



# Sustainable natural resource management in Namibia:

Successful community-based wildlife conservation

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# List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Programme for Indigenous Resource Management (Zimbabwe)
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CPR	Common Property Resource
IRDNC	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
LIFE	Living in a Finite Environment (USAID Project)
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MWCT	Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism
NACSO	Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP)
WRI	World Resources Institute
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WWF	Worldwide Fund for Nature

# 1. Introduction

'Namibia is probably going further than any other African country in developing policy and legislation that devolves authority over natural resources directly to local rural communities' (Jones, 1999).

Before independence in 1990, wildlife populations in Namibia's communal areas were plummeting, as a result of extensive poaching, severe drought and prolonged military occupation (WWF, 2007). In 1996, the country instituted an incentive-based law that led to the recovery of wildlife populations on communal state lands. Communities on these state-owned lands are now integrating the management and sustainable utilisation of wildlife into their livelihood strategies. Today, Namibia is a pioneer in the sustainable management of wildlife through community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) activities and legislation.

The opportunity to create a national CBNRM programme arose out of three key factors: 1) application of lessons from surrounding countries' attempts at CBNRM; 2) Namibia's success in its own national efforts to devolve wildlife management to commercial landholders; and 3) the leadership of the Namibian government, with support from local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international donors.

This story of progress tells the tale of Namibia's transformation, through community empowerment at a large scale and as a post-conflict, newly independent state, to create cutting-edge CBNRM legislation that links environmental management with economic opportunity. It demonstrates how the mindset and attitudes of communities have shifted significantly, in terms of the way they perceive and value their natural environment. Communities now view wildlife and conservation as a way to support livelihoods and generate environmental, social and economic benefits.

The broader message is that, beyond its intrinsic ecological benefits, conservation management has the potential to generate real wealth over a long time horizon and also to create real gains for disadvantaged groups.

# 2. Context

Namibia has an area of 823,988 km<sup>2</sup> in southwest Africa, bordered by Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Namibia's climate ranges from extremely arid in the west, where sand dunes reach the ocean and portions of the Namib Desert receive a mere 25mm/year of rain at most, to the sub-humid Caprivi region in the northeast, which averages 600-700mm/year of precipitation (Barnard, 1998). Overall, rainfall is erratic, both temporally and spatially, leading to large localised differences in precipitation and large annual fluctuations, with droughts a regular occurrence.

Namibia holds a high level of biodiversity. Around 75% of the mammal species of Southern Africa exist in Namibia, with 14 endemic species. The southwest arid zone of Namibia is an endemism 'hot spot' for mammals, birds and amphibians (Simmons et al., 1998). Namibia is an arid country with frequent droughts, and only 8% of the land is arable (Dynes, 2002). As a result, the largely rural population is highly dependent on natural resources: two-thirds of the population of 2 million live in rural areas and depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. This is despite their historical lack of control over land or its resource base. Politically, Namibia is a legacy of South African colonial role and suffered from the imposition of South Africa's apartheid policies, which also affected legislation related to land and natural resources. Legislation from 1962 mandated that all wildlife and wild game was a protected state-owned asset. Despite this institutional and legal arrangement – or as a consequence of it – Namibia experienced a rapid loss of wildlife populations from the 1960s.

In 1968, a policy decision was made to give private white farmers limited rights of proprietorship over wildlife. The passage of the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975 backed this up and devolved wildlife user rights to white-owned freehold farms, including the right to retain all income derived from the use and sale of game animals. Private farm owners thus acquired incentives to manage wildlife for gain and began to utilise animals sustainably for game meat, trophy hunting and tourism (WRI, 2005). Since then, wildlife numbers on commercial farmlands have increased by more than 80% (Barnes and de Jager, 1996). However, outside these commercial areas, state restrictions in relation to wildlife resources remained. Some resources, like wildlife and forestry, were subject to particularly strict control. However, despite this, wildlife numbers were falling in most communal areas. Particularly in the northwest, there was uncontrolled cutting of forested land.

Once it became independent from South Africa in 1990, Namibia inherited a skewed distribution of land. Some 4,500 commercial (mostly) white farmers owned 43% of the land, with 41% having been allocated to 'black homelands,' comprising 150,000 households (Werner, 1997). A total of 14% was allocated to conservation and a small percentage remained unallocated (Jones, 1999). Former 'black homelands' are now recognised as communal lands, where rural residents have access to the land but ownership is vested in the state.<sup>1</sup>

The post-independence government faced high levels of poaching and inadequate resources for enforcement of regulations. Between 1970 and 1992, the black rhino suffered a 96% decline in numbers as a result of rising demand for rhino horn in Asia and the Middle East (WWF, 2007). In addition to issues of wildlife loss, it quickly became apparent that, owing to highly variable climatic conditions and the lack of sustainability and suitability of much of Namibia's land for arable crop and livestock production, there was a need not only to protect wildlife but also to diversify economic activities and livelihood approaches in rural areas (Corbett and Daniels, 1996). It was also becoming clear that state regulation of wildlife and forestry products had become difficult to enforce, owing in part to the great distances from administrative centres and a lack of government resources to manage the land effectively.

In many cases, traditional mechanisms for land and resource allocation and management had broken down. Under South African colonial rule, land allocation was the function of government officials. In practice, traditional leaders believed the chief should own the land and allocate it according to customary law. Several factors, high among them the post-independence government's policies, eroded the *de facto* allocation of land by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1.</sup> The government now owns around 350 of the 6,000 freehold farms, and these are earmarked for resettlement, but not all are occupied and productive. Around 600 freehold farms are now owned by black Affirmative Action Loan Scheme farmers (Brian Jones, personal communication, 2010).

traditional leaders. This erosion of power of traditional leaders in many ways led to the development of 'open access' situations over much of Namibia's communal land, which created little incentive to manage the land in a sustainable fashion (Jones, 1999).

From 1990 to 1992, in an effort to understand problems from a community perspective concerning wildlife and conservation, the newly created Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT, later to become the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, MET), in partnership with local NGOs, began a series of participatory socio-ecological surveys. This exercise led to the development of several localised community-based conservation projects, supported by foreign conservation NGOs. This demonstrat¬ed that community-based approaches to wildlife conservation could improve both livelihoods and wildlife populations.

Based on these early experiences, and in an effort to create on communal land the same type of recovery of wildlife populations seen on commercial farmland, MET approved a policy called Wildlife Management, Utilisation and Tourism in Communal Areas, aimed at creating equitable rights to wildlife between freehold and communal area residents. Shortly afterwards, in 1996, the government of Namibia passed the Nature Conservation Act, giving rights over wildlife and tourism to local communities that formed a management body called a conservancy. The establishment of a conservancy allowed local communities to manage and benefit from wildlife on communal land, while allowing the community to work with private companies to create a tourism market.

The Act aimed to promote and integrate wildlife production and tourism activities into the livelihoods of communal area residents by devolving consumptive and non-consumptive use rights over wildlife to the community. By creating this legislation, the government put faith in a CBNRM approach, providing communal area residents with a framework to establish incentives to use natural resources sustainably.

By 1997, the first communal area conservancy was gazetted, with eight more to come in 1999. As of 2010, there are 59 conservancies.<sup>2</sup> The speed at which conservancies were gazetted owes to early action and involvement by NGOs and government, which developed small pilot projects in these areas. These aimed at establishing community-based tourism activities to demonstrate that wildlife could earn an income for communities and to involve the communities in conservation through their own community game guards. These conservancies had a demonstration effect on other communities, which then wanted the same benefits. Involvement of NGOs was important, particularly Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), which had been working in several communities in Caprivi and Kunene regions even before independence.

Conservancy legislation and its subsequent benefits have created an institutional model that Namibia's forestry sector has since taken up, devolving authority to community committees based on the conservancy model. In 2001, the government approved Forest Act 12, the Community Forestry Act, which allows local communities to obtain forest management rights from MET.

#### Box 1: How to create a CBNRM conservancy in Namibia

Communities that wish to apply to become a conservancy must go through the MET office. Requirements for the conservancy application include: a list of local people who are community members; a declaration of their goal and objectives; and a map of their geographic boundaries. Plans must be discussed with communities living in surrounding areas. Any funds the community receives must be distributed to the local community, either through direct dividends or as a contribution towards investments in community projects. For example, Torra Conservancy gave US\$2,000 for school renovations, with other funds allocated to individuals as payments for being members of the conservancy (Stefanova, 2005).

# 3. What has been achieved

Namibia's implementation of CBNRM legislation should be seen in the context of the global trend towards communitybased management. While this trend has produced mixed outcomes, Namibia has become one of the most successful national examples of CBNRM, having generated significant economic and environmental benefits. The conservancies have led to positive changes in land-use patterns across Namibia's arid and semi-arid communal areas. More environmentally appropriate and sustainable forms of game production have emerged as communities integrate wildlife and tourism enterprises into their livelihood strategies, while enhancing the viability of the protected area network by creating buffer zones for wildlife.

### 3.1 Growth of conservancies and community involvement over time

#### Figure 1: Registered and emerging conservancies, December 2006



Source: Libanda and Blignaut (2008).

The institutionalisation of CBNRM as a development strategy is one major enabling condition that has led to Namibia's progress over the past two decades. This institutionalisation is evidenced by several factors. First, the growth in the number of conservancies and people participating in conservancies: starting from only one conservancy, established in 1997, 54 conservancies had been established by 2009, with about 233,000 residents and more than 12.2 million ha of land (NACSO, 2009). Figure 1 and Table 1 show the situation up to 2006. Second, the creation of tertiary degrees in CBNRM and the growth in the number of local and national organisations that support the CBNRM programme (11 established NGOs now support conservancies).

#### Table 1: Growth of conservancies and community involvement over time, 1998-2006

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
No. of conservancies registered	4	5	1	5	N/A	14	2	13	6	50
Conservation area of newly registered conservancy (km2)	13,455	4,848	3,568	15,477	N/A	30,281	11,080	26,330	13,666	
Accumulative area under communal management (km2)	13,455	18,303	21,871	37,384	N/A	67,629	78,709	105,039	118,705	
No. of new members	6,302	4,891	85	1,971	N/A	29,914	1,548	6,721	2,395	
Accumulative no. of members	6,302	11,193	11,278	13,249	N/A	43,163	44,711	51,432	53,827	
No. of people living in newly registered conservancies	14,400	10,530	260	6,220	N/A	64,050	3,800	111,860	3,800	
Accumulative no. of people living in conservancies	14,000	24,940	25,190	31,410	N/A	95,460	99,260	211,120	214,920	
Total income of all conservancies per year (N\$ million)		2,439,824	3,411,260	6,124,195	11,129,952	13,503,055	14,517,467	20,099,173	N/A	

Source: NACSO (2006).

The high number of people now participating in conservancies indicates a shift in attitudes among communal area residents towards wildlife. In the early 1990s, there was prevalent hostility towards wildlife, as it was a state-owned and controlled asset from which local people received no benefits (WWF et al., 2008).

### 3.2 Specific outcomes of progress

#### 3.2.1 Increase in buffer zones around protected areas

Namibia's national park system covers almost 15% of the country's surface area (Weaver and Peterson, 2008). Of the 50 registered conservancies in 2007, 31 were adjacent to protected areas, were in important corridors between protected areas or provided wet season dispersal areas for wildlife that leaves protected areas. All these factors increased the land available for wildlife by more than half beyond the existing national protected area system (Jones and Weaver, 2009).

### 3.2.2 Recovery of wildlife populations

The introduction of grassroots wildlife management practices (e.g. wildlife water points, dedicated wildlife production zones, reintroduction of game to facilitate faster recovery rates) has led to massive recoveries of wildlife populations in many communal area regions across Namibia. Recoveries have been documented in Caprivi and Nyae Nyae and in the entire northwest region of Namibia.



#### Figure 2: Wildlife recovery in Nyae Nyae conservancy

Source: WRI (2005).

#### 3.2.3 Increased economic and social benefits to communities involved in conservancies

CBNRM and conservancy activities have become a major source of benefits for rural communities. Community benefits come in the form of cash, employment, payment for plant products and in-kind benefits such as meat from game or harvested trophies. Between 1998 and 2008 benefits increased by an average of 51.1% per annum (WWF et al., 2008).

Direct income to communities comes from a number of sources. Table 2 gives a breakdown of the incomes generated in 2004 (see Annex 1 for more detail).

#### Table 2: Incomes generated by conservancies in 2004

Joint ventures with private tourism enterprises	36%
Community tourism enterprises/campsites	25%
Trophy hunting and meat	17%
Thatching grass sales	11%
Game meat distribution (non-financial)	4%
Craft sales	3%
Own use game meat (non-financial)	2%
Live sale of game	1%
Bank interest	1%

Source: WWF et al. (2008).

Cash incomes to communities are bolstered by partnerships with the private sector. By 2004, a total of 180 enterprises were operating under the national CBNRM programme. These included: 44 joint ventures (18 joint venture lodges and 26 trophy hunting concessions); 18 community campsites; 16 shoot-and-sale agreements; 29 income generation activities linked to harvesting of plant products, conservation farming and fish/poultry production; and 23 CBNRM enterprises taking place outside conservancies. At that time, 37 conservancies were receiving cash income, with average annual cash income totalling approximately US\$2.25 million. Importantly, 15 of the 37 conservancies were fully self-financing and 7 were paying over 50% of their operating expenses (WWF et al., 2008). Figure 3 depicts the steady rise in income earned by communal conservancies over the years.



#### Figure 3: Namibia CBNRM programme benefits, 1994-2006

Source: Jones and Weaver (2009).

In 2008, the conservancies earned a total of just more than N\$26 million (about US\$3.25 million) in direct cash income, and the value of game meat distributed by conservancies to members was N\$3.06 million (about US\$382,500). Conservancies directly employed 154 people in 2008, and 605 full-time jobs and 2,267 part-time jobs were generated by tourism and hunting in conservancies (NACSO, 2009). These jobs are often in remote rural areas where there are few job opportunities and very little cash income.

At the individual household level, research conducted by Bandyopadhyay et al. (2009) suggests that, on the whole, conservancies have a beneficial effect on household welfare. In the regions the study assessed, all households

were better-off in the established conservancies (those that had begun in 1998 or earlier) by at least one measure of welfare. (Conservancies were assessed on four different measures of welfare: household income, household expenditure, per capita income and per capita expenditure.) In Kunene region, households in established conservancies received 28% higher per capita income than conservancies that were younger and less established, and in Caprivi region per capita household expenditure was 58% higher in established conservancies. The researchers argue that these positive impacts are a reflection of the cumulative aspects of all CBNRM and tourism activities associated with established conservancies.

### 3.3 Assessing progress against selected criteria: Scale, equity and sustainability

# 3.3.1 Scale

Namibia's environmental progress has occurred at a national scale. As previously mentioned, the conservancies make up roughly 15% of the entire area of the country, representing one of the highest percentages for any country in the world. Roughly 1 in 11 Namibians is currently a member of a communal wildlife conservancy.

# 3.3.2 Equity

CBNRM legislation provides tangible benefits to those among the poorest in the country. It provides the framework for economic, environmental and social incentives to which communities can respond voluntarily. The legislation also does not try to define a community or prescribe who should represent the community on the conservancy, instead leaving it to communal area residents themselves to choose their own representatives. While there has been concern that decentralised natural resource management may give increased power to traditional hierarchies, and that this may in turn lead to capture by local elites (defined as those with higher education or more household assets), Bandyopadhyay et al. (2009) found no evidence of this in the regions assessed. Rather, their findings suggest that improved welfare effects of conservancies are poverty-neutral in Kunene region and pro-poor in Caprivi. The benefits the asset-poor and the asset-rich gain from conservancies in Kunene do not differ significantly, whereas in Caprivi the asset-poor gain more than the asset-rich.

Conservancy policy is also flexible in its approach to how conservancies should use their income. Conservancy participants can decide whether income should be used for social projects like schools or distributed to individual households. The only requirement is that communities should have a plan for the equitable distribution of income. For the distribution of collective income, four modes of allocation have evolved (Murphy and Roe, 2004):

- 1. Individual, equal cash payouts to registered conservancy members, where the number of members is relatively small and the revenue substantial;
- 2. A conservancy 'social fund' where members can request finances on a needs basis, again where the number of members is small;
- 3. Payouts on a village basis, where numbers of members are large and revenues modest;
- 4. Expenditure on social services such as support to schools and old-age pensioners.

# 3.3.3 Sustainability

From a financial perspective, the CBNRM programme strives to be completely self-sufficient, and is making good progress. As of 2009, 21 out of 59 conservancies were self-sufficient.<sup>3</sup> NGOs operating in the programme are now trying to set up permanent and self-sustaining support systems for the conservancies. For example, the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) is creating a long-term CBNRM sustainability strategy and is identifying the critical resources that will be needed in the future. Any ongoing financial support for the CBNRM programme should come from a self-sustaining source of finance (e.g. dividends created through conservancy business investments, multi-donor trust funds or biodiversity offsets purchased by consumptive industries).<sup>4</sup>

In terms of the sustainability of CBNRM activities, tourism is proving to be a long-term business strategy for the conservancies. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) believes that Namibia will be the eighth fastest moving tourism market over the next 10 years, and has projected an annual growth rate of 8.2% in the country's tourism sector between 2010 and 2020. Within conservancies specifically, they are doing a good job of recognising

the value of wildlife for tourism: poaching has come to a halt in communal areas and land has been zoned appropriately. This type of future planning is in stark contrast with many other parts of the region in terms of how wildlife is being managed. Tourism partnerships established with private sector enterprises provide a way of accessing private sector financing, which can help make the conservancies financially more viable and self-sustaining (Libanda and Blignaut, 2008).

However, the tourism industry is being impacted by global events. The global recession is thought to have caused tourism revenue to shrink in 2009. In 2010, tourism was impacted by the eruption of Iceland's volcano, when flights were halted for several weeks, causing massive cancellations in Namibia's tourism industry. Then the World Cup created considerable congestion in Johannesburg, the major transport hub to Namibia.

# 4. Drivers of progress

Several factors have led to Namibia's success. These include both contextual factors, which allowed Namibia to embark on the development of cutting-edge CBNRM legislation, as well specific factors of progress on environmental indicators.

### 4.1 Contextual factors

In post-independence, post-apartheid Namibia, there was significant momentum for change and reform. The government was open to new ideas on conservation and natural resource management, and was keen to empower local communities to reclaim rights that had been compromised. The community-based rural development aspects of the CBNRM programme and the devolution of rights to communal area residents resonated with new government policies that focused on removing discrimination, poverty alleviation in rural areas and decentralisation. The programme also provided a way to manage natural resources in rural areas effectively without straining limited government resources. There was major appeal in the fact that the CBNRM approach to conservation did not require heavy state involvement. The CBNRM programme could therefore be 'sold' politically both as a conservation programme but also as a poverty reduction and rural development programme.<sup>5</sup>

### 4.2 Specific factors of progress

### 4.2.1 Changes in governance

Governance is concerned primarily with the way power is exercised and the sets of rules and institutions that govern behaviour in different arenas to pursue collective goals and interests. Most of Namibia's progress has been a result of improved natural resource governance, established through a legal reform process. As previously mentioned, one of the earlier but important institutional and legal reform processes came about with the enactment of the Nature Conservation Ordinance in 1975, which devolved rights to landowners to use and benefit from wildlife on their land. Improved wildlife populations on privately held land raised the issue of how to apply similar incentives to communal land.

The passage of the 1996 conservancy legislation was a major milestone, whereby the government devolved rights to communal area residents living in conservancies to benefit from wildlife. The passage of this legislation has resulted in the registration of 59 registered conservancies to date, covering 15.7% of the country's surface. The legislation created stability and predictability in the CBNRM approach. However, it was not simply the devolution and transfer of authority to community-led institutions that created the positive results. It was the fact that the devolution and transfer were given financial, technical and political support and sustained engagement that created an enabling environment for success. Namibian NGOs and WWF supported local communities in establishing conservancies and getting them operational. WWF provided grants and technical support, while MET and Namibian NGOs carried out implementation. Political support came from the Minister of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism: Niko Bessinger (the first Minister of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism in Namibia) and Deputy Minister Ben Ulenga, both of whom championed the approach in Cabinet. Despite the large amount of donor support and financial and technical support from WWF, the CBNRM programme has always been Namibian-led. The Namibian government developed policy and legislation with no prompting from donors – perhaps one reason why the legislation was welcomed and adopted by the Cabinet and implemented by officials.

There is a danger that devolution to nominally 'community-based' bodies can open the door to capture by traditional elites. There is also a risk that devolution alone can still reserve a structural bias against the poor in local institutions. However, because Namibia's CBNRM policy established equity, participation and benefit sharing as explicit policy goals, these risks were avoided.

# 4.2.2 Leadership and local ownership

Another important factor of progress has been the quality of leadership in the government agencies, NGOs and communities that helped create the CBNRM programme. Leadership in Namibia has been demonstrated powerfully through MET's ability to cooperate and partner with many different stakeholders. MET has worked closely with local government bodies, NGOs and rural communities to create a strong partnership to support the CBNRM programme. The Namibian central government played a key role in initiating the process of policy reform and MET in providing extension support to communities that wanted to establish conservancies. NGOs provided capacity building to assist communities. Public interest legal firms assisted communities in developing their conservancy constitutions and negotiating contracts with the private sector.

This leadership, demonstrated through cooperation and partnership across several organisations, helped establish and secure local ownership and empowerment. By engaging directly with local rural communities, CBNRM legislation and practices were deeply rooted in experience at the grassroots level rather than simply being a product of theory in top-down government planning. 'Policy arose as a response to needs identified by communities, not just government offices. Policy and legislation benefited from the opportunity for debate among a variety of stakeholders and affected parties' (Jones, 1999).

# 4.2.3 Learning from local and regional natural resource management initiatives

Within Namibia, the experience of wildlife management on commercial farms reversed the decline of wildlife on freehold land. It also gave a clear indication that incentives created through direct management and sustainable utilisation of natural resources (and the ability to retain all income derived therein) were working to increase wildlife populations. People were looking to change the legislation on communal land, and there was clear evidence to demonstrate to government officials that such incentives worked. Moreover, experience with wildlife management on private land had created a wildlife tourism industry. Because of this, there was already a market for wildlife and wildlife products, which the development of communal area conservancies could exploit.<sup>6</sup>

Lessons were also taken from early pilot programmes in community-based conservation. In the mid-1980s, an innovative anti-poaching programme in Kunene region, developed by Namibian conservationist Gareth Owen-Smith and assisted by his NGO IRDNC, provided an early template for CBNRM. The community appointed local people as community game guards and worked with local NGOs to promote stewardship of wildlife.

Namibia also applied lessons from similar regional initiatives, such as Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Programme for Indigenous Resource Management (CAMPFIRE). Rural communities in CAMPFIRE receive income directly related to the use and management of wildlife, emphasising the critical link between community income and wildlife conservation. One important lesson from CAMPFIRE has been that management authority and rights to benefits need to be devolved to the lowest possible units to have a positive impact on people's behaviour (Jones, 1999). CAMPFIRE personnel advised Namibian officials that it would be better if communities could retain 100% of revenue from wildlife, and not share the income with the government, as was done in Zimbabwe. In CAMPFIRE, it proved difficult to generate sufficient income to have a meaningful impact at the household level, and sharing of revenue represented an unfair tax on wildlife not applied to other land uses, such as livestock farming (ibid). Namibia applied these lessons, first by having the confidence to move forward on the legislation knowing that similar initiatives worked well in Zimbabwe, and second by amending the elements of the programme that were not working well in CAMPFIRE. Namibia's legislation therefore allows all revenue to go directly to communal area residents.

# 4.2.4 Change in conservation theory to support common property resource management

In designing the new policy and legislation, Namibia also drew on advances in common property resource (CPR) management theory and practice.<sup>7</sup> New ideas were emerging about the design of CPR management institutions, and helped answer some questions about how to devolve proprietorship over a common resource such as wildlife to a group of people on state-owned land. Brian Jones, in the Directorate of Environmental Affairs at MET, developed the conservancy policy and legislation and was exposed to CPR theory through researchers at the University of Zimbabwe, some of whom had developed a set of principles based on CPR management theory applied specifically to wildlife management on communal land. These principles, along with the CPR theory developed by Eleanor Ostrom, suggested that successful CPR institutions needed to have: a defined membership; a set of agreed operating and resource use rules; the ability to monitor compliance with rules and enforcement; defined areas in which resources are 'owned'

<sup>6.</sup> Brian Jones, personal communication, 2010.

and managed; and legitimacy from the resource users and from the state (Ostrom, 1990). These criteria were applied to the CBNRM legislation. According to the legislation, conservancies require: defined membership: a representative management committee; a legally recognised constitution; and defined boundaries.<sup>8</sup>

### 4.2.5 International donor support

The support of international donors – in particular the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – has made a significant impact in terms of helping establish the CBNRM programme and getting the conservation and economic benefits in place. USAID's Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) project has been implemented in three phases, starting in 1993. Its main purpose is to support the national CBNRM programme by assisting government agencies and NGOs to help local communities establish conservancies. The main focal areas are improving the natural resource base, establishing local institutions and developing natural resource-based enterprises (Jones, 2006).

USAID Namibia has made major investments, of both funds and time, in the CBNRM programme (between LIFE I, II and III): more than US\$45 million in total from 1993 to 2010 (Jones, 2006). The majority of these funds have flowed through WWF cooperative agreements, thereby highlighting the important role of international conservation organisations in carrying out CBNRM activities. The aim of this investment is to make civil society a stronger foundation within the country. The Namibian government has supported these large funding streams going through NGOs, as civil society has proved a critical component in terms of sustainability of the CBNRM programme at a time when the government had no capacity to manage these funds itself. The large funding amount and long-term support reflect a strong commitment to the Namibian CBNRM programme.

Project phase	Timeframe	Amount (US\$ millions)
LIFE Phase 1	1993-2000	16.8
LIFE Phase 2	1999-2004	16.2
LIFE Phase 3	2004-2010	13.5

#### Table 3: USAID funding to Namibia's CBNRM programme through the LIFE project, 1993-2010

Source: Jones (2006).

It is important to note that Namibia embarked on a path of change before donors became involved. WWF established a pilot project before the legislation was enacted, but significant donor support (mainly from USAID) did not begin until after the initial draft legislation was put in place.<sup>9</sup> However, support from the international donor community has contributed towards the implementation of the CBNRM programme for 17 years, providing stability for the country to develop and experiment with different activities. USAID's long-term support has also allowed wildlife populations to recover and revenue-generating aspects of the programme to develop. Moreover, an analysis by the Economics Unit of Namibia's MET shows the significant national-level impact of USAID's investment in the country's CBNRM programme. Despite the fact that donor funding peaked in 2003, the economic returns were still mounting. The total value of net national income (the value of goods and services that CBNRM economic activities make available to the country) and the increased capital value of wildlife from 1990 to 2003 totalled approximately US\$60 million (MET, 2004).

# 5. Conclusions

The Namibia case adds to the weight of evidence that, over and above its intrinsic ecological benefits, conservation management has the potential to generate real wealth over a long time horizon and also create real gains for disadvantaged groups.

### 5.1 Key lessons

- The major lesson learnt from Namibia's success in CBNRM is the importance of **linking economic incentives** with environmental management. The past experience of Namibia's land use management and the current experience of many countries today is that environmental sustainability has been hampered largely because national governments have not succeeded in creating incentives for private sector activity. Namibia's progress owes to its innovation in establishing a framework through the 1996 legislation which allows communities to directly access economic benefits through better management of wildlife and other natural resources.
- Namibia's **comprehensive legislation** has led to success in other ways: it also allows for devolution to community groups, transfer of authority to community-led institutions, a predictable incentive-based approach to promote participation and a commitment to equity and linkages to wider social programmes. These elements are of wider relevance beyond Namibia, as they are likely to be key features of any successful CBNRM programme. This CBNRM programme has led to an important change in perception among those living in conservancies as to the value of wildlife and environmental conservation, and the benefits that can accrue from this.
- Namibia's story of progress also highlights the importance of **leadership and local ownership**. This leadership, demonstrated through cooperation and partnership across several organisations, helped establish and secure local ownership and empowerment. By engaging directly with local rural communities, CBRNM legislation and practices were deeply rooted in experience at the grassroots level, rather than simply being a product of theory in top-down government planning.
- Learning applied from other regional initiatives in CBNRM gave Namibia the evidence and confidence to move forward.
- Finally, **long-term support from international donors** allowed the sustainable economic and environmental benefits to come to fruition.

# 5.2 Challenges

**Lack of secure tenure** hinders the ability of conservancies to attract new investments and reflects a significant challenge to the long-term success of Namibia's CBNRM. This is evident from the fact that there has been a much smaller growth in joint venture agreements with the private sector in comparison with the rising number of registered conservancies (Libanda and Blignaut, 2008). A secure tenure system has the potential to attract investors to form joint venture tourism operations. For the CBNRM programme in Namibia to reach its potential, addressing the land tenure system and devolving even more rights over natural resource use may be necessary.

Namibia also faces the challenge of ensuring benefits continue to reach the conservancy communities despite the ebbs and flows in the tourism sector that may occur as a result of changing global economic conditions.

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# Annex 1: Income earned by activity (updated to May 2006)

Year	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003		2004		2005	
Activity	Income	%	Income	%	Income	%	Income	%	Income	%	Income	%	Income	%
Campsites/ CBTEs	618,463	25	1,563,687	46	2,063,422	34	3,105,016	28	3,952,136	29	3,571,902	25	4,161,694	21
Trophy hunting	448,486	18	398,533	12	734,372	12	1,952,455	18	2,259,436	19	2,506,087	17	2,662,602	13
Joint venture tourism	401,699	16	373,750	11	1,536,636	25	2,179,874	20	3,901,627	29	5,268,159	36	7,643,943	38
Game donation (NF)	355,100	19	796,200	31	417,460	8	1,026,600	9	271,800	2	0	0	318,000	2
Crafts	195,917	8	111,389	3	234,827	4	561,221	5	615,100	5	458,289	3	551,761	3
Game meat distribution (NF)	32,000	1	35,000	1	158,830	3	402,014	4	470,014	3	586,608	4	774,567	4
Own-use game (NF)	0	0	0	0	54,320	1	536,472	5	195,834	1	232,560	2	1,012,864	5
Cultural tourism	18,000	1	38,000	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Interest earned	0	0	39,701	1	0	0	156,500	1	181,353	1	161,807	1	161,807	1
Miscellaneous	0	0	15,000	0	17,328	0	0	0	118,000	1	14,791	0	14,791	0
Campsite donation (NF)	126,500	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Campsite management training	23,812	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Thatching grass	219,847	9	40,000	1	898,000	15	1,077,500	10	1,054,006	8	1,587,820	11	2,425,326	12
Live game sale							132,300	1	211,749	2	110,100	1	195,600	1
Premium hunting											8,280	0	25,150	0
Shoot and sell											11,064	0	102,668	1
Veld products													48,400	0
	618,463	25	1,563,687	46	2,063,422	34	3,105,016	28	3,952,136	29	3,571,902	25	4,161,694	21
Subtotal: income generating activity	1,902,412	78	2,580,060	76	5,484,585	90	9,164,866	82	12,564,407	93	13,698,299	94	17,993,742	
Sub-total: NF benefits	537,412	22	831,200	24	639,610	10	1,965,086	18	938,648	7	819,168	6	2,105,431	
Total financial benefits	2,439,824	100	3,411,260	100	6,124,195	100	11,129,952	100	13,503,055	100	14,517,467	100	20,099,173	

Note: NF = non-financial.

Source: NACSO (2006).