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Wildlife protection project started

## Namibia wants to invest millions in the protection of game by 2026

Poaching and the conflict between humans and game are one of Namibia's greatest challenges. The country now plans to spend almost N \$ 100 million on the protection of game. The project documents were signed on Tuesday.



Martha Naanda (UNDP, from left), Alka Bhatia (UNDP), Teofilus Nghitila (State Secretary of the Environment Ministry), Ned Sibeya (Development Partners Coordinator, NPC), Bennett Kahuure (Director of Parks and Wildlife Management of the Environment Ministry) and Colgar Sikopo (Deputy) Managing Director of Natural Resource Management, NRM) presented the project for the protection of game in Namibia on Tuesday in Windhoek. Photo: Lea Dillmann

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Lea Dillmann,

Windhoek

The Namibian Ministry of the Environment will in future have around N \$ 92 million at its disposal for the protection of wild and farm animals. During a ceremony on Tuesday afternoon, representatives of the Ministry of the Environment, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the National Planning Commission (NPC) signed the project

papers. The wildlife conservation strategy is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and is expected to run from January next year to 2026.

The idea for the project arose in 2018, shortly after the sixth meeting of the global environmental agency, as State Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment, Teofilus Nghitila, explained. "This is not a 'one man show'. Various stakeholders are involved in the project," continued Nghitila. All those involved are pursuing one of Namibia's national priorities, namely to end the conflict between Namibian residents and game as well as game crime.

"Unfortunately, the great poverty in our rural areas is still a major cause of both the human-game struggle and poaching," said Nghitila. He therefore welcomed the fact that this project, among other things, achieved economic benefits from the game industry for the local communities. In addition, the exchange between all actors and those affected is an essential part of the project.

"I am sure that we will all see the resulting successes together," said the resident representative of UNDP, Alka Bhatia, who developed the strategy together with the project specialist, Martha Naanda.

The project is to be promoted in the three areas in the country in which wildlife crime and conflicts between animals and humans are particularly high. This affects north-central Namibia, including the Etosha National Park, the north-west in the Kunene region and the north-east, where the Bwabwata-Mudumu National Park and parts of the "Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area" (KAZA) are also located.

According to the Department of Environment's Director of Parks and Wildlife Management, Bennett Kahuure, the biggest challenges facing the wildlife strategy in rural areas are currently that many residents are not satisfied with the compensation for livestock that has been killed by wild animals. A higher financial compensation is currently not possible.