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## New project to protect black rhino


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ELLANIE SMIT

WINDHOEK

A grant of 200 000 euro has been awarded to Save the Rhino Trust (SRT) Namibia to support local communities in protecting the world's last black rhino. It will also assist with the sustainability of initiatives that bring revenue to these communities.

The project is funded by the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the European Union (EU), through the Biodiversity Fund.

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According to SRT, this two-year project will train and equip trackers and rhino rangers to continue monitoring and protecting the rhinos in

"SRT works tirelessly to protect the last free-roaming population of black rhinos left in the world. The black rhino is a critically endangered organisation says.

Covering an area of 25 000 square kilometres, SRT's trackers come from local communities and possess a deep knowledge of rhinos and the area with no national park status, no fences and no control over who enters and exits.

"This OACPS-EU-funded project will contribute to improving resiliency of rhino custodian communities against external pressure. It will improve technology in the field as well as the installation of critical infrastructure needed for communication and well-being of rhino trackers while

These activities ensure that rhino tourism and the existing rhino ranger programme remain sustainable and benefit biodiversity and local

SRT added that the rhino ranger programme has been noted as one of the most innovative community-based rhino conservation initiatives. Conservation has contributed significantly to the reduction of poaching in the landscape and income from rhino monitoring has provided approximately 50 community-based rhino rangers currently working in the region.

"I am very impressed with the way that conservation in Namibia is moving and the support shown to us, especially during the coronavirus because it allows us to continue our important work when a reduction of funding for many conservation initiatives means that poaching is

Sinikka Antila, EU ambassador to Namibia, said Namibia is an acknowledged pioneer in the sustainable management of wildlife and has the management (CBNRM) approach.

"We are confident that this grant will build and expand on the excellent work already being done in rhino monitoring and developing conservation


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