

Rhino Ark and the global sustainable development agenda



The Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet and intended to be achieved by 2030. Rhino Ark, through its conservation and community programmes, is a key organization fostering the achievement of these goals in Kenya and a model for the rest of the world.

Rhino Ark is at the forefront in supporting some of these goals. Conceived more than thirty years ago, Rhino Ark has implemented high-impact forest and wildlife conservation programmes to protect and restore mountain forests and their wildlife in Kenya, through supporting adjacent local communities. At the centre of Rhino Ark interventions is the construction of electrified conservation fences. To date, fences have been built around the perimeters of the Aberdare Mountains in central Kenya (400km) and Mount Eburu in the Rift Valley (44km). Rhino Ark has also completed 50% of a 450km long conservation fence around Mount Kenya which is a renowned UNESCO World Heritage site.

Through its fencing and conservation programmes, Rhino Ark protects over 570,000 hectares of pristine forest. It also safeguards the livelihoods of over 85,000 forest adjacent households from threats posed by elephant and other wildlife raids on farms. The fence also ensures that children walking to school are safe from dangerous wildlife, and provides direct benefits to communities through employment to maintain the fence.

There is much more to the Rhino Ark story. These great forests and protected areas are an invaluable resource for the entire country, with Kenya's greatest rivers the Tana and Athi, rising in the Aberdares and Mount Kenya to become the country's 'water towers' on which Kenya's essential economic sectors, in particular agriculture, tourism and energy, depend.

Rhino Ark conservation work is pivotal to environmental stability and to secure the ecological goods and services provided by the 'water towers'. These are essential to attain sustainable development in Kenya. They are cross-cutting, underlying requirements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Although Rhino Ark contributes towards nearly all the SDGs, it supports directly the achievements of SDG 1: Poverty, SDG 6: Clean Water and

Sanitation; SDG 13: Climate Action; SDG 15: Life on Land (see below).

Our conservation work also is a critically important contribution towards the implementation of multilateral environmental conventions, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Nagoya Protocol; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); RAMSAR Convention on wetlands of international importance; and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- Convention on Biological Diversity: by protecting the forest ecosystems and its wildlife; by promoting conservation-compatible livelihoods within the forest-adjacent communities; and, by rehabilitating degraded forest areas.
- Nagoya Protocol:
 - by strengthening community forest associations that will be able to enter into an agreement with KFS to secure user rights; and
 - by carrying out a prior informed consent processes before implementing project activities.
- CITES: by helping protect species listed in CITES Appendices (Appendix I: African elephant, black rhinoceros, leopard; Appendix II: Yellow-backed duiker, *Prunus africana*).
- RAMSAR: by protecting the upper catchment areas of Ramsar sites (Lake Naivasha, Lake Elementaita, Tana River Delta).
- UNFCCC: by contributing towards Kenya's National Adaption Plan (2015-2030) through enhancing the resilience of key mountain ecosystems to climate variability and change, and by supporting Kenya's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) through replanting degraded areas towards achieving a tree cover of at least 10% of the land area of Kenya.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

