

# THE STATE OF COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: ASSESSING PROGRESS AND LOOKING AHEAD

ROMY CHEVALLIER



AUGUST  
2016

*African perspectives.  
Global insights.*

## **SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) has a long and proud record as South Africa's premier research institute on international issues. It is an independent, non-government think tank whose key strategic objectives are to make effective input into public policy, and to encourage wider and more informed debate on international affairs, with particular emphasis on African issues and concerns. It is both a centre for research excellence and a home for stimulating public engagement. SAIIA's occasional papers present topical, incisive analyses, offering a variety of perspectives on key policy issues in Africa and beyond. Core public policy research themes covered by SAIIA include good governance and democracy; economic policymaking; international security and peace; and new global challenges such as food security, global governance reform and the environment. Please consult our website [www.saiia.org.za](http://www.saiia.org.za) for further information about SAIIA's work.

## **GOVERNANCE OF AFRICA'S RESOURCES PROGRAMME**

The Governance of Africa's Resources Programme (GARP) of SAIIA is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The programme contributes to policy governing the exploitation and extraction of Africa's natural resources by assessing existing governance regimes and suggesting alternatives to targeted stakeholders. GARP examines the governance of a number of resource-rich African countries within the context of cross-cutting themes such as environmental change and sustainability. Addressing these elements is critical for Africa to avoid deepening the challenges of governance and reducing its vulnerability to related crises, including climate change, energy security and environmental degradation. The programme focuses on the mining, forestry, fisheries and petroleum sectors in select African countries.

**PROGRAMME HEAD** Alex Benkenstein, [alex.benkenstein@saiia.org.za](mailto:alex.benkenstein@saiia.org.za)

---

© SAIIA AUGUST 2016

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilised in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information or storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Opinions expressed are the responsibility of the individual authors and not of SAIIA.

Please note that all currencies are in US\$ unless otherwise indicated.

Cover photo © Antonia Hoffman,  
IRDNC (Integrated Rural  
Development and  
Nature Conservation)

---

## ABSTRACT

Since the 1990s the development–conservation paradigm in the Southern African region has shifted from an approach that emphasised centralised management and wildlife protection, to one that better incorporates socio-economic development and promotes inclusive management and sustainable livelihood strategies. This has led to conservation approaches that may better recognise the rights of local people to manage and benefit from communal natural resources.

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) has had mixed results since the first programmes were initiated in Southern Africa. The foundations of CBNRM – economic incentives, devolution, proprietorship and conservation – have been applied in varying degrees with different institutional models, many governments favouring co-management and revenue-sharing approaches, retaining some control over natural resources and a large share of the income from their use.

National experiences in the region show that projects most likely to succeed have effective institutional frameworks; are supported through legislation and natural resources management policy; and focus on transparency and good governance at government level and within community and private sector partnerships. Community-based organisations with technical, organisational and institutional capacity are better able to assume management responsibilities and enhance partnerships with public- and private-sector actors.

Although the majority of CBNRM activities are still wildlife and tourism related, there is a shift to broaden their range. The development of innovative income generation from natural resources beyond wildlife products is key to furthering this discussion and spreading the risk of wildlife revenue-dependent communities. New thinking includes integrated landscape-level natural resource management and the use of ecosystem service accounting to justify land-use choices about conservation.

This paper provides a historical overview of CBNRM in the region, examining CBNRM's degrees of success in achieving the objectives of addressing rural livelihood improvement through benefit sharing and income generation, while addressing biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use. It considers the evolution of CBNRM policy, and highlights some of the lessons learnt from the cases of Namibia and Botswana in strengthening community-based decision making and management.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Romy Chevallier is a senior researcher with the Governance of Africa's Resources Programme (GARP) at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). She holds a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand. During her time at SAIIA she has worked on issues related to the EU's strategic engagement with Africa and South Africa, and has investigated the role of emerging powers in a changing geopolitical landscape. Her most recent work focuses on the politics of climate change, natural resource governance and environmental sustainability in Uganda, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana. She leads SAIIA's work on climate change and resilience.

**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
CAMPFIRE	Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	community-based natural resource management
CBO	community-based organisation
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
JVA	joint-venture agreement
JVP	joint-venture partnership
MOMS	management oriented monitoring system
NACSO	Namibian Association of Community-Based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations
NGO	non-governmental organisation
PES	payment for environmental services
PGR	private game reserve
TCE	tourism conservation enterprise
TFCA	transfrontier conservation area
WAVES	Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services
WMA	wildlife management areas

## INTRODUCTION

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), as its name suggests, is a term to describe the management of land, forests, wildlife, water and other natural resources by local institutions for local benefit. CBNRM has expanded throughout Africa over the past three decades as a response to the failure of centralised colonial and post-colonial policies to effectively manage natural resources, promote equitable benefit sharing and secure the co-operation of communities in sustainable resource governance practices.

Perspectives on CBNRM differ widely among stakeholders, and even within government departments themselves.<sup>1</sup> CBNRM can take many forms in different locations according to the unique and varied socio-political and bio-physical contexts of each country. CBNRM models may give greater or lesser emphasis to commercial or to subsistence resource utilisation, and may rely on consumptive tourism, like hunting, or non-consumptive sources of revenue like photographic tourism, or any mix of the two. CBNRM can also apply to traditional resource management arrangements, such as the collective regimes governing rangelands and pastoralist grazing reserves, in-shore fisheries or communally managed forests. CBNRM can be formal or informal, and often straddles both realms, particularly given the contemporary social and institutional transformations occurring across much of sub-Saharan Africa.

Finally, some consider CBNRM as primarily a development tool that empowers communities and provides them with tangible benefits, while others view it as a conservation model to protect wildlife and other ecosystems. The rural development potential of CBNRM has been increasingly emphasised and subsequently mainstreamed into broad cross-cutting national-development and poverty-reduction strategies. From a conservation perspective, CBNRM builds on the recognition among policymakers that for wildlife to persist outside protected areas on private and communal lands, it must be an economically competitive land-use option for landholders. Of course, effective CBNRM can contribute to both development and conservation objectives, but the lack of clarity around priority objectives can lead to confusion and discord among stakeholders.

As is apparent from the above, there is no single model of CBNRM. However, there are general principles and common characteristics across these initiatives, and some best practices can be highlighted that may support the successful implementation of CBNRM more broadly.

The Southern African region displays considerable diversity in the types of community conservation and co-management projects being carried out, in the structure of local institutions and in their levels of capacity. For example, the level of community involvement in natural resource management varies widely between and within regions, including protected area outreach, where communities are passive beneficiaries of natural

---

The Southern African region displays considerable diversity in the types of community conservation and co-management projects being carried out, in the structure of local institutions and in their levels of capacity

---

---

1 Turner S, 'A crisis in CBNRM? Affirming the Commons in Southern Africa', Paper presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property (IASCP), Oaxaca, Mexico, 9–13 August 2004.

resource management conducted by others; community involvement in natural resource management, where communities participate through co-management agreements or other forms of involvement; and natural resource management that is carried out by communities for local benefit. There is also regional variation with regard to community use and development resource rights, with governments retaining ultimate resource ownership. Most of these rights are geographically defined and granted for exclusive use of certain resources – they do not necessarily extend to include comprehensive land rights.<sup>2</sup> In some countries, such as Zimbabwe and Botswana, resource rights are limited by the central government's decisions, which determine the wildlife or hunting quotas for the area. Communities may be consulted but have a limited part to play in decision making, and in most countries, user rights can be transferred for a specific timeframe through tendering, auctioning or other mechanisms. These resource use rights are conditional on the establishment of community-based organisations (CBOs), a constitution governing the CBO, a resource management plan (including environmental specifications) and audited annual financial accounts.

### THE EVOLUTION OF CONSERVATION POLICY DISCOURSE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Rural communities have historically regulated their local resource use through traditional systems. However, over time many of these local institutions, norms and rules have been weakened through the centralisation of authority in colonial and post-colonial government systems, increased conflict and instability, greed and individual exploitation, and a movement of people away from rural areas. As a result many common property natural resources became de facto 'open access', with few communal management rules and no specific traditional institutions enforcing rule-based monitoring systems.<sup>3</sup>

Over the years community arrangements have altered to adapt to the changing and dynamic natural system, as well as the shifting governance discourse and political environment. As a result conservation–tourism–development nexus discussions have gone through a number of variations, becoming formally entrenched in broader natural resource governance and sustainability debates in the 1990s, with the adoption of institutional arrangements and associated policy reforms. Earlier efforts were generally short-lived and donor-driven pilot projects.

In the 1970s natural resource management and exploitation in Southern Africa were characterised by ad-hoc sectoral approaches, largely managed in isolation from one another, with an emphasis on maximising single-purpose and exclusive-use areas and resources. Many authors describe this era as being dominated by punitive state approaches

2 Land rights would give communities greater security, control and flexibility. In some cases increased land tenure leads people to develop their own property rather than contribute towards communally managed resource areas such as forestry, as their entitlements to the latter are less certain.

3 Roe D, Nelson F & C Sandbrook (eds), 'Community management of natural resources in Africa: Impacts, experiences and future directions', *Natural Resource Issues*, 18, International Institute for Environment and Development, London, 2009, p. 8.

characterised by ‘fortresses, fines and fences’.<sup>4</sup> Many communities in the region were dispossessed of their land and resettled elsewhere, often with little or no compensation. The management of land and natural resources was placed under central regulatory authorities, and sealed off from resident communities, with their rights for consumptive use limited by means of strict enforcement.

Conservation activities during this time focused almost exclusively on the ecological character of ecosystems and on the environmental threats posed by infrastructure development and growing populations. Little recognition was given to the role that humans had always played in altering or maintaining what appeared to be ‘untouched’ wilderness (for example through grass management and early burning techniques). Veterinary fences were raised, frequently blocking seasonal migratory routes and preventing wildlife from accessing food and water. Natural resources were generally open-access and communal, and suffered from overutilisation and illegal exploitation. Effective wildlife governance was further undermined by political instability in the Southern African region during this period. As a result wildlife numbers in Southern and East Africa started to decline, especially outside protected areas, and instances of human–wildlife conflict increased.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the user rights over wildlife on freehold lands in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia – all then under the rule of contested white minority regimes – were devolved to landowners through a series of legislative reforms. This shift significantly changed the status of wildlife on private lands from a liability to an economic asset, leading to major recoveries of wildlife on freehold land and the growth of wildlife-based industries in all three countries.<sup>5</sup> These reforms also laid the basis for extending the model of local management to communal lands – resulting in the development of Zimbabwe’s Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), Zambia’s Administrative Management Design Programme in the 1980s and Namibia’s communal conservancies in the 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

CAMPFIRE provided impetus for the replication of other CBNRM approaches and related policy development in other parts of the region. It played a key role in shaping the pilot initiatives in community-based wildlife management in Mozambique, Botswana

---

4 Van der Duim R, Lamers M & J van Wijk, ‘Novel institutional arrangements for tourism, conservation and development in Eastern and Southern Africa’, in Van der Duim R, Lamers M & J van Wijk (eds), *Institutional Arrangements for Conservation, Development and Tourism in Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Springer, 2015, pp. 1–16.

5 Bond I, ‘Private land contribution to conservation in South Africa’, in Child B (ed.), *Parks in Transition: Biodiversity, Rural Development and the Bottom Line*. London: Earthscan, 2004, pp. 29–62.

6 Jones B & MW Murphree, ‘The evolution of policy on community conservation in Namibia and Zimbabwe’, in Hulme, D & MW Murphree (eds), *African Wildlife and African Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation*. Oxford: James Currey, 2001.

and Namibia.<sup>7</sup> As a result, this period saw substantial developments in institutional and legal frameworks, with Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia formally establishing CBNRM legislation or specific programmes in 1989, 1992 and 1996 respectively. Countries such as Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa<sup>8</sup> followed in quick succession, but their programmes were smaller and more project-oriented.<sup>9</sup> During this time the principles of CBNRM became broadly recognised and accepted by many organisations and international conventions, including the AU, sub-regional bodies and multilateral institutions. CBNRM principles were broadly integrated into the development and environmental policies and plans of these institutions and within conservation planning tools and legislation. However, according to Nelson and Agrawal, the widespread adoption of CBNRM in policy and legal reforms during the 1990s ‘did not necessarily translate into radical changes in local rights or authority over natural resources in the years that followed’.<sup>10</sup>

In more recent years, natural resource and wildlife discussions have largely centred on financing for conservation and on promoting the economic value of wildlife and other resources, often to justify conservation as a viable land-use choice.<sup>11</sup> This has become particularly obvious in recent years with increased resource expenditure on surveillance, protection and monitoring of wildlife as poaching reaches alarming rates. There is growing impetus to support additional revenue-generating activities both through consumptive uses of wildlife (hunting,<sup>12</sup> game harvesting and farming, intensive breeding of crocodile and ostrich, live capture and sale of game, and processing of wildlife products) and also for activities to promote the non-consumptive uses of natural resources (including game viewing, photographic safaris, adventure and cultural tourism, the breeding of endangered species for reintroduction into wildlife zones, and production of forestry and veld products for handicrafts and medicines). The tourism sector in sub-Saharan Africa offers great potential with many countries exploring new opportunities to expand and market wilderness-related activities. According to the UN’s World Tourism Organisation,

---

7 In 1986 Botswana released its Wildlife Conservation Policy in which CBNRM principles were incorporated into government thinking, and in 1989 the first CBNRM pilot project was initiated in the Chobe Enclave Community Trust. In South Africa, in 1987, the government formally recognised wildlife ranching as an agricultural activity and subsequently legalised the private ownership of wildlife. In Namibia, legislation devolving rights over wildlife to communal areas was approved by the Namibian Parliament in 1996.

8 In South Africa CBNRM has commonly been associated with the land restitution claims relating to the formation of national parks in the apartheid era, which saw people being removed from their former homelands.

9 USAID, *Rural Livelihoods, Poverty Reduction, and Food Security in Southern Africa: Is CBNRM the Answer?*. Washington, DC: USAID, 2007.

10 Nelson F & A Agrawal, ‘Patronage or participation? Community-based natural resource management reform in sub-Saharan Africa’, *Development and Change*, 39, 2008, pp. 557–585.

11 It must be noted that this has not been without controversy – and academic criticism of the commodification of nature.

12 The game hunting debate remains polarised across the region, with countries like Kenya and Botswana having banned hunting tourism in 1977 and 2014 respectively.





Fisheries community meeting, Vilanculos, Mozambique

sub-Saharan Africa received 6.7 million visitors in 1990, which increased to 33.1 million in 2011 and is forecast to grow to 77 million by 2020.<sup>13</sup>

Today innovative market-based activities are also playing an increasingly prominent role in generating revenue for conservation, such as payment for environmental services (PES), carbon-related activities, wildlife credit schemes, biodiversity derivatives and environmental mortgages.<sup>14</sup> While these new narratives such as PES attract a flurry of interest from donors, governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the foundations of these approaches rest on the familiar ground of local resource governance, tenure and institutional performance. These initiatives further reinforce nature as a commodity approach to CBNRM but often exclude the cultural or ‘intangible’ values of wildlife being on the land.

---

13 UNWTO (UN World Tourism Organization), ‘Tourism Factbook’, UNWTO. Madrid: UNWTO, <http://www.e-unwto.org/content/v486k6/?v=search>, accessed 7 August 2016.

14 Whitelaw P, King B & D Tolkach, ‘Protected areas, conservation and tourism: Financing the sustainable dream’, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 2, 24, 2014, pp. 584–603.

## CURRENT REALITIES: CHALLENGES OF DEVOLUTION, GOVERNANCE CONSTRAINTS AND CAPACITY

As the 2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment aptly notes, ‘what is needed to sustain natural resources are strong institutions across different scales, with central government providing an appropriate enabling framework for security of tenure and management authority at the local level’.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the core paradox of CBNRM is that it requires strong local rights over resources, which must be conferred on local people by the state, and which the state has the right to withdraw. However, the degree to which decentralisation and devolution can take place depends very much on political priorities and influences, as well as the capacity of all governance actors. This requires a delicate balance in order to accommodate broad stakeholder priorities and capabilities. This challenge is clearly illustrated in the case of Botswana.

The Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) came to power in 1965 and built a broad coalition of support through articulating a vision that forged a national Botswana identity around a common language and shared resource wealth.<sup>16</sup> The state was to play a central role in promoting this wealth. This is particularly evident in the mining sector where mineral rights (including resource deposits on tribal land) were vested in the state. Revenues generated by the mining sector accrued to the national treasury and decision making with regard to the allocation of these revenues was centralised. However, other natural resources such as wildlife cannot be managed as easily by the central government due to their dispersed nature. In order to assist with monitoring, the management of wildlife resources was decentralised. This appeared to be a contradictory approach to natural resource management by the government. There was considerable debate within the BDP on whether the devolution of resource governance for wildlife and other sectors might undermine the centralised model for mineral resource governance.

Despite these concerns, the BDP forged ahead with CBNRM, as it recognised that future tourism revenue would dwindle if wildlife numbers declined and natural habitats were destroyed. Although the distinction appears warranted in light of the physical differences between wildlife and mineral endowments, it has been a politically difficult message to deliver (and especially where wildlife is a threat to communities living in its vicinity). Communities that have no access to wildlife or commercially viable resources argue that devolution generates unfair and geographically accidental distribution of revenues. The 1997 CBNRM policy ensured that revenues generated by wildlife and other common pool resources were shared between private operators and local communities in localities where successful tourism operations could be established (both consumptive tourism in the form of hunting concessions and non-consumptive tourism). However, communities

15 MA (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment), *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2005.

16 Chevallier R & R Harvey, ‘Is Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana Viable?’, SAIIA Policy Insights, 31. Johannesburg: SAIIA (South African Institute of International Affairs), 2016, <http://www.saiia.org.za/policy-insights/is-community-based-natural-resource-management-in-botswana-viable>, accessed 2 July 2016.

that were not located in such areas pushed for a more centralised model that would distribute revenues more equitably throughout the country.

The Botswana government attempted to address these concerns through the amended CBNRM policy of 2007. According to this revised policy, 35% of natural resource revenue accrues directly to CBOs, while the other 65% flows into a National Environment Fund at central government level. Any CBOs can apply to the fund for disbursements, whether they are explicitly linked to wildlife management areas (WMAs) or not. This allows those with no direct access to wildlife resources to secure access to revenue.

Some analysts criticise Botswana for not devolving sufficient decision-making responsibilities to local institutions, commenting that communities in many areas have become passive recipients of income from private sector activities, rather than active resource managers.<sup>17</sup> This in turn does not promote stewardship over wildlife and further dilutes the link between responsibilities and rights. It also erodes the incentives for communities that live with wildlife to care for that wildlife. While the Botswana government recognises the need to deepen institutional devolution to the local level if wildlife is to be conserved, it also seeks to respond to the call for a more equitable distribution of revenues generated by wildlife resources. As a result, CBNRM in its current form is a hybrid model that blends centralised revenue distribution with some level of local autonomy in the hands of CBOs.

Besides the challenge of balancing centralisation and devolution, governance presents an ongoing challenge at the central, district and community levels. As Gibson and others have highlighted, ‘individuals and agencies within the heterogeneous fabric of the central state often possess strong disincentives to enact such reforms’.<sup>18</sup> As with broader economic policies, the design of natural resource governance institutions in sub-Saharan Africa is often driven not by considerations of technical efficiency but by an array of personal interests revolving around patronage networks and the exercise of political power.<sup>19</sup> Devolving or decentralising rights over valuable natural resources may conflict directly with such interests, and as a result many of the reforms called for by CBNRM initiatives have not been implemented. Admittedly communities face their own governance challenges, with examples of misappropriation and poor governance within community trusts and institutions, lack of transparency, poor financial decisions and resource capture by local elites. Furthermore, communities often lack the necessary skills, resources and technical capacity required to effectively govern natural resources themselves. In some cases communities have the skills to manage resources but not the skills to manage the complex administrative/governance compliance requirements enforced by governments over CBOs.

---

Communities often lack the necessary skills, resources and technical capacity required to effectively govern natural resources themselves

---

---

17 Gujadhur T, ‘Joint Venture Options for Communities and Safari Operators in Botswana’, Occasional Paper, 61. Gaborone: UCN/SNV CBNRM Support Programme, 2001.

18 Gibson CC, *Politicians and Poachers: The Political Economy of Wildlife Policy in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

19 Chabal P & J Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*. London: James Currey Publishers, 1999; Nelson F & A Agrawal, *op. cit.*

These governance concerns need to be urgently addressed, as all stakeholders, at the central, district and community levels, have integral parts to play in the management of natural resources. While national governments have a legitimate mandate to protect ‘public goods’ and to ensure the sustainable management of resources in the interest of the entire population, communities living in the vicinity of natural resources are equally important in monitoring and enforcing regulations at the local level. Consequently many CBNRM activities in the region demonstrate characteristics of co-management rather than largely autonomous community management. Effective CBNRM relies on more effective partnerships through trust building which is only possible if communities have the mandate and authority to carry it out. In reality, user management rights, issued by central government, are often weak and limited, and often conditional, with government retaining important decision-making control over when and how resources may be used. For example, no governments have allowed communities to set harvesting rates and quotas for wildlife entirely on their own. In many cases community-based management consists of enforcing government rules against poaching or against illegal harvesting of forest products in return for a share of income derived from some form of resource use. In many cases, communities are managing the income from wildlife rather than managing the wildlife.

Many lessons can be learnt in this regard from the case of Namibia, where government and communities meet jointly to review wildlife data for the previous year and to agree on quotas for the following year. Government still has the final say, but in practice there is a rigorous debate and negotiation that allows communities to be authentically part of the decision making regarding hunting quotas. Also there are examples where communities are very actively involved in managing natural resources – through game guards, patrols, game counts, a local monitoring system (Event Book) and post-harvest monitoring of devil’s claw.<sup>20</sup> Instilling a ‘sense of ownership’ is often as powerful as ‘legal ownership’.

This point reflects an important question about CBNRM: is it an approach to ‘sharing benefits’ and channelling a portion of funding generated from natural resources back to communities, or does CBNRM require active local governance on the part of the community? Most analysts would strongly argue that it must include an active role for communities in governance activities. However, in practice this level of involvement is often limited, with very little ground-level management undertaken by communities. Examples do exist where there is a relatively strong mix of economic incentives, devolution and proprietorship<sup>21</sup> in policy and legislation, where communities are benefiting and where conservation is illustrating successful results – as in the case of Namibia.<sup>22</sup>

Both the state and communities have a legitimate and important role to play in CBNRM. However, a better balance needs to be achieved between local and broader, state-level interests and objectives, where appropriate legal rights and status are awarded to local

---

20 Devil’s claw is a medicinal plant used to treat arthritis and rheumatism. It is found in Namibia, South Africa and Botswana.

21 Proprietorship is the right to use resources, determine the modes of usage, benefit fully from their use, determine the distribution of such benefits and determine rules of access.

22 Nelson F & A Agrawal, *op. cit.*

communities to assist the central government with management and enforcement. But the question extends beyond the need for a better balance between community and state-level interests. There are currently challenges within both the government and community structures that cannot be resolved by giving either side more power. Instead, emphasis should be placed on supporting better governance, transparency and stronger institutions at both levels. At a local level, there also needs to be more emphasis on increasing benefit flows to the grassroots or most affected communities, as benefits are often captured by committees or elected representatives.

Effective partnerships between government and communities can only be strengthened with increased formal management responsibilities devolved to communities by the government, and with support for local collective management regimes over these resources.<sup>23</sup> In more sophisticated resource systems, management includes formal monitoring of the health and status of resources to inform thresholds and management decisions. For example, in Namibia communities are involved in restocking, resource monitoring and other management activities. Also a primary function of these game guards is to maintain the link with their communities. Their job is not to catch poachers but to stop poaching. The first is based on law enforcement, while the second is based on communication and the promotion of behaviour change at community level.

Communication and collaboration also need to improve between sub-national actors such as municipal and district assemblies and communities. These often operate in isolation from one another, with very little community involvement within broader district-level planning processes. To encourage political support for the integration of CBNRM into regional and district development plans, community organisations must be represented within local government structures. Official mechanisms can be used to attempt to bridge this gap and improve communication. In Botswana, district and national CBNRM forums help to co-ordinate activities among different stakeholders (national-level co-ordination is facilitated through the Botswana National CBNRM Forum Based Organisation Network).<sup>24</sup>

## **INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR TOURISM, DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA TODAY**

Various institutional arrangements and conservation management models exist in Southern Africa. These include conservancies,<sup>25</sup> CBOs, private game reserves (PGRs), transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) and tourism conservation enterprises (TCEs). Van Wijk *et al.* emphasise that ‘these institutional arrangements incorporate a social network of individuals and organisational actors that are governed by a set of regulations,

---

23 Jones B, ‘Synthesis of the CBNRM policy and legislation in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe’, Occasional Paper Series, 16. Harare: WWF-SARPO, October 2007.

24 BOCOBONET is an umbrella body for community organisations involved in CBNRM.

25 Conservancies are legally recognised, geographically defined areas that have been formed by communities that have united to manage and benefit from wildlife and other natural resources. Conservancies are common property resource management institutions.

tools, norms and discourses to achieve a particular objective'.<sup>26</sup> Although varying in structure and purpose, all of these arrangements 'give wildlife a higher value (both in monetary and non-monetary terms), to ensure that these values are captured at the level of the landholder ... through an appropriate combination of rights, and to empower people with discretionary choice over wildlife – accepting that people, given such responsibilities, are normally responsible'.<sup>27</sup>

However, the way in which these institutional arrangements aim to achieve this goal differs because their set-up varies in legal status, governance, the degree to which rights are devolved, the availability of financial resources and the tourism markets they serve.<sup>28</sup> These choices in turn affect the impact and outcomes of CBNRM programmes.

Some of these institutional arrangements reflect a greater level of 'institutional embedding' in national legislative systems than others.<sup>29</sup> Namibian conservancies, Botswana CBOs and PGRs in South Africa are all recognised and incorporated within national legislation. For example, CBOs in Botswana are registered legal entities, governed by a constitution and recognised within Botswana's law. TFCAs, on the other hand, are grounded on memorandums of understanding and related treaties which often do not provide actors with the authority and legitimacy to make claims over shared resources. TCEs, which are based on contractual agreements between the private sector, government and the community, are not based on national legislation either.

A range of governance methods are employed in these models. Conservancy management committees govern conservancies in Namibia, in Botswana there is a board of trustees managing each CBO on behalf of the community, and in South Africa PGRs are regulated by multiple actors such as the provincial nature conservation departments and trade associations of game ranches. TFCAs are governed by multiple institutions at various levels, while TCEs establish multi-sectoral conservation trusts to govern partnership deals and their board members are from the private sector, community and NGOs (such as the African Wilderness Foundation and Africa Parks).

The devolution of land and wildlife rights varies according to the choice of arrangement. In Namibia conservancies own wildlife and gain use rights over certain species. The conservancies are joint-venture partners with tourism lodges established in their conservancies, and have been granted concession-holder rights over tourism lodge developments in certain state-controlled concession areas or national parks neighbouring

---

26 Van Wijk J, Lamers M & R van der Duim, 'A dynamic perspective on institutional arrangements for tourism, conservation and development in Eastern and Southern Africa', in Van der Duim R, Lamers M & J Van Wijk (eds), *Institutional Arrangements for Conservation, Development and Tourism in Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Springer, 2015, pp. 239–260.

27 Suich H, Child B & A Spenceley (eds), *Evolution and Innovation in Wildlife Conservation: From Parks and Game Ranches to Transfrontier Conservation Areas*. London: Earthscan, 2009, p. 429.

28 Van Wijk J *et al.*, *op. cit.*

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 239–260.

the conservancies, while land that is in communal areas is held in trust by the state. The Communal Land Reform Act of 2002 allows for individuals to apply for customary land rights on communal land. The communal land is still essentially 'held in trust' by the state, but individual landholders now have increased rights over land. In Botswana the government owns the land and leases it to eligible community trusts that in turn sub-lease it to private tourism operators. In the case of South Africa, full ownership of land and wildlife resides with individual land owners of the PGRs. It is important to note here that the landscape in South Africa is not the case for many other African countries. Outside South Africa, land may be owned by individuals or communities, or held in trust by the state for the benefit of communities, but the ownership of wildlife remains with the state. It is through hunting and tourism that communities are given user, claimant or proprietor rights. In TCEs ownership of land and lodges resides with the community, and the management of lodges with the private sector party. The management of the conservation area on which a lodge is developed rests with all parties to the agreement.

The financial basis that supports these institutional ventures is sourced from a combination of private, public and donor funding. Conservancies and CBOs produce much of their own income through wildlife utilisation and through joint partnerships with the private sector, the government and the donor community.<sup>30</sup> PGRs receive private funding and venture capital. Funding for TCEs is mainly leveraged from impact investments, loans and equity shares, through the private capital of the tourism entrepreneurs.

All these conservation models have differing economic earning potential and appeal to a variety of markets, according to their product offerings, their ease of access, their cost and perceived value, as well as their aesthetic attractiveness. Some destinations offer non-consumptive ecological, photographic and tourism services, while others are for consumption and hunting. These external factors (excluding CBNRM policy and institutional arrangement choice) largely determine the amount of revenue received by each arrangement. In Botswana, for example, Chobe offers medium-density wildlife viewing with a wilderness experience, the Panhandle offers poling trips into wetland areas of high biodiversity and potential for a unique cultural product, and Tsodilo Hills offers cultural heritage.

The number of beneficiaries of each arrangement type varies greatly – some gaining on the individual level and others on the group level. In some cases, communities have 'grouped together' around a joint venture project (JVP), creating a wider dispersal of benefits. Also money is spent differently in each arrangement, with revenue often not being used to enhance the attainment of conservation objectives.

---

30 In Botswana the community obtains a 15-year wildlife and tourism resource lease from the Land Board and the Department of Lands. Current policy guidelines limit the sub-leases to three renewable five-year periods, which critics believe is too short to provide sufficient security to encourage investment and to promote a real sense of ownership and responsibility from CBOs.

Programmes in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia have strongly focused on wildlife-based tourism activities such as photographic and safari hunting, crafts and cultural tourism, whereas in Mozambique and Malawi projects also attempt to include other coastal, marine and forestry ecosystems. Attempts are being made within all countries to diversify their product offerings. In South Africa and Malawi, access to and use of protected areas also forms part of the CBNRM programmes.

### TRANSFERABILITY OF CBNRM MODELS: INSIGHTS FROM NAMIBIA

One of the best-known African examples of community-based wildlife management is Namibia's communal conservancy model. For many reasons this model is held up as containing best-practice principles for the region. Since the late 1990s, the number of conservancies has increased rapidly, with approximately 82 in existence by 2014, covering 162 030 km<sup>2</sup> of land, or about 19.6% of the country. By 2014, community conservation contributed about NAD<sup>31</sup> 4.15 billion (\$280 million) to Namibia's net national income.<sup>32</sup> In 2014, revenue from natural resource-based activities such as tourism and conservation hunting generated about NAD 91.2 million (\$6.26 million) in returns for local



Credit: IRDNC

Game guard monitoring rhino, Kunene region of Namibia

31 Currency code for the Namibian dollar.

32 NACSO (Namibian Association of Community-Based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations), *The State of Community Conservation in Namibia: A Review of Communal Conservancies, Community Forests and other CBNRM Initiatives (2014/5 Annual Report)*. Windhoek: NACSO, 2015, p. 11.





Woman holding devil's claw at George Mukoya Conservancy in Namibia

communities and facilitated 5 808 jobs.<sup>33</sup> Despite the resurgence in poaching of rhino and elephant since 2012, wildlife populations have widely recovered in these conservancies, including rare species such as black rhinos and predators such as lions.<sup>34</sup>

The Namibian government introduced legislation in 1996 that gave communal area residents rights over wildlife and tourism on their land if they agreed to form common property resource management institutions called conservancies. Once registered, conservancies gain ownership of certain species of game designated for hunting. They also qualify for use rights to hunt protected species, capture and sell game, and carry out trophy hunting. Conservancies then typically enter into joint venture agreements (JVAs) with professional hunting agencies for the use of their hunting quotas and/or with other private operators to develop tourism facilities on their land. The number of JVAs has increased by 90% since 2005 alone. This indicates that the private sector sees communal area conservancies as having substantial future potential for tourism. In addition to the JVAs within conservancy boundaries, according to Jones, Diggle and Thouless,<sup>35</sup> conservation-based tourism activities

33 Nuulimba K & JJ Taylor, '25 years of CBNRM in Namibia: A retrospective on accomplishments, contestation and contemporary challenges', *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 18, 2015, pp. 89–110.

34 NACSO, *Namibia's Communal Conservancies: A Review of Progress and Challenges in 2007*. Windhoek: NACSO, 2008.

35 Jones B, Diggle RW & C Thouless, 'From exploitation to ownership: Wildlife-based tourism and communal area conservancies in Namibia', in Van Wijk J *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–38.

contribute by far the biggest share (85%) of annual income to conservancies in Namibia. In 2007 NAD 14.3 million (\$981,994) (52%) was contributed by joint-venture tourism, 48% of which had direct employment benefits. A further NAD 9.1 million (\$624,905) (33%) was contributed by trophy hunting. Other wildlife utilisation activities generated NAD 2.8 million (\$192,278) (10%). By comparison, non-wildlife conservation business activities, veld products utilisation and craft sales generated a much smaller contribution of NAD 980,000 (\$70,000) (3%). It must be noted that although veld products generated less overall income for conservancies, they did provide the third-largest source of cash income to individuals, spreading the risk and making a valuable economic contribution at the household level. For example, devil's claw and commiphora resin collectively generated NAD 670,000 (\$460,000) in 2007, which increased to NAD 3.49 million (\$240,132) in 2014. This sector is likely to grow with increasing demand for certified organic and fair trade natural products.

There are a number of aspects of the Namibian CBNRM model that are salient for the design of CBNRM initiatives in the broader region. Firstly, the rights granted to communities over wildlife are relatively broad and secure; these rights are conditional and can be revoked but they are not 'term-limited'. Secondly, there is no middleman between communities and the private sector. Also, there is no local or state government tax on the revenue earned – 100% of the benefits from wildlife are retained locally. Finally, Namibia's programme has had a long history of development prior to the involvement of external actors and donors.<sup>36</sup> A further factor that explains the success of CBNRM in Namibia is the active network of local NGOs that have collectively championed and consistently provided technical support to CBNRM in Namibia for over two decades.

However, it must also be noted that Namibia has unique, favourable bio-physical characteristics –it has a low population density, has high soil aridity favouring wildlife over crop agriculture, is water scarce, has distinctive and attractive scenery (differing from the rest of the region), and has well-established infrastructure and is easily accessible for regional and international visitors. Nelson and Agrawal<sup>37</sup> also argue that Namibia has a relatively low level of institutional corruption, which has reduced the incentives for policymakers to withhold authority, thus enabling key CBNRM reforms. While many of these features are unique to Namibia there are lessons that can inform the shaping of CBNRM discourse and practices in neighbouring countries, especially in the devolution of use rights to communities through policy and legislative reform.

---

36 Roe D *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

37 Nelson F & A Agrawal, 'Patronage or Participation? Community-based Natural Resource Management Reform in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Development and Change*, 39, 4, 2008, pp. 557–585.

**TABLE 1** DIFFUSION OF INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OVER TIME, AFRICA FOCUS

Institutional arrangement	Numbers over time		
	Conservancies in Namibia	4 (1998)	9 (2000)
CBOs in Botswana	1 (1993)	2 (1995)	105 (2012)
Private game ranches in South Africa	10 (1960s)	5 000 (2000)	11 600 (2012)
Transfrontier conservation areas	1 (2000)		18 (2013)

\* According to Karine Nuulimba, in Namibia there were 82 by 2014. There were also 32 registered community forests by 2014, one community conservation association in a national park, 17 concessions in national parks or other state land held by 20 conservancies (some shared concessions), 66 community rangeland management areas, and two community fish sanctuaries.

Source: Van der Duim R, Lamers M & J van Wijk, 'Novel institutional arrangements for tourism, conservation and development in Eastern and Southern Africa', in Van der Duim R, Lamers M & J van Wijk (eds), *Institutional Arrangements for Conservation, Development and Tourism in Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Springer, 2015, pp. 1–16. Lamers M & J van Wijk (eds), *Institutional Arrangements for Conservation, Development and Tourism in Eastern and Southern Africa*. London: Springer, 2015, p. 245

### CBNRM BEYOND CONSUMPTIVE USE: THE CASE OF BOTSWANA

The percentage of total land in Botswana demarcated for WMAs is 22% (12,945,000 ha),<sup>38</sup> while national parks constitute 17% – therefore a total of 39% of land has some form of wildlife protection.

In November 2012 the government of Botswana officially announced that it had taken a decision to 'indefinitely suspend commercial hunting of wildlife in public or controlled hunting areas' from 1 January 2014.<sup>39</sup> The government believes that unregulated hunting poses a genuine threat to the conservation of its natural heritage and therefore to the long-term prospects of its tourist industry. Since the implementation of the ban the government is re-zoning controlled hunting areas to develop new management plans for each of the WMAs – to align them to non-consumptive utilisation of natural resources while also facilitating identification of possible private sector investors to partner with communities in the development of photographic tourism activities within the concession areas. These management plans will also include a (much-needed) updated inventory of all natural

38 Lovelock B (ed.), *Tourism and the Consumption of Wildlife: Hunting, Shooting and Sport*. New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis, 2008, p. 98.

39 Edmont B Moabi, Permanent Secretary, press statement from Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism on suspension of hunting by 2014, released 29 November 2012.

resources within WMAs, as well as resource utilisation options. Financial assistance has also been given to certain CBOs to support this transition.<sup>40</sup>

While many observers support this conservation policy, others have met this decision with substantial opposition. Numerous stakeholders, including CBOs, which have to date relied almost entirely on income and jobs generated through the hunting industry, state that there are many geographic locations throughout Botswana that are not conducive to photographic safaris or cultural tourism. About 80% of all Botswana's CBNRM income is concentrated in northern Botswana<sup>41</sup> with Ngamiland, Chobe District and Rhino Khama Sanctuary as the main recipients of CBNRM revenue. It is believed that banning hunting in these areas will render them economically unviable, which could then result in further degradation and neglect. Moreover, many local residents believe that poaching and the illegal trade in bush meat will flourish in the wake of the moratorium – meat that would ordinarily have been distributed to communities by hunting safaris.<sup>42</sup> According to authors such as Mbaiwa, before the ban trophy hunting was generating more income than photographic tourism in Botswana. Trophy hunting was carried out in eight CBOs in Ngamiland, two in Chobe and three in Mmadinare, Ghanzi and Kgalagadi.<sup>43</sup> In 2012, a total of 13 CBOs in Botswana were involved with hunting.

Karine Nuulimba, Programme Director at Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, illustrates the importance of trophy hunting for Namibia. She says that 'cash income and in-kind benefits from trophy hunting are generated shortly after the registration of a conservancy and the awarding of a trophy hunting contract, providing a timely reward to communities for their conservation efforts'. She says 'conservancies may take longer to receive cash income from joint-venture lodges due to more complex negotiations and agreements, as well as much higher development costs'.<sup>44</sup> She refers to the case of Namibia where joint ventures have an indirect fee structure based on a percentage of turnover, while hunting fees are based on a direct price per animal. She says that it is important to note that hunting is possible in areas that have little or no tourism potential due to their location or lack of scenic interest. Other returns from trophy hunting include employment, training and the distribution of meat from hunting animals. Although meat is an in-kind benefit, it provides a very direct return. Apart from its nutritional value, game meat distribution strengthens local support for wildlife and conservancies, because people see the link between wildlife and conservation in the form

40 Morula M, 'Government bails out cash strapped community and development trusts'. *Sunday Standard*, 18 June 2015, <http://www.sundaystandard.info/gov%E2%80%99t-bails-out-cash-strapped-community-and-development-trusts>, accessed 2 July 2016.

41 Mbaiwa J, 'Community-based natural resource management in Botswana', in Van der Duim R *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59–80.

42 Interview with a local Maun resident who has lived there since 1976 and is integrally involved in conservation efforts in the Okavango Delta.

43 Mbaiwa J, *op. cit.*

44 Personal communication (via email), Karine Nuulimba, Programme Director at Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, Windhoek, 6 June 2016.



A member of the Kasika Conservancy, Namibia

of a tangible benefit. This is rated as a key benefit by most conservancy members, many of whom are poor and cannot afford to buy much meat.

Botswana has a vibrant and growing inbound tourism industry as it is naturally endowed with unique and attractive scenery, globally important biodiversity and extensive wildlife areas. In 2014 the Okavango Delta was declared the 1 000<sup>th</sup> UNESCO World Heritage site. However, there is a need to transform its tourism sector to ensure that a greater proportion of its generated revenue is retained within the country, and that this income contributes more substantially to livelihood<sup>45</sup> development at the household level. According to Botswana Tourism Statistics, only 10% of the tourism revenue is retained locally.<sup>46</sup> This is partly because the bulk of Botswana's tourist bookings are handled in South Africa, and partly because the sector's supply chain is foreign dominated. Also, critics have noted that the sector further argues that it has failed 'to significantly contribute to rural poverty alleviation in the Okavango region'.<sup>47</sup> One critic ascribes this to weak linkages

---

There is a need to transform [Botswana's] tourism sector to ensure that a greater proportion of its generated revenue is retained within the country, and that this income contributes more substantially to livelihood development at the household level

---

- 
- 45 Alternative livelihoods are based on new, non-traditional sources of job creation that include income earned from a diversified range of resource products, such as medicinal plants, honey, ximenia, mongongo nuts, and products produced from reeds, thatching grass, papyrus paper, seed oil extraction for cosmetic use, as well as crafts and fisheries.
- 46 Afribiz, 'Industrialisation and global value chains in Botswana', 1 July 2014, <http://www.afribiz.info/content/2014/industrialization-and-global-value-chains-in-botswana>, accessed 13 June 2016.
- 47 Mbaiwa JE, 'Enclave tourism and its socio-economic impacts in the Okavango Delta, Botswana', *Tourism Management*, 26, 2, 2005, pp. 157–172.

between tourism activities and the domestic economy, particularly agriculture.<sup>48</sup> In order to address problems of enclave tourism and promote more inclusive development in the Okavango, there is a need to adopt policies and strategies to ensure that substantial



Credit: Ross Harvey

There are a number of possibilities for eco-tourism in the northern panhandle of the Okavango Delta

48 *Ibid.*

amounts of tourism revenue are retained within Botswana and that private operators procure domestically produced products. There also needs to be a more dedicated approach to diversifying Botswana's product offering to encourage tourism to rich cultural, archaeological and historical attractions. The Hambukushu community, for example, located near the UNESCO Tsodilo World Heritage Site in north-western Botswana, is working with the government to develop community campsites that would bring revenue to the community.<sup>49</sup>

Livelihood alternatives need to be further researched and extended to CBOs, especially those previously reliant on hunting revenue. This is particularly true for Botswana, a country that struggles with major water challenges and areas that are otherwise unusable. To date, however, diversification has been limited and only a few communities have developed alternative enterprises due to substantial challenges of funding, market access, infrastructure and storage requirements. Further attention needs to be dedicated to researching the potential feasibility of new conservation-based livelihood products. These include non-timber forest products such as honey, ximenia, mongongo nuts and products produced from reeds, thatching grass, papyrus paper, seed oil extraction for cosmetic use, as well as crafts and fisheries. While these alternatives cannot necessarily generate incomes on the scale that the hunting sector did, they serve to spread risk at CBO level, and have the potential to contribute to the livelihood security of a much larger number of resource users. The Kgetsi ya Tsie Community Development Trust, for example, located in remote eastern Botswana, has made substantial headway in producing oil from marula trees. Once the marula seeds have been harvested they are sold to an American company for making cosmetics. The trust is supported by a revolving loan fund to provide capital for equipment and supplies, as well as by external donors. Its main challenge to date is supplying the demand.<sup>50</sup> The Kalahari Conservation Society is further exploring the market potential of other products such as raisin bush, devil's claw, Kalahari truffles and thatching grass.

New job opportunities also exist for the inclusion of communities into the management and monitoring of resources in their vicinity. Since 2007, Botswana's Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) has been piloting projects on a management oriented monitoring system (MOMS) – a tool for collecting data for monitoring purposes by and from the community – in three communities in Ngamiland. DWNP has trained community members in how to apply MOMS and collect information on wildlife dynamics, game sightings, rare species, disruptive animals and village mapping. Data such as the GPS co-ordinates of species is based on physical patrols and information gained on site. This data improves the quality of aerial surveys and data collection is planned

---

49 Although this is a worthy initiative, campsites in general only attract enough revenue to cover their operational costs and do not bring in anything close to the revenues that hunting or even tourism lodge JVs would bring. They are, however, important symbols of local ownership and do increase the 'sense of local rights over resources'.

50 Mining and Travel, 'Community based marula project seeing results', 25 November 2013, <https://minetravel.co.bw/general-news/2013/11/25/community-based-marula-oil-project-seeing-results/#.V0f6m00gpYd>, accessed 2 July 2016.

to be rolled out to other districts in the near future. Also, more active monitoring for veld products extraction is being developed by the government. These initiatives must be supported by the central government but must not become extension services of the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, but rather community-driven approaches to managing natural resources.<sup>51</sup>

## KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CBNRM FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

Despite the model chosen or the specific context in which CBNRM is being implemented, the following are considered the main elements that provide the foundation for effective CBNRM in Southern Africa. From the analysis of the performance of CBNRM across the region, a set of good practice principles have emerged and should be broadly utilised for CBNRM to be more feasible:

### FLEXIBLE AND RESILIENT SYSTEMS OF MANAGEMENT

The choice of institutional arrangement for tourism and conservation must offer a degree of flexibility to be able to respond effectively to a changing environment, physically, financially and market related. Many institutional arrangements do not take account of measures to improve environmental resilience; consider changes that may affect models or income; include financial security in their planning and business strategies; or effectively consider wider market developments in both non-consumptive and consumptive tourism.<sup>52</sup> Also in the case of Botswana, radical policy change (such as the implementation of a hunting ban), without sufficient communication, has the potential to create uncertainty and risks for communities, investors and entrepreneurs involved in conservation–development–tourism arrangements. It is therefore important to provide long-term policy certainty.

### CBOs WITH STRONG AND EFFECTIVE INTERNAL ORGANISATIONAL AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Effective CBOs require an institutional framework, a transparent and well-managed governance system and monitoring mechanisms to ensure community trusts distribute resource rents effectively and equitably. It is recommended that the larger group managing the resource should also form the local management institution and there must be a direct and positive correlation between the quality of management and the magnitude of derived

51 In Botswana community escort guides patrol CBNRM areas and enforce community resources management regulations. There are 111 community escort guides in Botswana from 14 different trusts who are employed to monitor illegal activities and to ensure compliance with (then) hunting regulations. In order to succeed it is important that the appropriate governance structures for environmental stewardship are put in place.

52 For example, there have been recent discussions in the US and EU about abolishing the importation of trophy parts and airlines banning the transportation of trophy parts. If this is the case then hunting will no longer be viable.



benefits. This provides incentives for good management. Also, differential inputs should result in differential benefits, especially for communities bearing the costs of wildlife conflict.

### TRANSPARENT BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES WITHIN CBOs

The actual revenue distribution among communities varies tremendously. For example, in Zambia 40% of the revenues are passed on to individuals, whereas in some CBOs in Botswana, most benefits (as a percentage collected from central government) stay with the community trusts for running and project expenditures. This share of communal and individual benefits should be based on the needs of the local community and households.<sup>53</sup> However, poor governance and cases of misappropriation of funds have led to major governance challenges and confidence issues arising between the CBOs, community trusts and the broader community.

Credit: Romy Chevallier



Mayuni Conservancy staff and game guards, east Caprivi, Namibia

53 Arntzen J, Setlhogile T & J Barnes, 'Rural livelihoods, poverty reduction and food security in Southern Africa: is CBNRM the answer?', USAID, 2007, p. 29, <http://unpan1.un.org/intra/doc/groups/public/documents/cpsi/unpan026980.pdf>, accessed 2 July 2016.

The internal challenges of CBOs relate closely to the lack of continuity over time (boards rotating every year), lack of leadership from the communities themselves, few local stewards, in-fighting and village-level politics, transparency issues, inadequate management capacity and corruption at board level. Many people who are employed do not sit on these trusts because they are working elsewhere, often outside the village. It is suggested that more consolidated grouping structures perform better at managing themselves and the resource than large anonymous institutions. Therefore it is imperative that measures be put in place by CBOs themselves to encourage structures that engender transparency, accountability and instil a sense of ownership of community investments. Appropriate checks and balances need to be in place to ensure that benefits and decision making do not become controlled by local elites – it is not just about how the money is spent, but also about who decides how the money is spent. The community trust itself must adopt democratic governance practices, transparent reporting and mechanisms for financial supervision. In cases where this does not happen or where CBOs do not demonstrate the accountable use of income within a reasonable time span, this may result in the suspension or halt of resource rights. There has been one case of this happening in Botswana. The Khwai community experienced financial management problems that resulted in the government not allocating the 2003 hunting quota.

### SYSTEMS OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT WITHIN CBOs

Trust fund decisions should be made independently of the vested interests of stakeholders who will possibly benefit from them and mechanisms should be put in place to ensure the involvement of members/communities in decisions about the use of income. It is recommended that independent professional individuals from within the community serve in trust fund committees as independent auditors, approving financial accounts and providing an oversight management function to the board. Provision could also be made for financial audits to be conducted by independent third parties, the results of which should be publicly available for scrutiny. Resultant information about the exact costs and benefits associated with CBNRM projects would help to diminish rumour spreading and suspicion, provided it is communicated effectively to community members who may be financially illiterate. Realistically not all CBOs can afford to hire independent auditors willing to travel to remote locations. In these cases audit costs should be subsidised by a third party (even the state if need be).

### EFFECTIVE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION AT ALL LEVELS

Channels of communication are essential to dispel perceptions from the community that the only people benefiting are trust employees and committee members. Dialogue forums between JVPs, CBOs and the relevant government departments should therefore become more regular. This would improve transparency, minimise information asymmetry and ensure better overall communication between all stakeholders. What also needs better articulation are the clear limits of CBNRM to development, to ensure that this contribution is framed in a realistic way.

The commercial sector has considerable market knowledge and contacts, which can be used by CBOs in product development. In many countries financial assistance is available to support local communities in this endeavour

Credit: Romy Chevallier



Local women collect reeds during the dry season in order to generate an income from sales for thatching, Shakawe, northern Botswana

### ENHANCED TECHNICAL, ORGANISATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY AND KNOW-HOW

Enhanced capacity building is necessary for CBOs to maximise benefit-sharing partnerships with private sector actors. Although communities do benefit from these joint ventures, mainly through income and skills development, there is a need for deepened partnerships between communities and the private sector. This can include capacity development and support to promote entrepreneurial spirit, managerial skills, financial management and basic legal training, and know-how to pursue community-led, conservation-oriented initiatives. Botswana's Chobe Enclave Community Trust, for example, has a skills and development agreement with their private sector partner, Albida.<sup>54</sup> Through a job-shadowing initiative, currently underway, a local person from the community trust will take over the financial and operational lodge management responsibilities within an allocated timeframe.

To successfully embark on their business activities, CBOs also need to address added constraints of communications and limited market information, as well as access to capital. This will assist them with identifying feasible investment opportunities that are more likely to succeed. Commercial partners and market promotion entities such as the

---

54 Chevallier R & R Harvey, *op. cit.*

Botswana Tourism Organisation<sup>55</sup> can assist CBOs to identify viable local investment opportunities. The commercial sector has considerable market knowledge and contacts, which can be used by CBOs in product development. In many countries financial assistance is available to support local communities in this endeavour. In Botswana, for example, a community conservation fund was set up to support CBOs involved in CBNRM for a variety of activities, both revenue and non-revenue generating. Support has included environmental education, proposal development, drafting of management plans and marketing. Funding through structures such as Botswana's Community Conservation Fund is especially important in the formative and operational years of CBNRM projects, or to support a transition, a change in private sector partner and subsequent requirements, or, in the case of Botswana, the transition from hunting to photographic tourism. However, it must be noted that, as is common across the world, this may produce the unintended consequence of outward migration, especially in rural areas.

### **DIRECT AND INDIRECT VALUE FROM CBNRM ACTIVITIES ACCRUED TO COMMUNITIES**

A resource must have a measurable value to the community<sup>56</sup> so that the benefit of managing a resource exceeds the cost. Sufficient revenue must accrue to local individuals, at the household level, to raise their interest in resource management and conservation. CBNRM initiatives must also fare well in comparison with other land-use options such as agriculture and livestock. Communities that bear the opportunity cost of living with wildlife must also be compensated. Wildlife can pose a significant threat to local populations in the form of competition for resources, predation, crop damage, injuries and even fatalities. Thus there is need for mechanisms that accrue benefits from wildlife, compensate for loss or damage, and that respond to land disputes. This, as mentioned below, exists in the form of regulated compensation funds, as in the case of Botswana's Conservation Fund. To minimise human-wildlife conflict, as well as the tensions that have risen in the wake of the hunting moratorium, more tourism opportunities need to be generated for communities living in the buffer zones of WMAs. There are major opportunities in this respect, as significant potential exists to promote cultural tourism, recreational fishing, volunteer tourism and adventure tourism – activities that do not compromise the government's high-value/low-impact tourism model and that simultaneously seek to protect ecologically sensitive areas. It is also important to promote opportunities that are not located in WMAs but rather within village/agricultural contexts.

55 The Botswana Tourism Organisation was established in 2009. This parastatal body's objective is to plan, develop and implement tourism marketing and promotion strategies for Botswana, improve existing tourism opportunities and diversify the sector into other forms of tourism. It also facilitates the establishment of joint tourism business ventures between CBOs and foreign investors.

56 Jones B, 'Community-based natural resource management in Botswana and Namibia: An inventory and preliminary analysis of progress', Evaluating Eden Series Discussion Paper, 6, 1999, IIED, <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/7799IIED.pdf>, accessed 2 July 2016.

## BIODIVERSITY IMPROVEMENTS AND THE ATTAINMENT OF CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Communities must reinvest in natural resource management and conservation. Often the revenue accrued through community projects is not used to enhance the attainment of conservation objectives as set out in the objectives of CBNRM. Traditionally many communities in Southern Africa have reinvested income into livestock or agriculture, which in turn may place additional pressure on conservation areas. While it is unfair to expect communities that traditionally rely on crops and livestock to abandon these practices, specific quantitative or zoning limitations need to be placed on highly destructive practices that directly undermine conservation efforts. It must also be recognised that there is value in diversifying livelihood strategies and not being entirely reliant on CBNRM revenues from wildlife tourism, which can often be a volatile market.<sup>57</sup>

This complex scenario highlights the need for innovative thinking around integrated land-use planning. For example, some experts have argued that ‘greater consideration should be given to models of wildlife-livestock integration’.<sup>58</sup> Although there are substantial downside risks to, and legitimate concerns over the co-existence of livestock and wildlife,<sup>59</sup> a more integrated approach would minimise the current trade-offs between potential livestock farming and wildlife tourism revenue, and would also allow for the occupation of former hunting concessions that are currently uninhabited.

The same authors highlight that tenure and rights do not guarantee conventional conservation outcomes. For example, integrated and community-driven CBNRM will increase the likelihood of fiscal, ecological and institutional sustainability by granting communities more options. Market-based opportunities such as wildlife tourism might well be exploited alongside traditional agro-pastoralism or more diversified production systems. Tenure and rights to make informed choices are extremely important here, as is the knowledge and information that inform such decisions over land use. It should not be assumed that stronger tenure and improved rights will automatically lead to a ‘conservation’ outcome per se. However, underlying such a choice should be some measure of improved understanding of the institutional, economic and ecological issues that affect sustainability.<sup>60</sup>

In Southern Africa there is a particularly high correspondence between degraded land, areas of communal land tenure, overgrazing by cattle and loss of species types. According to environmental experts, many CBNRM programmes occur as multispecies production systems, occupying a range of biological niches. This will theoretically reduce the pressure on rangelands compared with single species production systems (such as cattle ranching)

---

57 A number of factors can deter visitors to Southern Africa – such as an outbreak in conflict, disease, hunting bans or changes in trophy hunting trade export legislation.

58 Personal interview with Linn Cassidy, CBNRM specialist with Ecosurv, Maun, 17 September 2015.

59 Niamir-Fuller M *et al.*, ‘Co-existence of wildlife and pastoralism on extensive rangelands: Competition or compatibility?’, *Pastoralism: Research, Policy and Practice*, 2, 8, 2012, pp. 1–14.

60 Roe D *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

and agro-pastoral systems. The limited data available suggests that land which has reverted to wildlife production after a period of intensive single-species production systems soon shows signs of resilience and improved ecosystem functioning.<sup>61</sup>

It is difficult to assess the environmental contribution of CBNRM as there is little empirical research on the direct impacts of CBNRM on wildlife or wild habitat. Further research is needed in this area, particularly the link between perceived benefits from CBNRM and local level conservation management. It is also difficult to attribute causality to any environmental improvements and to exclude external factors such as changes in rainfall and disease outbreaks. In Namibia's communal conservancies programme, it is well documented that CBNRM has contributed to the recovery of wildlife populations across large parts of northern Namibia.<sup>62</sup> However, it must be noted that as wildlife numbers increase so too does human-wildlife conflict and the need for preventative, mitigation and compensation techniques. Biodiversity co-benefits are also encouraged by the re-investment of CBNRM funding in business enterprise development. For example, the production of chillies can have the dual benefit of producing income for a community while also being used as an elephant repellent. Other co-benefits can be achieved in activities that promote fire management, litter collection and the removal of invasive species.<sup>63</sup> Also, from the outset, CBNRM models can incorporate best practice biodiversity management, including better resource assessments and integrated biodiversity management planning, and the creation of wildlife movement corridors.

#### THE INCLUSION OF WEALTH ACCOUNTING AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES VALUATIONS

In Southern African CBNRM, much emphasis is placed on allocating land to its highest-valued use. Conventionally the highest value has been interpreted largely in short-term economic and financial terms, using a market-based approach. Natural resources and their ecosystems have diverse values that go far beyond those that can be measured in financial terms, to include use values (direct and indirect) and non-use 'existence' values, such as spiritual and intrinsic values. This is particularly important as ecosystems play an important role in alleviating poverty and enhancing the resilience of communities to climate change impacts. This knowledge and information needs to inform land-use decisions. Developing a full understanding of the local economic and conservation impacts of CBNRM would require a more thorough range of quantitative and qualitative data, covering various dimensions of cost and benefit. In many cases such data is not available, especially with regard to the links with poverty reduction at the household level. Ecosystem service evaluations and natural resource accounting must be included in CBNRM model development.

61 Bond I *et al.*, 'Private land contribution to conservation in Southern Africa', in Child B (ed), *Parks in Transition: Biodiversity, Rural Development and the Bottom Line*. London: Earthscan/IUCN South Africa, 2004.

62 Nuulimba K & JJ Taylor, *op. cit.*

63 As in the case of South Africa's national Expanded Public Works Programmes such as Working for Water, Working for Fire, Working for Fisheries and so forth.

An initiative aimed at wealth accounting and the valuation of natural resources and ecosystems in Botswana found that ‘firewood, vegetables and grasses generate a net value of BWP 27 million (\$2.5 million) and a gross value added of BWP 29 million (\$26.8 million). About 37% of the value derived by households accrues from direct wetland use’.<sup>64</sup>

## RELEVANT INFORMATION AND DATA

All assessments of CBNRM processes are limited by the scarcity of data. In particular, robust ecological assessments that include non-monetary benefits and opportunity costs of CBNRM are extremely limited, as is an overall assessment of how CBNRM supports national development goals and livelihood diversification options in risk-prone environments. Consequently, many opinions rely on case-study analyses and anecdotal information that cannot be easily extrapolated, making it difficult to assess the overall economic performance of CBNRM in Southern Africa. A number of key data sets therefore need to be improved across the region in order to inform decision making. These include household income and community level income broken down by source, the value of benefits such as meat from hunting, jobs created by source, wages from tourism ventures and community enterprises and the value of forest products or fish that are sold or used. Also, from a conservation perspective, there is a need not just to measure wildlife numbers but to measure the extent to which habitat is disappearing or being maintained. Beyond household benefits and income generation it is further essential to understand the contribution (tangible and intangible) that CBNRM makes to local governance institutions, such as skills development, increased knowledge, greater community confidence and advocacy skills, and the institutional base for managing local affairs. In the case of Namibia it is pointed out that a key motivator for conservancy registration is that conservancy status was seen by local people as a way for them (even in areas without wildlife) to mobilise and organise themselves and establish representative structures, recognised by the state, in order to have a collective voice in advocating for their rights or improve their socio-economic conditions, and to create a sense of community pride and ownership over resources and increased community awareness of issues.

---

Many opinions  
rely on case-  
study analyses  
and anecdotal  
information that  
cannot be easily  
extrapolated, making  
it difficult to assess  
the overall economic  
performance of  
CBNRM in  
Southern Africa

---

## CONCLUSION

There has been a substantial shift over the past decades in the conservation–development paradigm and within CBNRM policy development in Southern Africa generally. Policies across the region now reflect natural resource management that incorporates, at least to a degree, participatory and community-based management approaches. There are a number of factors that demonstrate this, including the development of land and resource use rights; associated ownership structures; a supportive national legislation and a regulatory environment that is more lenient towards CBNRM practices; and the establishment of

---

64 WAVES (Global Partnership for Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services), *Report of the Botswana Preparation Phase*. World Bank –WAVES by the Centre for Applied Research and Econsult, 2012, [https://www.wavespartnership.org/sites/waves/files/documents/Final\\_WAVES\\_Botswana\\_Scoping\\_report\\_26.5.12.pdf](https://www.wavespartnership.org/sites/waves/files/documents/Final_WAVES_Botswana_Scoping_report_26.5.12.pdf), accessed 2 July 2016.

community trusts, CBOs, JVPs and other associated frameworks. It is also evident that CBNRM activities differ broadly within the region, according to the context and support environment in each country, preferences in terms of institutional setup and management styles, and varying levels of capacity, ownership and community involvement.

If the underlying premise of CBNRM is two-fold, namely to demonstrate practical examples of technical, social and economic community-based management, for increasing household and community income, and secondly to improve national and local capability to halt the decline in the wildlife resources and biodiversity, then CBNRM needs to be analysed on both fronts – the extent to which projects meet these dual objectives can determine the viability of CBNRM programmes. In this regard, CBNRM programmes across the region have achieved varying degrees of environmental and human development. These include wildlife recovery; revenue generation, game meat harvesting and job creation for poor rural populations; and the growth of democratic governance structures. CBNRM must therefore be valued for its contribution to rural economic diversification and livelihood security, especially where it serves to complement other established land and resource uses in communal areas. There have been meaningful JVPs, skills development and related job opportunities in remote communities.

However, examples are limited and CBNRM in practice has been subject to substantial criticism. Across these models there is an obvious need for improved levels of accountability and transparency within the decision-making structures of communities and government. This relates largely to the receipt and use of natural resource rents and the need for sufficient capacity at the broader community level and at the CBO community trust level, to strengthen their ability to implement, advise and facilitate the provision of better services to rural communities involved in CBNRM.

CBNRM largely hinges on the involvement of local community institutions in the management of resources.<sup>65</sup> In many cases there is limited evidence of communities actively engaging in conservation and taking responsibility for and ownership over their resources. It is important to balance the interests of marginalised communities through state intervention, and to allow decentralisation and devolution to empower local communities as decision makers. An effective democratic system requires the better linking of the local and the national – implying efforts to enhance relationships at all levels, as well as enhanced shared responsibilities between public and private sector actors. Good governance is central to both these stances.

The past 20 years of experience have set the stage for future devolution and diversification of management actions. However there is a need for continued, long-term support. Looking forward, it is important to deepen our understanding of CBNRM as a broad approach that embraces wildlife conservation and protected area management, together

---

65 Rihoy E & B Maguranyanga, 'Devolution and Democratisation of Natural Resource Management in Southern Africa: A Comparative Analysis of CBNRM Policy Processes in Botswana and Zimbabwe', CASS/PLAAS Occasional Paper Series, 2007, <http://www.plaas.org.za/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CBNRM%2018.pdf>, accessed 2 July 2016.



with the broader land management and resource use issues related to agriculture, forestry and pastoralism. CBNRM is a response to how best to harness local resource exploitation to privilege local economic and social development. The continued success of many projects will be determined by the extent to which they are able to expand beyond both traditional and emerging sectors of wildlife, forestry and fisheries, to further include important common pool ecosystems such as rangelands (grasslands, savannahs and woodlands), as well as new and innovative income-generating activities and alternative livelihoods strategies.

#### **BOX 1** OVERALL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CBNRM UPTAKE IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION

To enhance the legitimacy of wildlife and broader conservation regulations, CBNRM must demonstrate sufficient (and differential) benefits (intangible and tangible) for communities and individuals, especially where the dominant land use is agriculture and cattle grazing or where wildlife–human conflict occurs.

Increased management responsibilities must be devolved to the community. Namibia’s CBNRM legislation provides a useful model for devolving rights over wildlife and wildlife-based revenues to communities.

Deeper and more meaningful relationships between CBOs, the private and public sectors must be encouraged.

Internal governance of both central government and CBOs must be improved by ensuring that transparent mechanisms are used for equitable and transparent benefit sharing.

Adequate investment must be made into building the capacity of trusts to manage CBOs’ resources and income.

Key data sets, linking CBNRM to poverty reduction and conservation, need to be improved across the region in order to inform decision making. This includes the value of ecosystem services.

Emphasis and research need to be conducted on assessing the feasibility of alternative livelihood opportunities, beyond traditional sectors (wildlife, forestry and fisheries), as well as the enhanced role that eco-tourism can play

## **SAIIA'S FUNDING PROFILE**

SAIIA raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. Our work is currently being funded by, among others, the Bradlow Foundation, the UK's Department for International Development, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the World Bank, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Open Society Foundations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Oxfam South Africa and the Centre for International Governance and Innovation. SAIIA's corporate membership is drawn from the South African private sector and international businesses with an interest in Africa. In addition, SAIIA has a substantial number of international diplomatic and mainly South African institutional members.



---

Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand  
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Tel +27 (0)11 339-2021 • Fax +27 (0)11 339-2154  
[www.saiia.org.za](http://www.saiia.org.za) • [info@saiia.org.za](mailto:info@saiia.org.za)