



## PRESS RELEASE

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Legacy Landscapes Fund confirms long-term funding of USD 1 million per year to Namibia's North-West: The Skeleton Coast-Etoshia conservation bridge

**Legacy Landscapes Fund (LLF) is delighted to announce the signing of a grant agreement to provide significant funding to conservation area Skeleton Coast-Etoshia bridge in North-Western Namibia. The agreement commits USD one million annually to the region, which consists of multiple protected areas, communal conservancies and their buffer zones, for at least 50 years.**

This long-term funding will contribute to the effective management of the Namibian conservation hotspot, bolstering much-needed climate resilience efforts, boosting local livelihoods, and protecting vulnerable wildlife species.

The grant will be implemented by LLF's trusted partners World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Namibia's own Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) in support of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT). WWF and IRDNC will work closely with local partners, rural communities, and conservancies to oversee implementation in the region.

*"LLF is proud to have signed the first-ever perpetual grant with WWF and IRDNC. This ensures reliable and substantial funding of 1 Mio USD annually for over 50+ years and with strong governance of local rights-holders. We are very thankful to welcome this exceptional Namibian site into the LLF network."* Stefanie Lang, executive director of LLF.

*"This is further validation of the importance of Namibia's conservation efforts and the essential role communities play in protecting wildlife and biodiversity across Namibia. The Skeleton Coast-Etoshia conservation area will help ensure that iconic species like black rhinos and lions will be able to roam freely from coastal to inland areas, while also contributing to the livelihoods of local communities. The LLF funding model will help sustain these iconic places for generations to come."* Nik Sekhran, Chief Conservation Officer, WWF-US.

*"Wildlife plays a role in people's cultures and traditions. Whenever you are walking in the field, an animal will appear that will send a message. If you see an elephant, it is a sign of good luck. The Legacy Landscape allows us to plan for the future, where communities can build upon this connection by making decisions over how they want to see their land managed for the long term."* John Kasaona, Executive Director IRDNC

As per LLF's private-public model, the USD 20 million grant will be further complemented by match funding from the Rob Walton Foundation, a private philanthropic donor.

*"WWF Namibia is proud to partner with the Legacy Landscape Fund. This is a first Legacy Landscape not only for Namibia but for WWF. The Skeleton Coast Etosha Conservation Bridge builds on existing connections in the landscape, promotes sustainable resource use, and protects corridors that are vital to wildlife movement, while also providing local communities with economic opportunities. The project provides a unique opportunity for building stronger partnerships, with Government, NGOs, and local communities at the heart of it. The perpetual grant provides certainty when planning for a world that is becoming increasingly uncertain. That is a mighty legacy."* Dr Juliane Zeidler, WWF Namibia Country Director.

The Skeleton Coast-Etosha site in the Kunene Region of north-western Namibia is a conservation bridge that passes through several conserved areas and connects two national parks and embraces the first "People's Park" – a new conservation category, that expands the formalization of community conservation. The region is renowned for its unique biodiversity, exceptionally high variety of species and is home to 14 local communal conservancies.

*"We as Namibians are deservedly proud of our conservation record. Forty-five (45) % of the land in our country is under conservation management, including national parks, protected areas and communal conservancies for which Namibia has been a global pioneer. Once more we are proud to support a unique partnership between the LLF, IRDNC and WWF with the establishment of the Skeleton Coast Etosha Conservation Bridge. The LLF unites these lands in a vision shared by the local communities and the national government to protect and conserve this spectacular land and the rich life it holds. We anticipate through the LLF that real transformation of livelihoods will take place while pursuing our conservation efforts."* Teo Nghitila, Executive Director, Ministry of Environment Forestry and Tourism, Namibia.

LLF's perpetual grant of USD one million per year over 50+ years will contribute to ensuring species population connectivity through wildlife corridors, climate resilience in the region, and protection of key vulnerable fauna such as the black rhino, lion, and giraffe, amongst a multitude of less conspicuous endemic species.

Finalizing this grant agreement confirms the expansion of LLF's existing portfolio, which is set to grow further in 2024.

The Skeleton Coast–Etosha landscape was selected following LLF's first open call for proposals in early 2022.

LLF is an international public-private fund that was established as an independent charitable foundation in 2020 with the aim of supporting nature, people, and climate via closing the global biodiversity financing gap.

For further information, please send your queries to [communications@wwf.na](mailto:communications@wwf.na).