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AWEI

African Wildlife
Economy Institute



Impact Report

2023

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Reflecting on 2023

A note from our Chair, Prof Kennedy Dzama



A think tank embedded in an academic institution like Stellenbosch University has to not only reach out to key external stakeholders but establish its position within its host university. In 2023, AWEI clearly advanced its position at Stellenbosch with increasing recognition and support from the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, and the Development Office. AWEI has secured university funding for its first postdoc and PhD student and has a new office next to the Dean of AgriSciences. AWEI's approach to research-based thought leadership is now seen as an innovative pathway for the university to have an impact.

A note from our Director, Prof Francis Vorhies

Looking back to 2023, we will see it as the year that we connected the dots between the use of wild animal and plant species and resilient socio-ecological landscapes. The new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) offers a new policy space for our vision of the wildlife economy as a way for people to live in harmony with nature. In 2023, we began to understand how the GBF targets on wildlife use connect to the GBF target on area-based conservation. We tested this in a pilot assessment of landscape-based wildlife enterprise, explored it with new partners like the Peace Parks Foundation, considered ways to verify sustainable outcomes with standards like FairWild, showed how the African Continental Free Trade Area is a key opportunity for scaling up legal wildlife trade, and led the conversation in workshops at The Conservation Symposium, presentations at the Oppenheimer Research Conference and elsewhere. In 2023, AWEI's theory of change became its roadmap for change.



A note from our Programme Manager, Dr Wiseman Ndlovu



The year 2023 has been a landmark period for the Institute, marked by significant achievements, milestones and lessons that underscore our commitment to the flourishing African wildlife economy. This year's activities spanned a broad spectrum, from conducting in-depth area-based landscape economic assessment to probing the intricacies of value chains and sustainable use of wild products. Each initiative has been instrumental in shaping our understanding and approach to sustainable wildlife economy development. Through proactive strategic partnerships, stakeholder engagement, and participating in international events – for example, the African Liberty Forum, the All-Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture; the African Biotrade Festival; and Leadership for Conservation in Africa – we have laid the groundwork for meaningful knowledge exchange, amplified our impact, and extended our reach. Together, we are charting a course towards a more sustainable and economically vibrant future for Africa's wildlife economy.

Introduction

The African Wildlife Economy Institute (AWEI) is a think tank based in the Faculty of AgriSciences at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. Founded in 2018, it was only with generous support from Oppenheimer Generations Research and Conservation that the institute became operational in mid-2021.

This report highlights the Institute's impacts in 2023, with a more detailed list of our activities included in the Appendix.

Overall, AWEI's work supports the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in December 2022, the Institute was able to directly focus its efforts on supporting the GBF and its targets on the use of wild species.

Key SDGs and GBF targets include the following:

Sustainable Development Goals

(SDG)



Global Biodiversity Framework

(GBF)

GOAL B

Prosper with Nature

Target 5

Ensure Sustainable, Safe and Legal Harvesting and Trade of Wild Species

Target 9

Manage Wild Species Sustainably to Benefit People

AWEI's Theory of Change

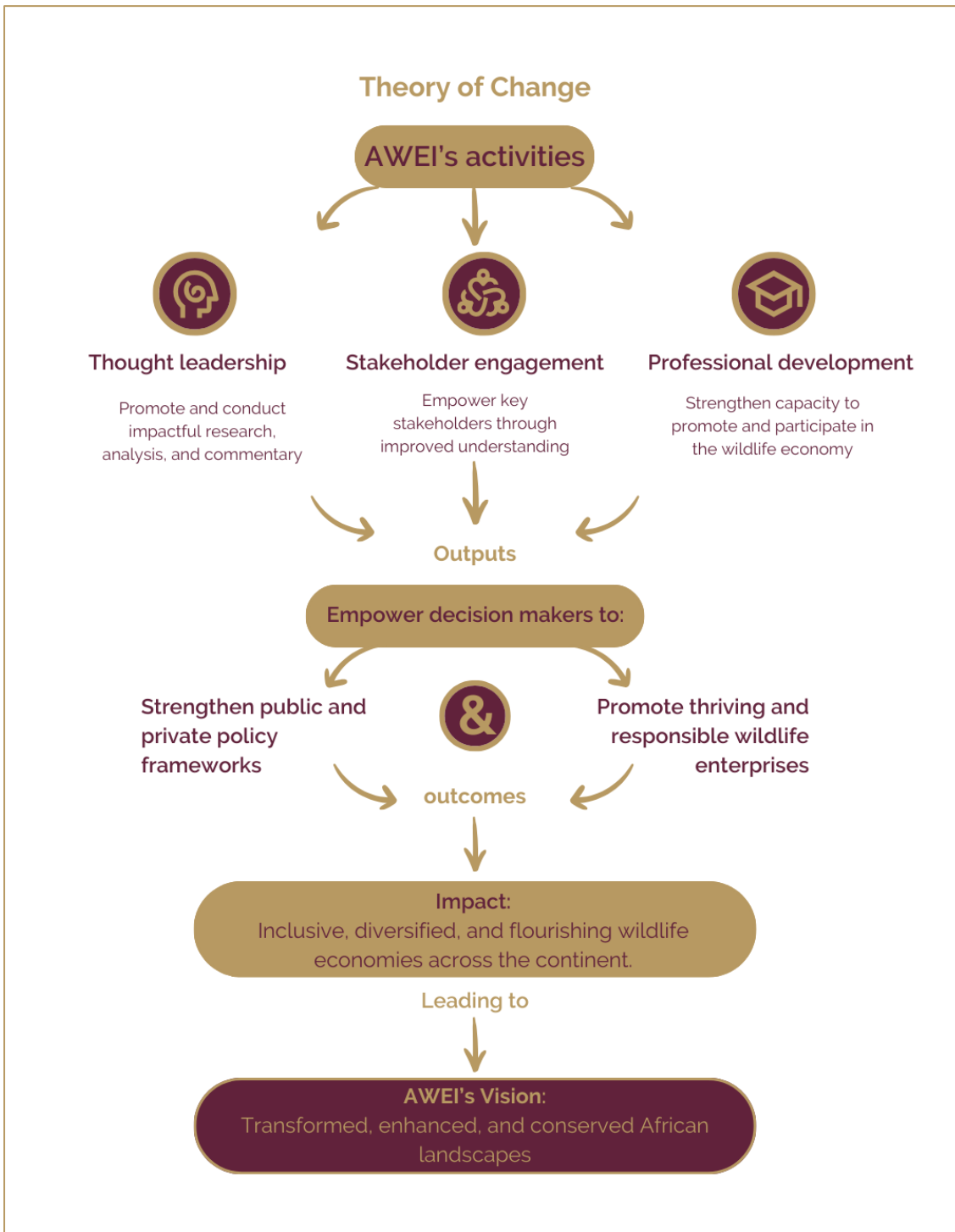


Figure 1: The African Wildlife Economy Institute Theory of Change

Key outcomes for AWEI in 2023

Through **thought leadership, stakeholder engagement, and professional development, the Institute continued to lead the conversation and research on wildlife economies in Africa**, resulting in the following key outcomes for AWEI in 2023. (Activities detailed in Appendix A)

In 2023, AWEI made a strategic decision to concentrate our thought leadership and research on four priority themes:

1. **Wild Meat** - Evaluating and advancing inclusive and sustainable wild meat value chains
2. **Wild Enterprise** - Assessing and developing wildlife-based enterprises at the landscape level
3. **Wild Standards** - Developing and advocating for voluntary sustainability standards and certification schemes for wildlife enterprises and products
4. **Wild Policy** - Assessing and promoting supportive strategies, policies, and regulations (at the national, continental, and international levels) for Africa's wildlife economy

This decision was based on the research conducted in 2021-2022 and the identified knowledge gaps that required attention. Consequently, these four themes intersect with all our goals and the key outcomes achieved in 2023.

1. Evolved thinking on wildlife economy policy and practice

In 2023, AWEI facilitated discussions that incorporated over-arching principles on wildlife economies, while also targeting and unpacking specific aspects and/or geographical areas of these economies in Africa.

This approach broadened the scope of understanding and allowed for more meaningful and productive stakeholder engagement and targeted research.

Overall, AWEI produced over 45 outputs on wildlife economy policy and practice, comprised of research papers, thought leadership articles, and scientific commentary published widely on multiple platforms (AWEI's website, academic journals, media channels, social media, and partners' platforms) to magnify the reach of our approach. In 2023, there were 910 downloads of content on the AWEI website.

This body of work and thought leadership sets the foundation for Africa's biodiversity economy policy and practice discussions. Moreover, these outputs bridge the research gaps, thereby advancing thinking, understanding, and implementation of sustainable wildlife economy strategies.



Over 45 outputs
on wildlife
economy policy
and practice

1.1. Increased awareness of the opportunities available in African wildlife economies

Unpacking issues and identifying opportunities for growing sustainable African wildlife economies at the continental level resulted in a better understanding of the following key areas of impact:

- The importance of private and communal lands in the sustainable conservation of Africa's rhinoceros
- Opportunities in Africa's blue economy
- The barriers affecting the intra-Africa trade in wild meat
- Opportunities for scaling and formalising the wild meat sector

There is now a more profound understanding of how effective governance of the wild meat sector can be achieved through value chain analysis. At the Conservation Symposium, a participant from Uganda posed the question:

"With the introduction of 'new value chains', as presented, would it not be proper to 'stop' the illegal trade by supplying the adjacent communities to the protected areas with the meat and permitting them to trade it in a formal market?"

This question underscores the evolution of thought and discussion resulting from AWEI's engagements and research in 2023.

1.2. Localised knowledge of wildlife economy opportunities

Understanding of the sustainable use of various wild products has also progressed at the national level. For instance, research into the value of honey, charcoal, and palm leaves was conducted in Uganda, as well as a study on the connection between food security and conservation in Niger. In Madagascar, a study was carried out on traditional medicine and the sustainable use of *Cedrelopsis Grevei* from a value chain perspective.

1.3. Identification of the link between traditional practices and the economy

Our research highlighted the opportunities and health benefits of incorporating traditional African wild food dishes into formal wildlife economies. An example of this is the consumption of edible insects in South Africa.

2. Deepened awareness and practical applications of wildlife use as a landscape conservation measure

AWEI has strategically amplified the discourse on wildlife use as a landscape conservation measure, marking a significant shift in awareness and practical applications across the continent. Through an array of dynamic platforms and forums, the Institute has championed a holistic view of wildlife economies, demonstrating how sustainable practices can bolster conservation outcomes while fostering economic resilience.

Notably, the institute hosted and co-hosted wildlife economy discussions at The Conservation Symposium, the



Over 170,000
people reached

International Hunting Discussion Forum, Leadership for Conservation, and the 10th All Africa Conference Animal Agriculture (AACAA10). Further, several **members of the AWEI Community participated in the Oppenheimer Research Conference**, speaking on topics such as landscape attributes, wild meat value chains, and standards for sustainable use of wild species at the landscape level.

2.1. Wild meat utilisation and potential discussed

AWEI co-hosted forums that facilitated meaningful exchanges and discussions on how wild meat can contribute significantly to landscape conservation and economic growth in Africa. Notably, the AWEI organised a workshop (AACAA10) in Gaborone, Botswana. **This work increased awareness of wild meat institutional arrangements, policy, and sustainable utilisation; reproduction and wildness; rewilding potential; and value chain management.** The discussion papers in local and international platforms also focused on the role of wild meat in rural household food security as well as how wild meat could be used to generate alternative income streams in protected areas. This underscores the multifaceted benefits of sustainable wildlife use.

By December 2023, a presentation by AWEI on wild meat value chains and formalisation at the Leadership for Conservation in Africa Webinar, was among the top ten most viewed videos on their YouTube channel, which has over 3,100 subscribers. This indicates deepening and growing awareness of wild meat utilisation and potential.

2.2. Policy and regulations for scaling wildlife enterprise unpacked

AWEI's strategic policy engagement helped to stimulate interest and demonstrate the potential for **wildlife product use opportunities for different African countries.** For example, the current policy frameworks for sustainable wildlife uses and advancements were discussed. The potential for using regional and continent-wide policy conventions was also unpacked and attendees and delegates explored the potential for intra-Africa wildlife trade and tourism through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

2.3. Continuous and active professional engagement enabled

The impact of AWEI's wildlife economy discourses was amplified through its digital footprint and partnerships. Due to its active engagement across multiple platforms, AWEI saw an increase of 30,1% in reach across all digital engagement platforms (Leading the conversation). LinkedIn (growing by 531%) and the website (335% increase in visits) were our primary engagement channels. This highlights the appetite for wildlife economy-based content in professional and academically inclined audiences and highlights the need for practical content outputs. The Institute's impact is also widespread geographically, attracting global interest in its contributions to the wildlife economy space, marked by 272,000 total impressions and engagement of 172,000 users. These digital engagements enabled a more comprehensive

and continuous global reach when raising awareness of sustainable wildlife use as a conservation strategy.

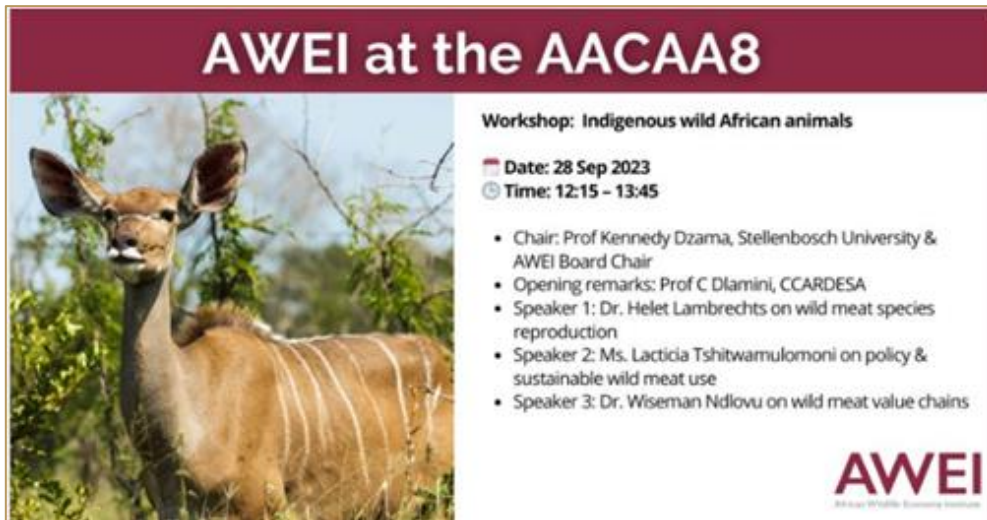


Figure 2: AWEI workshop on indigenous wild African animals at the AACAA8.

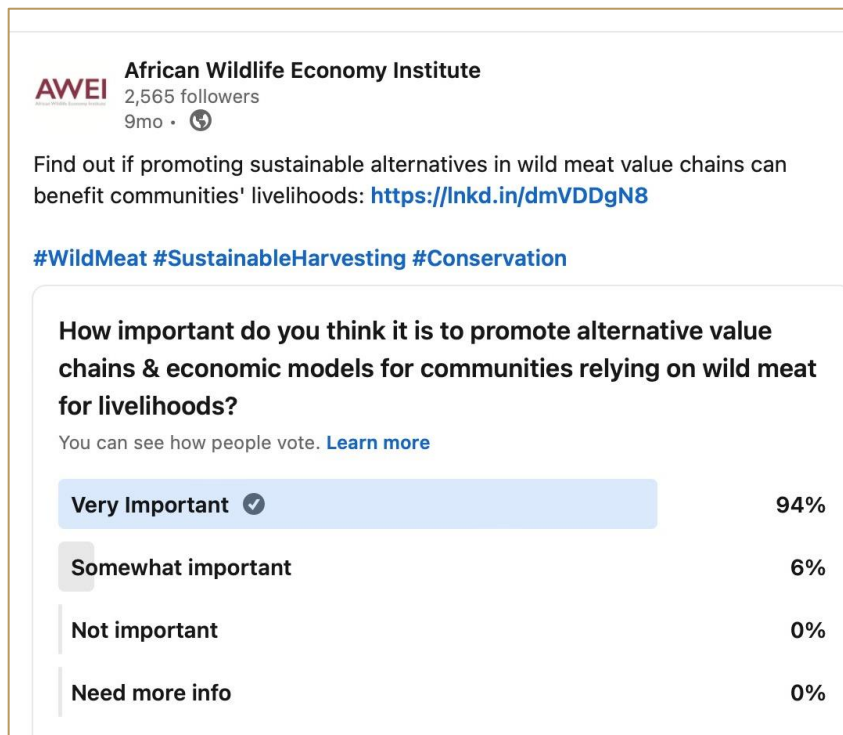


Figure 3: Wild meat value chain importance poll.

2.4. Professional development advanced

In 2023, AWEI was involved in advancing professional development to enhance professional practice and champion practice in the wildlife sector. Professionals and practitioners are aware of and can access wildlife economy-oriented courses - freely available online on our website for continued impactful professional development. Our self-directed short courses include:

- Liberalising intra-Africa trade in wild meat
- Can wildlife coexist with crops and livestock?
- What's next for Zimbabwe's wildlife economy?

AWEI also worked with SANBI on the development of a capacity-building strategy and training programme for South Africa's Scientific Authority that advises on the conservation impact of trade of CITES-listed species. Additionally, the AWEI community grew with new interns, PhD candidates, and fellows to further champion and diversify knowledge in wildlife economies.

3. Strengthened pathways for sustainable and legal wildlife trade

In 2023, AWEI addressed sustainable legal wildlife trade pathways, illuminating GBF Targets Five and Nine within a broader understanding of global trade dynamics. Our strategic engagements highlighted the role of CITES, not as a trade barrier but as a facilitator of sustainable legal trade, clarifying misconceptions and fostering a constructive dialogue on the trade in wildlife products. This shift in perception was bolstered by significant outreach and educational efforts.

3.1. Wildlife products trade capacity enabled

AWEI drafted CITES-related training materials, participated in webinars, and strengthened stakeholders' understanding of international trade laws. Through consultations and collaborative workshops, notably in the African Liberty Forum and the African BioTrade Festival, AWEI engaged in dialogue on wildlife trade. Moreso, **AWEI's training in addressing wildlife trade barriers, particularly in the wild meat sector, aims to bolster intra-African wildlife product trade by reaching a broader audience of policymakers and practitioners. To date, the course has had 305 visitors.**

Furthermore, engagements in international forums, such as CITES workshops on guidance for non-detriment findings, foster global policy consistency in wildlife economy practices. Over the reporting period, AWEI also supported and continues to support the connecting of different stakeholders in value chains to facilitate and enable legal trade. In particular, supporting the development of a game meat mobile application in partnership with Oppenheimer Generations Research and Conservation (OGRC), aimed at addressing the fragmentation of value chain actors, delivering legal wild meat products to customers' doorsteps, enhancing traceability, and ensuring accountability of supply chains. **The success of this application will further inspire the development of similar innovative trading platforms aimed at achieving sustainable use and trade of wildlife products throughout the continent.**

3.2. Co-creation of educational resources

AWEI engaged with global trade think tanks such as the Atlas Network and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), to expand appreciation and understanding

of the potential for liberalising trade in wildlife products, particularly across Africa. This positively contributed to linking trade policy to conservation policy in support of the SDG goals and GBF targets. As part of these endeavours, through its collaboration with the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) in 2023, AWEI was asked to conceptualise a capacity-building strategy in support of the regional wildlife-based economy strategic framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

4. Ensuring responsible harvesting, use, and trade of wild species

There is a growing recognition of the potential role of standards and certification in wildlife value chains as a result of AWEI's activities in 2023. **This was achieved through conducting research in the area, conference presentations, face-to-face engagements, workshop facilitations and strategic partnerships with organisations such as the Wildlife-Friendly Enterprise Network and the FairWild Foundation.**

For instance, at the Oppenheimer Research Conference and at the Conservation Symposium, AWEI made presentations and organised sessions on standards and certification. In addition, in collaboration with our partner organisations, AWEI engaged and shared information directly with entrepreneurs, government, institutions, traders, and buyers at the Africa Biotrade Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa. These sessions and engagements opened up opportunities, particularly for entrepreneurs, to learn and know how to use standards and certification in value chains.



Figure 4: AWEI attended and took part in Africa Biotrade Festival

5. Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to 2024 and beyond, the Institute is poised to deepen its support to the wildlife economy. We are looking to **expand our thought leadership, stakeholder engagements, and professional development with targeted efforts towards Eastern Africa, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.**

5.1. Thought leadership and stakeholder engagement

Building on identifying critical knowledge gaps in 2023, AWEI plans to further its research, analysis, and engagement in **sustainable wild meat global value**

chains, wildlife enterprise development at the landscape level, and the use of voluntary sustainability standards to deliver a sustainable wildlife economy sector. Part of the focus is **the expansion of research and engagement footprint into the rest of Africa.** Earmarked areas include supervision and producing impactful research in wild meat global value chain frameworks in Zambia and assessing enterprise development at landscape level in Kenya and Somalia among other areas.

5.2. Professional development

AWEI is committed to enhancing its academic offerings by finding **opportunities to develop post-graduate qualifications and structured coursework to foster leadership within the wildlife economy.** Discussions are underway within Stellenbosch University and with possible partner academic programmes. **A revamped website will also facilitate the dissemination of our articles, briefs, and research outputs.** It will also host an induction course for CITES Scientific Authorities and other interested stakeholders on the role of CITES and the use of non-detriment findings to facilitate sustainable wildlife trade.

5.3. Partnerships and collaborations

In 2024, AWEI aims to scale up its collaboration with partner organisations. We are looking **to conceptualise and seek funding for a landscape-based wildlife enterprise development initiative with partners such as Peace Parks Foundation and the Zambia Wildlife Producers Association.** Working with the School of Wildlife Conservation at the African Leadership University we plan to broaden the discussion on wildlife economy in East Africa. With the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) we aim to unpack the biodiversity economy report of Zimbabwe and identify pathways for policy reform. We aim to further engage our partners, to lead the conversation on the wildlife economy and to identify opportunities for promoting sustainable and inclusive wildlife enterprise.

Appendix A: Activity reporting

1. Thought leadership in 2023

1.1. Developing AWEI's research agenda

A key development early in 2023 was a strategic decision to focus our thought leadership on four priority themes:

- **Wild Meat** - assessing and promoting inclusive and sustainable wild meat value chains
- **Wild Enterprise** - assessing and developing wildlife-based enterprises based at the landscape level
- **Wild Standards** - developing and promoting voluntary sustainability standards and certification schemes for wildlife enterprises and products
- **Wild Policy** - assessing and promoting enabling strategies, policies, and regulations (at the national, continental, and international levels) to support Africa's wildlife economy

1.2. Publishing impactful research and thought leadership outputs

We scaled up our output of short articles in 2023 and started as well to produce more in-depth reports and papers.

Reports/Papers

Witsand Report - A pilot wildlife enterprise baseline assessment of Moodie's Farm by the AWEI Team - W Ndlovu, R Nyandire, S Strauss, D Vorhies, F Vorhies, and B Wynne

Opportunities in Mine Action for Mainstreaming of Environmental Protection and Conservation. E Chrystie. Master of Science - Master of Science - Management of Conservation Areas, Carinthia University of Applied Sciences

Socioeconomic Effects of Tourism Revenue Sharing (TRS) on Protected Area-Communities Bordering Bugungu Wildlife Reserve, Buliisa District, Uganda. Taddeo Rusoke. Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences 6(2):121-127

Perceptions of Local Communities towards Sport Hunting Activities in Rurambira and Nyakahita parishes, Kiruhura District. Wilson K Katamigwa*, and Taddeo Rusoke. Department of Natural Resources, School of Sciences, Nkumba University, Uganda.

African Wild Meat Ungulates Value Chain Integration Systems: Opportunities for Value Chain Formalization and Scaling: International



Figure 5: AWEI staff conducting a pilot wildlife enterprise baseline assessment of Moodie's Farm. The assessment was used to compile the Witsand Report.

Journal of Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology (under review) – W Ndlovu, S Karonga, and F Vorhies

The Bolts and Nuts for Achieving Sustainable Wild Meat Global Value Chains Governance: A Theoretical Framework. African Journal of Public Administration and Environmental Studies (Under review) - W Ndlovu

Unlocking opportunities for meaningful participation of land reform beneficiaries in the wildlife economy. Land Use Policy. Shwababa, Child, Mneni, De Vos, Clements. In revision. (in revision)

The diverse socio-economic contributions of wildlife ranching. Conservation Science and Practice. Denner, Clements, Child, De Vos. (in revision).

Articles

19 Jan 2023

Rewilding global biodiversity policy - Dr Francis Vorhies

23 Jan 2023

Are conservation and sustainable use opposing concepts? - Dr Julia Baum

10 Feb 2023

Food security and conservation in Niger - Dr Julia Baum and Mr Josef Garvi

21 Feb 2023

Implications of our findings for the wildlife economy - Ms Leandra Merz

22 Feb 2023

Sustainable Wildlife Use as an Area-Based Conservation Measure - Dr Francis Vorhies

01 March 2023

A global mission has finally begun to promote sustainable wildlife use for current and future generations - Dr Francis Vorhies

March 2023

South Africa's wildlife ranches can offer solutions to Africa's growing conservation challenges - Dr Hayley Clements et al (reprint)

29 March 2023

We revealed the value of Zambia's wild yam. Why it matters - R Ellis, A Culham, and D Zulu

01 April 2023

Liberalising intra Africa trade in wild meat - A summary - Dr Biandri Joubert

22 April 2023

Why it's important to recognise multiple food systems in Africa - Dr W Moseley (reprint)

02 May 2023

The challenges of breeding and conserving rhinos without trade - Dr Jane Wiltshire

18 May 2023

Why it's crucial to safeguard the ancient practice of finding wild honey with birds - J van der Wal and C Spottiswoode (reprint)

23 May 2023

She Learns to Hunt - American Insights, African Applications - Ms Francine Barchett

30 May 2023

Half of Africa's white rhino population is in private hands - it's time for a new conservation approach - Dr H Clements (reprint)

06 Jun 2023

African wild meat trade holds huge potential - Dr Biandri Joubert

08 Jun 2023

Changing Tides and Africa's Blue Economy - Dr Francis Vorhies

23 Jun 2023

AWEI into the wild! - Ms Savanna Strauss

01 Jul 2023

The Value of Honey, Charcoal, and Palm Leaves as Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) in Uganda - Prospects for Pro-Poor Development of Communities - Dr Taddeo Rusoke

4 Jul 2023

Bushmeat in Ghana: consumer profiles may point the way to conservation - Mr R K Bannor (reprint)

24 Jul 2023

Finding Balance for a sustainable future: Wild meat consumption, wildlife economy and landscape restoration - Dr Wiseman Ndlovu

12 August 2023

From enormous elephants to tiny shrews: how mammals shape and are shaped by Africa's landscapes - Dr Ara Monadjem (reprint)

27 Sep 2023

Trophy Hunting and Sustainability in Africa: A Nuanced Viewpoint - Dr Victor Muposhi

05 Sep 2023

Embracing the economic benefits of eco-system restoration through landmine clearance - Ms E Chrystie

24 Oct 2023

Tradition and science collaborate to help identify edible grasshoppers - AWEI Commentary (reprint)

21 Nov 2023

NDFs in International Wildlife Trade: Challenges, Progress, and the Road Ahead - Ms I Higuero, CITES (reprint)

5 Dec 2023

Wildlife economies have the power to extend Africa's biodiversity conservation and help curb climate change - Dr F Vorhies, Dr H Clements, and Dr W Ndlovu

1.3. Developing our community

In 2023, Dr Taddeo Rusoke, a lecturer at Nkumba University in Uganda and AWEI Fellow, took on the role of Fellow Coordinator to strengthen our Fellows network. He engaged with past Fellows and welcomed new ones, including Ms Basilia. Shivute from Namibia and Mr Joseph Goergen from the USA. A

WhatsApp group was established and there was increased communication and interaction among Fellows.

An evaluation of these efforts led us to the conclusion that the 'Fellow' model was not as effective for the Institute as we had hoped it would be. First, many people saw a Fellow as a special academic appointment with a primary focus on academic research. Though this is the case for some of our Fellows, others have subject matter expertise or technical skills which, though important to the Institute, did not really fit under the title of a Fellow. So, in 2023, we began to rethink the model and have moved towards a more inclusive AWEI Community to bring together a multi-disciplinary, multi-expertise, multi-skilled community of practice actively supporting the Institute's programmes of work.

2. Stakeholder engagement in 2023

2.1. Leading the conversation

By placing more focus on building our website as a knowledge platform and disseminating content through our social media platforms on LinkedIn, X, and Facebook, we have continued to lead the conversation around wildlife economies in Africa and to a broader audience.

The AWEI website was visited 12,538 times over 2023 - 334% more visits than in 2022. Most of the visitors to our website were from South Africa (38%) and 14% of visits were from the USA. However, we receive increasing numbers of visits from other African countries, including Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia, and Tanzania. Most of the traffic to our site (46%) originated from search engines (5,767), followed by 36% via direct entry of a URL (4,495), and 16% via links from our social media platforms (1,956), with 44% of those originating on LinkedIn.

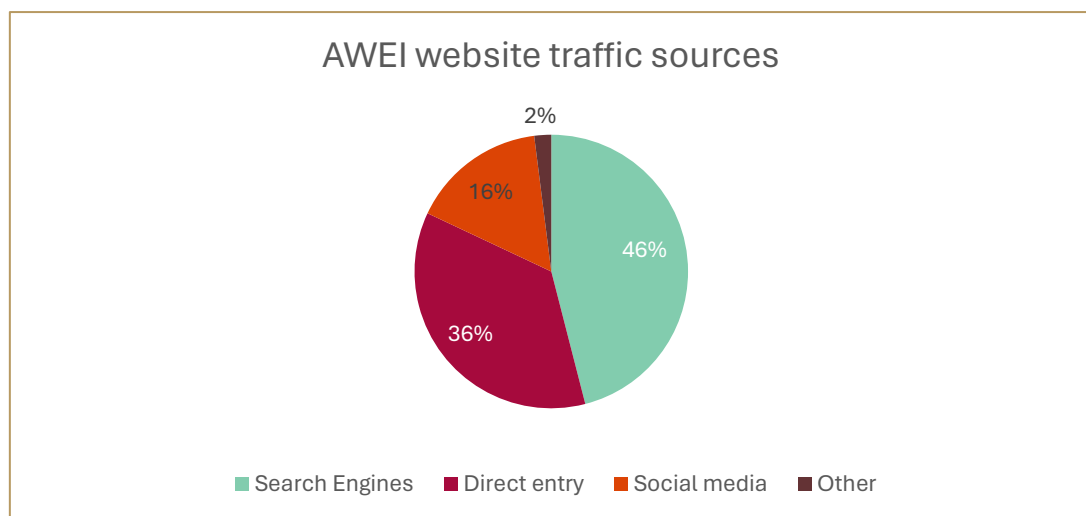


Figure 6: The sources of online traffic to the AWEI website.

Our followings on the three social media platforms continued to grow, with an overall growth of 30% - from 4,200 followers in 2022 to 5,500 followers in 2023. LinkedIn was the main driving force behind this growth with 48% of the total growth. The growth of LinkedIn was a direct result of concerted efforts to increase our presence on the platform over 2023. While our original focus was on X and Facebook, we established that our messaging and mission was geared predominantly towards thought leadership and LinkedIn is the platform most suited to this content, so we began in 2023 to grow our presence amongst professional audiences on LinkedIn.

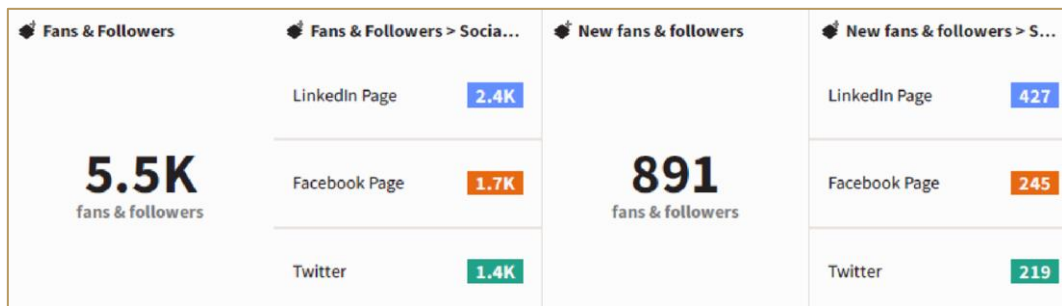


Figure 7: Follower details for AWEI's social media platforms in 2023.

The image above breaks down the number of followers, as well as the growth in followers over 2023, per platform.

Our social media activities reached 179,000 users and gained 272,000 impressions across platforms. The engagement rate over all platforms over 2023 was 6.87%.

The posts with the highest engagement rates per platform are shown below.

On LinkedIn, the most popular posts were those focused on the wildlife economy community of practice – be it new members of AWEI, new students, or events.

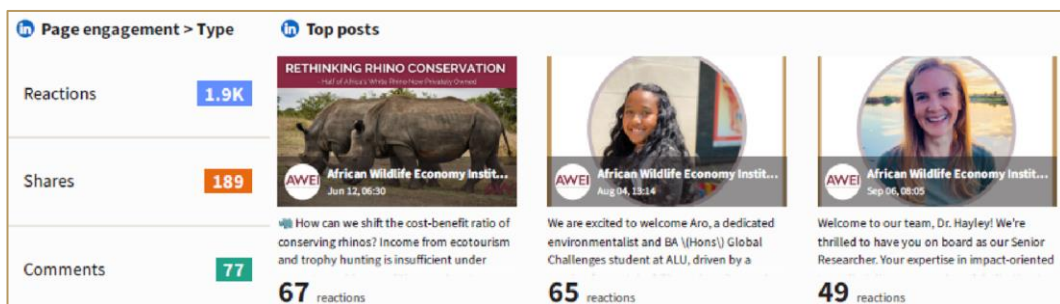


Figure 8: Page engagements and top posts on LinkedIn in 2023

On X (formerly Twitter), popular posts included discussions and knowledge exchanges, as well as information on AWEI project updates.



Figure 9: Post interactions and top posts on X in 2023

The posts with the most engagement on Facebook were also those providing interesting information and event notices.

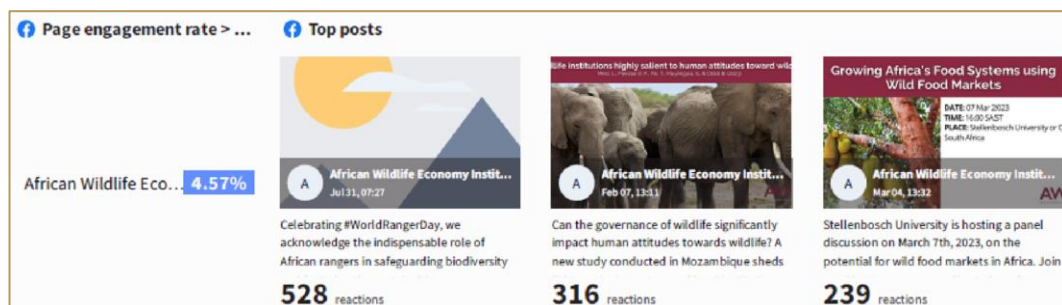


Figure 10: Engagement rate and top posts on Facebook in 2023

2.2. Game-changing dialogues

Though writing papers, reports, short articles, etc. and posting on social media are critical to developing knowledge about the wildlife economy, direct engagement with stakeholders, where possible face-to-face, is critical to influencing, encouraging, and assisting people to consider opportunities, understand challenges, and undertake next steps.

AWEI events

A panel discussion on the potential for wild food markets in Africa

7 Mar 2023 – Faculty of AgriSciences, Stellenbosch University (hybrid)

- Using wild species to conserve areas - Dr Francis Vorhies
- The market for sustainable wild animal products - Dr Wiseman Ndlovu,
- 38 in-person and 20 online participants

Towards sustainable utilisation of indigenous African animal genetic resources

26-29 Sep 2023

AWEI-organised workshops at the 8th All Africa Conference on Animal Agriculture (AACAA8) (hybrid)

Gaborone, Botswana

- Indigenous *wild* African animals
- Indigenous *domesticated* African animals
- Discussion on the *wild* and *domesticated* animals' economies

Africa's Wildlife Economy

07 Nov 2023

A Special Session at The Conversation Symposium 2023

- Workshop 1 - Developing the wild meat sector in Africa
- Workshop 2 - Promoting intra Africa wildlife tourism
- Workshop 3 - Liberalising trade in wildlife products
- Panel discussion - Scaling up wildlife enterprise

AWEI co-organised TCS 2023 and ran the special session online (over 90 participants) and also in-person (over 90 participants)

AWEI participation

Rewilding biodiversity

10 Jan 2023

Talk at staff at WildCRU, University of Oxford

30 in-person participants plus online participants

Strengthening the Biodiversity Economy Programme

26 Jan 2023

UNEP Africa Regional Scoping Workshop (online)

Sustainability Standards & Certifications as a Tool

26 Jan 2023

American Botanical Council (online)

Wildlife Economy Sustainability Standard and Certification Project

24 Feb 2023

DFFE, SANBI, UNDP, BIOFIN (online)

Strengthening Sustainable Wild Biodiversity Economies

27-28 Feb 2023

UNEP Partnership Building Workshop, Dublin Ireland

50 participants, presentation on AWEI

African Wildlife Economy Community of Practice (AWE-COP)

26 April 2023

Steering Group Meeting (online)

European Sustainable Use Group General Meeting

31 May 2023

AWEI representation and presentation

20 participants, Brussels, Belgium

Wildlife Economy Seminar

16-17 May 2023

African Institute of Environmental Law

AWEI presentation online, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe (hybrid)

3rd edition of the Africa Trade Collaboratory

01 Jun 2023

Center for African Prosperity, Atlas Network

AWEI participation, online

IUCN Wilderness Specialist Group Video-Gathering

28 Jun 2023

AWEI representation and participation, online

AWE-COP Theory of Change Workshop

11 Jul 2023

AWEI representation and participation, online

Conservation as Sustainable Use

12 Jul 2024

Talk to postgrad diploma students at WildCRU, University of Oxford

Africa Liberty Forum

20-21 Jul 2023

Cape Town, organised by the Atlas Network

150 participants including 2 from AWEI

Wild meat and cultivated meat: options for rewilding landscapes

27 Jul 2023

OGRC Tipping Points webinar

AWEI speaker

SA CITES Management Authority Briefing

25 Aug 2025

Stellenbosch University, AWEI participation

Business of Conservation Conference

29-31 Aug 2023

ALU SOWC, Kigali, in-person

AWEI presentation and participation

14-16 Sep 2023

Johannesburg

AWEI display booth plus conference participation

12th Oppenheimer Research Conference

04-06 Oct

AWEI presentations to more than 300 participants

- Wildlife trade policy and the rhino conservation economy
- Putting biodiversity on the decision-making map: Building a Biodiversity Intactness Index for Africa
- Eating wild meat for the restoration of African landscapes and sustainable livelihoods
- Certifying wildlife enterprise

African Wildlife Consultative Forum 2023

9-13 Oct 2023

AWEI presentation and participation - in person, Windhoek

Shaping the Future of the Wildlife Industry

17 Oct 2023

Nelson Mandela University, online

AWEI presentation

Is Wildlife Trade Sustainable?

19 Oct 2023

Institute of Economic Affairs, London, online podcast interview with D F Vorhies

Mainstreaming the sustainable use of wild species

26 Oct 2023

LCA Unlocking Nature online webinar by Dr F Vorhies

Biodiversity Economy Policy Dialogue

14-15 Nov 2023

African Institute for Environmental Law

Bulawayo and online

AWEI presentation on unlocking the wildlife economy

International Hunting Discussion Forum

17 Nov 2023

Online forum co-hosted by Cornell University, AWEI, and others

AWEI presentation

Resource Tomorrow

28 Nov 2023

London conference

AWEI panel member on Nature Positive Mining - Can You Extract Resources but Also be a Defender of the Natural Environment?

Back to Roots: Wildmeat in the Kitchen

30 Nov 2023

LCA Unlocking Nature webinar by Dr W Ndlovu

CITES International Workshop on Non-Detriment Findings (NDFs)

03-08 Dec 2023

UN Complex, Nairobi

AWEI participation and contributions to the working groups on NDFs for Appendix I import permits and on using voluntary standards and certification for Appendix I and II export permits

2.3. Collaborating with partners

In 2023, AWEI continued to build relationships with partner organisations. Increasingly the focus is turning to identifying fundable collaborative programmes and projects.

African Wildlife Economy Community of Practice (AWE-COP)

- Founding member of this new initiative supported by the African Wildlife Foundation and others.

- Provided inputs into its theory of change

Atlas Network

- Launched an online learning journey on intra-African trade in wild meat
- Participated in the Africa Liberty Forum
- Participated in several online discussions for Africa
- Participated in an in-person training programme in Cape Town
- Secured funding to build the Institute's capacity for monitoring, evaluation, and fundraising

CIC Wildlife

- Provided advice to CIC Wildlife (the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation) on their strategic plan
- Developed a pilot wild species use web-based platform focusing on hunted animals and jointly seeking funding for its development
- Exploring the development of a project to promote domestic and intra-African hunting

The Conservation Symposium

- Co-organiser of TCS 2023
- Hosted a special one-day session on Africa's Wildlife Economy with an opening keynote, three technical workshops, and a panel discussion

Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment (DFFE)

- Approached early in the year by SA's DFFE to comment on the revised Game Meat Strategy and provided inputs on issues such as intra Africa trade
- Ongoing engagement supporting the development of SA's biodiversity economy strategy
- Invited to have an MOU which is expected to be finalised in 2024

Fair Carbon

- Advised on the development of their theory of change and training programme
- Explored options for piloting blue carbon community projects in Africa

FairWild Foundation

- Provided inputs into the revision of the FairWild Standard and associated audit check lists
- Jointly ran a display both at the Africa BioTrade Festival in Johannesburg
- Contributed to a Darwin proposal on resilient landscapes and certified frankincense trade in the Horn of Africa

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)

- Engaged with IEA's Initiative for Trade and Prosperity
- Invited to write a monograph on Africa's wildlife economy, currently seeking funding

IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist (SULi) Group

- Actively engaged in SULi groups focus on Africa, CITES, and hunting
- Lead reviewer for a project on five dimensions of sustainability to be piloted in Tanzania

Oppenheimer Generations Research and Conservation (OGRC)

- Core partner for the Institute supporting institutional development
- Presentations at the Oppenheimer Research Conference
- Participation in OGRC Tipping Points webinars
- Developing the business case for OGRC's 'taste of game' phone app
- Recruited a new Senior Research Fellow with OGRC support

The Peace Parks Foundations

- Signed a formal partnership agreement after approval from their Board
- Explored options for collaboration on landscape/community-based wildlife enterprise development
- Drafted initial concept on a wildlife enterprise development initiative for a community conservation area in southern Zambia

School of Wildlife Conservation, African Leadership University

- Hosted an ALU student
- Participated in the Business of Conservation Conference
- Collaborated on establishing the AWE-COP
- Provide inputs into SOWC research activities

ShareScreen Africa

- Co-managed the TCS special session on Africa's Wildlife Economy
- Participated in LCA Unlocking Nature webinars
- Produced and shared numerous videos of AWEI events and talks
- Planned a Zimbabwe Wildlife Economy series for 2024

Southern African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)

- Developed a framework for a capacity building strategy for South Africa's Scientific Authority
- Developed the framework for an induction course for the Scientific Authority
- Participated in SANBI's multi-country wildlife economy project involving Botswana, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, and others

Southern African Wildlife College

- Developing a capacity building/training programme in support of the SADC wildlife-based economy strategy

Sustainability and Resilience Institute, University of Southampton

- Co-lead on a collaboration between Southampton, Stellenbosch, and the University of Zambia to develop a project proposal on: Building Equitable and Sustainable Climate Resilience via Nature-Based Solutions in Southern African Rangelands

- Proposal submitted to UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) for funding without success

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- Member of an advisory group for development of their programme on wildlife economies
- Engaged with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on tools and process to support GBF Targets 5 and 9 on wild species use
- Engaged with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) on developing guidance on non-detriment findings and capacities in Africa to facilitate sustainable and legal trade of listed species

Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, University of Oxford

- Co-supervision of a PhD candidate who is an AWEI Fellow
- Presentations to staff and students on the wildlife economy
- Guidance to post-graduate diploma students
- Marking diploma studies research projects

Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN)

- Agreed on a formal partnership to promote wildlife-friendly enterprise alongside wildlife-based enterprise at the landscape level
- Collaborating on securing fundable projects for wildlife-focused enterprise development at the landscape level

Wildlife Producers' Association of Zambia (WPAZ)

- Advised a staff member on her MSc research on wild meat value chains
- Explored options for bring a Taste of Game event and associated workshop to Zambia, but did not secure needed support
- Support the CEO's nomination to be Vice-Chair of the AWE-COP

3. Professional development

3.1. Supporting post-graduates, post-docs, and internships

We intended to enrol a full-time campus-based PhD student in 2023, after securing bursary support from Stellenbosch University, but the candidate withdrew for personal reasons.

Later in the year, we put out a call for PhD students and received over 40 applications. These were reviewed and four candidates were interviewed. We offered to support the application process for two of these - one from Tanzania and one from Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean is joining AWEI in early 2024 and the Tanzanian will join later in the year.

The following two students graduated cum laude from Stellenbosch:

- Luke Symonds-Mayes. 2023. Trophy hunting as payments for ecosystem services: A value chain exploration. MPhil in Sustainable

Development, Stellenbosch University, supervised by Hayley Clements. Graduated in December 2023 cum laude.

- Irene Mhlanga. 2024. Evaluating the role of trophy hunting in supporting biodiversity conservation in Zimbabwe. MPhil in Sustainable Development, Stellenbosch University, supervised by Hayley Clements. Graduating in March 2024 cum laude.

We also supervised and guided post-graduate students in other programmes at Stellenbosch and other universities, including ALU, Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, and the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, and Zambia.

With core funding from Stellenbosch University, our first post-doc, Dr Wiseman Ndlovu joined us in March to research wild meat value chains. He also took on the responsibility of AWEI's Programme Manager and, over the years, has taken a leading role in the work of the Institute.

With core funding from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), we took on a two-year, on-campus intern to serve as our Programmes Assistant. The intern, Thapelo Lebopa, has a master's in development studies from the University of Limpopo and has taken a keen interest in our CITES capacity-building project.

We also had two short-term on-campus interns, a Malagasy student from ALU who worked on the wild plants trade in her country and a Malawian student who supported our research on wild meat value chains.

3.2. Building wildlife economy leadership programmes

Early in 2023, we launched our first online self-directed learning journeys on:

- Liberalising intra-Africa trade in wild meat
- Can wildlife coexist with crops and livestock?
- What's next for Zimbabwe's wildlife economy?

The first of these on wild meat trade is the most developed with bespoke training videos supported by readings and reflective learning questions. The latter two are pilots of converting online dialogue series into learning journeys. The one on Zimbabwe will be completed after a second series of dialogues, which was planned for 2023 but eventually was held early in 2024.

For SANBI, we also developed the framework for an induction course on international wildlife trade focused on CITES requirements. Though the first version is specifically aimed at the Scientific Authority of South Africa, plans are to make the course available for Scientific Authorities across the continent.

With the Southern African Wildlife College, we started a discussion with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) about a capacity-building initiative for SADC's new Wildlife-Based Economic Strategy.

3.3. Establishing a cloud campus for practitioner learning

Discussions continued within Stellenbosch about developing a cloud campus platform for professional and technical training. There has been particular interest in a collaboration with StellenboschX, the University's partnership with the EdX platform, to host training courses from AWEI. The SANBI CITES induction course is set to be our first offering later in 2024.

Discussions continued externally as well - with potential funders like Jamma International and potential collaborators like the African Leadership University's School of Wildlife Conservation, CIC Wildlife, the IUCN Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist (SULi) Group, and the South African Wildlife College to bring together various offerings or proposed offerings into a type of cloud campus. The Institute still needs to secure funding for these opportunities to be taken forward.

On a closely related note, our partnership with ShareScreen Africa resulted in a considerable number of hours of dialogue and discussion on Africa's wildlife economy, providing useful content for online videos. All videos produced in 2023 are available on YouTube and embedded in the event pages on our website.



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