



Summary

Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) is the collective management of renewable natural resources by defined groups of people who, through agreed systems and rules, have access (usufruct) rights over the land and/or the resources on that land and are empowered to use, benefit from, dispose of, sell or trade in such resources.

Indicators for successful CBNRM include devolved proprietorship, a viable natural resource base underpinned by strong markets, a favourable macro-economic environment and committed government support.

In practice however, CBNRM is largely centralised and conditioned by poor enabling policies such that differentially “devolved” powers to communities are not favouring people-centred approaches to deliver sustainable conservation and development.

A simple highly visual dashboard, the **Enabling Conditions Tool (ECT)** will provide a baseline for national level, wildlife, forests, non-timber forest products and fisheries enabling condition indicators using a colour-coded score system accompanied by radar charts (or spider grams). Completed by communities themselves, areas of concern amongst the enabling conditions can be brought to the attention of policy makers and others at central and regional government level.

Applied at both field site level and online through the KAZA Impact Monitoring System, the tool will provide for communication briefs to alert governments and communities alike to weaknesses inherent in policy and practice underpinning the necessary enabling conditions for CBNRM.

Introduction

This project proposal is to be submitted by WWF Namibia, through WWF-UK, to the DEFRA Darwin Initiative Innovation Project Round 31 in October 2024. It will be coordinated by the WWF in KAZA team, WWF Namibia and work with community based natural resource management (CBNRM) experts

based in the KAZA region and with government agencies and local partners with close links to local communities involved in community natural resource management.

Problem Statement

Subsistence agro-pastoralism systems in southern African semi-arid and arid environments are no longer sustainable and meaningful rain-fed crop production is only possible with an annual rainfall of ≥ 700 mm but subsistence cereal crops continue to be grown in areas receiving 400 - 600 mm annual rainfall (AFFI. 2019¹). Rural human population growth now exceeds the availability of arable land, and cattle and other livestock numbers remain more than what these semi-arid rangelands are able to support. Moreover, these rangelands are now subject to increased threats from global climate change. A continuing limited acceptance for diversification and use of drought resistant crops and livestock, together with a lack of market access leads to a community focus on food security, and inevitable multidimensional poverty trap.

This micro socio-economic situation is further exacerbated by the limited awareness by rural communities of potential opportunities for livelihood enhancement available from the conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources (NR). Despite significant attempts to promote, foster and embrace devolved market-driven models of CBNRM over the past 30 years, commercial use of NR remains highly centralised and directed by policies of colonial and post-colonial eras (IIED 2006², Esmail *et al.* 2023).

Locally accountable NRM institutions should enable people to make their own and improved decisions about the use of land and NRs, strengthening land rights, environmental stewardship and NR governance. However, conventional wisdom prefers to maintain centralised control, fearing human nature cannot be entrusted with equitable access to NR, believing this will lead to ecological collapse. These arguments are biologically and institutionally flawed, leading to either inefficient use or overuse of NR, adversely impacting biodiversity and livelihoods. Centralised approaches are non-participatory and remote from the resource user or manager. Beneficiaries are passive recipients of management decisions flowing from inappropriate policy formulation.

Alternative innovative approaches can reverse the role of communities to that of active participants. Providing market-based solutions to mitigate unsustainable NR use can reduce poverty, maintain biodiversity and create sustainable economic development for those dependent upon environmentally precarious landscapes. But these solutions need to be chosen and driven locally rather than in a centralised paternalistic manner. For this to happen the enabling conditions must be in place. This includes assessment of the socio-political environment, the macro-economic situation including GDP and MDP indices, perverse economic incentives such as subsidies, access rights, the natural resource base, markets, investment funding, government support, commitment and avoidance of elite capture. This proposal focuses on the development and use of an innovative CBNRM Enabling Conditions Tool (ECT), with which to measure, monitor and influence centrally and locally, the enabling conditions for institutional change.

Project Methodology

This project is focused on the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) which comprises 520,000 km² within the borders of five Partner States of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia

¹ AFFI. 2019. Chapter 5: the KAZA Landscape. In AFFI Landscape Report. Wasafiri. Nairobi. Pg 61-118.

² IIED (2006). Participatory Learning and Action 55. Practical tools for community conservation in southern Africa. International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

and Zimbabwe. It encompasses savannas, woodlands and wetlands within a network of formally protected areas and community conservation areas, all supporting a rich biodiversity. An important area for eco-tourism, natural resource management and sustainable use, KAZA provides economic benefits at regional, national and local scales where a diverse population of 2.7 million people mostly depend on agro-pastoralism and NR in a complex social- ecological setting.

An initial framework within which to embed the ECT will be developed at a workshop with the project implementation team, and partners including KAZA representation. An initial framework within which to embed the ECT will be undertaken as a desktop exercise by the core project implementation team led by the team leader, an experienced CBNRM specialist. A suite of enabling conditions has been identified earlier (Taylor 2009³, Stuart-Hill unpublished⁴) nationally at a macro-economic level, together with indicators (Anon 2003⁵), and thematically for in-country community use of wildlife, forests, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and freshwater artisanal fisheries will be interrogated as a prototype to test and validate subsequently with communities.

An indicative dashboard will provide a baseline using a colour-coded score. National Level Enabling Conditions have 5 Focal Areas, with 15 Indicators, whilst Wildlife, Forests, NTFPs and Fisheries Enabling Conditions each have 8 Focal Areas with 28 Indicators. A Dashboard is scored from 1 (highly negative) to 5 (highly positive) using colour coding from **Red** through **Orange** to **Green**.

This information is automatically transferred to linked Spider Grams or Radar Charts which provide an easily understood comparison between all indicators scored, e.g. 15 indicators for national level enabling conditions. Together the dashboard and radar charts illustrate scores for a total of 127 indicators for 4 key natural resources and accompanying national level indicators underpinning these. The tool can be applied and used by and amongst different structures of governance including regionally, government(s), NGOs and local level CBOs such as CBNRM.

Baselines for Year 1 can be established for each indicator with spider grams reflecting dashboard values. These will be updated annually to provide measures of change. This material will constitute the ECT, the primary innovation of this project and which is expected to be highly effective, given its simplicity, in driving institutional change. The ECT will provide evidence for where change is needed, and when re-used, whether change has been effectively put in place. Experience shows that dashboards are interactive, highly visual, easily comprehended and capable of driving change (IIED, 2006²)

KAZA partner country M&E specialists and CBNRM practitioners will be exposed to the use and application of the ECT in a facilitated workshop in Kasane, Botswana. Country baselines will be established and/or updated and verified for the prototype ECT. Thereafter sites and communities in Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe will be identified and selected, and visits planned with CBNRM practitioners for field testing of the ECT. Facilitated workshops using recognised Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques will test and refine the tool ready for use. Guidelines for field use will be developed concurrently.

Technical physical and virtual meetings with the KAZA Secretariat, Information Technology (IT), KAZA Impact Monitoring System (KIMS) specialists and Database Manager will incorporate the ECT into the on-line KIMS. Once validated as ready for use, it will be launched and monitored in the short term for

³ Taylor, R.D. (2009). Community based natural resource management in Zimbabwe: The experience of CAMPFIRE. *Biodiversity and Conservation* 18, 2563-2583.

⁴ Dr Greg Stuart Hill. Greg Stuart-Hill <gregstuarthill@icloud.com>

⁵ Anon. (2003). Quantifying the assumptions for CAMPFIRE. Unpublished Report prepared by WWF Southern Africa Regional Programme Office, Harare.

technical efficiency. Thereafter the primary role of the ECT in respect of institutional change can be monitored.

Evidence from analysis of results generated by the tool will inform the development of policy briefs for KAZA and central government departments overseeing CBNRM. These will be co-developed and co-ordinated across KAZA, following consultations and approvals with the KAZA Community Conservation Working Group and the Joint Management Committee. Thereafter policy briefs will be printed and disseminated widely.

The Project Technical Lead will have project oversight and responsibility, working through the KAZA Secretariat and partner countries from a governance perspective, and through the three WWF Country Offices in Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in a technical implementation context. In turn, contracted in-country CBNRM specialists and practitioners will be trained in the use and application of the ECT and to subsequently engage with communities in further exposure and use the ECT, including the development of a manual and guideline for field use.

Project Impact

The impact of the project is: 'Devolved community proprietorship and responsible natural resource stewardship leads to improved biodiversity and reduced poverty through use of an innovative on-line Enabling Conditions Tool and field guidelines in KAZA Countries'.

Project Outcomes

The single outcome of:

Outcome 1: Decisions and actions related to CBNRM policy and governance in KAZA are influenced by evidence provided by the ECT being used by CBNRM practitioners and M&E specialists.

would have the four following Outputs:

Output 1: A prototype Enabling Conditions Tool (ECT) and indicators available at national and local level for selected NR, e.g. wildlife, forests, NTFPs, and freshwater artisanal fisheries, all with baseline scorecards and spider grams.

Output 2: ECT field tested and validated at selected sites with communities and support NGOs ready for adoption and use for on-site completion by practitioners.

Output 3: ECT incorporated into KIMS together with trained M&E Officer and a guideline for its application (either on-line and/or completion on-site by trained practitioners).

Output 4: Evidence from analysis of results generated by the tool used to inform the development of policy briefs for central government departments overseeing CBNRM.

Envisaged partners

These potentially include (still to be confirmed): Lead partner is WWF UK; implementing partners WWF Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe Country Offices in collaboration with 3 Government wildlife agencies (MEFT, DWNP and ZPWMA, implementing NGO partners (IRDNC etc.) and community representation e.g. NACSO, CBNRM Forum and CAMPFIRE Association.

Project Timeframe & Budget Summary

Budget: £199,000; mid-2025 to mid-2007.