

The way forward for CBNRM in Botswana



A Discussion Paper of the National CBNRM Forum

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National CBNRM Forum met in Gaborone during the 11th and 12th of April 2005 to discuss the way forward for CBNRM in Botswana, and other issues and challenges that currently face the successful execution of the programme by various stakeholders. All CBNRM stakeholders (Communities, NGOs, Government, Private Sector and Donors) acknowledged that poor financial management and lack of accountability at community level is threatening the core principles of CBNRM and need to be addressed urgently. The meeting set up a working group to put together a discussion paper to share its opinion on the future or new ways forward for CBNRM in the light of this and related challenges.

At the same meeting, the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) presented a concept paper that attempted to respond to the concerns raised previously by the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism on the mismanagement of finances by the CBOs that are engaged in Joint Venture business operations with Tour Operators in the country. This discussion paper will attempt to share the insight of the National CBNRM Forum regarding the concept paper and to provide its own independent position about CBNRM issues in Botswana with regard to CBO operations and possible intervention steps to address the current challenges and to inform the finalisation of CBNRM policy formulation.

It remains the sincere sentiment of the National CBNRM Forum that the principles, purpose, aims and conceptualisation of the CBNRM programme are still very central to the democratic dispensation of rural development in Botswana. This important approach has helped in setting the government of Botswana ahead of the rest in Africa with regard to ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals (2015) and the aspirations of Vision 2016 are achieved in terms of real socio-economic welfare of rural communities. The fact that other countries in the SADC region are eager to learn from Botswana and adapt their intervention strategies to CBNRM to the Botswana methodologies are testimony to this. Despite the current management constraints experienced by the local CBOs, the Botswana government remains a classical example of how economic base of rural villages can be strengthened through participatory decision-making by using CBNRM as a participatory rural development tool.

The National CBNRM Forum views that the non-completion of the CBNRM policy on time to guide the development processes in the natural resources conservation arena has contributed significantly to the recurring problems of land tenure and quota issuing. In addition, communities and CBOs have in turn continued to confuse issues of custodianship with ownership of concession areas; coupled with financial mismanagement. Furthermore, inadequate technical support from the TACs and other service providing NGOs in the concerned areas; and painfully slow disbursement of funds meant for CBO support and capacity building have a direct bearing on the recurring problems of CBNRM management at community level.

The Forum is also of the opinion that while the CBNRM programme implementation has not made a deliberate effort in the past to harness provisions of the available rural development policies and programmes such as the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, the Privatisation drive and Vision 2016, the draft policy on CBNRM should not miss the opportunity to anchor on the premise of the current rural development interventions and strategies of the government.

Overall, the National CBNRM Forum feels that while the concept paper presented by the DWNP at the meeting carries some fundamental information and good insight into the possible alternatives for improvement of future intervention, however the concept being suggested is seen as an impractical and unenforceable strategy.

While the paper suggests the devolution of rights to the CBOs through levels 1, 2, and 3, the Forum's position on this is that the mechanism to carry this out is not feasible. Rather, more effort and emphasis

should be geared towards addressing the root causes of the problem rather than the symptoms. This calls for a strategy that embarks on an effort to strengthen the capacity of CBOs through long-term technical backstopping. If this issue is not addressed the CBOs will constantly slide up and down the proposed devolution scale. As an alternative approach, the Forum suggests that it should be the support intervention that is phased in stages, with CBNRM support curriculum developed for each stage of intervention. All stakeholders taking part in a given stage will enter into contractual agreement: the participating CBO, the service providing NGO, the facilitating TAC and the Tour Operator. The CBNRM Society of Botswana will screen all the parties both at the beginning of the contract and at the end of the intervening period to determine the future of the next stage of intervention.

The Forum unanimously agreed that there should be a legal structure that is set up to handle matters pertaining to CBNRM activities in the country. Such a structure, to be called CBNRM Society of Botswana, will be similar to other existing structures like the Law Society of Botswana, and its role and responsibilities will be to establish all the necessary operation ethics of local CBOs, service providing NGOs, Joint Venture partners and other stakeholders. The CBNRM Society will be the one that is charged with all the responsibilities to ensure that CBOs follow the established operational standards in order for them to qualify for the right to lease concessions, quotas for the year and other requirements. The CBOs will be required by the established guidelines and ethics set up by the Society to provide all the information on the money they expect from the Joint Venture partners, link to the overall community development in their areas of operation and clearly demonstrate how the CBOs will support District development initiatives. They will also be charged with the responsibility of sustaining the CBNRM Society of Botswana in order for it to be able to support conservation programmes in the country.



The Forum wishes to communicate the following key messages regarding the subject under discussion as summarised above:

Key message 1: *CBNRM is both a conservation and rural development strategy contributing to ecosystem and human wellbeing.*

Key message 2: *CBOs need to be entrusted with both the responsibility and authority to actively manage natural resources in their localities.*

Key message 3: *CBOs have organised themselves into accountable and responsible entities therefore they can be held accountable for their actions/decisions through the normal legal procedures.*

Key message 4: *The costs of conservation are incurred at local level therefore the benefits accruing there from need to felt at the same level.*

Key message 5: *CBNRM has contributed to good governance.*

Key message 6: *CBNRM has contributed to improved attitudes of local communities towards wildlife and other natural resources.*

Key message 7: *CBNRM has evidently reduced poaching levels.*

Key message 8: *CBNRM has provided an excellent base for economic diversification in rural level.*

Key message 9: *CBNRM needs to build on existing (formal and informal) local institutions for effective management of natural resources.*

Key message 10: *CBNRM needs to be integrated into development and planning processes.*

Key message 11: *CBNRM has the potential to assist Botswana in achieving its development targets and goals articulated in the MDG, PRS, NDP and Vision 2016.*

Key message 12: *Mismanagement of funds by CBOs can be remedied.*

Key message 13: *Government's efforts to attempt to remedy the current financial management problems through the incremental devolution proposal are acknowledged, however they are addressed from a single and simple perspective.*

Key message 14: *In the light of the apparent shortcomings a rethinking process should be initiated to provide an opportunity for growth, reorganisation and innovation at all levels.*



1. Background of CBNRM in Botswana

In Botswana, the CBNRM programme was officially launched in 1989 when the government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) embarked on a joint Natural Resource Management (NRMP) project that was housed in the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP). The programme was taken up as the realisation and acknowledgement that conservation of wildlife resources in the country was not practical and possible without active involvement of rural communities that are resident within or adjacent to the conservation designated areas such as Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs). The approach rests on the recognition that local communities must be actively involved in the management and utilization of natural resources (wildlife, veld products) and derive a livelihood from them in order to value them in a sustainable manner. ***CBNRM is both a conservation and rural development strategy***, involving community mobilisation and organisation, institutional development, comprehensive training, enterprise development and monitoring of the natural resource base.

CBNRM in Botswana is based on 10 guiding principles:

1. Decision-making authority must be at community level
2. Decision-making must be representative
3. The community must be as small as practical
4. Leadership must be accountable
5. Benefits must outweigh costs
6. Benefits must be distributed equitably
7. Benefit distribution must be linked to natural resources conservation
8. Planning and development must focus on capacity-building
9. Planning and development must be coordinated
10. The CBNRM process must be facilitated

Key message 1:
CBNRM is both a conservation and rural development strategy contributing to ecosystem and human wellbeing.

2. The Premise of CBNRM

The CBNRM approach was born primarily out of the realisation that:

- Local communities living with the wildlife and forest resources form a fundamental base to be the custodians of the environment and its resources, and they are better placed to play a central role in their conservation and utilisation in order to derive a sustainable livelihood out of them;
- The contemporary conventional methods and statutory laws used and enforced by the state to conserve and protect the national wildlife and other resources are not compatible with the cultures and aspirations of the citizens as they normally feel alienated from the respective areas and denied access to natural resources often resulting in conflict tendencies;

Key message 2:
CBOs need to be entrusted with both the responsibility and authority to actively manage natural resources in their locality.

Key message 3:
CBNRM contributes to good governance.

- CBNRM will improve the attitudes on the part of communities towards wildlife through the association of wildlife with direct benefits/income.

It then follows that the CBNRM programme was developed on two fundamental goals to address the foregoing three elements of consideration:

2.1 Conservation of the natural resources and protection of the environment by the custodian communities:

That the communities residing within or adjacent to the Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Controlled Hunting Areas (CHAs) will be charged with the responsibility and custodianship to lead

Key message 4:
CBOs have organised themselves into accountable and responsible entities therefore they can be held accountable for their actions/decisions.

the conservation activities in these areas that are buffering between the communal areas and the National Parks or Game Reserves on behalf of the state – in the understanding that the wildlife resources in these areas remain solely the state assets.

2.2 Realisation of sustainable rural development and long-term improvement of livelihoods at individual, household and community levels within the custodian communities:

That the custodian communities undertaking conservation activities in the specified areas will be entitled to deriving livelihoods benefits from the resources through sustainable harvesting and/or eco-tourist activities in order to improve living standards of the members of the community in order to offset the costs of living with these resources.

Key message 5: *The costs of conservation are incurred at local level therefore the benefits accruing there from need to felt at the same level.*



3. Current Interventions and Untapped Opportunities in CBNRM

3.1 Achievements:

The National CBNRM Forum and the review of the CBNRM programme of 2003 noted several achievements of the CBNRM programme although to date these achievements seem to have been overshadowed by the problems such as financial mismanagement, lack of accountability and poor enterprise development skills by the community trusts as stated above. These achievements can be categorised as tangible and intangible. This paper shall attempt to share the most evident highlights:

Indications from the review of CBNRM are that CBNRM has significantly improved the communities' appreciation of the value of natural resources. There has been an acute shift of attitudes towards natural resources, particularly wildlife as a result of the CBNRM orientation. Prior to the implementation of the CBNRM programme, most communal vegetation resources had fallen prey to the so-called open access, where the use of resources was not controlled. This applied to most veld products that were not regulated under the 1974 Agricultural Resources Conservation Act, and for communal rangelands in the proximity of villages that were not controlled by private borehole owners. The use of wildlife resources was strictly controlled, but enforcement was problematic and poaching fairly common. Moreover, the co-existence of Special Game Licenses (based on development needs of the most vulnerable groups) and Single Game Licenses (based on species availability) restricted the conservation potential of the license system. Thus communal natural resources were inadequately protected, and their conservation was at risk

Key message 6:
CBNRM has contributed to improved attitudes of local communities towards wildlife and other natural resources.

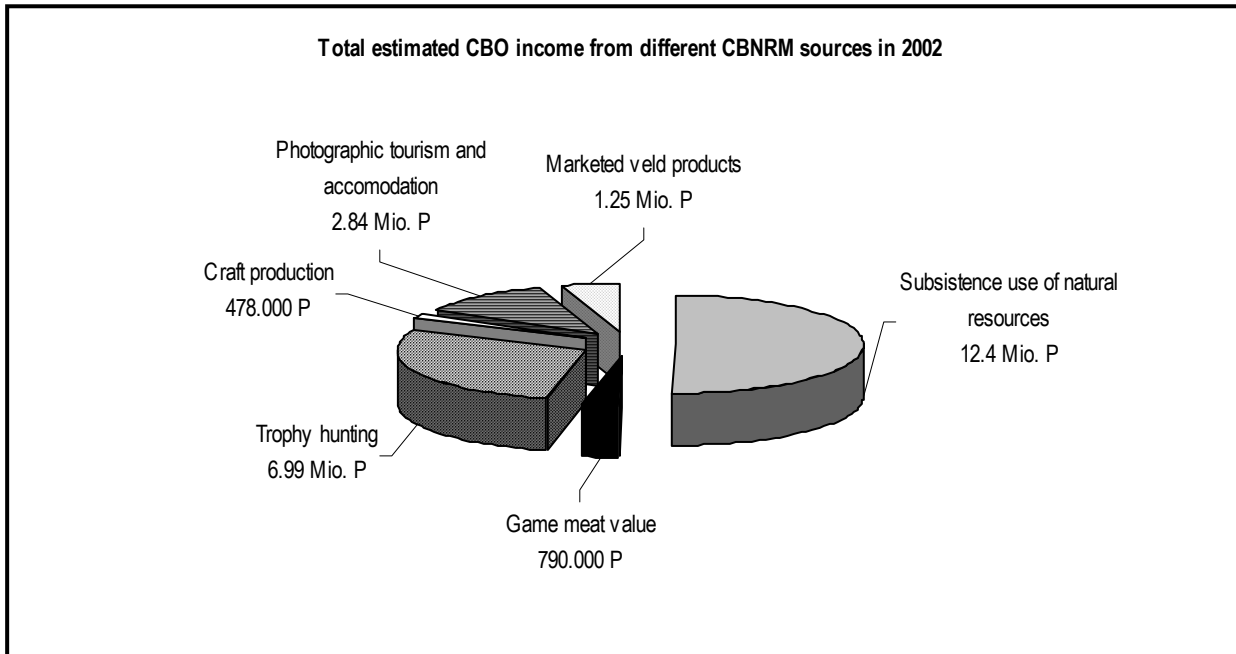
However, CBNRM projects have had several positive resource impacts because the review established that the CBOs have started to appreciate local natural resources and resource conservation is incorporated into the constitutions of all CBOs. There are lower incidence of poaching reported in CBO areas (by the DWNP), although poaching still occurs on a small scale, CBOs have appointed community game scouts who monitor the activities of the joint ventures partners. There is also containment of bush encroachment and maintenance of an open savannah landscape due to multiple land uses. The role of CBOs can be likened to that of European farmers, who receive income for their contributions to maintain diverse and threatened landscape.

Key message 7:
CBNRM has evidently reduced poaching levels.

Key message 8:
CBNRM has provided an excellent base for economic diversification in rural areas.

The 2003 review of CBNRM established that the subsistence value of natural resources in CBNRM project areas was estimated at 12.432.000 Pula in 2002. This is an important contribution to the rural economies of (especially western) Botswana. It needs to be noted that in most CBNRM areas alternative economic development options are very scarce. In western Botswana, it is predominantly Government through relief schemes that provides food and employment, a necessary but not a very sustainable form of development. Natural resource utilisation on the other hand shows economic potential and therefore warrants further development.

The figure below attempts to give a rough indication of the value added to natural resources through CBNRM in 2002:



3.2 Challenges

3.2.1 Financial mismanagement

The Forum resolved that revenues from the commercial use of communal resources are controlled by the Boards of trusts in a non-transparent and non accountable manner. This is not acceptable as community trusts are required to be accountable and representative. If the benefits of CBNRM activities are not felt at the household level due to financial mismanagement by the boards, communities are neither motivated nor willing to support or contribute to the conservation of local natural resources. The Forum resolved that there is therefore need for communities to hire professional accountants to run their affairs because they neither have capacity nor skills to do it on their own. On the same note, some of the management positions are supposed to be occupied by qualified personnel who need not necessarily come from the same community.

3.2.2 Institutional Strengthening

The Forum identified the crucial need for the strengthening through capacity building and provision of the material resources to all the stakeholders (to include government departments, NGOs, CBOs, support organizations etc) to be able to play their roles and functions effectively. There is need to recognize that CBNRM is an expensive process therefore need to commit substantial resources in order to reap the optimum benefits.

3.2.3 Strategic and Programme Linkages

There is need to establish a concrete link between the CBNRM programme to other national rural development initiatives, programmes, goals and targets because at the moment it is too isolated. CBNRM must be integrated and complementary to all the initiatives and programmes that strive to meet national goals and targets enshrined in NDP 9, MDGs and 2015 Vision 2016 etc.

3.2.4 Untapped Potential

When the implementation of the CBNRM programme started in Botswana in the early 1990s, there were certain assumptions that went with it. The first assumption was that the communities that were given concession rights in the WMAs or CHAs would derive direct benefits from the Joint Venture arrangements they went with Tour Operators to sustain the socio-economic status of their respective villages and people for long-term improvement of livelihoods. The other assumption was that the mindsets of rural people towards conservation of natural resources under their custodianship would change and they would support the state in this regard.

However, the approaches used to mobilize and organize the communities into legal structures of the CBOs had some shortcomings that failed to accord the communities proper capacity to achieve the intended aims.

3.2.4.1 The omissions in the first mobilization processes

Key message 9:
CBNRM needs to build on existing (formal and informal) local institutions for effective management of natural resources.

Earlier community mobilization for CBNRM initiatives did not involve the established community leadership structures and other existing local institutions. The mobilization process of the communities by the TACs and the steps to organize them into legal structures

that would shoulder the responsibilities of implementing the CBNRM programme should ensure that established community leadership structures are involved in running the CBOs. Structures such as the Chiefs and the VDCs must be involved in the participatory process which will ensure that the welfare of their respective communities is taken care of by the CBOs. If this is not addressed, the CBOs will operate at a level of independent interest groups and not instruments of the communities that are established to support the socio-economic affairs of the people.

3.2.4.2 Need For Established Village Planning Processes

Efforts are being made to ensure that communities establish some systematic coordinated planning processes at village level to guide CBOs to develop and implement community investment plans. The new efforts are meant to provide an opportunity for collective village planning processes to include all the village leadership structures (i.e. CBOs, VDC's, Dikgosi etc.). This will ensure that all the relevant leadership structures are practically involved in decisions relating to CBNRM (especially the distribution of benefits to households) and financial management matters in a coordinated and integrated manner. This will furthermore ensure that Village Extension Teams are involved in CBNRM initiatives and can provide local technical backstopping.

3.2.4.3 Need for Strategies to Link CBNRM to District Development Processes

Efforts are currently underway to link and align the CBNRM activities to the mainstream community development processes so that proper and appropriate support will be ensured. For instance, where CBOs are in Joint Venture

Key message 10:
CBNRM needs to be integrated into development and planning processes.

operation, the relevant District Councils should have innovative strategies to link the benefits accruing from CBNRM to programmes such as orphan care, Home Based Care, Drought Relief activities, Destitute programmes and others, so that the District Councils concerned could be relieved of financial burdens of community development. If this opportunity was not missed in the first stages of the CBNRM programme implementation, strong collaboration would have been established between the local CBOs and the relevant Local Authorities whereby some of the activities could have been subsidised by the benefits from CBNRM. Unfortunately, what actually happened was that the normal community development programmes executed by the District Councils ran parallel to the activities of the CBOs, without any consideration for harmonisation. This is by no means to imply that CBNRM should take over the development mandate of the Councils, VDCs and other structures but rather that CBOs, VDCs and Councils should be involved in collaborative/integrated planning to avoid duplication of efforts and combine technical forces.

3.2.4.4 Consideration to Anchor CBNRM on Current Development Targets

The National CBNRM Forum still regards the CBNRM programme as a good example, which demonstrates best practices in participatory development mechanisms at a community level for the current national and district development processes. With proper harnessing of the programme, it will go a long way in informing rural development processes in matters pertaining to: Community Based Strategy (CBS) for Rural Development of the Rural Development Council, the execution of Vision 2016 by local leadership structures, creating very productive opportunities for

empowering rural community structures in utilising the privatisation drive in the country, responding to the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic through supporting the mainstreaming of the fight into broad spectrum of rural development and also in empowering rural communities to

Key message 11:
CBNRM has the potential to assist Botswana in achieving its development targets and goals articulated in the MDG, PRS, NDP and Vision 2016.

take active part in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015. The government should not miss the opportunity to see CBNRM in this light and the programme must be anchored on these policies and programmes for sustainability and long-term improvement on its operations.

3.2.4.5 Mismanagement of Finances by the CBOs is an Operational Problem

It has been established by the Forum and the 2003 review of CBNRM that communities have generated substantial revenues from CBNRM operations that have not been reinvested to generate more income for the CBOs or invested into capacity building of the communities to be able to initiate and manage their own development processes more efficiently or at least to distribute it equally for better livelihoods. The position of the Forum is that this practice is unacceptable! All cases of financial mismanagement must be dealt with accordingly on a case by case basis, as is the normal procedure with all criminal cases including those of economic corruption. The law must take its course against the perpetrators of such crimes. However, notwithstanding the severity of this problem, the forum is still optimistic and suggests that financial management for the CBOs responsibility should be placed in the hands of professional accountants screened by the suggested CBNRM society and must be answerable to both the Trust and the society. Current efforts will strive to continue polishing this problem.

Key message 12:
Mismanagement of funds by CBOs can be remedied

3.2.4.6 Option of incremental devolution of rights

To address the above challenges in CBNRM, DWNP presented a Concept Paper on the management of CBNRM benefits on the 22nd of March 2005. It emerged from the discussions at the National CBNRM Forum meeting of April 2005 that the incremental devolution of rights, as suggested in the paper, even though it might theoretically provide good guidance, has some shortcomings. The National Forum members expressed their concern that this model might have the potential of disempowering communities, which would be counterproductive to what the

Key message 13:
Government's efforts to attempt to remedy the current financial management problems through the incremental devolution proposal are acknowledged, however they sound to come from a single and simple perspective.

Government of Botswana has set as major goals for rural development in the country (see i.e. Community based Strategy for Rural Development in Botswana, 1997). Secondly, the issue was raised that the incremental devolution of rights implies a complicated monitoring system and might therefore lead to practical complications.

Discussion's of this paper in other fora has highlighted the following shortcomings shared by the CBNRM National Forum.

The analysis of the root causes of the problem are one sided. Not enough attention has been paid to other shortcomings, which contributed to the problem of financial mismanagement. These include:

- TAC capacity and weak extension services
- Funding constraints for environmental NGOs and other support organisations to provide long-term technical backstopping to CBOs
- Weak engagement of the private sector

The current CBNRM Policy refers to adaptive management principles that simply imply that mistakes are part and parcel of learning. The opinion of the Forum is that what we need to focus on is identifying what it is that makes communities and institutions resilient and strengthen those aspects in order to make them more successful in their endeavours. The critical situation especially in regards to financial management provides an opportunity for novelty and innovation and growth. It does not call for striking CBNRM.

Key message 14:
In the light of the apparent shortcomings a rethinking process should be initiated to provide an opportunity for growth, reorganisation and innovation at all levels.



4. Recommendations by the National CBNRM Forum

All CBNRM stakeholders acknowledged that the weaknesses of CBNRM in Botswana are on an operational and programme level and must be addressed on these levels. The National CBNRM Policy (draft from the 21st of January 2005) however is regarded as comprehensively setting an enabling environment for CBNRM activities in Botswana. Therefore the following recommendations developed by all CBNRM stakeholders in Botswana (Government, NGOs, CBOs and private sector and Donors) are operational, programmatic and calling for a holistic approach.

4.1 Towards Addressing Financial Mismanagement and Equitable Benefit Sharing

Recommendation 4.1.1: Benefit distribution

Checks and balances need to be introduced in the CBNRM policy and guidelines to enforce accountability and responsibility of CBOs and to improve benefit distribution to all community members. Therefore the National Forum recommends introducing an obligatory annual Community Investment Plan (CIP), which clearly defines the distribution of benefits in the communities with a strong emphasis on benefits being felt at household level. The CIP should be approved by the general membership of the community and presented to DWNP as part of the quota request and to the Land Authority as part of the request to sub-lease. In the CIP, a clause should be introduced that not more than a certain percentage (approximately 20%, but depends on the total income) of the total value of annual benefits can be used for administrative purposes. Secondly, the financial advisor in the districts will assist CBOs in developing an obligatory five-year business plan to enable long-term planning. This ensures consistency and transparency in financial management and benefit distribution monitored and approved annually by the District Forum. Thirdly, the National CBNRM Forum recommends that each community sets aside a certain percentage of the gross revenue (approximately 30%, but depends on the total income) in a Community Investment Fund, which will be equally distributed to all community members at the end of the year. Annual financial audits should be maintained and the assistance in establishing these will be provided by the financial advisor.

4.2 Investing in long-term Capacity Building and Strengthening Partnerships

Recommendation 4.2.1: Capacity Building of Communities

To increase empowerment of communities, ongoing capacity building and coordinated training for management structures and the general membership in the community trusts have to be carried out. To support this process CBOs should increasingly build on internal skills and retain institutional memory, e.g. a certain percentage of the board members should stay in the board to guide the newcomers after each election. It should be considered to employ qualified persons for the key employment positions such as Community Liaison Officers, the Chief Community Escort Guides, the Bookkeeper/Treasurer, the Project Co-ordinator, as these people stay on in those positions even when the Board changes and are really the people who are doing the day to day work for the Trust. If these people are qualified and professional in their work, organisational systems and standards will be easier to maintain compared to when inexperienced Boards deal with these issues themselves. The common practice of appointing people at the Kgotla on a pro rata basis does not necessarily result in the best people taking up these positions. Recruitment for key positions should not be limited to the CBO villages it should be open to outsiders who are qualified.

Recommendation 4.2.2: Capacity Building of Support organisations

Low level of commitment to CBNRM in several Government Departments, lack of capacity as well as the multitude of other tasks, which are in the mandate of extension officers, are regarded as reasons for the inadequate support from government to CBNRM implementation and monitoring. Therefore the National Forum recommends increasing the capacity of Government extension services through standardised training programmes to intensify and improve the facilitation of CBNRM implementation at community level. Secondly, the structure, commitment and capacity of the TACs need to be reviewed and improved to enable the councils to play its support role more effectively. The permanently changing composition of the TACs is regarded as a major weakness of this organ. The Forum strongly recommends the expansion of the composition of the TACs to include other CBNRM stakeholders besides Government officers, such as private sector and NGOs, in order to compliment the skills of Government officers. The capacity and role of existing community networks have to be strengthened, i.e. BOCOBONET, which was established to lobby and advocate for communities.

Recommendation 4.2.3: Private sector

The participation and engagement of the private sector in CBNRM is declining. Private sectors issues and concerns need to be identified and well understood to inform the process of strengthening their involvement. Some of the emerging issues include hunting fees, tender procedures and duration of lease agreements. The concerns of the private sector need to be addressed and solved to create incentives for their full commitment in CBNRM. The Forum therefore recommends a fully-fledged study on this.

4.3 Sharing the costs and benefits of natural resources

Recommendation 4.3.1: Funding

Funding is required to address most of the recommendations made by the CBNRM national Forum. There are a number of funds under the auspices of DWNP, which could be targeted however; there are challenges with regards to accessing these funds. DWNP has to explore ways to make their funds more accessible for all CBNRM stakeholders, e.g. private sector to support CBNRM projects more effectively. Rather than having several Governmental funds it is suggested to establish one central foundation to manage and distribute funds for CBNRM activities. Ideally, funding and support should be available from a one-stop support center.

Recommendation 4.3.2: Contribution of the CBOs to fund CBNRM in Botswana

The National CBNRM Forum recommends that 15% of the gross CBO revenue should go to the legally registered National CBNRM Forum, which will allow the association to play its role as described in section 4.4. The 5% royalty to District Councils should be maintained, but more attention should be paid to the use this money for CBNRM projects. 5 % of the gross CBNRM revenue should go to a newly established National Social Responsibility Fund guaranteeing that also resource poor communities benefit from the national assets wildlife and veld products.

4.4 Monitoring Performance and providing support

Recommendation 4.4.1: Mentoring Programme

It is regarded as crucial to introduce an ongoing CBO mentoring programme in Botswana. Outstanding examples in terms of benefit-distribution like the Mababe community prove that permanent facilitators located in the villages contribute essentially to the successful implementation of CBNRM activities. These mentors have to be qualified professionals with experience in CBNRM and will be embedded in the communities to run the day-to-day business in CBOs. Funding sources for the mentors have to be explored, but a cost-sharing mechanism between Government and the communities should be considered. The ombudsman in the districts will be tasked to assist communities in building up partnerships with donors to fund mentors embedded in the community.

Recommendation 4.4.2: Natural resources management

On the issue of Natural Resources Monitoring, it is strongly suggested to standardise the monitoring system for all areas in Botswana i.e. in Community Areas as well as in Private Concession Areas and even in the Game Reserves and National Parks. Whatever system is used, such as MOMS, it must be supported by the Government Departments on a long-term basis and not only as long as donor money lasts. The Government of Botswana must guarantee that the communities are trained in applying the monitoring system and should provide on-going assistance. Graduated non-compliance sanctions should be introduced for communities, which do not carry out monitoring or are not able to report of the status of the natural resources they are the custodians of. This would contribute towards strengthening the conservation aspects of CBNRM and to ensure that Government shares this load with communities. However, efforts should be made to incorporate indigenous local knowledge in such monitoring programmes.

Recommendation 4.4.3: National Forum and District Forum as formally registered associations

The National Forum recommends to formally register the National CBNRM Forum as a membership association made up of representatives from the government, CBOs, the private sector, NGOs and the principal donors supporting CBNRM and thereby creating a representative accountable and legal CBNRM platform with participation of all stakeholders.

The association would have overall responsibility for:

- ✓ Developing codes of conduct for CBNRM stakeholders in Botswana and monitoring their adherence
- ✓ Monitoring the implementation of the CBNRM programme in Botswana
- ✓ Coordinating support activities
- ✓ Encouraging the development and endorsement of standard financial, administrative and organisational procedures for CBOs
- ✓ Supporting the development of Community Investment Plans, community budgets and business plans and monitoring their adherence
- ✓ Capacity building
- ✓ Gathering and disseminate information
- ✓ Monitoring and review progress

The National Forum would also maintain the contacts with other CBNRM Programmes in the region and exchange information and lessons, and seek joint funding opportunities. The Forum would establish a

website to disseminate information about Botswana's CBNRM programme as well as to market the projects locally, regionally and globally. To enable the legal body at the national level to fulfill its functions at the district level more effectively, it is recommended to establish branches of the association in each district by registering the District Fora. Two experts will be engaged in each office of the legally registered National Forum and District Fora: one ombudsman highly experienced in CBNRM and one financial advisor with business skills. They will be based in a CBNRM resource and assistance centre, which will host a well-selected CBNRM database and will be accessible for all CBNRM stakeholders, if they need assistance or advice. All CBNRM stakeholders will task the ombudsman to support and monitor the implementation of CBNRM and the adherence to codes of conduct and guidelines of the association. In addition, the ombudsman will provide advice and information to communities and will be responsible for conflict mediation and resolution, wherever requested. Even when there is no District Forum operational yet, one ombudsman should be located in each district. The financial advisor will assist the communities in financial management like the development of Community Investment Plans, community budgets and business plans and will monitor the adherence to these by communities.

Conclusion

Based on the insights shared in this paper and practical experiences working on this programme, CBNRM has proved to have great potential. Whilst the approach has its loopholes and challenges as articulated there is substantial evidence that CBNRM has the potential to contribute to rural livelihoods and nature conservation in Botswana. It should be born in mind that CBNRM is a slow and evolutionary process that requires long-term facilitation and investment to yield optimum results. Evidence from other regional programmes such as CAMPFIRE and the Namibian CBNRM programme confirm that the developments in Botswana regarding CBNRM are still on track. The Forum strongly believes that with the recommendations provided, coupled with insights from other observes and interested parties taken on board, CBNRM is heading for success.

Conclusively, the Forum is kindly requesting your office and structures to accord representatives of the CBNRM stakeholders an opportunity to engage with you and senior representatives in your Ministry to collectively reflect on this matter. A roundtable discussion at your earliest convenience will be ideal. Together we will chart the best future for our natural resources and sustainable rural livelihoods in Botswana.



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