



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE PROMOVE BIODIVERSIDADE PROGRAMME

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Executive Summary

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The mid-term evaluation of the PROMOVE Biodiversidade programme was conducted to assess its relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, added value and impact to biodiversity conservation in Mozambique. This evaluation aims to generate actionable insights and lessons learned to inform the final phase of the ongoing intervention and guide the design of future biodiversity initiatives. As PROMOVE Biodiversidade is a pioneering initiative in Mozambique, it offers a unique opportunity to extract valuable lessons for biodiversity programming.

Methodology: The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Key methods for data collection included: i) document review, ii) stakeholder consultations (semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders, including the European Union Delegation (EUD), ANAC (National Administration of Conservation areas), BIOFUND, implementing partners, local communities, and government representatives), field visits: two week site visits to key implementation areas such as Gilé National Park (GNAP), Mount Mabu, and APAIPS (Ilhas Primeiras e Segundas Environmental Protection Area) to observe programme activities and collect primary data, iv) quantitative analysis of progress indicators and v) data analysis with triangulation of findings from multiple sources to ensure validity and reliability.

Main Evaluation Findings

Relevance: The programme aligns strongly with Mozambique's biodiversity strategies, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, supports global EU priorities like the Green Deal and Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Although overall programme activities are pertinent to local population priorities, gaps in local-level planning and community engagement limit its relevance to specific beneficiary needs.

Effectiveness: JC 3.1 Strengthened ANAC Governance; The component contributed to strengthening ANAC's governance by supporting the development of conservation frameworks, notably the National Ivory and Rhino Action Plan (NIRAP), the MIKE programme, and the Elephant Trade Information System (ETIS). A critical milestone was the approval of Mozambique's CITES Regulation by the Council of Ministers in December 2024, advancing the country's legislation towards CITES Category I. Capacity-building activities allowed training over 800 participants, including government officials and stakeholders, enhancing compliance and reporting abilities. ANAC now internally prepares reports such as NIRAP, reducing dependency on external support. However, the project faced challenges in fully integrating national and local governance. Institutional coordination gaps, staff turnover, and limited technical resources hindered substantial progress. The design overlooked opportunities for synergy between national frameworks and pilot projects in Zambézia and Nampula, and mechanisms for monitoring outcomes were inadequate. The approach lacked systemic capacity assessments and long-term strategies. While the project addressed financial gaps and supported critical areas of ANAC's mandate, it missed fostering a strategic partnership between the EU, ANAC, and international stakeholders. Greater integration, targeted capacity building, and robust policy reforms remain essential to ensuring sustainable conservation governance in Mozambique.

JC 3.2 Conservation and livelihoods in Gilé National Park The Programme supported conservation in Gilé National Park (GNAP), building on a 20-year partnership between ANAC and FFS-IGF (Fundação François Sommer /Fundação Internacional para a Gestão da Fauna). Key achievements included enhanced infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and patrol facilities, contributing to improved accessibility and patrolling effectiveness. Wildlife conservation was supported by the successful translocation of 200

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buffaloes and the enhancement of tracking and monitoring systems. The establishment of a 10-year management plan further defined a strategic framework for conservation. Anti-poaching efforts showed progress, with a decrease in illegal activities and improved patrol operations supported by digital surveillance tools. Despite these successes, structural challenges persist. Community development efforts lacked strategic alignment with park conservation goals, leaving significant gaps in community engagement and livelihoods. Issues like uncontrolled fires, limited tourism opportunities, and human-wildlife conflicts highlight the need for stronger integration and long-term planning. Financial sustainability also remains precarious, relying heavily on external funding with limited national budget support. The evaluation underscores the importance of linking community engagement, livelihood support, and conservation efforts.

JC 3.3 Conservation and livelihoods in Mount Mabu; The project in Mount Mabu aimed to establish a community-managed conservation area amidst significant geographical and logistical challenges. Mount Mabu, a biodiversity hotspot with high scientific and eco-tourism potential, suffers from geographical isolation, heavy rainfall, and a lack of formal protected status. Progress has been made in boundary delimitation, participatory mapping, and the proposal for a formal conservation designation submitted to ANAC. These efforts fostered community ownership, but several factors, including logistical constraints and limited community capacities contributed to delay tangible impacts. Key achievements include the creation of basic facilities as well as the development of mapping and governance structures. However, the planned infrastructure and capacity-building initiatives remain underdeveloped, and community-based monitoring systems are in early stages. Livelihoods programmes, such as farmer field schools and beekeeping, have been initiated but operate on a very small scale with limited benefits and outreach. Persistent challenges include environmental degradation, inadequate financial mechanisms, and low community capacity in governance and resource management. Efforts to mobilize financial resources and explore eco-tourism opportunities have shown minimal progress. The evaluation underscores the need for a long-term, strategic approach that integrates conservation and livelihoods, restores degraded land, and builds local capacity to ensure sustainable community-led conservation in Mount Mabu.

JC 3.4 Conservation and livelihoods in APAIPS: The APAIPS component made notable progress despite its early implementation stage and initial delays caused by a contract transition from CTV (Centro Terra Viva) to WWF. (World Wildlife Fund) The collaboration between WWF, AENA (national rural extension association), and KULIMA (organisation for integrated socioeconomic development) provides a sound foundation for biodiversity conservation and community livelihoods. WWF has contributed significantly by rehabilitating APAIPS offices, recruiting skilled personnel, and equipping enforcement officers. A landmark achievement is the graduation of 47 enforcement officers, marking a new era of structured patrolling since APAIPS's inception in 2011. Improved mobility and communication tools further enhance operations. Community-based organizations remain central to grassroots conservation efforts, facilitating patrolling and awareness campaigns. However, weakened working conditions following the *conclusion of the Blue Action Fund- funded project and inadequate planning for the continuity of support by the PROMOVE Biodiversidade programme* pose challenges. Mangrove restoration and revitalized environmental clubs have also promoted ecological and community resilience. Yet, alternative livelihoods, especially during fishing moratoriums, remain inadequate. Limited progress in fish processing and apiculture, also linked to early stage of implementation, limited targeting, small scale and limited strategic value of value chains, further hampers income diversification, underscoring the need for sustainable fisheries management. Financial sustainability relies on an endowment fund, forthcoming MCA support *through BIOFUND*, and WWF's efforts. However, revenue-generating mechanisms, such as visitor fees, are underdeveloped. While promising foundations have been laid, challenges in community engagement, sustainable financing, and operational delays highlight the need for strategic alignment and long-term planning to ensure APAIPS's success.

JC 3.5 Crosscutting priorities: the programme incorporated EU crosscutting priorities such as gender

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equality, human rights-based approaches, governance, and sustainable resource management. While activities achieved gender inclusion, like some examples of women's leadership in Mount Mabu and patrol roles in GNAP, efforts lacked strategic initiatives for empowerment, such as capacity development, leadership support and access to financial tools. Governance mechanisms were promoted but limited by weak participation and shallow capacities in CGRN (Natural Resources Management Committees) and CONSERVA MABU. Vulnerable groups were addressed inconsistently, and environmental strategies lacked focus, such as vegetation restoration in degraded areas. The evaluation highlights opportunities to expand these priorities and upscale benefits significantly.

Efficiency: Efficiency is supported by a committed management team and a close follow up of contracts, a sound governance body and an effective coordination and dialogue across stakeholders. Programme efficiency however is constrained by several operational delays, unsatisfactory performances of some implementers, logistical challenges, fragmented implementation among components, inadequate planning and low result orientations

Sustainability: While foundational work has been initiated, the programme's long-term sustainability is at risk due to heavy reliance on external funding and inadequate timeline and limited resources with challenges to establish capacities at community level.

EU Added Value: The EU's contribution to international biodiversity governance and innovative conservation approaches is evident. However, missed opportunities in policy dialogue and strategic leadership have limited its full potential.

Conclusions: The PROMOVE Biodiversidade programme sets a landmark for EU Cooperation in Mozambique with a first important intervention at national scale to support biodiversity conservation. EU and partners are actively learning from this experience. The evaluation assesses very positively a two-pronged approach, with a component dedicated to support national conservation governance with ANAC and a second one implemented by BIOFUND supporting three very different pilot experiences, with opportunity to learn from a variety of approaches, ecosystems and capacity levels.

Each pilot addresses both conservation needs and livelihoods of local communities, another positive trait of the set up. Implementation is assured by different mechanisms, all supporting alignment and national ownership.

The programme demonstrates a high degree of relevance to Mozambique's national and local biodiversity conservation priorities and the European Union's development cooperation framework. The programme has successfully initiated activities aimed at addressing biodiversity loss and improving community livelihoods, with the evaluation evidencing meaningful results and good practices for the conservation component.

The Programme is set with ambitious goals, limited resources and short timeline in a context which is particularly challenging. Effectiveness, sustainability and impact opportunities are considerably constrained by several factors, including some design weaknesses and insufficient integration between components. The ANAC component, focusing on compliance with CITES regulations, is addressing an important and relevant issue. However, its contribution to the broader governance of conservation areas remains limited

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in strategic scope. Additionally, it has minimal synergies or interactions with the three pilot initiatives, reducing its potential impact on national and local governance.¹

While conservation activities are producing mixed results, with overall satisfactory performances in Gilé Park and some important initial steps are set for Mount Mabu, the livelihood component is unable to achieve its goals as no significant benefits are yet emerging, narrow contributions are provided to conservation efforts and limited opportunities are evidenced for sustainability and future impacts. The effectiveness of the livelihood component is diluted by the selection of a few, non-strategic value chains, such as fish farming and beekeeping. These activities engage a very small percentage of the local population and are unlikely to generate a significant impact on broader livelihoods. Additional constraints include a project-driven approach based on grants, very small scale, very limited reach, low performances and an overall inadequate attention to capacity building.

Recommendations: The evaluation identified ten key recommendations to address the challenges observed and enhance programme effectiveness and performance

A – operation recommendation to strengthen PROMOVE Biodiversidade effectiveness

Recommendation 1: Improved Programme-Level Planning and Result Orientation for the Last Phase of Implementation emphasizes the need to organize a result-oriented, participatory planning exercise early in 2025. The focus should be on refining targets, timelines, and resource allocation to improve the quality of design, effectiveness, and sustainability of each contract. This planning exercise should be aligned with the evaluation findings and on the contract with implementers. Specific areas for improvement include the operational recommendations for GNAP, livelihoods, Mount Mabu and APAIPS (see R3,4,5,6 and 7). This planning mechanism should be revisited annually to ensure continuous improvement. This recommendation is high priority, to be implemented immediately up to March 2025.

Recommendation 2: mobilize technical assistance to support the next phase of implementation addresses capacity gaps and strategic vision limitations. TA services should support ANAC, EU Delegation, and BIOFUND by improving programme monitoring systems, enhancing coordination between components, and fostering dialogue with development partners. Key tasks include visiting implementers every two months, aligning planning frameworks with Recommendation 1, and reinforcing strategic vision and cross-sharing of lessons learned. This is a high-priority recommendation, to be implemented in the short term, by mid-2025.

Recommendation 3: Strengthening ANAC's Governance and Capacity (operational recommendations for ANAC): This focuses on strengthening ANAC's capacity to manage conservation governance effectively. Specific actions include appointing targeted technical assistance (see R2), establishing programme-level monitoring systems, improving delivery according to the Programme Estimate (PE) stipulations, and enhancing coordination with BIOFUND and implementing NGOs. Additionally, ANAC should explore alternative solutions for seized products and prioritize mechanisms for learning and dialogue. This recommendation is high priority, to be implemented within 12–18 months.

¹ The evaluation fully acknowledges the strategic importance of CITES in national biodiversity governance. However, our assessment focuses on the scope and strategic integration of the ANAC component within the Promove Biodiversidade programme. The support provided has primarily involved activity-level inputs (e.g. trainings, travel, workshops), with limited operational linkage to the programme's broader objectives of community-based conservation and pilot site implementation. The evaluation's statement reflects an independent, evidence-based analysis of how CITES-related support contributed within this specific programme context, rather than questioning its global or national significance.

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Recommendation 4: Improving GNAP (Conservation Effectiveness operational recommendations for GNAP). Highlight the need to improve salaries and incentives for rangers, upgrade logistics in campsites, and enhance internet access at the park's center. Operational recommendations include the raising of additional funds to implement the Park Management Plan with flexibility to address the gaps identified by this evaluation; an important point will be the development of a strategic fencing plan to address poaching and wildfires; operational plans, supported by business plans will need to be established for tourism and Nokalano Game Reserve. These measures will reinforce GNAP's conservation effectiveness and visibility. This recommendation is medium priority, to be implemented within 12–18 months.

Recommendation 5: Enhancing Mount Mabu Management (operational recommendations for Mount Mabu): advocate for adjusting the [ReGeCom](#) approach to community participation, clarifying joint-management responsibilities among partners, and revising the infrastructure plan to transform the research center into a conservation management hub. Establishing a long-term eco-tourism strategy and addressing immediate infrastructure needs, such as water and electricity, are also critical. Efforts should include capacity assessments of CONSERVA MABU and plans for coffee development in deforested areas. This is a high-priority recommendation, to be implemented within 12–18 months.

Recommendation 6: Strengthening Livelihoods Contracts (operational recommendations for livelihoods contracts): emphasize supporting high-impact value chains like cashew and horticulture, completing fish farming and beekeeping components (delivery of all the equipment, full delivery of capacity development, sustainable access to inputs, linkages to markets), and establishing connections between livelihoods and conservation. Strengthening women's empowerment and promoting nutritional diversity are key priorities, as are realistic, long-term plans for agricultural production. This recommendation is high priority, to be implemented within 6–12 months.

Recommendation 7: Enhancing APAIPS Operations and Community Livelihoods (operational recommendations for APAIPS) emphasize the improvement of effectiveness of law enforcement operations through the channeling of funds, creation and equipping of law enforcement camps and strengthening of community based organizations, as well as improvement of community livelihoods by developing the fisheries value chain, accelerating the implementation of beekeeping, supporting local farmers in the production of seeds and advocacy for the implementation of biodiversity offsets.

B – Strategic recommendations for future cooperation support to Biodiversity

Recommendation 8: reinforce EU value added and policy dialogue for biodiversity conservation proposes increasing the EU Delegation's engagement in biodiversity policy reforms and dialogue at the national and regional levels. By leveraging strategic frameworks such as the Global Gateway and the Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) — which guide EU engagement and coordination — the EU should actively support governance reforms that enhance transparency and institutional capacity. This includes promoting more efficient national budgeting processes and fostering stronger sectoral commitments to conservation, helping to integrate environmental sustainability into national development strategies. This is a high-priority recommendation, to be implemented in the next programming cycle.

Recommendation 9: improve EU mechanisms to support biodiversity conservation in Mozambique suggests enhancing programme design by ensuring measurable results, financial resource alignment, and feasibility studies. Avoiding compartmentalized contracts, establishing a national programme-level monitoring system, and promoting gender inclusivity and rights-based approaches are also critical. Future

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agreements should focus on performance-based contracts, disbursements and adequate technical assistance. This is a high-priority recommendation, to be implemented in the next programming cycle.

Recommendation 10: Establish a Comprehensive Monitoring System aims to develop a robust framework for tracking progress and facilitating adaptive management. Standardized indicators and data collection processes should ensure coherence across all programme components, enhancing decision-making and programme effectiveness. This is a medium-priority recommendation, to be implemented in the next programming cycle.

Lessons Learnt: As the first initiative of its kind in Mozambique, PROMOVE Biodiversidade offers valuable insights to guide future biodiversity programmes:

- Aligning conservation and livelihoods ensures holistic impact.
- Participatory approaches could enhance relevance and sustainability.
- Clear Targets Improve Results: Detailed operational plans should guide implementation effectively.
- Capacity Building is Critical: Strengthening institutional capacities is vital for programme success.
- Long-Term Vision is Necessary: Biodiversity conservation requires sustained investments and partnerships.