

A risky business

In an ideal world, every grant we give to rhino conservation projects in the field could be monitored, evaluated and agreed successful, using annual targets such as increasing a particular rhino population by 7%, or involving 5,000 Kenyan school children in an environmental education programme. There would be no poaching incidents, no political conflict that adversely affected conservation efforts, no random accidents that left field projects struggling to keep going.

Save the Rhino International, as a registered charity, has a responsibility to ensure that the money we raise is spent wisely and well. We are regulated by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, which advises on best practice, monitors the proportion of funds spent on charitable purposes and, in extreme cases, investigates allegations of fraud. We are audited annually, and our Trustees review the finances each month and grant-making activity each quarter.

We also owe it to our donors to make the best possible use of the funds available. Our supporters sweat their way through marathons, give up the chance of receiving birthday presents and nominate us for donations instead, and leave us legacies in their wills. We owe it to them to ensure that as much funding as possible goes to the field where it can save rhinos.

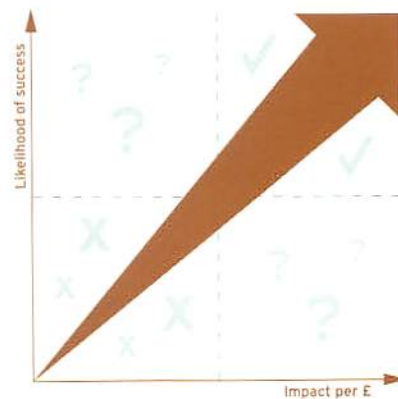
There are times when we give grants not knowing whether the outcome is going to be successful. For years we have given small but regular grants to help the Northern white rhinos in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. As you will read in this edition of *The Horn*, we have had to make the painful decision to withdraw from that project: we no longer feel that our funding would have any positive effect. Similarly, we have recently turned down funding applications from Nepal, where the Maoist insurgency has meant that armed guards have been deployed out of the national parks, and poaching of the Greater one-horned rhino in Royal

Chitwan and Royal Bardia National Parks has dramatically reduced numbers. For the last two years, we have given around £10,000 per year to Zimbabwean rhino conservation projects. With the political situation apparently deteriorating every month, we cannot be sure that private conservancies and national parks will be able to maintain their rhino populations.

Sure, we could focus our limited resources exclusively on those projects that have had continued demonstrable success: the Laikipia Wildlife Forum in Kenya and Save the Rhino Trust in Namibia are two shining examples. It's true; we very much want to continue to support projects like these, and to learn from their successes.

But we must also allow the possibility of failure in our grant making. Black rhinos are still classified as Critically Endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Despite an increase in numbers from 3,100 to 3,600 over the last two years, they still face an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild. The same applies, only more so, to Greater one-horned, Sumatran and Javan rhinos. The greatest risk is not to give at all.

Cathy Dean, Director



Events Schedule:



ING New York City Marathon
Rhino Climb Kilimanjaro
Desert Rhino
Fourth Douglas Adams Memorial Lecture
Flora London Marathon
Rhino Mayday
Edinburgh Marathon
The Longest Day

Sunday 6 November 2005
Thursday 23 February - Monday 6 March 2006
Friday 10 March 2006
Thursday 23 March 2006
Sunday 23 April 2006
May 2006 (date tbc)
Sunday 11 June 2006
Friday 23 - Sunday 25 June 2006

For more information about any of these, please email events@savetherhino.org or ring + 44 (0) 20 7357 7474.