



## Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area

### Animal Health Sub Working Group Steering Committee

#### Meeting Notes

**17 October 2019  
Conference Call**

#### **Table of Contents**

Abbreviations .....	2
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Report back from Conservation Working Group meeting .....	3
3. Update from KAZA Secretariat.....	3
4. Updates from other SC members .....	4
4. 1. Angola .....	4
4. 2. Botswana .....	4
4. 3. Zimbabwe.....	4
4. 4. Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust.....	4
4. 5. AHEAD.....	5
4. 6. Markus .....	5
5. Review of progress on year-1 prioritised activities.....	5
6. Next steps .....	6
7. Next AHSWG meeting .....	6

## Abbreviations

AHEAD	Animal & Human Health for the Environment And Development
AHSWG	Animal Health Sub Working Group
CBT	Commodity-Based Trade
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conference of Parties (of CITES)
DWNP	Department of Wildlife & National Parks
DVS	Department of Veterinary Services
H4H	Herding for Health
JMC	Joint Management Committee (of KAZA)
KAZA	Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OIE	World Organisation for Animal Health
PS	Partner State
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SC	Steering Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
ToR	Terms of Reference
VFWT	Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust
WG	Working Group
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## 1. Introduction

The following is a summary of the AHSWG Steering Committee (SC) meeting held via conference call on 17 October 2019. Attendees included: Paulo Afonso, Comfy Nkgowe, Columbas Chaitezvi, Nyambe Nyambe, Chris Foggin, Shirley Atkinson, Steve Osofsky, Nidhi Ramsden and Markus Hofmeyr. Jessica Dawson sent apologies.

The following materials had been circulated to the SC for review in advance of the call:

- Year-1 AHSWG activities
- Draft Terms of Reference for epidemiologist position
- Draft list of research topics
- CITES resolution: [https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/18/Com\\_II/E-CoP18-Com-II-14.pdf](https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/cop/18/Com_II/E-CoP18-Com-II-14.pdf)

## 2. Report back from Conservation Working Group meeting (Comfy)

In mid-2019, the Conservation Working Group (CWG) requested a briefing by the AHSWG. Comfy, as chair of the SC, noted the meeting went well, with a presentation being given to the CWG, Safety & Security & other authorities. They felt a lot of positive progress has been made by the AHSWG and were particularly impressed with the progress on commodity-based trade (CBT). Queries were, however, made regarding progress on the issue of fences. Comfy informed them of Botswana's recently re-convened National Committee on Cordon Fencing. Related to this, Comfy was scheduled to join Fencing Committee representatives during the week of 14 October to begin to assess some of Ngamiland's fences, but this has been postponed until after the upcoming elections. The plan is for the departments of Wildlife & National Parks (DWNP) and Veterinary Services (DVS) to visit the fences first, then meet with NGOs who are resident on the ground to ensure that information that reaches the Directors & Deputy Directors is accurate. As Botswana's Director of Veterinary Services has noted his willingness to consider removing those fences no longer needed, it will be important for the AHSWG to provide technical support to these efforts.

Nidhi noted technical representatives (i.e. Deputy Directors) of the Fencing Committee met on 20 August and it is hoped the full Committee, with all Directors present, will meet again in November.

## 3. Update from KAZA Secretariat (Nyambe)

At the last KAZA Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting, there was a request to rationalise the different working groups (WGs). This was, in part, due to proposals to establish both a freshwater & elephant WG. During deliberations, concerns were raised that there might be a risk in having too many WGs. The KAZA Secretariat was directed to provide a written rationalisation. The report, subsequently presented to the KAZA structures, recommends moving forward with the proposed WGs because both are linked to the fundamental socio-ecological processes in KAZA and linked to the identify of KAZA. It also recommends that existing WGs be retained as they add a lot of value. In terms of the KAZA structures, there is a need to demonstrate the self-convening power of the WGs, so it is very positive to see the AHSWG SC continuing to meet.

With progress being made with CBT, there is an opportunity to make sure decisions to bring down certain fences and/or maintain others is informed by science. Discussions have taken place with DEFRA regarding potential funding for a fencing assessment, but nothing has been finalised. The challenge is the timeline DEFRA wants the funds expended by/work completed. Nyambe requested that Steve send a rationale detailing the types of tasks required to undertake a fencing assessment, with potential timelines.

In discussion, Steve noted the need for a KAZA-wide epidemiology position was one of the top priorities identified by members of the AHSWG in June 2019. As a starting point, draft Terms of Reference (ToR) have been developed and shared with the SC. Nyambe noted that as things progress, there will be a need to ensure that the JMC is informed through the Secretariat and CWG. He suggested that maybe Nidhi and/or Shirley could, at a later date, help put together a package on this issue for the JMC.

Access to funds through KAZA for animal health-related work, including training and capacity development, is possible on a transboundary level. Nyambe suggested sending an email to the KAZA Secretariat outlining the types of funding needed and how the funds would be used so they can: (i) take it up with the donor and motivate, (ii) engage the KAZA Partner States (PSs) so they can lend their weight to the matter and (iii) discuss with the Programme Manager how current funding can be leveraged. Steve asked if a template existed and about the amount available to help frame a concept note; Nyambe will help with follow-up. Nyambe noted that countries have been asked to prioritise activities.

#### **4. Updates from other SC members**

##### **4.1 Angola (Paulo)**

Meetings have been held with Cuando-Cuabango colleagues in veterinary services/animal health to discuss ongoing animal health issues; and with Zambian colleagues to strategize on joint vaccination programmes. In addition, a meeting took place in August with Namibian colleagues to develop a rabies strategy – the result being the initiation of a small vaccination programme in a common area along the Angola-Namibia border. The importance of ratifying the KAZA Treaty has also been raised with the KAZA coordination body in Angola, as without this it will be difficult to move forward at the transboundary level. An internal meeting is planned with the KAZA coordination body in November.

##### **4.2 Botswana (Comfy)**

Northern Botswana is suffering a serious drought. The Thamalakane River has dried up and many hippos are stranded and dying. DWNP has tried to drill boreholes to ameliorate the situation but the ensuing competition for water with domestic animals is challenging on all fronts. Also grazing resources within walking distance around water points is simply no longer there so most mortalities are related to starvation rather than lack of water. Isolated cases of what appears to be anthrax have been detected but these have not yet been confirmed. Several elephants have recently died near Rakops but it's unclear whether these are linked. There is also word of a possible anthrax outbreak in Namibia, but Comfy is awaiting information from colleagues in DWNP's Chobe office.

##### **4.3 Zimbabwe (Columbas)**

A number of confirmed and suspected cases of anthrax have occurred in various species (elephants, hippos, impala & buffalo) in Hwange, Mana Pools and Victoria Falls. There is a need to build capacity of veterinarians within ZIMPARKS by recruiting more people to collect samples and thereby enable prompt and accurate diagnoses of diseases.

##### **4.4 Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust (Chris)**

Within Zimbabwe, anthrax has also been confirmed in one lion case in the extreme west of Hwange. A lot of elephant mortality is being reported east of Hwange. Anthrax has not been confirmed as the cause and efforts to confirm what is causing these mortalities is ongoing. With the severe drought, elephants are however feeding on *Dichapetalum cymosum*. A major outbreak of canine distemper occurred recently, killing a large

number of dogs. Funds were secured to conduct a vaccination campaign, with dogs being vaccinated for both canine distemper and rabies. Quite a lot of training of Parks personnel has also been undertaken over the past two years. Furthermore, two new technologists are now in place at the lab which will help improve forensics capacity. Progress is also being made with the Herding for Health (H4H) programme, with several eco-rangers receiving training. However, the current economic situation in the country makes it difficult to plan and associated poverty is resulting in increased poaching activity.

#### 4.5 AHEAD (Steve)

The gap analysis report on implementing CBT in Ngamiland has recently been completed. Suggested modifications identified by stakeholders at a validation workshop in July are incorporated directly into the report itself. The report is available on the AHEAD website. The CBT Guidelines are also being re-formatted as an official SADC document, which will hopefully be finalised in the next month. A list of potential animal health-related research questions has also been developed and circulated to the SC for expansion, and AHEAD is also trying to pursue potential Cornell funding for an epidemiologist position to assist in KAZA.

#### 4.6 Markus

Markus has now joined the Oak Foundation – a philanthropic family that gives quite a bit of money to conservation & International Wildlife Trade-related issues. The foundation is busy developing a new strategy and would like to support the integration of wildlife-livestock coexistence and land-use planning. Related to CBT, much progress on coordinating on-the-ground activities in Ngamiland has been made through the Wildlife Friendly Beef Forum. It is recommended that this continue. Bruce Petty from Great Plains continues to be interested. In addition, a big fundraising push to support H4H pilots in KAZA is underway by Peace Parks Foundation and Conservation International. Finally, Markus will continue to represent southern Africa on the OIE Working Group on Wildlife. He will raise some of the issues the AHSWG has highlighted with the OIE WG in December so they are aware of on-the-ground progress and key things the WG might need to champion.

### 5. Review of progress on year-1 prioritised activities

To ascertain progress, the SC reviewed the key activities that need to be undertaken during the July 2019-June 2020 period (see Table 1 below). It was noted that while good progress has been made on some fronts, it is likely some of the activities have yet to be initiated. Specifically, for the following topics:

- **Animal Production and Livelihoods.** Good progress on CBT activities. SADC has approved formal adoption of the CBT Guidelines, the gap analysis report for Ngamiland has been completed and CBT pilot sites/projects are being identified/initiated.
- **Surveillance.** Little progress made on collating existing SOPs and recent/planned surveillance operations within KAZA.
- **Disease risk assessment.** Progress made. Draft ToRs for a proposed KAZA-wide epidemiologist have been developed and shared within the SC; some attempts to identify funding for an epidemiologist are underway via Cornell.
- **Diagnostics.** Progress made. SC members drafted a motivation letter in July on the proposed CITES resolution dealing with movement of diagnostic & forensic samples. KAZA Secretariat communicated this to the Directors and KAZA focal

persons prior to the most recent CITES COP. The resolution was approved at CITES, with user-friendly guidelines to be developed by the CITES Secretariat. Progress still needs to be made on: (i) a survey of diagnostic capacity within KAZA and (ii) developing veterinary SOPs for gross examination & course of action for confiscated consignments of animal products. Chris will follow-up on the diagnostic capacity activity.

- **Communications.** Progress made. A WhatsApp Group for field-based livestock/wildlife veterinary officers and practitioners has been established. However, it could be strengthened by: (i) identifying and sharing the names/position titles of everyone on the group, (ii) communicating, via an introductory paragraph, the purpose of the group and (iii) developing rules of communication. Comfy and Nidhi will work on the first two tasks. Progress is still needed on initiating veterinary officer meetings (local/field-level).
- **Disease control.** Progress made. For example, Botswana has re-convened its National Committee on Cordon Fences. KAZA Secretariat, WWF and AHEAD have started the process of identifying and trying to source funds for a fencing assessment.
- **Cross-cutting research.** Progress made. A preliminary list of veterinary research questions has been drafted and shared with the SC for review/expansion.

SC members agreed on the importance of having one person from the SC take the lead for each activity – not necessarily to undertake the activity, but to act as a liaison and to follow-up with AHSWG members in each of the PSs.

In an administrative note, the list of tier 1 and 2 diseases discussed in June 2019 in Victoria Falls were inadvertently left out of the meeting notes. It was agreed these should be added back so as to be an accurate reflection of the meeting.

## 6. Next steps

The following next steps were agreed to by the SC:

- i. SC members to identify which of the activities they can take the lead on [due 25 October]
- ii. SC members to review draft list of research priorities and expand upon [due 25 November]
- iii. Comfy and Nidhi to work on WhatsApp group intro paragraph & list of names [due 25 November]
- iv. Chris to take lead on undertaking a survey of KAZA lab diagnostic capacity [due 31 December]
- v. Steve to send rationale on fencing assessment tasks/timelines to Nyambe [completed 17 October]
- vi. Shirley to update June meeting notes to include tier 1 & 2 diseases; replace meeting notes on AHSWG website [completed 21 October]
- vii. Shirley to prepare SC meeting notes [completed 23 October]

## 7. Next AHSWG meeting

It was agreed that the next AHSWG meeting take place the first week of March 2020 (2-6 March) in either Zambia (Livingstone) or Namibia (Katima). The AHSWG has met three times previously, in Angola, Botswana and Zimbabwe respectively. This should be communicated to the full AHSWG in a 'save the date' email towards the end of 2019.

**Table 1. Prioritised activities for the year 2019-2020**

Priority legend

C Completed

O Ongoing

U Greatest urgency in terms of animal health & conservation outcomes in KAZA

L Easy to accomplish (low hanging fruit) within 1-year with limited resources

B Both Urgent AND Low hanging fruit

No	Topic	Objective	Activity	Responsibility	Location/ Scope	Timeline	Details	Priority
1.1	Animal Production & Livelihoods	Facilitate sustainable integrated land use & livelihoods in KAZA	Prepare updated regional guidelines for CBT beef production	AHEAD	SADC region	2017-2018	Revised to incorporate 2015 changes to OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code that allow for quarantine.	C
1.2			Revise guidelines for CBT beef production based on SADC Livestock Technical Committee (LTC) input for proposed adoption as SADC document	AHEAD	Presented to SADC LTC (Jul & Dec 2018)	Jul 2018 – Jun 2019	Revised following SADC LTC feedback; approved by SADC Council of Ministers as regional document (June 2019)	C
1.3			Identify priority sites in KAZA WDAs for CBT pilot projects	H4H	Multiple sites	2018- to date	Field site assessment with eventual feasibility studies	O
1.4			Initiate CBT pilot work at multiple sites identified in WDAs (3 countries to date)	Govt & community partners; H4H, BPCT; CLAWS; ORI; CIRAD; VFWT; PPF; CI; AHEAD	(BW) Habu & Eretsha (ZM) Simalaha (ZW) Victoria Falls	2018 – to date	Various stages from feasibility studies to early implementation at production level (e.g. herding/kraaling pilots)	O
1.5			Conduct CBT beef market opportunities analysis for Ngamiland, BW	AHEAD, WWF	Ngamiland, BW	2017	Stakeholder consultation & desktop study.	C
1.6			Conduct detailed gap analysis on implementation of CBT beef in Ngamiland, BW	AHEAD consortium in partnership with DVS, BW	Ngamiland, BW	Nov 2017- Jul 2019	Stakeholder consultation & field site visits; capacity-building/ training; workshops. Draft report completed; DVS HQ validation (June 2019); stakeholder validation workshop (July 2019)	O
1.7			Conduct analysis of regional abattoir capacity	TBD			Analysis to consider potential for more efficient use of resources within KAZA	L

1.8		Improve understanding & ability to mitigate risk	Collate data & apply rainfall biomass model to help guide risk mitigation/ future management strategies	DVS – Afonso & Machado (AN); Mbeha & Mafonko (BW); Amushila (NA); Katampi (ZM); Taylor (WWF)	Rainfall station data (as many as possible); mortality data available for KAZA component; modelling	Jul 2019 – Jun 2020; ongoing with progress report by end of Yr-1	Collection of data (yr-1); apply Coe, Cumming & Philipson model (1976) - Yr-2 (Taylor). Rainfall data & statistics on animal mortality, especially livestock (deaths due to disease, predation, environmental/underlying nutrition, fence & road kills). [Editor's note: consider FEWS NET famine early warning system for possibly useful tools.]	B
2.1	Surveillance	Improve decision making by making surveillance data more comparable across KAZA landscape	Collation of existing SOPs	DVS - Afonso & Machado (AN); Mbeha & Mafonko (BW); Amushila (NA); Katampi (ZM); Hanyire (ZW)	Desktop	Jul – Sep 2019	PDF documents, send to AHSWG SC	B
2.2			Collation of recent & planned surveillance operations within KAZA	DVS - Afonso & Machado + Cuando-Cubango province vet officer (AN); Mbeha & Mafonko (BW); Amushila (NA); Katampi (ZM); Hanyire (ZW)	Desktop. Data from 2015 onwards (passive & active operations)	Jul-Sep 2019	List of surveillance operations & where	B
3.1	Disease risk assessment	Coordinate & spearhead prioritised AHSWG activities	Produce Terms of Reference (ToRs) for a proposed KAZA-wide epidemiologist	VFWT (Foggin); AHEAD; Chaitezvi (ZW)	Start process to produce ToRs & source funds	Jul 2019 – Jun 2020	Email & Skype meetings b/w team; desktop	L
3.2		Improve ability to mitigate disease risk	Desktop survey of epidemiological capacity within KAZA	TBD	TBD	Likely 2020-2021	Progress envisioned once KAZA-wide epidemiologist position filled &/or Yr-2 activity	L
4.1	Diagnostics	Improved speed & accuracy of diagnoses to improve disease management	Survey of diagnostic capacity within KAZA (including listing labs that are accredited for certain tests)	Team to source info: Foggin (VFWT); Hanyire (ZW); Mbeha (BW). Nyika to provide info from LTC (via Manyire)	Initially desktop study; ZW chairing LTC lab sub-committee (indicated some info already there)	2019	Progress envisioned within one year. Conduct survey for disease risk assessment capacity, with view of more efficient use of resources within KAZA	L



4.2			Promote use of regional (KAZA) facilities/labs	TBD	TBD	Likely 2020-21	Progress envisioned once survey of diagnostic lab capacity completed	B
4.3		Improved speed & accuracy of diagnostics / analysis to improve disease management / forensic identification	Develop veterinary SOPs for gross examination & next course of action for confiscated consignments of animal products	DVS - Afonso & Machado (AN); Mbeha & Mafonko (BW); Amushila (NA); Katampi (ZM); Hanyire (ZW)	Examination of legislation - both wildlife & veterinary health statutes (2019); start to develop SOPs (2020)	Oct 1 - Dec 15, 2019 (gather Acts/regulations)	Examine with view to developing SOPs & share w/ group (2019); develop SOPs (2020); developed in partnership with law enforcement agencies.	B
4.4			AHSWG members to get their own countries to support CITES CoP18 Doc.56 resolution dealing with movement of diagnostic & forensic samples	Individual countries with top-down & bottom-up approaches	1. Chair for AHSWG 2. Conservation WG 3. Country delegation to CITES CoP18 4. Country representatives	ASAP (before Sep 2019)	Through written communication to the Directors cc KAZA focal persons	B
5.1	Communications			Set up WhatsApp group for field level operatives	One administrator per country: Afonso (AN); Nkgowe (BW); Amushila (NA); Katampi (ZM); Foggin (ZW)	Include representatives from PS (DVS; wildlife & private sector)	Initiated 13 Jun 2019; full set of names by Jun 30	Develop rules of communication
5.2			Institute veterinary officer meetings (local/field-level)	Representatives from PS	Veterinary officers stationed within KAZA	Use existing mechanisms where possible e.g. TBNRM forum	Initial step: brief &/or write to superiors in PSs	B
6.1	Disease control	Ensure fencing decisions are based on sound cross-sectoral cost/benefit analysis	Determine mechanisms in place in each PS for cross-sectoral engagement on fencing issues (start w/ key government authorities)	Individual countries	DVS representatives: Matamdiko (BW); Amashila (NA); Tapiwa (ZW)	Aug 31, 2019	Consultation with relevant stakeholders and written communication	B
6.2				Re-establish Botswana multi-sectoral national fencing committee to review fencing	BW - co-chaired by DVS & DWNP; support provided by AHEAD	Botswana	2018 - to date (ongoing)	Regular meetings of Committee; input from technical experts on specific issues, as required

6.3			Conduct assessment of current & planned veterinary fences affecting KAZA's WDAs	AHEAD; WWF	Start process to source funds	Attempt to source funds: Yr-1	Actual assessment possibly done at individual country level?	U
6.4		Improve KAZA-wide disease management	Coordinate shared emergency disease response	TBD				O
6.5			Coordination of vaccination campaigns (activities to be synchronized)	TBD				O
7.1	Cross cutting – Research	Improve regional knowledge base for science-based decision making	Identify veterinary research priorities	Steering Committee (SC)	AHEAD to share preliminary list with SC for expansion	Jul 2019 - Jun 2020	Desktop	L

**Top Tier Diseases for KAZA**

Anthrax  
Foot and mouth disease (FMD)  
Rabies  
Trypanosomiasis (Angola)  
Bovine tuberculosis (BTB)  
Contagious bovine pleuropneumonia (CBP)

**Tier 2 Diseases for KAZA**

Bovine brucellosis  
African swine fever (ASF)  
Canine distemper virus (CDV)