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CASE STUDIES ON SUCCESSFUL SOUTHERN AFRICAN NRM INITIATIVES AND THEIR IMPACTS ON POVERTY AND GOVERNANCE

COUNTRY STUDY: NAMIBIA
PROMOTING INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
AS A MEANS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: THE LIVING IN A
FINITE ENVIRONMENT (LIFE) PROJECT AND THE #KHOADI
//HOAS CONSERVANCY, NAMIBIA

January 2006

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This project was funded by USAID-FRAME and implemented by the IUCN-TPARI (Trans-boundary Protected Areas Research Initiative). IUCN-TPARI is funded through the Centre for Integrated Study of the Human Dimensions of Global Change, by way of a cooperative agreement with the National Science Foundation (I-9521914).

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CBNRM | Community-based Natural Resources Management |
| CBO | Community-based Organization |
| FIRM | Forum for Integrated Resource Management |
| GFU | Groofberg Farmers' Union |
| LIFE | Living in a Finite Environment |
| MAWRD | Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development |
| MLRR | Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation |
| MET | Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism |
| NAPCOD | Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification |
| NASCO | Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organizations |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| USAID | US Agency for International Development |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report has been commissioned by the USAID-FRAME programme as part of a series of case studies on successful southern African natural resource management activities and their impacts on poverty and governance, particularly within the context of national action plans to combat desertification. The USAID-Funded Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE Project) has been supporting community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Namibia since 1993. This report considers how the LIFE Project has been contributing to the aims of Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCOD), particularly through its support to a community-based organization, the #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy, in the arid northwest of Namibia. Overviews of desertification in Namibia, NAPCOD and the LIFE Project are provided and the project's support to the #Khoadi //hoas conservancy is considered in more detail.

METHODOLOGY

In accordance with the Terms of Reference, this report draws on existing literature on the LIFE Project and the #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy. A limited number of telephone interviews were carried out with key informants and a brief field visit was made to the conservancy in late 2005, while in the area for other purposes. The author has also drawn on his own experience in assisting the development of the conservancy while an official for Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), and on his experience of the LIFE Project in different capacities. These include carrying out socio-economic survey work in the #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy as a consultant for LIFE (1999) and as the USAID Namibia CBNRM Advisor managing the project for USAID in 2004.

DESERTIFICATION IN NAMIBIA

Namibia is a desert country – the driest south of the Sahara. Droughts are common and much of the country is classified as arid or semi-arid. Desertification is taking place in the form of land degradation in many parts of the country. Seely *et al* (1994) identified a number of symptoms of desertification in Namibia:

- Overgrazing – excessive trampling and consumption of grasses by livestock so that grass cover is reduced or destroyed; caused by overstocking of livestock.
- Bush encroachment – the increase of woody species at the expense of grass. Encroachment lead to the development of a large biomass of thorny bushes reducing available pasture and resulting in a decline of carrying capacity. Bush encroachment is caused mainly by a combination of overgrazing, suppression of fire, and lack of bulk browsers.
- Deforestation – conversion of wooded areas of northern Namibia to open grassland through cutting of trees to clear lands for crops, firewood, and construction, as well as too frequent fires.
- Overtilling – in the northern and north-eastern areas where people cultivate land without adding fertilizer or giving the land a chance to rest and resulting in impoverished soils.

The consequences of desertification have a considerable effect on the economy. Quan *et al* (1994) estimated that desertification was costing rural households in Namibia about N\$80 million (approx US\$13,3 million) a year in lost income.

In a study on the underlying and policy factors affecting desertification in Namibia, Dewdney (1996:17) suggested that overutilisation and sub-optimal allocation of communal land was being caused by the following principal factors:

- Insecure tenure
- Sedentarisation with the expansion of permanent water points (and reduced options for transhumance as a result of private fencing)
- Individual fencing of communal land and population growth causing pressure on available space
- State control of wildlife and forests limiting land use to livestock and limited household crop production.

NAMIBIA'S PROGRAMME TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (NAPCOD)

In order to research and address the symptoms, as well as the underlying factors causing desertification, Namibia developed a comprehensive national programme. Namibia's Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCOD) was established in order to implement the provisions of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) which was signed in June 1994.

The CCD promotes sustainable use of natural resources, but also calls for the development of alternative and diversified forms of land use, and for central governments to devolve responsibility to lower levels, including local communities. The participation and involvement of local communities is emphasised throughout the CCD (United Nations 1997). In line with these approaches, NAPCOD worked with rural resource users to investigate land uses, agricultural practices and alternative livelihoods through pilot activities in a number of communities. Part of the work included assisting communities to clearly identify and express their development needs and to coordinate service provision by government and NGOs through a community development plan (NAPCOD Website 2003). The efforts of community-based organisations (CBOs) have been supported through capacity building and the transfer of knowledge. The main objectives were:

- To ensure that monitoring systems to track and help understand key desertification indices are established and functional
- Strengthen the capacity of selected community-based organisations and community members to plan and sustainably manage their natural resource base and to promote diversified livelihoods
- Strengthen the capacity of service organisations to provide more effective and appropriate services to community-based natural resource users, managers and organisations
- Improve FRAME conditions conducive for sustainable natural resource management practices and develop a basis for implementation
- Communicate and share experiences with SADC partners and internationally¹

NAPCOD was a collaborative programme between the Ministry of Environment and Tourism and Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD).

¹ NAPCOD Website, 2003

THE LIFE PROJECT

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT, APPROACH AND IMPACTS²

The LIFE Project is funded by USAID, Namibia's Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and other sources of matching contributions. Project activities are implemented by MET, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other Namibian institutions. The funding mechanism for the project is a Cooperative Agreement with WWF. The project is guided by the LIFE Programme Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives from MET, USAID, WWF, and a number of Namibian organisations involved in CBNRM.

The LIFE Project is being implemented in three phases over a period that started in 1993 and ends in 2010. The main aim of the project is to support the National Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme in Namibia. This is done by assisting Namibian government agencies and NGOs to help local communities to establish common property resource management institutions called conservancies that are provided for under Namibian legislation³. Currently, there are 44 registered conservancies in Namibia, covering more than 10 million ha, and many more communities were in the process of forming conservancies.

The project is complex and multi-dimensional. It has three main focal areas: improving the natural resource base, establishing local institutions and developing natural resource-based enterprises. It therefore integrates biodiversity conservation, democracy/governance and enterprise development in one project. The LIFE Project goal and purpose statements remained consistent between Phases I and II:

- Goal:** Improved quality of life for rural Namibians through sustainable natural resource management.
- Purpose:** Communities derive increased benefits in an equitable manner by gaining control over and sustainably managing natural resources in target areas

The initial phase began in May, 1993 and operated until June 30, 2000 with a funding level of US\$16,8 million. Phase II began on August 12, 1999, running concurrent with the last nine months of phase 1 and continued to September, 2004. The level of funding was \$16,2 million. Phases I and II focused on supporting MET and Namibian NGOs to mobilise local communities into conservancies and to develop various wildlife and tourism-based enterprises. Capacity building of Namibian organisations was also a major focus.

The LIFE Project implementation strategy in Phases I and II was to support local organizations by providing technical assistance, training, and funding through grants. In Phase 1 the geographical target areas were limited to the northeast of the country. The target areas were expanded in Phase II, covering parts of northwest Namibia, including the #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy, to which the project provided direct support.

Phase III of the LIFE Project began in October 2004 and runs to 2010 with a funding level of \$13,5 million. While aiming to consolidate existing activities and achievements, this phase contains some significant shifts in

² Drawn largely from Jones, B. T. B. In preparation. Principles, Processes, and Products: Best practice in project design and implementation. Lessons learned from the Living in a Finite Environment Project, Namibia 1993 – 2006.

³ Under Namibian legislation passed in 1996, rural communities wishing to form a conservancy have to define the members and boundaries of the conservancy, have a representative committee, a benefits distribution plan and a legally-recognized constitution. Once registered by government, a conservancy gains use rights over certain species of wildlife, trophy hunting rights, the right to sell game and the ability to enter into contracts with tourism operators. Conservancy status does not affect other forms of land use such as crop growing and livestock, but provides rural people with additional land use and income generating options.

emphasis. Phase III aims to promote greater diversification of CBNRM activities, which in the previous phases were heavily reliant on wildlife and tourism. There is a considerable reduction in funding available for grants to support NGOs and conservancies directly and funds available have been further diluted by a heavily devalued US Dollar. The purpose of LIFE Phase III is:

Improved livelihoods through sustainable integrated natural resources management

The four Intermediate Results are:

- Strengthened Institutional Capacity
- Increased Economic Growth
- Improved Governance
- Enhanced Recovery and Sustainability of Natural Resources

The LIFE Project was built on a foundation that was already being laid by Namibian organizations. When the project started in 1993 the following were already in place (Jones *in prep.*):

- a clear expression from local communities of interest in conserving and benefiting from wildlife and other resources
- a request from local communities for the same rights over wildlife as white freehold farmers
- a draft policy for giving such rights to local communities
- a number of pilot community-based natural resource management projects in different parts of the country
- an emerging collaborative group of government officials and NGO personnel who were developing a vision for CBNRM in Namibia

It is difficult to clearly specify the impacts of the LIFE Project because it has largely provided support to other organizations that have implemented CBNRM in Namibia. However, some of the cumulative impacts of LIFE and Namibian organizations are the following:

- By the end of LIFE II there were 31 registered communal area conservancies covering nearly 8 million ha of land in five different biomes.
- In 2004, the total value of the contribution of the national CBNRM programme to net national income and increased capital value of wildlife in northwest Namibia from 1990 to 2003 was N\$417 million, almost matching the total investment in CBNRM by government and donors of N\$464 million.
- Increased capacity of Namibian organizations to implement CBNRM and of the umbrella organization, the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO).
- Development of innovative community-based wildlife census and monitoring systems.
- Well-documented increases in wildlife, particularly in the northwest of the country.
- By 2004 income to CBNRM participants in conservancies was N\$14,1 million (approx. US\$2,3 million). This income was generated through conservancy/enterprise cash income; household/wage income; and conservancy non-financial benefits mostly in the form of game meat from either harvested trophy animals or game cropped by the conservancies⁴.

⁴ LIFE project, 2004

LINKS TO NAPCOD

The overall approach of the Namibian CBNRM Programme fits very closely with the aims and objectives of the UNCCD and with the objectives and implementation strategy of NAPCOD. Jones (2004) found that the national CBNRM Programme and NAPCOD⁵ shared much in terms of conceptual foundation and philosophy. Both recognise the role of landholders/local resource users in conservation and both recognise that if the appropriate conditions are in place, then landholders/resource users are likely to manage their resources sustainably. These conditions include the following⁶:

- Devolution of rights over resources
- Incentives for sustainable management
- Ability to benefit from use of resources
- Placing a value on resources
- Having the capacity to manage resources (including information, knowledge, skills, strategic planning capability etc.)

Both programmes are founded on the concept of sustainable use of natural resources and promote integrated land use planning and management. Both recognise the need for coordinated and integrated approaches between conservation projects and programmes. The LIFE Project is founded on the same philosophy and principles and has applied these in its support to the National CBNRM Programme.

More specifically, LIFE has contributed to achieving NAPCOD goals and objectives through its support to the establishment of conservancies as common property institutions that have begun to take responsibility for managing local natural resources sustainably. LIFE liaised regularly with NAPCOD at national level and was a partner of NAPCOD in providing support to the #Khoadi //hoas conservancy at community level.

SUPPORT TO #KHOADI //HOAS CONSERVANCY

The #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy, located on communal land in Kunene Region in northwest Namibia, was unusual among the initial conservancies to be registered in that it emerged with very little NGO support (Jones 1999). Two American Fulbright Scholars hired with funding sourced by MET advised the community on the development of the conservancy for one year. Due to lack of strong support from a Namibian NGO, the LIFE Project provided considerable direct assistance to the conservancy. This took the form of a grant to assist the ongoing operations of the conservancy until it started generating its own income; support for institutional development and governance; advice and support for wildlife counting and monitoring; and support for developing a conservancy management and land use plan. The grant was expected to assist the conservancy to address the following:

- Review the conservancy's staffing structure
- Develop operational guidelines and administrative systems
- Develop systems for financial sustainability
- Establish a training development plan
- Develop a land use zoning plan
- Develop an equitable benefits distribution plan

⁵ As well as the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan

⁶ Jones 2004: 20

As a number of other organizations began to assist the conservancy, the LIFE support has tended to diminish. Currently the main focus of assistance is for continued wildlife monitoring and quota setting for trophy and other forms of hunting and assistance towards marketing and managing the conservancy's hunting concession.

SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND COMBATING DESERTIFICATION IN THE #KHOADI //HOAS CONSERVANCY

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The #Khoadi //hoas conservancy was formed under wildlife legislation to gain rights over wildlife and tourism and to manage these for the benefit of the local community. In conjunction with a local farmers' union, the conservancy has begun to integrate wildlife management with rangeland and water management. Support to sustainable natural resource management by the conservancy has been coordinated through the conservancy's own development and natural resource management plan.

BACKGROUND

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The conservancy falls in a semi-arid area with an east-west rainfall gradient from the freehold farms on the eastern border (annual average 300 mm), westwards to the Grootberg Pass (240 mm a year). The rainfall is highly variable and is often erratic, both seasonally, and spatially. The evaporation rate is about 3 m a year.

An east-west transect of the conservancy includes the relatively flat and sandy highland plains (elevation 1 000 - 1 200 m) dotted with granite hills, which stretch from the border with the freehold farms to the basalt ridges of the Grootberg in the west. Surrounded by a rocky plain of eroded basalt, the Grootberg rises to 1 645 m and forms the edge of the escarpment which rises above the plains of the pre-Namib desert. Soils consist mostly of red sands on the highland plains, and shallow eroded basalt and granite based soils on the hills.

Mopane *Colophospermum mopane* is the dominant tree species over much of the area, with mopane, the ana tree *Faidherbia albida*, the camelthorn *Acacia erioloba*, and the leadwood *Combretum imberbe* found along the dry water courses. *Sterculia africana* and *Sterculia quinqueloba* are common on the larger granite koppies in the east.

The conservancy and surrounding area support at least 82 species of mammal, including six endemics, among them the Hartmann's mountain zebra *Equus zebra hartmannae*. The only endangered mammal species is the black rhino *Diceros bicornis bicornis* found in extremely low numbers on the western margins of the conservancy. Predators include lion (very occasionally), leopard *Panthera pardus*, cheetah *Acinonyx jubatus*, and spotted hyena *Crocuta crocuta*. There is a population of elephant *Loxodonta africana* estimated at more than 200 (varying seasonally).

LIVELIHOOD ISSUES

The conservancy area of about 362 000 ha previously consisted of land owned by white farmers and bought by the South African Government to help create the Damaraland Homeland as part of an *apartheid*-style division of Namibia. Many of the residents were forcibly settled in the area from hundreds of kilometers away. There is a scattered settlement pattern with the majority of people living on the fenced former white

farms in small groups of 2-5 families, close to artificial water points. Several hundred people live at the settlements of Erwee and Anker, each of which has a school and a clinic.

The human population of the conservancy is estimated at 3 000 - 3 500. Most people live a subsistence existence, although there are a handful of fairly wealthy livestock owners, who farm commercially. The main form of subsistence is sedentary livestock farming at low stocking rates (however in times of drought the movement of livestock sometimes over large distances is an important coping strategy). Most farmers keep a mixture of cattle and small stock. The semi-arid, conditions, poor soils, and steep slopes in the hills make crop farming extremely difficult and even livestock rearing is precarious. The sale of livestock by the more wealthy farmers and the receipt of remittances and pensions by the poorer residents are important sources of cash income. There is little formal employment.

Many livelihood activities are directly dependent upon the natural resource base, making people particularly susceptible to natural shocks such as drought. Strong informal social networks and relationships of reciprocity serve as safety nets in difficult times (Kruger 2003).

Access to resources such as water and grazing is crucial for conservancy residents but is not assured for many people because of tenure uncertainty. Jensen *et al* (2002) reported that residents are unclear about who has authority over the land and in many of the more remote areas of the conservancy one wealthy family has taken over control of land and grazing access. "In these and many similar cases, confusion over tenure status and related resource rights has allowed one or a few people to take *de facto* control over large tracts of productive land" (Jensen *et al* 2002:17). As a result, many people are confined to smaller or less productive areas, resulting in "extremely high pressure" on the marginal areas and constant pressure on the land controlled by the powerful.

The presence of wildlife adds to the difficulties for farmers. Elephants and species such as kudu, oryx and springbok use the same water points as livestock and compete with cattle and goats for grazing and browse. Elephants cause damage to water points, fences, and gardens, kill livestock and threaten people. Jackals and other predators kill livestock.

RESOURCES USED OR MANAGED

Through various institutions (see next sub-section) the community manages its grazing, water, wildlife and tourism within the conservancy area. One of the main focal issues of this case study is the various means used to try to promote integrated management of these resources, and integrated and coordinated service provision by support agencies with single resource mandates.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING RESOURCES

The community has been relatively well organised since the early 1990s through a strong association of local farmers, who collaborate through the Grootberg Farmers' Union (GFU). The GFU was responsible for the establishment of the conservancy and the relationship is always described locally as that of parent and child (Jones 2003). The #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy was registered by the MET in mid-1998, one of the first four communal area conservancies to be registered in Namibia.

Jones (2003) identified a number of institutions that play a role in land and natural resource management in the conservancy and which, to some extent, compete with each other for authority. For example, the central government line ministry, the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (MLRR), has overall control of land, which is owned by the state. The Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD) advises the traditional authority on allocation of grazing land. The Regional government has no specific powers over land but co-ordinates regional development activities that have an impact on land use. The traditional authority is responsible for the allocation of residential and grazing land. Community water point committees are responsible for the management and maintenance of water points and have the right to exclude those who do not pay user fees. It might be argued that whoever controls water in a semi-arid environment controls the land. The GFU is a strong institutional actor that also advises the traditional authority on land allocation and has a vested interest in promoting decisions that favour livestock owners.

The conservancy has defined boundaries officially declared in the government gazette and this delimitation could be interpreted as strengthening the land rights of the conservancy members. The conservancy wishes to promote land uses that further its aims of increased financial benefit through wildlife and tourism.

Through its legal status as a conservancy, the community receives trophy hunting rights and the rights to operate tourism on its land. The conservancy has had a contract with a professional hunter for a trophy quota received from the MET. The quota is set mainly based on the results of game counts carried out jointly by the conservancy, the MET and NGOs. The conservancy is also able to buy and sell game animals. It has its own mid-market tourism lodge on its land zoned for wildlife and tourism. The lodge infrastructure was paid for by donor funding and the lodge and associated tourism operations are managed on contract by a private company. The conservancy also has its own campsite on a major tourist route through the Kunene Region.

FUNDING

The LIFE grant that ran from May 2000 to April 2002 was worth N\$300 000 (approx. US\$31 250 at the then exchange rate). A further institutional and capacity building grant under LIFE II through the Namibia Nature Foundation Co-operative Agreement with USAID was for N\$108 480 and ran from June 2003 to November 2004.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

GOAL

The overall goal of LIFE support to the #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy has been to build the institutional and technical capacity of the conservancy and its members to manage their natural resources sustainably. In particular LIFE aims to promote wildlife and tourism as additional, complementary forms of land use.

PROBLEM TO BE RESOLVED

The key NRM problems in #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy are closely aligned with the key desertification issues noted in sub-sections 1.3 and 2.2 above and are related to the livelihood issues noted in sub-section 3.2.2 above. Tenure and the necessary institutional arrangements for collective management of the area's natural resources are central issues. The conservancy approach represents an attempt to provide some form of resource tenure in the absence of clear mechanisms for groups or communities to gain secure tenure over their land. The lack of formal tenure recognition and the weakening of past institutional arrangements have led to the tenure insecurity among individual livestock owners described by Jensen *et al* (2002) and noted in sub-section 3.2.2.

Although some movement of livestock still takes place in times of drought, fixed artificial water points have led to greater sedentarisation of people and their herds putting greater pressure on grazing areas around the water points. There is a need to adapt existing grazing management systems and adopt new practices and technologies for improving livestock. The difficulties of farming with livestock in the conservancy and of managing water are increased by the damage to water installations caused by elephants and their use of water that has been pumped for livestock.

Given the climatic uncertainty of the area and the poverty of most residents, there has been a need to diversify livelihood activities and find ways of providing jobs and income that can reduce reliance on natural resources.

Further, there has been a need to promote greater efficiency and synergy in service provision to the residents and to promote an integrated approach to natural resource management instead of one driven by the single resource interests and agendas of government line ministries and NGOs.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

One of the most important activities of the LIFE Project and other service providers in the #Khoadi //hoas conservancy has been the development of the FIRM approach. FIRM (the Forum for Integrated Resource

Management) was initiated in 1996 by the Directorate of Environmental Affairs in MET in partnership with a number of other organisations to coordinate the support being provided by different government departments, NGOs and projects to the residents of the conservancy area. The aim was to assist the community in identifying its own development objectives and a programme of action and then coordinate the activities of service providers through collaborative action in support of the community vision and action plan. A system evolved where detailed annual work plans were developed at the start of the year jointly by the GFU and the conservancy; service providers would attend a meeting to indicate where they could assist; and additional meetings were held during the year to assess progress and adjust work plans if needed (Kruger *et al* 2003). LIFE was a member of the group of organizations that initiated FIRM, and provided considerable support to the development of the community vision and action plans.

As part of the FIRM approach, LIFE has assisted the conservancy in developing financial management systems, carrying out needs assessments, and establishing tourism potential. It has played a major role in supporting baseline surveys of wildlife and the development of a game monitoring system used by the conservancy's environmental shepherds. It has provided training to the shepherds in monitoring resources other than wildlife. LIFE contributed to the development of an adaptive management plan for the conservancy as well as the development of a land use plan. Other partners in FIRM, including NAPCOD and its partner organisations, have provided support to improved livestock production and management and monitoring of range productivity.

RESULTS

LIVELIHOOD RESULTS

The livelihood results of the FIRM approach have been mixed. The conservancy has taken longer than expected to generate sufficient income from wildlife and tourism to start providing significant benefits to residents. Schiffer (2004) found during her field work in 2002 that community members in #Khoadi //Hôas were becoming impatient at the lack of tangible benefits as their conservancy had already been registered for nearly five years. A number of factors have contributed to this situation. The receipt of income from trophy hunting was delayed because the conservancy initially entered into a poorly constructed contract with a professional hunter who failed to bring hunters to the area. This was because the conservancy wanted to develop its own contract without technical support. LIFE subsequently helped the conservancy to terminate the contract and to find an appropriate, qualified concessionaire. The conservancy's ability to generate income from trophy hunting is limited by the lack of a permanent quota for elephant⁷. An initial quota that included one elephant brought in N\$150 000 (approx. US\$25 000), but without an elephant the quota will be worth about N\$75 000. The conservancy had expected to generate income from an existing tourism concession on land within the conservancy but managed by the MET. Although MET had adopted a policy of converting such concessions to conservancies, this did not take place in #Khoadi //hoas and negotiations are continuing over the future of the concession.

The new mid-market Grootberg Lodge is in its first year of operation and needs to achieve a sufficiently high occupancy rate to start generating income. Once the lodge is able to do this, the benefits for the community will be important. The lodge currently employs 16 local residents at N\$550 per person per month with an additional N\$250 worth of rations per person per month. The operating company takes 15% of gross turnover (less marketing fees and taxes) as a management fee, 15% of gross turnover goes to the conservancy and the remainder goes back into the lodge for maintenance and further investment in infrastructure. The projected income to the conservancy for the first year was N\$300 000 (approx. US\$50 000) but this amount will not be realized because the lodge was completed too late for marketing to be carried out (DuRaai, D. 2005, *pers. Comm.*). The intention is that the managing company will train local staff to the level where the conservancy can take over operation of the lodge itself. The aim is to buy local crafts and assist one or two

⁷ Although elephant numbers are increasing in northwest Namibia, environmental factors will always limit general numbers and therefore the number available for trophy hunting

families to grow vegetables for sale to the lodge. The lodge also buys 12 head of game annually from the conservancy for meat for staff for a total of N\$6 000. The lodge management also wishes to explore a number of potential tourism activities involving conservancy residents.

The conservancy distributes meat from trophy hunting and its own hunts, but the amounts received per household are small, and some residents are unhappy with the distribution (Schiffer 2004). The last hunt was for 168 animals on a quota approved by MET. The conservancy has made a number of other contributions locally to social welfare. In 2003 it donated N\$12 500 to a local school to pay for renovations, it has paid for the purchase of breeding stock to be loaned to members to help improve livestock quality, and regularly pays for a soup kitchen to provide food for the elderly. The conservancy also provides diesel at a 50% discount to members for pumping water where it is used up by elephants, and compensates water point committees for elephant damage⁸. It also had a programme of protecting water installations against elephants.

According to the conservancy chair, Asser Ndjitezua, and the coordinator of the environmental shepherds, Bob Guibeb, (2005 *pers. comm.*) the conservancy aims not only to manage its wildlife and generate income from it, but also to help local farmers to farm sustainably. Support to livestock management from the conservancy through the environmental shepherds has included monitoring of livestock quality, rainfall and grass density and vegetation quality. Considerable emphasis is being placed on improving livestock quality in order to reduce the need to keep large numbers of livestock. Farmers are assisted to grade their stock, remove weak and sick animals, improve quality and keep a smaller number of good animals that are worth more. Although NAPCOD funding has ended, the conservancy and the GFU are doing their best to continue with these activities although not at the same scale. Ndjitezua and Guibeb say that some residents are beginning to respond positively, particularly the younger farmers. The quality of livestock is beginning to improve and some farmers are willing to reduce numbers as their stock improves. They also say that residents are beginning to respond to conservancy awareness creation about deforestation and some people have started using stone and earth bricks for construction rather than wood.

If these beginnings can be built upon and the positive responses of residents sustained over time, then improvements in livestock production and in range management can start to translate into positive livelihood impacts.

NATURAL RESOURCE RESULTS

Schiffer (2004) found general agreement amongst stakeholders that the conservancy helped to reduce large-scale and commercial poaching by outsiders, although local hunting for the pot was not as easily controlled. The environmental shepherds were in a difficult position because on the one hand, they were community members but on the other hand, it was their job to control their neighbours. Wildlife experts working with the conservancy agree that although local poaching takes place it is not at a level that is causing declines in numbers (Weaver, C. 2006 *pers. comm.*, Stuart-Hill, G. 2006. *pers. comm.*). Data from game counts and personal observations suggest that most populations of large mammal are stable or increasing, although fluctuations take place at different times and in different years because of movement of certain species over large areas (even beyond conservancy boundaries) in response to rainfall and grazing availability. Most of the wildlife in the conservancy is concentrated in the Klip River area that has been zoned by the conservancy for wildlife and tourism, although wildlife is found across the conservancy, but in lower numbers. The Klip River area serves as a core conservation area from which wildlife can move out into surrounding areas of the conservancy. The MET is sufficiently confident of the conservancy's ability to conserve wildlife that it is considering the re-introduction of black rhino into the Klip River area.

Five years of support to improved livestock production and range management is too short a period in which to produce results that indicate effects on land degradation. However, the results reported by Ndjitezua and

⁸ Water point committees are expected to levy residents to pay for maintenance of installations and this can be very costly due to damage of pumps and pipes by elephants

Guibeb (2005 *pers. comm.*) regarding adoption of improved production and range management techniques, if widely replicated, could contribute over time to combating desertification.

GOVERNANCE RESULTS

Two main areas relating to governance issues are considered. The first is the overall management of the conservancy in relation to the inputs of external service providers through the FIRM approach. The second is the relationship between the conservancy and its members. According to Kruger *et al.* (2003) the main outputs and products of FIRM are:

- The development of integrated work plans in a participatory manner;
- The development of demand-based project proposals, involving all relevant stakeholders; and
- Regular participatory monitoring, evaluation and adjustment of work plans.

They suggest that “this community-driven approach empowers community decision-making, provides opportunities for capacity building and ensures community control over development. Success is dependent on all other stakeholders taking a more responsive role, as directed by, and in support of, community priorities, and helping only when and where requested” (Kruger *et al.* 2003:1759).

The development of an integrated community vision and action plans was facilitated by the close links between the GFU and the conservancy. This meant that from the beginning, the local institutional mechanisms existed to integrate livestock management with wildlife and tourism. The support of the livestock farmers in the GFU was important for securing agreement on the setting aside of the Klip River area as a wildlife and tourism zone largely free from livestock and settlement.

A survey was carried out in 2002 to assess the impacts of FIRM in the conservancy. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. A summary of achievements and challenges, based on the perceptions of a variety of people (n=15) directly or indirectly involved in FIRM in #Khoadi //hoas and interviewed during October 2002. Source: Kruger *et al* (2003)

| Achievements | Challenges |
|--|--|
| 1. Involves a variety of stakeholders interested in the same issues. | 1. Mainly driven by external service providers (mentioned by only 1 respondent). |
| 2. Serves as a platform for sharing of information and knowledge. | 2. A lack of buy-in from a number of other important partners in the field of natural resource management. |
| 3. Provides a platform for integrated planning, involving a variety of stakeholders. | 3. A gap between the GFU and its membership. |
| 4. Focuses on support where it is really needed. | 4. Some competition among certain service providers. |
| 5. Puts the community in the “driver’s seat.” | 5. Institutional and financial sustainability not clarified for when donors withdraw. |
| 6. Is conducive towards improving understanding and the development of long-term visions. | 6. Irregular attendance of some partners. |
| 7. Minimises duplication of activities. | 7. A lack of continuity amongst representatives from different partners. |
| 8. Provides a holistic picture of the challenges and opportunities within a community. | |
| 9. Allows opportunities for participatory monitoring, evaluation and adjustment of planned activities. | |
| 10. Improves transparency with respect to roles and responsibilities of different partners. | |
| 11. Ensures more efficient use of human and financial resources. | |

An ongoing problem in #Khoadi //hoas is the gap between the conservancy committee and ordinary members. This has been identified by a number of researchers (e.g. Jones 1999, Deutsch 2002, Vaughan and

Katjiua 2002 and Schiffer 2004). During research carried out by the WILD project, when asked to rank local organisations in terms of priority for supporting NRM and livelihoods, a group of residents placed the conservancy last and the majority of the group said that it had little effect on their livelihoods, did nothing for them and just controlled the illegal use of wildlife (Jones *et al* 2002)⁹. None of the residents interviewed in the initial group-based work carried out by WILD, except for those employed by the conservancy and their families, had seen a copy of the conservancy constitution or had it translated into a local language.

The key problems are a lack of information about conservancy activities, a perceived lack of transparency about conservancy decision-making and benefit distribution, and a lack of interest by conservancy residents in the affairs of the conservancy. Schiffer (2004) suggests that the lack of interest stems from several factors:

- The local community does not have a history/culture of organising themselves – the history of colonialism meant people still wait for things to happen and the scattered nature of Damara social organisation was an obstacle to self-organised participation
- Impeding procedures and structures hinder participation – linked to the provisions in the conservancy legislation and shortcomings in the conservancy constitution¹⁰.
- Lack of information/education - inadequate education and knowledge about the conservancy were seen as obstacles for strong participation of the community; poorly educated communities are more prone to being manipulated by better-informed individuals.
- Logistical issues - the size of the conservancy (in area as well as membership numbers) is a challenge for getting people together on a regular basis. Dissemination of information, options for participation and a feeling of ownership over the conservancy decreased the further people lived from the central settlements and the conservancy office.
- People became inactive after unpleasant experiences - community members complained that criticism was not taken notice of, questions were not answered, and people were not allowed to talk at meetings.
- Exclusive power-networks/favouritism - members of certain networks were more likely to become influential committee members.
- Lack of community interest in conservancy matters - participation is low because people do not see significant benefits from the conservancy

The committee is aware of these issues and has made attempts to encourage more participation in key decision-making. It has, for example, held conservancy wide meetings to discuss and develop a conservancy benefit distribution plan.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS

No unexpected results have been identified in the literature reviewed.

CONCLUSIONS

LESSONS LEARNED

Evidence suggests that one of the lasting impacts of the support provided by LIFE in conjunction with other FIRM partners is the institutional capacity building to the #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy. Deutsch (2002) in an evaluation of NAPCOD activities in southern Namibia found there was a higher likelihood of success in combating desertification where consistent support is focused through “a community organizational

⁹ At this stage, no benefits had been distributed by the conservancy to residents

¹⁰ In particular, committee elections that resulted in over representation of one area of the conservancy led members from other areas to feel they were not well represented in decision-making

medium”. The experience in #Khoadi //hoas would appear to be similar. Jensen *et al* (2002:18) found that “while the conservancy model has by no means been perfect, it has proven to be a viable alternative for wildlife resource management. Through this model, a social and political institution has been built which may well have the capacity to manage land rights in the future.” Vaughan and Katjiua (2002:19) found that “communities within #Khoadi //hoas Conservancy recognise the conservancy institution as an important stakeholder in the area for decision making over some development activities, and conservancy leaders (along with other local figures such as Agricultural Extension officers) are often called upon for advice in land and resource disputes.” In relation to #Khoadi //hoas, Deutsch (2002: 139) suggests that the conservancy AGM is “a public event of growing importance, an indicator of local governmental and organisational development.”

Such findings about the institutional importance and relevance of the conservancy for local residents make it particularly important that the internal governance issues noted in sub-section 3.4.3 are adequately addressed. If the conservancy is to continue to function as a useful and relevant institution it needs to increase its legitimacy so that it can be seen to represent the people of the area. Much of the focus of FIRM support has been to the conservancy committee. There is a need to provide much greater focus on the relationship between committee and members and how accountability and transparency can be developed. The WILD project researchers have suggested that conservancy activities need to be more relevant to the livelihood needs of residents in order for conservancies to gain more support (Long and Jones 2004). #Khoadi //hoas conservancy is doing this through its support to livestock and range management activities in conjunction with the local farmers’ union. It is also doing this through support to water points that are damaged by elephants and provision of subsidized diesel for pumping water. The conservancy needs to expand these activities to reach greater numbers of residents. It also needs to consult widely among its members about how best to use the income that should start to flow from its newly developed tourism activities.

The conservancy is currently going through what Deutsch (2002) calls rule by “middle management” – the committee – and suggests that in the initial stages of conservancy formation, such an approach might be necessary, provided the committee is responsible to members and informs them of decisions. There are however, key decisions that require greater participation if they are to be accepted by the membership. The setting aside of a large area of potential grazing land for wildlife and tourism is a decision that needs broad agreement if it is to be successfully implemented. The conservancy benefit distribution plan is another example of an issue that needs broad debate and agreement so that benefits can be defined by the beneficiaries themselves. In essence the conservancy needs to strike a balance. There seems to be a tendency among researchers and practitioners to expect communities in rural Africa to exercise far higher levels of participatory democracy than exist almost anywhere else in the world. Magome (2003) suggested that CBNRM was one of the means for external actors such as practitioners, researchers and donors to live out their socialist ideals on some rural stage. CBNRM also seems to be a convenient stage for the same external actors to play out their dreams of an idealized form of democracy where everyone has participated in making decisions. Conservancies like #Khoadi //hoas need to strike a balance between grinding to a halt in a never-ending round of community consultations conducted with one unreliable pick up truck over many square kilometers of semi-desert, and losing their legitimacy because the committee takes decisions on behalf of the people without consulting them. Finding the balance is hopefully where #Khoadi //hoas is heading. The conservancy is increasingly using eight local level farmers’ leagues that make up the GFU for dissemination of information. This process could be extended to decision-making providing internal devolution to lower levels of authority within the conservancy.

Noting the problems regarding transparency and participatory decision-making in #Khoadi //hoas, Schiffer (2004) found that local people in 2002 were only starting gradually to exercise their rights. In order to do this, people need to be aware of their rights and to have incentives to exercise them. Increased benefits to a larger number of individuals could lead to greater participation and interest in conservancy affairs including the rights of members and the procedures for decision-making.

Although donor funding to the conservancy has been reduced and some technical support has gone as a result, the conservancy albeit with reduced resources, is continuing with a number of important activities that can contribute to combating desertification. However, the income that it hopes to generate from hunting and tourism in the future can help to fund some of these activities that will also be important for providing greater livelihood security.

LINKS TO UNCCD

As indicated in various sub-sections above, the FIRM approach of which the LIFE Project has been a key participant has clear links to achieving Namibia's objectives and global objectives with regard to combating desertification. The key contributions are in:

- supporting the development of community level institutions that can structure appropriate local management regimes over a variety of resources;
- providing additional and complementary land uses that can generate income to fund community priority activities;
- generating income from resource use which communities can plough back in to land and resource conservation; and
- building capacity to identify and address desertification issues locally.

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