established Wildlife Economy Working Group.

Our Wild Plants Dialogue early in the year expanded thinking about the livelihood and enterprise opportunities of the wild plants sector. Wildlife discussion all too often focuses on wild fauna, missing the many opportunities in wild flora. We carried on with this perspective in our Zimbabwe Dialogues in support of a soon-to-be-released government report on its biodiversity economy.

A key impact of all our activities is to build a shared vision among decision-makers and stakeholders of the potential for wildlife economies to deliver biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, inclusive economic opportunities, and community well-being at the landscape level. When looking at the wildlife economy from a landscape perspective, the opportunities are in both wild fauna and wild flora and in the production of wildlife goods and wildlife services. We need to look at both the forest and the trees. This holistic view feeds into policy reform and a better enabling environment.



Putting the wildlife economy on the radar

Because of our efforts in 2022, more people across Africa and beyond at different levels are aware and engaged with the wildlife economy approach to inclusive, sustainable development. From their participation in our many activities, reading our blog post commentaries, and following our messaging on social media, they better understand how the development of the wildlife economy can benefit both landscapes and livelihoods, leading to increased attention to wildlife economy approaches to sustainable rural development.

We reached hundreds of stakeholders through our training at the African Protected Areas Congress, at universities, and online; our thesis advising at Stellenbosch and other universities; our organised in-person and online events including workshops, dialogues, and consultations; our engagement in other events providing technical inputs; and our extensive dissemination and engagement on social media platforms. These outputs enabled AWEI to be recognised as a new and innovative thought leader for conservation and development in Africa.

In 2022, we published over 45 thought leadership articles, built followings of over 1,000 on each our social media platforms and reached many thousands more through our postings. We involved hundreds of people in our events in Stellenbosch, at APAC and the Conservation Symposium, as well as our own events on Zimbabwe and the intra-African wild meat trade. We also provided official comments to the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment on their white papers on biodiversity conservation and game meat. All of these activities contributed to putting the wildlife economy on the radar as a way forward for sustainable rural development.

Turning up the heat on wild meat

The wild meat sector can literally be a game-changer in restoring and rewilding Africa's savannahs and drylands and enhancing rural livelihoods. Targeted AWEI dialogues, consultations, commentaries, and social media messaging in 2022 contributed to an increased understanding of the opportunities to develop a sustainable wild meat sector across the continent connecting to national, intra-African, and global markets.

We have turned up the heat on wild meat in Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe by engaging with wild meat producers and others in wild meat value chains to promote policy reform on critical issues.

In Kenya, we have contributed to a growing awareness of the need to reopen the wild meat sector to reverse their major losses of wildlife and habitat. In Tanzania and Zimbabwe, our discussions focused on enabling mixed livestock and wildlife ranching. In Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia, we are addressing non-tariff barriers to intra-Africa wild meat trade as well as the critical roles of voluntary standards and industry associations to establish best practice and assurance to stakeholders.

Dozens of key stakeholders have participated in our dialogues and consultations. We have also established strategic partnerships, e.g., with the Wildlife Producers Association of Zambia, and commented on key documents, e.g., South Africa's new game meat strategy. We have prioritised establishing a post-doc position at Stellenbosch to take this game-changing topic forward in 2023 and implement a holistic programme of impactful research and engagement on growing the wild meat sector across the continent.

Importantly, in December, decisions of the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) established an international policy framework for our work. Notably, CBD/COP/15/L.5 calls for collaboration "with all relevant actors and stakeholders in order to promote the mainstreaming of the sustainable use of biodiversity, in particular that of wild species, into all relevant sectors." We will be supporting this decision in the context of the newly adopted Global Biodiversity Framework by promoting the sustainable use of wild species at the landscape level.



A spotlight on policy reform

Our targeted efforts – particularly in South Africa and Zimbabwe – have positioned AWEI as a serious player in supporting needed policy reform. By creating the space – both online and in-person – for experts to present, discuss, and debate, we have established AWEI's position in policy processes, bringing the unique perspective of the wildlife economy to the table. Increasingly, we are being approached by organisations such as the African Wildlife Foundation, the South African National Biodiversity Institute, and the United Nations Environment Programme, to participate in policy-related processes.

In South Africa, we engaged directly with industry leaders and industry bodies, such as Wildlife Ranching South Africa. As noted, we submitted formal comments to the South African government on their draft White Papers on Biodiversity and a Game Meat Strategy. In Zimbabwe, with the delay in the release of the government's report on their biodiversity economy, our series of wildlife economy dialogues in Zimbabwe kept the light shining on the need for policy reform, highlighting the importance of promoting community-based wildlife enterprise and scaling up wildlife product exports.

In 2022, our engagement on policy reforms has broadened to include Kenya, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zambia. Requests for further engagement with these countries and others came from our participation in key events, such as the African Protected Areas Congress and a multi-country workshop organised by the South African National Biodiversity Institute. We expect to be more actively involved in policy reform in one or more countries in the coming year plus continuing with our involvement with South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Where others fear to tread

We go where others fear to tread, tackling sensitive issues that need to be addressed. We must tackle the hard questions if we are to succeed. Going only after the low hanging fruit will not bring about the transformation in understanding required. We need to tackle the tough issues as well. In so doing, we enable stakeholders to look more broadly at the range of options for wildlife goods and services and their interrelated value chains that will deliver restored landscapes and enhanced livelihoods. This improves their ability to see these options in a broader, systematic context.

Some issues are relatively easy, like promoting sustained offtakes of wild ungulates for food or scaling up intra-African photographic tourism. Others, however, are much more sensitive and complicated, like hunting for sport and the international trade in products from endangered wild species.

In 2022, we co-organised a hunting discussion group chaired by an AWEI Fellow studying at Cornell University. This group is exploring the role that hunting in Africa plays in conservation including the hotly debated role of so-called trophy hunting tourism. Through these discussions we are identifying knowledge gaps that need to be addressed. Further, we have published new research on hunting and ethics and participated in the general meeting of the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC). Strategically, through our dialogues and thought leadership writings, we have positioned hunting in a more holistic perspective focused on enabling Africans to harvest their wild resources, i.e., to forage, fish, and hunt for food, medicines, biofuels, and building materials.

We are also engaging at national and international levels on enabling and promoting legal trade in wildlife products. We have published new research on rhino horn trade and wild plant value chains. At the request of the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group, we produced a report for discussion at the 19th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES COP19). The report explored the nexus between trade barriers agreed by CITES COPs, livelihoods, and landscapes. We found that the direct impact of CITES trade barriers on livelihoods across the value chain and, in turn, the potential impact this has on landscape management decisions is generally not considered in CITES decisions.

Further, we have started to explore pathways to policy coherence between CITES and the recently launched the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which aims to eliminate trade barriers such as those adopted by CITES COPs. A research project on non-tariff barriers (NTBs) facing the intra-Africa trade in wild meat led to a number of policy recommendations with respect the reporting on these barriers through the AfCFTA NTB Mechanism and to establishing an enabling environment for wild meat exports at the national level. By linking CITES and AfCFTA, we are supporting African policy makers to develop and support a shared vision of the livelihood and landscape opportunities from liberalising wildlife trade across the continent.

Reshaping the conservation agenda

Through our research, dialogues, thought leadership blogs, social media posts, and mailouts, we are building a continent-wide constituency that is able and willing to promote the development and diversification of wildlife economies. They are addressing the interlinkages between wildlife enterprises, landscapes, and livelihoods. In the first half of 2022, we reached more than 3,000 stakeholders through our website, social media, and mailouts.

Our main events during this period – a wild plants dialogue in Stellenbosch, our Zimbabwe dialogues, sessions at the African Protected Areas Congress and the Conservation Symposium, consultations on intra-African wild meat trade, and lectures on wildlife and agriculture – engaged hundreds of people. Most of these events were filmed and posted online, enabling ongoing learning and engagement on these topics.

Through this engagement, we are reshaping the conservation agenda which for too long has attempted to save wildlife and habitats by ‘protecting’ them from people. In 2022, we broadened the discussion across the continent on restoring wildlife populations and their habitats through ‘using’ them for people. By the end of 2022, AWEI was widely recognised as a thought leader in the integration of conservation with development through wildlife enterprise.

This is evidenced by the increasing requests from stakeholders for our inputs. Many are also asking to be associated with AWEI as Fellows or Partners. Most encouraging, as a think-do tank, we are excited about the growing requests to undertake post-grad or post-doc research with us – with enquiries in 2022 from DR Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and elsewhere.



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Further, the decisions of CBD COP15 have provided an important policy framework for the wildlife economy approach to delivering conservation and livelihood outcomes through sustainable landscape management.

Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (CBD/COP/DEC/15/4) is to:

“Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and of coastal and marine areas... are effectively conserved and managed through... systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures... while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes...”

This target is supported by the recognition in CBD/COP/15/L.5 that:

“sustainable wildlife management can significantly contribute to biodiversity conservation, as opposed to alternatives that may result in land use changes that may be harmful to the environment and ecosystems.”

The road we are on is taking us towards a common understanding of sustainable wildlife use as an effective, area-based conservation measure – i.e., wildlife enterprise delivering conservation and livelihood outcomes across African landscapes. In 2023, our journey continues!



Annex 1 Our theory of change

Throughout 2022, we refined our theory of change and developed an associated logical framework. This exercise is critically important for an innovative think-do tank that aims to not only generate knowledge, but also to use this knowledge to bring about systemic change, and to develop the capacity to implement and manage this change.

Vision

Transformed, enhanced, and maintained African landscapes – i.e., complex systems that deliver biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, inclusive economic opportunities, and community well-being

Impact

Inclusive, diversified, and flourishing wildlife economies across the continent supporting this vision

Outcomes

A. Strengthened enabling environment

Key public and private policy and regulatory frameworks are developed and/or strengthened across Africa to support the growth of a sustainable, inclusive, and transformative wildlife economy

B. Thriving wildlife enterprise

Across Africa, wildlife enterprises are developed and contributing to sustainable development across wildlife product global value chains

Outputs (for both Outcomes)

1. Knowledge generated

Knowledge gaps inhibiting the wildlife economy and wildlife enterprise discovered and addressed through impactful research and analysis by AWEI, Fellows, and Partners

2. Stakeholders engaged

Identified stakeholders across Africa are engaged using knowledge generated by AWEI to improve understanding, and are empowered to identify their interests and adapt their behaviour in support of the wildlife economy and wildlife enterprise

3. Capacity developed

Capacity to sustain knowledge generation and stakeholder engagement in support the wildlife economy and wildlife enterprises is developed and strengthened through academic studies and technical training

Annex 2 2022 targets and results

Our work plan for 2022 included the following activities and targets.

Activities	2022 Targets	2022 Targets
1.1 Identifying knowledge gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a strategic research programme by the end of 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic programme well developed, based on stakeholder engagement
1.2 Impactful research and thought leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish 5 research papers Publish 20 commentaries or analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 published 45 published by AWEI plus several published elsewhere
1.3 Building an African-wide research network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit 10 new Fellows Publish 20 items of research from our Fellows Establish 2 academic partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 new Fellows recruited; discussions underway with others Publication and promotion of Fellows' research 5 new academic partnerships
2.1 Identifying and mapping stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build a mail list with 1,000 stakeholders from across Africa and beyond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over, 1,400 on our mail list, hundreds engaged with our social media platforms

Activities	2022 Targets	2022 Targets
2.2 Disseminating knowledge and engaging in dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach at least 1,000 stakeholders through our website and social media platforms • Continue policy engagement in South Africa • Undertake dialogues in 2 new African countries • Undertake 2 dialogues relevant to our research priorities • Participate in 4 international events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 1,000 followers each on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook • Submitted comments on South African white papers on biodiversity conservation and a new game meat strategy • Dialogues on wild plants and wild foods • A new dialogue series in Zimbabwe; engaged with Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia on intra African wild meat trade • Participated in 4 key international events – CIC Wildlife, APAC, WTO Public Forum, and ORC; closely monitored the CITES and CBD COPs
2.3 Building collaborative partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish 4 collaborative partnerships • Raise funds from 2 new donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 new collaborative partnerships • New funding from Atlas Network and IUCN SULI
3.1 Supporting post-grads, post-docs, and internships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 PhD student and 1 post-doc starting in 2022 • 2 MSc students starting in 2023 • Co-supervising 3 post-graduate students at partner universities • 4 interns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 PhD student with others under consideration and 1 post-doc starting in early 2023 • 1 MSc student • 3 post-grads being supervised at Oxford, Cambridge, and Carinthia • 4 in-residence interns from Germany, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and South Africa

Activities	2022 Targets	2022 Targets
3.2 Implementing leadership development programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop a post-graduate wildlife economy certificate programme • Recruit 25 students for a cohort starting in 2023 • Secure accreditation through Stellenbosch or an academic partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions underway within the University on a taught post-grad degree • Plans underway for to design and pilot a professional development programme in 2023 • Accreditation discussions underway with the Stellenbosch and SAWC
3.3 Establishing a cloud campus for practitioner learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop 4 in-person or online technical courses • Develop and deliver the courses with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 piloted training sessions – in-person and online – with partners • Prototype cloud campus on mightynetworks.com

