State Department for Wildlife

KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE

# BRIEF ON HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT COMPENSATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES

MAY, 2025

## Background and Context

Human-wildlife conflict is a major obstacle to conservation and development globally, occurring when wildlife and human needs for resources overlap, leading to competition. Factors aggravating HWC include increases in human, livestock, and wildlife populations, agricultural expansion, deforestation, illegal activities in protected areas, climate change, and encroachment into wildlife corridors. In Kenya, a significant portion (about 65%) of wildlife lives outside protected areas, meaning communities coexisting with wildlife bear the brunt of HWC. Kenya has numerous protected areas covering about 12.34% of its land mass comprising of 24 terrestrial national parks, 29 terrestrial national reserves, four (4) marine parks, six (6) marine national reserves, eight (8) national sanctuaries, and 234 forest reserves.

## Drivers of HWC

Key drivers include climate change, conflicting land use practices, land fragmentation, blockage of wildlife corridors, increased human population, habitat degradation, invasive species, infrastructure development, lack of implementation of spatial plans, poverty, resource competition, and conflicting conservation policies.

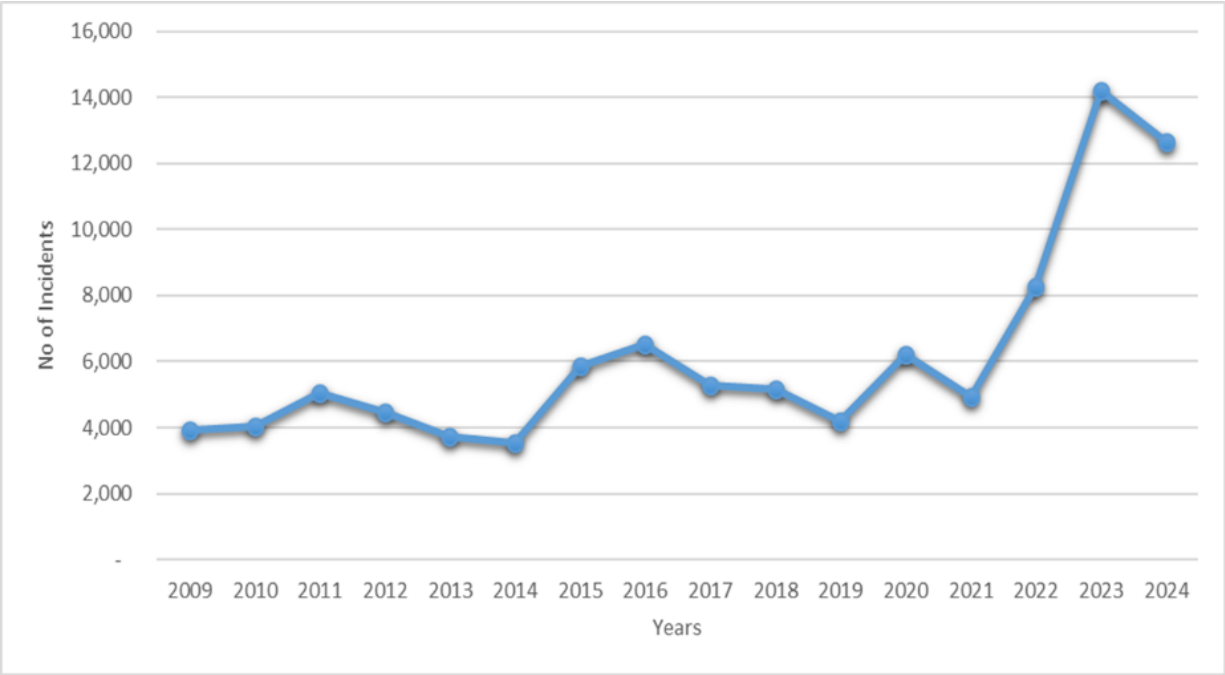
## HWC Status in Kenya

Analysis of data of human-wildlife conflict incidents for 15-year period, specifically from 2009 to 2024 gives a **Grand Total of 57,006 incidents reported**.

Looking at the annual data, the number of incidents has fluctuated over the years. There were 2,409 incidents recorded in 2009, increasing to 3,186 in 2011, before dropping to 1,930 in 2013. Incidents rose again, reaching 3,431 in 2015 and 3,412 in 2016. A significant increase is noted towards the later years, with 3,698 incidents in 2020, 3,176 in 2021, 4,950 in 2022, and

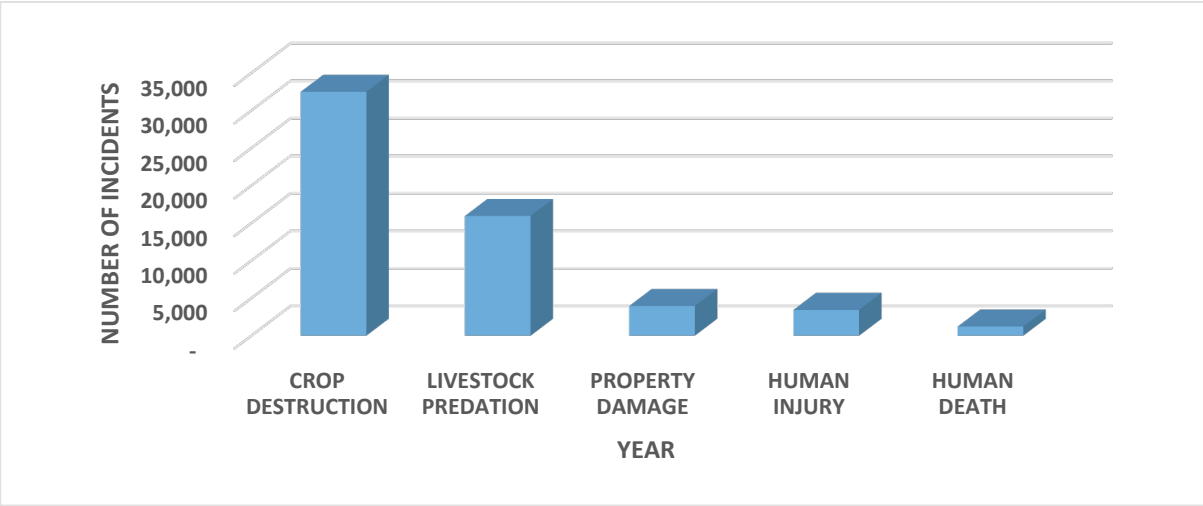
reaching a peak of **8,272 incidents in 2023**. The data for 2024 shows 7,883 incidents recorded. Trend is shown in the figure below;

**HWC 15 YEARS NATIONAL TREND**



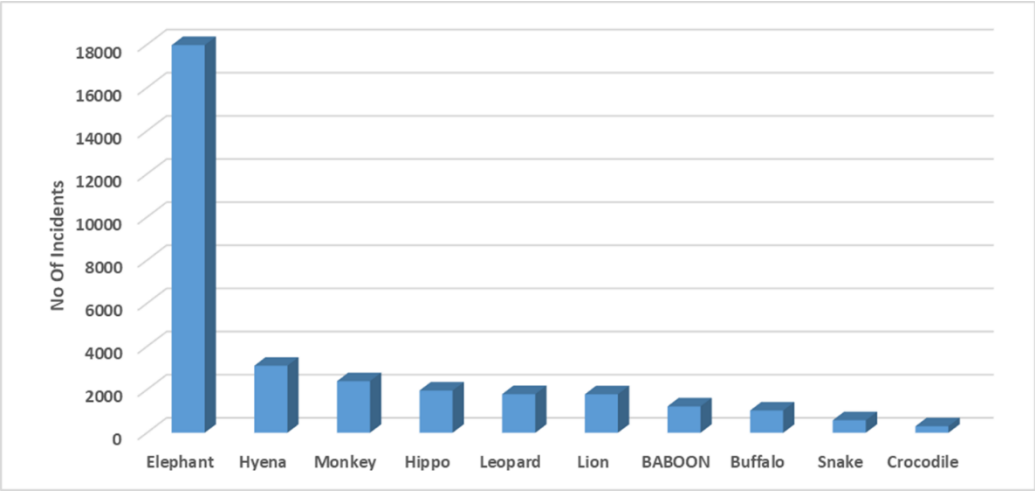

**HWC PER CONFLICT TYPE**

A breakdown of the incidents into categories based on the type of conflict shows that **Crop Destruction is the most frequent type of incident**, accounting for 32,480 cases. **Livestock Predation** is the second most common, with 15,940 incidents. Other types of conflict for the cumulative 15-year period are as given below figure



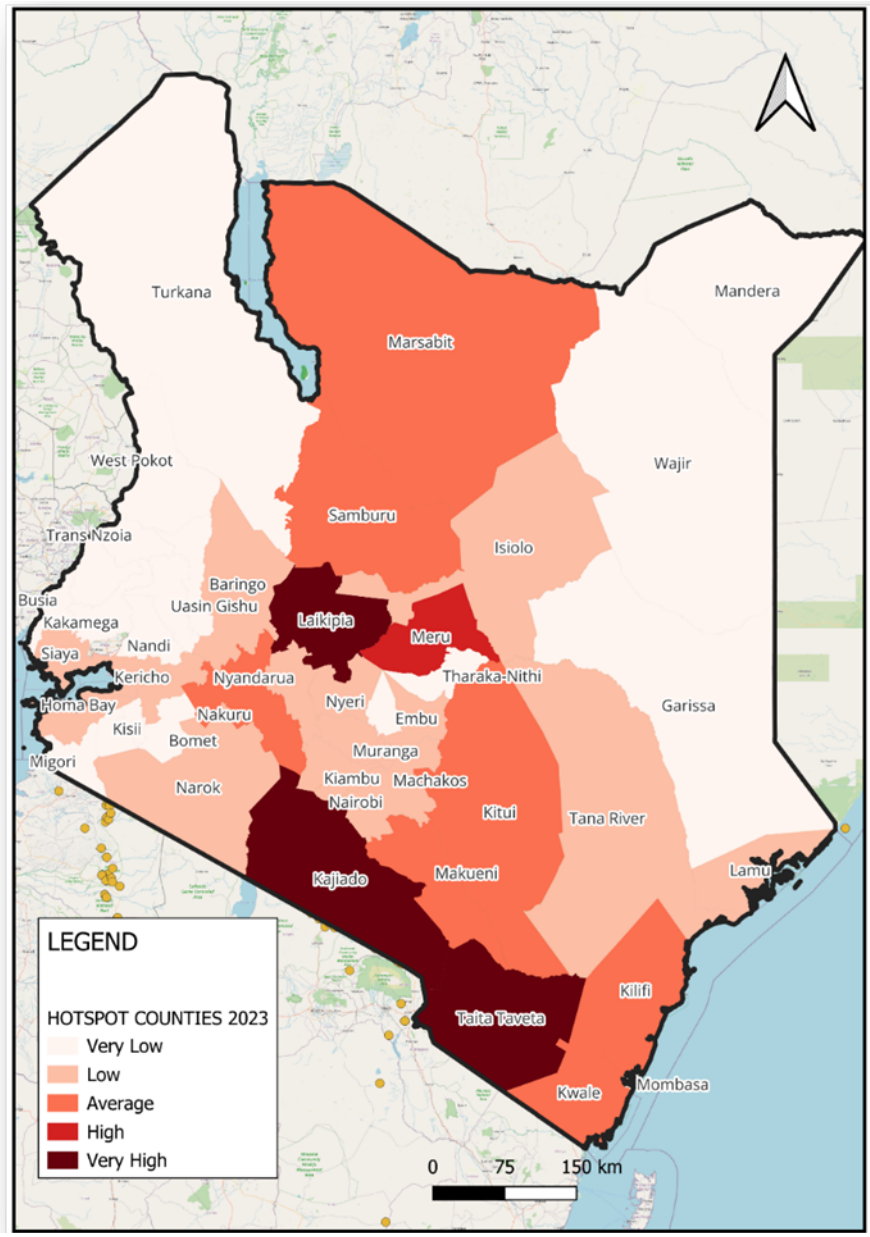

## THREE-YEAR ANALYSIS OF TOP TEN PROBLEM ANIMALS

For the period between 2022 and 2024 the **top ten species involved in human-wildlife conflict**s were **Elephants** contributing to the highest number of incidents during this specific period, with a total of 17,917 cases. These incidents ware primarily related to **Crop Destruction (7,556)** and **also** Human Injury (149) and Human Death (121) incidents. Following elephants in the 2022-2024 period, **Hyenas** are involved in 3,109 incidents, largely due to **Livestock Predation (2,480)**. **The figure below shows the details of the other species causing the highest HWC incidents over the period**




## HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT HOTSPOT COUNTIES

From the three-year analysis Geographically, the **top ten counties experiencing the highest number of human-wildlife conflict incidents were identified as TAITA TAVETA County** with 6,293 incidents among the listed counties. Other counties in the top ten include Laikipia (4,479), Kajiado (3,196), Meru (1,451), Marsabit (1,373), Nakuru (1,136), Kilifi (1,041), Kitui (1,037), Kwale (948), And Isiolo (897).




## Impacts of HWC

HWC has widespread economic, social, and physical effects on both people and wildlife.

- **Economic:** Communities suffer serious economic losses from damaged crops, livestock, and property. HWC can slow national development by discouraging investment in conflict-prone areas. Managing HWC is a substantial and ongoing financial burden for the government.

- **Social/Psychological:** Human death, permanent disability, and property damage can lead to psychological trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), potentially contributing to self-destructive behaviors and reducing workforce productivity.
- **Wildlife/Biodiversity:** Retaliatory attacks against problematic animals are a major cause of wildlife mortality, surpassing other security-related deaths like poaching in some cases. These attacks threaten endangered species (like elephants and lions) and can harm non-targeted species and entire food chains, impacting biodiversity.
- **Attitudinal:** Economic losses and trauma foster negative attitudes towards wildlife and conservation agencies, potentially hindering conservation efforts and trust.

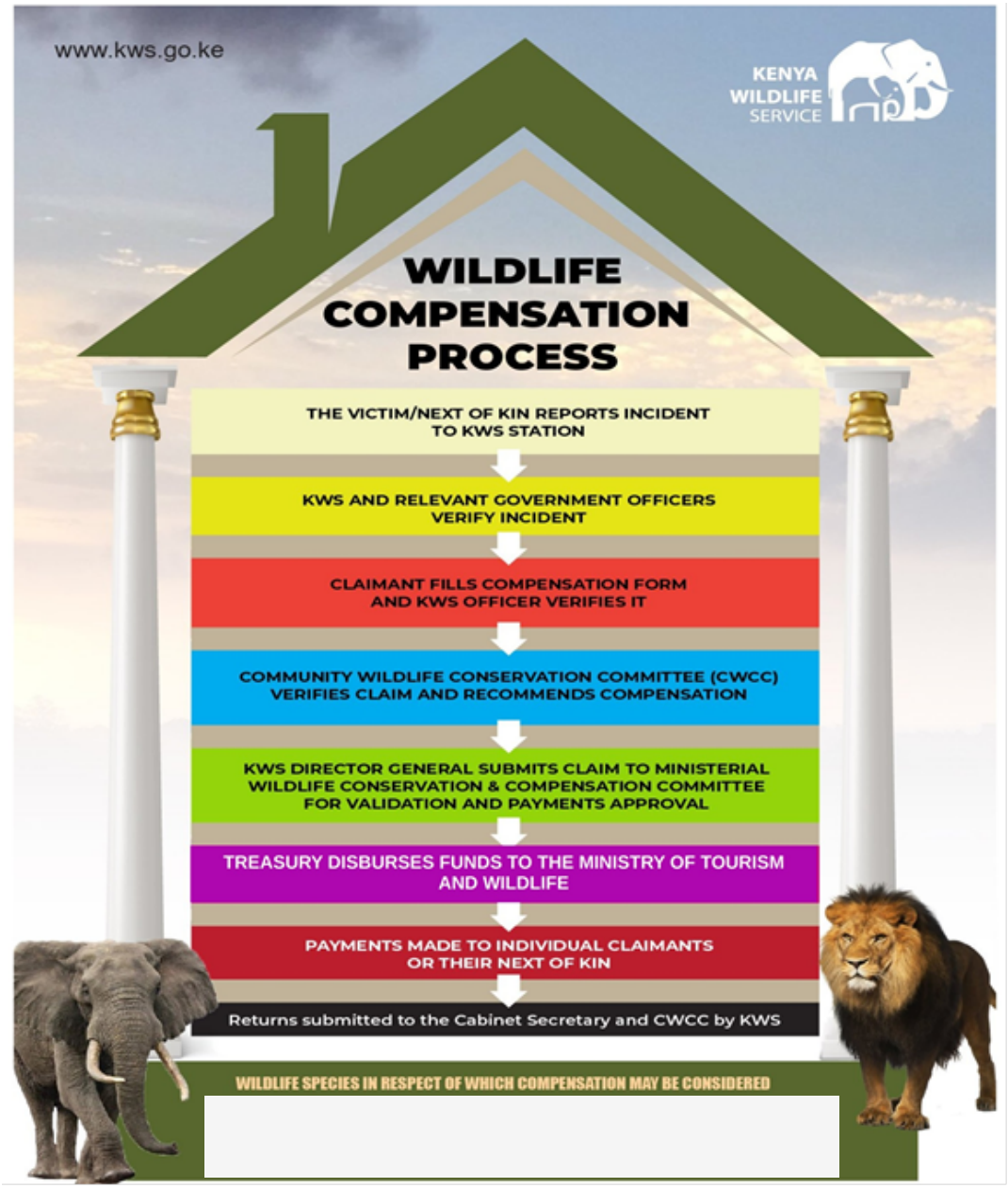
## COMPENSATION

### History of HWC Compensation

- Compensation for HWC in Kenya dates back to the **Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 1976**, which covered human injury/death, crops, livestock, and property damage. This early scheme faced challenges with funding, verification, and corruption.
- In 1989, compensation for crops, livestock, and property damage was abolished, though compensation for human death and injury continued.
- Payments were enhanced in 2006, increasing approved payments for death and injury.
- The **Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013**, re-introduced compensation for crop, livestock, and property damage. This act set minimum compensation payments for **human death at Ksh 5 million** and **permanent human disability at Ksh 3 million**, with property damages awarded at market rates.

- The Act provides for **Community Wildlife Compensation Committees (CWCCs)** at the county level, which assess claims and recommend them to the Cabinet Secretary for review and approval for payment.
- CWCC meetings were disrupted after 2021 due to restrictions and a circular on sitting allowances. However, **sitting allowances were approved on April 7, 2025**, allowing claim verification to resume from May 12, 2025.

## Procedure for HWC Compensation



**Compensation Claims Funding**

- Outstanding Approved HWC compensation claims as of February 2023 totaled over **Ksh 4.16 billion**
- Since the advent of the current government, the State Department for Wildlife has paid out a total of **Ksh 2.8 billion FY 2023/24 (908,000,000)** and **FY2024/25 (950,000,000)** with a pending balance of **Ksh 1.36** billion still unpaid.
- Key challenges include **funding deficits**, delays in manual claim processing and verification, and legacy claims dating back to 2014.
- Approximately **20,000 claims** are held at the county level awaiting processing. Compensation has primarily been reactive rather than preventative.

**COMPENSATION PAID PER FINANCIAL YEAR**

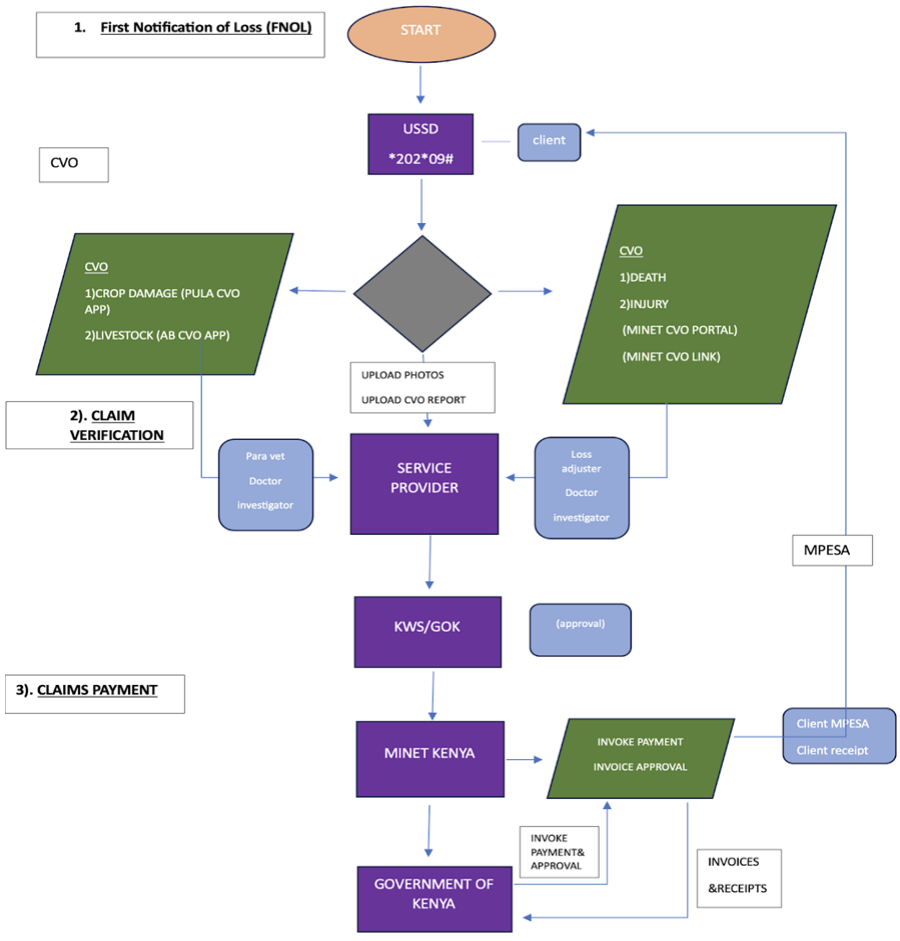
| YEAR | COMPENSATION |
|---|---|
| FY2018/19 | 439,000,000 |
| FY2019/20 | 559,313,000 |
| FY2020/21 | 523,298,000 |
| FY2021/22 | 530,000,000 |
| FY2022/23 | 908,000,000 |
| FY2023/24 | 960,000,000 |
| FY2024/25 | 950,000,000 |
| TOTAL | 4,869,611,000 |

Additionally, payment for **legal dues** were paid by KWS are as per the breakdown below

FY2022/23 -**94,327,686.60**
FY 2023/24 - **98,431,278.60**
FY2024/25- **436,488,601.60**

## Digital Compensation Scheme

- To address challenges in the manual system, a digital compensation scheme was initiated in 2024.
- It is being piloted in six counties and uses a digital platform for data collection and processing. Small payments (up to Ksh 100,000) are made via MPESA.
- The piloting period is two years, **ending in November 2025**.
- The scheme has so far paid out Ksh 10,127,812.
- Total approved 804 claims amounting to 29,519,322 are awaiting payment




## Mitigation Framework and Ongoing Reforms

Kenya's strategy includes various measures beyond compensation.

- **Preventive:** Electric/bio-fences, predator-proof enclosures, alarms, lights.
- **Responsive:** Deployment of Problem Animal Control and rapid response units, early warning systems.
- **Financial:** Establishing the Human-Wildlife Coexistence Fund (HWCF), promoting digital compensation and micro-insurance.
- **Community Involvement:** Strengthening community conservancies, empowering and training communities in mitigation tools and coexistence-friendly enterprises (like ecotourism, beekeeping). Expanding community benefit-sharing schemes is recommended.
- **Technology:** Using data to target hotspots (like Tsavo, Amboseli, Central Rift), integrating motion-triggered alarms, drone surveillance, camera traps, and SMS alerts.
- **Legal/Institutional:** Proposed legal reforms aim to institutionalize Community Human-Wildlife Conflict Committees (CHWCCs) and the HWCF Board for long-term mitigation funding.

## Conclusion

Despite progress in compensation, the high number of pending claims and rising conflict levels emphasize the urgent need to scale up prevention efforts. Key recommendations include establishing the HWCF, strengthening conservancies and land-use planning, expanding community benefit-sharing, scaling up technology and hotspot mapping, and finalizing legal amendments.