I. Project Context

Country Context
Over the last 15 years, Zimbabwe has suffered from protracted fragility induced by recurrent cycles of political and economic crises. However, during the past four years, relative political stability, the adoption of a multi-currency regime, and economic reforms have generated economic growth. Nonetheless, the decade of economic decline which preceded the growth has severely compromised basic service delivery, public sector capacity, infrastructure maintenance and the investment climate for the private sector.

Following a modest 4.7 percent in 2012, growth further decelerated in 2013, estimated to have been 4.3 percent. Tapering off of economic growth has resulted from persisting policy uncertainties constraining growth and reforms including in areas of diamond revenues, land policy, and investment climate for private sector. Prospects for 2014 are highly uncertain, with further risks
such as possible compression of exports due to a slow down of the global economy, disorderly unwinding of vulnerabilities in the banking sector, potential destabilizing effects of the indigenization policy, and possible downside risks in agriculture.

The recent poverty report on the 2011-2012 PICES Survey (ZimStat 2013) reveals that 72.3 percent of Zimbabweans are poor, with poverty being most prevalent in rural areas, where 84.3% of people and 62.6% of households are deemed poor, whilst 16.2% of households are in extreme poverty. The Health, Education and Agriculture sectors are constrained by declining public financing, the introduction of informal fees and levies, an acute shortage of relevant personnel, dilapidated infrastructure and obsolete equipment.

The relative political stability experienced over the last four years follows the political impasse of the 2000s, which was partially resolved by the establishment in 2009 of an Inclusive Government made up of the three major political parties – creating significant room for reforms and a window to improve basic social service delivery. However, beginning in early 2012, the coalition Government became increa¬singly fractious, especially as the elections scheduled for 2013 drew closer. Those elections were concluded, relatively unmarred by any violence, and have resulted in the end of the Inclusive Government. A new Constitution has also been recently approved.

**Sectoral and institutional Context**

Zimbabwe faces a number of daunting environmental challenges including deforestation and forest degradation; land, air and water pollution; soil erosion; land degradation; loss of biodiversity; and contamination and pollution from poor mining practices. The political and economic upheaval the country has gone through since 2000 has diverted attention from management of the challenges facing the country’s natural resources. Additional factors contributing to environmental deterioration include population growth, poverty, agricultural expansion, and continued reliance on wood fuel. The global rise in the demand for oil and minerals has increased prospecting and mine development around high biodiversity value areas in some regions of the country.

Forest and land degradation are particularly worrisome throughout the country. Unsustainable firewood collection is contributing to widespread deforestation, land degradation and loss of biodiversity. The country lost about 20 percent of its forest cover between 1990 and 2010, an average loss of 327,000 hectares per year, making it one of the world’s top ten countries based on the largest annual net loss of forest area. Land degradation is having significant economic impacts. One study estimated that land degradation was responsible for the loss of 13% of Zimbabwe’s entire national potential productivity, mostly caused by human land use changes and unsustainable land use practices, particularly in the heavily utilized communal areas. Inappropriate land use and non-compliance with natural resource conservation measures and legislation have worsened the situation.

Climate change will have major repercussions on livelihoods and on Zimbabwe’s natural resource base, especially in the agriculture sector, worsening already precarious food security. As per Zimbabwe’s Second Communication to the UNFCCC, under the worst-case scenario, by 2080 Zimbabwe’s plant diversity is projected to decline throughout the country, with concomitant shrinking of high biodiversity areas. A shift in agricultural seasons has already been noted, as evidenced by later onset of the rainy season. There are also indications of reduced water replenishment of aquifers leading to increasingly unsustainable groundwater abstraction.
Sustainability of agriculture and food security will be further compromised by loss of biodiversity.

The Hwange-Sanyati Biological Corridor (HSBC) covers the bulk of northwest Zimbabwe, providing livelihoods for a large proportion of the national population, mainly livestock farmers, forest-dependent populations, and communities engaged in wildlife-based enterprises. The future of the HSBC is shadowed by all of the environmental and natural resource management issues that are problematic at the national scale. Additionally however there are a number of challenges specific to this broad swathe of the national territory.

Rangelands occupy a significant land area of the HSBC and climate change effects are expected to be pronounced in these areas with more frequent and intense droughts, affecting the available water and forage for wildlife populations, livestock, and crop yields. Human-wildlife conflicts (HWC), already exacting their toll on community livelihoods through destruction of gardens and crops and killing of livestock, will be exacerbated as wildlife travels further outside Hwange National Park (HNP) in search of high nutrient grazing grounds and accessible water sources, negatively impacting on an already food insecure population (estimated at between 20-40% in the HSBC area).

Due to the generally poor and infertile soils of the HSBC and relatively low vegetation density, coupled with the semi-arid climate and improper land use practices (including stream bank cultivation; veld fires; and land clearance for cultivation), soils in the HSBC area are being chemically and physically weathered resulting in extensive erosion.

The institutional map of actors responsible for NRM in the HSBC is complex. The Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate (MoEWC) is responsible for policy formulation, strategy development and executing programs in the environment sector of Zimbabwe as a whole. The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) is responsible for ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment, the prevention of pollution and degradation. The Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) manages wildlife conservation and sustainable use specifically in protected areas around the country. The Forestry Commission (FC) contributes to national socioeconomic development through effective regulation and capacity enhancement in the sustainable utilization and management of forest resources (for more information, see Section IV).

II. Proposed Development Objectives
To develop land use and resource management capacity of managers and communities in the Hwange-Sanyati Biological Corridor (HSBC).

III. Project Description
Component Name
Protected area management and community livelihoods
Comments (optional)

Component Name
Land and forest management
Comments (optional)
Component Name
Corridor sustainability
Comments (optional)

Component Name
Project coordination
Comments (optional)

IV. Financing (in USD Million)

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V. Implementation

The Ministry of Environment, Water and Climate (MoEWC) will be the overall coordinator of the project. MoEWC is responsible for policy formulation, strategy development and executing programs in the environment sector (including water issues and climate change). The Ministry of Finance (MoF) will sign the grant on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ).

The Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (PWMA) is a parastatal organization under the MoEWC mandated to effectively and profitably manage Zimbabwe’s wildlife resources for the benefit of present and future generations. The PWMA will implement the biodiversity focal area of the HSBC project.

CAMPFIRE Association is the lead agency for the Community Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources. Its mandate is to promote the interests of rural communities in the sustainable management of their natural resources in partnership with government, civil society organizations and the private sector. This organization will lead the implementation of the livelihoods focal area of the HSBC project.

The Environmental Management Agency is a parastatal under MoEWC, responsible for the sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment, prevention of pollution and environmental degradation, and preparation of national environmental management plans. As such, EMA is responsible for the land degradation focal area of the HSBC project.

Finally, the Forestry Commission is another parastatal under MoEWC that provides for the regulation, management and capacity enhancement within Zimbabwe’s forestry sector. As such it is
responsible for the forestry management and REDD+ focal area of the project.

The project will be executed by WWF-Zimbabwe that has a long history of presence in the country and has been involved in support of the environment sector. The main responsibilities of WWF-Zimbabwe will include: (i) all fiduciary aspects of the project including overseeing financial management and procurement, contracting of independent auditors and project reviewers; (ii) targeted TA and training as needed; (iii) management and coordination of the monitoring and evaluation system; (iv) preparation of periodic reports; (v) coordination of the communication strategy and undertake outreach and awareness building; and (vi) coordination and consultation with relevant civic and NGO representatives.

A Steering Committee—composed of MoEWC, Ministry of Agriculture, EMA, PWMA, FC, CAMPFIRE Association, WWF-Zimbabwe and other agencies—was established during the preparatory phase of the project and has shown to work well to date. During project implementation the committee will advise on annual plans and budgets, review progress reports, and coordinate donor-supported activities. As the executing agency of the project, WWF-Zimbabwe will act as a Secretariat for the Steering Committee, but without voting rights.

Local communities, Rural District Councils (RDCs), and NGOs are all key stakeholders in the implementation of the HSBC project. The sustainability of the project largely hinges on the effective participation of the targeted local communities and their RDC counterparts. A vehicle for community participation will be the district-level environment committees which in turn are supported by ward-level environment sub-committees. Traditional leaders are represented at both district and ward level through these committees.

The project will have a Project Implementation Manual (PIM) that will, amongst other things, describe in detail all the aforementioned institutional and implementation arrangements.

VI. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

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Comments (optional)

VII. Contact point

World Bank
Contact: Douglas J. Graham  
Title: Senior Environmental Specialist  
Tel: 473-4117  
Email: dgraham@worldbank.org

**Borrower/Client/Recipient**  
Name: Government of Zimbabwe  
Contact: R. Kaseke  
Title: Chief Economist  
Tel: 2634783484  
Email: kasekerol@yahoo.com/kasekerol@gmail.com

**Implementing Agencies**  
Name: World Wildlife Fund Zimbabwe  
Contact: Dr. Enos Shumba  
Title: Interim Director  
Tel: (236-4) 703-902  
Email: eshumba@wwf.org.zw

**VIII. For more information contact:**  
The InfoShop  
The World Bank  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20433  
Telephone: (202) 458-4500  
Fax: (202) 522-1500  
Web: http://www.worldbank.org/infoshop