



strengthening capacities
to counter wildlife crime

ROOKKAT TRUST

Who we are and what we do

2022



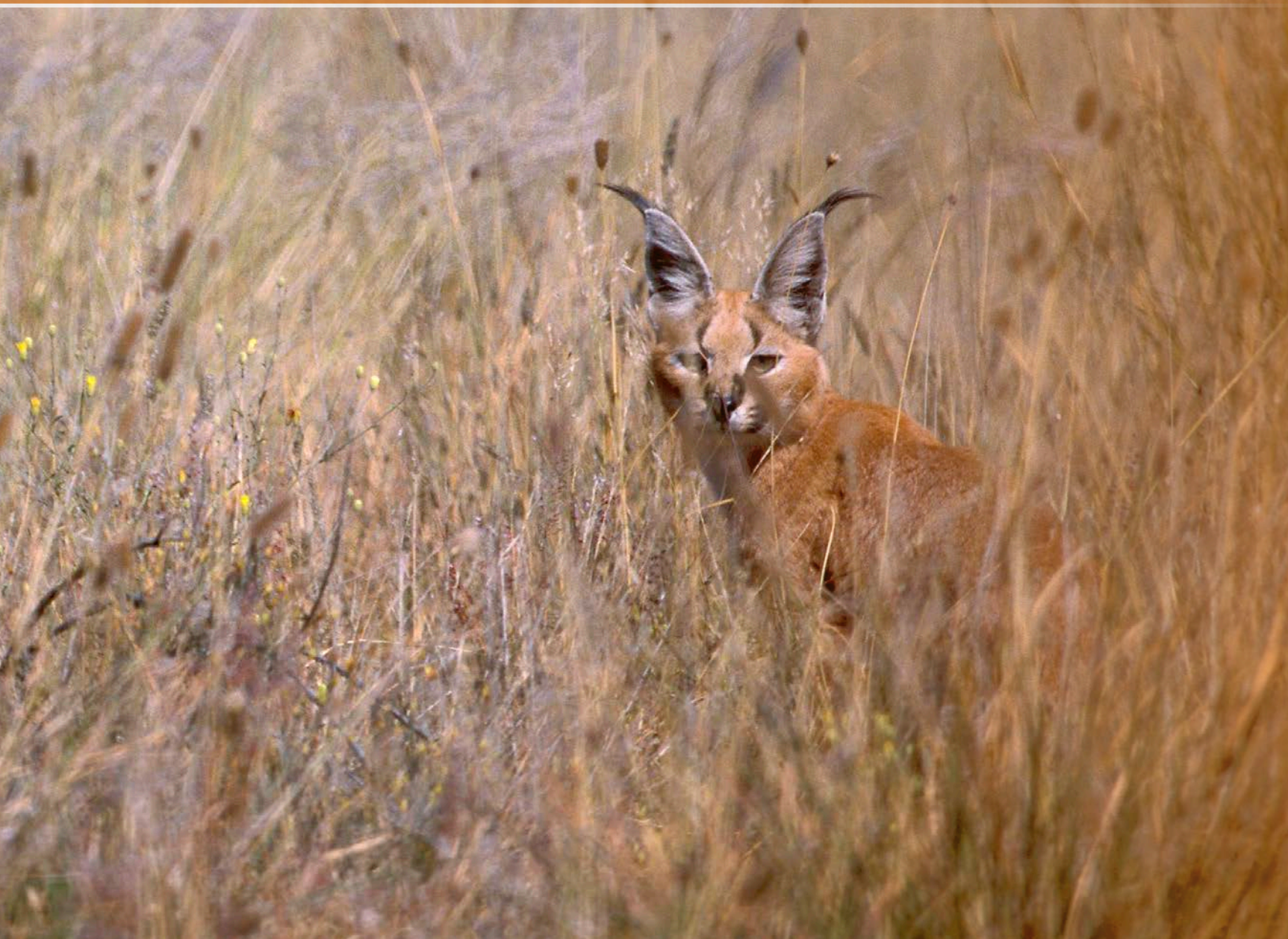
the Rooikat objective

to strengthen Namibia's capacities to counter wildlife crime

by providing direct, flexible support to government

and other bona fide partners

The ultimate aim of anti-trafficking is to protect Namibia's valuable biodiversity



the **ROOIKAT TRUST** is a small, independent Namibian NGO providing financial and technical support to mandated government agencies countering wildlife crime. Within this context, anti-trafficking law enforcement is the priority focus and the Blue Rhino Task Team is the nexus for all support.

Rooikat support focuses on two overarching aspects:

- *Flexible funding* that enables pro-active law-enforcement and rapid responses to incidents
- *Technical support* that provides tools and technologies, equipment and expertise

Fundamental Rooikat approaches:

- Rooikat is a facilitating rather than implementing entity, based on trust in adequately resourced government personnel successfully carrying out their mandated duties
- Rooikat actively liaises with all key government agencies on operational issues
- A minimal Rooikat staff contingent provides direct support to a broad cohort of government personnel from a number of agencies
- Innovative structures, systems and approaches are based on relationships of trust between personnel
- Ongoing technical support and capacity building for government personnel builds resilience within government structures
- Channelling international funding directly to mandated government activities creates a direct link between funding partners, Rooikat and government personnel

Rooikat has catalysed a variety of new approaches, developments and innovations in the wildlife-crime law-enforcement landscape in Namibia, particularly in the areas of pro-active, information-based investigations, focussed, fast-tracked prosecutions, data compilation and analysis, and communications. The trust recognises the need for ongoing capacity building, both in terms of technical capabilities and human capital, and continually invests in these areas. The trust also places great emphasis on strengthening local and international counter-trafficking and conservation partnerships. Rooikat can function as a very small, highly effective entity because it enhances the activities of partners through funding and technical support, rather than directly participating in anti-trafficking or conservation activities.

The ultimate aim of countering wildlife crime is to protect biodiversity for a healthy environment & the benefit of the people.

the **BLUE RHINO TASK TEAM** is the central focus of all Rooikat anti-trafficking support.

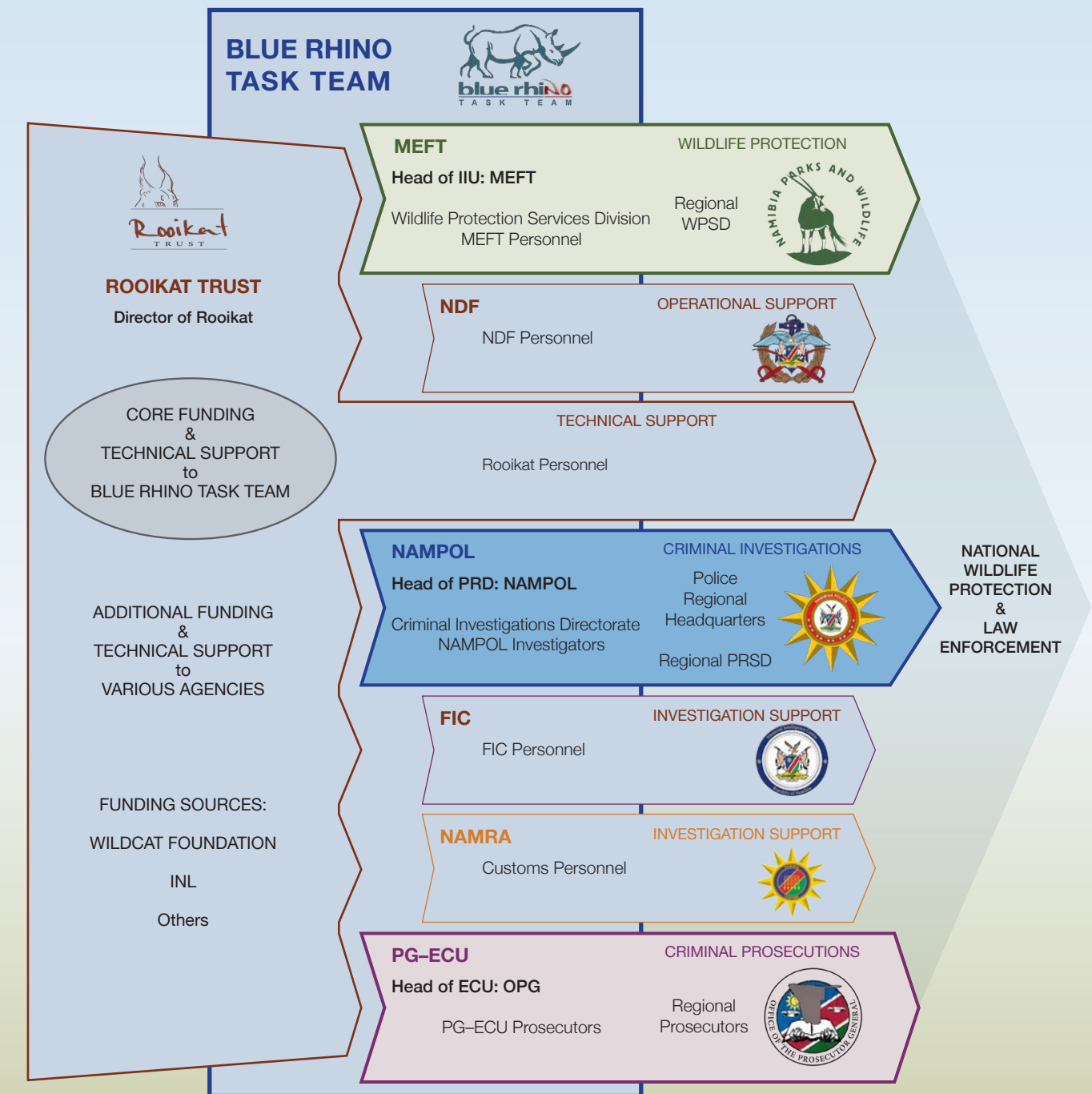
The multi-agency task team brings together experienced personnel and resources from key government agencies. Lead entities are the **Intelligence and Investigation Unit (IIU)** in the Wildlife Protection Services Division (WPSD) of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT, mandated with wildlife protection), the **Protected Resources Division (PRD)** of the Namibian Police Force (NAMPOL) within the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (MHAISS, mandated with law enforcement) and the **Environmental Crime Unit (ECU)** within the Office of the Prosecutor General (OPG, mandated with criminal prosecutions). The **Namibian Defence Force (NDF)**, mandated with defending the state and its resources against threats) is a vital auxiliary partner. By creating close synergies between these agencies, Namibia has laid the foundations for effective wildlife-protection and law-enforcement systems and approaches. Rooikat provides direct, flexible funding and technical assistance to these and other bona fide entities, and facilitates collaboration amongst them and with other partners. Rooikat supports the entire anti-trafficking spectrum and places emphasis on strengthening the capacities of regional MEFT, NAMPOL, NDF and OPG units, as well as supporting national structures.

The operational structure of the Rooikat–BRTT partnership is based on two central components:

- External funding & technical support that enable efficient, proactive law enforcement operations
- Government interagency cooperation that significantly strengthens law enforcement capabilities

The Rooikat–BRTT partnership approach is based on the following tenets:

- Flexible real-time funding & technical support directly to government personnel
- Active support at both central & regional levels
- Support for active collaboration & exchange at regional transboundary & wider international levels
- Holistic support covering investigations, arrests & prosecutions
- Establishment & maintenance of information networks to guide investigations
- Active data collection, management & use (Integrated Database of Wildlife Crime in Namibia)
- Use of latest technologies, equipment & tools (esp. for data analysis, forensics & surveillance)
- Active internal & external communications
- A general culture of recognition & trust



Namibia's massive, long-term investments in conservation and wildlife protection are being eroded by crime



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Namibia has a turbulent political and conservation history. During the first centuries after their arrival in southern Africa, Europeans wantonly plundered the natural resources of the subcontinent. In what is today Namibia, species such as the white rhino were shot to local extinction; others were reduced to remnant populations. From the late 1800s, the formal colonial period ushered in the first conservation laws and proclaimed protected areas, but at the same time brutally suppressed indigenous people and enforced segregated land and resource uses. For more than a century of white-minority rule, indigenous communities were alienated from natural resources. In the decades leading up to Namibian sovereignty in 1990, the heavy military presence of apartheid South Africa caused a final wave of external oppression and plunder.

Over the past half-century Namibia has actively strengthened its conservation structures and rebuilt its wildlife populations through significant investments. Conservation interventions empowered previously disenfranchised rural communities across the vast communal areas of the country. Effective conservation structures in freehold, communal and state-protected areas saw the country experiencing minimal poaching of high-value species for two decades. This began to change from 2010 onwards, when international wildlife-crime syndicates increasingly focused on Namibia's healthy rhino and elephant populations. Poaching of these species reached crisis proportions in 2015–16. Government responded by deploying national security forces to priority areas in 2016 to assist with the protection of high-value species. The combined police and defence-force units act in an anti-poaching capacity, complementing existing conservation structures. Despite Namibia's active response to the poaching crisis, positive results were initially hampered by capacity constraints and a lack of coordination between agencies.

The Rooikat Trust was initiated to help address these specific challenges. The simple notion that flexible external funding could ensure adequate resources for effective government counter-trafficking activities was piloted in 2016–17. Immediate successes motivated the registration of the Rooikat Trust in early 2018 – with the specific aim of bridging capacity gaps in anti-trafficking operations through the rapid disbursement of flexible external support to a network of trusted government personnel via dedicated government agencies. The Blue Rhino Task Team was formed in mid-2018 as the main conduit for Rooikat support.

The past decade has seen a rapid expansion of criminal activity targeting Namibia's indigenous fauna and flora. The internet is a key driver, as it connects dealers in end-market countries with poachers sourcing products in Namibia. In this context, wildlife crime has become a broad umbrella term for poaching and trafficking of any indigenous, undomesticated fauna or flora.

ROOIKAT investigation support

In a vast, sparsely populated country, wildlife protection is not possible everywhere, all of the time. Namibia is blessed with abundant and unique indigenous fauna and flora. The range of protected species targeted by criminals for commercial gain is broad and increasing. While wildlife protection through anti-poaching activities is an important facet of modern counter-measures, effective investigations of illicit activities are vital in curbing criminal impacts.

Rooikat recognises the need for proactive, rapid-response action to effectively counter crime, and provides flexible real-time funding to enable this. Support for surveillance and information networks enables early detection of criminal activity, which in many cases leads to pre-emptive arrests before wildlife is poached. Wildlife crime ignores international borders and Rooikat actively supports transboundary investigations and broad international collaboration to counter regional and global wildlife trafficking.

Through Rooikat support, the Blue Rhino Task Team and regional colleagues have been able to apprehend a large number of perpetrators of high-value species crimes. Arrests have included a high percentage of pre-emptive interventions in rhino cases, numerous aiders and abettors, and a number of high-level dealers and kingpins, including international kingpins attempting to operate in Namibia. Poaching losses of elephant and rhinos have been curbed, yet criminal activities continue to evolve to evade law enforcement. New species are being increasingly targeted to supply expanding international markets for illicit wildlife products.

To curb the rapid increase in the trafficking of timber, live reptiles, mammals and plants, Rooikat is providing targeted funding and capacity-building support to the MEFT-IIU. The IIU plays a vital role in countering a wide range of environmental transgressions and actively liaises with various partners in this regard. Criminal investigations are carried out with the active support of the BRTT.

Rooikat investigation support includes funding and technical assistance in the following focus areas:

- Flexible operational funds for the anti-trafficking activities of the Blue Rhino Task Team
- Strengthening of regional units to ensure country-wide law enforcement reach
- Supply of dedicated vehicles, equipment and technical support
- Supply of surveillance technologies and tools
- Funding for information networks and clandestine operational bases
- Strategic planning and communication support



Criminal syndicates are targeting a wide range of protected flora and fauna, including valuable timber resources

ROOIKAT prosecution support

Delivery of justice through effective prosecution of perpetrators, which leads to convictions with appropriate sentences, is the final aim of criminal investigations. The massive increase in wildlife-crime arrests in recent years has severely challenged Namibia's judiciary, which is already confronted with high rates of crime in other sectors. Because organised commercial wildlife crime is a relatively new facet of the Namibian criminal landscape, an understanding of the serious impacts of wildlife crimes is often limited within the judiciary. Rooikat is placing particular emphasis on supporting efforts to address these challenges.

Rooikat recognises the need for a holistic approach that embraces the entire spectrum of investigation and prosecution of wildlife cases. By providing support to all aspects of law enforcement, Rooikat is facilitating improved case-docket management, evidence procurement, prosecution-guided investigations, application of appropriate charges and compelling evidence presentation. All of these aspects strengthen prosecutions and enable convictions with appropriate sentences.

With Rooikat support, the Environmental Crime Unit is organising temporary special courts dedicated to wildlife cases in priority regions. This is reducing the backlog of cases on court rolls and focussing the full attention of courts on the seriousness of wildlife crime. Rapid case finalisation and more appropriate sentences are being passed by the special courts, sending a strong message that crime does not pay in Namibia.

Rooikat prosecution support includes funding and technical assistance in the following focus areas:

- Flexible funding for various activities of the Environmental Crime Unit of the OPG
- Support for investigation–prosecution liaison and evidence presentation
- Supply of dedicated equipment and technical support
- Facilitation of comprehensive data compilation and analyses
- Funding and logistic support for special courts dedicated to wildlife cases
- Strategic planning and communication support

Court-case backlogs are being effectively reduced through special courts dedicated to wildlife cases

other **ROOIKAT support** Rooikat focuses primarily on investigation and prosecution support to government agencies, yet also provides wide-ranging support to broader initiatives. This includes government, NGO, community and research activities related to anti-trafficking, anti-poaching and biodiversity conservation. Rooikat is part of an extensive network of partners who collaborate to counter wildlife crime in Namibia, and who also engage in regional counter-trafficking initiatives.

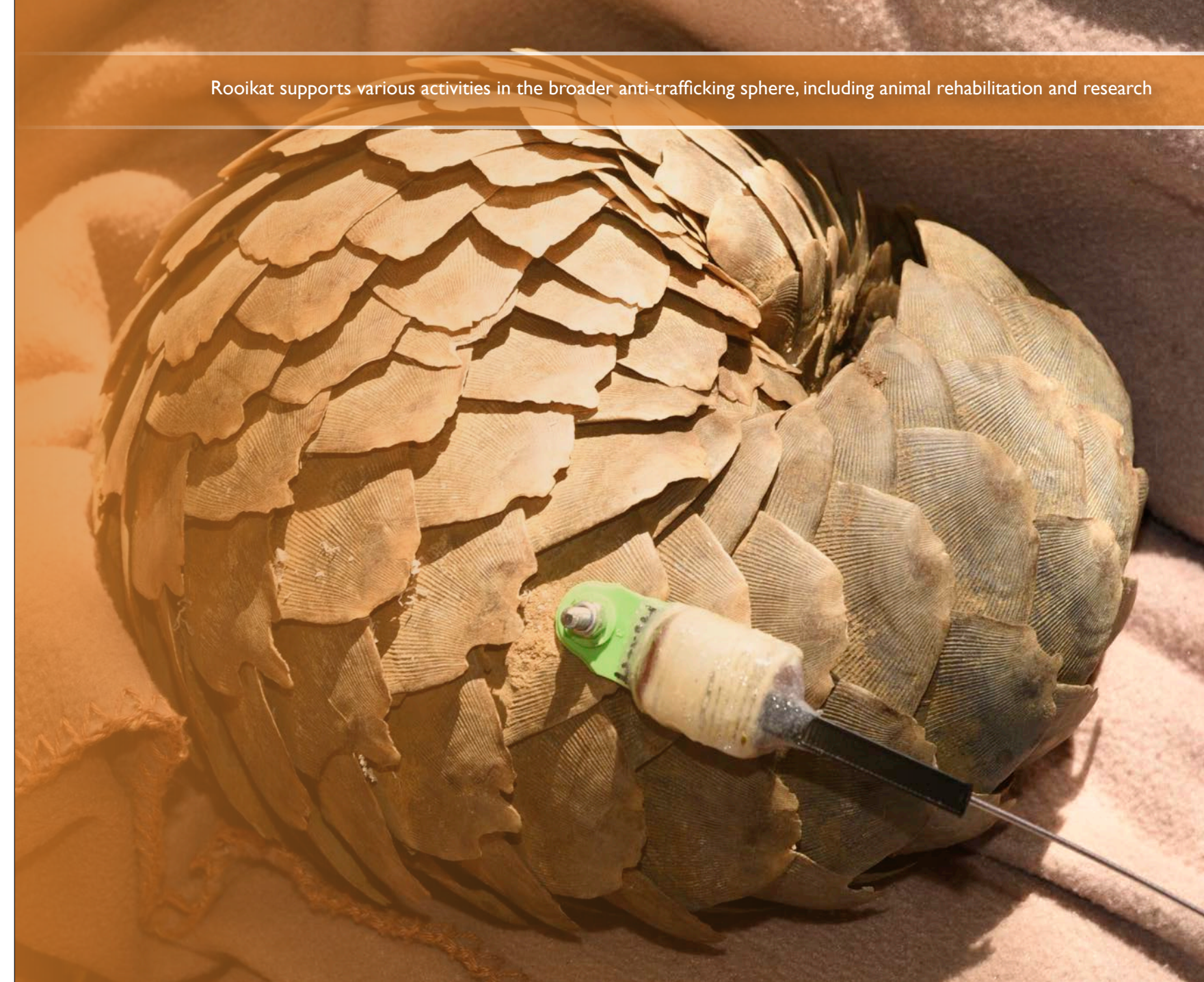
An over-arching priority for Rooikat from its inception has been information management and communication. Support for the compilation and management of Namibian wildlife-crime data evolved into the Integrated Database of Wildlife Crime in Namibia (ID-WCN) under the auspices of the Blue Rhino Task Team. The database collates data sets from the MEFT-WPSD, NAMPOL-PRSD and PG-ECU into one integrated database. This enables a wide range of data analyses for use during investigations and prosecutions, as well as other internal and external uses. Regular, comprehensive communications on the status of wildlife crime in Namibia to various audiences are an important output enabled by the ID-WCN.

Rooikat recognises institutional resilience and individual capacities as keys to ongoing success and has facilitated systems and approaches with an emphasis on a culture of recognition and trust. The ultimate aim of Rooikat is to help ensure that Namibia has the financial, technical and strategic capacities to deal with the relentless challenge of wildlife crime through strong local, national and international partnerships built on individual and collective integrity.

Broader Rooikat support includes funding and technical assistance in the following areas:

- Development, integration and expansion of the Integrated Database of Wildlife Crime in Namibia
- Internal and external communications support through regular reports and information materials
- Strategic planning support at national stakeholder level
- Support for conservation activities and research related to wildlife crime
- Capacity building and career enhancement through the Rooikat Expertise Enhancement Fund (REEF) and other support

Rooikat supports various activities in the broader anti-trafficking sphere, including animal rehabilitation and research



Ivory trafficking continues to feature prominently among registered cases; much of the ivory originates in other countries



RESULTS and SUCCESSES

Rooikat measures success firstly in facilitating strengthened government capacities to counter wildlife crime at local, national and transboundary levels. This is being achieved through targeted support that addresses constraints at individual and institutional levels.

Rooikat support has facilitated:

- Interagency cooperation and broad collaboration
- Use of the latest technologies, equipment and tools
- Proactive investigations and arrests enabled by fast & flexible funding
 - around 1,000 cases registered
 - over 2,000 individuals arrested
 - well over 1,000 illicit products seized
- Active liaison between investigators and prosecutors resulting in improved case management
- Effective prosecutions resulting in more appropriate sentences and a reduction of backlogs on court rolls
 - more than a third of individuals' cases finalised
 - conviction rate in finalised cases above 80%
- Wide-ranging international collaboration
 - transboundary collaboration on investigations with counterparts in neighbouring countries
 - technical collaboration with international partners such as Wildlife Crime Prevention Zambia, C4ADS, Education for Nature Vietnam
 - liaison with international entities such as INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime
- Far-reaching capacity building and increased resilience at both institutional and individual levels
- Proactive communications and information outputs
 - weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual and special reporting
 - extensive media coverage
 - publication of information materials to support investigations and prosecutions

Rooikat investments have catalysed a transformation from reactive to proactive law-enforcement in Namibia

Strong partnerships are a central component of successful anti-trafficking interventions

key ROOIKAT partner organisations

Rooikat works directly with:

CORE GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

BLUE RHINO TASK TEAM

Intelligence and Investigation Unit, MEFT
Protected Resources Division, NAMPOL
Environmental Crime Unit, Office of the Prosecutor-General
Namibian Defence Force

CORE FUNDING PARTNERS

Wildcat Foundation
Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, USA

Rooikat also liaises with:

GOVERNMENT

Anti-Corruption Commission
Financial Intelligence Centre
Namibia Revenue Agency
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform
Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security
Ministry of Justice
Office of the Judiciary

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
Legal Assistance Centre
Namibia Animal Rehabilitation, Research and Education Centre
Namibia Nature Foundation
Save the Rhino Trust
WWF In Namibia

NGO UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS

Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations
Namibian Chamber of Environment

INTERNATIONAL FUNDING AGENCIES

Global Environment Facility
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
United States Agency for International Development
WWF

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Communal conservancies
Communal farmers
Freehold conservancies
Freehold farmers
Black-rhino custodians
White-rhino owners

PRIVATE INDUSTRY

General business community
Mining industry
Tourism and conservation-hunting industries

Support from Namibian companies and individuals is overwhelmingly positive, extremely wide-ranging and highly appreciated, even if it is not possible to list all such contributions here.



Report wildlife crime at these numbers:

sms: 55 555

call: 061 22 83 83

[all messages and calls are strictly confidential]