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Environmental Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **1<sup>ST</sup> NATIONAL RHINO CONSERVATION DIALOGUE WORKSHOP**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

***30 May 2012***  
***Midrand Conference Centre***

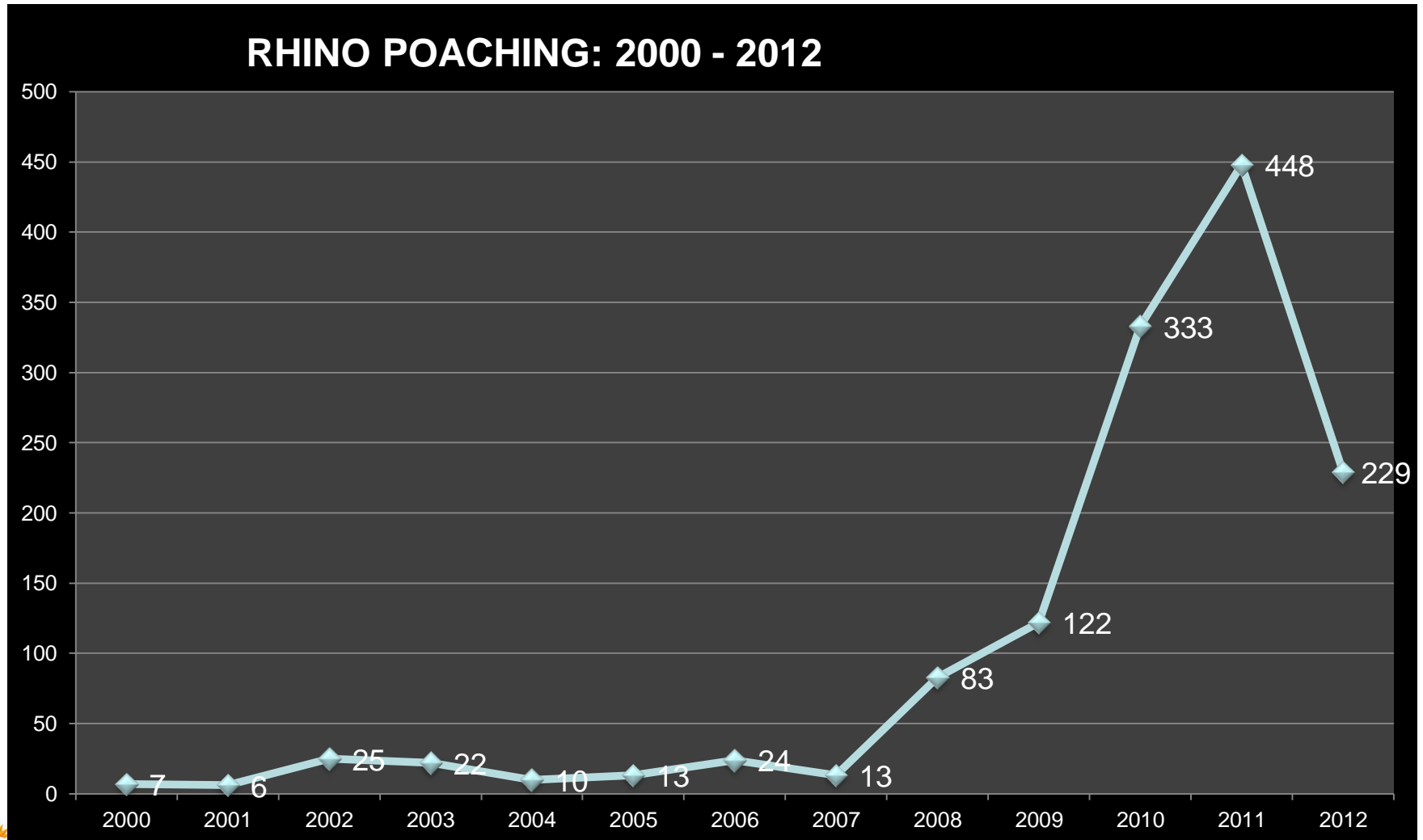
# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

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2. Threat drivers
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12. Way forward



# BACKGROUND

- Continued increase in poaching



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# BACKGROUND

## South African Situation

- The rhino poaching threat in SA is impacting all 9 provinces and the KNP;
- A total of (229\*\*) rhino have been illegally hunted in SA since January 2012;
- The highest number of incidents occurred in the KNP;
- The poaching activity is supposedly driven by an international illegal trade and demand for rhino horn;
- The international demand is also notable in neighbouring countries, European countries, Australasia and America.
- The current conclusion is that the pandemic is not necessarily a crisis, however, a heavy national threat is recognised in this regard.

\*\* As at May 30<sup>th</sup> 2012



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# BACKGROUND

## South African Situation (continue)

- In South Africa the current known threat to the rhino population is divided into two categories.
- The first category is the traditional method of poaching rhino by means of walk and stalk using firearms, poison and snaring of rhino.
- The second category is the modern method of poaching rhino by means of Drugs/tranquilizers , De-horning, Permit fraud, technological surveillance, Pseudo Hunting and dealing in rhino stockpiles.



# BACKGROUND

## South African Situation (continue)

- The criminal activities are being coordinated through both international and nationally based organized crime elements;
- Currently neighbouring countries like Mozambique and Zimbabwe are perceived to be used as a base for organised crime structures to target neighbouring provincial rhino population of which Mpumalanga, Limpopo, North West and Kwa-Zulu/Natal are the most prominent provinces;
- It is suspected that citizens of these neighbouring countries are recruited as poachers and couriers, because of their supreme knowledge of war affairs, hunting and nature elements and the obvious economic benefit.



# THREAT DRIVERS

- Since the early 1960's the conservation of the White Rhino was prioritized by conservation organizations in South Africa.
- With the conservation successes came commercial incentives.
- The demand was stimulated by the high value tag on rhino horns.
- Traditional perception of Asian medicine.
- Greed became the drive and all boundaries were crossed to self enrichment.
- Transnational organised crime



# RESPONSE TO THREAT

- Investment in institutional structures to respond
- Engagements on an International level to promote cooperation & collaboration [“consumer” States (China, Vietnam, Thailand) & neighbouring States (Mozambique)]
- Engagements and collaboration with other government departments
- National Wildlife Crime Reaction Unit established
- Legislative amendments to address abuse of permit system – Rhino N&S
- Additional focus on ports of exit





# CURRENT INITIATIVES

## Implementation of the National Strategy on Safety and Security of Rhinoceros Populations in South Africa:

### PURPOSE:

- To inform decision making processes, strategic planning and operations aimed at reducing the effects of poaching of rhinos;
- to ensure successful arrest, conviction and sentencing of poachers and illegal traders;
- to provide better control and monitoring of rhino horn stockpile management and
- to promote improved management of the conditions under which rhino may be hunted legally



# INTERVENTIONS

- Joint deployment of security forces
- DNA Program
- Vetting of members involved in Ops Rhino
- Application of dogs
- Enhanced security at KNP Gates and RSA border POE / border line
- IBIS testing of fire arms program
- Creating a communication strategy with the assistance of GCIS
- Other interventions at Provincial level are on-going



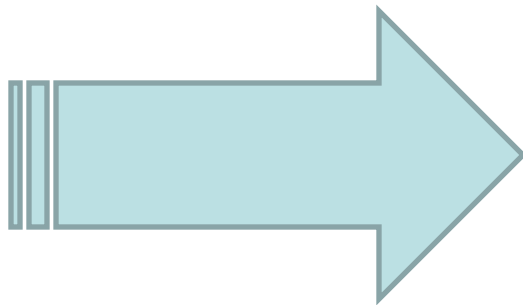
# CHALLENGES

- Rhino poaching situation continues to escalate unabated
- Support to private landowners
- Increase in legislative provisions – resource constraints
- Demand in consumer states & increase in value of rhino horn
- Potential impact on population growth if situation can not be brought under control



# CHALLENGES (continue)

- A number of interventions in place, however, public concern remains about the successes
- Uncontrolled national debate as to whether or not to trade in rhino horn
- There is no guarantee that legal trade will reduce the illegal killing of rhinoceros

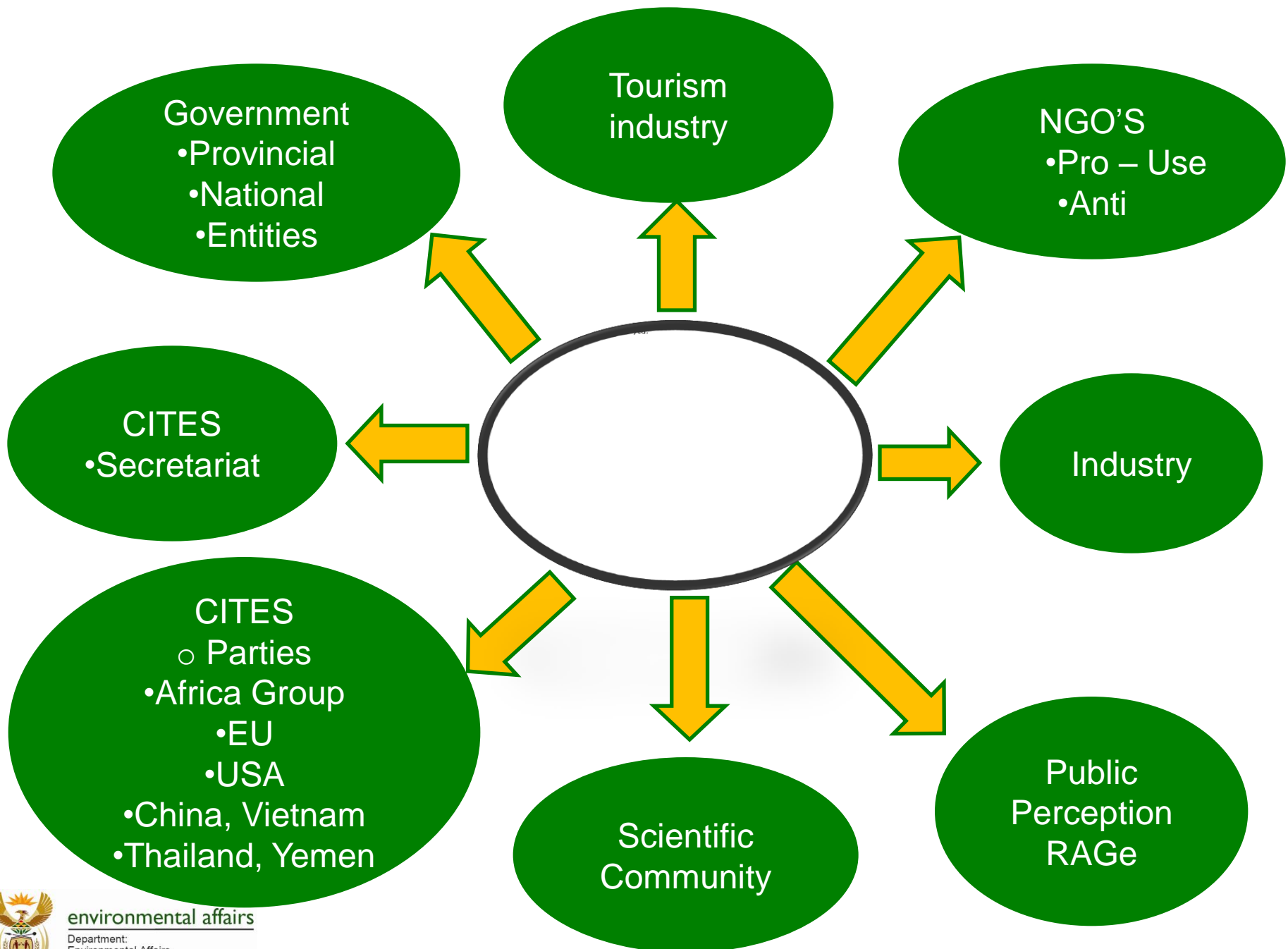


National dialogue required



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# CURRENT STATUS

- No national consensus on the matter as the debate is being externally controlled
- DEA appointed an Issue Manager to facilitate the development of a national consensus to inform decision making
- DEA has commissioned studies to inform decision making:
  - A feasibility study to determine the viability of the legalization of the trade in rhino horn within South Africa
  - Global market research study to determine potential market conditions



# PROPOSED PROCESS

- Stakeholder dialogue workshops
- One-on-one discussions
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop
- Report to Minister – recommendations relating to key rhino issues



# WAY FORWARD

- Full implementation and review of the DEA strategy
- Holistic threat assessment of wildlife specific crime
- Review of operational strategies for combatting wildlife crime
- Integrated budget submission to Treasury to address resource constraints
- Operationalizing of MOU's with so called consumer countries
- Enhanced commitment with countries in the region
- Coordinated stakeholder engagement
- Awareness raising initiatives





# THANK YOU



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