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## Evaluating Cross-Border Natural Resource Management Projects

Community-Based Tourism Development and Fire Management in Conservation Areas of the SADC Region

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Community-Based Tourism Development and Fire Management in Conservation Areas of the SADC Region

## Seminar für Ländliche Entwicklung | Centre for Rural Development

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Alfons Üllenberg (Team Leader)

M.Sc. Agricultural Economics

e-mail: [alfons@uellenberg.eu](mailto:alfons@uellenberg.eu)

Christoph Buchberger

M.A. Political Science

e-mail: [christoph.buchberger@posteo.de](mailto:christoph.buchberger@posteo.de)

Kathrin Meindl

M.A. Political Science

e-mail: [kathrin.meindl@gmx.de](mailto:kathrin.meindl@gmx.de)

Laura Rupp

M.A. Latin American Area Studies

e-mail: [laurarupp@posteo.de](mailto:laurarupp@posteo.de)

Maxi Springsguth

M.Sc. Landscape Ecology

e-mail: [maxi.springsguth@posteo.de](mailto:maxi.springsguth@posteo.de)

Benjamin Straube

M.Sc. Agricultural Science

e-mail: [benjamin.straube@gmail.com](mailto:benjamin.straube@gmail.com)

SLE Postgraduate Studies on International Cooperation

PUBLICATION SERIES S 259

*Study commissioned by*

*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH*

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Alfons Üllenberg

Christoph Buchberger

Kathrin Meindl

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Berlin, February 2015

*Supported by*

**BMZ**



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

Senate Department  
for Economics, Technology  
and Research

**be**  **Berlin**

## **SLE PUBLICATION SERIES S 259**

Editor	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin SLE Centre for Rural Development Dr. Karin Fiege  Hessische Str. 1-2 10115 Berlin Germany  Tel. +49 30 2093-6900 Fax: +49 30 2093-6904  E-Mail: <a href="mailto:sle@agrار.hu-berlin.de">sle@agrار.hu-berlin.de</a> Website: <a href="http://www.sle-berlin.de">www.sle-berlin.de</a>
Print	Zerbe Druck & Werbung Planckstr. 11 16537 Grünheide Germany
Distribution	SLE Hessische Str. 1-2 10115 Berlin Germany
Photos	Benjamin Straube Christoph Buchberger
Copyright	SLE 2015  1 <sup>st</sup> edition 2015 (1-150)  ISSN 1433-4585  ISBN 3-936602-64-6

## Foreword

The Centre for Rural Development (SLE - Seminar für Ländliche Entwicklung) at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin has been training young professionals in the field of German and international development cooperation for over fifty years.

Three-month practical projects conducted on behalf of German and international organizations in development cooperation form an integral part of the one-year postgraduate course. In interdisciplinary teams and with the guidance of experienced team leaders, young professionals carry out assignments on innovative future-oriented topics, providing consultant support to the commissioning organizations. Involvement of a broad spectrum of actors is vital to this process, i.e., surveys from household level to decision-makers and experts at national level. The outputs of this applied research directly contribute to solving specific development issues.

The studies are linked primarily to rural development (including management of natural resources, climate change, food security and agriculture), cooperation with fragile or least developed countries (including disaster prevention, peace building and relief) and the development of methods (evaluation, impact analysis, participatory planning, process consulting and support).

Throughout the years, SLE has carried out over two hundred consulting projects in more than ninety countries, and publishes the findings regularly in this series. In 2014, SLE teams conducted studies in Kenya, Paraguay, Cambodia, Tajikistan, and in the SADC region.

The present study was commissioned by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH Botswana in cooperation with the SADC secretariat in Gaborone/Botswana.

Prof. Dr. Uwe Schmidt  
Director of the Albrecht Daniel Thaer-Institute  
at the Humboldt University of Berlin

Dr. Susanne Neubert  
Director of the Centre for  
Rural Development / SLE

## Acknowledgements

This evaluation was only possible with the financial support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Humboldt University of Berlin and the assistance of countless people in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and Germany. We are grateful to all of them for their valuable input.

First and foremost we would like to express our gratitude to Martin Leineweber of GIZ Botswana for initiating and commissioning this evaluation. We are more than grateful for his logistic and organizational support, but above all for his valuable expertise. Our sincere thanks go to Nyambe Nyambe, SADC Secretariat for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Management, Wibke Thies, head of the GIZ unit “Transboundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources” and Martin Schneichel for their technical input and support.

Our thanks also go to experts in the field of fire management and ecotourism in conservation areas: Anja A. Hoffmann, Ludwig Ellenberg, Roberto Zolho and Iris Paulus. Many other experts in the SADC region took the time to share their knowledge and experience with us.

In the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA), we would like to give special thanks to Frederic Alpers, IRDNC, for his hospitality, for his logistic support and for sharing his insight and experience. We would also like to thank Antonio Chipita, ACADIR, for his kind cooperation and his support for the evaluation team in Angola.

In the /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park, we would like to thank Francois Snyders and Charles Ndoli, both from NWR, and Hendrik Prins from SANParks for their logistic support and their hospitality.

In the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA we would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Nomsa Mabila and Rod de Vletter, both Lubombo Conservancy, for their support with logistics and translation, but also for sharing their insights and experience, especially in community-based approaches. Furthermore, we thank Alves Nhaurire for his support with interviews and data collection in Mozambique. His specific knowledge of the local context and local language made him invaluable.

In the Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA, we are particularly grateful to national TFCA coordinator Seth Maphalala for his logistic support. Our thanks also go to

park managers Jerry Myeni and Mandla Makhanya for their technical support and translation work.

We are hugely indebted to the staff at the WESSA office in Howick, South Africa, for their great hospitality, tons of biscuits and endless cups of tea. Their community spirit made us feel at home.

We would like to express our special gratitude to all the members of the communities and villages that were host to our research. Without the patience, support and wisdom of the local people in all five countries, this evaluation would not have been possible. We sincerely hope that our work will be of benefit to them.

We extend our appreciation to the resource staff in all five countries, who shared their expertise and knowledge with us in countless hours of interviews.

We would like to thank all the people and organisations who provided support, valuable comments and advice in preparing and implementing the evaluation, especially to Karin Fiege and the SLE staff. And finally, we are very grateful for the circumstances that allowed us to return to Berlin safe and sound.

At this point we apologize to all those we were unable to mention by name. Please accept the sincere thanks of the entire evaluation team for the assistance received throughout the study.





## Executive Summary

Biodiversity is crucial to the provision of ecosystem services and consequently to sustaining people's livelihood. Its loss has become a global problem with severe social and ecological impacts. Conservation of the earth's ecosystems has therefore gained in significance at national and international level, where protected areas play a vital role.

Protected areas are generally managed in a national context. Yet, as ecosystems straddle international boundaries, the need has arisen to coordinate conservation across those boundaries. Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA) seek to foster cooperation between nations and encourage sustainable socio-economic development in the interests of the rural poor who live in or within the vicinity of the parks. Accordingly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) developed legally binding protocols such as the *Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement* (1999), which calls for the establishment of TFCA in the region, and the *Protocol on Forestry* (2002). Their main purpose is to protect natural resources, foster regional cooperation and increase effective community participation. A *Regional Biodiversity Strategy* was also adopted in 2006. The SADC region currently contains eighteen TFCA – six established, seven emerging and five conceptual areas – although the implementation status differs considerably. Cross-border management of these conservation areas and local community participation is often lacking. Many of the communities are deprived of their right to gather and hunt for resources in protected areas and have hitherto benefited little from their economic potential. Combined with a lack of alternative income-generating options, this leads to increased poverty and food insecurity.

To support the management of natural resources across national borders in TFCA, SADC established a regional programme in 2012 in cooperation with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The first phase (06/2012–05/2015) of this technical cooperation measure entitled *Trans-boundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources* (TUPNR) ends mid-2015 and will be followed by a second phase (06/2015–05/2018). A pilot project approach was developed as its core element. Nine pilot projects were carried out to generate on-the-ground learning experiences. Their aim is to support the harmonization of national frameworks and to foster cooperation in natural resource management in the different TFCA.

In 2013, the SADC Secretariat issued the *SADC Programme for Transfrontier Conservation Areas* with the mission

*to develop SADC into a functional and integrated network of transfrontier conservation areas where shared natural resources are sustainably co-managed and conserved to foster economic and social development, tourism, and regional integration for the benefit of those living within and around TFCA and mankind at large* (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 4).

In order to review the SADC/GIZ pilot project approach and observe early impacts, GIZ requested the Centre for Rural Development (SLE) to evaluate four selected pilot projects in different TFCA, two on income generation through tourism development and two on community-based fire management:

- *Desert Kayak Trails:*  
Development of a kayak trail along the Orange River in /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park (ARTP), Namibia/South Africa.
- *Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative:*  
Development of community-based eco-lodges and hiking trails, Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (LCG TFCA), Swaziland/Mozambique.
- *Community-Based Fire Management:*  
Development of an Integrated Transfrontier Fire Management Strategy for Luiana Partial Reserve and Bwabwata National Park, Kavango Zambezi TFCA (KAZA TFCA), Angola/Namibia.
- *Cross-border Fire Management for SM TFCA:*  
Development of a harmonized community-based fire management approach in Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA (SM TFCA), Swaziland/South Africa.

Since project implementation was in the early stages in all cases, GIZ selected four projects that were more advanced. GIZ intends to use the evaluation findings to plan and implement the second TUPNR phase, and to improve the projects of implementing partners.

The evaluation report provides knowledge on the four pilot projects, compiles baseline data where necessary and identifies early impacts where possible. We evaluate project planning and implementation processes as well as the pilot project approach. Qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were applied. Semi-structured interviews, group discussions and focus group discussions were carried out with the relevant stakeholders at supranational, national, TFCA and local level in the five project countries. Collected data was triangulated and cross-checked with secondary data.

The evaluation took place from May to December 2014 with a phase of primary data collection from 5 August to 12 September 2014. In general, implementing organizations were highly supportive and assisted the team logistically, establishing contacts or translating. The team was unable to access Luiana National Park, however, so that no statements can be made on project development there.

For analysis of the individual pilot projects, the evaluation team used all five OECD/DAC criteria: effectiveness, impact, sustainability, relevance and efficiency. We added cooperation as a criterion, since strengthening cooperation was a key project target and drew on other success criteria of Capacity WORKS management tools, such as strategy and learning.

### **Tourism Development Project in the /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park**

The /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park (ARTP) was founded in 2003 and was the result of combining the /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park in Namibia and the Richtersveld National Park in South Africa. The ARTP lies in one of the most species-rich areas in the world with high plant endemism and is threatened primarily by cultivation and mining activities. In the past, this TFCA was inhabited by the nomadic Nama people. Today, the Namibian Nama community lives at least 100km away from the /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park, now a state-owned protected area. The Richtersveld National Park in contrast is owned by the Richtersveld Community and leased to the government of South Africa. Although Nama people on both sides of the border have the same roots, cross-border contacts are infrequent. The main job opportunities in the region are provided by mining companies and commercial farms, but unemployment is generally high.

Cooperation between the park agencies in charge of the /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park and Richtersveld National Park, Namibia Wildlife Resorts and South African National Parks (SANParks), has been fostered since 2006. Joint management bodies were established at various levels, such as the Bilateral Ministerial Committee and the Joint Management Board, both working at the strategic policy level of cross-border park management. The bilateral Park Management Committee coordinates at the operational level. Since 2009, park agencies have gained experience in organizing joint transboundary tourism activities. The harmonization of legal matters remains nonetheless inadequate.

ARTP is an attractive tourist destination with a variety of tourism activities. The majority of tourists comes from South Africa. The main season is between

March and October. Activities such as kayaking on the Orange River, the frontier between the two countries, were identified as having development potential.

The focus of the pilot project is therefore on designing a fully catered and fully equipped four-day kayak tour along the Orange River. Once it gets under way, clients can avail of tours tailored to their requirements. The objectives are three-fold: firstly, to set up kayak activities for the benefit of ARTP, secondly, to generate employment for the men and women of the local communities and, thirdly, to empower the Richtersveld Community by handing over the project operation.

To establish the tourism product, plans were made to train future guides in capacity development, to procure kayaking equipment and to work on marketing. During the evaluation period, almost all activities had been carried out or were in the final stages. They were nonetheless delayed, which led to postponement of the kayak trail launch.

In terms of effectiveness, the project has already produced some desired results:

- Seven guides, including one woman, have been trained in kayaking and are in possession of a wage employment contract.
- Despite delays, most of the equipment has been purchased and delivered.
- Cross-border communication between the Namibian and South African communities was enhanced by visits of community guides.
- Cross-border activities have been extended at park management level, contributing to TFCA implementation.

On the other hand, the project is ambitious given the budget and the time schedule, and further activities and investments will be required to manage a fully catered four-day kayak trail. High on the agenda are issues such as training completion, the establishment of new campsites and the purchase of a vehicle. Kayak tours are now scheduled to begin in spring 2015, providing a further source of revenue. The management bodies will decide jointly on their use for ARTP.

The project impact on the livelihoods of the tour guides will be significant. The scale of the project, however, is small and alternative opportunities for economic development in the communities are few and far between.

For the sustainability of project success, we consider positive the existence of joint management bodies and the institutionalization of cooperation with a joint management plan. At the same time, we identified several challenges:

- There is an urgent need for further investment capital to guarantee finalization of the project.
- A number of legal issues need to be addressed, e.g., work permits for tour guides and immigration rules for kayak trail clients.
- The Nama community in Namibia was granted a concession for tourism development along the Orange River. Although this could attract more tourists to the area and benefit Desert Kayak Trails, it could also mean increased competition for the project.
- A new Orange River water flow regime to protect wetland at the river mouth was discussed. The impact this might have on kayak operations during certain periods of the year is unclear and calls for further investigation.

In terms of project relevance, it can be stated that on the whole communities on both sides of the border lack opportunities for income generation. The project addresses this issue.

As far as we could discern, the budget was spent efficiently.

Cooperation between the implementing partners has been strengthened by the project. One advantage here was the existing cooperation between the park management bodies at strategic and operational level. This has increased the knowledge on the different framework conditions and intensified the joint search for practical solutions. There is, however, room for improvement of the information flow between the implementing bodies.

Community participation within the project is currently somewhat passive and strategies to hand over project operation to community members are vague. This objective will only be achieved if community guides are trained accordingly. The flow of information between project implementers and guides is seen as difficult at present and the absence of open dialogue is evident. Furthermore, the long distances between the villages and the tourism area are a challenge to greater economic and political participation of larger communities.

Our observations and analysis led to the following recommendations:

- Day excursions should be introduced as soon as possible, since launching four-day kayak tours requires further investment and is more demanding in terms of logistics.
- Project implementers should secure funding to implement the four-day kayak trail.

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- Management capacities should be enlarged to guarantee effective running of the business.
- Guides should be trained in customer service and environmental interpretation to add quality to the product.
- Project implementers should seek to improve the quality of their information exchange with the guides concerned and design a long-term strategy with the aim of handing over responsibility for project operation to them.
- The capacity of local communities to provide goods (e.g., food, wood) and services (e.g., local dishes) should be enhanced.
- Community members should continue with cross-border visits to heighten interest in kayaking and further cross-border cooperation.
- Implementing partners should assess the above-mentioned risks (e.g., water flow regime, work permits, immigration regulations) and adopt the relevant measures.

### **Tourism Development Project in Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA**

Established in 2000, the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba (LCG) TFCA combines Lubombo Conservancy, an association of protected areas in northeast Swaziland, with the Goba district in southern Mozambique. The Goba community on the Mozambican side and the Mhlumeni community on the Swazi side are the communities targeted in the project area. In the 1990s, participatory land-use planning was carried out in the Goba community and land set aside for conservation purposes. The process was never finalized, however, and to date no area has legal conservation status. Consequently there is no management body on the Mozambican side of LCG. Nevertheless, a community-based organization (CBO) was founded and entitled with land rights. On behalf of the Goba community, it was entrusted with the management of approximately 10,000 ha. Mhlumeni territory borders on Lubombo Conservancy but no area has been awarded conservation status as yet.

Livelihoods in Mhlumeni depend for the most part on subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry. Formal employment opportunities are in short supply. The situation is somewhat different in Goba where, apart from subsistence farming, people are employed on agricultural farms. Furthermore, charcoal production is common in Goba, generally for self-consumption but in some cases for commercial purposes.

The TFCA is part of the Lubombo Mountains ecosystem and a key biodiversity area. The principal threats are overgrazing (Mhlumeni), charcoal production (Goba) and invasive species. With its mountainous landscape, the area has tourism potential, not least as a local recreation area for visitors from the nearby capital, Maputo.

One non-governmental organization (NGO) on each side of the border is responsible for the project in LCG: Lubombo Conservancy on the Swazi side and CESVI on the Mozambican side. The idea of the project is to develop a cross-border trail with campsites/lodges in both communities. The project is embedded in a broader programme on the Swazi side, the *Eco Lubombo Program*, which promotes tourism development and biodiversity conservation.

The pilot project aims at strengthening conservation through economic development and enhancing the livelihoods of people in the Lubombo mountain range area. Numerous activities with a strong community-based approach were envisaged, extending from community preparation via participatory land-use planning and baseline data collection to project implementation. This includes drawing up eco-business plans and an integrated management plan, as well as tackling infrastructure, capacity development and marketing. The project also contemplated cross-border activities such as the introduction of a cross-border community forum on natural resource management.

When evaluating project effectiveness, it is vital to take the respective circumstances in each country into account. Lubombo Conservancy carried out several activities in the context of designing a community-based ecotourism product. These have already led to results, e.g., greater conservation awareness and the foundation of the CBO Mhlumeni Trust. In Goba, on the other hand, there has been no activity in this direction and consequently no cross-border outputs have emerged.

It is too early to assess project impacts. We can only estimate possible future impacts. If the *Eco Lubombo Program* is carried out as planned, the community-based approach of alternative economic opportunities should contribute to poverty reduction and improved conservation, at least on the Swazi side. Impacts at cross-border level cannot be identified yet and depend on what approach the Goba community adopts in the future.

Concerning project sustainability, continuation is likely on the Swazi side as the *Eco Lubombo Program* is in a position to acquire additional funding. In contrast, the cross-border character of the project is at risk as a result of difficulties on the Mozambican side. For the success of the project, the implementer will have to



identify a suitable project partner, secure the active support of the relevant government authorities and develop a funded long-term approach.

Cooperation between the implementing partners failed. CESVI, the NGO on the Mozambican side, subsequently withdrew from the project. Cooperation was never formalized and for several reasons no agreement was reached on project implementation, e.g., poor assessments prior to implementation caused the partner in question to draw false conclusions about the situation in Goba. Replacement of a CESVI country director on two separate occasions during the project implementation phase led to loss of information. Both parties had neglected the aspect of cooperation.

Lubombo Conservancy adopted a community-based approach. The foundation of the Mhlumeni Trust is one of the key outputs of the participatory approach that saw broad community involvement. In Goba, in contrast, the complex situation, the short timeframe and the ill-prepared approach were contributing factors to the failure of the participatory process. The CBO was not sufficiently involved and the fact that it was not representative of the whole community was ignored.

Recommendations to the Mhlumeni community:

- The project should soon proceed with the next steps in order to exploit the current dynamic and motivation in the community. These include campsite construction and hospitality training in Mhlumeni.
- The management skills of the CBO Mhlumeni Trust should be strengthened.
- In the interests of sustainable conservation, the implementer should develop a strategy for the replacement of cattle as an asset and a status symbol.

Recommendations to the Goba side:

- The relevant stakeholders, i.e., government authorities, community representatives and the broader community, should be involved.
- The project needs to identify a suitable partner organization in Mozambique with knowledge of the region, experience in community-based approaches, and the willingness for a long-term commitment.
- Further assessments of the situation in Goba should be undertaken and an appropriate strategy for work with the community developed.
- The project should secure the financial and human resources required for a long-term approach.

## **Fire Management Project in the Kavango Zambezi TFCA**

With an area of approximately 440,000km<sup>2</sup>, Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA is the largest transboundary protection area in the world. It was established in 2011 as a conservation and development initiative by the governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. KAZA TFCA includes thirty-six formally proclaimed forest reserves, game reserves, national parks and wildlife management areas, *inter alia* the target areas of the pilot project: Bwabwata National Park (NP) in Namibia and the adjacent reserves on the Angolan side of the border, Luiana NP and Mucusso Protected Public Reserve (PPR).

The authority responsible for the management of Bwabwata NP is the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), which works closely in this context with the local CBO, Kyaramacan Association. Founded in 2006, the latter is responsible for the sharing of park benefits.

Bwabwata NP is known for its large tally of mammals and avian biodiversity. Some of the bird species are globally threatened. Areas such as the riparian woodlands and floodplains are considered both highly sensitive and a rarity. The park is zoned into core protection areas and a multiple use area for agricultural practices, human settlement, community-based tourism and trophy hunting.

Twelve villages with a total of approximately 6,500 inhabitants form the local community, which consists of different ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Khwe (82%) and the Mbukushu (16%) peoples. The Khwe traditionally pursued a nomadic or semi-nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle. Once settled in Bwabwata NP, they were obliged to take up agricultural activities since hunting was prohibited and gathering restricted. They rely a great deal on government food aid. The Mbukushu are farmers by tradition and practise agriculture and livestock husbandry on a larger scale.

In Angola, the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism governs Luiana NP and Mucusso PPR<sup>1</sup>. A management plan for the Angolan section of KAZA TFCA has not yet been drafted. The area is marked by low species diversity. Since the end of the civil war in 2002, more and more wildlife, e.g., elephants, crosses the border.

Here the overwhelming majority of the population is Mbukushu (80%), although numerous other ethnic groups migrated to here during and after the war. Roughly 2,500 people live in the three villages targeted by the pilot project in the vicinity of

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<sup>1</sup> Statements can only be made about the Mucusso area, as information on Luiana was inaccessible.

Mucusso PPR. The key sources of livelihood are agriculture and animal husbandry. Although legally forbidden, hunting and gathering are also in evidence. Vast areas have been cleared for the purpose of slash and burn agriculture. Along with a growing number of elephants in the area, this is a major reason for increased human-wildlife conflict and harvest destruction.

Visits by community members across the border take place primarily in the direction of Namibia. Namibian infrastructure for health and education services is also used by the Angolan neighbours. There is no occurrence of formal cooperation at park management level.

Veld fires were commonly used in the past by the Khwe people as a traditional management tool for maintenance of natural resources and their utilization. Much of this knowledge has been lost in recent decades, when veld fires were prohibited by law<sup>2</sup>. Instead, veld fires are set illegally for livelihood purposes. They tend to be set in the late dry season and are far more detrimental to the environment than traditional early dry season fires. In Bwabwata NP, the concept of veld fire management was reintroduced and is now carried out by MET in cooperation with the Kyaramacan Association. In Mucusso, in contrast, fire management is non-existent, albeit veld fires are considered harmful.

The two NGOs, ACADIR in Angola and IRDNC in Namibia, applied jointly for the SADC/GIZ pilot project in order to develop and implement an integrated transfrontier fire management strategy for Luiana NP and Bwabwata NP. The basic idea of the project is to share Namibian knowledge and experience of community-based fire management with Angola in an effort to boost its fire management. Most activities concentrated on capacity development and building up relationships between the two countries at both local and regional level. Another intended result was the establishment of a cross-border community forum.

Project effectiveness was adversely affected by an overly ambitious objective and inconsistent project logic. The development and implementation of a community-based fire management strategy cannot be achieved with the current budget and timeframe. Since neither of the implementing NGOs had a mandate from their respective governments, only a concept note on a fire management approach was written. The introduction of a cross-border community forum was thwarted by lack of support from the Angolan administration. Under these conditions, it can be seen as a success that exchange visits and fire management train-

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<sup>2</sup> Veld fires are still legally prohibited in Angola.

ing measures were carried out as planned. In addition, knowledge of the situation in the neighbouring country was generated, awareness of community empowerment and fire management raised, and more favourable conditions for improved cooperation between the implementing NGOs worked out.

Enhanced fire management could impact positively on biodiversity and the livelihood of the local people. This target was not reached on the Angolan side of the border despite exchange visits and trainings on fire and fire management at local level.

Concerning project relevance, it can be stated that on the whole fire management is a relevant topic, as it contributes to natural resource management enhancement and thus to the conservation-poverty alleviation nexus. Poverty alleviation, human-wildlife conflicts and poaching were, however, highlighted as more pressing issues in the project area. In addition, the current legal and institutional framework in Angola does not permit veld fires, nor does it support the concept of community-based natural resource management. It can therefore be concluded that the relevance of the topic is limited and should be embedded in a more holistic approach addressing also the issue of poverty alleviation.

As far as the evaluation team could establish, activities were carried out efficiently and responsibly by the implementer IRDNC. Administrative barriers and the involvement of government officials rendered a number of activities both time-consuming and more costly. These obstacles, however, are beyond the responsibility of the implementing organization.

The project encouraged cooperation between the two implementing NGOs IRDNC and ACADIR, neither of which had worked closely before. Cooperation has not been institutionalized at community level. Nonetheless, initial contact has been established and may facilitate cooperation between the communities in the future. Exchange visits at both government and park management level failed to bring those responsible together. There seems to have been no interest in meetings or cooperation at these levels. All in all, the project failed in its effort to bring about cooperation.

Community participation was low, especially in Angola. The local population was not involved in the development of the proposal. Later, people were merely informed as the project target group.

One important conclusion of this evaluation is that a cross-border community-based project in a context of vastly different institutional frameworks and obstacles may not make good sense. This needs further attention and should be ana-

lysed with a broader empirical basis. For now, the evaluation team recommends in the case of similar projects that legal and administrative issues be also addressed at the national level.

We see the following recommendations as vital:

- The choice of topic is decisive and calls for greater attention; a consultation process involving the local population is recommended, particularly in the context of community-based projects.
- The logic of this project was inconsistent and shows evidence of insufficient investigation prior to project begin.
- All cross-border projects need the strong involvement of government bodies, especially those that focus on strategy design and implementation. A multi-level approach should therefore be considered.
- In order to avoid project failure, the feasibility of the approach should be verified prior to implementation (depending on the project budget).

### **Fire Management Project in Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA**

Established in 2004, the Songimvelo-Malolotja (SM) TFCA integrates Songimvelo Nature Reserve (NR) in South Africa and Malolotja Nature Reserve in Swaziland. A Joint Management Plan (JMP) was developed in 2009 and a Joint Task Group for strategic planning implemented. Several joint activities are currently underway, the most important of which are the construction of an internal link road and a border crossing to transverse the TFCA. The daily management routine is still performed by the individual reserve managers. The implementation of the TFCA is slow primarily due to lack of funds and a land restitution process on the South African side that has gone on for several years.

SM TFCA is considered a centre of endemism, hosting rare plant species and numerous mammal species. The greatest threats to biodiversity are high population density in the vicinity of the park, veld fires, poaching and illegal resource extraction.

Both parks have a long history. Songimvelo NR was established in 1987. The people who lived in the area were resettled outside the reserve, with the exception of one village that resisted relocation. Up until 2012, the NR was managed by Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA), the provincial park agency. When those who had been resettled reclaimed territory in the reserve, the park agency agreed to jointly manage the park with their representatives, the commu-

nity-based organisation (CBO) Ekuphileni Kwezive Communal Property Association (EKCPA). A co-management committee was elected for five years. While the MTPA reserve manager is currently in charge of the technical day-to-day management, EKCPA focuses on strategic planning and tourism development. Both parties share the benefits resulting from entrance fees, trophy hunting, game capture and tourism. MTPA employs approx. sixty people, most of whom come from the surrounding villages. A social ecology department has been set up to support the resettled communities with livelihood projects.

Since its foundation in 1977, the state-owned Malolotja NR has been managed by the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC), the parastatal agency responsible for conservation and cultural heritage. Similar to Songimvelo NR, the communities who lived within the designated area were resettled when the reserve was established. Eighty per cent of the thirty park employees are recruited from the surrounding villages. Similar to Songimvelo NR, a community outreach department was also established.

The majority of inhabitants on both sides of the border belong to the Swazi ethnic group. The most important livelihood sources are subsistence agriculture and cattle husbandry, whereby cattle are seen both as an asset and a status symbol. Park areas designated for the harvesting of resources are restricted and require official permission. Illegal activities such as hunting and gathering are not uncommon and constitute a further source of income. In the past, people found employment in the mining industry. When most of the mines closed down, unemployment became a vast problem. Infrastructure (water supply, electricity and health services) is more developed in South Africa, which leads to border crossing from Swaziland in search of these services.

Fires in the late dry season (August to September) are a frequent occurrence and perceived as a threat, as they cause degradation and loss of biodiversity. Fires are used for many reasons, however, e.g., to stimulate plant growth for forage, to harvest wild honey or to hunt illegally. Although official permission to use veld fires is mandatory in both countries, people tend to ignore this. Traditional fire management practices still exist but are no longer pursued. In the TFCA, both reserves use fire management practices such as the establishment of fire breaks and the controlled burning of alternating blocks. Inadequate equipment, lack of early warning systems and the difficulty of fire fighting in a steep mountainous terrain make fire a continuous hazard.

The objectives of the pilot project are ambitious: firstly, to create and implement a fire management strategy; secondly, to develop an institutional structure

that harmonizes fire management programmes in the TFCA; thirdly, to equip community members with skills to prevent fires and respond to wildfires. The Swazi national TFCA coordinator, who is the main driver of the project, and the Songimvelo reserve manager are responsible for implementation. As the pilot project had not yet got off the ground during its evaluation, the planning process was assessed and likely results were estimated. The delay in launching the project was primarily due to administrative procedures.

Project effectiveness is evident in several aspects: the cross-border structure Joint Task Group is in place and covers knowledge on current fire management and transfrontier processes. Fire management is an issue in both reserves and practices are similar. Community outreach departments have been set up in both reserves with the aim of enhancing relations with local communities. On the other hand, the number of activities in this small project seems excessive and is aggravated by limited human and financial resources.

Since implementation was still in the early stages, the potential impacts of the project on poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation could not be assessed. One possible outcome is the establishment of a Joint Management Committee for decision-making on the ground, which is not yet in place but called for in the Joint Management Plan (JMP).

The sustainability of the project heavily depends on its ability to acquire further funding to finalize the project and finance fire management activities once the pilot project comes to an end. Furthermore, the project sees the introduction of permanent staff in the communities. Unfortunately the parks already face funding gaps. No information was available on raising and securing additional funds.

The relevance of the topic is evident: SM TFCA was identified as a fire hotspot and the occurrence of cross-border fires with disastrous consequences in 2007 and 2008 has shown the need for international cooperation. This notwithstanding, the Directorate of Environmental Affairs in South Africa sees no reason to promote the TFCA with fire management. Local communities perceive veld fires as a threat to their lives and their livelihoods, and are keen to participate in fire management activities. The local practice of exploiting fire, however, should be seen in the broader context of livelihood and subsistence; poverty and unemployment are more pressing issues for the local population than wildfires.

Cooperation was facilitated by the existence of the Joint Task Group and the creation of a binational project management team to implement the pilot project. However, the team is facing structural problems. First of all, the absence of a connecting road and means of transport hinders the holding of meetings. Secondly,

an imbalance in the knowledge and experience of the responsible implementing partners leads to uneven involvement of the two partners. This is exacerbated by the partial unavailability of the Swazi national TFCA coordinator due to work overload. The end result is time delays and slow processes.

Community participation is not detailed in the proposal, but the idea of introducing community-based fire management is mentioned. Communities were involved in the planning process and representatives are part of the project management team, although communities are underrepresented. We rate their involvement in Swaziland as “interactive participation”, since local people helped to shape project activities. In South Africa, only one community was informed and consulted. This can be characterized as “participation by consultation” on an extremely limited scale.

Our observations led to the following recommendations:

- The proposal should be revised and inconsistencies in the project logic addressed. Activity descriptions are vague and should be clarified. The proposal should be adapted to implementer and community capacities.
- The project should institutionalize meetings and instead of relying on one person, as is the current case, work on the sharing of responsibilities among the members of the project management team.
- The project should seek cooperation with private businesses, since timber companies in the vicinity of the TFCA possess valuable knowledge and equipment (e.g., helicopter) and have a strong interest in fire prevention. They also have fire management programmes in place.
- Fire management should be embedded in a more holistic project approach that also addresses poverty alleviation and livelihoods.
- Local stakeholders need to be empowered and trained in management issues in order to reduce the heavy reliance on one implementer. Financing an external consultant for a limited period seems reasonable in this context.

### **Pilot Project Approach**

The intention of the pilot projects was to test innovations initially on a small scale in order to learn from them and later scale-up good practices. On-the-ground learning experiences should be generated to identify and reduce barriers at local level. This contributes to enhancing the implementation of SADC protocols and strategies for sustainable natural resource management. A further aim of



the pilot projects was to stimulate and improve cross-border cooperation in the TFCA, to reduce poverty at local level and to promote community participation in cross-border natural resource management. The inclusion of women and youth was emphasized. These objectives were neither specified nor prioritized.

The concept of the approach was modified early in the process following intervention by the SADC member states. Instead of three large, hand-picked projects of long duration, the financial volume of each project was limited to €50,000 and the duration to nine months. The procedure was altered to a tendering process. Based on a call for proposals open to all TFCA, nine cross-border projects covering income generation, fire management and climate change adaptation were selected. Three of these focused on income generation and four on fire management. Alterations to the process led initially to a three to four month delay.

As far as effectiveness is concerned, we consider the project approach adequate in terms of achieving promising results for the first objective. A wealth of learning experiences was gathered. The participation of numerous TFCA – albeit not from the C category – should also be acknowledged. The degree to which the remaining goals were achieved varies considerably. On the whole, cross-border cooperation improved where preconditions were favourable. At the same time, the short duration of the projects frustrated the achievement of more tangible results referring to poverty reduction and community participation.

The evaluation team sees the pilot project approach as highly relevant. The objectives are relevant at the macro level, e.g., as a contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and regional treaties, policies and programmes, and in most cases at local level in the individual project context. Given these objectives, the topics selected were not always the most appropriate.

One reason why the set goals were not reached dates back to modification of the approach design. Although the new strategy seems more conducive to generating learning experiences, it is counterproductive for achievement of the remaining three objectives. All four objectives demand a great deal more time if tangible results are to be produced. A second reason was the failure to adapt the objectives to the changed circumstances. The call created incentives for a rapid submission of project proposals that were not examined carefully enough in the selection process.

The preparatory work for implementation was inadequate and had an adverse effect on the efficiency of the approach, in turn leading to further delays. This was compounded by high administration costs as a result of setting up numerous projects throughout the region.

GIZ administrative structures and instruments are designed for bilateral cooperation, not for regional projects. Faced with a huge variety of implementing partners and activities, they turned out to be inflexible. They also proved inadequate when it came to cross-border projects to be implemented by two partners on equal terms. Overall, the challenges that arose during implementation on the part of SADC/GIZ and in some of the pilot projects brought further delays of up to fourteen months in the most extreme case.

The evaluation team considers the coordination with member states in the process lacking. It contributed to disapproval of the original design of the approach. The fact that topics were set unilaterally by SADC/GIZ caused irritation among some member states. Coordination with other stakeholders was likewise fragile. In KAZA, lack of coordination with other donors, for example, ultimately foiled potential synergy effects.

Learning is a core element of pilot projects, as reflected in objective 1 of the approach. Creating learning experiences complies with the explicit requirement in the call that implementing bodies document results, the evaluation of which is part of the approach to ensure learning. In our opinion neither SADC/GIZ nor the implementing organizations focus sufficiently on documentation. The guideline for documentation received little attention in the selection process, which in turn means that documentation is confined to results and fails to include the processes. This compromises the provision of well-documented learning experiences from all projects, which could then be disseminated and institutionalized. The planned feeding of experience back into the expanding TFCA network can be seen as positive in this context.

On the pilot project approach, the evaluation team drew conclusions and made recommendations as follows:

- The pilot project approach is too ambitious. We recommend clarifying the objectives and modestly defining what is feasible within the given set and what is not. Confining the project to the achievement of two objectives, i.e., generating learning experiences and stimulating cross-border cooperation, would have been a reasonable solution.
- Standards and requirements should be adhered to in the selection process to ensure that projects are in a position to promote the desired objectives.
- The selection procedure needs to pay more attention to relevance, especially if projects serve an agenda beyond their immediate subject.

- We recommend pursuing a multi-level approach, including political dialogue with member states, to support pilot project implementation.
- Administration procedures and structures in GIZ should be streamlined and the process checked for potential obstacles prior to implementation.
- A smooth information flow should be ensured and project implementers given approachable access to SADC/GIZ. In a cross-border project with two implementing partners, it is pivotal to communicate and work with both on equal terms to avoid imbalances and regardless of whether only one partner is in charge of funds.
- Encouraging cross-border cooperation at TFCA level and promoting CBNRM should be the focus in the future, since these topics are anchored in SADC protocols and strategies, and can make a strong contribution to SADC TFCA programme implementation.
- SADC and GIZ should invest more energy in developing a financing mechanism for activities in the TFCA to alleviate finance shortages.
- Due to its time constraint and low budget, the current approach should be abandoned. We recommend focusing on carefully selected long-term projects in the next TUPNR phase when working at local level.

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## Abbreviations

ACADIR	Associação de Conservação do Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Integrado Rural Angola – Association for Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
ANAC	Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação National Conservation Areas Administration (National Administration of Conservation Areas, Mozambique)
ARTP	/Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park
BMZ	German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CARA	Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act
CBET	Community-Based Ecotourism
CBFiM	Community-Based Fire Management
CBNRM	Community-Based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CESVI	Cooperazione e Sviluppo (Cooperation and Development)
CGG	Community Game Guard
COSPE	Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Paesi Emergent (Cooperation for the Development of Emerging Countries)
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (South Africa)
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs (South Africa)
DPA	Direcção Provincial de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural (Provincial Department of Agriculture, Mozambique)
EKCPA	Ekuphileni Kwezive Communal Property Association
ELP	Eco Lubombo Program
FA	Financing Agreement
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH
IDP	Integrated Development Plan

IRDNC	Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
JMB	Joint Management Board
JMC	Joint Management Committee
JMP	Joint Management Plan
KA	Kyaramacan Association
KAZA	Kavango Zambezi
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LC	Lubombo Conservancy
LCG	Lubombo Conservancy – Goba
LCG TFCRA	Lubombo Conservancy – Goba Transfrontier Conservation and Resource Area
LCG-UTF	Combined area of Lubombo Conservancy-Goba and Usuthu-Tembe-Futi
MAWF	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (Namibia)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Namibia)
MHT	Ministry of Hotel and Tourism (Angola)
MINAG	Ministry of Agriculture (Mozambique)
MITUR	Ministry of Tourism (Mozambique)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTPA	Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NR	Nature Reserve
NWR	Namibian Wildlife Resort
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
ORASECOM	Orange-Senqu River Commission
PPF	Peace Parks Foundation
RNP	Richtersveld National Park
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SANParks	South African National Parks

## **XXX** Abbreviations

SM	Songimvelo-Malolotja
SNTC	Swaziland National Trust
TC	Technical Cooperation
TFCA	Transfrontier Conservation Area
ToR	Terms of Reference
TriCo	Trilateral Cooperation
TUPNR	Transboundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization
WoF	Working on Fire
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

## **1 Introduction**

Biodiversity is essential for the provision of ecosystem services and critical to sustaining people's livelihoods (Ash, Jenkins, 2007; Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005), especially people in the rural areas who rely on natural resources. The massive fragmentation and destruction of habitats, as well as climate change, however, have led to severe loss of biodiversity (Novacek, Cleland, 2001). In this context, protected areas play a vital role in preserving the earth's biodiversity (Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 2005).

Conventional conservation concepts set aside protected areas for the purpose of preservation and excluded the local poor and marginalized from managing and exploiting natural resources. These concepts led to so-called "parks without people". In the 1970s and 1980s, new conservation approaches questioned this concept and sought a win-win solution of "people and parks", integrating nature conservation and socio-economic development. The key principles of this integrated approach are recognition of the (traditional) rights of local communities living in or within the vicinity of protected areas, increased local participation in resource use and management, and the shared benefits of the economic potential of protected areas. The idea behind sharing management responsibility for protected areas, e.g., community-based or co-management, is to give local people ownership of natural resources, thereby enhancing their conservation (Borrini-Feyerabend, Kothari, Oviedo, 2004; Wells, McShane, 2004).

This integrated conservation approach is also pursued in Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA), acknowledging the fact that ecosystems straddle international boundaries. Their protection can only be planned and managed effectively through international cooperation. Apart from contributing to biodiversity conservation, TFCA, also known as Peace Parks, aim to foster peaceful cooperation between nations and regional socio-economic development that is sustainable. The first TFCA was established in 1932. Today, more than 200 TFCA exist worldwide. Especially since the late 1980s, transboundary protection has attracted greater international attention (Sandwith, Shine, Hamilton, Shepperd, 2001, pp. 1–2, 4–5; Global Transboundary Conservation Network, 2011).

In southern Africa, six TFCA have been established since the 1990s (A category). Twelve further TFCA were signed or are under negotiation (B category) or in the conceptual stage (C category). The TFCA establishment process in southern Africa led by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was facilitated by

## 2 Introduction

the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) (SADC Secretariat, 2013, pp. 7, 11–13; Sandwith et al., 2001, pp. 1–2) and is based on a seemingly simple rationale:

*The rivers of Southern Africa are shared by more than one country. Our mountain ranges do not end abruptly because some 19<sup>th</sup> century politician drew a line on a map. The winds, the oceans, the rain and atmospheric currents do not recognise political frontiers. The earth's environment is the common property of all humanity and creation, and what takes place in one country affects not only its neighbours, but many others well beyond its borders (Dr Pallo Jordan, 1997, cited in: Sandwith et al., 2001, p. vii).*

Notwithstanding these insights, transfrontier conservation in the SADC region has not always achieved its desired aim of integrating biodiversity protection and human development (Braack, Kadel, Petermann, Schuerholz, 2005, p. 50; GIZ, 2011, pp. 6–7, 9; Bocchino, 2013). Transboundary cooperation and the integration of conservation and rural livelihoods are often poorly implemented, leading to the continued degradation and destruction of ecosystems. In order to address shortcomings in TFCA implementation, SADC – in cooperation with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH – seeks to create forms of sustainable transboundary management of natural resources. As a result of this cooperation, the organizations supported nine pilot projects in cross-border natural resource management, four of which are evaluated in the present study.

### Report Structure

The next chapter presents a background overview of the study, i.e., the implementation of TFCA in southern Africa, the attendant problems and the SADC/GIZ joint measure. Chapter 3 outlines the study assignment, including evaluation objectives and the research questions that guide our analysis. Chapter 4 focuses on the concepts and evaluation framework for data analysis. Chapter 5 discusses the data collection methodology and analysis. In Chapters 6 to 9, we describe and analyse each of the four pilot projects under review and make detailed recommendations. Each chapter can be read independently. Chapter 10 gives a separate assessment of the pilot project approach applied by SADC/GIZ.

## 2 Context

SADC took up the concept of transfrontier conservation in the 1990s. The goal of this supranational organization is to bring about the regional integration of its fifteen member states and to eradicate poverty in the southern African region (Treaty of the Southern African Development Community, 1992). Its commitment to TFCA is driven by a conservationist perspective and the desire to ensure socio-economic development. SADC member states acknowledge the potential TFCA offer in terms of the economic development and poverty alleviation of local communities (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 5).

In SADC, legally binding protocols such as the *Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement (1999)*, which calls for the establishment of TFCA in the region (Art. 3 (2) f), and the *Protocol on Forestry (2002)* were designed to protect natural resources and foster regional cooperation. The *SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan* (SADC Secretariat, n.d.) describes TFCA as a key instrument of natural resource management, while GIZ sees TFCA as a prerequisite for sustainable regional development (GIZ, 2011, p. 5). The commitment to use and manage natural resources for the benefit of local people living in TFCA is reflected in the SADC definition of TFCA, where the integration of “*multiple resource use areas*” (Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, 1999, p. 4) is underlined. The most widely used definition of a TFCA is provided by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN):

*An area of land and/or sea that straddles one or more boundaries between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas and/or areas beyond the limits of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, whose constituent parts are especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed cooperatively through legal or other effective means* (Sandwith et al., 2001, p. 3).

Despite these political efforts, member states are slow to implement most TFCA. This means flagging cooperation between partner states and an uninterrupted environmental degradation that continues to threaten the rich biodiversity of the region as well as rural livelihoods (GIZ, 2011, pp. 6–7). The many people who live in or within the vicinity of the protected areas do not benefit sufficiently from the economic potential of these areas, nor are they granted rights to resource use and resource management (Braack et al., 2005, p. 50; GIZ, 2011, p. 9; Bocchino, 2013). The resettlement of local communities from protected areas, unfair contractual management agreements and the failure of government authorities to

## 4 Context

acknowledge the mandates of the local people are an indication of the prevalence of conventional conservation practices (Braack et al., 2005, p. 50; Bocchino, 2013).

In cooperation with GIZ, SADC introduced a joint technical measure. Its aim is to enhance the potential of TFCA, to create benefits for local communities and to effectively implement TFCA and the respective SADC protocols and strategies for sustainable natural resource management with the aid of regional and national actors. The measure itself is entitled *Transboundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources* (TUPNR) and currently in the final year of its first phase (06/2012–05/2015). The next three-year phase begins in June 2015.

This technical cooperation measure consists of three components, one of which is the improved implementation of the regional TFCA programme launched by SADC in 2007 (Ron, 2007, pp. 10–11) and finalized in 2013. The vision of the TFCA programme was to create

*a functional and integrated network of conservation areas where shared natural resources are sustainably co-managed and conserved to foster economic and social development, tourism and regional integration for the benefit of those living within and around TFCA and mankind at large* (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 4).

In order to operationalize programme implementation, SADC/GIZ adopted a pilot project approach designed to establish joint management of natural resources in selected TFCA. The idea behind this approach is to create and document new learning experiences through transboundary pilot activities in TFCA with the specific involvement of local communities, and ultimately to contribute to the harmonization of national frameworks and foster cooperation in natural resource management in TFCA. Following a call for proposals by SADC/GIZ in 2013, a total of nine community-based pilot projects were selected: three on income generation, four on fire management, and two on climate change adaptation. Each project is funded by GIZ with an amount of €50,000 and an implementation timeframe of nine months. Four of the nine pilot projects are evaluated in this report, two on community-based income generation through tourism development and two on community-based fire management. The development of tourism as a form of land use in TFCA and the management of fire as a tool to manage land and resources is a step towards enhancing the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods:

- Tourism development: the natural features and biodiversity of protected areas make them attractive tourist destinations, not least as a result of the growing demand for sustainable forms of tourism, including ecotourism (Eagles,

McCool, Haynes, 2002; Strasdas, 2002; UNEP, 2011, p. 269). According to the World Tourism Organization, eco and nature tourism grew three times faster in 2004 than conventional tourism (Honey, 2008, p. 7). Ecotourism has the potential to provide local communities with alternative forms of income generation and promote acceptance of nature conservation in the process (Strasdas, 2002; WWF, 2001). Tourism is also an important source of revenue for parks and the enhancement of protected area management, and hence supports the conservation of biodiversity (Strasdas, 2002, p. 11; UNEP, 2011, p. 267).

- **Fire Management:** southern African savannah ecosystems are highly prone to fire events due to climate patterns, e.g., extremely arid periods and strong winds. Mankind has been using fire as a land management tool for thousands of years on the African continent for the purpose of preparing arable and grazing land, for hunting or as pest control. Fires and fire regimes, i.e., the pattern of time, frequency and intensity of fire, also play a major role in biodiversity conservation. The sustainable use of fires maintains savannah ecosystem features and promotes the growth of fresh grass, for example, whereas inappropriate and imbalanced fire regimes result in resource degradation and loss of biodiversity, e.g., depletion of soil nutrients or extinction of species. Today, most destructive fires are of anthropogenic origin (Goldammer, 2007, p. 1; Hoffmann, 2013, p. 5), in other words the result of human activity. Fires and their consequences do not halt at national borders (Goldammer, 2007, p. 1), making transfrontier management vital.





### 3 Assignment of the Evaluation

GIZ appointed the Centre for Rural Development (SLE) to evaluate four of the nine pilot projects, two on tourism development and two on fire management (cf. GIZ, 2014a, pp. 5–6):

- *Desert Kayak Trails:*  
Development of a kayak trail along the Orange River in /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park (ARTP), Namibia/South Africa.
- *Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative:*  
Development of community-based eco-lodges and trails in Lubombo Conservancy - Goba (LCG) TFCA, Swaziland/Mozambique.
- *Community-Based Fire Management:*  
Development of an Integrated Transfrontier Fire Management Strategy for Luiana Partial Reserve and Bwabwata National Park, Kavango Zambezi (KA-ZA) TFCA, Angola/Namibia.
- *Crossborder Fire Management for Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA:*  
Development of a harmonised community-based fire management approach in Somgimvelo-Malolotja (SM) TFCA, Swaziland/South Africa.

GIZ selected these four projects because implementation was at a more advanced stage than that of the remaining five projects. The objective of our assignment was to look into “*planning processes, the project logic, the implementation process, outputs/results [of each pilot project] and [to conduct] an assessment of early impacts*” (GIZ, 2014a, p. 6). The assignment furthermore included analysis of the pilot project approach and its appropriateness as a contribution to the objectives of the TUPNR measure.

The present evaluation report is the central output of our investigation and, first of all, provides GIZ with in-depth knowledge on the four pilot projects and with baseline data in cases where early impacts could not yet be identified. Secondly, we make recommendations on the pilot projects in terms of fine-tuning their planning and implementation processes, and on the pilot project approach. Thirdly, we identify the potential for project continuation during the second TUPNR phase and document examples of good practice. The outputs will be used by SADC/GIZ to steer pilot projects, to report on the projects to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and to plan the second TUPNR phase strategically. In addition, implementers of pilot project activities will be able to draw on the evaluation results to enhance their project management.

## 8 Assignment of the Evaluation

Based on the objectives and outputs to be achieved in this evaluation, we drew up the following research questions:

- What results have been achieved so far, what changes are likely to occur and how sustainable are they?
- What factors facilitate or constrain successful planning and implementation?
- How can strengths be capitalized on and potentials fully developed?
- How can weaknesses be overcome and risks addressed?

## 4 Concepts and Evaluation Framework

The SADC/GIZ TUPNR technical cooperation measure seeks, among other things, to improve implementation of the TFCA programme. Community participation and regional cooperation within the context of transfrontier natural resource management are the backbone of this endeavour (SADC Secretariat, 2013) and provide the theoretical guideline for pilot projects on tourism development and fire management (cf. SADC/GIZ, 2013a, b). Our evaluation is therefore based on insights into community-based natural resource management and cooperation. These concepts constitute the theoretical background to the evaluation criteria used to analyse the pilot projects and the pilot project approach.

### 4.1 Community-Based Natural Resource Management

In general, definitions of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) differ widely. CBNRM is an approach that focuses on the collective management of land and natural resources, where management responsibilities are taken over by the local communities. The aim of CBNRM is to promote the sustainable use of resources, to protect biodiversity, to generate substantial benefits for communities and thereby create sustainable livelihoods. Community-based projects require capacity development and the establishment of local institutions and governance structures (Fabricius, Collins, 2007, p. 84; WWF, 2001, p. 5; de Kock, 2010, p. 1). Since the pilot projects deal with community-based tourism development and fire management, the concepts of both CBNRM subsets are described in the following.

#### 4.1.1 Community-Based Ecotourism

The two pilot projects under review, /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park and Lubombo Conservancy - Goba TFCA, focus on designing ecotourism products to the benefit and with the participation of local communities. Hence, we apply the concept of community-based ecotourism (CBET) to evaluate the two projects. The International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as the “*responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people*” (WWF, 2001, p. 2). Ecotourism is community-based when “*the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community*” (ibid., p. 2). CBET may also include elements of culture and adventure tourism (Strasdas, 2002, p. 6).

Tourism in general and consequently ecotourism is a business that makes community-based tourism development a complex issue calling for management skills and knowledge. Planners must work with key business criteria to ensure project success. In the course of project planning, for example, the tourism market should be assessed and a coherent business plan devised (see Strasdas, 2002, p. 11–31; WWF, 2001). Involving an entire community in the planning process is not an easy task and has proven difficult in practice. Community participation has frequently been confined to the receipt of economic benefits or simple consultations. The need for capacity building and training of community members is evident. Experience shows, however, that project ownership can be achieved by encouraging the political participation of the communities and material incentives (GIZ, 2014b, p. 45; Strasdas, 2002, pp. 11, 32; WWF, 2001, pp. 10, 21).

### 4.1.2 Community-Based Fire Management

The aim of the pilot projects in Kavango Zambezi and Somgimvelo-Malolotja TFCA is to manage fires with the involvement of local communities. Community-based fire management (CBFiM) is defined as “*an approach to the management of fire in the landscape that adequately includes communities in decision-making about the role, application and control of fire*” (Hoffmann, 2013, p. 8) in the interests of sustainable land-use and vegetation management systems. CBFiM includes traditional or indigenous knowledge and practices, taking into account the livelihoods of local people and involving them in planning and implementation processes along with other local stakeholders (FAO, 2011, p. 4; Goldammer, de Rode, 2004, pp. 396–397). The idea is that local people have

*sufficient tenure (formal and informal) to ensure that their rights are considered along with broader (e.g. national, provincial and district) production and environmental protection aims and objectives. They [local people] consider that involvement in land and fire management decision making and activities will improve their livelihood, health and security* (Abberger, Marbyanto, 2003, cited in: FAO, 2011, p. 6).

In 2010, SADC developed a *Regional Fire Management Programme* that stressed the involvement of local communities (SADC Secretariat, 2010, p. 7–8). Cooperation, coordination and continuous information exchange among the stakeholders concerned is key to successful fire management and includes the analysis of fire-related data, fire prevention, early warning (preparedness), actual fire suppression and the restoration of fire-affected areas (ibid., p. 3).

### 4.1.3 Community Participation and Institutions

The CBNRM concept sees community participation and community institutions as pivotal. The evaluation of four pilot projects and the SADC/GIZ project approach focuses on the insights gained. Although GIZ describes the pilot projects as “community-based” (GIZ, 2014a, p. 5), the degree of community involvement in the planning and implementation of these projects was not specified by SADC/GIZ (cf. SADC/GIZ, 2013a, b). The outlined concept of participation helps to analyse the extent to which pilot projects are community-based. Community participation comprises two dimensions: economic and political. Economic participation can range from mere passive forms of receiving material incentives without direct involvement in project activities (e.g., through community funds) to land leasing, employment, or the supply of goods and services. In the case of community-based ecotourism, more active involvement can be encouraged by joint ventures with the private sector or community enterprises (Strasdas, 2002, p. 34–35; Cornwall, 2008, pp. 270–272). The term “community-based” conjures up a greater stake in political forms of participation than may be the case in reality. A typology of political participation is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Typology of political participation**

Types of participation	Characteristics
Passive participation	People participate by being informed about decisions and actions.
Participation by consultation	People participate by being consulted. External people listen to their views but are under no obligation to take these into account.
Functional participation	People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives usually after major decisions have already been taken.
Interactive participation	People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local groups or institutions, and take control of local decisions.
Self-mobilization	People participate by taking the initiative independent of external institutions.

Source: modified after Pretty (1995) in Cornwall (2008, pp. 270–272)

Functional participation seems to be the most common type. While the first two categories describe “weaker” forms of participation, participatory approaches profess to achieve the goals of interactive participation and self-mobilization (Cornwall, 2008, pp. 270–271), which may lead to empowerment. Empowerment can be seen as *“a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power [...] in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their society, by acting on issues that they define*

as important" (Page, Czuba, 1999). Whether people can or are willing to participate depends, among others, on their capacity, the value of expected economic benefits, power relations that shape social interactions but also institutional arrangements (Cornwall, 2008, p. 271; Leach, Mearns, Scoones, 1999; Ribot, Peluso, 2003).

Institutions determine the stake local people have in tourism development and fire management, and define people's right to use and manage resources, e.g., to hunt or gather, stipulate use and management regulations or establish community-based organisations. The development of pilot projects in TFCA is also influenced by higher-level institutional arrangements set by conservation agencies, national governments or SADC, such as joint management plans, legislation and international protocols. Institutions are

*the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights) (North, 1991, p. 97).*

A closer look at the existence of such formal rules and informal constraints, and their impact on the planning and implementation of cross-border projects allows for analysis of their success. Institutions also shape cooperation between the various actors involved in community-based and transfrontier tourism development and fire management, such as park management, non-governmental organisations (NGO) and community representatives (Berkes, 2006; Leach et al., 1999; Ostrom, 2009; Sandwith et al., 2001).

### 4.2 Cooperation

One of the objectives of the SADC/GIZ pilot projects is to foster cross-border cooperation within the framework of TFCA, including government bodies, park agencies and local communities. While cooperation across borders entails particular challenges, such as divergent national interests and legal frameworks, most challenges at local level are in reality similar to those in any cooperation relationship.

Social science research has established several starting points to overcome these challenges (cf. Kollock, 1998). The following are relevant in a cross-border context and thus adopted in this evaluation:

- **Communication:** social actors are not entirely egoistic and attribute some value to the outcome for others. To be compassionate, however, you need to know the cooperating partner.

- **Reciprocity** and durable, possibly infinite **iteration** of interaction: if non-cooperation had consequences and partners were likely to meet each other again, walking out on cooperation would be less attractive.
- **Right partners:** making a good choice here sets the course even before cooperation attempts are made.
- **Transparency** of each other's actions helps to overcome insecurity about partners' aims and strategies, and lowers the barrier to cooperation.
- **Incentives:** social actors will only cooperate if they assume they will be better off than before in absolute terms<sup>3</sup> (Kollock, 1998).

Other avenues to overcome cooperation challenges found in the literature are only partially available or require special efforts in a cross-border setting: using a common group identity (*ibid.*, p. 194) is possible in cases where communities with common (ethnic) roots are directly involved in the cooperation effort on both sides. Another option is for park managers – to specify a different group of actors – to create a group identity based on their common profession. Less analytical but highly practical, the guidelines set by the World Commission on Protected Areas mirror many of the themes outlined above. Additional emphasis is given to knowing the cooperating partner well, to joint values and aims, and to including stakeholders at various levels (Sandwith et al., 2001).

### 4.3 Evaluation Criteria

With reference to the concepts outlined above, pilot projects and the project approach are analysed on the basis of specific criteria. We first of all draw on the criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD/DAC), which are commonly used to evaluate projects that receive development aid. The OECD/DAC criteria, effectiveness, impact and sustainability serve to analyse the success of pilot projects by describing the changes that have occurred as a result and, in that case, how the continuity of positive changes is assured. Analysing the relevance and efficiency of the projects and the project approach helps to understand why they have been successful or why not (*cf.* Development Assistance Committee, 1991). Secondly, additional criteria for the evaluation of project management processes derive

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3 In contrast, success in a competitive setting is measured in terms of being better off than the opponent (relative gains), which could also mean to merely sustain less damage.



from the GIZ management model Capacity WORKS (cf. GTZ, 2009). We apply the cooperation criterion to evaluate the individual pilot projects under review and the project approach, since promotion of cross-border cooperation is one of the chief objectives of SADC/GIZ and cooperation relationships exist on multiple levels in each project. In addition, analysis of the pilot project approach includes the criteria planning process and strategy, and learning. Since the pilot project approach does not include activities of its own, the planning process and strategy criterion is of particular significance here. It measures the design and implementation of the individual pilot projects, making the strategic planning of the approach indispensable. The learning criterion deserves special attention, as the main purpose of the approach is to stimulate learning. Insights derived from analysis of the pilot projects help to draw inferences from the project approach.

The evaluation criteria and guiding questions are listed in the following:

- **Effectiveness:** evaluates the extent to which the objectives have been achieved or are likely to be achieved. It also assesses the major factors that influence the achievement of these goals. What has been achieved or is likely to be achieved in terms of, e.g., community participation, income generation, cooperation, capacity development, development of tourism products?
- **Impact:** measures the positive and negative changes produced by the pilot project, direct or indirect, intended or unintended. What impacts have occurred or will probably occur in relation to people's livelihoods, biodiversity protection, awareness creation, empowerment of local communities or TFCA implementation?
- **Sustainability:** assesses whether outputs are likely to persist after finalization of GIZ funded project activities. It considers economic, ecological and social sustainability. To what extent are pilot projects financially sustainable? How far have forms and processes and of cooperation been institutionalized? Has community ownership been established? Do related programmes play a role in sustaining the pilot projects?
- **Relevance:** considers the extent to which the projects are suited to the priorities of the target group, the project context and the policies of recipient countries. What is the relevance of community-based cross-border ecotourism development and fire management in the given context?
- **Planning process and strategy:** assesses the adequacy of the pilot project approach as a strategy to achieve the desired outcomes. It also analyses the planning processes and their effect on the tender process up to the point of in-

dividual project identification. Was the call for proposals well designed and how did project selection take place?

- **Efficiency:** measures the input-output relation and compares costs and use within the given context. How costly were planning and implementation processes? To what extent did administration and communication structures facilitate the processes? To what extent are projects complementary to other development measures? Are there alternative, more efficient measures in place to achieve the desired objectives?
- **Cooperation:** analyses cooperation between the stakeholders involved, including community participation as a key process in project planning and implementation. To what extent were the relevant stakeholders included in project planning and implementation? To what extent are the intended partners able and willing to enter into cooperation relationships? How sustainable is the cooperation? Are the cooperating partners on equal terms? This criterion also examines the coordination with other stakeholders.
- **Learning:** evaluates whether learning experiences produced during project planning and implementation can be disseminated and institutionalized by SADC/GIZ. How was learning considered in the whole process? What was done to ensure learning?



## 5 Methodology

Our research is a combination of data collection and the review of secondary data. Most of the data collected was qualitative but complemented by quantitative data. The qualitative research approach allows us to understand how and why individual pilot projects and the overall pilot project approach either succeed or fail to achieve the objectives and desired impacts. The research questions outlined in chapter 1 were formulated in line with this approach and guided the collection of information and the evaluation of the following units of investigation:

- GIZ/SADC pilot project approach
- Individual pilot projects
- Communities involved in pilot projects
- Specific target groups of pilot projects, e.g., guides, community-based organizations (CBO)

### 5.1 Data collection

The evaluation team collected empirical data on the four pilot projects and the pilot project approach in the five SADC member states – Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland – from 5 August to 12 September 2014. Data was collected in the project areas and in most capitals of the states concerned. Faced with the challenge of evaluating four transboundary projects in five countries, we separated into two teams, each of which visited and evaluated two pilot projects on either tourism development or fire management. Data collection for the tourism development project in Lubombo Conservancy - Goba had the support of Alves Nhaurire, a postgraduate student at Mondlane University in Maputo.

#### 5.1.1 Selection of Interview Partners

Based on a multi-level approach we conducted interviews at supranational, national, TFCA and local level. The interview partners were selected according to their functions and perspectives:

- Those involved in planning and implementing pilot projects and the pilot project approach, such as implementing partners, protected area and TFCA management, the relevant ministries and SADC/GIZ staff.
- Members of the pilot project target group, i.e., local communities. Local people were selected according to their function, e.g., government and traditional au-

thorities or members of CBO. Likewise interviewed were community members and beneficiaries of the pilot projects, such as kayak guides.

- Other experts with proficiency in the topics and/or project areas who did not belong to the pilot projects: interviews were conducted to gain insights into the institutional, socio-economic and ecological context of the countries involved. They also served for triangulation.

### 5.1.2 Methods of Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews and group discussions were the principal methods used for data collection, in the course of which they were continuously adjusted. With this inductive procedure we were able to adapt the methods to the respective contextual setting of each cross-border pilot project or even each country involved in the project concerned. Likewise, the research focus had to be aligned with the individual stage of implementation of each pilot project.

A total of 103 interviews, fifteen group discussions and three focus group discussions were conducted. The majority relates to a specific pilot project (for details, see Annex: List of Interviewees and Applied Methods). The evaluation of the pilot project approach builds on the evaluations of the four pilot projects, so that few interviews had to be held specifically on this topic.

Prior to data collection in the project areas, project implementers were briefed on the research approach and methods to be used. Counterparts from both countries (Swaziland/South Africa) were present in SM TFCA only. The discussion gave us a first impression of the project area, which we used to align the mix of methods more precisely to the specific requirements of the project and countries in question. Consequently the methods applied shift slightly from one project to another.

The number of communities involved in each pilot project varies considerably. In LCG TFCA two communities are targeted by the project and both were visited. In ARTP no village is located in the TFCA. The targeted community lives dispersed in the vicinity of the park, where three villages were visited. The number of communities involved in KAZA and SM TFCA exceeded our capacity to visit them. Villages on each side of the border were selected according to their location in/near the TFCA, distance from the border, ethnic composition, occurrence of uncontrolled fires, and context-specific criteria such as historical background (resettlement) or settling status.

We applied the following methods in the communities:

- *Community group discussions* were held with heterogeneous resident groups, using gender, age, specific role, livelihood source and ethnic background as criteria. Participants were selected by village contacts. Headmen (traditional authority at village level), for example, were asked to convene a group of eight to ten people along the above-mentioned criteria. Some group discussions had significantly more participants than others. Mixed groups of men and women were set up. In the fire management projects, the headmen participated in the group discussion.
- *Focus groups* were composed of members of organizations working on specific tasks, such as CBO, local administrative bodies, tourist guides and community game guards.
- *Individual semi-structured interviews* were carried out with representatives of institutions such as the traditional and government authorities, CBO chairpersons and other important stakeholders.
- *Site visits and observations* were conducted in the company of various stakeholder groups to complete the mix of methods.

At the end of each data collection phase, debriefing sessions were held with the implementing partners from both sides. In KAZA and LCG TFCA, only one side was represented. The evaluation team presented collected data and preliminary results to validate and discuss the findings.

## 5.2 Data Analysis

All interviews are documented in detailed minutes and coded with ATLAS.ti computer software for qualitative data analysis. The evaluation team developed a common code structure based on the evaluation criteria stated in chapter 1 and applied it to the empirical and secondary data.

Data triangulation of primary and secondary data was carried out for cross validation. Primary data collected at different levels and in the different countries involved were cross-checked, e.g., park management and communities, national and local level. This allowed us to check and validate information, close information gaps and be confident about the credibility of our findings.

The pilot project approach was assessed by integrating and comparing data from the individual projects. Preliminary results were fed into the de-briefing dis-

cussions with project implementers and with SADC/GIZ. This constitutes another facet of the triangulation technique.

### 5.3 Constraints

Several minor constraints undercut the data collection phase, e.g., the relevant interview partners were unavailable, project employees occasionally accompanied the team to interviews or translation was poor. These were overcome by triangulating other data sources. In the case of the pilot project in KAZA TFCA, however, the evaluation team failed to access Luiana National Park, the chief project area in Angola. Additionally, secondary data on our topics was inaccessible for this area. As a result, no statements can be made on Luiana National Park. Instead, the evaluation team visited Mucusso Partial Reserve in Angola, where project activities had also taken place.

## 6 Tourism Development Project in /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

The following chapter evaluates the tourism development project Desert Kayak Trails. The project will offer tourists kayak tours in the /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park along the Orange River that marks the border between Namibia and South Africa. Since not all project activities for operation of the tours have been completed, the kayak trips have not yet been launched. Before turning to project details and analysis of the research results, some context information is required.

### 6.1 Context: /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

The year 2003 saw the signing of an international treaty on the establishment of the /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park (ARTP). ARTP, an A category TFCA encompassing an area of 5,917.6km<sup>2</sup>, includes the /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park in Namibia and the Richtersveld National Park in South Africa. The Orange River flows through the arid mountainous landscape and describes the common boundary of the two countries and the protected areas (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 4; Figure 1). ARTP lies in one of the world's most species-rich areas, with high plant endemism: the Succulent Karoo Biome. The habitats of a large number of bird and mammal species along the Orange River have high conservation value. The riparian vegetation is threatened by cultivation both upstream and outside ARTP, as well as by mining activities along the river banks in each country (ARTP JMB, 2011a, pp. 16, 20). Park managers claim that the riparian forest is currently in rapid decline due to *Prosopis* sp, an invasive tree species that thrives on arid soil.

In a concerted effort to conserve this rich and unique biodiversity, a Joint Management Plan for ARTP was developed in 2006 (ARTP Joint Management Plan, 2006). It was enhanced and revised by the Integrated Development Plan draft for strategic guidance (ARTP JMB, 2011a) and the Joint Operational Strategy draft for practical guidance on the implementation of joint activities (ARTP JMB, 2011b). Both documents are the basis for the collaborative management of ARTP (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 2).

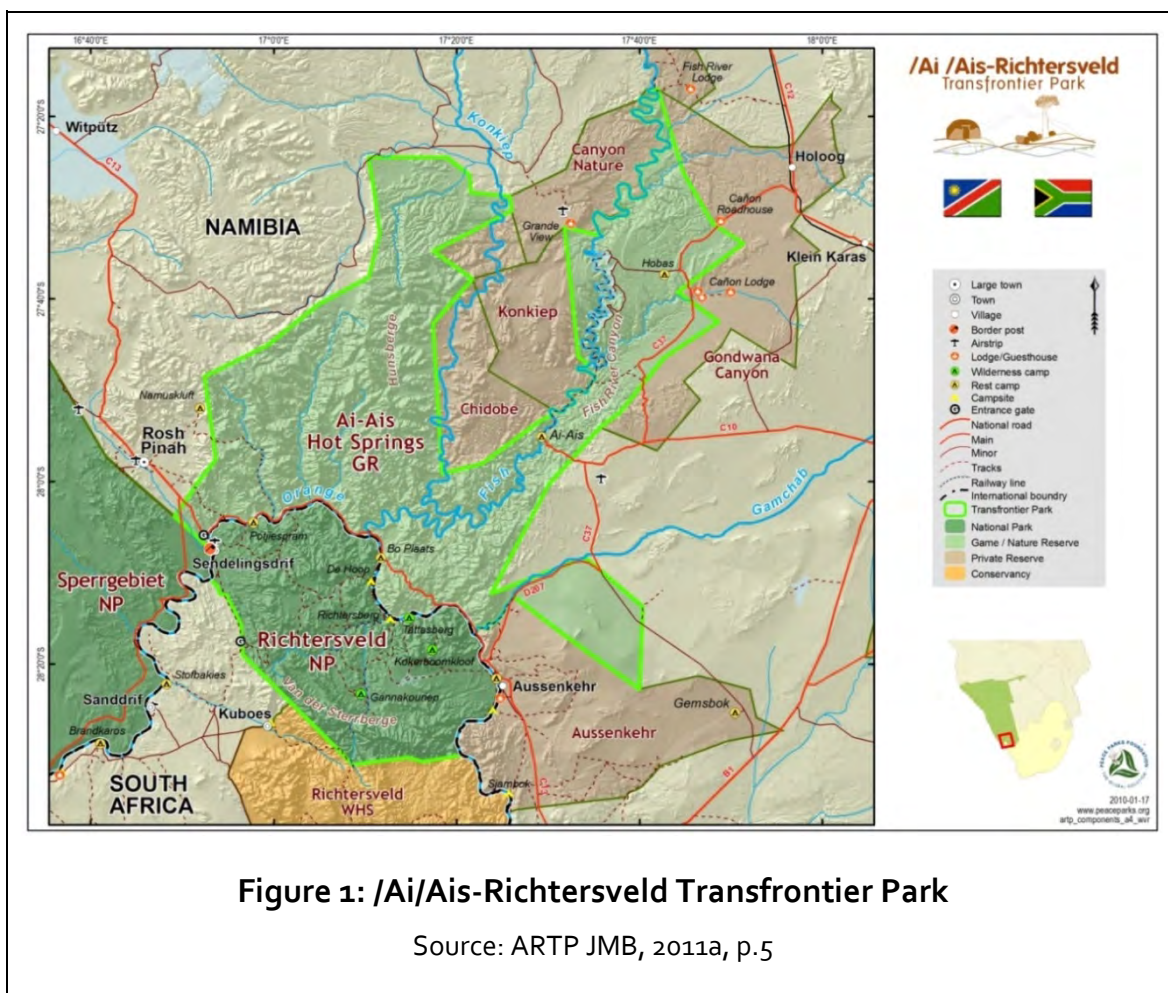
Management of the transfrontier park resides with the Bilateral Ministerial Committee, the Joint Management Board and the Park Management Committee. The Bilateral Ministerial Committee and the Joint Management Board work at the strategic policy level of cross-border management. The former meets once and the latter twice a year (ARTP JMB, 2011b, pp. 13–14). They are active primarily in



## 22 Tourism Development Project in /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

joint planning, institutional arrangements, financing, benefit flow management and policy harmonization (ARTP JMB, 2011a, pp. 36–37). These institutional structures notwithstanding, legal matters relevant to protected area management are not sufficiently harmonized. Immigration procedures for park staff within ARTP, for example, are still lengthy and bureaucratic.

The third management institution, the Park Management Committee, is made up of the park warden of the /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park (Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism, MET), the park manager of the Richtersveld National Park (South African National Parks, SANParks) and the responsible area manager of Namibia Wildlife Resorts. In bi-monthly meetings, the Park Management Committee members discuss operational issues concerning TFCA development and management, such as joint conservation, training, capacity building and tourism development (ARTP JMB, 2011a, b).



### 6.1.1 /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park

The /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Game Park, hereafter referred to as /Ai/Ais Game Park, was proclaimed in three separate stages between 1968 and 1988. With an area of 4,307.1km<sup>2</sup>, the Namibian protected area is the largest part of ARTP (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 4). The /Ai/Ais Game Park is a state-owned protected area supervised by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). As in all Namibian state-owned protected areas, tourism facilities are run by the parastatal enterprise Namibia Wildlife Resorts.

Community involvement in the /Ai/Ais Game Park has recently attracted attention. The park is remote and, apart from a small number of jobs in a resort and a campsite, local communities reap almost no economic benefits. Likewise recently, the Nama community of Karasburg constituency was granted a tourism concession to operate along the Orange River in the southwest of the park (see chapter 6.1.3).

### 6.1.2 Richtersveld National Park

The Richtersveld National Park is owned by the Richtersveld Community<sup>4</sup> and jointly managed by SANParks, a conservation authority responsible for the administration of national parks, including their tourism facilities. The Richtersveld National Park was the first contractual park in South Africa. The government finances the annual lease for the park to the Richtersveld Community trust fund for education and social projects. As per treaty between SANParks and the Richtersveld Community, the Richtersveld Joint Management Committee (Richtersveld Gesamentlike Bestuurskomitee, RGBK), a joint institutional decision-making structure, manages the protected area and its resources (South African National Parks, 2008). The RGBK consists of park managers and SANParks officials, as well as five representatives of the Richtersveld Community. The committee meets quarterly to discuss operational matters concerning the Richtersveld National Park and the TFCA. Day-to-day management is solely in the hands of SANParks. Community representatives report decisions taken in the RGBK back to their towns.

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4 Richtersveld Community refers hereafter to the towns of Eksteenfontein, Lekkersing, Kuboes and Sanddrift in the Richtersveld Municipality (cf. South African National Parks, 2008, p. 13).

### 6.1.3 Karasburg Community, Namibia

The lower reaches of the Orange River have been home to the Nama people for the last two thousand years. The Nama community, known as Bondelzwarts, lives north of the river, more than 100km from the /Ai/Ais Game Park. The nearest town is Karasburg, the district capital of Karasburg constituency in the //Karas Region. As of 2011, approximately 16,500 inhabitants have been domiciled in the constituency. Population density is generally low, with 0.5 people/km<sup>2</sup> (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014a, pp. ii–iii). The Bondelzwarts community is guided by a Kaptein, the traditional community leader in Karasburg.

Although most people have access to primary education, secondary school level is often not attained (*ibid.*, pp. 22–23). According to interviewees, this was partly due to the inability to pay secondary education fees. Electricity is not widely distributed, with many households using wood or charcoal as energy sources. Most households have access to safe piped water (*ibid.*, pp. 51–52).

The unemployment rate among the Nama is high. In 2013, it rose to 21.6 per cent in the //Karas Region and was higher for women and youth (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014b, pp. 75, 78, 83). In the Karasburg constituency, the rare employment opportunities come from the commercial farms and mining companies in the western //Karas Region (*cf.* Namibia Statistics Agency, 2014a, pp. 32–33). Labour migration from Namibia's north and the subsequent competition on the labour market has led to discontent among the Nama. Besides, the Nama people in south Namibia frequently feel marginalized as a result of their underrepresentation at the national level.

Traditionally, Nama livelihoods were based on nomadic pastoralism. Although most of the Nama people in Namibia have abandoned their nomadic lifestyle, livestock farming is still a key activity (*cf. ibid.*, p. 43).

### 6.1.4 Richtersveld Community, South Africa

The Nama community is a scattered settlement south of the Orange River. The Richtersveld Municipality (Northern Cape Province) comprises the towns of Port Nolloth, Alexander Bay and Sanddrift, as well as the smaller towns of Kuboes, Lekkersing and Eksteenfontein. This sparsely populated municipality (approx. 1.4/km<sup>2</sup>) harbours around 15,000 inhabitants belonging to the Nama, Bosluis Basters and other ethnic groups. Sanddrift and the three smaller towns are commonly referred to as the Richtersveld Community and had a total population of around 3,700 in 2011 (Frith, 2014). Sanddrift and Kuboes are the towns closest to

the Richtersveld National Park. In general, distances between the localities are long and infrastructure is poor (Richtersveld Municipality, 2013, pp. 10–11, 15, 28).

In the Richtersveld Community, access to education is inadequate, since high schools exist in the two larger towns Port Nolloth and Alexander Bay only and public transport is limited. Health care is a problem due to understaffing of provincial facilities (Richtersveld Municipality, 2013, pp. 12, 14, 44, 78). Most households are equipped with water and electricity, although water management in this arid region remains a challenge (Richtersveld Municipality, 2013).

In 2011, 18.6 per cent of the municipal population was unemployed. The unemployment rate of young people between 15 and 34 years of age was slightly higher (22.4 per cent) (Statistics South Africa, 2014). The mining companies within and outside of ARTP provide most of the labour opportunities (cf. Richtersveld Municipality, 2013, p. 15), whereas the number of Richtersvelders employed in the tourism sector is decidedly less<sup>5</sup> (Conservation International South Africa, 2005, pp. 12, 25–26). Community work programmes organized by the South African government gives residents a small income. Thirty-six community members are employed as park staff in Richtersveld National Park.<sup>6</sup> The SANParks regulations stipulate that staff be recruited from the Richtersveld Community, thus honouring the obligation to derive economic benefits from conservation.

The majority of the Nama in the Richtersveld Community have abandoned pastoralism. Today only a few live as semi-nomadic herders (ARTP Joint Management Plan, 2006, p. 25). Livestock is kept on Richtersveld communal land. In addition, twenty-six herders from Kuboes and Sanddrift are entitled to use pastures in Richtersveld National Park. As per agreement between SANParks and the Richtersveld Community, a total of 6,600 livestock is allowed to graze in the park, approx. 4,700 permanently and 1,900 seasonally.

Social interaction between the Nama people on each side of the border is rare. Cross-border communication only takes place, for example, at family celebrations or festivals. Lack of communication, absence of knowledge about the communities and the subsequent mistrust between them coupled with the cost of cross-border

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5 In 2003, 6% of the people were employed in the tourism sector, 74% by the mining companies. Stock farming was practised by 20% of the population. Wages paid in the tourism sector were around 80% higher than in the livestock sector (Conservation International South Africa, 2004, pp. 3, 25–26).

6 In comparison, over 60% of the Richtersveld population was economically active in 2001, i.e., around 4,400 people (Conservation International South Africa, 2005, p.12). Despite the unavailability of current figures, 36 local SANParks employees carry little weight in terms of the overall employment rate.

meetings (transport, road fees, acquisition of official documents) hamper exchange. While the Nama in Namibia have formed an association around their ethnic identity, the Nama in South Africa are still unorganized.

### **6.1.5 Tourism**

For the most part, ARTP owes its attractiveness as a tourist destination to its impressive geology and floral richness. Tourism activities include hiking, botanical excursions, game driving and recreation. Apart from basic campsites, more sophisticated facilities for visitors are available at the /Ai/Ais Hot Springs Resort and Hobas Camp Site (/Ai/Ais Game Park), as well as the chalet accommodation in Sendelingsdrift (Richtersveld National Park). The introduction of a pontoon in Sendelingsdrift in 2007 and with it the possibility of cross-border movement has drawn more visitors to ARTP (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 59). Due to the remoteness of TFCA, tourists generally visit the park for several days. Most of them are of South African nationality. The peak season for tourism is between March and October.

The Integrated Development Plan confirms that the enormous potential of ecotourism in ARTP has been recognized. The market for adventure tourism is underdeveloped and should be more radically exploited to attract clients with diverse profiles to the Transfrontier Park, including international visitors. Kayaking along the Orange River was identified as a tourist attraction with potential for joint marketing of the TFCA and diversity of the product mix (ARTP JMB, 2011a, pp. 59, 84–86). Canoeing along the Orange River is a water sport that has been in operation as a tourist attraction for the last thirty years. Six tourism operators located outside ARTP provide canoe tours.

Developing the areas adjacent to ARTP for tourism is somewhat problematic. Park staff and community representatives saw lack of tourism management knowledge, poor service quality, inadequate marketing and institutional arrangements to manage tourism projects, lack of funds and of ownership, and mistrust between communities as the chief obstacles to successful tourism. Consequently visitor figures are low.

## **6.2 Project Description**

The idea of establishing a kayak trail along the Orange River in ARTP has been contemplated for years. As early as 2000, the Richtersveld Community came up with a proposal for a canoe business. It was never realized. Eventually, the Park Management Committee revived the idea of a kayak trail but lacked the financial

resources for its initiation. The SADC/GIZ call for proposals (SADC/GIZ, 2013b) was finally the opportunity to get the idea off the ground and develop Desert Kayak Trails.

### **6.2.1 Objectives**

The objectives of the project as per project proposal submitted to SADC/GIZ (ARTP Project Proposal, 2013) and interviews are to:

- “Establish a profitable niche [kayak] activity to the benefit of [ARTP]”, and to “enhance the general occupancies within [ARTP] and add value in relation to revenue generation, awareness and product mix”
- Employ staff from local communities, including women
- “Empower the Richtersveld Community”, in other words “once the project operates well, it could be handed over to the community to run”.

### **6.2.2 Implementing Partners**

The Desert Kayak Trails project is under the aegis of the Park Management Committee (see chapter 6.1) and jointly managed by three bodies:

- MET, represented by the park manager of the /Ai/Ais Game Park,
- SANParks, represented by the park manager of the Richtersveld National Park, and
- Namibia Wildlife Resorts, represented by the area manager, who is the project coordinator.

Through joint operation of the annual Desert Knights Mountain Biking Tour, which was launched in 2009 and began operating on a commercial scale in 2014, the Park Management Committee has gained experience in cross-border tourism development.

### **6.2.3 Tourism Product**

The ecotourism product Desert Kayak Trails, a scenic and adventurous experience in ARTP, should be enhanced by environmental interpretation through qualified guides. It differs from other commercial products, since the river tour guides are local people well-versed in their Nama culture and history (cf. ARTP Submission, 2014, pp. 2-3).

The focus of the product offer is a fully catered and fully equipped four-day kayak tour that begins at the confluence of the Gamkab and Orange Rivers (/Ai/Ais

Game Park) and ends in Sendelingsdrift (Richtersveld National Park; Figure 1). Once established, the product could be extended to include day excursions or multiple departures, and provide flexible offers tailored to the wishes of the clients. The price of the four-day kayak tour is estimated at NAD4,300 (around €305) per person (cf. *ibid.*, p. 2). A tour group consists of a maximum of thirty clients. Overnight stays are planned at campsites on the river bank, two of which have yet to be built in the /Ai/Ais Game Park. This construction work, however, is not funded by GIZ.

#### 6.2.4 Activities

In order to achieve the objectives (see chapter 6.2.1), the following activities were planned and undertaken, for the most part as per project proposal (ARTP Project Proposal, 2013) with a work plan, interview statements and progress reports to document project activities (ARTP Report on Progress, 2014):

- *Application of candidates:* Following approval of the ARTP proposal by GIZ in June 2013, the implementing partners sought about thirty-two kayak guides. Information on these job vacancies was provided by the project partners via public notice and orally through community representatives in the Bondelzwarts and Richtersveld communities. Application requirements for river guides as laid down by the project implementers called for unemployed people with passion from the local area. Foreign language skills were not a prerequisite.<sup>7</sup> Only sixteen candidates applied. This was because many of the local people appeared to be afraid of water and could not swim.
- *Capacity development:* The application process was succeeded by two training phases and an internship with commercial canoe operators in February and March 2014. Training included a test of the candidates' kayaking skills and potential, as well as kayak handling, safety, and crisis management. Of the sixteen applicants, seven (four from the Karasburg community, two from the Richtersveld Community, and one permanent employee from Namibia Wildlife Resorts) successfully completed the training course. Their kayaking licence will be issued by the African Paddling Association once training units in first aid, for example, have been completed. The remaining applicants either failed or withdrew. In addition, three permanent staff members, i.e., the project coor-

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7 Language skills, notably English, were not required, since the common tongue of park staff, river guides and most tourists is Afrikaans. Not all local guides were confident in English, however, and may encounter communication difficulties with foreign visitors.

dinator, the park manager of the Richtersveld National Park and a SANParks employee, will undergo trip leader training in advanced white-water rafting.

- *Procurement:* The procurement of kayaks, trailers for kayak transport, and safety, camping and hosting equipment was planned for March 2014. Several fixed assets had to be tendered by GIZ Namibia. Due to a lengthy tendering process, kayaks and trailers were finally delivered by a company in Cape Town, South Africa in September 2014.
- *Marketing:* In addition to marketing the Desert Kayak Trails at the Lifecycle Expo held in Cape Town in March 2014 in cooperation with Boundless Southern Africa<sup>8</sup>, the product should be launched at tourism trade fairs in Berlin and Durban in 2015. The kayak trail was also promoted at the Desert Knights event in September 2014. To enhance recognition of both ARTP products, websites and print media should have a common design.
- *Further activities:* In addition to the above-mentioned activities, project partners drew up a rough business plan for the four-day kayak tour (ARTP Submission, 2014, pp. 3–4). They also organized cross-border visits for river guides to the Bondelzwarts and Richtersveld communities. In order to run four-day kayak tours, the construction of two campsites on the Namibian side is planned. Funds for this project have still to be raised.
- *Operation of kayak tours:* Since the necessary activities have not yet been completed, operation of the first kayak tour has been postponed until spring 2015, when the launch will take place in the presence of invited guests and the media. Subsequent to this event, Desert Kayak Trails will begin offering tourist tours.

The proposal and the work plan for Desert Kayak Trails are on the way to completion. The activities involved are adequate for the establishment of the kayak trail and achievement of the desired objectives. This ecotourism project is highly ambitious, however, and only seems feasible in a longer time frame, as will be shown later on.

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8 Boundless Southern Africa is a marketing brand that promotes and represents cross-border tourism activities in TFCA in southern Africa.



## 6.3 Findings and Analysis

This section of the chapter evaluates Desert Kayak Trails from the perspective of OECD/DAC criteria and cooperation. The advanced implementation status of the project allows for elaboration of the results and their sustainability, taking potential project risks into account.

### 6.3.1 Effectiveness

The project has not yet begun to operate kayak tours (objective 1), primarily due to delays in the procurement process and the capacity development of local guides and trip leaders. The next stages of the project, however, depend on the launch of the kayak tours. We see the proposed four-day kayak tours in spring 2015 as very ambitious. Funds for the necessary infrastructure and a vehicle are not in place. In addition, achievement of objective 3, to hand over project operation to the community, is linked to further steps.

On the other hand, there is evidence of success pertaining to objective 2 (to recruit staff from local communities, including women): of the seven local guides trained, six have been employed by Namibia Wildlife Resorts since July 2014. (One of the six had worked for this parastatal enterprise in the past.) This means an additional income of NAD22,968 (around €1,630) for each of the six households during the eight-month probation phase that ends in February 2015. The contract will then become permanent, leading to an additional annual income of NAD60,000 per household (around €4,260).<sup>9</sup>

All employees are recruited from local communities. Despite attempts by the implementers to employ female guides, women are currently underrepresented in the kayak team. In addition, the project has so far only enhanced employment for an extremely limited number of local inhabitants. In order to increase the benefits and revenue generated by Desert Kayak Trails for ARTP, project implementers envisage recruitment of further staff.

### 6.3.2 Impact

Since kayak operations have not yet begun, the impact of Desert Kayak Trails on TFCA, on individuals and communities, and on cross-border communication

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9 The minimum wage in the South African hospitality sector is between ZAR2,600 and 2,900 per month (between ZAR31,200 and 34,800 per year, equivalent to between €2,280 and 2,550) (Ramutloa, 2014). Although there is no minimum wage in Namibia, minimum salaries in the sector are similar to those in South Africa (Mwilima, 2012, pp. 11–12).

remains an anticipated impact. There has nevertheless been some movement in this direction.

At TFCA level, Namibian and South African park staff has occasionally collaborated in management and tourism activities. Desert Kayak Trails succeeded in establishing the first permanent bi-national team in the tourism sector, which consists of park management staff and members of the local community. Cross-border collaboration of this kind can be understood as a further step in the joint management of the TFCA. In addition, the revenue<sup>10</sup> generated here is to be invested in tourism development and conservation measures. In this sense the project has already contributed to enhancing TFCA implementation.

It is far too soon to assess activities associated with Desert Kayak Trails that might be detrimental to conservation. To prevent potentially adverse environmental impacts, Richtersveld National Park plans to draw up an Environmental Management Plan. The construction of campsites in the /Ai/Ais Game Park may call for an Environmental Impact Assessment. The project implementers, however, have not yet examined the regulations for environmental impact assessment.

On an individual level, Desert Kayak Trails could have an extremely positive impact. According to the river guides, an annual income of approximately NAD60,000 (around €4,260) would improve their standard of living (daily consumption, children's education, health care and insurances, savings, support for family and relatives, purchase of assets such as livestock, farmland and electricity).

The current project design benefits only a small minority of local people. To increase the benefits for the wider local community, project implementers plan to market goods produced by the communities in the immediate vicinity of the park. Meat and wood are two meaningful examples. They are also working on the idea of a local delivery service to kayak tourists at river campsites, which would include cultural dances and local dishes. All in all, however, the potential impact of Desert Kayak Trails on local communities remains vague.

At the same time, the project has contributed to cross-border communication between the Bondelzwarts and the Richtersveld Community as a result of visits by river guides. This exchange triggered the exploration of common family histories, produced insights into the way of life of other communities and reduced miscon-

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<sup>10</sup> Annual revenue is estimated at ZAR1.3m. for the first years according to the newly developed sustainable financing strategy for ARTP (Prime Africa Consultants, 2014).

ceptions and prejudices. Community representatives mentioned the importance of re-establishing social links and the potential of cross-border communication to preclude future conflict between the communities. These initial efforts are a good example of enhanced cross-border ties and illustrate the potential of the approach.

### 6.3.3 Sustainability

Given the prevailing financial constraints, the proposed four-day kayak trail is impractical as a product. Of major concern in terms of project sustainability is the question of funding. Project implementation depends heavily on more funding, since equipment in the form of cars for transportation have to be purchased and two more Namibian campsites built.<sup>11</sup> Funding, e.g., through Peace Parks Foundation or MET, cannot be guaranteed at the moment, forcing project implementers to seek other sources. To contribute to a solution for the lack of investments funds, GIZ and Peace Parks Foundation supported the development of a Sustainable Financing Strategy, which has just been finished in December 2014 (Prime African Consultants, 2014).

On the subject of project operation, joint activities are based on existing TFCA management structures, i.e., the Park Management Committee. Furthermore, institutionalization of the project within the scope of the joint park management strategy helps to counteract the compulsory recurrent transfer of park managers to other protected areas in both countries, since changes in personnel may jeopardize the continuity of the Desert Kayak Trails project (see chapter 6.3.6). To address this problem and overcome the lack of management capacities, the implementing partners see fit to hire a permanent manager for *Desert Kayak Trails* to ensure the business is run professionally.

The success of kayak operations likewise depends on immigration procedures. Tourist border-crossing in the course of kayak tours along the Orange River without border posts needs to be clarified, i.e., compliance of tourism operations with immigration regulations. Otherwise the project runs the risk of coming under severe pressure (cf. ARTP JMB, 2011a, pp. 64, 72–75).

Other risks are the limited commitment of trained guides due to delays in the Desert Kayak Trails launch, the as yet uncertain deployment of guides during the off-season, and the absence of accident insurance (an essential for guides as the

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11 Within the recently developed Sustainable Financing Strategy, investment costs for a new base camp, additional camp sites and vehicle are estimated being appr. ZAR 7.2m. (Prime African Consultants, 2014).

work can be dangerous). These factors could lead to resentment and high river guide fluctuation. Although crucial to the stability of the bi-national kayak team and to project sustainability, the issue of work permits for South African guides employed by Namibia Wildlife Resorts has not yet been dealt with by the project implementers.

Two recent developments affect the sustainability of this ecotourism project. MET granted a concession to the Bondelzwarts community to develop tourism along the southwestern stretch of the Orange River in ARTP. The implementing partners see potential in this move, since it will draw additional tourists to the region with fringe benefits for Desert Kayak Trails. Tourism operators are obliged to undergo a tender process to obtain a concession. If Desert Kayak Trails operators make a service offer and win the tender process, they could benefit from cooperation with the Bondelzwarts community. The issue is pending and constitutes a risk, since it could heighten competition on that stretch of the river and thwart the unique selling point of Desert Kayak Trails.

Discussions are now under way to establish an Integrated Water Resources Management Plan for the Orange-Senqu River Basin in the interests of protecting the Ramsar site at the mouth of the river. Restoration of the natural flow regime would imply higher water levels in summer and lower levels in winter (Macfarlane, 2013). The extent to which changes in the flow regime could be detrimental to kayak operations in the chillier winter months from March to October has not yet been resolved. Details on the new regime could not be clarified within the framework of this report and require further investigation on the part of the regional Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM).

Project sustainability depends on several internal and external factors. Full exploitation of the strengths and potential of the project will contribute to sustainability. At the same time, it is imperative that the risks and uncertainties involved in the project are likewise fully addressed by the implementing partners in order to avoid endangering its success.

#### **6.3.4 Relevance**

Introducing kayaking activities along the Orange River (objective 1) has already been identified as relevant to fostering ecotourism development, initially by the Richtersveld Community and later by the ARTP Joint Management Board (see chapters 6.1.5 and 6.2).

*By focusing on the unique selling features and activities that are suited to the ARTP it is believed that financial sustainability can be achieved, enabling the continued protection of the biodiversity of the ARTP, as well as the provision of substantial benefit to the Richtersveld Community specifically and broader community generally (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 76).*

It is assumed, firstly, that kayaking as a joint ecotourism product will add to park revenue (objective 1) and thus encourage joint operations by the park management agencies to preserve the rich biodiversity of the area, which has international significance. Secondly, respondents emphasize the relevance of *Desert Kayak Trails* for the creation of employment in the region (objective 2), where jobs are scarce. The project particularly addresses a younger target group, including women, and seeks to reduce the high rate of unemployment among females and youth (see chapters 6.1.3 and 6.1.4). Focusing on these groups complies with the SADC Programme for TFCA (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 5). The ultimate idea behind ecotourism in ARTP is to supply opportunities that bolster livelihoods in the region and improve the socio-economic circumstances of local communities (cf. ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 34; Fabricius, Collins, 2007, p. 88; Richtersveld Municipality, 2013). On the other hand, the project seems unsuitable when it comes to offering attractive jobs to women. In other words its relevance to the alleviation of female unemployment is low (see chapter 6.3.1).

The SADC Programme for TFCA underscores the importance of community participation in the development of tourism and its benefits. It is an opportunity to enhance their livelihoods and thus contribute to poverty reduction (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 5). The ARTP Integrated Development Plan states that, *"frameworks and strategies through which local communities can participate in, and tangibly benefit from, the management and sustainable use of natural resources [should be developed]"* (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 34). Project objective 3 aims at enhancing the participation of communities in kayak operations up to a certain point. It pertains only to local residents currently employed as kayak guides. Broader community impacts are limited.

### 6.3.5 Efficiency

The activities already carried out and the equipment purchased (see chapter 6.2.4) are an integral part of product development and justify financial investment. The training of people with little previous experience of kayaking or even fear water is cost intensive. Yet, capacity development is essential if the project is to be run by local people in the future. Resources for product development are hence used appropriately and efficiently.

### 6.3.6 Cooperation

Cross-border development of tourism activities with local community involvement requires cooperation. The following sections elaborate on how stakeholders involved in project planning and implementation cooperate with one another and evaluates the success of this cooperation.

#### Cooperation among Implementing Partners

Cooperation within the pilot project is based on provisions of the joint management strategy (ARTP JMB, 2011b) and the submission on the proposed kayak trail (ARTP Submission, 2014). MET, SANParks and Namibia Wildlife Resorts have an equal stake in the project. Yet, Namibia Wildlife Resorts is in the lead when it comes to project coordinating, guide recruitment, responsibility for marketing and the purchasing of equipment. According to the project implementers, this decision was taken for practical reasons, as SANParks rules for supply management are somewhat rigid and bureaucratic, making the purchase of equipment more complicated. MET is responsible for protected area management but not in a position to run commercial operations.

According to the implementing partners, their cooperation is based on good personal relationships that facilitate TFCA management and the establishment of Desert Kayak Trails. Major decisions on project issues are taken according to committee rules, with a two-thirds majority between all three partners. Nevertheless, lack of information flow between project partners has led to differences of opinion on the product design and the implementation strategy, e.g., on quality standards referring to the two outstanding campsites. This has notably been the case since the /Ai/Ais Game Park park manager originally involved was transferred and an acting park manager took over responsibility for implementation of the ecotourism project in Namibia. The latter was not involved in project planning and implementation from the start and is still not up to date on Desert Kayak Trails.

In addition, the ongoing information flow between project implementers and other key personnel involved in Desert Kayak Trails is poor at times, due to the frequent absence of the implementing partners. Those involved in organizing project-related activities are not always fully informed of proceedings and procedures. This leads to discontent of the personnel concerned and lack of understanding and transparency of project proceedings.

In terms of joint financial administration of revenues generated by Desert Kayak Trails, the Park Management Committee plans to use a ring-fenced account. This form of financial administration has already proven suitable to the depositing and

sharing of funds generated by the Desert Knights tourism event. The account is held by Namibia Wildlife Resorts on behalf of the implementing partners, who agree on the purpose for which funds are spent, and can be considered an appropriate instrument for joint financial appropriation.

On the whole, cooperation between the implementing partners is positive at the personal and institutional level. The implementing partners need to address the standard of the information flow and the changes in personnel to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved and results can be sustained.

### **Cooperation between Implementing Partners and Other Stakeholders**

Cooperation with Boundless Southern Africa, a brand that promotes TFCA in Southern Africa and was active in publicizing the Desert Knights event in ARTP, is highly suitable marketing choice for Desert Kayak Trails. With the technical support and positive marketing strategy of this brand, Desert Kayak Trails has a professional partner at its side.

### **Community Participation**

Community participation is envisaged in the mission of ARTP (ARTP JMB, 2011a, p. 34). Currently, however, community participation is low. During the planning phase of the ecotourism product, the Kaptein of the Bondelzwarts community (Namibia) participated passively via information sharing. Although the community perceives passive forms of participation as adequate, a stronger relationship between the community and the project can only be achieved if substantial project information is shared and discussed. In Richtersveld, community representatives participated interactively in discussions on the kayak trail launch with the joint management committee (RGBK). At the same time, as per agreement with SANParks, community representatives of RGBK are not included in operational decisions on Desert Kayak Trails. The extent to which the Richtersveld Community was informed about Desert Kayak Trails by RGBK representatives could not be clarified. The local community criticized the lack of information from their community representatives with regard to park management. On the other hand, resident attendance at community meetings was poor.<sup>12</sup> Despite the existence of structures for passive community participation in the Richtersveld Community, they function under par. The idea spawned by the implementing partners of including the broader community in benefit sharing is in its infancy and calls for

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<sup>12</sup> Investigating the reason for such poor attendance would have exceeded the scope of this evaluation.

thorough investigation (see chapter 6.3.2). The local communities lack the infrastructure and capacity to deliver the respective goods, and the number of local inhabitants economically active in the project through employment is so far negligible.

The project implementers see Desert Kayak Trails and its operation as empowering local community residents. Handing over responsibility for project operations to the community, however, entails a strategy for political participation and capacity development, one that is currently somewhat vague. At the moment it is the project partners who have the lead in implementing Desert Kayak Trails. Devolving operational responsibility to the guides seems unrealistic, at least until there is further investment in capacity development, e.g., training of community river guides as trip leaders (cf. Häusler, Strasdas, 2003; WWF, 2001). Although the river guides have occasionally been consulted on certain product features, activities are generally planned without previously consulting them. The guides themselves are keen to be involved in information-sharing and decision-making where project-related activities are concerned, an obvious prerequisite for stronger ownership.

The information flow to the river guides is regarded as troublesome, notably when a third party takes over this responsibility during the absence of the project coordinator. Due to lack of open dialogue with project implementers, the guides tend to be passive about stating their opinions or raising their concerns. This may be the result of prevailing labour relations and employment hierarchies. Relationship building within this newly formed bi-national team takes time and a great deal of trust.

## 6.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The focus of the ecotourism product is on a four-day kayak tour that requires an increase in logistics and financial means. As an alternative we recommend to start with day excursions. This would lead to the security of investments already made. The kayak team is advised to concentrate on the gradual development of kayaking skills and customer service, and to postpone demanding logistics to a later date. Furthermore, a business that is up and running may inspire more confidence when it comes to fund-raising. To add to the diversification of the tourism market within ARTP, synergies between kayaking and mountain biking, for example, should be exploited further (cf. ARTP JMB, 2011a, pp. 87–91).

Designing a strategy for the acquisition of additional funds is crucial at this point. Efforts must be made to attract funding for the campsites, vehicles and



other equipment indispensable to the envisaged four-day kayak trail. In order to run kayak tours properly, full-time trip leader positions should be in place and likewise require funding. The workload of those already trained and active is high. The notion that they could also manage the Desert Kayak Trails project is unrealistic. Besides, managing a tourism product calls for business skills and advanced planning (Häusler, Strasdas, 2003; WWF, 2001). The financial planning of Desert Kayak Trails has so far shown considerable shortcomings, making it vital to obtain the necessary expertise in business management.<sup>13</sup>

Desert Kayak Trails is a small-scale project that provides employment for seven local river guides from the Richtersveld and Karasburg communities. If run efficiently it has the potential to increase community involvement. The implementing partners envisage recruitment of further local river guides. The campsites could provide jobs for women, e.g., as cooks and service providers.

Operation of the ecotourism product by local residents requires skills that can only be acquired through training. Past and future kayak training of community guides constitutes the basis. Additional training in customer service, language skills and knowledge on the environmental features of ARTP would enhance the qualifications of river guides considerably and hence the quality of the tourism product.

Although management responsibility for Desert Kayak Trails remains in the hands of ARTP, fostering the gradual political participation in the operation of kayak activities demands a long-term strategy if objective 3 is to be achieved. The strategy should contain details on the rights and duties associated with project operation. We recommend that the implementing partners negotiate this with the river guides in order to enhance ownership and sustainability of the project.<sup>14</sup>

To ensure that the actors involved in project planning or implementation support decisions, the respective information should be shared in good time. In the absence of the project coordinator, a contact person adequately instructed and familiar with the project should be appointed to guarantee a smooth information

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<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, this issue has been addressed and a Sustainable Financial Strategy has been designed.

<sup>14</sup> As formulated, project objective 3 pertains to the South African Community only: "*Empower the Richtersveld Community*" (ARTP Project Proposal, 2013, p. 3). Although the property rights of the Namibian and South African communities over the respective protected areas differ (the Richtersveld National Park is owned by the Richtersveld Community, whereas the /Ai/Ais Game Park is state-owned), as do the duties of the park management to involve communities, members of the Karasburg community should be granted the right to participate politically in the project.

exchange with employees. In addition, relationship building warrants the creation of an atmosphere of trust and structures conducive to open dialogue.

In light of the growing recognition of community participation in TFCA in the SADC region (SADC Secretariat, 2013), opportunities for wider economic involvement of the Richtersveld and Karasburg communities should be assessed. Additional efforts may be required to enhance the capacity of communities to provide goods and services. Community cooperation may also stimulate joint marketing of Desert Kayak Trails and tourist destinations in the area. Support for the project can only be achieved if there is cooperation with community leaders and representatives, and a viable exchange of information on the activities involved.

We recommend that project implementers continue to arrange cross-border community visits. Inviting community residents on kayak trips is one way of encouraging exchange and interaction between ARTP and the communities. This would be a concrete demonstration of project progress and encourage people to support and market the trips, increase their interest in kayaking and contribute to cross-border community relations.

Several risks and uncertainties in project planning and implementation have not been adequately addressed (see chapter 6.3.3) and should be assessed and clarified as soon as possible. With regard to changes in the water flow regime of the Orange River, project implementers need to contact the ARTP Joint Management Board, a stakeholder in the strategic management planning for the Ramsar site (Macfarlane, 2013, p. 19), or GIZ as the funding organization for integrated water resource management planning. It is recommended that GIZ underpin this procedure in order to reduce project uncertainty.

Customers of kayak tours will cross the border between Namibia and South Africa at certain points. The project should apply for visa waivers to ensure that border crossing at undesignated posts complies with national immigration regulations. This would allow tourists to move freely in the TFCA and comply with regular immigration procedures at the border post.

It is recommended that SADC and GIZ adopt lessons learned on legal framework constraints and work towards greater harmonization at regional and national level. ARTP must address the issue of handling work permits in TFCA as well as immigration procedures. One option would be for SADC and GIZ to advocate for exemptions to certain regulations in TFCA rather than to seek changes to national laws.



## 7 Tourism Development Project in Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA

The project *Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative* embraces two communities on the border between Swaziland (Mhlumeni) and Mozambique (Goba) in the vicinity of the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (LCG TFCA).

On each side of the border implementation is at a different stage and stable cooperation has not been established. Our main research interest was to find out why progress had not been made in Goba and what impeded cooperation between the implementing partners.

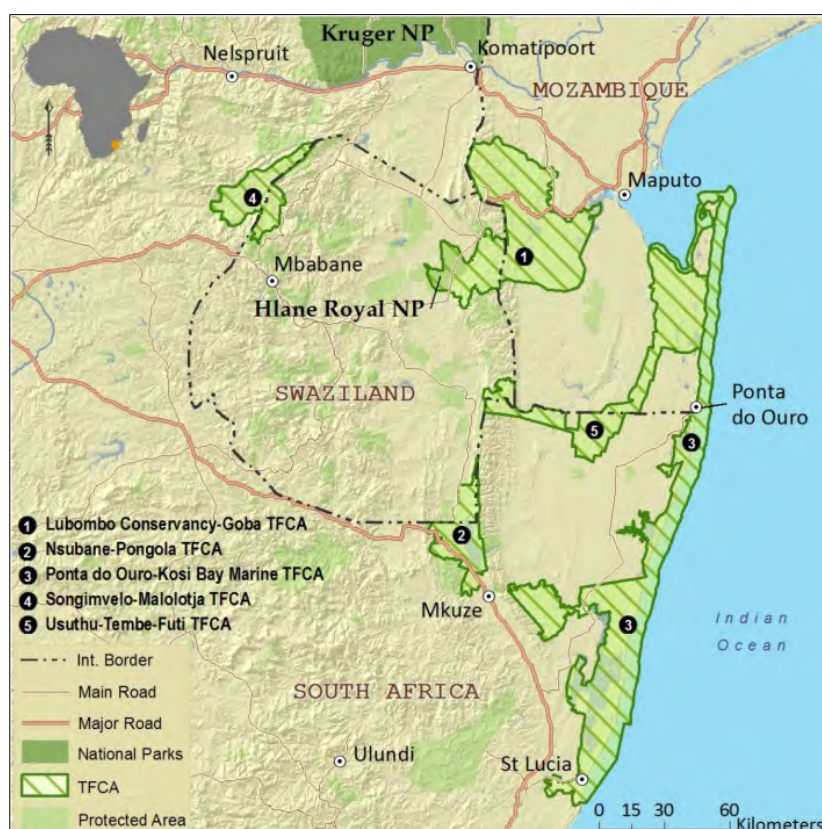
Activities on the Mhlumeni side are part of the Eco Lubombo Program (ELP) run by Lubombo Conservancy and up to now mostly financed by funds from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)<sup>15</sup>. This made identification of project activities funded purely by GIZ challenging.

### 7.1 Context: Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA

The Lubombo TFCA (LTFCA) was established in 2000 with the *General Trans-frontier Conservation and Resource Area Protocol* signed by the governments of Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa (General TFCRA Protocol, 2000). According to this protocol, Lubombo is recognized as an A category TFCA, albeit the document fails to mention its geographical extent. Today the LTFCA consists of five pockets or separate TFCA not yet physically linked (see Figure 2). The Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA (LCG TFCA) is one of these pockets and the location of the project. LCG TFCA is made up of Lubombo Conservancy in the northeast of Swaziland and Goba District in the southwest of Mozambique.

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<sup>15</sup> CEPF is a joint programme with several donors, including l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Government of Japan and the World Bank (cf. CEPF, 2014).



**Figure 2: Lubombo TFCA**

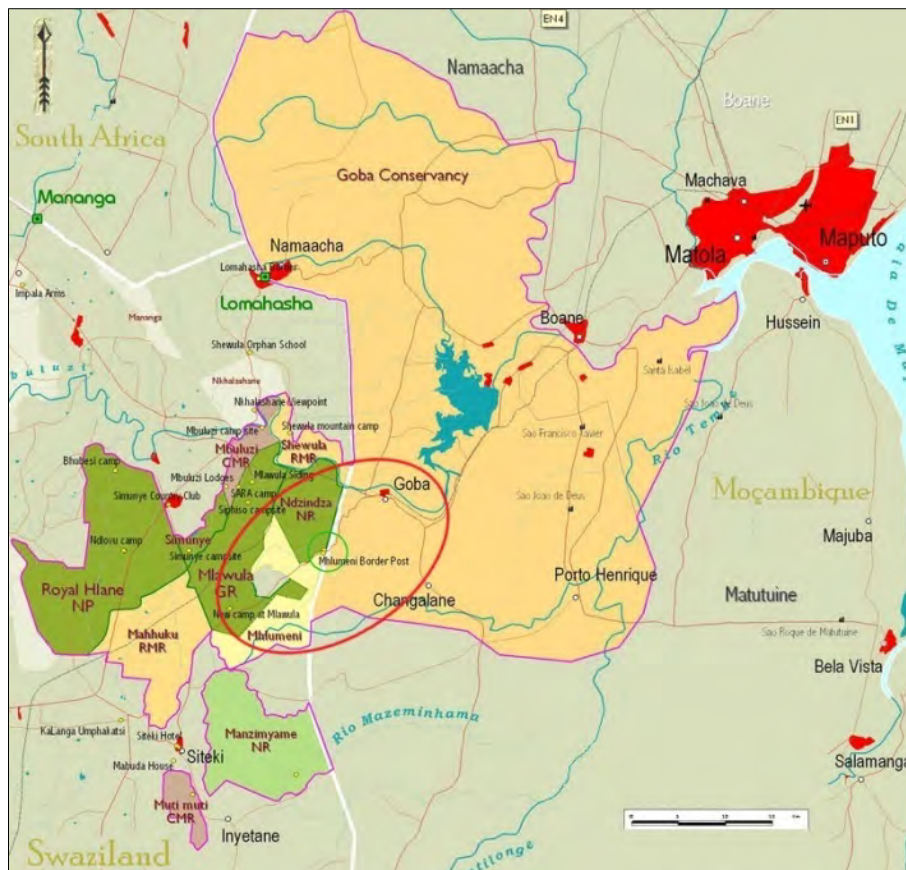
Source: <http://www.peaceparks.org>

The LCG TFCA was constituted by the LCG TFCRA Protocol (2000) in the year 2000 and is coordinated by the Mozambican Ministry of Tourism (TFCA unit) and the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC)<sup>16</sup>. The protocol sees the establishment of an LCG TFCA Task Group, a permanent secretariat and a fund, none of which is in place. Figure 3 shows the proposed extent of LCG TFCA. A red circle roughly marks the pilot project area.

One new development at TFCA level is the draft of an Integrated Development Plan for the combined areas of Lubombo Conservancy-Goba and Usuthu-Tembe-Futi TFCA (LTFCA Commission, 2014), which is to be signed by representatives of Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland. Intended as a strategic document for joint TFCA development and joint management of the two TFCA pockets, its ob-

<sup>16</sup> SNTC is a parastatal organization that runs the Swazi nature parks without big game. They receive their mandate from STA (Swaziland Tourism Authority) in the Swazi Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

jectives are, among others, to define the extent of the TFCA, to align component plans and to establish institutional arrangements that are both functional and effective (ibid., p. 1). This could be vital to the implementation of LCG TFCA (see below). The Integrated Development Plan sees the completion of an integrated management plan for Mhlumeni-Goba by December 2014 and a fully functioning TFCA within ten years (ibid., pp. 17–18).



**Figure 3: Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA**

Source: [http://sntc.org.sz/documents/lu\\_lgmin\\_a1\\_lr.jpg](http://sntc.org.sz/documents/lu_lgmin_a1_lr.jpg)

The TFCA Lubombo Conservancy-Goba is of great ecological value and part of the Lubombo Mountain area, a large integrated ecosystem worthy of conservation. Located within the 1.7m. ha Maputaland Centre of Endemism, it is a key biodiversity area within the confines of the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany biodiversity hotspot (CEPF, 2012, p. 2; UNDP, Kingdom of Swaziland, GEF, 2014, p. 195). IUCN lists the area as a Centre of Plant Diversity with an abundance of sensitive and unique ecosystems straddling national borders. Describing it as one of the most biologically rich albeit threatened areas, CEPF earmarked it for support with a

total of US\$6.65m. (CEPF, 2012)<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, the millions of people who live in the Maputaland-Pondoland-Albany region depend on its natural resources (CEPF, 2012, p. 5), which in turn increases pressure on the ecosystem.

A biodiversity assessment conducted by external consultants in Mhlumeni, the Swazi territory of the project, confirmed the ecological value of the area as a biodiversity hotspot in good condition and worthy of conservation. It also gave credence to its potential as an important transboundary protected area in combination with a territory of Goba (McClelland, 2014, p. 2), the community on the Mozambican side selected for the project. Since the late 1990s, this area has been set aside by the community for conservation reasons and seems ecologically intact.

Similar to the whole of Swaziland (UNDP et al., 2014, p. 187), the main threat to the ecosystem in Mhlumeni is overgrazing by cattle. The medicinal plants here are already difficult to find as a result of overharvesting. Cycads endemic to the area also face extinction as they are sold outside the community. Charcoal production in Goba (partly for the adjacent market in Maputo) and other burning practices are critical when it comes to biodiversity. Yet another threat is invasive plant species, e.g., *Chromolaena odorata*.

### 7.1.1 Lubombo Conservancy (Swaziland)

In 1999, the Lubombo Conservancy (LC) was established as a not-for-profit association to attain

*long-term conservation of the ecosystems in [...] the Lubombo region through a process of cooperative nature conservation management, and the development of conservation-based opportunities which create benefits, and contribute to improvement of the quality of life of all the people in the region* (LC, 1999, p. 1).

LC was founded by representatives of the Shewula Game Reserve Trust, Hlane Royal National Park, Mlawula Nature Reserve, Sisa Ranch and Mbuluzi Game Reserve. In 2013, it became a non-governmental organization (NGO) and gained legal status in accordance with the Swaziland Companies Act (Lubombo Conservancy, 2014, pp. 6–7; UNDP et al., 2014, p. 195). LC has the particular characteristic of combining different types of protected areas, which are managed by a wide spectrum of stakeholders such as SNTC, Big Game Parks, communities (Swazi Nation Land) and the private sector (UNDP et al., 2014, p. 106) (see Figure 3). Swaziland's largest conservation area, it covers approximately 66,000 ha (Lubombo Conservan-

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<sup>17</sup> ELP received its funding from CEPF on this basis.

cy, 2014, pp. 6–7) and constantly integrates new territories. Mhlumeni, as the pilot project community on the Swazi side, is surrounded by Lubombo Conservancy. Though it has no protected area status yet, this is planned for the future.

### 7.1.2 Goba District (Mozambique)

The Mozambican part of LCG TFCA is the Goba district (LCG TFCRA Protocol, 2000, p. 1). This territory has no protected areas to date. Responsibility for managing an area of 9,701ha was given to the CBO Goba Ntava Yedzu (see chapter 7.1.4), which falls under the Provincial Department of Agriculture (DPA) as a sub-unit of the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAG), while the responsible unit for TFCA in Mozambique is the Ministry of Tourism (MITUR). From a conservation and institutionalization perspective, nothing has been done in Goba since the proclamation of Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA in 2000. Goba was not considered in the second phase of the Mozambican TFCA programme, MOZBIO (2005–2013)<sup>18</sup>, the focus of which was to be TFCA and tourism development (Ministry of Tourism, 2014), since only national conservation areas were financed. The institutional framework in Mozambique is currently undergoing a shift. MITUR has introduced a new department for the administration of conservation areas (Administração Nacional das Áreas de Conservação, ANAC), which will oversee implementation of the third phase of the Mozbio programme mid-2015. According to the draft of MOZBIO III, LCG TFCA is again not among the areas designated for support (Thompson, 2014).

A novelty in Mozambique is the possibility of creating community conservation areas as a result of the new law adopted in June 2014 on the protection, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Article 22 on *Área de conservação comunitária* gives communities the right to create conservation areas and manage them sustainably, whereby the areas in question remain communal lands (Lei N° 16/2014, Art. 22). Based on the management plan required for the respective community conservation areas, the sustainable use of natural resources and concessions for tourism activities are permitted (Art. 26).

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<sup>18</sup> MOZBIO launched its first phase in 1998. It was funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank. US\$40m. is the financial volume of the third (current) phase.



### 7.1.3 Mhlumeni Community

Mhlumeni is a Swazi community of approx. 1,500 inhabitants. It borders Mozambique, is surrounded on the Swazi side by Mlawula Nature Reserve (NR) and consists of 153 scattered homesteads with extended families. The land of the Mhlumeni community is Swazi Nation Land held in trust for the nation by the King of Swaziland.<sup>19</sup>

The political structure of Mhlumeni is based on the traditional system. Mhlumeni is one of several communities under the Ka-Langa chieftancy, with the Langa council and Langa chief as the highest institutions. The inner council and its chairman govern the Mhlumeni community on behalf of the Langa chief. Traditional headmen for different areas of Mhlumeni deal with land and land disputes in the community. The Mhlumeni representatives on the inner council are eight elderly men and women from the community. They are appointed by the Langa chief based on recommendations from the current inner council or the community. The inner council is the first institution to be contacted when planning a community activity or project. In the case of a major decision such as an economic activity, investment or development project, however, the Langa chief must be consulted. Community meetings are open to interested members of the community and held regularly. The principal asset of the Mhlumeni community is its pronounced social cohesion. This is evident in its organizational structures, interest groups and active communication within the community.

Livelihoods in the region, and thus in Mhlumeni, depend on rain-fed agriculture for subsistence and the harvesting of natural resources. The chief crops are maize, cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, beans. Community members report a shift in the farming season, with a decrease in productivity due to poor soil fertility coupled with low precipitation. Cotton is the only cash crop and is cultivated by the very few. Animal husbandry plays a major role and includes poultry production, cattle herding and goat keeping. Cattle are a source of livelihood as well as a symbol of wealth and influence. Almost 50 per cent of all households own cattle. A total of 1,091 heads of cattle graze in Mhlumeni, a fifth of which are owned by non-residents.<sup>20</sup> Although the number of cattle in Mhlumeni has dropped in the

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19 De facto, Swazi Nation Land belongs to the community. The chiefs have the right to allocate land in their respective areas to community members and the responsibility to ensure availability of land for cultivation to all homesteads (Mushala, Kanduza, Simelane, Rwelamira, Dlamini, 1998).

20 The official number of cattle belonging to non-residents is 215.

last eight years by about 14 per cent, pressure on land remains high, not least due to the fence now surrounding the territory of the Mlawula Nature Reserve, previously used for grazing. Apart from agriculture and animal husbandry, people generate income from small businesses in the informal sector, while a few are employed outside the community by the sugarcane company RSCA, the Swazi Railway Company or the government (as teachers, police or in the military).

Mhlumeni has one primary school for approx. 200 children, but no secondary school. Apart from a monthly mobile clinic, there is no basic health care facility. The nearest hospital is in Siteki about 25km away. Although a rural electrification scheme is in place, very few can afford electricity. One borehole serves the entire community with water when other wells and rivers dry up during the dry season. A water pipeline to the community is planned. The village has a small grocery shop and gravel roads. Transport in and outside of the community is a general problem and may become an issue in the context of tourism development. Key obstacles to be overcome in Mhlumeni are access to water, unemployment, low education and a high prevalence of HIV.

According to statements by community representatives, the residents of Mhlumeni see no value in ecosystems and adopted a hostile attitude to biodiversity conservation prior to the pilot project launch. The background to this stance was a boundary dispute with the neighbouring Mlawula NR. The Mhlumeni community accused the park management of seizing communal land by moving the fence incrementally. At the same time, community residents conducted illegal activities in the park itself, such as poaching, cattle grazing, collecting firewood, plants or grass and setting fires.

Cross-border contacts between Mhlumeni and Goba exist in the context of family relations and businesses. The only institutionalized cross-border cooperation, on the other hand, refers to the police on matters of poaching. Cross-border conflict is likewise in evidence when, for example, members of the Mhlumeni community accuse Mozambicans of stealing cattle.

#### **7.1.4 Community: Goba**

The Goba community on the Mozambican side has an estimated 2,500 inhabitants. The centre of the village is 11km from the Swazi border in the direction of Maputo.

For a better understanding of the complex situation in Goba, the historical experience of the community with external intervention and community-based natural resource management will be described briefly. The FAO supported a commu-

nity-based forest management project in Goba from 1997 until 2001.<sup>21</sup> At the time, the community was chosen because of widespread illegal exploitation of forest resources for charcoal production. Several interest groups were set up, including the community association for natural resource management, Goba Ntava Yedzu (our mountain). Thirty elected members of this association were to represent community interests in dealings with the private sector, government authorities, neighbouring communities and other stakeholders. Ntava Yedzu had been in possession of a community land tenure certificate over 9,701ha since 2001 (Certidão No.16/DPAPM/16/SPGC/2795/2001) when the rights over the land were transferred from the local authorities to the association. The latter was to manage the land on behalf of the community and use it for socio-economic purposes. A participatory resource management plan was drawn up, marking seven land-use zones for settlement, farming, grass/grazing, charcoal production, indigenous forest/thatch grass, recreation/ecotourism and forest plantation (DPA, 2000). When responsibility for the overall project was transferred to the Mozambican government in 2002, almost all activities associated with the project in Goba collapsed. Interest groups ceased to function. Without FAO subsidies they were no longer viable and participation in a community organization was no longer attractive. Ntava Yedzu lacked capacities and external support with the result that most members ultimately left (FAO, 2001; Kumagwelo, 2000; Tanner, Baleira, Norfolk, Cau, Assulai, 2006).

Political structures in Goba today are complex as a result of coexisting modern and traditional systems. The national government is represented by the community council, which is dominated by officials from Mozambique's current governing party and led by the local administrator or *chefe da localidade* (locality chief). The traditional system is led by the traditional chief, who is at the same time *chefe da terra* (land chief). These parallel structures do not interact on a regular basis due to the absence of communication rules and a flow of information. Meetings are held only when the administrator extends the invitation. The third powerful party involved is the CBO Ntava Yedzu. It is the only organized group left in Goba and still holds the land rights over communal land (see above). The *chefe da terra* was deprived of his task to allocate land when the land rights were handed over to Ntava Yedzu. Today, Ntava Yedzu's community representation is limited and the CBO performs poorly when it comes to its principal task, which is to secure benefits from the communal area for the entire community. The organization has six to

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21 In the context of the GCP/MOZ/056/NET project entitled "Support for Community Forestry and Wildlife Management".

ten members, most of whom are founding members. They no longer keep to regular procedures such as holding elections every four years (Estatutos da Comunidade Goba Ntava Yedzu). According to their current president, the last elections were held in 2007. Ntava Yedzu and the local administration no longer trust each other, as evidenced by their mutual accusation of abusing power for personal gain. This dilemma is fuelled by lack of transparency about land negotiations between Ntava Yedzu and people from outside the community. The latter have been given land for various purposes. In exchange, the community is to receive such benefits as classrooms, a clinic or cows. All agreements are verbal. There are no written contracts and no one knows the precise details about the land that has been leased or the conditions.

Livelihoods in Goba community are based on subsistence farming (notably maize, millet, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables, peanuts). At the same time, the vast majority of households are employed in the four big farming companies (macadamia and banana) in Goba district. Every family in Goba produces charcoal legally for family consumption. Some still rely on charcoal production for their livelihood, although its production on a commercial basis is prohibited. Additional activities include animal husbandry (mostly cattle), commercial and other activities (teacher, police). Migration flows resulting from the civil war have weakened social structures and social cohesion. Today, Goba is ethnically mixed; most of the inhabitants speak Portuguese and Shangana.

During the FAO intervention awareness of conservation was raised and charcoal production reduced. The zoning of communal land is still accepted, and an estimated area of 2,500ha, the so-called "reserve", has been preserved to a large extent. There is, however, evidence of biodiversity depletion outside the "reserve" area (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 31; own data collection). Ntava Yedzu is still pursuing the idea of tourism development here. In 2007 a foreign investor began constructing a lodge beside a waterhole bordering the "reserve", 12km away from the village centre. It was subsequently taken over by another private investor in 2011. Progress has been slow, however, and the tourism infrastructure has not been completed. In return for a lease on some land, the current investor has promised to build six tourist chalets in the village centre for a community tourism project. Nothing has happened yet.

#### **7.1.5 Tourism**

LCG TFCA has tourism potential. Maputo is a mere 80 km away what makes the area a promising location with expatriates and a growing middle class as the target group for recreational ecotourism. Road infrastructure is good and the area

favourably situated between Durban and the Kruger National Park. The twenty-four hour border post enhances its accessibility (LTFCA Commission, 2014, p. 8). Small trails in the region could be used for hiking, mountain-biking, bird-watching or simply scenic enjoyment. In order to fully exploit its potential for ecotourism, however, there are still some obstacles to overcome, such as lack of (basic) facilities, e.g., campsites, and lack of experience and skills in relation to hospitality and tourism services. Based on current visa regulations, tourists in TFCA must go through the border post to cross the border.

## 7.2 Project Description

The proposal for *Mhlumeni Goba Community Tourism and Conservation Initiative* was submitted jointly by Lubombo Conservancy and SNTC for Mhlumeni and CESVI and Ntava Yedzu for Goba. It was signed by the Swazi national TFCA coordinator (SNTC) and the Mozambican Ministry of Tourism (MITUR). The first project proposal was submitted to GIZ in May 2013. The work plan and the budget from November 2013 included some minor adjustments.

### 7.2.1 Implementing Partners

The NGO Lubombo Conservancy, with two employees, a project manager and a community and ecotourism expert, is in the lead for pilot project implementation. Project activities are part of the larger Eco Lubombo Program, which is primarily financed by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) and co-financed by COSPE<sup>22</sup>, an Italian NGO with fifteen years of experience in community-based development in Swaziland. COSPE staff assists the ELP in participatory and GIS<sup>23</sup>-assisted mapping and zoning for the development of eco-business plans, and implements livelihood projects in Lubombo communities.

The implementing partner on the Mozambican side is CESVI<sup>24</sup>, an Italian NGO active in the country since 2000. One focus of its work lies on environment and natural resource management. CESVI is based in Maputo and had no experience in the project area. During the project phase the position of country director changed twice, in February and in September 2014. In addition, CESVI reduced its

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22 COSPE: Cooperation for Development in Emerging Countries.

23 GIS: Geographic Information System, a computer system designed to capture and manage spatial or geographical data.

24 CESVI: Cooperazione e Sviluppo (cooperation and development).

staff to currently two (including the director) and funding for the organization has only been secured until the end of 2014.<sup>25</sup>

The pilot project on the Swazi side is embedded in the larger Eco Lubombo Program. ELP is the implementation strategy of the Lubombo Conservancy with a planned spatial extension over the entire Lubombo Mountain Ecosystem. It started in 2013 and is funded by CEPF with US\$270,000 for a first programme phase until June 2015. The goal of ELP is to foster biodiversity conservation and to create an ecotourism product in the Lubombo Mountain range, possibly extending it to the entire LTFCFA at a later point. The holistic approach includes institutional strengthening of LC (incorporating further communities, private and state-owned land in a protected landscape approach), eco-business plans<sup>26</sup> at community level, community-based eco-trails and partnership-based research, monitoring and evaluation. The tourism product focuses on a community-based eco-trail network, including a chain of community owned eco-lodges (Lubombo Conservancy, 2014, pp. 7–8). The pilot project and its activities can only be understood within this broader context and as part of ELP implementation.

### 7.2.2 Objective and Outputs

The overall objective of the GIZ-funded pilot project as stated in the proposal is *“to protect biodiversity through economic development and skills training, specifically ecotourism and related activities”* (LCG Project Proposal, 2013, p. 4). This was specified in the project work plan as *“to establish a viable, ecofriendly and attractive community tourism product with associated sustainable livelihood activities, spanning the areas of Mhlumeni in Swaziland and Goba in Mozambique”* (LCG Project work plan, 2013, p. 2). In the logic of the project, biodiversity conservation is to be achieved through income generation and sustainable livelihoods for local communities, for the most part through tourism development. Additional income means poverty alleviation<sup>27</sup> for the population and may therefore reduce the need to exploit natural resources, lessening the pressure on the ecosystem. The objective of biodiversity conservation is strategically approached from a business point

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25 CESVI received funding from CEPF from March to September 2014, with an extension until December 2014. This was earmarked for activities in the districts of Goba and Matutuin.

26 Eco-business plans are management plans for community development based on an ecosystem approach and sustainable community-based management of natural resources. Their aim is to combine ecosystem conservation and enhanced sustainable livelihoods, creating business opportunities in the process.

27 The direct objective of the project is income generation and improved livelihoods for the communities. Our evaluation of impacts and relevance refers to the general, underlying goal of poverty alleviation.

of view, highlighting biodiversity in the community as a valuable asset that can be used to generate income from ecotourism. In this way, the implementers want to create awareness for the value of land in the community and convince it of the importance of conservation.

The work plan envisages the following outputs: an integrated management plan for the two communities and an ecotourism product focusing on eco-recreational and adventure activities such as mountain-biking, hiking and 4x4 drives. The trails connecting Mhlumeni and Goba are part of the proposed Lubombo eco-trails network, which encompasses campsites and accommodation facilities in a design that reflects the natural environment. The individual tourism products should be developed in cooperation with the communities (LCG Project work plan, 2013, p. 2).

### 7.2.3 Activities

The proposal included activities to be financed via GIZ and ELP over a total period of twenty-four months from mid-2013 up to mid-2015. A multitude of proposed activities were to be co-financed by GIZ in the period from the beginning of 2014 up to mid-2015. In Mhlumeni, activities in five areas (LCG Project work plan, 2013, pp. 6–11) were conducted as follows<sup>28</sup>:

- *Planning and governance:* The participatory spatial planning of ecosystem services and functions was carried out in seven sessions with thirty-two key informants (including four moderators) from Mhlumeni, and a baseline of the community recorded. A draft of the eco-business plans for the two communities and an integrated management plan for a Transfrontier Community Conservation Area are planned for the end of 2014 and beginning of 2015, respectively. Only a draft of the eco-business plan for Mhlumeni is viable within this time frame.
- *Infrastructure:* The site for a camp/lodge in Mhlumeni was chosen in the company of community representatives and initial ideas on a camp design have been drafted. Still, the camp construction planned for the third quarter of 2014 up to the beginning of 2015 has not yet begun. Construction of the lodge was planned for 2015.

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<sup>28</sup> The fields of activity listed here refer only to those funded by GIZ.

- *Trail development:* The route should have been designed by mid-2014 and the trail opened in early 2015. Development of the trail has not yet started, however, but a consultant on tourism product development in Mhlumeni was engaged in August 2014.
- *Training:* Training in basic hospitality for ecotourism, which includes guiding, basic accountability, small business non-financial administration, planning and budgeting, is to take place on a regular basis. Training in these fields has not yet materialized.
- *Marketing:* The proposed recruiting of a marketing consultant for market analysis and tourism product development has not taken place, but some assessments have been conducted by ecotourism experts. As a first step in marketing, a Lubombo eco-trail brochure is available and networking with stakeholders has taken place.<sup>29</sup>

Numerous activities have been carried out in Mhlumeni, albeit with a mixed status of implementation and generally delayed, as presented above. In Goba, on the other hand, none of the activities for the GIZ-funded pilot project were undertaken, mainly due to the difficult relationship between the implementing partners and the withdrawal of CESVI (see chapter 7.3.6). Since the implementers agreed in July 2014 that the objectives were no longer achievable, the proposal for the Mozambican side was reviewed and adjusted, and an amendment request sent to GIZ. The implementing parties never agreed on the revised proposal. When CESVI withdrew from the GIZ project in late August 2014, GIZ, LC and ANAC agreed in consultations that LC should temporarily manage the Goba part, too. LC plans to search for a new long-term partner and to hire a consultant to assess the situation in Goba. Depending on progress and the situation analysis, LC has plans to carry out confidence building and preparatory activities with the community and simultaneously reorganize and consolidate Ntava Yedzu.

Although it had officially withdrawn from the project in August, CESVI took up activities in Goba in September 2014. This occurred outside the GIZ pilot project but was funded by CEPF in cooperation with COSPE. CESVI performed activities initially planned as part of the joint project in ELP, without prior consultation with LC, e.g., training in participatory mapping.

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<sup>29</sup> These activities/outputs have no immediate connection with GIZ project activities.



## 7.3 Findings and Analysis

Presentation of the findings concentrates on enabling and constraining factors that explain the uneven project development in both countries and the cooperation difficulties between the two implementing partners. We take the reviewed objectives, activities and work plan time-tables as the background for the project evaluation. Many statements refer to Mhlumeni only and will be marked as such.

### 7.3.1 Effectiveness

Concerning the specific objective of the project, the first planned outputs are eco-business plans for the two communities and a cross-border forum. These have not yet been attained, but activities in Mhlumeni are still in progress (see chapter 7.2.3).

In Goba, the specific objective has not been achieved as none of the activities has been carried out so far. One reason for the withdrawal of CESVI was the perception that measurable effects and outputs for Goba were not possible within the project timeframe. Expectations of developing a community-based tourism project in Goba with tangible outputs within nine months were too high. In the current situation, it is impossible to estimate future project implementation in Goba, as future stakeholder involvement in the project is completely vague.

In Mhlumeni, preparatory activities for development of a community-based ecotourism product have been carried out and first achievements are in place, e.g., awareness-raising around conservation and the foundation of the CBO Mhlumeni Trust. The tourism product itself is under development. Although some ideas have been defined, infrastructural measures have not gone ahead as planned. The obligatory Environmental Impact Assessment requested by Lubombo Conservancy from the Swaziland Environmental Authority is still outstanding. Tourism and management-related skills training has not yet got under way. Due to the delay, tourism infrastructure is non-existent and accordingly, no income has been generated. Future income effects cannot be estimated, since the business plan and final tourism product have yet to be defined.

More than a year has passed since the launch of Eco Lubombo Program activities, which paved the way for activities funded by GIZ. The implementer LC plans to spend GIZ funds on activities up to April 2015. Against this background, the project can be seen as an eighteen-month approach. As a nine-month project on its own without the broader context, it is unlikely that the GIZ investment can create tourism infrastructure and conduct training in management skills and marketing using a participatory approach.

### 7.3.2 Impact

The overall goal of the project is biodiversity conservation through poverty alleviation. This is to be achieved with ecotourism and the attendant income-generating opportunities in contrast to the unsustainable use of natural resources and overexploitation. The project has just recently got off the ground, and early impacts are not yet visible. Nonetheless, some current effects of the project could lead to positive impacts in the long run. We estimate these in the following and identify what the project needs if the desired impacts are to emerge in the future.

Participatory exercises such as mapping ecosystem services and sensitization training with key informants has raised consciousness for biodiversity conservation in the community. Combined with community meetings, where information on conservation and aspects of tourism were shared, these project activities led to a notable change in the community's overall perception of and attitude towards conservation. The sharing of mapping and inventory exercise results with the community and the subsequent debates is a vital step towards a community eco-business plan. At the same time, the notion of converting part of Mhlumeni territory into a community conservation and recreation area is gaining currency. Key here is the support of the Ka-Langa chief and the inner council. Both enjoy high authority and the trust of the community. In the interests of enhancing conservation, however, growing environmental awareness must be translated to a behavioural shift. The community cannot bring about substantial change in the use of natural resources without the necessary alternatives and instruments for sustainable natural resource management. Although the main threat to conservation in Mhlumeni is overgrazing, there is little evidence of a willingness to reduce the number of cattle, not least because owning them symbolizes social status, as described earlier. Currently, it seems that the project does not have the right tools at hand to achieve this cultural shift, one that calls for staying power.

If the anticipated income effects are achieved, we can at best highlight the project potential. The impact on poverty alleviation can only be assessed at a much later date. The community-based approach allows for broad community participation in project benefits, albeit this depends on the design of the final tourism product and on concrete community involvement. Apart from this, tourism is a sector that tends to encourage high involvement of youth and women (BMZ, 2011, p. 9).

As a side-effect of project activities, the dispute with the neighbouring Mlawula NR became less tense, the relationship improved significantly and communication is now possible (see chapter 7.1.3). The project facilitated joint activities and an

exchange of opinions, as well as the direct support of Mlawula NR for the activities concerned. GPS mapping increases knowledge in the community and makes its members feel more secure about the boundaries of their territory. The Mhlumeni community, however, still calls for official reassurance on the matter. This could become the prerequisite for a sustainable relationship.

### 7.3.3 Sustainability

The project in Mhlumeni is likely to be continued when GIZ support comes to an end, as it is integrated in ELP, which is in a position to raise more funds. There have been some promising signals, e.g., from GEF, GIZ and the Dutch government.<sup>30</sup> A follow-up funding proposal for ELP is currently being drafted and states a preliminary amount of over US\$3.7m. for implementation of a five-year plan. This includes development of an eco-business plan with several communities in the Swaziland Lubombo Mountain Ecosystem and their incorporation into the Lubombo Eco-Trails initiative (Lubombo Conservancy, 2014). Against this backdrop, the GIZ pilot project fund can be seen as a stimulus for a broader project.

The organizational set-up of ELP will be reinforced by another staff member for administration tasks and the incorporation of a GIS expert. Dedication is high on the Swazi side and Mhlumeni will have continued support.

The second aspect of sustainability concerns project results and project impacts. Are they likely to persist when pilot project activities end?

Since the project is dedicated to income generation via tourism, it should generate revenue at a later stage. Although this makes financial sustainability of the project likely, this stage must first be reached. The project implementers themselves plan the independence of Mhlumeni from the financial and technical support of LC within five years. They see an end to further support mid-2015 as a worst case scenario, but are convinced that Mhlumeni community could launch tourism activities on their own with a finished campsite.

The process of empowerment began with the creation of institutional structures in the community and has generated a sense of community responsibility. This is the desired basis for a sustainable project. ELP supported the foundation of the CBO Mhlumeni Trust and trains people to make their own informed decisions in the future. Equally, participatory spatial planning would increase community

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<sup>30</sup> Backed by GIZ, Lubombo Conservancy made efforts to negotiate with MITUR in Mozambique on the possibility of supporting Goba in the context of the MOZBIO programme.

commitment to the project. It is still too early to confirm these aspects of empowerment, which call for a stronger sense of ownership and independence from external support.

No statement can be made on the ecological and economic sustainability of the tourism product, i.e., ecotourism, which is tourism that adapts to the environment and includes hiking, mountain-biking, 4x4 drives and camping/lodge. Trails and tourism products still need to be precisely defined, since their economic viability relies heavily on marketing and demand. The Environmental Impact Assessment is still outstanding. The ecological impact of 4x4 activities should be carefully assessed.

Another feature of sustainability is the documentation of learning experiences and the development of methodologies with up-scaling potential. ELP is in the process of preparing a guidance manual on community-based eco-business plans. Mhlumeni is to be a first experiment and practice example. If Mhlumeni succeeds as a community-based enterprise based on an eco-business plan combining tourism and conservation, this could become an incentive for other communities to join the tourism and conservation initiative of the Lubombo Eco-Trail and follow suit. The manual should serve to up-scale the Mhlumeni experience and replicate the methods in other communities.

#### 7.3.4 Relevance

The overall objectives of poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation are recognised as highly relevant in a global development context, as they integrate the Millennium Development Goals 1, eradication of extreme poverty, and 7, environmental sustainability. Against the backdrop of the socio-economic landscape described in chapters 7.1.3 and 7.1.4, sustainable livelihoods through employment and income generation is highly relevant at the community level of Mhlumeni and Goba. Similarly, rich biodiversity as a livelihood source is under threat, making incentives for conservation measures crucial. The strategy of linking biodiversity conservation and community development goes hand in hand with the new GEF project *Strengthening the National Protected Areas System in Swaziland*, which focuses on income-generating activities that will reduce the reliance of local communities on natural resources, thereby protecting biodiversity (UNDP et al., 2014, p. 18). The IDP for the combined LCG and Usuthu Tembe Futi (LCG-UTF) TFCA foresees that “*economic returns from tourism and associated activities*” (Lubombo TFCA Commission, 2014, p. 3) must be provided for local communities if employment is to be created, livelihoods enhanced and opportunities for conservation secured.

Mozambique's national tourism strategy from 2004 to 2013 included tourism goals that saw employment creation and poverty alleviation, the development of sustainable and responsible tourism, and a contribution to the conservation of biodiversity (Ministry of Tourism, 2004). A new strategy is in progress and expected to strengthen the focus on tourism in protected areas (UNWTO, 2014). The Swazi tourism policy refers specifically to the environmental sustainability goal of tourism initiatives (Ministry of Tourism and Environment Affairs, 2010). The objectives stated in the LC constitution refer to nature-based tourism, employment and conservation-based community development opportunities, all of which will lead to a better quality of life for local communities in the Lubombo region (Lubombo Conservancy, 1999, p. 1).

Neither Swaziland nor Mozambique are in possession of a specific legislation or policy for CBNRM (Roe, Nelson, Sandbrook, 2009, p. 161). The Swaziland national biodiversity strategy and action plan from 2001, however, refers to the establishment of CBNRM and the attendant legislation (Swaziland Environmental Authority, 2001, pp. 60, 67). A UNDP (GEF) study from 2014 repeats this recommendation to develop CBNRM in Swaziland via the relevant national policy (UNDP et al., 2014, p. 16). In Mozambique, a broad policy framework allows for community participation and benefits from sustainable natural resource management (Nhantumbo, Norfolk, Pereira, 2003, pp. 3–4), e.g., through communal land titles (Lei n° 19/97), access and rights over forestry resources (Lei n° 10/99) and further specification on community participation and community benefits (Decreto N° 12/2002). In addition, the community-based strategy of the project is in line with the Lubombo General TFCRA Protocol, which seeks to create a framework to facilitate the *"involvement of communities in and adjacent to TFCAs through consultation, representation and participation in TFCA management"* (General TFCRA Protocol, 2000, p. 3). In fact, the draft IDP for LCG-UTF TFCA sees the establishment of community forums and *"a TFCA wide community-based tourism corporate structure to underpin the sustainability of TFCA tourism products"* (Lubombo TFCA Commission, 2014, p. 19). This is identical to the strategy of ELP.

### 7.3.5 Efficiency

By September 2014, the project implementers had spent none of the GIZ funds. Therefore, we will simply highlight some financial aspects.

Resources on the Swazi side were advanced by GEF funds and have been used mainly for participatory community exercises and the contracting of consultants. GIZ funds are held back for investment in campsite and lodge infrastructure. The implementer stressed that the efficient use of funds was more important than

simply cash outflow. On the whole, LC gave a positive report on cooperation with GIZ, declaring it was very responsive and made two visits to the project area. GIZ proved flexible in terms of regular adjustments to objectives, time-tables and budgets. According to LC representatives, administrative costs and efforts were so far small-scale, but LC is in the process of recruiting an administrative officer to manage the growing administrative programme expenditure.

On the Mozambican side, GIZ funds have not been spent, as no agreement between the cooperating partners has been reached and no money disbursed.

### **7.3.6 Cooperation**

Transboundary cooperation is central to a cross-border project. It has not yet been achieved in the LCG TFCA project. Reviewing the work plan, it is obvious that the activities proposed in the plan will not suffice to accomplish the objective of transboundary cooperation and the introduction of a cross-border community forum. This chapter looks at the relationship between three different types of stakeholders: the implementing partners, other stakeholders and the communities. We identify why cooperation has failed up to now and the Mozambican partner withdrawn from the project. In addition we evaluate the different approaches to the communities on both sides.

#### **Cooperation among Implementing Partners**

The LC project manager initiated the project and asked CESVI for cooperation in September 2013. Neither organization had worked together before, nor did they have any detailed information about each other. The proposal was developed jointly by the LC project manager and the CESVI country director. Both organizations pursue community-based approaches. Several complications emerged in the course of cooperation. It transpired later that the notion of a participatory approach and the associated methods had not been sufficiently aligned during the project planning phase. Following his first visit to the Goba community in May 2014, the new CESVI country director assessed the project approach and its objectives as unviable. The implementers decided to submit an amended proposal to GIZ with adjustments to the Goba objectives. By August 2014, when CESVI withdrew, the implementing partners had still not reached an agreement. Several factors hampered cooperation:

- The partnership between CESVI and LC was never formalised. The draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) sent by CESVI in February 2014 was not discussed or signed. Neither was an agreement reached on joint project procedure. Although CESVI considered a formalized agreement indispensable prior

to implementation, drafting an MoU was not a priority for LC. This explains why CESVI did not take up activities in Goba.

- Communication was not smooth, notably after the first change of CESVI country director in February 2014. At the same time, LC was not pro-active where cooperation is concerned. The process was put on hold. According to information from CESVI, they were merely informed of project approval by the co-operating partner in April 2014. Several personnel changes among the CESVI staff further complicated cooperation. The hand-over period between the country directors was brief, information got lost and the new directors were not well informed about the project or the situation in Goba.
- The respective partners operate in different contexts and time scales. For LC, the GIZ project is one element of a broader programme. ELP had already begun when the call for proposals was launched. LC seized the opportunity of enlarging the programme with a cross-border component and was under pressure to find a cooperating partner quickly. For CESVI, on the other hand, the GIZ project was a stand-alone activity without a secure long-term plan.
- The relationship between LC and CESVI was uneven. LC was seen as the principal applicant with power over GIZ funds, while CESVI was simply the partner. The proposed project was understood as an ELP component conducted by LC with an unmistakable focus on Swaziland. Rules for cooperation and decision-making were never fixed and CESVI had the impression that LC made decisions (e.g., on investing joint funds in consultants) unilaterally without real involvement of CESVI.

### **Cooperation between Implementing Partners and Other Stakeholders**

COSPE, the main LC partner, supports ELP implementation with financial and technical assistance based on an MoU. It did not take part in the planning process and is not an official pilot project partner. COSPE was never formally introduced to CESVI, but at some point became CESVI's primary communication partner. The amalgamation of LC and COSPE caused confusion in CESVI. Although it withdrew from the GIZ project, CESVI still cooperates with COSPE, contracting it for participatory planning activities in Goba.

On the issue of tourism promotion, LC initiated informal cooperation and negotiations with several stakeholders, such as the Kingsley Holgate Foundation, tour operators All Out and Swazi Trails, the University of Texas, international mountain bikers and newspapers. They also have the support of an architect free of charge. Mlawula NR (SNTC) is directly involved in the work with Mhlumeni and

gives logistic support (transport, meeting rooms). It is represented by the Community Outreach Officer, who accompanies numerous project activities.

Interestingly, both initial project partners were supported simultaneously by CEPF funds. CEPF promotes the biodiversity conservation objective but does not incorporate the cross-border component. Both CESVI and LC sought to combine GIZ and CEPF funds for similar activities.

### **Community Participation**

Since the project proposal had to be drawn up in a hurry, very little time and commitment was dedicated to planning. According to the implementers, the time-frame did not allow for a proper assessment and participatory planning process. Prior to issuing the proposal, they lacked information on the project area and the target communities on both sides. They had never worked with these communities, nor did they consult them or identify their needs and potentials. For the Mozambican side, the implementer assumed that the CBO Ntava Yedzu represented the community, that the 9,701ha had legal status as a community conservation area, and that the external investor who occupied the site selected for the lodge could be evicted without further ado. These assumptions proved wrong, and contributed to project failure on this side.

On the Goba side, community participation has not been achieved. Ntava Yedzu was mentioned in the proposal as a focal point, although it is unclear how this CBO came to be identified as a project partner. According to statements by members of Ntava Yedzu, they were not consulted prior to submission of the proposal to GIZ. The CESVI approach did not make the grade for several reasons:

- The dynamics of local politics and local customs were ignored when approaching the community. CESVI bypassed the local administration and addressed Ntava Yedzu directly, unaware that it no longer represented the community.
- Ntava Yedzu was hard to convince when it came to the proposed ideas on tourism infrastructure and the time-consuming participatory approach. Up until September 2014, the CBO members felt ill-informed about the project set-up. Cooperation with Ntava Yedzu was not a relationship of implementers on equal footing, but rather one on a donor-recipient basis.
- Based on the experience dating back to the FAO intervention, Ntava Yedzu and the Goba representatives expected fast project gains. The project, however, has made no progress and people's high expectations of the infrastructure investment for tourism have been thwarted.



The attitude of CESVI towards the community of Goba was ill-advised, may have fostered tension in the Goba community and could complicate future cooperation. Despite having withdrawn from the pilot project, CESVI continued to work with representatives from Ntava Yedzu and the community council.

On the Mhlumeni side, LC follows a community-based approach rooted in its constitutional objective of promoting a cooperative approach to community conservation that includes employment creation and conservation-based community development (Lubombo Conservancy, 1999, pp. 2, 7). The common knowledge and experience of the implementer in this case was sufficient for the initiation of a successful process with the community of Mhlumeni, although it took longer than initially expected.

The Mhlumeni community adopted a hostile attitude when the project idea was presented. As a result of land disputes in the past, they feared domination by Mlawula NR, a stakeholder of the implementing LC, and that their land could be taken away. The process of dispelling these doubts and gaining consent for the project required patience and dedication. LC was called upon to convince the community and explain why they wanted to develop a joint project with them. The project adopted several measures to ensure community participation and address empowerment:

- Preparatory steps: meetings with community authorities and the Langa chief to gain support; study tours with community members to Shewula Mountain Camp (see Textbox 1) and Madjedjane (Maputo Special Reserve) to get an idea of good and bad practices in community-based tourism projects; identification of the future lodge site with community representatives; livelihood activities with community groups.
- Setting up of the CBO Mhlumeni Trust as an independent institutional structure within the community to promote tourism development and supervise eco-business activities. It consists of elected members and traditional representatives. The latter is vital to its acceptance in the community. The CBO backs up the project with training and technical assistance. This process is ongoing and the CBO is currently awaiting its official registration.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The constitution of the Mhlumeni Trust has been drafted but needs confirmation from the Langa chieftancy before the CBO can be registered.

- Participatory mapping exercises to strengthen the involvement and commitment of the wider community, foster awareness for conservation and prepare future community decisions on land uses.

Continuous community work and contact through LC proved to be another success factor. The LC community and ecotourism expert is from the region, speaks local languages and has personal experience of the popular community project in Shewula (see Textbox 1), all of which increased the credibility of the implementer. This was crucial to building a good relationship to community members and representatives, and gaining their trust.

According to the typology of political participation (see chapter 4.1.3), participation in the project can be classified as “functional”, with a tendency to “interactive”. The overall idea of the project was predetermined and project planning conducted by externals without involving the community. They are, however, incorporated in the participatory process of identifying natural resources and ecosystem values on their land, which empowers them for future independent decisions. The community is accompanied, informed, trained and organized with the aim of assuming ownership of the project. Decisions are now taken by the community (representatives), albeit still based on advice from the implementer. LC sees a five-year accompaniment of Mhlumeni community as realistic if it is to ultimately run the project on its own.

On the topic of economic participation we can state little for now as the tourism product is still no more than a vision. In Mhlumeni, the community expects to be the owner of the project and enjoy direct benefits. Major decisions such as the use of revenues are to be taken collectively in community meetings. The Mhlumeni Trust will manage the lodge, make personnel decisions and promote the associated activities. On the other hand, capacity building in management skills and hospitality as a precondition for lodge management has yet to be undertaken. The associated activities are an opportunity for the economic participation of the community as a whole.

**Textbox 1: Good practice: “Shewula Mountain Camp”**

The Shewula Mountain Camp was established in 1997 and is located approx. 15km from Mhlumeni. It is an impressive example of how communities can reap the benefits of their natural resources and culture through tourism. The community succeeded in setting up a rustic, yet atmospheric and authentic community lodge and won the UNDP Equator Price in 2014 for outstanding local achievement in advancing sustainable development solutions for people and nature. Although the future nature reserve is still in the process of proclamation, Shewula can be seen as an example of good practice:

- Tourism provides a total income of €700 per month for seven employees recruited from the community. The camp buys products for consumption from local farmers.
- The Board of Trustees, originally instituted to implement the campsite, became a reliable partner for several donors that support community projects. The latter include projects in the educational, livelihood and health sector, where assistance is given to people with HIV/AIDS, child-headed households, women, and early school leavers. Equally, nature conservation has been enhanced, e.g., through conservation agriculture.
- In the initial years, the project was run solely on a voluntary basis. The number of tourists visiting the camp has grown constantly since 2000, so that the camp was able to pay staff salaries from 2005 onwards. The board continues to work voluntarily and independent of technical assistance from COSPE, which withdrew in 2006.
- At its inception, the project was highly relevant: the community was poor, the ecosystem under pressure and the neighbouring Mbuluzi Game Reserve keen to assist the community in battling with the incidence of poaching.
- The project pursued a comprehensive approach that covered a variety of aspects, ensured widespread support and benefits not merely for a chosen few, but for the entire community.
- Community participation: the idea was introduced by the chief and endorsed by the inner council. This gave the project credibility and authority, and was a key factor in convincing the community and ensuring high ownership from the outset.
- Shewula received substantial support from outside. Mbuluzi Game Reserve applied for external funds on behalf of the community, while COSPE provided technical assistance. Today, Shewula Mountain Camp is part of Lubombo Conservancy, its major source of funding.

Shewula is an example to other communities but also to donors in terms of what CBNRM can achieve. At the same time, it demonstrates what is needed most: enthusiasm, ownership and targeted external support. And above all: patience and time!

## 7.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

There is no conservation area in the Mozambican part of the Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA and thus no protected area management structures at local level. Promoting TFCA development and implementation, including joint management structures, calls for a multi-level approach that involves not only the local level, but also the responsible ministries and government authorities in Mozambique, such as ANAC, MITUR, MINAG and DPA. GIZ/SADC should engage in political dialogue to secure support for LCG TFCA.

Several factors influenced the varying success of the project in LCG TFCA. In the following we present separate recommendations on project continuation for each of the two local contexts.

### Goba

The absence of a proper assessment of the situation in the Goba community prior to project begin and shortcomings in the cooperation between the implementers were central to the failure of the project on this side. Not all stakeholders were satisfactorily involved in the planning phase or development of the proposal. If the project decides to continue working with this community, several recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- **Stakeholder involvement:** Transparency and clarity with regard to cooperation structures and future activities for the stakeholders involved. To avoid jeopardizing support for CBNRM, it is recommended that LC, CESVI and COSPE coordinate any future intervention in Goba. An approach to the community should include the relevant parties, e.g., traditional and government representatives and the CBO Ntava Yedzu. It is vital that the wider community be involved at an early stage.
- **Cooperation:** Identify a new partner organization for Goba/Mozambique with local expertise, experience in community-based approaches, institutional standing to negotiate on multiple levels, and the ability and willingness to engage in long-term commitment to the community. Both implementing partners must invest time and resources in cooperation.
- **Assessment:** Specific questions need to be answered for a proper understanding of the situation. What land is leased to whom and under what conditions? How can the community be convinced of its relevance and the need to participate in the project and in Ntava Yedzu? What is the conservation status of the "reserve" area? What exactly is the institutional set-up, including power struc-

tures? What are the precise legal rights and requirements of Ntava Yedzu with regard to land leases? What are the roles, rights and plans of the investors associated with the territory managed by Ntava Yedzu, notably those preparing for tourism infrastructure?

- **New strategy:** The approach to Goba should be adjusted on the basis of the assessment, and decisions taken on who works with whom and with what approach. Existing institutions from past attempts at CBNRM should be kept in mind and the role of Ntava Yedzu acknowledged. A process of re-organization and capacity building to revitalize the organization and regain its representative character should be initiated. It is recommended that concrete project activities such as tourism development be tackled only when the major stakeholders have reached a consensus. These must be embedded in a long-term, holistic approach with the ultimate goal of launching sustainable livelihood activities and engineering community empowerment. Visits to good practice examples of CBNRM and tourism in Mozambique could inspire the Goba community, and direct exchanges between Mhlumeni and Goba further cooperation and creativity. Knowing the cooperating partner better is the key to a more powerful sense of ownership of the joint tourism project in the future.
- **Field officer:** To increase insights, gain trust, and support the community process, a permanent staff member on the ground in Goba will be necessary. GIZ could finance this person.
- **"Do no harm":** Avoiding the unpleasant experience of unfulfilled expectations due to poorly implemented projects (as in the past) should be a priority. Organizations should only engage in Goba following a situation analysis and a discussion of preparatory steps with the community. Interventions should be based on long-term strategies and commitment, and no false promises made about fast benefits. This steady, long-term process must have the support of donors such as GIZ, and should not push for tangible outputs in the short-term.

We consider completion of the first project phase by May 2015 viable. Preparatory steps should include a situation analysis and an assessment of the potential in Goba, the identification of a new partner for Mozambique and the subsequent design of an appropriate strategy. Implementation of a new strategy and the project itself can only be envisaged with a long-term approach in a new project phase.

## Mhlumeni

Apart from a number of delays, the process in Mhlumeni is going in the right direction. The participatory approach has shown initial results: awareness for conservation has increased and the community is motivated for the ecotourism project. This dynamic should be maintained with further activities such as campsite construction and hospitality training as soon as possible. It is advisable to coordinate these with marketing plans, trail development, other associated livelihood activities and the eco-business plan.

The Mhlumeni Trust is a key institution for the coming process. It is vital to reinforce its capacities and sense of responsibility if it is to fulfil its assigned role. The planned training, notably in management skills, is crucial to empowerment of this CBO. Greater decision-making involvement could advance ownership of the Trust and the community as a whole.

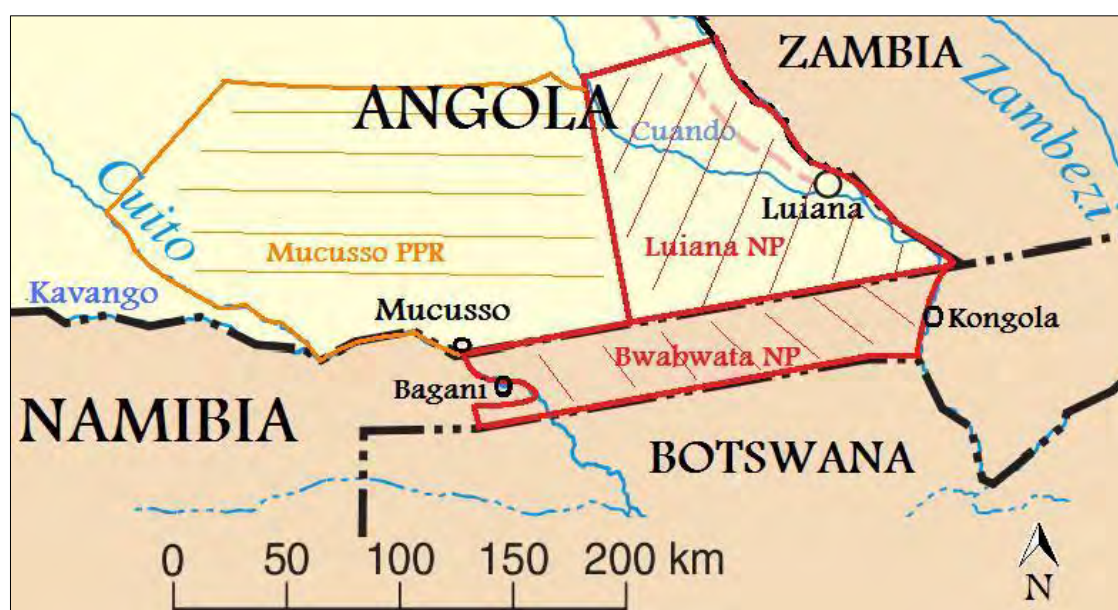
Official confirmation of tenure rights over community territory, including demarcation of the border with Mlawula NR, would be helpful. Security of land tenure rights helps to develop a sense of community responsibility and set the planning process in motion, e.g., lodge construction. It would counteract the fear of the community that the land in which they invested so much time and resources could be taken away.

Although awareness on biodiversity and conservation has been raised through the project, the widespread tradition of keeping cattle as a status symbol poses a huge challenge when it comes to translating awareness to a behavioural shift towards reducing the number of cattle kept. We are convinced that the only way to bring about a decrease in the number of cattle in Mhlumeni is to design a meaningful strategy for substitution of this asset and its cultural significance.



## 8 Fire Management Project in Kavango Zambezi TFCA

In August 2014, the evaluation team visited the pilot project “An integrated Trans-frontier Fire Management Strategy for Luiana National Park in Angola and Bwabwata National Park in Namibia”. The area lies in the Kavango Zambezi (KAZA) Transfrontier Conservation Area and comprises Bwabwata National Park in North-East Namibia and two adjacent reserves in South-East Angola, namely, Luiana National Park and Mucusso Protected Public Reserve in South-East Angola<sup>32</sup> (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4: The KAZA TFCA project region**

Source: modified after <http://www.goafrica.about.com>

The relevant stakeholders of the pilot project and other organizations working in KAZA TFCA were interviewed for this evaluation. Apart from the two project implementers, these included both Angolan and Namibian KAZA TFCA coordinators, representatives of the line ministries in both countries, the relevant non-governmental organizations (NGO), seven villages (three in Angola, four in Namibia), and the community-based organizations (CBO) concerned in each country. A detailed list of interviewees can be found in Annex.

<sup>32</sup> Throughout this report Bwabwata National Park is referred to as Bwabwata, Luiana National Park as Luiana, and Mucusso Protected Public Reserve as Mucusso.



This evaluation was constrained by administrative and logistical obstacles in Angola. The evaluation team was unable to access Luiana and failed to obtain access to secondary data on Luiana National Park. Hence this report contains no information on the Luiana project area.

## 8.1 Context: Kavango Zambezi TFCA

KAZA TFCA is the largest transboundary protection area in the world and was established as a conservation and development initiative by the governments of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe on 18 August 2011 (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2012, p. 1). Spanning an area of approximately 440,000 km<sup>2</sup>, KAZA TFCA includes thirty-six formally proclaimed forest reserves, game reserves, national parks and wildlife management areas (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2012, p. 2, Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, 2010, p. 4). Its objective is the ecological, socio-economic and organizational reinforcement of these areas in order to establish an interconnected mosaic of protected areas and join fragmented transboundary wildlife corridors (Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, 2010, p. 3). Additionally, it will promote transnational collaboration on the implementation of protected ecosystems as well as in cultural and natural resource management through the involvement of communities native to the TFCA (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2012, p. i).

MET is responsible for the management of the Namibian part of KAZA TFCA. Its integrated development plan contains strategic objectives and approaches aimed at enhancing wildlife conservation and community development in the Namibian protected areas (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2012, p. xi). Responsibility for the implementation of KAZA TFCA in Angola lies with the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, while responsibility for all other protected areas and national parks comes under the National Directorate of Biodiversity in the Ministry of Environment. Apart from the integrated development plan there is no evidence of other plans for the individual reserves or the entire Angolan section of KAZA.

Unlike the Namibian side of KAZA TFCA, which is home to vast numbers of large mammals such as buffalo, elephant, kudu, lion, leopard, roan antelope, wildebeest and zebra, the Angolan side shows low mammal diversity. Still, elephant populations have risen in both countries over the past decade and increasingly impact on the structure of vegetation and on human settlements, which in turn leads to major livelihood disputes (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2013, p. 7). The area is characterized by a semi-arid tropical climate and its vegetation

by broad-leaved Zambezian *Baikiaea* woodlands. *Hyparrhenia hirta* (Common Thatching Grass), *Guibourtia coleosperma* (False Mopane tree), *Harpagophyllum procumbens* (Devil's Claw), *Hyphaene ventricosa* (Makalani tree), and *Ricinodendron rautanenii* (Mangetti tree) are some of the economically significant species (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2013, p. 6).

### 8.1.1 Management of Bwabwata and Mucusso

Conservation in the Namibian regions of Kavango and Zambezi got under way as early as 1963 when Bwabwata was proclaimed a protected area. In October 2007, Bwabwata National Park was gazetted and is one of the few National Parks worldwide where local inhabitants are permitted to live within its borders (Dieckmann, Thiem, Dirkx, Hays, Hays, 2014, p. 366; Dain-Owens, Kemp, Lavelle, 2010, p. 1). Its concept follows the paradigm shift towards inclusion of local residents in conservation measures (see chapter 1) in such a way that MET acknowledges the rights of its residents in terms of livelihood needs, movement, settlement and social services (Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 6). The park is zoned into three core protection areas and one multiple use area to be used for agriculture, human settlement, community-based tourism and trophy hunting (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2013, p. 5). Life within the park entails restrictions: it is not permitted to keep cattle in the central part of the multiple use area. In the core areas, gathering of natural resources is only permitted under exceptional circumstances, while traditional hunting is forbidden altogether (Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 6). Based inside the park, between forty and fifty MET staff manage fire, natural resources, tourism and wildlife in close cooperation with employees of the local CBO, Kyaramacan Association (KA) (see chapter 8.1.2).

Luiana National Park conservation status has recently been altered from Luiana Partial Reserve to Luengue Luiana National Park and Mavinga National Park combined. Official data on this transformation and key facts, e.g., administration, date of establishment and size, are unavailable. The Mucusso Protected Public Reserve is situated west of Luiana and includes the commune of the same name.

### 8.1.2 Local Community in Bwabwata

The Bwabwata community consists of twelve villages situated along the Trans-Zambezi Highway (B8) that traverses the Park from east to west. The park is home to about 6,500 people from various ethnic groups, of which the Khwe<sup>33</sup> is

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33 The Khwe ethnic group belongs to the larger (Khoi)San group.

the most dominant group, making up 82 per cent of the total population in Bwabwata (Boden, 2014, p. 3). To a lesser extent (16 per cent) the park is inhabited by Bantu-speaking Mbukushu (Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 3). During the period of civil war and conflict in the region, the Mbukushu migrated to Bwabwata and displaced the Khwe people (Lead, 2006, in: Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 2).

When the colonial administration came to an end, Namibia was left with a mosaic of land tenure arrangements (Roe et al., 2009, p. 162). With the Nature Conservation Amendment Act (Promulgation of Nature Conservation Amendment Act, No. 5/1996, Sec. 24A) communities were empowered to own and manage communal area conservancies in Namibia as well as community forests (Forest Act, 2001, Sec. 15(1)). Although the Khwe people are believed to be the ancestral inhabitants of Bwabwata area, they are the only ethnic group in Bwabwata not legally recognized by the Namibian government according to the Traditional Authorities Act (Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 3). This leaves them without a legal body to enforce their rights over land and access to free education (Boden, 2014, p. 31). Nothing has changed for the Khwe despite the founding of the CBO Kyaramacan Association (KA), which MET recognized in 2006 as the legitimate body of the residents of Bwabwata. The Khwe are still among the poorest ethnic groups in Bwabwata (Dieckmann et al., 2014, p. 380).

One person from each village is elected village representative of the KA committee. Through KA, residents have the right to gather natural resources and to benefit from tourism and trophy-hunting concessions. In 2013, trophy hunting in Bwabwata generated revenue amounting to NAD12.5m. (equivalent to €921,656), 50 per cent of which goes to KA. Both the revenue and the meat (worth approximately NAD5.7m. or €420,275) are shared equally with the residents of the community. Additionally, the collecting and marketing of certified organic Devil's Claw (see Textbox 2: Devil's Claw), a high-value root crop, is organized and supervised by KA to guarantee sustainable use of the plant.

The harvester receives 100 per cent of the revenue and is both permitted and encouraged to collect the tuber during the growing season from April to October. In 2012, this translated to NAD716,841 (€52,854). KA employs sixteen female community resource managers. They organize the harvest and transport of Devil's Claw and monitor other veld and forest resources, such as fruit and nut trees. KA employs twenty-four Community Game Guards (CGG) to monitor wild life populations and poaching via joint patrols with MET. The MET fire management is conducted jointly with CGG staff, who contribute to decision-making on the early burning regime and the construction of fire breaks.

**Textbox 2: Devil's Claw****Image 1: Dried Devil's Claw tubers**

**Devil's Claw** (*Harpagophytum procumbens*) is a tuber native to southern Africa. It was used in the past to fight pain, kidney and liver ailments, fever and malaria. Today it is used to relieve arthritis, back pain and headaches, as well as in the treatment of inflammation. It is primarily used in France and Germany (University of Maryland Medical Center, 2013). This leafy perennial plant produces tubers. The secondary roots can

be harvested without killing the plant, if the main root is left in the ground. Resting on nets, the tuber is sliced and dried in the sun before being collected by the buyer for further processing. Devil's Claw owes its name to the peculiar appearance of its hooked fruit.

The livelihood of Khwe communities was traditionally marked by a hunter-gatherer lifestyle and territorial movement (Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 2). Since their recent settlement in Bwabwata they have practised small-scale agriculture, cultivating finger millet, maize and other staple fruits. They are also permitted to keep goats. The Khwe people still collect veld fruits for consumption, including Mangetti nuts and False Mopane seeds, and thatch grass and Makalani fan palm leaves for local craft production. Numerous people rely on government food aid, which contributes largely to food security but also creates dependencies (Boden, 2014, p. 24). Gathering Devil's Claw is a key livelihood activity. The Mbukushu are agricultural producers and cattle farmers by tradition. In Bwabwata they mostly crop finger millet and maize, and keep cattle. During the dry season, the Mbukushu also produce Devil's Claw.

As their greatest challenges, the inhabitants of Bwabwata see food insecurity and dependence on government food aid, human-wildlife conflicts (notably with elephants), lack of health services, schools and transportation, water scarcity, and, to a lesser extent, fire. People from Namibia visit Angola occasionally to see relatives. There is no institutionalized cooperation at community level.

### 8.1.3 Local Community in Mucusso

The majority of the community in Mucusso belongs to the Mbukushu ethnic group (80 to 90 per cent), with a small minority of Khwe (Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, 2010, p. 32). The villages of Katunda, Ngongo and Temwangu close to Mucusso are home to a total of 2,500 residents. In 2008, they founded the Chamue Association. Each village is represented by thirty members who, in turn, elect a board of ten members. The objectives of the association are to monitor veld and forest fires and illegal hunting, and to market community resources, notably Devil's Claw. The association receives a management fee from Ecoso-Dynamics, the company that buys Devil's Claw; the staff, on the other hand, works on a voluntary basis. The Land Law of 2004 recognizes the rights of communities over land in compliance with customary law (Roe et al., 2009, p. 162). There are no other legal frameworks in place to consider communities in natural resource management or to empower them. Decision-making adopts a centralized approach with weak traditional structures and low community participation.

Villages in Mucusso are formally headed by traditional chiefs who report to the communal administration (Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, 2010, p. 47). Before the Angolan civil war came to an end in 2002, the Mucusso community was scattered. An ongoing government programme mobilized and settled people in larger villages along the main roads *"where they can easily be reached and receive government attention"* (Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, 2010, p. 32).

In the past people's livelihood was primarily based on animal husbandry, forest resources and small-scale farming. The changed settlement pattern that transformed them into residents remote from the forest and its resources affected their traditional way of life. Dependence on agriculture has increased leading to the expansion of farmland using slash-and-burn practices. The main crops are finger millet, maize, peanuts and sorghum. Timber collection and hunting for small animals are both illegal, but still occur. Collecting and selling Devil's Claw and thatch grass are further sources of income. Similar to Namibia, the Khwe people were forced to settle by the government (Ministry of Hotel and Tourism, 2010, p. 32). The massive expansion of agricultural land and increase in wildlife (elephants and hippopotami) led to a surge in the number of human-wildlife conflicts, aggravated by the fact that people are unable to defend their property effectively.

The people we met in the three villages stated that they visit Namibia on a regular basis because of their children's education and their family ties.

### 8.1.4 Fire Situation and Fire Management

#### Fire Situation

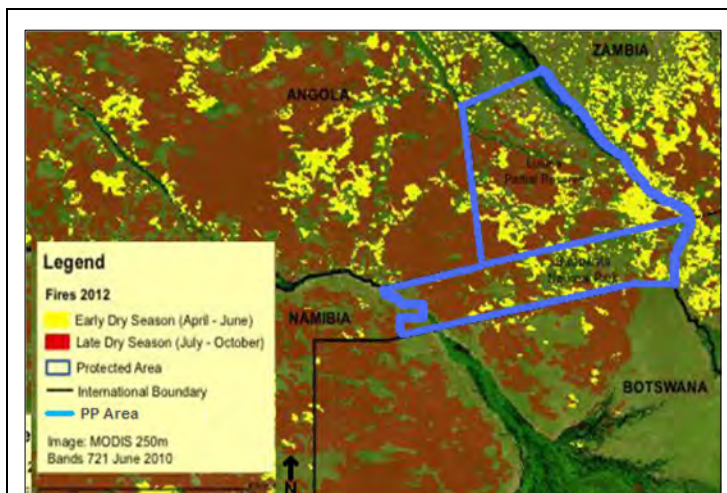
Veld fires impact heavily on the vegetation structure of the project region. They contribute to the natural ecological dynamics of woodland vegetation and occur primarily during the dry season (May to September).

Frequent intense fires are detrimental to plant and animal life, while an absence of burning can cause bush encroachment (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 2013, p. 14).

Beatty points out that late dry season fires impact negatively on flora, fauna, soils, energy, carbon and water fluxes, and thus both directly and indirectly harm local livelihoods (Beatty, 2014, p. 6).

Runaway wildfires and, as shown in Figure 5, late dry season fires<sup>34</sup> are a big issue in the area, particularly in the western part of Bwabwata and in Mucusso. According to the Directorate of Forestry in Namibia, the occurrence of fires in the country has declined in the last decade, presumably due to increased awareness and project activities.

In Namibia, the Khwe traditionally used veld fire management practices such as prescribed burning for hunting and grass growth stimulation as a contribution to their livelihoods (Brown, Jones, 1994, in: Dain-Owens et al., 2010, p. 2). This traditional knowledge still exists in the older generation, but for various reasons is no longer transmitted to younger people, and for the most part no longer practised. The Mbukushu, on the contrary, are less affine to the use of veld fire as a land management tool, although they now use it to stimulate growth and facilitate the collection of Devil's Claw.



**Figure 5: Burnt areas in KAZA TFCA in 2012**

Source: Beatty, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Late dry season fires occur between August and October. Of high intensity and low patchiness, they tend to spread considerably as a result of windy conditions and large amounts of dry biomass.

Traditional land-use practices of the local population around Mucusso made little use of veld fire. Today, however, livelihood changes have led people to use fire to protect wildlife, prepare agricultural fields, collect wild honey and hunt with dogs. These fires do not adhere to any rules or management schemes but are carried out individually and without coordination.

### **Legislation on Fire**

Since colonization, the KAZA TFCA region has largely been regulated by policies of prevention and suppression (Frost, 1998 and FAO, 2006, quoted after Beatty, 2014, p. 9). FAO points out that fire suppression policies since colonial administration and their consolidation through the Namibian-Finnish Forestry Programme since 1996 caused serious fire problems due to a shift from early and less detrimental dry season fires to much more disastrous fires in the late dry season, destroying human livelihoods, natural resources and wildlife (FAO 2011, p. 44).

With the Forest Act of 2001, fire management in Namibia has been regulated by the Directorate of Forestry and now focuses on a decentralized implementation process of CBFiM where communities acquire rights and responsibilities to practise fire management (FAO, 2011, p. 45). According to the Angolan project implementer, prevention and suppression policies in Angola are in place but are poorly enforced due to the absence of a regional fire management system.

### **Fire Management**

The Namibian NGO IRDNC promoted an integrated fire management (IFM) approach in collaboration with MET. With the cooperation of the KA Community Game Guards, an early burning fire regime was introduced to Bwabwata in 2006. This includes the creation of firebreak networks, prescribed burning practices and coordinated fire suppression. No such scheme is set up in Angola.

## **8.2 Project Description**

The proposal for a fire management project in KAZA was motivated by the fact that IRDNC has operated an integrated fire management programme in Bwabwata since 2006, whereas interventions of this kind in Angola are non-existent. The pilot project was designed to transfer knowledge on and experience in fire management across the border.

### 8.2.1 Implementing Partners

Along with ACADIR, the Angolan NGO, IRDNC applied for the SADC/GIZ funded pilot project. Both NGOs have years of experience in the field of nature conservation and pursue a sound community-based approach. Initial contact between ACADIR and IRDNC was established through the South African Regional Environmental Program on transboundary river basin management in 2011. In 2013, they signed a Memorandum of Understanding just before the launch of the pilot project.

### 8.2.2 Objective

As stated in the proposal, the overall objective of the project was “*to develop and implement an Integrated Trans-frontier Fire Management Strategy for Luiana [National Park] in Angola and Bwabwata National Park in Namibia*” (KAZA Project Proposal, 2013, p. 2). One aspect of the objective was to “*strengthen the fire management capacity of communities living in Bwabwata and Luiana*” and to work out a fire management strategy to “*reduce uncontrolled veld / forest fire incidences*” (KAZA Project Proposal, 2013, p. 3). It is still unclear how the seven activities described below will lead to implementation of a fire management strategy, particularly since none of the activities address higher levels of decision-making or policy frameworks at national level.

During a project meeting in April 2014, three key changes were made to the proposal, including adjustment of the overall objective. According to the implementers, discussions with MET revealed that the Namibian government already had a national fire management strategy. They were asked to shift the project focus from a strategy design to the establishment of a fire management approach. Secondly, greater emphasis was given to relationship building, since the two countries had little experience of cooperation or making contact in the past. Thirdly, the implementers extended the project region Luiana by integrating Mucusso, since access to Luiana was difficult for both administrative and infrastructural reasons. Despite modification of the objectives, no adjustment was made to the planned activities. SADC/GIZ was neither informed nor consulted. The three main objectives of the project are:

- **Fire management approach:** development and implementation of an integrated cross-border fire management approach for Bwabwata and Luiana.
- **Relationship building:** establishment of contacts and relationships between rural communities and the NGO concerned.



- **Capacity building:** introduction of integrated fire management training and exchange visits with the aim of sharing fire management techniques and their application.

### 8.2.3 Activities

ACADIR and IRDNC envisaged a set of seven activities for implementation of the project:

- *"Formal visits and introduction of the project to local and provincial/regional authorities"*: A meeting between ACADIR and IRDNC took place in April 2014, the Namibian government was approached for institutional support, pilot activities were planned, and the project was introduced to the participants.
- *"Reciprocal site visits for community leaders and traditional authorities in Bwabwata and Luiana"*: Two visits, one to Angola and one to Namibia, were carried out with Angolan and Namibian participants representing local, regional and national level. In Luiana (June 2014), a delegation that included Angolan senior ministry officials was introduced to the concept of community-based fire management while visiting local villages and fire sites. In Namibia (August 2014), links were created between Luanda-based and regionally based Angolan ministry officials. Further activities included discussions with the local CBO KA and visits to various villages, including a handicraft centre, a community-driven campsite, and a joint venture lodge.
- *"CBFiM capacity buildings in Bwabwata and Luiana"*: Two fire management capacity building training units focusing on early burning practice were carried out. The first workshop was conducted in May 2014 in Bwabwata by the specialist fire management company "321Fire". Burning practices were performed on site and explained thoroughly. The second training unit was conducted by IRDNC in Luiana in June 2014.
- *"Establishment of an integrated trans-frontier fire management approach for Bwabwata and Luiana"*: A first concept note on an integrated transfrontier fire management approach was worked out by the specialist fire management company "321Fire". It outlines the simultaneous and gradual implementation of IFM steps in each of the two countries and proposes a transfrontier collaborative fire management framework, CBFiM components, training and skills transfer and a 'Permit to Burn System'. It does not, however, take into account the Angolan institutional framework.

- *"Development of institutional framework for community collaboration and communication between Bwabwata and Luiana"*: The institutional framework for a community forum was not developed.
- *"Provision of technical assistance to the Bwabwata-Luiana transboundary community forum"*: No technical assistance was supplied, since the forum was not established.
- *"Institutionalisation of lessons learnt via KAZA TFCA secretariat"*: During project implementation, a delegation of Angolan senior officials visited the KAZA secretariat in Kasane, Botswana, in order to exchange with KAZA junior officials on the transboundary work of the KAZA secretariat. Regular contact and information sharing between the KAZA secretariat and the pilot project, however, neither took place nor is it planned. Unclear is how the information sharing process could and should be institutionalized.

### 8.3 Findings and Analysis

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the project. The activities and time-tables of the work plan and the revised objectives from the minutes of the meeting in April 2014 constitute the background to the project evaluation.

#### 8.3.1 Effectiveness

In the following, the three objectives as laid down in chapter 8.2.2 are analysed. It should be acknowledged as a project success that ACADIR was able to access Luiana, which was not possible prior to project activities. Access to Luiana was a precondition for any activity in this context.

#### Fire Management Approach

Project effectiveness was impeded by the ambitious belief that development and implementation of a community-based fire management approach could be achieved with a budget of €50,000 and a timeframe of nine months. Such a strategy calls for strong cooperation with TFCA and government authorities, a process that would exceed the scope of the project in terms of time and money. Although to a lesser extent, this is also true for the development and implementation of an integrated fire management approach, which emerged as the new project target. The complexity of this ambitious objective was not sufficiently taken into account in the project design. IRDNC experience in CBFiM in general and in Bwabwata in particular since 2006 was a good starting point. Implementation of a fire manage-

ment approach must be consistent with the national strategy and therefore address the legal framework and the involvement of decision-makers at TFCA and national level. In the context of a cross-border project, it is even more important to address the institutional framework in both countries. A concept note with recommendations for implementation of the approach was developed. The Angolan context was not addressed and the concept note needs further elaboration to take national legislation and the involvement of the organizations concerned into account. Hence this overambitious objective has not been achieved.

### **Relationship Building**

The first of the seven activities “*Carry out formal visits to local and provincial/regional authorities to formally introduce the project and obtain their support for implementation*” was not carried out to a satisfactory degree, which is why communication of the project failed. Provincial and national authorities learned about the project belatedly, notably in Angola.

During the exchange visits, it were often not the people on the same positions in both countries who met. Also, cooperation between the park management of Bwabwata and Luiana was never established. The site visits did, however, facilitate fresh links between ACADIR and local Luiana communities, the Luiana park management and the KAZA TFCA coordinator. In the course of these visits Angolan government officials became more conscious of fire management.

The introduction of a transboundary community forum at local level failed due to

*pressure [...] exerted by top government officials in Luanda, who insisted that there should be senior government officials from Luanda present at all meetings and during all exchange visits. This [...] made it impossible to establish a community-based institutional forum; as transboundary community-based activities necessitate a degree of trust and devolution of power* (KAZA Project report, 2014, p. 11).

It is not clear how much interaction and relationship building took place between the local inhabitants who took part in the CBFiM training, given the language barriers and poor attendance. We concluded that the project contribution to strengthening relationships between Angola and Namibia was limited to say the least.

### **Capacity Building**

Two practical CBFiM capacity building units for the training of trainers took place with male and female community representatives. Those who were trained

as trainers in Angola, however, subsequently failed to train members of the community. ACADIR only learned about this during the evaluation process, as monitoring activities had not delivered.

The poor support from government authorities and the lack of legal framework adjustments makes community empowerment in natural resource management in the conservation areas of Angola a formidable task.

### 8.3.2 Impact

A “*reduc[tion of] uncontrolled veld / forest fire incidences*” (KAZA Project Proposal, 2013, p. 3) could impact positively on biodiversity and the livelihoods of the local people. As a result of poor implementation, this project fails to contribute to poverty reduction or biodiversity conservation.

The original idea was to transfer to Angola the knowledge and experience gained from fire management policies in place in Namibia. Exchange visits and training raised awareness of veld/forest fires and their management in Angola, albeit among very few people. Because CBFiM training failed to reach the villages, the project impact at local level was negligible.

Knowledge was transferred at a higher level, where the Angolan KAZA TFCA coordinator and provincial/regional officials became aware of community-based fire and natural resource management. Due to lack of interest in community empowerment, however, this had little or no effect.

### 8.3.3 Sustainability

The overall goal of strategy implementation was not reached, so that sustainable change cannot be expected. A concept note for a fire management approach was delivered but lacked tailoring to the Angolan context.

The desired relations between the political levels or local communities in each country are weak and unlikely to continue in the future. The enhanced relationship between the implementing organizations is an exception.

Fire management training in Angola is likely to cease when the pilot project ends, since there is no institutional framework in place. Furthermore, up-scaling at village level has not been encouraged, nor has equipment been procured.

### 8.3.4 Relevance

The successful implementation of community-based fire management in Bwabwata in recent years prompted IRDNC to address the lack of fire manage-

ment in Angola with the transfer of Namibian experience and knowledge on CBFiM. In addition, IRDNC intended to use this opportunity to establish initial contact with Angola at various levels.

Satellite data on the current fire regime in KAZA TFCA shows frequent late dry season fires (cf. Figure 5). In addition, both Bwabwata and Mucusso communities spoke of uncontrolled and destructive fires as a daily problem in the late dry season. On the other hand, fires were seen as a less pressing issue than the increase in poaching and human-wildlife conflicts (cf. chapter 8.1.2 and chapter 8.1.3). In Bwabwata, poverty alleviation was highlighted as most pressing issue.

With the gradual withdrawal of the Namibian government from fire suppression policies since the mid-2000s, fire management has gained currency, which is why MET has put a national fire management strategy in place. According to a MET official, fire management is a “*very urgent topic [and] fire needs to be managed*”. By contrast, the use of fire in Angola is prohibited and fire management is not mainstreamed in Angolan legislation, i.e., it has no legal basis. It can therefore be concluded that CBFiM is not a suitable topic when it comes to encouraging cross-border relationship building. Additionally, fire management practices were not included in the KAZA Strategic Action Plan (KAZA Secretariat, 2011)

Due to the difficult situation of the Khwe in Bwabwata (cf. chapter 8.1.2) community empowerment and the community-based approach are highly relevant in Namibia, and have the potential to spill over to Angola, where community-based approaches are non-existent. We see the current institutional framework in Angola as a stumbling-block to community-based project implementation, rendering the approach irrelevant in this case.

### 8.3.5 Efficiency

As far as we can see, activities were carried out cost efficiently, although certain circumstances led to increased time and expense. Rigid hierarchical structures and centralized decision-making made it difficult for the implementer in Angola to conduct a transfrontier project at local level. High-ranking government officials insisted on involvement in all activities. This led to delayed implementation of the project and increased effort and cost, both obstacles beyond the responsibility of the implementing organization.

The efficiency of capacity building was limited, since very few people were trained and dissemination did not take place as planned. Why dissemination has not yet taken place was difficult to discern but it does indicate that the influence of the implementing partner ACADIR is weaker than expected. Capacity building

was originally planned as a parallel activity to implementation of the fire management strategy. The latter, however, requires further equipment not envisaged in the project. In other words there is evidence of inconsistency in the logic of the project.

### 8.3.6 Cooperation

Cooperation is analysed according to the respective cooperating partners:

#### **Cooperation between implementing partners**

The implementing NGOs ACADIR and IRDNC signed an MoU in 2013. The pilot project was to be their first collaboration. When the Namibian NGO took the lead, ACADIR became less involved in proposal planning. IRDNC rated transboundary cooperation as 'very difficult': the bureaucratic barriers between the two countries were high, making the procedure lengthy and cost-intensive. Money transfers and invoices are just two examples. As a result, IRDNC decided to take prior responsibility for the organization of activities.

#### **Cooperation between implementing partners and other stakeholders**

A major drawback to project implementation was the requirement of ACADIR to report to and involve the Angolan Ministry of Hotel and Tourism in most of the decisions. This was time-consuming and caused delays in implementation. On the Namibian side, the TFCA coordinator (MET) was consulted once before submission of the proposal by IRDNC. Although the TFCA coordinator did not endorse the proposal, he was not consulted again before approval of the project.

Cooperation with KAZA TFCA secretariat was minimal and confined to information sharing. No steps were taken to incorporate lessons learnt on CBFiM into KAZA TFCA management as planned.

Since its foundation, KAZA TFCA has attracted numerous donors such as the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), UNDP, World Bank and WWF, all of which work on anti-poaching, community empowerment, human-wildlife conflict compensation, integrated park management, and tourism and wildlife conservation. Precisely because of the wide spectrum of donors involved in KAZA TFCA, activities must be harmonized in order to foster synergies and avoid parallel structures. Some donors, e.g., KfW and WWF, were not informed by GIZ prior to project implementation. In summary, the project has largely failed to strengthen cooperation at the relevant levels.

### Community Participation

The initial planning and writing of the proposal was performed without consultation of either the communities as a whole or individual community members. Although not involved in designing the project, KA participated in all of the activities later on. Hence community participation in Namibia is classified as “participation by consultation”.

On the Angolan side, political participation of the community around Mucusso in the pilot project was very low. Community representatives were not consulted. Their only motive for participation CBFiM training was to serve as multipliers for larger communities. In this case, participation was classified as “passive”.

## 8.4 Conclusions and Recommendations

An important conclusion of this evaluation is the question of whether cross-border community-based projects make sense in the context of widely differing institutional frameworks and obstacles. This needs further attention and should be analysed with a broader empirical basis. For now, the evaluation team recommends that similar projects address legal and administrative issues at national level.

### 8.4.1 Implementing Partners

Since the management of veld/bush fires is not perceived as relevant in Luiana, the topic seems ill-suited to fostering transboundary cooperation. Consultation with and involvement of the community is the appropriate measure to identify the needs of the local population and define the right topic(s) prior to planning a community-based project.

The logic of the project was inconsistent. Although fire management calls for equipment, for example, the project did not envisage its procurement. We therefore recommend that the logic of the project be examined for consistency.

The cross-border nature of this project requires a design that sees involvement and participation of government bodies from the outset, since cooperation across national boundaries can be politically sensitive and affect territorial sovereignty.

Vital to successful strategy implementation is the involvement of target authorities at local, regional and particularly national level, since the process will require the collaboration of a number of institutions at different levels and harmonization with legal frameworks. The preconditions must be identified.

The aim of transferring knowledge from Namibia to Angola and the implementation of a fire management strategy in both countries demands a feasibility study. Decision-making procedures, government structures and legal frameworks on community empowerment and fire management in Angola should be examined thoroughly prior to implementation.

Although ACADIR had planned to monitor activities, performance was poor. Monitoring must be carried out systematically from the beginning of the project to avoid loss of information and poor implementation of activities.

#### **8.4.2 GIZ**

The KAZA TFCA pilot project necessitates a multi-level approach if objectives and activities are to be aligned with national policies and involve national ministries. The options to achieve this alignment should be explored. Project managers, for instance, could function as a link between local and national level, allowing the latter to become more aware of and respond politically to local needs. Alternatively, a technical adviser could establish a partnership with the ministry concerned.

In KAZA TFCA, multiple donors interact on a variety of topics. To avoid duplication and accrue benefits from synergies, the relevant stakeholders should be informed and consulted about new activities. A suitable first contact point is the project implementer IRDNC, which is based inside KAZA TFCA and engages in CBFiM, CBNRM and transboundary cooperation.

Apart from the donors concerned, GIZ should also make sure that other key stakeholders are addressed. In this case the Park Management of Bwabwata and Luiana should have been involved from the start.



### Textbox 3: Good Practice | Trilateral Cooperation Fund

**GIZ developed the Trilateral Cooperation (TriCo) Fund approach** to bolster South African development cooperation with a third beneficiary African country. The Trilateral Tanzania – South African Fire Management and Coordination Project was funded by GIZ between 2011 and 2012. In an effort to enhance integrated fire management at local, institutional and national level, the Tanzanian government approached the South African “FireWise” Programme with a request to carry out activities and training in Tanzania. Various Tanzanian stakeholders working on land management (agriculture and livestock, forestry, NGOs, universities, wildlife) were involved. In order to raise awareness and improve fire management skills, the South African FireWise approach was adapted to cultural and socio-economic conditions in Tanzania (Hoffmann, 2013). A manual was designed to empower extension officers and natural resource committees, and enable them to train local communities. It included graphical extension material for education in communal areas with low literacy rates. The programme encompassed activities on three levels:

- **Community level:** Capacity building and training of trainers in fire management, fire awareness and basic firefighting.
- **Institutional level:** Institutionalization of training via the Olmotoni training centre. Adaptation of the South African training manual to the Tanzanian context.
- **National Level:** Support for Tanzanian Ministerial Forest Service in fire monitoring and GIS. Establishment of a Task Force on fire management and fostering of exchange between the relevant ministries and research institutions on integrated fire management.

According to GIZ, the programme was successful. Tanzania developed sound ownership in fire management capacity building. Synergies among stakeholders were used and strengthened, e.g., with FAO on the implementation of the Task Force. The training manual was completed, and funds to operate the Task Force and conduct training after conclusion of the project were made available.

Hasty joint planning and weak participation of Tanzanian counterparts initially are some of the shortcomings that resulted from lack of time for relationship building. It can thus be concluded that preparation is crucial, especially in a project of short duration. Furthermore, completion of a manual within six months is not feasible.

## 9 Fire Management Project in Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA

The evaluation team visited Songimvelo-Malolotja (SM) TFCA in September 2014. Pilot project activities had not yet begun, as the budget had only been transferred to the project implementers during our visit. We conducted interviews with the major stakeholders (cf. Annex: List of Interviewees and Applied Methods).

### 9.1 Context: Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA

In 2004, SM TFCA was accepted as the fifth TFCA to function under the Lubombo Commission (Loock and Dlamini, 2005, p. 1). The TFCA integrates Songimvelo NR in South Africa and Malolotja NR in Swaziland (both outlined in red in Figure 6) with the option of expansion on both sides of the border (outlined in white). The Lubombo TFCA comprises a Trilateral Ministerial Committee and an advisory TFCA Commission made up of senior executives at the highest level (cf. chapter 7.1). SM TFCA adopted a Joint Management Plan (JMP, 2009) and set up a Joint Task Group (approx. ten people) for strategic planning according to the Lubombo General TFCA Protocol (General TFCRA Protocol, 2000). The JMP also calls for the es-

tablishment of a Joint Management Committee (JMC) for day-to-day management, which is still taken care of by the individual reserves. Several joint projects are currently in operation, the most important of which is the construction of an internal



**Figure 6: Songimvelo Malolotja TFCA**

Source: own adaptation after SNTC, n.d.

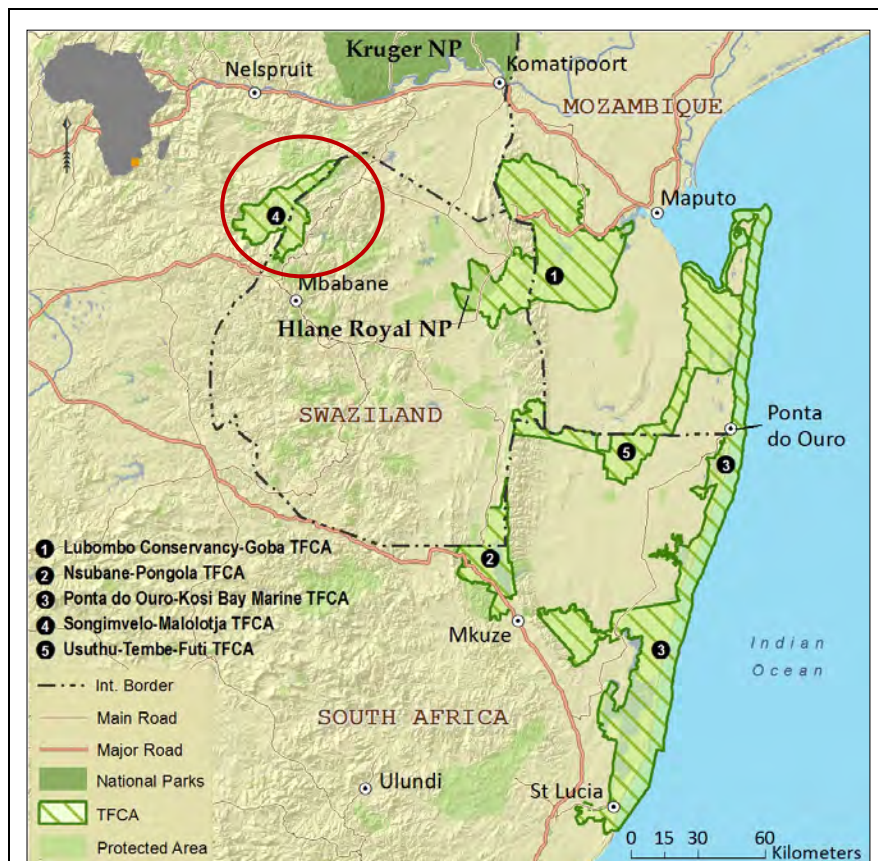
link road to a border post to make SM TFCA traversable (cf. Loock, Dlamini, 2005, p. 2; UNDP et al., 2014, p. 65). No joint project has been completed so far.

Implementation of SM TFCA has been slow for two main reasons. Firstly, TFCA is not equipped with a budget of its own but depends on external funds and money allocations from the individual reserves. Secondly, activities in Songimvelo NR were held up by a land restitution process, creating considerable uncertainty about the future of the reserve and TFCA.

SM TFCA is situated in Barberton Mountain land, an upper Middle- and Highveld area<sup>35</sup> with steep mountainous terrains and lower lying valleys ranging from 600 to

1,900m above sea level. *"The vegetation of the higher-lying regions of the SM TFCA belongs to the Grassland Biome. The lower-lying Nkomati valley falls within the Savanna Biome."* (SNTC, n/a, p. 3) These biomes belong to the sourveld<sup>36</sup>.

The area is considered a centre of endemism, hosting, e.g., rare cycad species (*Encephalartos paucidentatus* and *E. laevifoliuscycads*), including the only remain-



**Figure 7: Lubombo TFCA**

Source: Peace Park Foundation, 2014

<sup>35</sup> Highveld is an area of the South African inland plateau at an altitude of approximately 1,500 to 2,100m.

<sup>36</sup> According to an African grassland classification: "Grassland is mainly in the central, high regions: sourveldt occurs under high rainfall on acid soils, and sweet veldt on fertile soils in semi-arid zones" (Palmer, Ainslie, 2005).

ning wild population of the Woolly Cycad (*E. heenanii*) (ibid., p. 4). Animal species include leopards, buffalos, wildebeest, African wildcat and aardwolf, as well as elephants and white rhinoceros in Songimvelo NR. Although the latter are not found in Malolotja NR, they would move to the higher and thus colder areas of Malolotja NR during high temperature periods once free animal movement becomes possible.

SM TFCA, furthermore, contains some important hydrological catchments for both countries, as it is drained by numerous perennial rivers and streams, the most significant of which are the Nkomati and Mlumati rivers (ibid., p. 3).

### 9.1.1 Management of Songimvelo NR and Malolotja NR

Songimvelo NR was first proclaimed a game reserve in 1987 and encompasses an area of 49,000ha. Today it is a provincial nature reserve co-managed since 2012 by the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA)<sup>37</sup> and the Ekuphileni Kwezive Communal Property Association (EKCPA)<sup>38</sup>. Eighty per cent of reserve employees (50 to 60 people) are recruited in local communities. When the reserve was founded, local inhabitants who lived on the designated land were resettled to the vicinity outside the park. One village opposed relocation from the start and still lives in the reserve to the present day.

Based on the enactment of the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act 22 (1994) in the 1990s, some of the resettled villagers demanded the return of some of the territory in the protected area with the aim of moving back to their former homes. With individual claims supported by the court of law, the villages and claimants formed EKCPA as their representative body in 2008. In the course of legal proceedings, the initial objective of moving back was replaced by the desire to benefit from nature conservation. A settlement agreement was reached in March 2012 and a land title over communal land given to 2,500 successful claimants. Joint park management was subsequently introduced and formalized through a co-management committee made up of MTPA and EKCPA (each to 50 per cent) for five years. Currently, the MTPA reserve manager is in charge of the technical day-to-day management, whereas EKCPA focuses on strategic planning and tourism development. According to its chairperson, the association receives revenue

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37 MTPA was established in 2005. Its objective is “to provide for the sustainable management and promotion of tourism and nature conservation in the Province and to ensure the sustainable utilisation of natural resources” (Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, 2014).

38 Prior to 2012, Songimvelo NR was state land managed by MTPA.

from the following sources: 60 per cent from entrance fees, trophy hunting and game capture, and 50 per cent from ecotourism facilities. The latter percentage figure could increase in the future, since EKCPA holds a concession for a park lodge, which is currently under construction. Benefits are shared among the 2,500 landowners via community projects and donations for individual needs, e.g., for orphans and the disabled as well as for training in conservation-related professions. Around eight hundred active members participate in planning meetings and activities in the park, including seasonal work. Not everyone living close to Songimvelo NR submitted land claims. The residents in question are not officially represented by EKCPA.

During the process of land restitution the relationship between the reserve and the claimants was conflictive and some instances of intentional burning took place in the reserve. The huge decline in the number of tourists had heavy consequences for the financial position of Songimvelo NR. Uncontrolled fires, poaching, human-wildlife conflicts and a shortage of staff and equipment as a result of MTPA's financial difficulties are the major challenges in the reserve.

Malolotja NR was gazetted in 1977 with a surface of 18,000ha. It has been managed from the outset by the Swaziland National Trust Commission (SNTC)<sup>39</sup>, a parastatal agency responsible for conservation and cultural heritage. Similar to Songimvelo NR, the communities residing in the designated area were resettled to the surroundings in the course of the nature reserve establishment. Today, no one lives within the confines of the fenced territory of Malolotja NR. One small area bought by SNTC in the 1980s, however, has not been integrated in the reserve so far and is now densely populated. Land restitution is not an issue in Swaziland.

Although local communities are not involved in the management of Malolotja NR, approximately 80 per cent of the thirty employees were recruited from the surrounding villages. Furthermore, the reserve hosts a community outreach department, whose task is to support the local (resettled) communities and foster reconciliation with the reserve. Activities of the department include the implementation of livelihood projects such as bee-keeping, gardening and orcharding,

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39 SNTC is "the national agency responsible for the conservation of the Kingdom's natural and cultural heritage as mandated by the Swaziland National Trust Commission Act No. 9 of 1972 [...]. The SNTC carries out its mandate through proclamation and management of national parks and reserves, national museums and monuments. The SNTC is an independent statutory body and a government parastatal operation at the present time under the umbrella of the Ministry of Tourism and Environment Affairs. [...]" (UNDP et al., 2014, p. 90).

as well as the organization of community meetings and the issue of permits<sup>40</sup> to harvest designated resources in the park (three different species of grass used for baskets, brooms and mats, fire wood and poles). The reserve manager stated that this initiative would create a positive attitude towards conservation by demonstrating its benefits to the local residents and offering counter-incentives to setting fires in the reserve.

The social ecology department in Songimvelo NR performs the same tasks as the community outreach department. As in Malolotja NR, resource harvesting in the reserve is only allowed with permits issued by the park management. Projects and activities of the community outreach departments have been reduced in both countries due to lack of funds.

On the whole, Malolotja NR is severely underfunded. Its main source of finance is the government budget allocation to SNTC supplemented by entrance fees (cf. UNDP et al., 2014, p. 16). This lack of funds is reflected in the shortage of staff and equipment, e.g., vehicles. Other problems in the park are poaching, illegal harvesting of natural resources (e.g., gold, green jade, cycads), human wildlife conflicts in nearby villages, and uncontrolled fires.

### 9.1.2 Local Communities in South Africa and Swaziland

The term 'local communities' refers to local inhabitants living in the vicinity of SM TFCA and in the remaining village within its confines, since the majority of the population lives outside the TFCA following resettlement. Many aspects of local communities and their livelihoods are similar for the villages on both sides of the border. Historically the communities lived close together and belonged to the same ethnic group but were separated by international demarcation processes and the establishment of nature reserves. Existing cross-border contact and trade is strongest in the villages close to the border. The Swazi use public services such as schools and health care centres in South Africa. The following chapter outlines the common features of the communities on each side of the border.

The ethnic composition in the villages surrounding the TFCA is homogeneous, with the Swazi as the predominant ethnic group. The group traditionally makes a living from farming and cattle grazing, whereby cattle are additionally seen as an

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<sup>40</sup> SNTC has the right to issue permits for hunting, harvesting and conveying of species within the boundaries of its proclaimed parks according to the SNTC Act 9/1972. In Malolotja NR extraction is restricted to specific days; harvesters are obliged to form groups and are controlled by the park rangers. The procedure in Songimvelo NR is unique.



investment and a status symbol. The traditional Swazi organizational structure consists of chiefdoms comprising a number of villages. On behalf of the chief, these villages are administered by an inner council and an “induna” (headman). The traditional structure that persists on the Swazi side is promoted by the government. Six chiefdoms surround Malolotja NR. Most of the ten villages in and around Songimvelo NR, in contrast, adhere to the government structure. Very few combine it with the traditional system. Traditionally, homesteads in the area were scattered; population growth, however, has led to a more agglomerated settlement structure. Over 10,000 people now live in the vicinity of the TFCA on both sides of the border. In Swaziland, basic services such as water supply, electricity and health facilities are non-existent in remote villages. In South Africa, on the other hand, the villages we visited had these services close at hand.

Land in the vicinity of SM TFCA in both countries is primarily used for commercial forestry and cattle grazing, as well as subsistence agriculture in the villages. Mining (e.g., gold, asbestos) created countless jobs in the past. Since the mines closed down, unemployment has become the biggest problem in the area. Apart from the scant employment opportunities offered by commercial forestry and nature conservation, there is little else in the way of income generation in the area, leaving local residents highly dependent on natural resources and subsistence agriculture.

Maize, millet, (sweet) potatoes, beans and vegetables (e.g., cabbage, carrots, spinach) are the main crops cultivated by small-scale farmers on both sides of the border, supplemented by livestock (chicken, goats and cattle) and orchards (e.g., banana, avocado, lemon). Agricultural productivity is low due to poor soils, steep slopes, lack of farm equipment and fertilizers, land scarcity due to population growth, and the destruction of cultivations by animals and wild fires. Additional sources of livelihood are wild honey harvesting in the forests around the villages, the use of resources from the reserves via permits, handcraft (baskets, stone and wood carving), and ultimately illegal hunting and smuggling. Due to the availability of land, living conditions seem slightly better in the village inside Songimvelo NR. The use of land and resources within the reserve is nonetheless restricted by law and veld fires are prohibited.

Residents in both Swaziland and South Africa claim that promises made during the resettlement process, such as jobs and public services, have not been kept and that they have not been sufficiently involved in the activities and benefits of the reserve.

### 9.1.3 Fire Situation and Fire Management

#### Fire Situation

Malolotja NR is identified as a fire hotspot in Swaziland (Dlamini, 2010, pp. 373–374). Mpumalanga, the location of Songimvelo NR, is likewise among the provinces with the largest annual occurrence of burnt area in South Africa (nine per cent of the surface, cf. Working on fire, 2014a). SM TFCA has ideal circumstances for extreme wildfires with its topography of steep, rugged areas and its climatic conditions, which foster massive dry fuel and strong winds (Manyatsi, Mbokazi, 2013, p. 3). The majority of fires in SM TFCA occur in the late dry season (August and September). Around Malolotja NR, village members and reserve employees declared that veld fires occur anywhere between once a fortnight and twice weekly during the dry season, depending on the location. Residents near Songimvelo NR stated they experienced at least one fire per week during this period. Local actors mentioned that fires tended to begin at night and sweep across the border.

Although perceived as a threat, fire is widely used by local communities practising subsistence agriculture around SM TFCA in order to *“burn off unpalatable growth left over from previous seasons, to stimulate growth during those months when there is little forage available and to protect homesteads from wildfires”* (Goldammer, de Rohde, 2004, p. 135). Fire is furthermore used for harvesting wild honey<sup>41</sup> as well as for illegal hunting<sup>42</sup> and smuggling<sup>43</sup>. The latter usage is commonly seen as the main cause of uncontrolled fires, as they are not properly extinguished. Another belief in the communities is that fires are caused by trespassing smokers. One Swazi fire expert saw lack of knowledge in the communities about fire management, fire conditions and the consequences of burning as the main challenge.

Traditional knowledge on fire management still exists, but is no longer used and about to disappear. While the younger generation does not respect age old traditions, population pressure and land scarcity promotes overuse of resources and extensive practice of fire. Another crucial factor is national legislation, which

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41 *“The honey hunters start fires with the intention of smoking bees.”* (Manyatsi, Mbokazi, 2013, p. 707) As wild honey is often found in plantation forest trees, forestry companies are also confronted with this issue.

42 Fires are lit to clear the ground for poaching. Some animals, such as blesbok, zebras and wildebeest, graze immediately after an area has been burned.

43 Smugglers light fires at night when they cross the border, either to distract from their activities or to clear their passage.



in both countries requires permits for burning (Grass Fires Act, 1955; CARA, 1984). Although introduced in the interests of reasonable fire management, local communities find it difficult to obtain these permits and consequently burn illegally.

### Legislation on Fire

The Grass Fires Act in Swaziland states that "*no owner or occupier [...] shall set fire at any time to grass, reeds or other vegetation [...] unless he is in possession of a permit*" (Grass Fire Act, 1955, sec. 3 (2)). Permits are issued by the Directorate of Agriculture and penalties laid down for burning without proper authorization. The use of veld fires in agriculture is allowed if the burned area is cultivated within the following three months (*ibid.*, sec. 1(b)). If the farmer concerned fails to do so, he is prosecuted (*ibid.*, sec. 7 (3)). Additionally, the Forests Preservation Act prosecutes fire setting in forests, bush land or plantations (Forests Preservation Act, 1910, sec. 8). Fire as a method of harvesting wild honey is therefore prohibited (Grass Fires Act, 1955, sec. 10). People are permitted to construct fire breaks around their property but must inform their neighbours fourteen days in advance (*ibid.*, sec. 8 (5)).

In South Africa, the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act of 1984 is a land management tool to regulate the use of veld fires. The necessary permits are issued in line with the "*accepted veld management practice in the area*" (CARA, 1984, sec. 12 (2, b, i), cf. Avenant, 2013). The National Veld and Forest Fires Act determines that "*every owner on whose land a veld fire may start or burn or from whose land it may spread must prepare and maintain a firebreak on his or her side of the boundary between his or her land and any adjoining land*" (National Veld and Forest Fire Act, 1998, 12 (1)).

### Fire Management

Although cross-border fire management is not mentioned explicitly in the SM TFCA JMP, awareness-raising of fire fighting in the communities is planned (SM TFCA Joint Management Plan, 2009, p. 28). Training and capacity building in pasture management and agricultural practices is another activity outlined in the JMP relevant to fire management (*ibid.*, p.29).

Each side of SM TFCA has separate but similar fire management practices, e.g., the construction of fire breaks as barriers to wildfire progress, both along the international border and inside the reserve (see Image 1). Blocks of burnt and unburnt areas alternate annually. The fire breaks are constructed (burned) by Songimvelo and Malolotja park rangers and twenty seasonal employees recruited from the surrounding villages of each reserve from May to July. During the dry

season, these employees are on stand-by as fire fighters. Recruitment is organized by EKCPA for Songimvelo NR (twelve beneficiaries, eight others) and by the reserve management for Malolotja NR. Seasonal employees receive one day's training from the rangers and additionally in Songimvelo NR from Working on Fire<sup>44</sup>. The parks have no budget for more extensive training.



**Image 2: Fire break inside SM TFCA**

Due to the steep and often inaccessible terrain, fire fighting has to be undertaken by foot in vast areas of SM TFCA, leading to delayed reaction with severe implications for fire intensity and subsequent danger. Malolotja NR has contacts in a number of villages close to the park. They inform the rangers of the outbreak of fire. Neither of the reserves is in possession of an early warning system.

The only fire management measure undertaken by local communities is the construction of fire breaks around their homesteads. In South Africa this is compulsory following the Veld and Forest Fire Act 1998 (4), in Swaziland it is also promoted by law. Some villages receive support for these activities from nearby timber companies.

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<sup>44</sup> "Working on Fire is a government-funded, job-creation programme focusing on Integrated Fire Management in South Africa. [Working on Fire] fire fighters are recruited from marginalised communities and trained in fire awareness and education, prevention and fire suppression skills." (Working on Fire, 2014b)

## 9.2 Project Description

The proposal for a fire management project in SM TFCA was triggered by the experience of devastating cross-border fires in 2007 and 2008. The fires began in South Africa and swept across the border to Swaziland, destroying a total of 20,000ha plantation forests with a financial loss of US\$45 billion in 2007 alone (SM Project proposal, 2013, p. 3).

### 9.2.1 Project Implementer

The pilot project "*Cross-border Fire Management in SM TFCA*" was initiated by the Swazi national TFCA coordinator, who is the main driver of the pilot project. The Songimvelo reserve manager is responsible for project implementation on the South African side. The pilot project is therefore in the hands of the two park agencies, SNTC and MTPA.

The parastatal organization SNTC was founded in the early 1970s and relies heavily on government budget allocation (85 per cent of funds), but is also financed by third parties (Child, 2004, p. 144). It is responsible for the administration of several Swazi conservation areas, one of which is Malolotja NR. The current implementation of fire management inside the parks is under the mandate of SNTC.

MTPA is one of nine provincial park agencies in South Africa funded by the government. In recent years, the agency has had financial difficulties with repercussions for staff employment and the performance of maintenance activities in Songimvelo NR. The financial shortage was resolved in 2014 with additional budget allocation from the government. MTPA hosts several provincial parks in Mpumalanga and is in charge of the technical management in Songimvelo NR, including fire management.

### 9.2.2 Objective

The proposed objectives of the project are:

- Establishment and implementation of a fire management strategy
- Development of an institutional structure that harmonizes fire management programmes in TFCA
- Creation of skilled community members

The fire management project envisages the involvement of local communities and their cooperation with the TFCA. It adopts an approach in line with CBFiM.

### 9.2.3 Activities

The objectives are to be achieved with the following activities:

- *Institutional setup*: entails a study on “*legislation relating to fire management in both countries*” that incorporates “*indigenous knowledge*”. “*Institutional arrangements in the TFCA [will be harmonised] in order to enable the [...] implementation of a cross-border fire management programme*” and development of a local fire management strategy.
- *Awareness-raising*: development and distribution of information material on fire and fire management, including the policy framework. “*Two multi-stakeholder workshops [will] launch the implementation of the cross-border fire management project*” and are to be followed by two information sharing workshops to present project achievements.
- *Capacity building and strengthening*: to be accomplished by the “*training of trainers in fire management [for the implementation] of the fire management strategy*”. Priority areas for project implementation will be identified and fire brigades in the villages trained. In addition, a “*multi-stakeholder fire management training manual*” that includes good practice guidelines is to be designed. The acquisition of fire management and protection equipment is budgeted.
- *Information sharing*: activities include the “*development of an early warning and reporting*” procedure in the project area, the “*training of local fire coordinators to coordinate information dissemination and fire reporting*” in each village, and the “*creation of a fire register to document all fire occurrences and best management practices*”.
- *Sustainability*: means to mainstream fire management in the JMP and identify and train a fire management coordinator in each community. Funding will be secured for the continuation of activities after the pilot project phase (SM Project proposal, 2013, pp. 4–6).

As mentioned earlier, the project had yet not begun in September 2014. Due to a hold-up in the delivery of funds, none of the above-outlined activities were carried out. The project implementers stressed that they are keeping to the plan and are keen to implement the full range of activities by the end of the first TUPNR project phase. Hands-on fire management training must be carried out during the dry season, however, making capacity building on burning practices in SM TFCA after October is not appropriate. Preparatory work should therefore be accomplished by March 2015, when the burning season starts.

There are a number of inconsistencies in the logic of the project, e.g., the relation between objectives and activities is not outlined in the proposal. Some of the activity blocks, e.g., “awareness-raising” and “sustainability”, are targets rather than activities. The extremely vague description of activities makes it difficult to assess their potential impact.

## 9.3 Findings and Analysis

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the SM TFCA cross-border fire management pilot project and estimates future changes. It likewise describes the current implementation stage of the project.

### 9.3.1 Effectiveness

Since implementation of the pilot project has not yet begun, it can only be assumed on the basis of planned activities and the project context to what extent the objectives can be achieved.

SM TFCA already has a permanent cross-border structure at its disposal, i.e., the Joint Task Group, which allows for regular exchange between the parties involved. Those currently responsible for fire management in the two nature reserves are members of the Task Group and implement the pilot project. They are well-versed in knowledge on the reserves, on fire-related data and transfrontier processes, all of which can be rated positive for the project. Furthermore, the structure of the reserve management and of fire management practices is quite similar on both sides of the border. Another advantage is the existence of community outreach departments, which are the contact link to the surrounding communities. These capacities will be of support for implementation of the pilot project and contribute positively to its effectiveness. There is, however, a shortage of staff and equipment on each side of the border. This poses a serious challenge to achievement of the objectives. The problem is more severe in Swaziland, where the implementing partners have, for example, no vehicles. The workload of the implementers and their employees is excessive, so that at times they are unable to perform their duties in total.

On the whole, the spectrum of activities presented in the proposal seems somewhat ambitious. In the light of the above-mentioned advantages and limitations, implementing the activities within nine months on a budget of €50,000 appears unrealistic.

### 9.3.2 Impact

Since activities have not been carried out, no real impacts on the fire management, poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation nexus can be discussed. Still, a number of impacts likely to occur as a result of TFCA implementation can be described.

The pilot project is perceived as a golden opportunity to put life into the Joint Management Committee (JMC), designated in the JMP as the executive body for SM TFCA on a daily basis. A project management team was established to plan and implement the pilot project. The team is made up of more or less the same people as are on the JMC, i.e., the reserve managers and the chairperson of the Joint Task Group. It operates in the same way as the future JMC will work, i.e., it is accountable to the Joint Task Group. The stakeholders involved expressed their desire and intention to transform the project management team into the JMC when the pilot project comes to an end.

### 9.3.3 Sustainability

The sustainability of the project depends on its ability to acquire further funding when the pilot project is over. This is crucial to the continuation of activities, notably when those planned have not been fully implemented. Current fire management in the reserves has reached its financial limit and is unable to sustain further expenditure. Securing funds is one of the activities described in the proposal, albeit with no further explanation as to how it should be achieved (SM Project proposal, 2013, p. 6).

Fire brigades, fire coordinators and fire management coordinators will be assigned specific tasks in order to implement the strategy. The proposal does not indicate whether these positions are paid or voluntary. The first option requires increased permanent funding of TFCA management.

The inclusion of the newly designed fire management strategy in the JMP would contribute to its institutionalization and thus enhance sustainability. Furthermore, the introduction of community fire registers could impact positively on the availability of local fire data and local strategies, and thus on the sustainability of the project results.

### 9.3.4 Relevance

The relevance of the fire management topic and the community-based approach is analysed below.

### **Relevance of Fire Management**

SM TFCA has been identified as a fire hotspot with scientific methods such as satellite monitoring. The greatest danger of fire outbreaks is their ability to spread instantly, making fire fighting a challenging task. The occurrence of cross-border fire disasters (2007, 2008) has shown the need for international cooperation on this issue. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two countries has been signed in case of emergencies; cross-border fire management is nonetheless relevant to the prevention of such incidents. Governmental levels in South Africa and Swaziland have different views on fire management. Whereas the South African Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA) was not very positive about the use of fire management for the TFCA and did not consider it relevant, senior SNTC officials were supportive and contributed their expertise to the proposal.

The TFCA's JMP does not include fire management. The pilot project is intent on correcting this omission. The reserve managers saw fire and poaching as relevant issues in their respective reserve. They identified most fires as anthropogenic and stated that they were initiated by local communities nearby. This notwithstanding, communities are heavily affected by veld fires and the attendant property loss.

Community members close to Songimvelo NR and Malolotja NR stated that fire threatened their lives, homes and the basis of their livelihoods. They also confirmed that they were not included in current TFCA fire management operations, but expressed their desire to participate and be empowered to deal with this issue. One Swazi fire expert explained that there was much confusion and ignorance in rural communities about the legal procedures to obtain burning permission (see chapter 9.1.3). As a result, people tend to burn without permits. Hence, fire management and education on legislation and administrative procedures pertinent to fire management and capacity building on safe burning are urgently needed in the area.

At the same time, the greatest drawback in the villages on both sides of the border is lack of job opportunities. Local inhabitants are forced to rely on subsistence agriculture. Low mechanization and lack of fertilizer has led to the extensive use of fire in agriculture. Other livelihood sources likewise make use of fire. Fire must therefore be seen in its broader livelihood context. Although villagers, specifically in the vicinity of Malolotja NR, did not feel integrated in the reserve activities, they are conscious of the value of conservation and expressed the desire to develop tourism that would benefit them via employment and craft sales.

### Relevance of Community Involvement

The pilot project measure is based on community-based fire management (CBFiM). This complies with the General TFCRA Protocol, which seeks to create a framework to facilitate “*involvement of communities in and adjacent to TFCAs through consultation, representation and participation in TFCA management*” (General TFCRA Protocol, 2000, p. 3). No specific policy on CBNRM has been designed in both countries, but CBNRM measures have already been implemented successfully in South Africa. In Swaziland, several acts associated with conservation mention and promote community involvement.

#### 9.3.5 Efficiency

No statements can be made on the efficiency of the pilot project measures and money expenditure, as the project has not yet started. It seems from the proposal that some activities overlap. This could have an adverse effect on efficiency.

#### 9.3.6 Cooperation

Since one objective of the pilot project approach is to foster cooperation, particular attention is given to this topic. Cooperation will be analysed at various levels.

##### Cooperation among Implementing Partners

Cooperation between the project implementers has gone on for several years due to their involvement in implementing SM TFCA. Their collaboration was formalized with the introduction of the Joint Task Group in 2009. Meetings take place on a regular basis. Both parties stress their mutual respect and mutual trust, making relationship building as a component of the pilot project superfluous.

For implementation of the project, a project management team was set up as a sub-group engaged in preliminary work for the Joint Task Group and accountable to it. Although meetings are held, cooperation is frustrated by long distances, the absence of an internal link road in the reserve, and lack of transport.

Despite the existence of a project management team, the pilot project relies heavily on one committed team member, i.e., the national TFCA coordinator, whose time is obviously limited as far as pilot project implementation is concerned. In Malolotja NR he is supported by the reserve manager, who is well informed and has briefed his employees. On the South African side, on the other hand, only the Songimvelo reserve manager feels responsible in the project management team but tends to wait for instructions from the Swazi side rather than be pro-active. Staff shortages in Songimvelo NR have led to the reserve manager's excessive workload. In other words, his project engagement is of necessity restricted. The



information flow on the South African side is poor. The Songimvelo social ecologist predestined to play a significant role in the pilot project, for example, was not briefed and EKCPA was informed about the project as late as July 2014.

Some of the disequilibrium between the two sides may derive from the unequal positions of the counterparts in question, one a national TFCA coordinator and the other a reserve manager. The TFCA coordinator has more experience of conceptual planning and the development of fire management strategies.

### **Cooperation between implementing partners and other stakeholders**

There are no other donors present in the project area. Several stakeholders working on fire management were identified as relevant but not involved in the pilot project.

- SM TFCA is surrounded in the northern part by widespread plantation forests owned by private enterprises and one NGO<sup>45</sup>. These timber companies encounter fire problems similar to those of the reserves and have a common interest in protecting their property and keeping fires out. The companies are in possession of fire fighting expertise and expensive equipment such as vehicles and helicopters that facilitates access to the mountainous terrain. Furthermore, plantations are home to wild bees and fires set to harvest honey constitute a major threat. The timber companies have therefore launched community bee-keeping projects and help communities to construct fire breaks.
- The headquarters of Working on Fire, a community employment programme on fire fighting, is located one and a half hours away from Songimvelo NR. They carry out one-day training in fire breaks for seasonal employees in Songimvelo NR. They also have helicopters and other heavy equipment at their disposal.

### **Community Participation**

The proposal is based on the CBFiM approach that includes traditional and indigenous knowledge and involves local residents in fire management planning and implementation via fire brigades, fire coordinators (monitoring) and fire management coordinators (SM Project proposal, 2013; cf. FAO, 2011, p. 4; Goldammer, de Rode, 2004, pp. 396–397). No information is available on the level of decision-making competence or the extent of community participation.

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<sup>45</sup> Bulembu Ministries in Swaziland is an NGO and an orphanage. It sustains itself with timber, honey and dairy production.

Analysis of community participation in the planning process was nevertheless possible. In Swaziland, community representatives were both informed and consulted during the planning phase and contributed their knowledge and opinions to the shaping of the proposed activities. This process is characterized as “interactive participation”. In South Africa, in contrast, the project was discussed with one community only. This is defined as “participation by consultation”. Although EKCPA is the representative body of the successful land claimants in Songimvelo NR, the association has not been involved to a great extent either.

Four community representatives, one of whom represents EKCPA, are members of the project management team. The involvement of local representatives can be seen as positive. The participation of four community members out of approximately twenty settlements is a poor result. How representation is selected is not clear.

## **9.4 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings presented above gave rise to a number of conclusions and recommendations directed at GIZ and the project implementers of the SM TFCA fire management pilot project. Since the project has not yet begun implementation, the recommendations take the ongoing process into account and can contribute to shaping the project.

### **9.4.1 Implementing Partners**

The project logic is inconsistent and activity descriptions are vague. We recommend a revision of the proposal and refinement of each activity for a more detailed picture of the content and implications of the planned measures. Furthermore, some of the proposed activities overlap. They should be examined and adjusted accordingly. We are of the opinion that securing implementation of all project activities will require additional funds. These should be secured.

Against the background of limited resources, the intended creation of numerous positions and tasks in the local communities should be reviewed and reduced/simplified in order to adapt to their capabilities. Furthermore, the development of a concept to finance these jobs is recommended. Development cooperation or other donors may be an option at the beginning but in the long run, financial options must be found within the TFCA management.

The involvement of private timber companies operating in the vicinity of SM TFCA should be considered. Some of them have already established links with the

local inhabitants. Their fire management and fire fighting expertise could be a valuable contribution to the project. In addition, they could support TFCA in emergencies with their equipment, e.g., with a helicopter, and donate funds to the project. The Swazi NGO Bulembu Ministries, which supports itself with a timber plantation, showed interest in cooperating with TFCA on this issue.

Setting up the project management team initiative to manage the pilot project and cross-border cooperation was a positive move. The team should institutionalize meetings and share implementing responsibilities with all those involved rather than rely on one single person. Transforming the project management team into a permanent JMC is likewise to be encouraged.

#### **9.4.2 GIZ**

A major finding in community group discussions in both countries was the realization that wildfire occurrence at the hands of local inhabitants is embedded in the context of unemployment, the dependence on subsistence agriculture and livelihood sources based on natural resources. Fire is a common practice in this context. Fire management attempts to cure symptoms of a deeper ailment will only be successful, i.e., achieve sustainability, if alternative income/livelihood opportunities are generated. Future CBFiM projects should therefore assess alternative income-generating activities, e.g., bee-keeping instead of wild honey collection and the development of community-based tourism. The latter is of particular interest, since EKCPA has already been active in this respect in Songimvelo NR.

With reference to the current process in SM TFCA, dependence on a single implementer with limited resources is perceived as a structural problem. The worrisome reliance on one individual is a stumbling block to implementation and the coordination process. At the moment, there is no other stakeholder in sight with suitable management capacities to support the Swazi national TFCA coordinator in his cross-border project task. We recommend empowering local stakeholders in management parallel to pilot project implementation. Possible partners are the Swazi reserve manager and the South African EKCPA. This measure demands linking the project more closely to GIZ. It seems worth investigating whether a technical adviser can accompany the process for some time in order to overcome the current command and control structure of the park agencies. As a side effect, enhanced capacities of the Joint Task Group and future JMC could impact positively on TFCA implementation.

The project proposal seems fairly ambitious for a nine-month timeframe and a budget of €50,000. As a general rule it is recommended that a feasibility assessment be carried out prior to project selection.

## 10 GIZ/SADC Pilot Project Approach

This chapter analyses the pilot project approach as introduced in chapter 1 and is guided by research questions. The analysis is essentially based on the previous chapters and on interviews conducted with other stakeholders, if not otherwise stated.

### 10.1 Description

Pilot projects are a common instrument of development cooperation and frequently used by GIZ. The general purpose is to test innovations initially on a small scale in order to learn from them and later scale up good practices. GIZ staff sees them as a way of *"showing, how things can improve and be done differently"*. In this case, the pilot activities funded by the SADC/GIZ technical cooperation (TC) measure demonstrate how SADC protocols and strategies for sustainable natural resource management are implemented, with a particular focus on the SADC TFCA programme (GIZ, 2011).

Since not a single document states the objectives of the pilot project approach, we (re-)constructed them from key documents and interviews. As stated in the offer made to the BMZ, the prime objective of pilot projects is to test *"approaches to poverty-reducing, cross-border management of natural resources"*, to adopt those that work well and to learn from shortcomings (GIZ, 2011, p. 7). The implementation strategy of the TC measure is based on *"enhancing variation at local level"* (GIZ, 2012, p. 20), making the implementation of pilot projects a cornerstone for SADC-GIZ cooperation.

The offer mentions further objectives to be achieved by the pilot projects. Their function is to improve cooperation between actors at local level, such as *"conservation area managerial bodies, decentralised services of sectoral authorities, municipal representation, NGOs"* (GIZ, 2011, p. 11) and to *"reduce poverty directly among the population"* (ibid., p. 11), which applies to both income generation and fire management according to module indicator 2 (ibid, p. 7). The last objective, which can be ascertained from the offer, is to strengthen community participation with special consideration of gender: the *"pilot approaches for cross-border resource management (e.g. community-based tourism, participation of the population in managing TFCAs) [are supposed to] integrate [...] the promotion of gender equality"* (ibid., p 15). Further proof of the intention to promote community-based approaches can be found in indicator 2.1 of the TC measure (ibid., p. 8), and in refer-

ences to community participation in the discussion on the methodological approach of component 2 (ibid., p 11). Also, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluation referred to the pilot projects as “*community-based*” (GIZ, 2014, p. 5).

The objectives of the pilot project approach can be summarized as follows:

- Generation of learning experiences relevant to implementation of the TFCA programme
- Stimulation and strengthening of cross-border cooperation between park agencies, TFCA managements and communities
- Poverty reduction/improved livelihoods
- Participation of local communities, with special focus on women and youth

As these objectives are not presented in hierarchical order, we treat them as multiple objectives on the same level. We find support for this view in the fact that objectives 2 to 4 received strong emphasis in our interviews. The third objective in particular was underlined in interviews with SADC and GIZ, and placed in a conservation perspective. Staff members stressed the importance of demonstrating the benefits of TFCA to the local population to raise awareness and gain acceptance for conservation. This objective should be seen in the respective topic context: while the aim of income-generating projects is to reduce poverty directly, fire management is indirectly linked to poverty reduction by preserving livelihoods (see chapter 10.2.1). The fourth objective is not clearly defined anywhere, leaving room for interpretation of the importance of the issue and of what constitutes “community-based” and/or community participation. It was pointed out in interviews with GIZ that economic participation in the form of benefit generation for local communities would suffice and that stronger forms of political participation by the communities were not expected, merely a degree of *community-orientation*. Choosing the degree of participation was left to the applicants themselves.

The instrument of local level pilot activities was part of the original project proposal for the TC measure on which SADC and GIZ had agreed. It envisaged pilot measures in a maximum of three TFCA, closely accompanied by technical support. Proposals for these pilot projects were to be prepared by February 2013, and implementation to have started by May 2013. At a regional workshop on the SADC TFCA programme from 17-19 September 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa, however, this set up was rejected by representatives of the SADC member states. Instead, all TFCA were to have equal opportunity to benefit directly from the SADC/GIZ TC measure, regardless of their implementation status and donor

support. It was agreed that a large number of smaller pilot projects were to be selected via a tender process.

In the subsequent tender process, ten cross-border projects with a financial volume of up to €50,000 each and a duration of nine months were to be selected. SADC and GIZ developed two calls for proposals<sup>46</sup>, one for income generation and one for fire management (SADC/GIZ, 2013c). The calls required that project proposals be developed jointly in the TFCA; implementing partners “*such as scientific institutions, NGOs, communities, etc.*” (SADC/GIZ, 2013a, b) were to be involved in drafting the proposals. Women and youth from local communities were given special emphasis in both topics. In addition, income-generating projects were to benefit the local population explicitly (SADC/GIZ, 2013b).

The calls for proposals for income generation and fire management were approved in February 2013 by the responsible technical committee and promotion commenced at the end of that month. GIZ offered all of the member states assistance with drafting proposals. Seven countries accepted and were visited by GIZ in March and April 2013. During the application period, it emerged that preparation required more time and the deadline was postponed from 30 April to 13 May<sup>47</sup>. By mid-May, SADC and GIZ had received nineteen proposals, nine on fire management and ten on income generation. Participation was widespread: half of the TFCA submitted at least one proposal and almost all member states with land-based TFCA responded to the calls.

Assessment of the project proposals was based on the following criteria (published in the calls for proposals):

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<sup>46</sup> A third call for proposals for projects on climate change adaptation was issued much later. In this evaluation, we focus solely on the income generation and fire management projects.

<sup>47</sup> The original ToR for income generation stated 15 February 2013 as the submission deadline.

**Table 2: Selection criteria**

Criteria	Points
Appropriateness of concept and suggested work plan	
- objectives are feasible and favour communities	20
- methodology is sound and participatory	10
- transfer of results into future activities taken into account	6
- budget is feasible	7
- time schedule is feasible	7
Degree and method of cross-border cooperation	20
In kind and financial contribution of participating countries and others to the project	20
Consideration of gender	15
Proposal for documentation	5

Sources: SADC/GIZ, 2013a, SADC/GIZ, 2013b

Selection took place at the end of June 2013. It was conducted by two representatives from SADC and two from GIZ, and based on personal ranking along the criteria. The member states disapproved of concentrating on a small number of TFCA but agreed on one project per topic for each TFCA. This meant that despite good rankings, two proposals for income generation were disqualified. The quality of the accepted proposals led to a shift in focus, so that in the end only three income generation projects were selected and four instead of three fire management projects (SADC/GIZ, 2013c). Nine projects in total were ultimately financed, including two on climate change adaptation. The project implementers were informed of the decision immediately. By now it was the end of June / beginning of July 2013.

Following the selection meeting, the implementation process of the pilot project approach stalled. This also applied to the four projects evaluated by our team. Delays in finalizing the contracts stretched from two months for the fire management project in the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA to ten months for the project in Songimvelo-Malolotja (SM) TFCA. In the latter case, it took a further eighteen weeks for the contract to be signed and the first funding instalment disbursed (16 September 2014). This meant a total delay of sixteen months for a project originally set for implementation in May 2013. In KAZA, the final activity took place while we were there in August 2014. The other projects were still not completed at this point. Some even have to be speeded up to reach completion before the end of the SADC/GIZ TC measure.

## 10.2 Findings and Analysis

In the following sub-chapters, we analyse the pilot project approach in line with criteria described in chapter 4.3, which we adjust slightly to facilitate evaluation of the whole approach. We refrain from analysing (early) impacts. Impacts at regional level depend largely on the proper functioning of other key processes, such as networking and exchange of experience, all of which exceed the scope of our study. The aim of the pilot project approach is to produce tangible results on the ground. From a local level perspective, however, the causal link from the approach via the call for proposals and the individual pilot projects to potential impacts is long and accompanied by a wealth of intervening variables. For this reason we are unable to give a reliable assessment of this criterion.

The chapter on efficiency also serves to analyse the implementation process, including cooperation with project implementers. Since SADC/GIZ did not interact directly with the communities, the chapter on cooperation focuses on third-party stakeholders only.

### 10.2.1 Effectiveness

As stated above, the pilot project approach pursues multiple objectives. This is not seen as standard good practice in project planning, as it reduces clarity and can lead to conflicting aims. Consequently, statements on the relative importance of individual objectives changed constantly or at best remained vague up to the end of the evaluation. This said, SADC/GIZ was successful up to a point. Another positive outcome was the participation of a wide variety of TFCA – albeit not from the C category. Based on analysis of the four pilot projects in ARTP, LCG, KAZA and SM-TFCA, the pilot project approach achieved the following results:

- *Objective 1: Generation of learning experiences relevant to TFCA programme implementation:* The objective has been achieved, since all four projects produced different types of lessons at different levels, ranging from pragmatic solutions to joint management of revenues from cross-border activity (ARTP) to the course of community-based processes (LCG). The projects highlighted the need for legal harmonization, e.g., border formalities and labour laws (ARTP), organizational structures (ARTP, SM), as well as for the involvement of multiple levels of governance (KAZA, LCG) and adequate time to process sustainable community-based cross-border projects. These experiences are unique to the setting concerned and reflect the varying context of TFCA. In other words, they cannot be transferred smoothly to other TFCA.



- *Objective 2: Stimulation and strengthening of cross-border cooperation between park agencies, TFCA managements and local communities:* This objective has been achieved to a minor extent only. Cross-border cooperation at TFCA level improved in both cases, i.e., ARTP and SM TFCA, where park management is directly involved and favourable organizational structures were already in place prior to project begin. Cooperation did not take place in the two other project cases, neither of which had structures in place. The projects failed to create the framework for cooperation. In KAZA, for example, the project was even designed without involvement of the park management (contrary to the provision in the call for proposals). LCG on the Mozambican side had no park management and consequently no opportunity to cooperate with a Swazi counterpart. At the level of community-to-community cooperation, the objective has not yet been achieved either. There is potential in some cases for future cooperation, such as in LCG.
- *Objective 3: Poverty reduction/enhanced livelihoods:* The thrust of these two topics differs. While the aim of income generation is the immediate *improvement* of local livelihoods, fire management is geared to the *protection* of existing livelihoods. As one of the two income generation projects, ARTP employed seven guides at the time of research. LCG in contrast had not yet taken up work on the tourism product. Both projects have future potential. Time is of the essence, however, as the good practice example of Shewula Mountain Camp (cf. Textbox 1) demonstrates. In the case of fire management we saw no evidence of poverty reduction resulting from the two projects concerned. The KAZA project, which has run its course, failed to improve the fire situation in the area and impact on community livelihoods. The project in SM failed to tackle the root causes of fire, so that expectations of livelihood enhancement are low. Our conclusion is that despite future potential in three of the four project cases, the objective has not been achieved.
- *Objective 4: Local community participation with special focus on women and youth.* Evaluation of this objective proved difficult, since the call for proposals merely contained a vague definition of participation and the ultimate objective. With reference to the explanation given by GIZ (see chapter 10.1), we see the objective as largely achieved. At the same time, we rate the achievement of the objective as inadequate: participation rarely reaches the necessary level of political participation and empowerment to warrant the term “community-based” (see chapter 4.1.3). LCG is the only project that operates with a community-based approach and generates the necessary time beyond the nine

months of the SADC/GIZ pilot project to achieve the project aims. The three other projects use some elements of community participation, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees. The project in SM TFCA is highly ambitious in terms of this objective. To what extent this is realistic remains to be seen.

Community participation in the Angolan part of KAZA is hampered by institutional framework, while in ARTP, greater community participation is envisaged in the long run only. Likewise the participation of women and youth varied considerably.

Analysis of the effectiveness of the pilot project approach reveals a mixed picture. The findings for the first pilot project objective – testing and learning – show some promise. At the same time it should be noted that the almost total absence of cross-border activities in TFCA in the region almost guaranteed the generation of new experiences. Of the other three objectives, it can be said that neither the budget nor the timeframe were conducive to producing positive results. Cross-border cooperation was strengthened, but only where the respective project was able to build on an existent base; the projects achieved an almost negligible degree of poverty reduction and community participation, albeit never parallel. They nonetheless show potential and may well reach the objectives if they are continued. We see objectives 2, 3 and 4 as overly ambitious for such short-term small-scale projects and inappropriate for a regional TC measure, given their complexity and scope.

### **10.2.2 Sustainability**

The sustainability of the identified effects depends on factors external to the pilot project approach itself. Whether lessons learned during the process lead to sustainable change depends largely on the success of networking and exchange facilitation, as will be described briefly in chapter 10.2.7. Although this lies within the scope of SADC/GIZ, it is not under scrutiny in our report and thus not assessed.

The sustainability of results on the remaining three objectives is left to factors beyond the control of SADC/GIZ, since there is no exit strategy and SADC/GIZ intend to continue funding during the next phase for a small number of projects only. With regard to the other projects, sustainability of the results on cross-border cooperation, community participation and poverty reduction achieved so far depends solely on the ability of the implementers to acquire further funding and the quality of the institutional framework in which the projects are embedded.

### 10.2.3 Relevance

Projects must be directly financed on the ground, especially in TFCA that donors tend to overlook. Several interview partners pressed home that funds for cross-border activities were rare and that SADC/GIZ had filled a financial gap with their call for proposals, since most donors focus on the national level. Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) seems to be the only donor to finance TFCA across the region systematically. Their focus, however, lies on financing structures in category A TFCA – and not on single activities or local projects in TFCA of all categories. Even in the well-established category A TFCA of ARTP, which were heavily subsidized by PPF in the past, the idea of the Desert Kayak Trail was on hold for several years due to lack of funding. KAZA is supported by a multitude of donors but no funds are earmarked for cross-border activities.

Despite the need for funding in TFCA, it is unlikely that funding projects on the ground is consistent with the role of the SADC Secretariat and GIZ. The task of the SADC Secretariat is defined as regional facilitator, which includes support for harmonization of legislation and policies, information sharing, resource mobilization, and strategic advice (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 21). The role of GIZ as the German agency for technical cooperation is to support the SADC Secretariat in its task. This is compatible with financing pilot projects for the purpose of learning and demonstration, similar to the original setup with larger projects backed with technical assistance. Torn between BMZ requirements to work at local level and those of the member states to provide equal access to benefits for all TFCA, the current approach looks more like financial cooperation on a small scale. Although authorized by BMZ to do so, this activity falls outside the original competence area of GIZ.

The relevance of the pilot project approach is analysed below along each objective:

- *Objective 1: Generation of learning experiences relevant to TFCA programme implementation.* Despite the political will to engage in transfrontier nature conservation expressed through the various protocols and strategies (e.g., Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, 1999; SADC Secretariat, 2013), the process of establishing TFCA in the region remains slow. Member states generally seem reluctant to relinquish some of their national sovereignty (GIZ, 2011, p. 6; Elischer, Hirth, 2013). National prerogatives, e.g., in the fields of immigration and law enforcement, inhibit joint management of TFCA. Demonstrating the benefits and potential of TFCA with tangible good practice examples on the ground is a viable method of inducing change at the level of national policy and legislation. This is in line with component 4 of the TFCA

programme, which calls for documentation and dissemination of “*innovative approaches in TFCA development and management*” (SADC Secretariat, 2013, pp. 17–18). Since implementation of most TFCA is stagnant, encouraging new experiences seems plausible.

At local level, good examples of other TFCA can inspire practitioners on the ground. Desert Knights, the forerunner of the project in ARTP, is recognised across the region and a similar event is planned in the Lubombo Mountains. Increasing the incidence and variation of good practice examples therefore seems relevant, given the very different contexts of TFCA in the region.

- *Objective 2: Stimulation and strengthening of cross-border cooperation between park agencies, TFCA managements, and communities:* This objective contributes to realizing one of the core purposes of SADC as an institution for regional integration, as laid out in the Treaty of the Southern African Development Community (1992). Although several TFCA are institutionalized at intergovernmental level, little is happening on the ground. In KAZA, there is no meaningful coordination or communication between Bwabwata NP and Luiana NP. SM TFCA has a Joint Task Group, but the group is too large and meets too rarely to deal with operational issues effectively. Yet, improving cooperation on the level of day-to-day operations would constitute a major step forward in the implementation process of these TFCA, given that both are already category A. Thus, we rate fostering cross-border cooperation locally between the parties involved in the management of the respective TFCA as highly relevant. Several interview partners stressed this as well.
- *Objective 3: Poverty reduction/enhanced livelihoods:* The topic of income generation is directly linked to this objective and highly relevant in the context of internationally agreed development objectives (e.g., MDG 1b). More specifically, this objective contributes to realizing the objectives of component 5 “*Enhancement of local livelihoods*” of the SADC TFCA programme (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 18), as well as to the objective of component 1 (“Advocacy and Harmonization”) of the SADC/GIZ TC measure. It is also relevant to the target group of the TC measure, the “*predominantly poor, rural population*” in the fifteen SADC member states, which is “*dependent on natural resources for both its livelihood and economic production*” (GIZ, 2011, p. 9). This topic seemed relevant in both TFCA we visited with income generation projects.

Fire management is indirectly linked to the objective of poverty reduction / enhanced livelihoods, since uncontrolled fires pose a threat to the livelihoods of local people (cf. chapter 9.3.4). Fires occur frequently, yet in many areas

they are outrun in relevance by other issues, e.g., poaching or human-wildlife conflicts, especially in KAZA. The projects in KAZA and SM TFCA showed that fire *management* is only part of the solution. Not tackling some of the root causes for uncontrolled fires is part of the problem. As long as alternative livelihood options are not on the table and the law not enforced emphatically, projects that focus exclusively on fire management will have little impact.

- *Objective 4: Local community participation with special focus on women and youth:* Several SADC documents stress the importance of community participation and CBNRM (cf. Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement, 1999, Art 4 (2) g, SADC Secretariat, 2010, p. 23). The TFCA programme even ascribes communities “*an intrinsic right to be involved in the decision making processes*” in TFCA (SADC Secretariat, 2013, p. 18). Beyond SADC, the BMZ position paper on tourism for sustainable development calls for the participation of local communities in planning and decision-making in the management of the affected areas (BMZ, 2011, p. 19). Furthermore, the objective is also relevant from a conservationist perspective, as pointed out by the literature on CBNRM. Conservation can only succeed in populated areas if the responsibility to protect biodiversity and the right to benefit thereof coincide. It is hence pivotal that communities participate both politically and economically.

However, there are important qualifications at TFCA level due to political or geographical hurdles: in Angola, the political framework is unfavourable to community-based approaches, casting doubt on their relevance. In ARTP, communities live between one and three hours drive from TFCA, which logically curtails their active participation. Hence the relevance of community-based approaches in such cases is limited.

The specific focus on the involvement of women is in line with international standards, as exemplified by MDG 3 and MDG 1b, and generally relevant. Emphasis on the participation of youth complies with MDG 1b.

#### 10.2.4 Planning Process and Strategy

Although the resistance of individual member states to SADC activities at national and local level was identified as a key risk in the offer to the BMZ (GIZ, 2011, p. 20), the SADC Secretariat and GIZ failed to convince the SADC member states to finance a small number of larger projects of longer duration and with close technical support. This led to a shift in the design to implementation of a large number of smaller and shorter projects.

The new setup seems more conducive to the generation of relevant learning experiences, since it spawns variety. This was also set as a strategic guideline in the capacity assessment report (GIZ, 2012, p. 23). Through the use of a call for proposals, the process was less steered, allowing – in principle – for the development of projects suited to local conditions and thus context-specific solutions. The design appealed to the member states and required their active participation for implementation, e.g., dissemination of the call for proposals. This could raise the number of member states that acknowledge the relevance of these learning experiences, a measure that could pay off when it comes to sharing and promoting learning experiences in the future.

On the other hand, we see a negative effect on the other three objectives, most prominently in the case of the community participation objective. The staff of the SADC/GIZ TC measure correctly anticipated that the €50,000 budget and nine-month timeframe would thwart the notion of a community-based approach. Theory and practice confirm that community-based projects require a timeframe of several years rather than several months. During the process, SADC and GIZ were obliged to reduce their expectations to supporting projects that benefited communities, but did not necessarily foster their active participation.

Yet this shift was never clearly documented, nor was it communicated to BMZ. On a similar note, no corresponding adjustment was made to the strategy. A concept paper did not exist, while the capacity development strategy (GIZ, 2012) merely focused on the TC measure as a whole, without going into detail about the pilot project approach. This strategic omission is conspicuous in the objective to promote community-based projects, which is handled somewhat inconsistently: although the call for proposals did not explicitly use the term “community-based”, it suggested community involvement in the implementation (SADC/GIZ, 2013b) and likewise in the development of proposals in the case of the fire management projects (SADC/GIZ, 2013a). In addition, the selection criteria included a participatory methodology.

In our view, a specific concept paper beyond the project offer and the capacity development strategy – although evidently not an instrument usually applied by GIZ – would have helped the implementation process by clearly stating the rationale, objectives and strategy of the approach vis-à-vis its limitations.

In reality, the subsequent implementation process did not pursue a clear policy and provoked underresearched and overambitious proposals. The budget amount and allocated time reduced the scope for tangible and sustainable impacts. As one project implementer put it: *“With €50,000 [...] you're not changing the world”*. Sev-

eral implementers nonetheless came under pressure to produce tangible results. This is reflected in our ToR to look expressly for "*early impacts*" (GIZ, 2014, p. 6). Combined with the predefined topics, the urgent need of TFCA to secure additional finance options and the subsequent effort to fulfil the call requirements led to partly inadequate project designs. The planned construction of community-based lodges in LCG, the promotion of completely inexperienced community members to competent river guides in ARTP, and the development and implementation of a community-based transfrontier fire management strategy in KAZA and SM TFCA, including training and the creation of institutions, are some examples. Most implementers did not invest in thorough assessments, since time was short and they were considered out of proportion to the amount available. The open call had the potential to promote locally adapted solutions but was counteracted by the demand for too much too soon. Although aware of the often poor quality of the proposals and now under pressure to attain results during the first phase of TUPNR, SADC and GIZ decided to continue with the proceedings.

The following selection process led to an array of projects that were in part unsuitable for the set objectives:

- First of all, the process was based on poorly defined selection criteria. As with the objectives, the selection criteria were never defined precisely. Some were subjective (e.g., "sound methodology", the "feasibility" of budget and time schedules), others combined two criteria in one (e.g., "*objectives are feasible and favor [sic!] communities*"), or both. The outcome was different ratings by the four members of the selection committee. Some key aspects were neglected, such as the relevance of the project in the specific context, or how the proposals were developed.
- Secondly, the information basis for the selection was poor. The only information available came from the proposals, which were confined to a maximum of six pages (SADC/GIZ, 2013a, b) and not adequately subjected to a reality check. LCG was ranked first in its category, although it was based on false assumptions of the situation in Mozambique and was to be implemented on that side by an NGO that had no foothold in the local community (cf. chapter 7.3.6).
- Thirdly, the preconditions defined in the call were not always observed. The proposal for KAZA was handed in by two NGOs without involvement of the TFCA management in the process. This is inconsistent with the objective of the pilot project approach to stimulate cooperation at TFCA level and the call requirement that "*proposals [had to] be developed jointly within the TFCA*" (SADC/GIZ, 2013a). NGOs were merely envisaged as implementing partners.

The schedule following the selection meetings saw the immediate launch of the projects (ibid.), leaving little time to sort out contracts and practicalities. Consultations, information gathering and the application of the “financing agreement” instrument in an international context turned out, however, to be more complex and time-consuming than expected.

#### **10.2.5 Implementation Process and Efficiency**

The idea of small projects spread throughout a large region swallowed most of the administrative budget. The call for proposals was first published via the SADC webpage and launched through the TFCA practitioners’ network. The response proved that this was not enough. Advertising and assisting at least seven projects to draft their proposals led to high travel expenditure. Some were visited more than once. Despite these efforts by SADC/GIZ, a number of implementers continued to list communication with Gaborone as one of the top challenges they faced. Although GIZ and SADC were unable to detail the exact number of working hours and funds spent on overseeing the pilot project approach, their estimation of the administrative costs was high.

While some expenses were unavoidable in this setting, most of the delays were intrinsic to the administrative structure and the instrument applied. Financing agreements (FA) are a standard GIZ instrument for the support of local partners. It should be noted, however, that both the instrument and the administrative structure of GIZ are designed for bilateral cooperation, not regional projects. As financing agreements are signed locally between the implementing organization and the respective GIZ country office. This involvement of GIZ in various countries makes internal coordination vital. Since GIZ does not have offices in all of the countries concerned, contract administration occasionally takes place in country offices that are far away from both the office of the TC measure in Gaborone and the pilot project. This adds to the complexity. Key challenges to administering the financing agreement in this case were extended communications, the fact that only NGOs were eligible although several implementing partners were registered as companies, stringent documentation requirements, and money transfer issues, to name but a few. These dilemmas led to further delays, rendering the original schedules obsolete. Some projects were forced to update their work plans, since FA can only be disbursed for future activities. Ironically, this in turn created even more delays, adding up to fourteen months to the original project schedule in the most extreme case of SM. Although some delays were due to weak capacities and lack of human resources in the pilot projects, the overall process of implementation for small-scale projects spread across the region seems highly complex and bureaucratic.



Besides being administratively challenging, the overall suitability of the financing agreement instrument for this kind of task is questionable.

- Firstly, it does not allow for recurrent costs such as salaries, which proved to be a challenge for the implementers. Most of them are severely underfunded and face staff shortages. When administrative overheads are not financed, the projects are implemented and administered willy-nilly by existing staff in addition to their regular tasks. Delays and mistakes due to overburden are the consequence.
- Secondly, as a result of the recent modification of GIZ internal regulations, financing agreements no longer cover procurement. In the case of ARTP, GIZ Namibia was obliged to put out a tender for the procurement of fixed assets. The implementers reported that advising GIZ Namibia in the procurement process in order to obtain the right equipment was difficult and demanded intensive communication. The result was another delay of about five months. This process seems overly complicated and is not consistent with the principle of subsidiarity behind the open call for proposals. It is likewise a determinant of effective and efficient development projects.
- Thirdly, financing agreements can only be signed by one of the implementers, although all of the projects were to be implemented by partners on both sides of the border. This administrative constraint led to a structural imbalance between the partners concerned, since GIZ communicated with one side only. LCG is the most extreme case here, where one partner ultimately withdrew from the project, a step that can at least be attributed in part to this circumstance.

The approach was also new to the SADC Secretariat, meaning that expectations, roles and tasks had to be clarified first. Many activities require the consent of senior officers, which is sometimes hard to obtain given the complex and hierarchical structure of the SADC secretariat. Since travelling is part of the work of most SADC employees, it takes a long time to get documents signed. This is exacerbated by the apparently low priority of natural resource management in the SADC Secretariat.

### **10.2.6 Coordination with other Stakeholders**

The involvement of member states in the process was found wanting, a circumstance that had already led to disapproval of the original concept. The unilateral decision on the topics by SADC/GIZ caused irritation, at least with the South African director of TFCA.

On a similar note, GIZ failed to coordinate the respective member state ministries during the implementation process. In the case of KAZA, the proposal was developed and implemented with scant involvement of the governments concerned. This led to a parallel process that conflicted with the current drafting of a new national fire management strategy in Namibia (see chapter 8.2.2). It could have been avoided if TUPNR had followed the process more closely. In the case of LCG, even the signature of the Mozambican Ministry of Tourism was not enough to garner sufficient political support for Goba from that side. Mozambique's attitude to the project was sympathetic but passive. The country is currently preparing the third phase of its \$40m. MOZBIO programme to promote the country's protected areas with support from the World Bank. Setting up a conservation area in LCG, however, is not on the priority list.

Neither KAZA nor LCG was coordinated with national policies or authorities. This undermines the relevance and sustainability of the otherwise short-lived individual projects, as it makes it harder for them to acquire further funding. More fundamentally, it also runs counter to the principle of "Alignment" as laid down in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005).

In addition, coordination with other stakeholders remained weak. In KAZA, the donor coordination mechanism was reported as not yet fully operational. Other German agencies such as KfW, which is heavily engaged in funding activities in KAZA and a partner in the TUPNR programme, were not properly informed either of SADC/GIZ pilot activities in the area. The template for proposals did not require applicants to give information on other donors active in the project area, which would have provided a starting point for effective donor coordination.

### **10.2.7 Learning**

Learning is an essential part of using pilot projects and is reflected in objective 1 of the approach. The generation of learning experiences is backed by the explicit requirement in the call that project implementing bodies provide documentation of the results, even suggesting the use of photographs, videos or other "*innovative methods*" (SADC/GIZ, 2013a, b). SADC/GIZ also offered technical advice to the projects in this context and the call for proposals explicitly covers documentation costs.

This four-project evaluation can be seen as part of the approach to ensure learning. At the same time, it cannot replace the corresponding learning measures in the remaining five projects. Yet the aspect of documenting experiences received little attention in the selection process: plans for documentation contributed only 5 per cent to the overall ranking of the proposals (SADC/GIZ, 2013a, b). On a simi-

lar note, while the call merely asks for documentation of the results, we assume – based on analysis of the four projects in this report – that the individual processes would be of vast interest. Correspondingly, reporting and documentation was handled very differently by the implementers. In general, the task was not pursued as a priority. This in turn casts doubt on the capacity of the approach to produce well-documented project learning experiences that could be disseminated and institutionalized.

There is a current plan to feed the experiences back into the Technical Committee in the form of fact sheets, as well as into the expanding TFCA network, which is also open to practitioners on the ground. There is also a demand for direct exchange between practitioners on the ground, as one implementer indicated.

### **10.3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The pilot project approach applied by SADC/GIZ appears to be a case of wanting too much all at the same time. Pursuing multiple objectives with very limited time and financial resources calls at least for a clear concept and strategy. The capacity development strategy of the overall TC measure is too general in nature to provide this and should have been supplemented by a separate concept paper. Especially the objective to stimulate community-based projects became blurred during the process, while both the call for proposals and the subsequent selection failed to pursue a clear policy. Also, implementation was rather ad-hoc as a result of poor planning. Although the approach did produce learning experiences and improved cooperation in two cases, results for the other – overambitious – objectives are unexceptional to say the least.

- Our first recommendation is thus to clarify the objectives and modestly define what is possible within the given set – and what is not. In this case, it would have meant reducing the objective of generating learning experiences and improving cross-border cooperation. Pushing for early and tangible results on poverty reduction and community participation within prescribed topics proved not to be conducive to the overall process and is partly responsible for the development of inappropriate proposals.
- Own standards and requirements should be adhered to in the selection process to ensure that projects are suited to promoting the objectives concerned. If not enough proposals of sufficient quality are submitted, this should be seen as an incentive to rethink the strategy and improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

- The relevance of the individual projects in their respective context was not checked in the selection process. Low relevance of the topic has an adverse effect on the impact and sustainability of the projects as a whole. The resultant frustrating experiences can also harm the effectiveness regarding the objectives behind the topics, such as fostering cross-border cooperation. During the selection process more attention should be paid to aligning projects with existing national policies. Only projects deemed relevant should be supported.
- We also recommend pursuing a multi-level approach and engaging in political dialogue with member states to encourage support for pilot project implementation. This is crucial, since it is they who must ultimately adjust their policies and their legislation to enhance implementation of the SADC TFCA programme.
- GIZ seems ill-equipped to conduct this kind of activity, in terms of its administrative structure and its instruments. Administration procedures should be streamlined and the process checked for obstacles to avoid delays during implementation. This includes, e.g., concise information up-front on the necessary documents for implementers. The “financing agreement” instrument needs to be more flexible to suit a broader range of project designs and potential partners or implementing organizations.
- If numerous stakeholders are involved as in this case, a convincing information flow should be in place. This implies that project implementers have easy access to SADC/GIZ and demands preparation and pro-active communication. It is also pivotal to communicate and work on an equal footing with both implementing partners of the cross-border projects to avoid imbalances.
- For the future, the focus should be on stimulating cross-border cooperation at TFCA level and the promotion of CBNRM, as these topics are anchored in SADC protocols and strategies, and can make a substantial contribution to the implementation of the SADC TFCA programme. They should, however, be well prepared, based on existing experience and scientific research. Ample time measured in years rather than months should be allotted if tangible results are to be achieved.
- The widespread lack of funding persuaded several implementers to make tender applications. Yet pilot projects should be used for technical cooperation purposes only and not as a general vehicle to alleviate finance shortages in TFCA. Instead, SADC and GIZ should invest more in the development of a sustainable financing mechanism for activities in TFCA, independent of TUPNR. This mechanism should leave concrete topics open to allow for adaption to local needs.

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- The current approach should be stopped. Small-scale and short-term projects have proved unfeasible in the context of the prevailing administrative structures and instruments. Neither do they provide sufficient incentives or space for appropriate planning and an informed selection process. We therefore recommend focusing on carefully selected long-term projects in the next TUPNR phase, if working at local level is key.

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## Annex

### List of Interviewees and Applied Methods

#### 1. Overarching/General

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Senior officer TFCA unit	SADC	semi-structured interview	07/08/2014
Advisor for TFCA Pilot Projects	GIZ TUPNR	semi-structured interview	08/08/2014
Head of secretariat	NACSO	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014
National TFCA Coordinator	MET Namibia	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014
Regional Manager SADC & Namibia	KfW	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014
Senior Programme Officer	IUCN South Africa	semi-structured interview	27/08/2014
Head of Procurement	GIZ Country Office South Africa	semi-structured interview	27/08/2014
International Coordinator Lubombo TFCA	PPF	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
Director TFCA	DEA South Africa	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
Head of Component 1	GIZ TUPNR	open interview	30/08/2014
Programme Manager	PPF	semi-structured interview	29/08/2014

#### 2. In /Ai/Ais-Richtersveld Transfrontier Park

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Marketing expert, engaged in promoting DK & DKT	Stay Today	semi-structured interview	07/08/2014
Tourism journalist/author	Travel News Namibia	semi-structured interview	07/08/2014
Travel agent	Trip Tours Namibia	telephone interview	11/08/2014
Marketing Director	NWR	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014
Project coordinator Desert Kayak Trails	NWR	semi-structured interviews	14/08/2014 16/08/2014
Guides (4)	Desert Kayak Trails	semi-structured interview, individually	14/08/2014
Shop assistant at /Ai/Ais Hotsprings resort, declined work in Desert Kayak Trails	NWR	semi-structured interview	14/08/2014

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Camp manager at /Ai/Ais Hotsprings resort	NWR	semi-structured interview	14/08/2014
Kaptein (traditional leader)	Bondelzwart Community	semi-structured interview	15/08/2014
Camp manager, tourism department Richtersveld National Park, deputy park manager	SANParks	semi-structured interview	17/08/2014
Acting park manager /Ai/Ais Hotsprings Game Park	MET	semi-structured interviews	15/07/2014 17/08/2014
Applied as guide, not selected (2)	–	semi-structured interview, individually	18/08/2014
Staff, Richtersveld National Park, designated team leader	SANParks	semi-structured interview	18/08/2014
Representative of Eksteenfontein, former coordinator of CBNRM programme	RGBK, previously EcoAfrica	semi-structured group interview	19/08/2014
Guide	DKT	semi-structured interview	16/08/2014
Manager	Richtersveld WHS	semi-structured interview	18/08/2014
Guide (2)	DKT	semi-structured interview, individually	18/08/2014
Voluntary tourism expert	Kuboes	semi-structured interview	18/08/2014
Voluntary tourism expert	Eksteenfontein	semi-structured interview	19/08/2014
Senior people and conservation officer	SANParks	semi-structured interview	20/08/2014
Livestock farmer representatives	RGBK	semi-structured interview	23/08/2014
Kuboes representative	RGBK	semi-structured interview	23/08/2013
Park manager Richtersveld NP	SANParks	semi-structured interview	24/08/2014
Owner	Amanzi (commercial kayak operator)	semi-structured interview	25/08/2014
Manager	Felix Unite (commercial kayak operator)	semi-structured interview	25/08/2014
Marketing manager	Boundless Southern Africa	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
All guides	Desert Kayak Trails	focus group discussion	21/08/2014

### 3. In Lubombo Conservancy-Goba TFCA

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
EcoLubombo Programme employee	Lubombo Conservancy	semi-structured interview	01/09/2014
Outreach Officer	Mlawula NR	semi-structured interview	02/09/2014
Manager Water Project, GIS expert	COSPE	semi-structured group interview	02/09/2014
Chairperson	Mhlumeni inner council	semi-structured interview	03/09/2014
Member	Mhlumeni Trust	focus group discussion	03/09/2014
Freelance marketing consultant	–	semi-structured group interview	03/09/2014
Community member, not involved in project activities	Mhlumeni Community	semi-structured interview	03/09/2014
Community member & cattle farmer, not involved in project activities	Mhlumeni Community	semi-structured interview	03/09/2014
Community member & agriculture and cattle farmer, not involved in project activities	Mhlumeni Community	semi-structured interview	03/09/2014
Ntava Yedzu representative Traditional leader (chef de terra) Local administration representative	Goba Community	site visit	11/09/2014
Various community members	Mhlumeni Community	group discussion	04/09/2014
Three members of the inner council	Mhlumeni Community	focus group discussion	04/09/2014
Livestock extensionist	Mhlumeni Community	semi-structured interview	04/09/2014
National TFCA Coordinator Swaziland	SNTC	semi-structured interview	05/09/2014
Eco Lubombo Programme project manager	Lubombo Conservancy	semi-structured interview	04/09/2014 14/09/2014
Current country director Former country director	CESVI	semi-structured group interview	08/09/2014
ANAC adviser TFCA coordinator Community adviser on TFCA project	MITUR	semi-structured group interview	09/09/2014



Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Traditional leader (chefe de terra)	Goba Community	semi-structured interview	10/09/2014
Local administrator (Chef de Localidade)	Goba Community	semi-structured interview	10/09/2014
Chairperson of Ntava Yedzu	Goba Community	semi-structured interview	10/09/2014
Community members (eight)	Goba Community	semi-structured interview, individually	11/09/2014
Four members of Ntava Yedzu	Ntava Yedzu	focus group discussion	10/09/2014
Member of board of trustees (local CBO)	Shewula Community	semi-structured interview	06/09/2014

#### 4. In Kavango Zambezi TFCA

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Deputy Director: monitoring, research and planning	MET	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014
Programme Officer, Bwabwata NP	IRDNC	semi-structured Interview	17/08/2014
Employees (2), Bwabwata NP	IRDNC	semi-structured Interview	16/08/2014
Executive Director, KAZA Coordinator	MHT	semi-structured Interview	23/08/2014
Chetto	Village Namibia	community group discussion	17/08/2014
Executive Director	ACADIR	semi-structured interview	22/08/2014
CGG & CRM	Kyaramacan Association	focus group discussion	17/08/2014
CBNRM Expert	WWF	semi-structured interview	08/08/2014
Chairperson	Chamue Association	semi-structured interview	21/08/2014
Chairperson	Kyaramacan Association	semi-structured interview	18/08/2014
Representative of a village	Chamue Association	semi-structured interview	22/08/2014
Katunda	Village, Angola	community group discussion	21/08/2014
Extension Officer, Mucusso Mushambo	ACADIR	semi-structured interview	22/08/2014
	Village, Namibia	community group discussion	18/08/2014

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Mushashane	Village, Namibia	community group discussion	16/08/2014
Ngongo	Village, Angola	community group discussion	22/08/2014
Co-Director	IRDNC	semi-structured interviews	05/08/2014 11/08/2014
Chief Warden, Bwabwata NP	MET	semi-structured interview	23/08/2014
Shamakue	Village Namibia	community group discussion	16/08/2014
Fire Monitoring Expert	MAWF	semi-structured interview	08/08/2014
Director Parks and Wildlife Management / TFCA Coordinator	MET	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014
Transboundary Coordinator	WWF	semi-structured interview	11/08/2014
Temwangué	Village, Angola	community group discussion	21/08/2014
Programme Manager Natural Resources	KfW	semi-structured interview	12/08/2014

## 5. In Songimvelo-Malolotja TFCA

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Community Outreach Officer; Park Ecologist Malolotja NR	SNTC	semi-structured interview	02/09/2014
Director of Parks Fire expert	SNTC	semi-structured interview	12/09/2014
Ebutsini	Village, South Africa	community group discussion	10/09/2014
Hawane	Village, Swaziland	community group discussion	08/09/2014
Social Ecologist Songimvelo NR	MTPA	semi-structured interview	03/09/2014
Reserve Manager Malolotja NR	SNTC	semi-structured interview	04/09/2014
Human Resources Manager; Forest Manager	Bulembu Ministries	semi-structured interview	09/09/2014

Position	Organisation	Method	Date
Swazi National TFCA Coordinator	SNTC	semi-structured interview	08/09/2014
Focal Point Biodiversity and Protected Area Management	IUCN	semi-structured interview	27/08/2014
Mlondozi	Village, Swaziland	community group discussion	08/09/2014
Director of TFCA	DEA	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
Reserve Manager Songimvelo NR	MTPA	semi-structured interview	01/09/2014
Ncenceni	Village, Swaziland	community group discussion	09/09/2014
Ngonini	Village, South Africa	community group discussion	10/09/2014
Chairperson	EKCPA	semi-structured interview	11/09/2014
Deputy Director: Veldfire Oversight	DAFF	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
Regional Manager	DAFF	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
International Lubombo TFCA Coordinator	PPF	semi-structured interview	28/08/2014
Regional Manager	MTPA	semi-structured interview	11/09/2014
Village in Songimvelo NR	Village, South Africa	community group discussion	10/09/2014

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