

Going wildlive!

Read the inside story of wildlive!, which puts people in touch with the World Around Us through their mobile phones

Can the latest generation of mobile phones help to join together key conservation projects and their supporters around the world? That was the question John Logan, Director of the Vodafone Group Foundation (VGF), and Karen Hayes, Director of Corporate Affairs at Fauna & Flora International (FFI), set out to answer around 18 months ago.

The outcome is wildlive!, developed with the invaluable support of Vodafone UK and available to all Vodafone live! customers in the UK since December 2003. It's the result of a special partnership between an operating company, the VGF and a non-governmental

organisation: the VGF gave FFI a grant of £400,000 to investigate the development of a service that allows people interested in conservation projects to follow the projects' progress via their Vodafone live! handsets – and Vodafone UK helped make it happen.

The story starts back in 2001, when the Vodafone Group Corporate Responsibility team asked FFI to undertake research into the issue of coltan mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This work was needed to discover the truth behind the headlines linking mobile phones to humanitarian and environmental atrocities in the war-torn Central African country. At the end of

2003, a report on this research was published in association with GeSI, the Global e-Sustainability Alliance, the UN telecommunications body.

From this first project, the relationship between Vodafone and FFI flourished. Key conservation activities around the world have been supported by Vodafone UK's Fonebak recycling scheme and Vodafone global reporters have visited FFI projects as winners of a World Around Us competition on @one.

Karen Hayes says: 'When John and I met in the summer of 2002, we talked about how mobile phones could support conservation work. There seemed to be two main areas to consider.

'First, how could we make the most of cutting edge technology to bring mobile phone users closer to conservation? How could we connect people more directly to conservation projects and issues in a way that was enjoyable, novel and created a sense of personal involvement? And while doing all this, how could we raise funds for conservation?

'Secondly, how could we make mobile phone connectivity work for conservation in the field, in communities where poverty is an overwhelming fact of life and where conservation is seen as a luxury of the wealthy?

'It was such questions that inspired our thinking. FFI had a lot to learn about mobile phones, so in a one-day workshop for our staff from all departments and regions, we started learning the basics and letting our imaginations run riot!

'We took these ideas back to the VGF and the Group CR teams expecting to be given a serious reality check. Quite the opposite. We were advised to keep thinking big and to look at the most innovative resources available. Most importantly, we were told that at Vodafone, services for "communities of interest" groups and the environment are not considered second best.

'Vodafone live! was the latest and most sophisticated service available to Vodafone customers. To be permitted to develop a



Fast facts

- Fauna & Flora International (FFI) is a global conservation group. Link: www.fauna-flora.org
- wildlive! is available to Vodafone live! customers in the UK and it's hoped to expand it globally
- Customers can download animal sounds as ringtones, play conservation games and will be able to become part of

- mobile supporter groups for conservation projects around the world
 - Each time a customer downloads a wildlive! picture, sound or game, 100 per cent of the fee they pay goes to FFI and its partners
 - wildlive! has a community theme that means customers can make contact with others who share their interest
- Link: www.wildlive.org

This is the first time that an operating company, a non-governmental organisation and the Vodafone Group Foundation have worked together. It's a real success story and a great tribute to Vodafone people's Passion for the world around us

John Logan, Director, The Vodafone Group Foundation

conservation component for this state-of-the-art platform was challenging and exciting.

'The proposal that was submitted to the VGF trustees couldn't clearly spell out what this project was eventually going to look like, so approving it was something of a leap of faith for the trustees – but that's just what they did in December 2002. The trustees insisted that this would be a pilot development project and that Vodafone UK would be free to engage in it at their discretion – something they were delighted to do in recognition of the uniqueness of the whole concept.'

FFI quickly put a team together, bringing skills in technology and community development to add to its core competence in conservation.

For Karen, the success of this project has been down to a much larger team composed of FFI, VGF and Vodafone UK people, and especially those in VF live! content services. She says: 'The Foundation provided the financial backing, FFI provided the products, and Vodafone UK made it happen. Through the joint efforts of this team, what was little more than an idea became wildlive!.'

The original plan was to come up with a small-scale pilot project for testing but as work progressed it became clear that

wildlive! was not only viable, but was worth launching to Vodafone live! customers as soon as possible. High quality images, sophisticated gaming, an entirely new fundraising mechanism... it was too good to wait.

And so, one year after the VGF trustees approved the grant, wildlive! was launched in December 2003 at a special fundraising event at London's Natural History Museum – where FFI had been founded exactly a century earlier, making it a double celebration. In a satellite link to Los Angeles, international conservationist Sir David Attenborough was presented with an award for lifetime contribution to conservation. Earlier, he officially launched wildlive.

What next? Karen says: 'Over the next year it is planned that wildlive! will expand in terms of content and options. New games will be added but one of the most exciting developments will be the extension of "field diaries". These will enable users to become personally involved in conservation projects around the world through text and picture messages from field scientists, competitions and newflashes.

'We also hope that wildlive! will expand globally, using the experience and support of Vodafone UK to bring other members of the Vodafone family on board.'



The Gorilla Game: Face the challenges of life in the forest as you grow from a juvenile gorilla into a fully-grown silverback. Across eight challenging levels try to guide yourself and your new family to the safety of the reserve, but watch out for fires, traps, poachers and rival silverbacks!

When's it time to share conservation news?



With Vodafone wildlive!, you can keep up with conservation news while you're on the move. Check out our mobile content and features from the comfort of your own phone. www.wildlive.org

