



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2018 - 2025**

INTRODUCTION

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust was established in 2008 when our pilot project, the Wildlife Centre, opened as Malawi's first wildlife sanctuary and environmental education facility. Our remit and reach has since grown significantly.

We now work both nationwide and cross-border, employ 90 staff and invested over \$2 million in conservation in Malawi last year, ranging from biodiversity research and conservation ambassador programmes through to initiatives that tackle wildlife trafficking and engage the highest levels of government.

We focus on where we can deliver the greatest impact, responding to the key conservation challenges, pushing boundaries, thinking 'out-of-the-box' and seeking out the right partners to deliver the best results. This impact-led flexibility and pioneering, collaborative spirit are well appreciated by our staff, partners and donors and have been key considerations in the development of this strategy. And, as with any fast growing organisation, a clear strategic framework is essential to effectively develop and deliver our work, whilst building a sustainable and robust organisation that will continue to deliver impact permanence well beyond 2025.

For more on our achievements to date, read our latest impact report at www.lilongwewildlife.org/wp-content/uploads/impact_report_201718.pdf



MALAWI'S CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

POVERTY

Malawi has one of Africa's fastest growing populations, at c. 3% annually, and remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with up to 71% of the country living in extreme poverty and millions of people still highly dependent on natural forests and fisheries for their income. The nation's natural resources are being over-utilised, as day-to-day survival takes precedence over misperceived 'luxuries' such as conservation, even though biodiversity losses ultimately impact human wellbeing.

BIODIVERSITY LOSS

87% of Malawi's population don't have access to electricity and rely on charcoal and firewood for their energy needs. This, coupled with demand for land for agriculture, has driven extreme rates of deforestation - the highest in Southern and Eastern Africa. This not only means the loss of habitats for wildlife, but also the loss of ecosystem health that provides the human population with food, fuel, water and clean air. Similarly, fish stocks in Lake Malawi are also declining by an average of 18% per year due to overfishing and lack of habitat protection, and consumption per head of Malawi's key protein source has declined by two thirds over the past 20 years as a result.

WILDLIFE & FOREST CRIME

Wildlife and forest crime is now the world's fourth largest transnational crime, representing one of the greatest threats to biodiversity. Malawi is a principal transit hub for illicit wildlife trafficking in Southern Africa, historically influenced by factors such as weak deterrent legislation and poor law enforcement. Poaching and the illegal trades in bushmeat, charcoal, high-value timber, wildlife artefacts, and live animals are also prevalent and are becoming increasingly commercialised.

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

The rise in both population and habitat loss has also led to an increase in human-wildlife conflict, which impacts both the welfare of individual animals and the survival of species.

With wildlife and forests seen by many in Malawi as naturally renewing commodities provided by God, social and institutional change is required to drive a step-change in the way that Malawi's natural resources are both valued and managed.



MISSION, VISION & STRATEGIC APPROACH



MISSION

To safeguard Malawi's wildlife and empower guardians of the wild.

VISION

Malawi's wildlife populations and habitats are secure and thriving for future generations, and that:

- Malawi is free from wildlife and forest crime
- Everyone respects and protects nature
- Evidence-based management is integral to conservation
- Every wild animal is free from human-inflicted suffering

STRATEGIC APPROACH

In order to achieve our mission we will focus on six core areas of work:

1. Wildlife Rescue & Welfare

Provide the facilities, resources and expertise to respond to wildlife in need.

3. Env. Education & Advocacy

Build public and political knowledge, support and action for conservation.

5. Partnerships

Foster strong, impactful relationships with key conservation stakeholders. Secure funding for conservation initiatives.

2. Conservation Justice

Strengthen conservation legislation and legal tools. Build capacity and implement initiatives to combat regional wildlife and forest crime.

4. Biodiversity Research

Conduct research that will inform and improve conservation and management action.

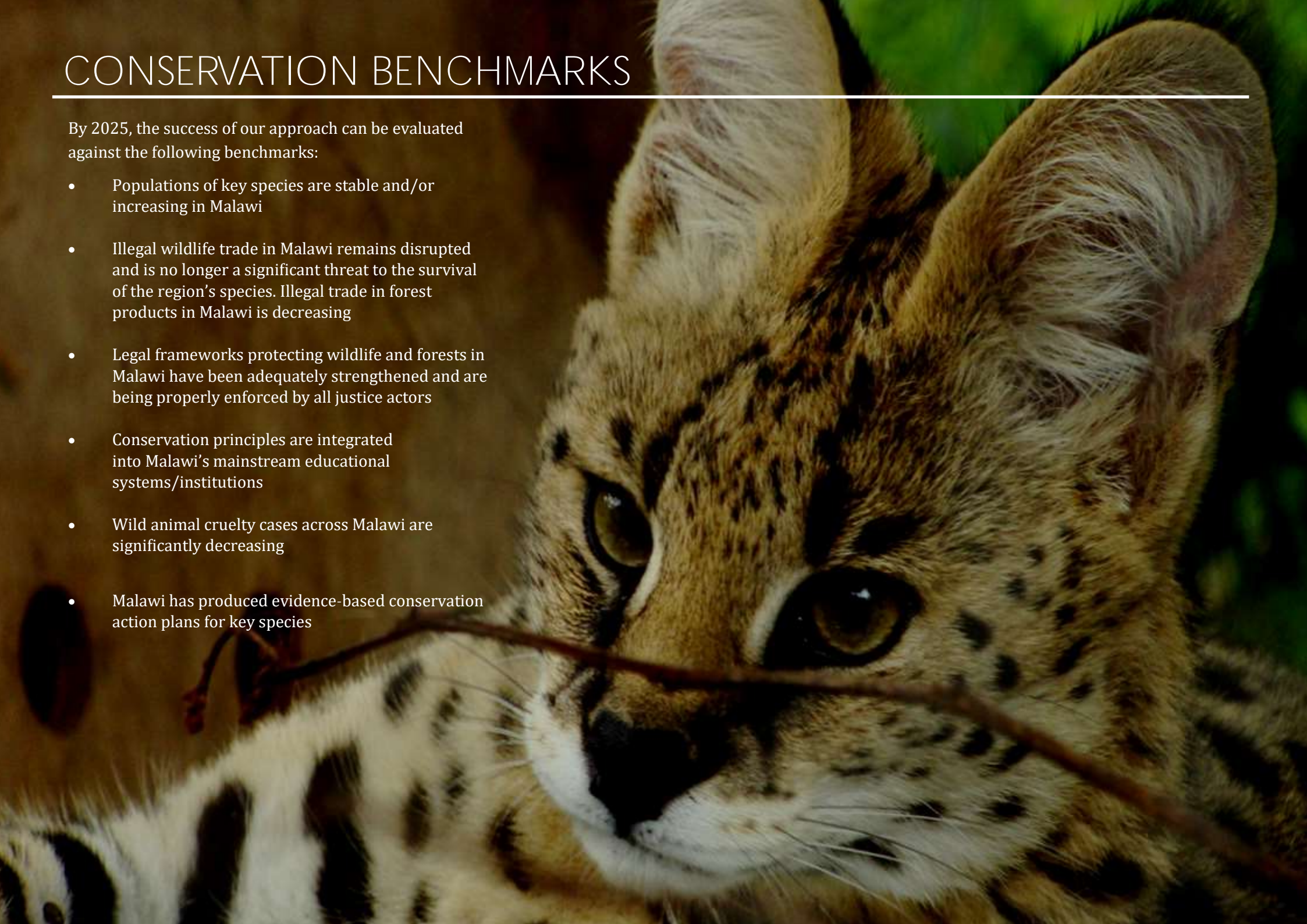
6. Operational Excellence

Build a resilient, sustainable and progressive impact-led organisation.

CONSERVATION BENCHMARKS

By 2025, the success of our approach can be evaluated against the following benchmarks:

- Populations of key species are stable and/or increasing in Malawi
- Illegal wildlife trade in Malawi remains disrupted and is no longer a significant threat to the survival of the region's species. Illegal trade in forest products in Malawi is decreasing
- Legal frameworks protecting wildlife and forests in Malawi have been adequately strengthened and are being properly enforced by all justice actors
- Conservation principles are integrated into Malawi's mainstream educational systems/institutions
- Wild animal cruelty cases across Malawi are significantly decreasing
- Malawi has produced evidence-based conservation action plans for key species



STRATEGIES

1. WILDLIFE RESCUE & WELFARE

The promotion of animal welfare considerations within a wider conservation context are central to the operational principles of Lilongwe Wildlife Trust. Wildlife rescue and rehabilitation also has an important role to play in the conservation of species where wildlife populations are critically low. LWT has also found that misperceived “lesser” local crimes - e.g. bushmeat/pet trades - often act as entry points into higher level criminality - e.g. ivory trafficking - whilst both types of crime pose a significant direct threat to wildlife. Every individual counts, whether it’s a monkey in captivity or a critically endangered rhino that has been injured by a snare within a national park.

We strive to address the root of these problems. The aim of long-term impact permanence is as important as providing an emergency lifeline for victims of wildlife crime (or other human-inflicted suffering) and initiatives in this area of work include community sensitisation and strengthening and enforcement of the law.



PRIORITY STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	7-YEAR BENCHMARK
Provide the facilities, resources and expertise to respond to wildlife in need.	Operate a wildlife sanctuary and centre for environmental excellence.	Wild animals rehabilitated to the highest standards of welfare.	Wild animal cruelty cases across Malawi significantly decrease.
		Increased public awareness of wild animal welfare.	
	Provide national veterinary and husbandry support for wildlife emergencies and key species management.	Lives of wild animals saved, including threatened species.	
		Better management of wildlife populations.	
	Review and amend wildlife welfare legislation.	Wildlife captive care guidelines and other welfare regulations enacted.	
	Sensitise and help enforce wildlife welfare regulations.	Community understanding and support for wildlife welfare.	
		Wildlife welfare regulations upheld, e.g. welfare confiscations and arrests.	
	Train and mentor veterinary officers and students.	Improved welfare standards.	
	Increased national capacity for wildlife care and veterinary science.		
Execute wildlife welfare reintroductions.		Rehabilitated wild animals returned to the wild.	

STRATEGIES

2. CONSERVATION JUSTICE

Environmental crimes represent one of the biggest threats to the survival of both people and wildlife. Malawi has been identified as a key wildlife trafficking hub and country of primary concern, contributing to the demise of wildlife populations both nationally and regionally. Forest crime is becoming increasingly commercialised and has contributed to the fastest rate of deforestation of any country in Southern and Eastern Africa.

Malawi's enforcement agencies tasked with protecting the nation's natural resources are grossly under-resourced and lack of specialist capacity, deterrent legislation and high levels of corruption have historically exacerbated the problem. Thanks to the government's recent progressive and collaborative approach on wildlife conservation, LWT is in a position to support government-led initiatives across the wildlife enforcement chain. LWT holds formal agreements with a number of key government agencies, paving the way to maintain momentum and build on successes to also benefit sectors such as forestry and fisheries in the future.



PRIORITY STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	7-YEAR BENCHMARK
Support the strengthening of Malawi's legal frameworks governing conservation.	Review and amend conservation legislation.	Strengthened conservation legislation and legal tools.	Populations of key species are stable and/or increasing in Malawi.
	Provide instruments and training to facilitate best practice.	Improved and consistent application of conservation laws.	Illegal wildlife trade in Malawi remains disrupted and is no longer a significant threat to the survival of the region's species, and illegal trade in forest products in Malawi is decreasing.
Build capacity and implement initiatives to combat regional wildlife and forest crime.	Facilitate and equip government partners to apprehend wildlife and forest criminals.	<p>Disrupted wildlife and forest crime networks.</p> <p>Increased transparency and consistency across the conservation justice system.</p> <p>Appropriate and deterrent sentencing for serious conservation crime.</p>	Legal frameworks protecting wildlife and forests in Malawi have been adequately strengthened and are being properly enforced by all conservation justice actors.

STRATEGIES

3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

The threats facing wildlife and forests today are ultimately human-driven. We envision a Malawi where everyone respects and protects wildlife and so we work with local government and likeminded organisations to deliver education and advocacy initiatives that inspire and empower people to safeguard their natural heritage for future generations. We aim to bring about long-term social and institutional change through targeted interventions that change the knowledge, attitudes and behaviour within our key audiences, ranging from the decision makers and enforcement agents through to the communities responsible for the supply and demand.



PRIORITY STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	7-YEAR BENCHMARK
Empower youth to engage in conservation.	Implement direct environmental education in targeted areas.	Key communities and stakeholders well informed about nature conservation. Positive shift in attitudes towards protecting wildlife and forests. Reduced demand for illegal or unsustainably harvested wildlife and forestry products.	Conservation principles are integrated into Malawi's mainstream education systems Legal frameworks protecting wildlife and forests in Malawi are adequately strengthened and properly enforced by all justice actors.
	Train teachers on environmental education.		
	Facilitate school-based nature conservation projects.		
Build public support for conservation.	Run community awareness and sensitisation activities.		
	Deliver national conservation and welfare campaigns.		
Secure government and wider political backing for conservation initiatives	Deliver national/international environmental advocacy campaigns.	Conservation issues prioritised on the national agenda e.g. new policies/laws/curricula. International support for Malawi's conservation initiatives and high-level decisions made and enacted in favour of critical conservation needs.	

STRATEGIES

4. BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH

Informed decisions based on scientific evidence over assumptions are critical to ensure the best conservation outcomes, whether it is the formation of new legislative policies or species and site-based management plans. LWT is in a position to build on Malawi's limited body of research across a range of wildlife-related topics, which will help to develop robust baseline data for key species/environmental indicators, monitor ecosystem health and answer specific research questions relating to our wider work e.g. wildlife crime trends. The resulting outputs will hold both national and international value in their respective fields of applied conservation research .



PRIORITY STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	7-YEAR BENCHMARK
Conduct research to inform and improve conservation and management action.	Study the condition of natural systems in protected areas.	Increased body of applied conservation research.	Production of evidence-based conservation action plans for improved management of key species and habitats.
	Assess the risk to, and status of, indicator and threatened species and populations.	Informed conservation status assessments leading to improved wildlife and habitat management plans.	
	Investigate zoonotic and human interface in communities around protected areas.	Improved community wellbeing and healthier wildlife populations.	
	Undertake and monitor wildlife reintroductions.	Supplemented and restored threatened wildlife populations.	
	Train and build capacity for wildlife conservation and research.	Increased national capacity for wildlife and habitat management.	
	Establish wildlife conservation research facility.		

STRATEGIES

5. PARTNERSHIPS

To deliver the highest impact possible, LWT must continue to build partnerships with likeminded local and international organisations who can help to both fund and implement our work. Ensuring that this impact is sustainable also relies on fostering our already strong government relationships. With less than 1% of Malawi's budget allocated to the wildlife authorities - at a time when wildlife has never been in greater need - securing conservation funding and widening our funding reach to bring in both project and operational support is critical if we are to achieve our vision of greater security for the region's wildlife and forests.



PRIORITY STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	7-YEAR BENCHMARK
Foster strong, impactful relationships with key conservation stakeholders.	Collaborate with impact-focused, like-minded organisations.	Engaged and satisfied partners. Better aligned and coordinated projects at a national and regional level for greater conservation impact.	Populations of key species are stable and/or increasing in Malawi Illegal wildlife trade in Malawi remains disrupted and is no longer a significant threat to the survival of the region's species. Illegal trade in forest products in Malawi is decreasing
	Design and implement needs-based projects alongside entrusted government partners.	Institutional changes and sustainable conservation impacts.	Conservation principles are integrated into Malawi's education systems
	Design and implement needs-based projects alongside engaged communities.	Social change and community-led conservation initiatives.	Legal frameworks protecting wildlife and forests in Malawi are adequately strengthened and properly enforced by all justice actors.
Secure funding for the organisation's conservation initiatives.	Maintain and grow existing public and private donor base.	Engaged donors and supporters.	Wild animal cruelty cases across Malawi are significantly decreasing.
	Diversify and develop new funding streams.	Greater financial security for the region's threatened wildlife and habitats.	
	Register the organisation overseas.	Better aligned and coordinated funding allocations and projects at the regional level for greater conservation impact.	
	Enable intermediary funding for regional conservation programmes		

STRATEGIES

6. OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

LWT has grown considerably over recent years and moving from a small to a medium-sized NGO requires a step change in our operations. We must ensure flexibility, efficiency, accountability and transparency, invest in the right people, build capacity and the best management systems, and ensure that we consistently deliver against our measurable goals and objectives. It is through this operational excellence, working to the highest of industry standards, that we will maintain the confidence of our staff, donors and partners. Building sustainability and resilience is critical to ensure LWT's continued impact, whilst retaining our innovative and pioneering spirit is vital for quick responses and effective solutions to Malawi's emerging and most critical conservation needs.



PRIORITY STRATEGIES	ACTIVITIES	OUTCOMES	7-YEAR BENCHMARK
Build a resilient, sustainable and progressive impact-led organisation	Maintain best practice industry standards, accreditations and memberships.	External recognition of operational excellence.	Populations of key species are stable and/or increasing in Malawi
	Secure and maintain legal mandates for all operations and projects.	Lawful operations.	
	Maintain internal systems that facilitate operational flexibility and innovation.	Responsiveness to conservation needs.	Illegal wildlife trade in Malawi remains disrupted and is no longer a significant threat to the survival of the region's species. Illegal trade in forest products in Malawi is decreasing
	Develop and implement comprehensive policies, plans and standard operational procedures.	Sound governance, rigorous financial management and effective, consistent and secure operations and staff.	
	Build strong data and information management systems.	Comprehensive knowledge capture and transfer.	
	Monitor and evaluate staff and project performance	High impact projects.	Conservation principles are integrated into Malawi's education systems
	Recruit, train and retain passionate and talented staff and volunteers.	Sustainable staffing structure with clear succession plans.	Legal frameworks protecting wildlife and forests in Malawi are adequately strengthened and properly enforced by all justice actors.
	Promote codes of ethics and conduct.	A culture of benevolence, honesty, accountability and transparency.	
Communicate effectively, consistently and sensitively with internal and external audiences.	High project impact maintained.	Wild animal cruelty cases across Malawi are significantly decreasing.	
	Recognised voice of authority on wildlife conservation in the region.		
	Well informed and supportive staff and partners		



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Lilongwe Wildlife Trust is a Malawian not-for-profit trust, registered under the Trustee Incorporation Act of Malawi since 2008 (No. TR/INC4209) and has been a Council of Non-Governmental Organisations of Malawi member since 2009 (No. C466).