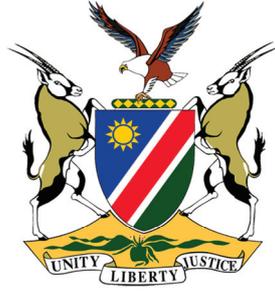


REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
Ministry of Environment and Tourism



Challenges, Lessons Learned and Best Practices in establishing Landscape Conservation Areas in Namibia



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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CMA Coastal Management Authority

GEF Global Environment Facility

IUCN International Union for the Conservation of Nature

LCA Landscape Conservation Area

MET Ministry of Environment and Tourism

MNC Mudumu North Complex

MNP Mudumu National Park

MTR Mid-Term Review

NAM-PLACE Namibian Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Project

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

NP National Park

PA Protected Area

SPAN Strengthening the Protected Area Network Project

UNDP United Nations Development Programme



1 Introduction

Namibia's protected area (PA) network makes significant contributions to the conservation of biodiversity which is of national and international importance and contributes to the maintenance of ecosystem services. In addition the network has the potential to contribute to the socio-economic benefits of local communities who are residents and/or neighbours of protected areas. The Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) recognises the importance of creating positive attitudes of residents and neighbours towards protected areas and of capitalising on sound management with them to enhance conservation activities. MET also recognises that protected areas (PAs) cannot operate as islands surrounded by areas of incompatible land uses, and in view of climate change predictions it is important to maintain connectivity between PAs including across international boundaries. As a result, supported by the GEF-funded NAM-PLACE Project, MET has been exploring the establishment and development of Landscape Conservation Areas (LCAs) in different parts of Namibia.

The NAM-PLACE Project, administered for GEF through UNDP in Namibia, has supported the formalisation and development of five LCAs as follows (see also Figure 1 on page 2):

- Mudumu Landscape covering 2047 km² including three PAs under MET, a State Forest under the Directorate of Forestry, and conservancies and community forests bordering the PAs and the State Forest;
- Greater Waterberg Landscape covering 18 763 km² including the Waterberg Plateau Park PA, neighbouring freehold conservancies and nearby communal conservancies;
- Windhoek Green Belt Landscape covering 760 km² including the Daan Viljoen Game Reserve and neighbouring freehold farms.
- Greater Sossusvlei-Namib Landscape covering 5730 km² including the Namib Naukluft Park and neighbouring farms and private game reserves.
- Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape covering 7621 km² and incorporating the /Ai-/Ais Hotsprings Game Park, the Naute Recreation Resort, private farms, private game reserves and a communal conservancy.

The five-year project started in 2011 and ends in December 2015. It aims to lift barriers for the establishment of a large scale network of landscapes in the country. Its goal is to ensure that Namibia's biodiversity and ecosystem values are conserved and provide sustainable benefit flows at local, national and global levels through the establishment of Landscape Conservation Areas. The objective of the project is that Landscape Conservation Areas are established and ensure that land uses in areas adjacent to existing Protected Areas are compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives, and corridors are established to sustain the viability of wildlife populations.



Namibia's protected area (PA) network makes significant contributions to the conservation of biodiversity which is of national and international importance and contributes to the maintenance of ecosystem services.



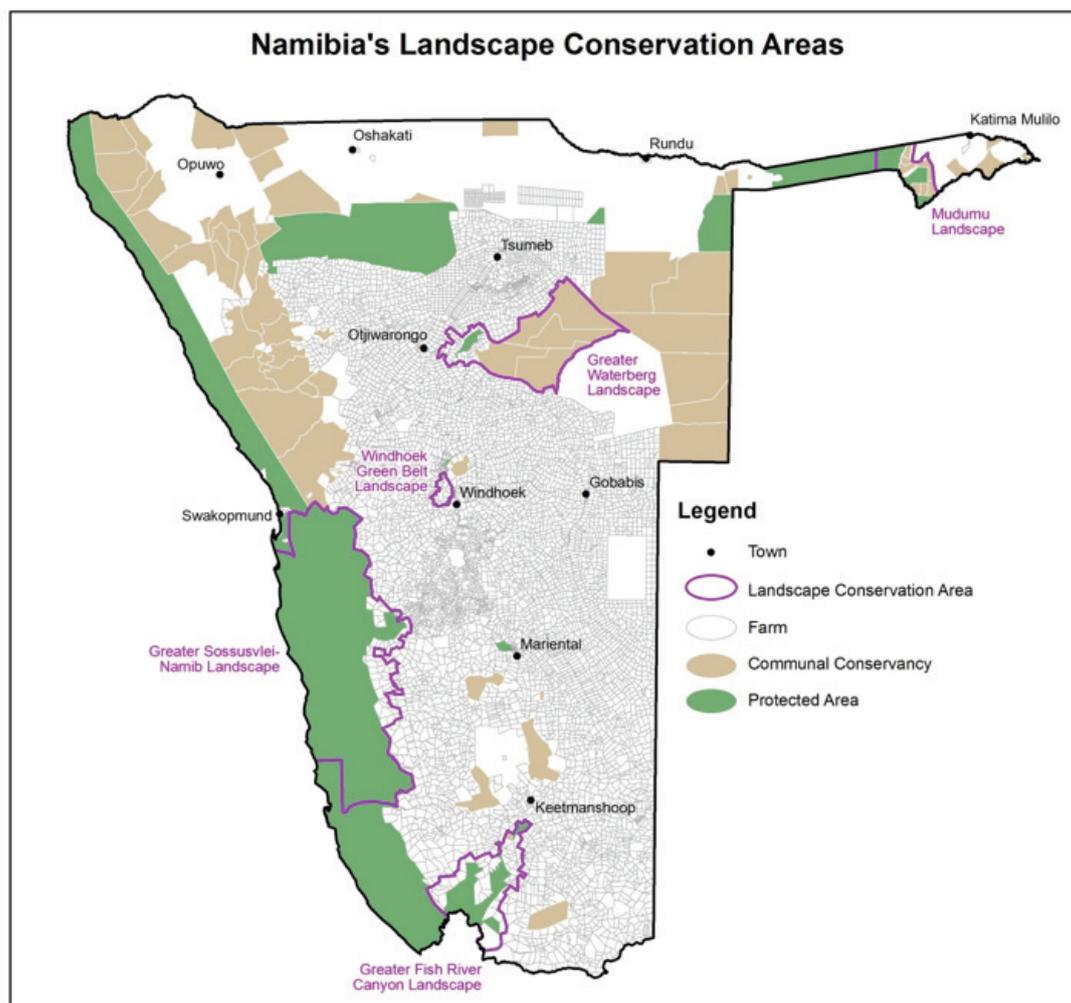


FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AREAS SUPPORTED BY NAM-PLACE.
SOURCE: NAM-PLACE PROJECT

Three project components were identified in order to achieve the Project Objective:

Component One: Establish new Landscape Conservation Areas. This component has one predicted outcome – that five LCAs are established.

Component Two: Collaborative governance for LCAs. There are three predicted outcomes to this component:

- i) adaptive collaborative management frameworks for the five pilot LCAs operationalized;
- ii) collaborative oversight by individual LCA authorities supported by a LCA Coordination Unit; and
- iii) LCAs are being adaptively managed to cope with the impact of climate change.

Component Three: Incentives and Market Transformation. There are two predicted outcomes:

- i) where production is taking place within LCAs, it is compatible with biodiversity conservation while providing livelihoods to land users, and ii) the LCA management costs are underwritten by constituents.

The main purpose of this report is to assist MET and UNDP to identify challenges and lessons learned from the implementation of the project for the establishment and development of LCAs and translate these lessons into best practices for replication within the country and to guide future GEF project formulation. The full Terms of Reference are provided in Annex 1.

2

The Landscape Conservation Context

2.1 THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Internationally the concept of landscape conservation is not new. The IUCN has recognised Protected Landscapes as Category V in its categorisation of protected areas since at least 1978. In 1994 Category V was expanded to include seascapes under the designation “Protected landscapes/Seascapes” (Dudley 2008). IUCN defines a protected area as follows (Dudley 2008:8):

“A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values”.

Category V is defined as:

“A protected area where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value; and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values”.

Further, Category V PAs should have the following essential characteristics:

- Landscape and/or coastal and island seascape of high and/or distinct scenic quality and with significant associated habitats, flora and fauna and associated cultural features;
- A balanced interaction between people and nature that has endured over time and still has integrity, or where there is reasonable hope of restoring that integrity;
- Unique or traditional land-use patterns, e.g., as evidenced in sustainable agricultural and forestry systems and human settlements that have evolved in balance with their landscape.

Dudley (2008) suggests that some Category V PAs may act as a buffer around a core of one or more strictly

protected areas and may also aim to link habitat between other PAs. They also provide a framework when conservation objectives need to be met over a large area in crowded landscapes with a range of ownership patterns, governance models and land uses.

IUCN has further developed concepts around protected landscapes and identified what it calls the protected landscape approach (Brown et al 2005), which emerged at the IUCN World Parks Congress held in South Africa in 2003. The congress found that while Category V Protected landscapes and Seascapes were the primary tool for landscape conservation, strategies to protect landscapes were often broader than a single PA category, drawing on a combination of PA designations and tools. According to Brown et al (2005) the protected landscape approach takes a holistic and inter-disciplinary view of the environment, emphasises the integration of humans and nature, and is an approach that can accommodate different land uses, land tenure and management objectives. Mitchell et al (2005:231) note that the approach “does not focus solely on the protection of nature and biodiversity but rather recognises the critical links between nature, culture, and community for long-term sustainability of conservation” and emphasise that a landscape encompasses a mosaic of land uses from cultivation of crops to wildlife areas.

“IUCN has further developed concepts around protected landscapes and identified what it calls the protected landscape approach .”

Brown et al (2005) suggest that Category V PAs can complement more strictly conserved areas and enhance their impact. They also emphasise cultural values in the landscape noting that these are inextricably linked with natural values.

Internationally the concept of “connectivity” is strongly

linked to landscape conservation. Pulsford et al (2015) describe connectivity conservation management as a strategic approach that helps to link habitats across whole landscapes, which can enable species to move and their ecosystems to adapt as conditions change. They refer to landscape connectivity as the connectedness of patterns of vegetation cover in a given landscape and refer to wildlife corridors as physical linkages between patches of indigenous vegetation including within and between core protected areas. Pulsford et al (2015) suggest that wildlife corridors contribute to landscape connectivity through facilitating increased habitat connectivity for some species and the ecological connectivity of some key ecosystem processes.

2.2 THE NAMIBIAN NATIONAL CONTEXT

Prior to the inception of the NAM-PLACE Project, landscape conservation had not been incorporated into Namibian PA policy or legislation. However, examples of cooperation between different stakeholders across landscapes existed and these formed the foundation for the conceptualisation of the NAM-PLACE Project.

In what is now the Mudumu Landscape Conservation Area in Zambezi Region, different stakeholders cooperated initially to form the Mudumu North Complex (MNC). The complex includes the eastern part of the Bwabwata National Park (NP), the Mudumu NP, a State Forest, four communal area conservancies and four community forests. Representatives from these different land units and other stakeholders meet to discuss and implement various joint management activities including anti-poaching patrols,

In the MNC rural communities, traditional leaders, protected area managers and NGO personnel came together because they realised that in order to reach their various objectives they needed to cooperate and forge new partnerships. Each of the stakeholders realised that they could not succeed at the scale of their own land unit – they needed to scale up to a larger landscape level (Jones 2014). Following the success of the MNC, representatives from the Mudumu NP, the Nkasa-Rupara NP, four registered conservancies and one emerging conservancy formed the Mudumu South Complex. These two complexes merged with NAM-PLACE support to form the Mudumu Landscape Conservation Area.

In a completely different setting before the inception of the NAM-PLACE Project, various stakeholders in southern Namibia had started to cooperate in the management of land and wildlife centred around the /Ai-/Ais Hot Springs Game Park. Farmers, private game parks and MET officials had already shown interest in adaptive collaborative management, had drafted a constitution and developed a co-management and development plan. Similar developments had also taken place on private land neighbouring the Sesriem/Sossusvlei section of the Namib-Naukluft Park and on land neighbouring the Waterberg Plateau Park in central Namibia. The NAM-PLACE Project aimed to support the further development of landscape conservation at these sites and to promote similar cooperation between the Daan Viljoen Game Park outside Windhoek and neighbouring farmers.

Other approaches to landscape conservation have been developed at the coast (Jones 2014). An Integrated

Coastal Zone Management Committee, constituted by the coastal regions, addresses issues of coastal conservation, management and planning. It serves as a high-level overall supervisory and advisory

body working with the Namibia Coast Conservation and Management Project. Its membership includes regional governors, regional chief executive officers, regional councillors and representatives from line ministries.

“Farmers, private game parks and MET officials had already shown interest in adaptive collaborative management.”

fire management, annual game counts and other joint monitoring initiatives. Significantly the cooperation between stakeholders emerged from the bottom up.

In addition the National Policy on Coastal Management makes provision for the creation of a Coastal Management Authority (CMA) under the MET in order to harmonise overlapping mandates and responsibilities and for protection of coastal areas and resources in a consultative manner (Jones 2014). This is a different approach to the others documented above as the CMA will be a statutory body established by Act of Parliament.

In 2013 MET launched the National Policy on Protected Areas' Neighbours and Resident Communities (MET 2013). The policy, developed with support from the GEF-funded SPAN and NAM-PLACE Projects, sets out a framework for protected area managers to engage with local communities and stakeholders. Strategy 4.3

“Integrated Park management, zoning and landscape conservation”, contains the following objectives regarding landscape conservation:

- To promote and encourage landscape conservation and integrated park management in order
- to ensure that land uses in areas adjacent to existing protected areas are compatible with biodiversity conservation objectives, and corridors are established to sustain the viability of wildlife populations.
- To lift the barriers to promotion of a large scale network of landscape conservation and
- address threats to habitat and species loss on a landscape level approach so as to ensure greater responsiveness to variability and seasonality issues around climate change.

The Strategic Approach in the policy for achieving these objectives includes provision for landscape conservation initiatives at ecosystem level where MET will work closely with neighbours and resident communities and other stakeholders to manage wildlife, combat wildlife crime, prevent Human Wildlife Conflict and livestock diseases, and provide environmental education, community awareness programmes and training, and support game monitoring and research.

The policy states that MET will ensure that all sectors work together through an integrated approach and that participatory approaches through landscape conservation can lead to better conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

The policy will provide a foundation for Landscape Conservation to be included in the new parks and wildlife legislation being developed by MET. Once the legislation is in place, Namibia is expected to have a sound framework for the strengthened implementation

“The Strategic Approach in the policy for achieving these objectives includes provision for landscape conservation.”

of landscape conservation, wildlife corridor and connectivity conservation initiatives. For historical reasons linked to the racially skewed pattern of land ownership and distribution prior to Independence in 1990, the legislation is unlikely to include provisions for the formal proclamation of landscape conservation areas. This is because formal proclamation could be viewed as trying to protect white-owned land from purchase or legal expropriation by government as part of the national land reform process. For the same reasons NAM-PLACE itself moved away from an emphasis on formal proclamation of landscape conservation areas.

Overall the landscape approach is being adopted by MET and extended to the Etosha National Park and its neighbouring areas. MET has welcomed the support provided by NAM-PLACE and believes the landscape conservation approach has improved relations and cooperation between parks and neighbours.

3

Key Challenges in establishing Namibian Landscape Conservation Areas

3.1 PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

3.1.1 Lack of adequate consultation before Project start-up

As indicated in the previous section, in at least four of the five landscapes supported by the project there was already a measure of cooperation between different stakeholders before the project started. This meant that stakeholders already had their own expectations of how the project might support their activities. However according to the project 2012 Annual Progress Report (NAM-PLACE 2012a) a lack of adequate consultation in the project design phase led to delays in start-up and some suspicion or caution among stakeholders. “Most stakeholders had no background on the proposed landscapes having missed the meetings or them not being available during the brief consultation meetings” (NAM-PLACE 2012a:31). In addition: “There were differences between priority actions from landscapes and those identified in the project document. Most important project outputs are not perceived as necessary by some landscapes as they are seen as top-bottom approach” (NAM-PLACE 2012a:14).

Persons interviewed also noted that there were different expectations among different stakeholders at project start up. While some stakeholders in some landscapes had a vision for landscape conservation others wanted direct benefits to themselves. The project personnel needed to meet the project deliverables while trying to meet the different needs and expectations of landscape stakeholders and bridge these gaps in perceptions about what the project should try to achieve.

3.1.2 Narrow focus on wildlife and tourism

According to the Project Mid Term Review (MTR) the landscape-level thinking that underpinned the project was primarily five-fold (Williams and Mfune 2014): i) to remove the fences where possible to allow movement of large mammalian fauna, ii) to secure corridors especially for elephant and buffalo specifically in the Mudumu LCA, iii) to try to ensure compatible land use among all parties within a LCA, iv) to enhance collaborative management within the LCA, and v) to try to harmonize the products from each LCA and seek mechanisms to enhance the supply chain for those products.

This approach however, reflects a narrow focus on wildlife and some habitat conservation but does not necessarily address the livelihood needs or aspirations



of all stakeholders. Within the Greater Waterberg LCA the communal conservancies had high expectations that the project would support their livestock activities. However, the Project Steering Committee was reluctant to provide the support that the communities desired without the blessing of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry. For various reasons this was not pursued further. This led to a belief that while other stakeholders were benefiting the communal conservancies were losing out (Williams and Mfune 2014).

It is a challenge within this narrow approach to landscape conservation to engage with those land users who have no real interest in developing land uses compatible with neighbouring protected areas and following a wildlife and tourism agenda.

3.1.3 Different levels of progress at Project start up

As noted above, the project built on some existing collaborative arrangements, but some landscapes were more advanced than others in terms of real cooperation. For example, the status of the Waterberg Landscape at the start of the project has been described as a good idea that existed more on paper than in practice because there was no shared vision for cooperation at the time between the key stakeholders.

There seems to have been an assumption that institutional capacity existed – especially in the Waterberg communal conservancies, but these at project start-up were institutionally too weak to properly engage, leading to a power imbalance with freehold farmers and the very active NGO, the Cheetah Conservation Fund. As a result a current focus of activities in the Waterberg LCA is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the communal conservancies such as support to holding their Annual General Meetings and remaining compliant with MET legislation. A challenge for project implementation was how to deal with these different levels of progress and capacity at start-up within the confines of the pre-defined project objectives and activities.

3.1.4 Sustainability

There are three key aspects to the sustainability of the landscapes – financial, institutional, and social. The Project Document recognises the importance of governance structures for landscape conservation and that the chances for sustainability are increased if such structures are informed by a shared vision among stakeholders (MET 2011).

The Project Document (MET 2011:69) also suggested that:

“The shared common vision for improved conservation and sustainable natural resource use coupled with already existing collaborative management arrangements established in Mudumu, Greater Waterberg, Greater Fish River and Sossusvlei-Namib landscapes secures the long-term social sustainability of these sites. In addition, these four sites have concept notes for co-management, constitutions (draft and approved), management and development plans, local level monitoring (LLM) and land use zoning plans in place which further secures the sustainability of a landscape level approach to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource use”.

The Project Document (MET 2011:69) also makes the bold statement that:

“Even without the support from the GEF, stakeholders will continue with the existing collaborative management arrangements to enhance biodiversity and ensure long-term sustainable benefits”.

With regard to the Waterberg the assumption of a shared vision and continuation of the existing collaborative management arrangements had not been properly

tested. The project annual standard progress report for 2013 (NAM-PLACE 2013a:6) states regarding Waterberg:

“Some stakeholders feel that the chairperson elected to represent the landscape at the Steering Committee has little relation to issues faced by communal groups and will not position their interests fully as a representative from the communal area would have. These differences have resulted in the landscape not able to plan the development of the landscape as a group due to different aspirations”.

Clearly the shared vision was not in evidence at Waterberg.

Further, concept notes for co-management, constitutions, management and development plans, local level monitoring and land use zoning plans alone do not lead to sustainability. The crucial point for sustainability is whether any of these bits of paper are referred to and implemented. There has to be institutional commitment, capacity, and available funding beyond the project to ensure implementation of plans and activities.

3.2 COMPLEXITY OF LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

The MTR rightly notes the complexity of landscape conservation (Williams and Mfune 2014). There are different aspects to this complexity. One is the diversity of stakeholders within most of the landscapes supported by the project. The different stakeholders have different land uses and aspirations, management objectives, different levels of implementation capacity and economic and political power, different cultures and histories, and different levels of interest and engagement and expectations. Thus there are differences of interest between state run protected areas and private sector neighbours and even within the private sector there are different interests between those farmers with a predominantly livestock farming focus and those who farm with wildlife. There are differences between individual farmers and those companies that buy up several farms for the establishment of private game reserves and photographic tourism operations.

There are also differences between communal farmers and communal area conservancies and their freehold counterparts. There is added complexity in communal areas where

within large communities there are different interest groups with different economic interests and aspirations. In some landscapes there are mines and large agricultural schemes that have quite different needs to wildlife or livestock farmers. Successful landscape conservation somehow needs to reconcile the differences in land use, in management objectives and in the economic power held by these stakeholders.

In the Windhoek Green Belt Landscape changing ownership of some farms meant that new owners did not share the interest of the previous owners resulting in some farms no longer being participating components of the landscape (NAM-PLACE 2013b). Some farmers on the edge of Windhoek were interested in developing their land for light industrial or for residential purposes. It is challenging to promote compatible land uses around the Daan Viljoen Game Reserve if several neighbours are interested in other forms of land development.

Another challenging aspect of complexity is the need to distinguish between appropriate landscape level interventions that add value to landscape level conservation compared to interventions at a much more localised scale that might have only local impact. Sometimes a local level intervention can have impacts across the landscape but other such interventions might only benefit one stakeholder or land unit within the landscape. The MTR for example suggested that some project activities in the Mudumu Landscape had a limited relevance for the project's Objective and Outcomes because they did not add sufficient value at landscape level (Williams and Mfunne 2014). However the Project Management team felt that these activities did in fact contribute to landscape conservation even if this was indirectly by serving as incentives for stakeholders to be part of landscapes (NAM-PLACE 2014b).

3.3 ROLE OF MET

A major challenge for establishing fully functioning LCAs has been the ambivalent approach of MET. Although MET signed the project document, several persons interviewed said that MET did not appear to give full support to the landscape activities, or did not have clear policies for supporting these activities. Some influential individuals in MET were reportedly

uncomfortable with the project providing support to the private sector in some landscapes given Namibia's racial politics of the past and the political drive for land redistribution post-independence. Efforts to link protected areas and freehold neighbours prior to the NAM-PLACE Project were often met by MET staff with the belief that the private sector would gain without any real benefit for MET. As a result of these persistent attitudes, one person interviewed suggested the project had come too early for MET in terms of its own institutional attitude towards cooperation with the private sector.

The project has supported the establishment of Landscape Associations as the governance bodies for each landscape and supported the development of constitutions to govern the affairs of the associations. The original intention was that MET would be part of the landscape associations. However government takes the position that it cannot join non-governmental bodies in such formal associations. Stakeholders expressed disappointment that MET is not willing to be a signatory to these constitutions. They suggested this has been demotivating and is being interpreted as a lack of commitment to the landscape conservation concept. Stakeholders feel the same about the reluctance of MET to commit to removing fences between parks and neighbouring private properties, which is an important part of landscape conservation in areas where wildlife seasonally moves between different areas or habitats. The lack of a clear MET policy on landscape conservation at project start-up has contributed to the lack of clear direction among MET personnel. Although the project was meant to help advocate the need for landscape conservation and feed into policy development, this was challenging for implementers. "The project has helped to ensure policy includes landscapes, but for project implementation we were operating in darkness" was one comment, and another: "We are implementing in doubt".

SUMMARY: CHALLENGES

Design & Implementation

- Lack of prior consultation of key stakeholders, combined with different expectations of different stakeholders, made it difficult for project personnel to meet the project deliverables while trying to meet the different needs and expectations of landscape stakeholders and bridge the gaps in perceptions about what the project should try to achieve.
- It is difficult within the project's narrow approach to landscape conservation based on wildlife and tourism to engage with those land users who are more interested in livestock farming or developing their land for other purposes.
- The project found different levels of progress and capacity within the LCAs at start-up and had to address these within the confines of the pre-defined project objectives and activities.
- Although there were vision statements, management plans and cooperative forums in place in four LCAs at start-up, not all had solid foundations of stakeholder participation and cooperation, undermining potential sustainability of the initiatives.

Complexity of landscape conservation

- The multiplicity of stakeholders with different backgrounds, economic interests and aspirations, power, land tenure, capacity, management objectives and land uses,
- required the project to find ways to reconcile these differences.
- The project needed to clearly distinguish between interventions that had impact at the landscape scale rather than activities that had only local impact.

Commitment of MET

- The lack of existing policy on landscape conservation, the reluctance of MET to commit to removing fences with neighbouring land, and reluctance of MET to formally join landscape associations led stakeholders to question MET's commitment.
- In the absence of clear policy and implementation guidelines MET personnel were implementing in "darkness and doubt" and unsure what they could commit to.

4 Lessons Learned

4.1 PROJECT DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

4.1.1 Consultation in the design phase

More consultation was required during the project preparatory phase to ensure that the project objectives and activities were more closely aligned with the expectations of the stakeholders in the individual landscapes, particularly as the project was building on existing initiatives. The 2012 Annual Project Review suggested this issue can be addressed in similar projects elsewhere by providing sufficient financial resources during the preparatory phase to ensure that all critical stakeholders residing furthest from the capital and central areas are also consulted (NAM-PLACE 2012b). The importance of proper consultation/participation of stakeholders in project design has been well recognised in the development literature, but it seems the lesson still needs to be learned.

4.1.2 Flexible and adaptive implementation

As noted above at project start-up there were differences in levels of capacity, funding availability, and implementation on the ground in the five LCAs. The MTR found, perhaps unsurprisingly, that those with better foundations had advanced further and more securely. In addition, the differences in progress at start-up and the different contexts for each landscape required different approaches and not uniform application of project interventions. The MTR found that as a consequence of the differences between the landscapes the project had to be implemented adaptively, as the landscapes would progress at different rates (Williams and Mfunne, 2014). Projects that are working at sites with different contexts and levels of progress at start-up need to be designed so that they can meet the different needs of the different sites. This requires improved consultation during the preparatory phase so that different needs can be clearly identified, and requires a flexible and adaptive approach to project implementation.

4.1.3 Strong government support for implementation

The participation of MET is crucial to the landscape approach where state-run PAs are involved. The

comments from stakeholders regarding the role of MET suggest the need for strong institutional support from the host ministry for such initiatives to be successful. This support needs to be translated into involvement on the ground and commitment to implementing joint management activities in the landscape. While there might be legal reasons why MET cannot sign constitutions for associations that include private entities, means need to be found for MET to show its commitment to working with the landscape associations. One means of doing this could be through signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the landscape associations setting out cooperative arrangements and MET's roles and responsibilities. MET personnel in some of the landscapes said they needed clear directions from senior management so they knew what activities they could engage in, particularly the removal of fences.

4.1.4 Implementation processes

A number of processes are involved in establishing and operating LCAs not just the technical aspects of writing constitutions and management plans, carrying out environmental studies and developing infrastructure. There are also processes of institution building with regard to governance issues – decision making, the exercise of power and influence, and developing a shared vision and agenda between different stakeholders with different interests. In addition, there are often lengthy processes involved in developing an enabling framework and policy development.

There is a need for functional institutions to implement management plans. Component 2 of the Project covers Collaborative Governance for the LCAs but the main targets and indicators are based on production of various plans. According to the project document the project would provide for systematic and institutional strengthening through building capacity in government, private lands and conservancies. However, the mechanisms and human resources to provide this institutional strengthening beyond developing constitutions and plans were not in place.

The MTR also identified the need to go beyond developing a policy framework for landscape conservation and establishing LCAs and for the project to support implementation activities: “The Project Document describes in detail and makes provision for

For example the communal area farmers in the Greater Waterberg LCA have a strong focus on livestock farming and there are few game animals left on their land. A Baseline Study on Integrated Rangeland Management was carried out for four Conservancies in the LCA but was not followed up on with implementation.

“This support needs to be translated into involvement on the ground and commitment to implementing joint management activities in the landscape.”

Component 3 of the Project: Incentives and Market Transformation, appears to have a bias towards wildlife and tourism and seems to assume that sustainable natural

the development of plans, agreements, assessments, policies and legislation. Aside from the establishment of the LCAs and infrastructural inputs, there is little mention of implementation of the resulting enabled environment. Where possible, the project should catalyse implementation processes” (Williams and Mfunne 2014:49). Either stronger provision for implementation should have been built into the project or a second phase should have been planned that supported implementation once an enabling framework was established.

resource use cannot include agriculture. For example an outcome of the project is expected to be (paragraph 189): “Production practices on community and private lands within five PLCAs are compatible with best practices in biodiversity management objectives while providing livelihoods to stakeholders.

4.1.5 Accommodating different land uses and meeting the needs of all land holders

Landholders need to see sufficient benefit in joining a landscape conservation initiative. Landscape Conservation Area projects involving multiple stakeholders with different land uses and aspirations therefore need to address sustainable land management and habitat management outside protected areas, rather than focusing mainly on the needs of protected areas to have compatible land uses on neighbouring land. The Project had a narrow interpretation of landscape conservation compared to international approaches which encompass a mosaic of land uses which do not only focus on the promotion of wildlife and tourism as land uses. Landscape conservation projects need to recognise and accommodate different land uses and different aspirations of land holders by emphasising sustainable land management and not only wildlife and tourism on land outside protected areas.

Ongoing paradigm shift from unsustainable to sustainable natural resource use (tourism, game products, revenue diversification) sustained”. Stakeholders interviewed suggest it is unrealistic to expect all farmers to switch from livestock to wildlife and tourism as a main form of land use and to buy in to a pre-conceived wildlife conservation agenda.

4.1.6 Project time frame

The experience of the NAM-PLACE Project once again highlights the need for project lifespans that go beyond even a five-year period. Because of the challenges in the Windhoek and Waterberg LCAs it was difficult to achieve the project outcomes. In the case of Waterberg, as indicated above, there was a need to build capacity among the communal area conservancies and address governance issues that had not been recognised in the project design.

Even in the southern LCAs which are recognised to be more successful, stakeholders from these areas question whether landscape level conservation activities will continue after the project. They believe another two-three years of project support that was also aimed at

weaning the LCAs off project funding would have helped to consolidate the landscape approaches.

It should be standard practice in all major projects of this nature to review the project design at inception. Often projects are implemented one-two years after the completion of the design because of the lengthy approval processes. By the time the project is implemented, circumstances can have changed. A review of the design to see if it is still appropriate at inception can identify such changes in circumstances and possibly any flaws in project assumptions.

4.1.7 Communication

Although English is the official language of Namibia stakeholders found it difficult to understand technical documents such as the Project Document written in English. There is a need to find ways of better communicating to stakeholders for whom English is their second or third language. Some stakeholders requested that technical documents such as the Project Document should be translated into the languages most used by local participants. For example a German speaker with good spoken English said he still had trouble understanding dense technical documents written in English. While translation of key documents into local languages could be time consuming and costly it could be important for ensuring a good understanding of the project and buy in from stakeholders. It could also be possible to produce summaries of key documents in local languages.

4.1.7 Institutional housing of the project

The project was housed in the Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA) instead of the DRSPM which is the MET directorate responsible both for conservation in state protected areas and for conservation outside these areas. The DEA had neither the authority nor the resources for implementation of project activities on the ground – this rested with the DRSPM. According to the Mid Term Review: “The lesson here is that the institutional housing is an important part of project planning and getting it right will enhance connections and, as a result, the effectiveness of project implementation.”

4.2 SUCCESS FACTORS

4.2.1 Shared resources or tourism assets

xperience in implementing the Mudumu complexes in Zambezi Region and the NAM-PLACE Landscape Conservation Areas shows that participation must be based on a real need for cooperation e.g. where wildlife is a shared resource with park neighbours, or where there is a common attraction for tourism. Both these conditions apply in the Mudumu, the Greater Fish River Canyon and Greater Sossusvlei-Namib landscapes, where neighbouring land units depend on the parks as tourism attractions and wildlife moves from the parks on to neighbouring land. Box 1 below describes how cooperation and participation by different stakeholders emerged in the Mudumu Landscape. In the Greater Fish River Canyon Landscape the Canyon provides a major tourism attraction and wildlife moves across the landscape as a shared resource. There has been good cooperation between MET and mostly freehold farmers and private game reserves. Joint activities include research, game counts, mapping, clean ups and marketing. Fences are being removed between the park and the Gondwana private game reserve and between farms. This has enabled mountain zebra to revive seasonal movement patterns leading to a significant increase in numbers.

However in the Waterberg and Windhoek landscapes there are greater differences in management agendas among members and there is not the same sense of a shared tourism attraction or managing a shared wildlife resource as in the other landscapes. There is little movement of wildlife from the state-run Waterberg Plateau Park on to neighbouring freehold farmland, and wildlife numbers are low on the communal farmland which is far from Waterberg – the core wildlife area for the LCA. The Project Annual Progress Report of 2012 (NAM-PLACE 2012a) points out that in the Windhoek Green Belt Landscape the Daan Viljoen Game Park at 4000ha and being fenced off provides limited opportunities to neighbouring farms in terms of tourism and wildlife spill over. It stated that among the lessons was that projects with limited time should target stakeholders who show special interests in landscapes approaches. One person interviewed noted that while neither Waterberg nor the Daan Viljoen parks served to unite stakeholders, from an MET perspective it was important to have good relationships with neighbours. However, the landscape conservation approach was not necessarily the best way to address this issue.

4.2.2 Building from the bottom up

As indicated in section 3.1.1 above some stakeholders felt that project outcomes were imposed from above and did not necessarily meet their needs. In addition, the concept for the Windhoek Green Belt Landscape was a new one to stakeholders and had to be introduced by the project. The problems experienced in setting up an LCA in the Windhoek Green Belt area demonstrate the difficulty in starting such initiatives from scratch where stakeholders themselves have not identified the need for cooperation. The Mudumu, Fish River and Sossusvlei-Namib LCAs developed from the bottom up and have proven to be the most successful.

Box 1 below presents the Mudumu North Complex and the Mudumu LCA as good examples of the importance of shared resources and/or tourism attractions and building from the bottom up.

4.2.3 Field-based coordinators

The project deployed field coordinators to facilitate

implementation in the landscapes. The Mid Term Review (Williams and Mfune 2014) found that the coordinators needed to be from appropriate backgrounds and have appropriate skills in promoting cooperation between different stakeholders – and be given appropriate training. Stakeholders also noted that such coordinators needed to be based in the landscape and not in the capital as was the case with the coordinators for the southern and central landscapes. If based in the landscape it was easier to communicate with all stakeholders and to keep abreast of local dynamics and developments and to understand the particular contexts and needs of individual landscapes. A locally based coordinator can help to keep pushing the landscape agenda, keep stakeholders motivated, and facilitate communication between stakeholders. This is the experience in the Greater Fish River Canyon and Greater Sossusvlei-Namib landscapes which are currently providing their own coordinators with funding assistance from the project.

BOX 1. CASE STUDY: MUDUMU NORTH COMPLEX (MNC) AND THE MUDUMU LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AREA (LCA)

The MNC and the Mudumu LCA are good examples of developing from the bottom up and cooperation based on shared resources and tourism attractions.

THE MNC:

In the MNC, MET and the conservancies/community forests have a shared interest in sustainable management of wildlife resources and the habitat they depend on. Wildlife moves between NPs and conservancies/community forests and the conservancies have rights over wildlife and tourism. There are some clear benefits for all parties in managing game animals sustainably and addressing land use issues in support of sustainable management. Initially stakeholders cooperated in anti-poaching activities. A reduction in poaching enabled MET to translocate game into the conservancies. The game translocations then provided a catalyst for further cooperation as stakeholders had to agree where the game should be introduced. The need to monitor the introduced game at complex scale led to the establishment of a joint monitoring team including MET rangers. Gradually more joint activities between MET and conservancies were added and it was decided to formalise the cooperation that was taking place. The MNC has been successful because stakeholders recognise that the complex should not take over the activities of the member units but implement what needs to be done at a larger scale. In addition to shared wildlife resources, the proximity of the parks provides conservancies with the opportunity to develop tourism facilities for visitors to the parks.

THE MUDUMU LCA:

With the support of the NAM-PLACE project the MNC has been successfully incorporated into a larger landscape conservation area with the Mudumu South Complex, forming the Mudumu Landscape. The landscape has its own strategic management plan and a constitution. So far the Mudumu Landscape has been the most successful in bringing together parks and communal area neighbours. It meets regularly and is active in addressing landscape level issues. The Mudumu landscape builds on the activities at complex level to address natural resource management across a much larger area of land.

4.2.4 Capacity

A particular advantage of the successful landscape approaches such as Mudumu and the Greater Fish River Canyon is that the combined involvement of different stakeholders develops a greater capacity for cooperation and implementation of joint activities. The different stakeholders bring different skills, knowledge, expertise and funding (C.J. Brown, pers. comm. October 2014).

4.2.5 Champions

Stakeholders noted that landscape approaches work better where there is an individual or stakeholder organisation that

can champion the concept and help to drive the process forward. This was the case in the southern landscapes where the Gondwana Collection has been a driving force in the Greater Fish River Canyon LCA and where both Gondwana and Namib Rand have taken on this role in the Sossusvlei-Namib LCA. However, such individuals or organisations should not become too dominant and try to steer the landscape activities to meet their own agendas at the expense of others.

SUMMARY: LESSONS LEARNED

Design & Implementation

- More consultation was required during the project preparatory phase to ensure that the project objectives and activities were more closely aligned with the expectations of the stakeholders in the individual landscapes.
- As a consequence of the differences between the landscapes the project had to be implemented adaptively, and not take a uniform approach to each landscape.
- Landscape conservation projects need to recognise and accommodate different land uses and aspirations of land holders not just a wildlife/tourism agenda.
- Project documents should be kept simple and at least summarised in local languages for better communication and understanding by stakeholders.
- Projects of this nature need to be housed with the agency responsible for on the ground implementation.

Success factors

- There is more likelihood of success where there is a real need for cooperation at landscape level e.g. where wildlife is a shared resource with park neighbours, or where there is a common attraction for tourism.
- Landscape initiatives are likely to be more successful when they have developed from the bottom up and not been imposed from the top down.
- Field based coordinators can play an important role in pushing the landscape agenda, keeping stakeholders motivated, and facilitating communication between stakeholders.
- The combined involvement of different stakeholders develops a greater capacity for cooperation and implementation of joint activities as they bring different skills, knowledge, expertise and funding sources.
- Landscape approaches work better where there is an individual or stakeholder organisation that can champion the concept and help to drive the process forward, but without dominating and promoting their own agendas at the expense of others.

5

Best Practices from the Namibian LCA Experience

5.1 BUILDING ON EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

As indicated above, the project was able to build on existing landscape conservation initiatives in the Mudumu, Greater Fish River and Sossusvlei-Namib areas which had developed from the bottom up and which were based on shared resources and/or tourist attractions. This was undoubtedly an advantage for the project. In these landscapes the foundations for scaling up to landscape level conservation had been laid to a large extent enabling the project to move much faster in these areas. It also meant that although there was resistance to landscape ideas by some stakeholders in these areas, with time they bought into the concept (NAM-PLACE 2012b). Although the Waterberg LCA appeared to have similar foundations, as indicated above these proved not to be so solid.

The Windhoek Green Belt area had no such prior initiatives and there was considerable resistance to the landscape approach by many farmers. It took much longer for farmers to become interested in the concept.

5.2 POLICY SUPPORT

The Project has supported the development of several MET policy documents. This policy development support to MET has been timely and well implemented. This is because there was a clear demand from MET for policies to underpin the proposed new parks and wildlife legislation. In addition the Project used Namibian consultants who have worked for MET, know the Namibian context and what is likely to be politically acceptable. Once consultants submitted draft policies these have been discussed in MET, reworked and have become fully MET owned policies and not project/consultant produced documents that sit on shelves.

5.3 ADAPTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TO ENCOURAGE STAKEHOLDER OWNERSHIP

The project team adapted its implementation approach

to meet the needs of each LCA and to promote more local level ownership of project activities. Due to the differences in nature of the landscapes, some of the activities identified in the project document were not supported by landscape stakeholders. As a result the

“The project was successful in accessing co-financing from other sources that helped to fund landscape activities, helping to spread project funding further. .”

Project Steering Committee agreed that activities could be identified at landscape level in order to accommodate the interests of the landscapes and the work plan was amended accordingly. This meant that some activities were embarked on that project personnel felt did not fully fall under the scope of the project, but were necessary in order to foster stakeholder participation and ownership.

5.4 INCLUSIVE STEERING COMMITTEE

Although the Project Steering Committee was initially composed of government representatives, it was changed to include representatives from the LCAs. It therefore became more inclusive representing not only government and project management, but also the private sector and local communities. This change also helped to ensure that decisions were taken transparently and could accommodate the different interests and needs of the different LCAs.

5.5 CO-FINANCING WITH OTHER PROJECTS

The project was successful in accessing co-financing from other sources that helped to fund landscape activities, helping to spread project funding further.

5.6 COMMUNICATIONS

The project tried different methods of communication and publicity including using social media and web sites for each LCA. The best method of communication with stakeholders was through the use of the telephone because many stakeholders were based in remote rural areas either

without e-mail or with weak or unreliable connection. The web sites for each LCA proved useful in providing information to outsiders and for holding data on the results of game counts etc.

SUMMARY: BEST PRACTICES

Building on existing arrangements

- By building on existing initiatives in the Mudumu, Greater Fish River and Sossusvlei-Namib areas which had developed from the bottom up and which were based on shared resources and/or tourist attractions, the project could move faster and resistant stakeholders could see progress and become participants.

Policy development

- This was successful because policies were required by MET, not part of a donor agenda, and once consultants had developed draft policies they were reworked by MET personnel and therefore owned by MET.

Adaptive Project Management

- The project team adapted its implementation approach to meet the needs of each LCA and to promote more local level ownership of project activities.

Inclusive Steering Committee

- Although the Project Steering Committee was initially composed of government representatives, it was changed to include representatives from the LCAs making it more inclusive and able to accommodate the needs of the different LCAs.

Co-financing

- The project was able to source co-financing for various activities.

Communication

- The project adapted its communication methods to suit constraints in the field while also making the best use of digital technology.

6

Sustainability of the landscape conservation approach in Namibia

One of the outcomes of Component 3 of the Project is that LCA management costs are underwritten by stakeholders through an agreed financial management system with appropriate revenue/benefit sharing mechanisms in place. This outcome, if achieved, would provide a foundation for the financial sustainability of the LCAs. However, as indicated above, stakeholders interviewed believe the LCAs have not yet reached this position, raising questions about their future sustainability. Some of the difficulties in achieving this outcome are related to the differences in the ability of different stakeholders in the landscapes to contribute financially. Thus it might be argued that a large private game reserve is able to contribute more to landscape operations than a single farmer. However there is a limit to which even the large private game reserves can use their resources to keep LCA operations going. There are also different aspects to sustainability, not just the financing of operations. These aspects are considered below.

6.1 PROJECT ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTING TO SUSTAINABILITY

The project has taken a number of steps to either improve tourism products in the LCAs or to develop new products. To some extent these can be expected to have an impact on income generation within the LCAs. If new products are to help support the LCA operations then there need to be mechanisms for income and using it at the landscape level. The Windhoek Green Belt LCA has with project support developed a hiking trail through the landscape and a percentage of the tourism fees is kept back for landscape management costs.

6.2 NATIONAL LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

As indicated above MET commitment to the landscape conservation approach is crucial both for implementation on the ground, but also for long-term sustainability of the approach. This commitment needs to be shown

through implementation on the ground as well as clear policy guidelines for implementation. MET has already included the landscape approach in its National Policy on Protected Areas' Neighbours and Resident Communities and will publish guidelines for implementing this policy. The inclusion of the landscape approach in policy has laid the foundation for the approach to be incorporated in the new parks and wildlife legislation. Further, the DRSPM is being restructured and has included in its own annual work plan an output on parks and neighbours and landscape conservation for which it will provide a budget. As part of the restructuring a three person unit will be established to coordinate activities related to engagement with communities residing in or neighbouring parks and landscape conservation areas. These developments will go a long way to providing the clear direction that MET personnel require for implementing landscape conservation and working with a variety of partners and stakeholders. Staff members should no longer be "implementing in doubt and darkness" and partners should see a clear commitment from MET to supporting LCAs.

Commitment and participation from land holders is also a crucial element of long-term sustainability of the approach. The current narrow parks and wildlife focus of the landscape conservation approach should be

“The project has taken a number of steps to either improve tourism products in the LCAs or to develop new products. .”

expanded to embrace the concept of sustainable land management as a means of gaining the interest and support of farmers whose main livelihood activities are livestock and/or crop farming.

With support for sustainable livestock and grazing management and support for appropriate methods of crop farming that include reduction of human wildlife con-

flict, some farmers could be contributing to the creation or maintenance of wildlife corridors across landscapes, even if not fully engaged in wildlife and tourism as land uses. However, their needs and interests should be recognised and included in landscape activities.

6.3 LANDSCAPE LEVEL REQUIREMENTS

At the landscape level sustainability will be supported if each LCA has its own Landscape Coordinator possibly supported by an administrative assistant (Williams and Mfunne 2014). The coordinator and any additional staff will need to be housed within the landscape. In order to avoid suspicion of furthering special interests, ideally the staff members should be employed by and report to the management committee for the landscape association rather than being housed within one of the stakeholder organisations. The landscape coordinator will require an office, transport and communications systems.

Each LCA should have its own Financial Sustainability Plan which should look at how revenue will be raised for landscape operational costs, and what contributions can be made by members (Williams and Mfunne 2014). It could also be a role of the landscape coordinator to seek additional funding.

Until sustainable means of funding have been secured, stakeholders suggested that in some LCAs members would be able to fund meetings themselves which have so far been subsidised by NAM-PLACE. Lodges in parks or on private game reserves could host meetings and provide accommodation.

6.4 ADDITIONAL DONOR FUNDING

Stakeholders indicated that the landscapes were not yet at the stage where they could fully fund their own activities. There will be a need for further external funding for ongoing conservation activities such as research and monitoring and salaries for landscape staff.

SUMMARY: SUSTAINABILITY

National Level - Sustainability will be enhanced where:

- There is clear policy committing government to landscape conservation and clear guidelines for implementation by government officials.
- Government commits staff and budgets to implementation.
- Landscape approaches are broad in scope, can accommodate different land uses, promote sustainable land management and do not only focus on wildlife and tourism.

Landscape Level - Sustainability will be enhanced where:

- Each LCA has its own Landscape Coordinator possibly supported by an administrative assistant, employed by the landscape association, and provided with an office, transport and communications systems.
- Each LCA has its own Financial Sustainability Plan which indicates how members will contribute (e.g. through commission on landscape wide tourism activities, member levies, etc.).
- Until sustainable means of funding have been secured, LCA members fund meetings themselves which have so far been subsidised by NAM-PLACE.

In addition:

- Landscapes should seek further external funding for ongoing conservation activities such as research and monitoring and salaries for landscape staff until they are able to pay for these themselves.

7

Replicating the process at other sites

Replication implies copying or duplicating what has been done before. The aim should not be to copy or duplicate, but to follow a process and set of steps that will allow land holders in each landscape to identify the issues over which they need or wish to cooperate and then develop their own vision for landscape conservation based on the needs and interests of stakeholders. There should be space for land holders in a

landscape to set their own objectives and not be confined by a pre-determined agenda. Based on the experiences in the LCAs supported by NAM-PLACE, the following provides a framework for developing LCAs at other sites in Namibia with hopefully some relevance to other GEF-funded projects supporting landscape conservation:

1

DEVELOP ENABLING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Ensure there is enabling policy, legislation and implementation guidelines in place that provide clear commitment to the approach by government and guidance for government officials and other stakeholders in how the approach can be implemented (e.g. clear policy on taking down fences between state-run parks and neighbouring conservation areas, government taking part in collaborative forums, etc.)

2

BUILD ON EXISTING COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

Build on any existing cooperation across the larger landscape. If these do not exist, identify existing collaborative initiatives or forums (e.g. human wildlife conflict management committees or liaison forums in or around NPs) and use these as an entry point for discussion of larger landscape conservation opportunities.

3

IDENTIFY THE KEY AREAS FOR COOPERATION

Work with land holders/stakeholders to identify the key areas that require cooperation. Establish whether there is a real need and potential for landscape conservation or whether the main objective is improved relationships between the park and its immediate neighbours and this can be achieved by other means. Establish whether there is a common tourism attraction that needs managing or promoting, whether there are shared natural resources that need joint management or sustainable land management activities that can be jointly undertaken.

4

DEVELOP A VISION FOR LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

Work with the land holders and stakeholders to develop a shared vision for landscape conservation that embraces the needs and interests of all the participants. Based on this vision, develop objectives for landscape conservation and strategies to achieve these objectives. Ensure less powerful stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute fully.

5

IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS CAPACITY DIFFERENCES AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Where there are stakeholders from different backgrounds, and some who are less powerful than others, identify their different capacity status and support needs. If necessary identify activities that can build their capacity to fully contribute as LCA members in the governance of the LCA. Source funding and technical support to carry out these activities.

6

ESTABLISH A LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT BODY

The landscape will need some form of management body that can take decisions, direct activities, acquire and manage funds, hire staff, etc. In order to carry out these functions some form of legal body will be required such as an association of members with a constitution that provides for a management committee that can act on behalf of members.

7

ESTABLISH AGREEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Landscape Association should include the relevant government agencies where possible. If there are particular circumstances that preclude government establishing a formal relationship with non-government entities, then the government and landscape association should enter into a formal agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement that sets out roles, responsibilities, contribution of government, contribution of other stakeholders, mutual commitments to activities such as dropping fences where appropriate, game translocation, cooperation in joint game counts, research and monitoring, etc.

8

BE IMPLEMENTATION ORIENTED

Planning should be kept to the minimum necessary to guide implementation. LCAs should develop a basic management plan that is not too technical, but comprehensible and useful for all land holders and stakeholders in the landscape. A basic work plan should indicate how the management plan will be implemented and assign roles and responsibilities for implementation. A budget should be developed for implementation and funding sourced locally and/or externally where appropriate. Development of the management plan, work plan and budget should include all members of the landscape association unless members have specifically mandated the LCA management committee to do this on their behalf. The management plan should be guided by the vision and objectives for the landscape, and should therefore accommodate the interests and address the needs of all landholders and stakeholders. The LCA should also develop a basic business/financial sustainability plan that sets out projected costs, income, sources of income and means of increasing income in the future.

9

MAINTAIN A LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVE

Plans and activities should be agreed based on the need for cooperation at the landscape level to achieve common objectives. The landscape association should not implement activities that a landholder member could or should carry out at the local level. Landscape activities should be those that need to be carried out at a larger scale than individual land units.

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