Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Activity: From awareness to action for wetlands (25-0002516)

Id	25-0002516
Date	06-11-2025
SAP application number	

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Key data

Activity basics

Type	Standard
Short name	From awareness to action for wetlands
Contract party	Birdlife Zimbabwe (30203321)
ODA	Yes
Amount and Currency	115000 USD
Amount EUR	97520
Start date	01-12-2025
End date	26-11-2026
Full name	From Awareness to Action: Establishing a Policy and Governance Framework for the Protection and Restoration of Harare's Wetlands
Summary	In July 2025, Zimbabwe hosted the 15th Ramsar COP and assumed its presidency for a three-year term, committing on a global platform to strengthening wetland protection at home and worldwide. This major international event also came at a time of heightened public concern over growing water challenges and environmental destruction nationally, but especially in Harare which is in a water crisis, and where wetlands remain under constant threat as the city rapidly grows and the climate changes. Altogether, this has created unprecedented political will from Government of Zimbabwe especially the key Ministry of Environment and associated agencies which face accusations of negligence or even complicity in inappropriate developments over the years. With support from the Netherlands Embassy in 2024–2025, BirdLife Zimbabwe (BLZ) built on its long-standing wetland conservation work to substantially elevate awareness and concern across public, private, and government sectors. During this period, BLZ collaborated closely with key ministries, parliament, government agencies, and the City of Harare to strengthen understanding of wetlands' vital role in securing the city's water supply and to outline and promote the urgent policy reforms needed to ensure their long-term protection while also supporting strong participation of CSOs at COP15, and providing progressive policy advice to Government of Zimbabwe during that event. Building on these results, this project seeks to turn awareness into action by strengthening legal and institutional frameworks, empowering local authorities and communities to manage and restore wetlands, and engaging the private sector to promote responsible investment and sustainable urban development. Key activities include supporting revisions to wetland-related policies and regulations, developing a concept for a dedicated Wetlands Act to domesticate Ramsar commitments, integrating wetland protection into Harare's masterplan, and creating a framework for community–government management agreements. Media campaigns and targeted engagement with developers, financiers and EIA practitioners will help shift practice toward safeguarding wetlands as critical to water management.

This initiative seeks to leverage Zimbabwe’s Ramsar presidency and Harare's water crisis to precipitate stronger legislation and governance, improved management of Harare’s wetlands, and greater accountability among public, private, and community actors with regards to safeguarding ecosystems essential to the city’s water security.

Activity details

Date of receipt of proposal	20-10-2025
Proposal’s reference number	BLZ2
Budget holder	Ambassade Harare (8221HAR)
Limit access	No
Related activity	24-0001868

Accounting data

SAP application number	
Funds center	HAR Strengthening civil society contribu (1703U03040023)

Policy data

Cooperation modality	Project support
Technical assistance	0% of the activity budget
CRS code	15150 Democratic participation and civil society
Policy Keywords	
Refugees & host communities	No
Team Europe Initiative	No
Policy Markers	
__Trade & The Economy	Not targeted
_Security & Stability	Not targeted
Biodiversity	Principal
Climate change: adaptation	Principal
Climate change: mitigation	Significant
Desertification	Not targeted
Equality between men & women	Not targeted
Migration	Not targeted
Integrated water management	Significant
Wetlands	Principal
Explain your choices	Protecting Harare's wetlands is vital to the city's water supply and preserving vital biodiversity with a function in the city's climate adaptation (wetlands, adaptation). Halting destruction of wetlands also prevents new emissions from land use change (mitigation). Including wetlands as nature-based solutions for the water supply in for example Harare's master plan, will contribute significantly to integrated water resources management goals.

Beneficiary location

Beneficiary location	Country
Country	Zimbabwe
Location type	Province
Specific location	Harare

Policy Appraisal

Policy relevance

- HAR MACS 2022-2026: Social Progress and Climate Change "1BZ (DAF, DMM, DDE, DSO, IGG and the embassy in Harare) stands for a strong focus on women, youth, civil society, adaptation to climate change and sustainable economic development "… "Climate change action will be pursued through the Strengthening Civil Society Flex Fund"
- HAR Annual Plan 2025: SCS Flex Fund: Improved legal protection of wetlands through publications and workshops with key government departments. Improved community-based protection of Ramsar wetlands...
- Programme Fund Policy Markers: Civic Space Fund
  "The thematic areas that are mentioned in the policy framework 'Strengthening Civil Society' and are relevant for CSF are: climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainable value chains, food security, sustainable water management and/or WASH, SRHR, women's rights and gender equality..."
- Dutch International Approach to Climate as Described in Climate Diplomacy Toolbox
  "In developing countries NL works on (access to) renewable energy, combating deforestation, improving water management and climate smart agriculture. NL stands firmly behind the Paris Agreement affirmations of the importance of providing financial resources for developing countries, including support for technology transfer and capacity building."

Rationale

- **Problem 1:** Wetlands in Zimbabwe, especially in the capital city Harare are increasingly destroyed by improper development, agriculture and mining activities. This is impacting the city's water supply and reducing adaptive capacity.
- **Problem 2:** Protection is hampered by poor governance and weak enforcements of regulations designed to protect these spaces. Critical authorities (Ministry Environment, EMA and town councils) lack the knowledge, have long lacked the capacity and political will to act. Though concern is growing among the public and policymakers, legislative and policy gaps remain a hindrance to wetland protection.
- This activity will build on the results from the first phase (see 24-0001868) continuing to build knowledge and awareness on the importance of wetlands across stakeholders; bolstering the efforts of local CSOs and CBOs working on wetlands; ensuring prioritization on the legislative agenda; providing critical technical support and feasible policy/legislative options towards domestication of Ramsar Convention; pushing for inclusion of wetlands in key plans especially City of Harare Masterplan. The project is targeted chiefly at Harare's wetlands, although a successful legislative push would have a positive bearing on wetlands across Zimbabwe.

Contextual analysis

Key Beneficiaries/Target Groups are:

- **Parliamentarians** from the Parliamentary Portfolio Committees on Environment, Local Government, Justice, Tourism, thematic committee on Climate Change, Agriculture - will receive support including capacity building, agenda setting, and technical input towards stronger legislation/wetland policy. They will be provided with feasible options to achieve wetland protection including advice on a Wetland Act and how to list wetlands as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) with improved protection.
- **Key government ministries** involved in wetland protection, the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife (MOE) together with its **parastatals/implementing agencies**: EMA, UMSCC, ZINWA - capacity-building and accountability towards communities and CSOs.
- **Local authorities**: City of Harare - supported to develop generic frameworks for management agreements with communities towards protecting and restoring wetlands. Input into City of Harare Masterplan - currently under review, and lacking on wetlands.
- **CSOs:** ZELO, CHRA, HWT and CBOs in Harare that advocate for wetland protection and community rights - will be supported with capacity-building to strengthen their wetland advocacy.
- **Private sector** including banks, insurance companies, construction firms, and estate agents involved in development and investment - will be appraised on the importance of sustainable finance/development and the need for due diligence re. wetlands affected by their investments. Environmental Impact Assessment practitioners/consultants will be pushed to include wetland specialists in their assessments.
- **Public/Media**: continued awareness-building on wetlands value and relevant policy/development issues through a media campaign. Important to keep the public vocal on this issue, maintaining the political will.

Results

Climate

2.2. Prevent biodiversity loss

Indicators
Basket indicator Biodiversity: Area reached with activities aimed at sustainable management or other improved practices contributing to enhanced ecosystem resilience and ecosystem services (hectares).
Measurements: Target: 1557

Climate Change Adaptation (SDG 13.1)

Indicators
What has been achieved by this activity on Climate change adaptation (SDG 13.1)?
Measurements: - Improved water management by preserving wetlands which capture, filter and store water for Harare
- Reduces the risk of drought and flooding impacts under a changing climate

Climate Change Mitigation (SDG 13.2)

Indicators
What has been achieved by this activity on Climate Change Mitigation (SDG 13.2)?
Measurements: - Protecting wetlands will prevent carbon emissions from land use change. Wetlands are significant carbon sinks that cause emissions when they are burnt and/or developed for agriculture, housing etc.

Water

3.4 Capacity building and technology transfer (policy for knowledge)

Indicators
3.4. What has been achieved by this activity on capacity building and technology transfer?
Measurements: This activity will build the capacity of:
- CBOs in wetland-adjacent communities
- parliamentarians, key ministries and their relevant departments and local authorities
- private companies especially in construction and finance to improve due diligence

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

- Check-ins: Policy Officer will call or meet the partner every two months for informal check-ins on progress and issues. Short update reports will be shared with the policy team. Important information or stories worth sharing will be forwarded to relevant BZ colleagues.
- Field visits: A minimum of one visit to key sites and activities will be conducted. At least one including CdP/PlvCdp.
- Mid-term reports: Summative mid-term reports will be requested to indicate progress on activities, budget depletion, and to highlight any adjustments required to the second half of the project. These will be assessed at Embassy level only.
- Final Reports: Detailed final reports will be required including narrative and financial. No audit is required for this activity since the budget is well below the EUR500.000 threshold for audits. However, pending issues during implementation, the Embassy may request an audit for internal verification purposes. These reports will be assessed by the Embassy and FSO together.

Finance

Summary Budget:

Main Budget Items	Netherlands Embassy (USD)
O1. Strengthen Legal and Policy Framework	41.635
O2. Strengthen Stakeholder Capacity	9.005
O3. Engage the Private Sector	18.135
Project monitoring and evaluation	1.000
Direct staff costs	31.200
Indirect staff and overheads	14.025
TOTAL	**115.000**

Above is a summary of the budget showing expenses per Objectives 1-3, M&E costs, direct staff costs, and overheads. A detailed budget is attached to the proposal. The below assessments refer to the detailed budget.
- The budget is arithmetically correct, is in the right currency, and costs reflect previous expenditures and local conditions.
- Overheads are 7.5% of the total budget - within acceptable levels. Includes office and vehicle costs, key utilities and rates, insurance, licensing etc. to contribute to sustaining BLZ operations.

Earmarking

- Non-earmarked

Prepayments

- 60% of the budget (USD69.000) will be paid on signing of contract
- 30% (USD34.500) will be paid on submission of mid-term reports and liquidity forecast for assessment by the Embassy.
- Final 10% (USD11.500) will be paid following approval of final reports (Embassy + FSO)