

E Environmental management

Through the CFF, ICEMA promotes income generation through sustainable integrated ecosystem management (IEM) activities. As much as a subproject demonstrates long term economic sustainability it must at all times avoid adverse environmental impacts. "Environment" in this context encompasses the natural environment and human health and safety. Conservancies and community forests are encouraged to bear safeguard, social and environmental impacts in mind once an idea has been formalised and agreed upon for a subproject. This ESMF has checklists annexed that will facilitate impact screening but the ICEMA PO can avail technical assistance, when needed, to communities for impact screening early in the development of a subproject proposal.

Planning at conservancy level

The ICEMA Project encourages conservancies to undertake as much of the planning and decision-making as possible at the local level, since this is an important aspect of capacity building and empowerment. However, it is also necessary that the conservancy maintains a direct line of communication with the MET, especially on issues that are likely to require higher level planning, such as an EIA.

Conservancies must develop their own CMPs. This must be done in consultation with all the conservancy members (inclusive of all Interested and Affected Parties) and relevant stakeholders so that a consensus-based plan can be produced. Participation by extension staff of government ministries (especially MET) and SOs can be extremely beneficial through provision of technical advice. The CMP serves as framework for all future decision making and sets out clearly what will be allowed to happen in each area. It should clearly identify;

- All individual projects that are likely to be implemented;
- how the land in the conservancy will be used (zonation), and by whom;
- who is responsible for undertaking the various tasks; and
- how decisions will be communicated to the members and residents of the conservancy; and to support organizations that might be working with the conservancy.

Thus, the above must be in place when a conservancy develops a subproject application for funding by the CFF. ICEMA makes funds available for technical assistance to conservancies for the development of CMPs. Based on information in the CMP about future proposed activities, preliminary environmental and social screening can be done.

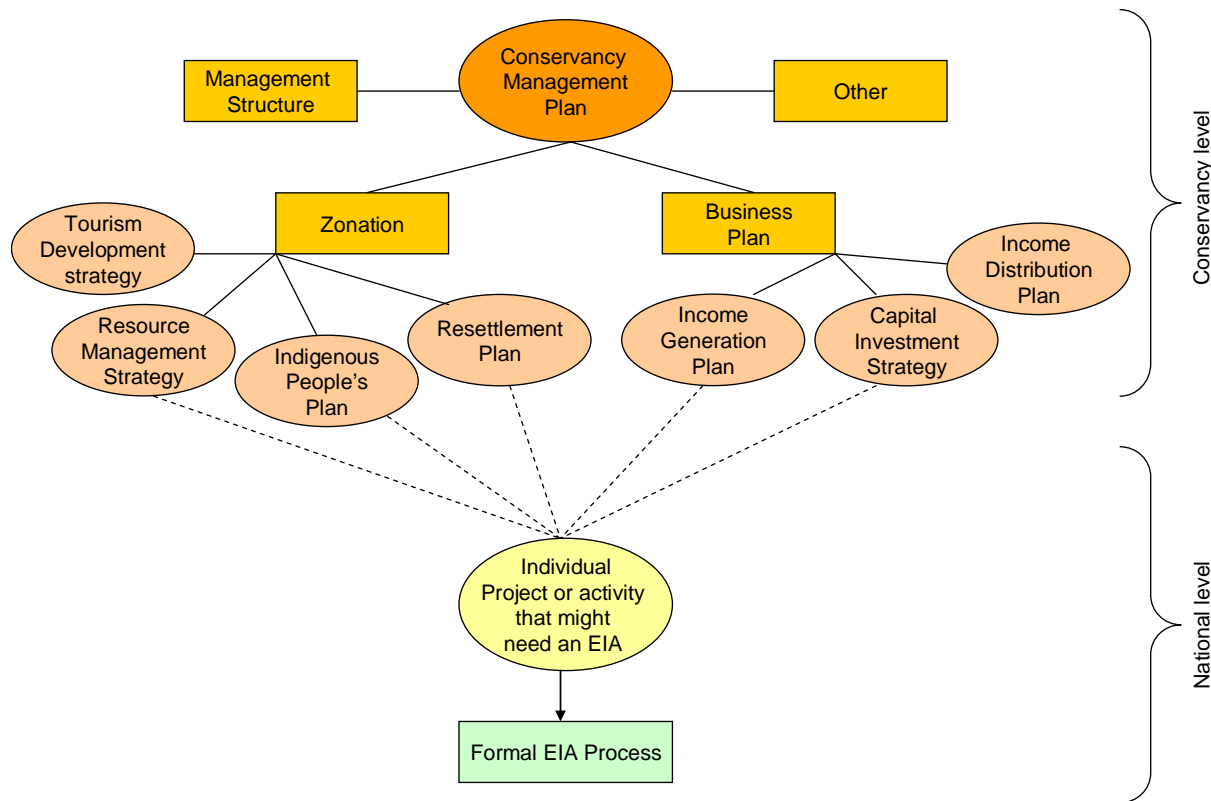


Figure 2: Demonstrates a Management Planning process for a conservancy (ESA 2003)

Environmental impact assessment (EIA)

Namibia's Environmental Assessment policy is clear on the process that must be followed in the mitigation of impacts through conducting Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs). However, long before an EIA is contemplated or done; the planning system within the conservancies needs to be followed (Figure 2).

EIAs will be conducted very pragmatically to ensure that the implementation of subprojects with negligible impacts is not slowed down and that ones with serious potential negative impact are thoroughly screened and assessed prior to funding approval.

Environmental management plan (EMP)

Certain activities will have explicit impact on the natural environment and thus require a specific plan to institute and monitor mitigation measures and take desired actions as timely as possible. An Environmental Management Plan (EMP) at conservancy/ community forest level must be kept as simple as possible, clearly describing adverse impacts and mitigation actions that are easy to implement. The scale of the subproject will determine the length of the EMP. A small-scale subproject's EMP can be elaborated in a few paragraphs or in tabular format (Annex 5 as example), keeping it as simple as possible with concrete mitigation actions, timelines and responsible persons. The basic elements of an EMP are;

- a. A description of the possible adverse effects that the EMP is intended to deal with;
- b. A description of planned mitigation measures, and how and when they will be implemented;

- c. A programme for monitoring the environmental effects of the project – both positive and negative;
- d. A description of who will be responsible for implementing the EMP; and
- e. A cost estimate and source of funds

The community must participate in the development of the EMP since local knowledge is important in identifying, designing and planning the implementation. In addition, the success of the implementation of the EMP will depend on community support and action; ownership is essential.

Cultural property

The World Bank Operational Policy (OP 4.11) defines cultural property as; "...including sites having archaeological (prehistoric), paleontological, historical, religious, and unique natural values". It thus includes both remains left by previous human inhabitants (e.g. middens, shrines, rock art and battlegrounds) and unique natural environmental features such as canyons and waterfalls.

The EIA Policy considers biophysical, social, archaeological and cultural issues as all being part of the environment. Hence, impact screening for a subproject must include firstly, identifying the presence of cultural property (as defined above) and secondly, determining whether the proposed subproject may damage such property. ICEMA will establish contact with the National Monuments Council to solicit their cooperation with regard to the identification of cultural property within conservancies/ community forests.

Natural habitats and forest areas

The World Bank's Operational Policy (OP 4.04) defines natural habitat as land and water areas where i) the ecosystem's biological communities are formed largely by native plant and animal species, and ii) human activity has not essentially modified the area's primary ecological functions. The operational policy also distinguishes between;

- a. *Critical natural habitats* (e.g. existing protected areas and areas officially proposed by Governments as protected areas, areas initially recognised as protected by traditional local communities (e.g. sacred graves), and sites that maintain conditions vital for the viability of these protected areas (as determined by the EIA process).
- b. *Significant conversion* is the elimination or severe diminution of the integrity of a critical or other natural habitat caused by a major, long-term change in land or water use (e.g. land clearing; replacement of natural vegetation; permanent flooding; drainage, dredging, filling, or channelisation of wetlands; or surface mining).
- c. *Degradation* is modification of a critical or other natural habitat that substantially reduces the habitat's ability to maintain viable populations of its native species.

Subprojects cannot be funded if they involve the significant conversion or degradation of natural habitats unless there are no feasible alternatives (including the subproject site) and the overall benefits from the subproject substantially outweigh the environmental costs. If a subproject would significantly convert or degrade a natural habitat, the ESMF specifies that the subproject needs to incorporate acceptable mitigation measures such as minimizing habitat loss and establishing and maintaining an ecologically similar area.

One of the aims of the conservancy approach is to halt or reduce further modification and maintain areas of natural habitat within the conservancy. Management planning (in conservancies and community forests), through the zonation of land use and resources,

aid in spatially defining important areas and prompt the need, through TA, for ongoing monitoring and conservation of natural habitats and forest areas. TA, provided by government extension and/or support organisation staff, can play a vital role during the visioning and management planning exercise to provide communities with pertinent information about the occurrence and importance of natural habitats and forest areas. Where management plans are not coarsely accurate in the zonation of natural habitat and forest area ICEMA can provide resources for updates.

The above must be considered during a subproject's impact screening and if/when an EIA is necessary it will be considered explicitly during the scoping stage (see Annex 4 for EIA Process).

Annex 6 provides guidance for subproject planning with respect to natural habitat and forest area.