

## Central project evaluation – executive summary

# Support to Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) in Namibia

Country/region/global	Namibia		
Sector and creditor reporting system code	41030 - Biodiversity, 43042 - Rural development		
Project number	2015.2209.3		
Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)		
Lead executing agency/partner organisations	Ministry of Environment (Forestry) and Tourism (MEFT) of Namibia/Directorate of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)		
Development cooperation (DC) programme	<i>Management natürlicher Ressourcen in Namibia</i> [Natural Resources Management in Namibia]		
Implementing organisations of the DC programme	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), GmbH, Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe (BGR)		
Project value	EUR 6,800,000		
Project term	January 2017 - September 2020		
Reporting year CPE	2021	Sample year CPE	2018

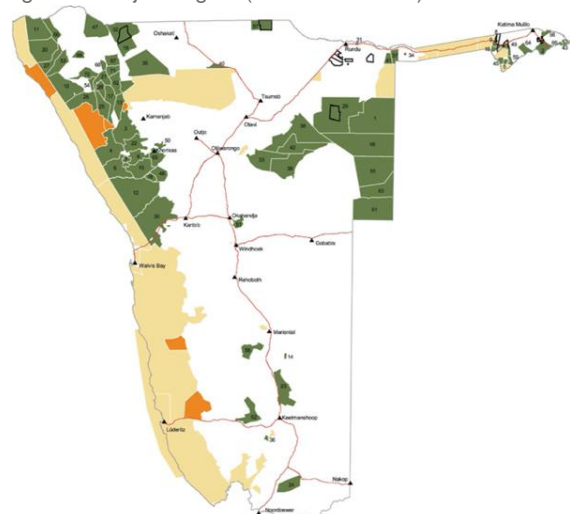
### Context of the project

This evaluation focuses on the ‘Support to community-based natural resource management’ (CBNRM) project, hereafter referred to as ‘the project’. This is a technical cooperation measure, embedded in the ‘Management of natural resources in Namibia’ Development Cooperation Programme. The project is funded with an overall budget of EUR 6,800,000 by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development. It was implemented from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2020 and builds upon its predecessor project ‘Biodiversity management and climate change’ (PN: 2011.2199.5) which was implemented between January 2013 and December 2016.

The project operated under moderately supportive political conditions with a government that considers CBNRM as one of its primary development objectives. In 2013 the Ministry of Environment Forestry and Tourism of Namibia (MEFT) and its Directorate for Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) developed a national CBNRM policy, with the aim ‘to provide a framework that promotes the wise and sustainable use of natural resources on state land outside protected areas as well as the promotion of integrated land and natural resource planning and decision-making that considers the most appropriate land uses based on land capability, optimum

economic return, environmental and human needs’. Although the policy was subsequently adopted by parliament, various capacities were insufficient for its implementation at both national and regional levels. Furthermore, conservancy management committees (CMCs) in many cases had limited ability to manage the conservancies in accordance with CBNRM good governance standards or to improve their situations over the long term. Thus, despite an existing legal framework for the sustainable management of the conservancies, DWNP and other actors responsible for implementing the CBNRM policy still did not have the required resources and capacities to coherently implement the CBNRM policy.

Figure 1: Project region (Source: NACSO)



## Brief description of the project

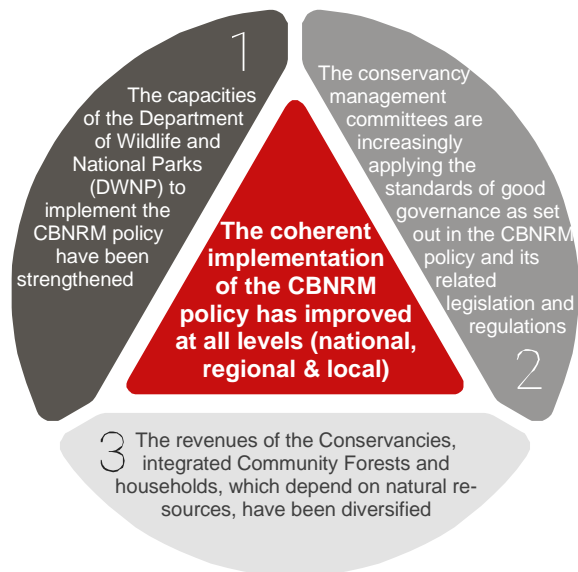
The project objective reads that ‘the coherent implementation of the CBNRM policy has improved at all levels (national, regional and local)’. Thereby, it should contribute to equitable access to natural resources and their sustainable management and therefore to the protection of biodiversity, functional ecosystems and the diversification of rural incomes. To achieve these objectives, the project pursued a multi-level capacity development approach involving three complementary areas of activity:

Under activity area A, participatory workshops were held and training of trainer courses for selected MEFT and non-governmental organisation (NGO) employees were conducted to enable them to work as trainers, as well as training for all relevant actors in the use of the compliance monitoring system. Finally, memorandums of understanding were developed to formalise cooperation between MEFT, implementing actors and conservation agencies.

Under activity area B, an auditing approach was developed to identify gaps and measure progress in the governance of the conservancies. Also relevant actors from these agencies were trained to gather and process compliance information. Furthermore, the project provided logistical, administrative, technical and financial support for the development of an external service provider for assisting local bookkeepers employed by the conservancies on financial issues. Finally, it implemented climate change vulnerability studies in communal forests and conservancies, and supported the implementation of selected activities to increase the communities' resilience.

Under activity area C, the project carried out scoping studies on the potential of innovative income-generating measures; developed approaches for harnessing the value of biological resources, provided strategic/technical support for selected value chains; also provided economic and legal advice in preparing contracts related to tourism concessions, hunting concessions, biotrade and agreements on benefit sharing, and in meeting the relevant contractual requirements.

Figure 2: Project objective/areas of intervention



## Assessment according to DAC criteria

### Relevance

The project aligned well with national objectives and strategies and directly supported the government's efforts by working towards some of its specific objectives. The project's objective can be regarded as a key prerequisite for the government's declared outcome of a sustainable management and utilisation of natural resources. The project objective indicators relate directly to the policy fields of action, including outcomes relevant for managing protected areas, mitigating human-wildlife conflicts, and increasing the communities' benefits from the use of natural resources.

Likewise, the project features a strong linkage to Namibia's CBNRM policy by supporting conservancies in increasing revenues from the sustainable use of their natural resources and developing a comprehensive monitoring system.

Natural resource management is one of the core areas of German-Namibian development cooperation, having the overarching goal to improve the use of natural resources for economic development in an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable manner. The project is therefore well aligned with BMZ's latest country strategy. Also with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a linkage to poverty reduction (SDG 1); gender

equality (SDG 5); ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy (SDG 7); reducing inequalities (SDG 10); ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12); taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13); and sustainable life on land (SDG 15).

The project acknowledges the needs of the target groups and further stakeholders. By supporting the creation of job opportunities and income for conservancy residents, it worked towards solving one of their key problems, and by providing capacity support to the MEFT and NGOs it aimed to satisfy their demand for technical knowledge and skills and, furthermore, to mitigate the lack of adequately qualified staff at national and regional levels.

In principle all support measures, including training, advisory and technical support are considered adequate. Only the digital monitoring system has not yet been fully implemented; it still requires a higher degree of adaptation to the technological capacities of its users and more continuous support and backing through MEFT's IT unit, because it is not yet yielding the expected benefits for its users.

### Effectiveness

Four of the five project outcome indicators were overachieved. By December 2020, instead of the expected 10 communal conservancies, 29 listed one additional source of revenue in their annual reports. Moreover, the number of conservancies whose environmental management capacities increased has been well exceeded with 53 instead of 10 reporting to implement at least one climate change adaptation measure in line with their work plans, and eight instead of five applying wildlife management and utilisation plans. Also, women's satisfaction level regarding their involvement in decision-making processes and the accommodation of their interests improved by 6 percentage points more than envisaged. In contrast, only 12 instead of the targeted 20 annual reports from conservancies are available in the national CBNRM compliance database.

However, a rather moderate assessment of the project's outcome achievement by its final beneficiaries raises the question about the adequacy of

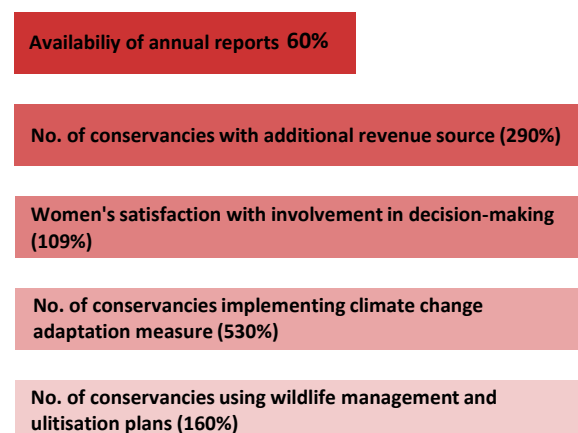
these indicators to reflect its goal achievement. At least it appears that the number of conservancies using supplementary activities for generating income and listing revenues deriving from these activities does not provide a full picture.

The COVID-19 pandemic limited the project activities in its last year of implementation. However, it succeeded in providing continuous capacity support despite travel restrictions.

With the introduction and support of an early-warning system against conflicts between communities and elephants and lions, and the support of improved water infrastructure for local communities and wildlife, the project was able to contribute to the mitigation efforts against human-wildlife conflict in the supported communities. Given the magnitude of the issue of human-wildlife conflict, however, and – among other things – the persistent drought conditions, the project could not completely mitigate the problem, and an overall increase of human-wildlife conflicts was still observed during the implementation period.

On the other hand, a number of positive side-effects can be attributed to the project, such as a stronger awareness among partners and donors regarding the importance of resilience, diversification, and several new activities and funding opportunities, for instance through EU.

Figure 3: Achievement of the project's objective indicators



## Impact

At impact level the project should contribute to equitable access and benefit sharing of natural resources and their sustainable management as well as the conservation of biodiversity, functional ecosystems and the improvement of rural incomes. Unfortunately, the programme indicators relating to the project's higher-level impacts are not suitable for impact measurement, as all but one are expressed formatively, that is, describe the prerequisites for achieving a desired impact instead of reflecting its achievement.

The quantification of the respondents' statements on their perceived long-term benefits, yields a heterogeneous picture. Residents in two conservancies could give no indication at all. Also, four conservancy managements and seven traditional authorities could not name any positive developments. At least the reported impacts, such as improved nutrition and natural resource management as well as employment and income, are in line with the intended project results, although were only mentioned in eight or fewer cases by the respective stakeholder group.

As at the outcome level, the ongoing droughts, lacking financial resources of the MEFT and, above all, the influence of the COVID-19 crisis negatively affected the project's impact.

The attribution of the observed impacts to its achieved outcomes is very plausible. Only in one case was reference made to another support project, which had already been completed in 2006. In the end, the project can be regarded as moderately innovative in a sense that it pursued a multi-level approach, including relevant stakeholders at all institutional levels, instead of providing its support to one particular group or institution.

At impact level neither positive nor negative unintended project results could be detected. The monitoring report contains no information about unintended results, or any countermeasures to avoid or mitigate such.

Photo 1: Event books and monthly reports (Source: Maxi Louis).



## Efficiency

Travelling and gathering restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic impeded the implementation of training sessions for MEFT staff and technical support measures in the conservancies, which eventually put the implementation plan behind schedule. Due to the end of the project term in December 2020, when COVID-19 restrictions were still ongoing, in accordance with BMZ, funds were reallocated to specific COVID relief measures.

From a technical point of view, the implementation of project activities can be regarded as highly professional and efficient. The high overachievement of the output indicators further suggests that the project has succeeded to transform the available budget efficiently into useful products and services for its target groups.

The only output indicator that could not be fully achieved is the support to concluding tourism contracts with conservancies, which is clearly related to the pandemic and some delay previously caused by the ministry. Accordingly, shifting more resources towards this activity would have been not more promising.

The project's allocation efficiency has to be assessed in view of the conclusion that its resources did not fully translate into benefits at each results level. While it has achieved its intended outcomes at national/ministry and regional/institutional levels to the widest extent, this could not be fully confirmed for the local/conservancy level.

Nevertheless, considering the size of the country, the overall budget of EUR 6.8 million for developing a database and capacitating its users in the

ministry and the conservancies in collaboration with several NGOs over a period of four years, the allocated resources therefore appear reasonable. The only criticism is that about half of the approximate EUR 2.2 million personnel costs was spent on international staff.

The project succeeded in creating synergies with other projects. Among others, a cooperation on strategic communication for improved public awareness on poaching and illegal wildlife trade was established with the BMZ-funded GIZ project, Partnership against Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade (PN: 2017.6253.3); a joint approach to support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was developed with its sister project, Biodiversity Management and Climate Change (BMCC) II (PN: 2015.2211.9); and a European-African entrepreneurial cooperation for biodiversity-based innovations and products was built with the GIZ sector project, Bio-Innovation in Africa for Equitable Benefit Sharing (PN: 2018.2235.2).

### Sustainability

To ensure the further development and implementation of the CBNRM policy, at institutional level the project followed a knowledge dissemination strategy by applying a training of trainers approach. Therewith, the trained MEFT and NGO staff should be enabled to continuously provide future capacity-building measures without its further support. However, this strategy was questioned by the partners, as the Ministry is apparently unable to cater for such dissemination training on its own due to a lack of resources. Furthermore, it was stated that governmental and non-governmental actors would require further mediation to ensure their mutual trust and collaboration.

Regarding the continuous use and further development of the innovations introduced by the project, the stakeholders on site display a predominantly positive attitude about their willingness to apply and further develop their acquired capacities. Most residents are well aware of the necessity and added value of their natural resources' sustainable management. However, they also stated they need further support, for instance for creating awareness regarding climate change, doing the finances,

developing value chains, maintaining the technical infrastructure and improving their agricultural activities.

Despite the project being apparently more effective at national level, the political partner regards the reporting system as being not yet sufficiently anchored, with too much paperwork still required for reporting and aggregated data not being available when needed. Moreover, further technical and financial support would be necessary for monitoring the compliance of the conservancies.

The main risks are rooted at the interplay of the national-level stakeholders and the ecological framework in the conservancies. Major threats to the project's sustainability are seen, for instance, in the increasing human-wildlife conflicts, natural catastrophes and the stability of established value chains. Much hope is, however, resting on the follow-on project.

### Overall rating

Table 1: Rating of OECD/DAC evaluation criteria

Criteria	Score (Max. 100)	Rating 1 (highly successful) to 6 (highly unsuccessful)
Relevance	90	Level 2: successful
Effectiveness	75	Level 3: moderately successful
Impact	70	Level 3: moderately successful
Efficiency	90	Level 2: successful
Sustainability	75	Level 3: moderately successful
<b>Overall</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>Level 3: moderately successful</b>



## Conclusions and factors of success and failure

The project's factors for success can be summarised as follows:

- ☑ One of the project's key success factors was its alignment with national development objectives and strategies. It featured a strong linkage to Namibia's CBNRM policy in particular and was also well aligned with BMZ's country strategy.
- ☑ Furthermore, the on-site stakeholders' positive attitude and willingness to apply and further develop their acquired capacities contributed to the project's success. However, they also state to require further support.
- ☑ Eventually, the highly professional and efficient implementation of the project was key to its success. The high overachievement of the output indicators indicates that the project has succeeded in transforming the available budget efficiently into useful products and services for its target groups.

The project's factors for failure can be summarised as follows:

- ☒ Ongoing droughts, lacking financial resources of the MEFT and, above all, the influence of the COVID-19 crisis constituted rather adverse conditions for the project. It can be assumed that they also had a negative effect on the project's impact achievement.
- ☒ Another detrimental factor for the project's success was that it apparently could not contribute to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts. Respondents from several conservancies stated that they do not feel sufficiently resilient against this threat.
- ☒ The project's sustainability is jeopardised by the conservancy managements' further need for capacity support in order to fulfil their tasks in line with the CBNRM policy. As regards the political partner, despite the project's efforts, the MEFT still lacks personnel and financial capacities.
- ☒ Moreover, the ministry's lacking resources pose a challenge to the project's knowledge dissemination strategy. Governmental and non-governmental actors apparently require further mediation to ensure their mutual trust and collaboration.

## Recommendations

The successor project should focus more on the conservancy residents' and managements' needs and on fostering their awareness about the necessity to preserve wildlife. Safe access to water and reduction of human-wildlife conflicts should be addressed again. There need to be further activities for creating awareness regarding climate change, financial management, developing value chains, maintaining the technical infrastructure and improving their agricultural activities.

The MEFT should be provided with further support to bring its staff to a sufficient level of knowledge and skills for sustainably implementing and further developing the Namibian CBNRM policy. Moreover, the project should strive to mediate between governmental and non-governmental actors to ensure their future collaboration.

The successor project should seek professional assistance when developing its project and programme objective indicators. Formative indicators should be prevented, and qualitative indicators should be used.

More efforts should be undertaken in seeking scaling-up opportunities. A stronger involvement of the indirect target groups should be considered, for instance by establishing regional roundtables.

The training of trainers' approach should be thought over in terms of including not only contents and teaching materials but also a refinancing mechanism that enables the partners to sustainably continue with their dissemination activities.

The project's comprehensive approach tackling key challenges at national, regional and local levels, and its endeavour to develop a regulatory framework that ensures the target groups can benefit on their own from their natural resources in the long run should be maintained.

## Approach and methods of the evaluation

The evaluation is based on an *ex-post facto* design, due to the following reasons: (1) The target groups were not selected at random but by their location. (2) It was not feasible to construct a comparison group for the target group. (3) Project outcomes partially refer to institutional and systems-level changes as the project followed a multi-level approach. Furthermore, the evaluation followed a semi-remote design with only the national expert collecting data on site and the international expert conducting online interviews with selected stakeholders.

To provide for valid and reliable findings, the evaluation team applied both theory-based and multi-method approaches, when assessing against the OECD/DAC criteria. Thereby, it acquired a thorough understanding on how the project intended to achieve its goals, which measures were implemented and how they took effect. Furthermore, the roles of the different stakeholders involved in the activities as well as their own objectives, strategies and capacities were taken into account. For the contribution analysis, unintended effects as well as the influence of external factors on the measures' implementation, their effectiveness and their outcomes and impacts were identified and assessed. Therefore, at first, the project's intervention logic was reconstructed by tracing its main impact pathways. The results model guided the data collection process and was eventually validated by the evaluation as it provided information about the extent to which the causal assumptions between its elements hold true.

Data was collected from the direct and indirect beneficiaries in 10 selected conservancies. The selection was purposive, that is, it aimed at a preferably contextually representative picture in terms of their regional distribution and types of support received, while considering the time and budget constraints and particularly the logistical impediments deriving from the pandemic situation. In the visited conservancies, the evaluation team conducted interviews with management staff of the conservancies as well as with traditional authorities and community members. In six cases, it was also possible to talk to a local representative of one of the partner NGOs. However, despite thorough planning,

the respondents had to be selected within the conservancies by means of a convenience sampling because of time and logistical constraints. In other words, the consultant had to take potluck with who was available from the different stakeholder groups, at the time when she was there.

## Rating system

Projects are rated based on the OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, sustainability and efficiency. Each of the six criteria is rated on a scale of 1 to 100 (percentage system).

The project's overall score is derived from the average points awarded for the individual DAC criteria. The average value for the overall score is rounded according to mathematical convention. All DAC criteria are equally weighted for the overall score. Compared with the predecessor systems (6-point scale, 16-point scale), a 100-point scale has a number of advantages in that it allows differentiation, is commonly used internationally, is easy to understand and can readily be converted into other assessment systems.

Table 2: Rating and score scales

100-point scale (score)	6-level scale (rating)
92–100	Level 1: highly successful
81–91	Level 2: successful
67–80	Level 3: moderately successful
50–66	Level 4: moderately unsuccessful
30–49	Level 5: unsuccessful
0–29	Level 6: highly unsuccessful

Overall rating: The criteria of effectiveness, impact and sustainability are knock-out criteria: if one of the criteria is rated at level 4 or lower, the overall rating cannot go beyond level 4 although the mean score may be higher.

Both the assessment dimensions within the OECD/DAC criteria and the determination of the overall score using a points system serve to increase the transparency of ratings while enabling better comparability between individual projects.

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