



In the Kunene conservancies of this study, the dominant strategies and livelihood priorities relate to the production and ownership of livestock, principally cattle and goats. People tend gardens, but while they do supply additional food they are not very significant in terms of incomes. There are relatively few opportunities for formal employment and there are fewer natural resources available to people. Wildlife is an important resource and in some contexts may offer opportunities to supplement food and incomes in combination with existing strategies.

One opportunity to enhance livelihoods in Kunene Region is for conservancies to support improved livestock production and market access, particularly for goats. This would improve the amount of cash available to people, reduce the transaction costs of market access itself and lead to improved livelihood security. Research data presented in this report illustrates that expenditures on the health of livestock are significant. Providing support in the production of stock (through improved access to health care) would also free up some of the capital expenditure that seasonally goes on dealing with animal health. Any future strategies that aim to provide support for livestock production will have a differential impact on the different groups. In a worst-case scenario, this could lead to benefits for the wealthiest and further marginalisation for poorer groups. Support for livestock needs to be tempered by the realisation that there is differentiation between livestock owners, with some having relatively large herds and farming commercially, and others holding small numbers of stock for subsistence. It would be necessary for conservancies to decide how they would address equity issues if taking the route of supporting livestock production. In order for residents to decide on how best CBNRM can supplement existing livelihood activities, they need to assess the costs and benefits of different activities and the trade offs among the different wealth groups.

There are a variety of opportunities of these kinds that would provide effective ways in which the conservancies could support livelihood security. The conclusion that WILD presents here is not that the conservancies need to take up the options identified by WILD research, but rather a livelihoods perspective offers the means to rethink support strategies in ways that would be more meaningful locally, taking into account issues of differentiation and equity. Furthermore, providing support that draws on the resources of the conservancy, but directly addresses livelihoods, would create a direct link between conservancy activities and livelihoods – in this way improving synergy between the two.

#### Recommendations:

1. An approach to conservancy development (planning and decision-making) that supports both improved livelihood security and diversification opportunities

through building on existing livelihoods strategies and activities needs to be adopted and mainstreamed with the CBNRM programme. Funds need to be made available and the requisite support provided to include this component as a fourth pillar of support to conservancies.

2. At the level of service provision and conservancy support, skilled specialist personnel need to be brought in to train Namibian staff in the use of the methodologies that address the above. The use of a Household Livelihood Security methodology and its extension through a training of trainers approach – with the aim of training conservancy-level people to conduct these assessments independently – should be considered as a priority among NACSO partners.
3. In the context of future opportunities for funding CBNRM (for example, the new wave of USAID-funded support to CBNRM in Namibia), MET and NACSO should evaluate proposed projects and programmes in terms of how far they are likely to meet the above objectives.

Specific recommendations to provide livelihood security and address diversification that draw from the research findings presented in this report include:

1. In Caprivi, conduct analysis of natural resource product market access and identification of new markets and any barriers or constraints to entry (through existing groups like Phytotrade and CRIAA).
2. Support conservancies to identify and assess options to use conservancy income to support better livestock and crop production (micro-credit, provision of draught power, animal health support, market access etc.) and to address the implications of doing so in terms of equity.
3. Where appropriate identify funding opportunities outside of the conservation sector that would assist with piloting projects focused on support to rural livelihoods: for example, through the provision of micro-credit or through extension support to livestock breeding and cash cropping or small non-farm enterprise development.

#### Critical factors that affect livelihoods: conservancies, institutions and governance

The conclusions provided here discuss those factors which have an effect on the ability of people within conservancies to pursue their livelihoods and to access resources. The discussion focuses on governance arrangements at the local level. These include highly local and specific factors relating to social relations and power; relationships between the conservancy institutions and the traditional authority structures; the existence of overlapping and competing



institutions for resource management and a lack of integration between them; the issue of participation and mechanism of support; and policy and legislation.

**Social relations** in the conservancies are variously organised according to kin and lineage structures and other kinds of social networks based on common allegiance to institutions, political groups, traditional authorities and common locality and so on. There is often an imbalance of power within these relationships based on differences of status and wealth. These relationships serve to provide a valuable safety net for people, but conversely can put a drain on people's resources, as people make claims on each other. In Chapter 6, the discussion centred on the issue of illegal wildlife use at household level. The chapter explored some of the issues associated with how power relations between people create a situation in which it becomes possible for those in positions of power (formally through links with institutions or informally by virtue of their wealth) to gain preferential access to key resources. Similarly access to land and water is mediated by the same kinds of relationships. These relationships are the 'stuff of life' for rural communities. While there will always inevitably be these differences, in some cases the traditional authorities and headmen can act to resolve disputes arising from the monopoly of resource access by powerful elites. In the context of CBNRM and the establishment of conservancy institutions the exact role of the conservancy and its power in this regard are unclear. This can lead to a situation in which it is relatively easy for some elite groups to monopolise access to resources (particularly land, water and wildlife) and decision-making arenas. One of the reasons for this relates to the lack of clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities of key conservancy players, for example, game guards and other staff.

**Traditional authorities and conservancies:** The conservancies links to traditional authorities vary between the two study regions. In Caprivi, the strong support provided by the traditional authorities has created a legitimate foundation for conservancy development. In Kunene, the conservancy links with the traditional authorities have been less strong, and this has in some cases lead to a lack of clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities for key resource management decisions, particularly regarding water and land. In Kunene, the traditional authorities are also in a relatively weak position and the emergence of the conservancies has been seen as some by a direct threat to their already limited authority. A good example relates to the issue of group tenure, raised in the context of both Caprivi and Kunene.

Formerly, access to grazing was the responsibility of the traditional authorities and village headmen. A situation of negotiated access prevailed, but overseen by the traditional authorities. This led to a degree of flexibility, allowing for

the extensive movements of livestock in arid areas and access to certain areas during drought. Within conservancy boundaries, for all intents and purposes, this system remains much the same (with the exception of access to areas zoned specifically for wildlife). It is in the context of relationships with external customary resource users and the issue of exclusion that there are difficulties. Although the conservancies have responsibility for land they have no authority to enforce exclusion, particularly in conservancies where the traditional authority structures are relatively weak. While this represents a threat to the conservancies in terms of the depletion of their own resources and any lost revenues, it could also be potentially problematic for the livelihoods of people who live in the boundary areas.

**Institutional complexity:** There are a range of different institutions with different roles and responsibilities for NRM in the conservancies. The conservancies are only one of a number of institutions and structures of authority that have a responsibility and a mandate to make resource management decisions. In some cases there is an overlap in terms of responsibility, and there is currently a lack of coordination and synergy between institutions and organisations. Opportunities to create better synergy are being addressed by conservancies through the adoption and implementation of integrated approaches to NRM planning (Kwandu for example).

The issue of integration and sectoral collaboration, however, presents a number of practical challenges. The distances from urban and regional centres – and therefore opportunities for better sectoral coordination between the conservancies and government departments – is a particular problem in Kunene. In Caprivi, distance is less of an issue, but the resources required to attend meetings and for better communication are lacking. Appropriate fora through which collaboration can take effect are also needed.

The Government's decentralisation processes offer an opportunity to coordinate the various different resource management committees and institutions. At local level the establishment of the VDCs provides the opportunity for an appropriate forum for integration at an appropriate scale. The CDCs, and ultimately the RDCs, offer opportunities to link to regional developments and to coordinate various Ministry departments. The effectiveness of decentralisation in achieving better intersectoral collaboration and linking regional planning to conservancy development is, however, hampered by the current slow pace of implementing the policy of decentralisation and a lack of clarity concerning the exact role and function of VDCs. At the time of fieldwork, WILD was given the explicit directive to work through the RDC in Opuwo. This was not possible during the project's three years' duration because, although the committee had met on several occasions, it was not a



functional committee as such. In Caprivi, by contrast, there are functioning VDCs and CDCs. At a regional level there is also an RDC that meets on a regular basis.

The Communal Lands Act may offer the means to create better coordination in terms of land-use planning and integration through the establishment of the Communal Lands Boards. Conservancies will have representation on these boards, together with traditional authority members and various government departments. In terms of issues relating to the granting of leases for various land uses in conservancies, the boards must reach agreements – the fora that the lands boards offer may provide additional opportunities for collaboration and to strengthen tenurial land rights. The boards are being formally constituted, but there is a lack of clarity as to exactly how the conservancies will be represented and what powers they may have. The same lack of clarity exists in terms of the role of the traditional authorities on these boards.

**Participation and the provision of support:** In terms of household livelihoods, most resource use and management decisions take place at the household and inter-household levels. In contrast, resource management by committees at conservancy level operates at a much broader scale. The result is that in some cases there are essentially two different forms of resource management that co-exist within conservancies – household and conservancy. This has the effect of distancing the primary resource users from resource management decisions that the conservancy may make. The issue of grazing access decisions and conservancies' desires to achieve exclusion, the issue of zonation for tourism and wildlife, and the differences between wildlife management at conservancy level and management and use at household level, are clear examples. There is a need for the inclusion of resource management practice at the household level within the decision-making and planning processes of the conservancies. In terms of the participation and the inclusion of community residents in decision-making and planning, there is no systematic approach being adopted or promoted and participation remains *ad hoc*. In the Caprivi case, links through village headmen to the hierarchy of traditional authority structures continue to provide an effective means of communication between the conservancy and membership. In Kwandu Conservancy there has been a broadly inclusive approach to NRM planning. Elsewhere there appear to be poor channels of communication between conservancies and their communities. External support organisations share responsibility for a lack of participation and poor communication within conservancies, since the focus of much of their support has been in building internal institutional capacity, NRM and enterprise development, and not on improving systems of governance (including accountability and participation).

While the prospect of improving participation would at first sight appear a daunting task, the discussion in this report (particularly Chapter 9) identifies that people already have effective means of collaboration and participate in the resolution of disputes and problem solving in relation to resource access. There are also a number of cooperative and functioning groups and clubs, including the churches, farmers' unions and water point committees, not to mention the kin and lineage groups at inter and intra-household farm and village level, that provide opportunities for social interaction, communication and collaboration. The existence of these groups offers some opportunity to build on existing decision-making and problem-solving fora and to address the issue of participation. While conservancies are bodies that meet particular legal requirements and are therefore organised accordingly, at a lower level it is important that structures to improve communication and participation are not developed in addition to or in parallel with existing fora. The issue of participation and communication is not only important in order to address improved decision-making and planning: the issue is at the heart of the legitimising conservancies as institutions.

In some cases there are good opportunities for participation. In Caprivi, the traditional authority structures, with representation from individual villages all the way to the chief's courts, offer an opportunity for the concerns of local people to be included in conservancy decision-making. Internal institutional and structural arrangements at conservancy level are important in terms of addressing participation, but the role of support organisations is also critical in the determination of conservancy development.

Support organisations have provided guidance and training in support of a range of conservancy development activities. These have focused on developing capacities for institutional management, enterprise development and NRM – predominantly at the conservancy committee level. Discussion in Chapter 4 in this report, considered why there has been less emphasis on addressing governance and participation. Part of the reason for this relates to the conservation and wildlife management origins of CBNRM, but the analysis in this report also highlights the extent to which the balance of power within NACSO itself remains in the hands of those with biological and technical competences. There are a number of organisations and individuals who recognise the value and contribution that community and social development expertise can make, but they represent the smaller and weaker organisations within NACSO. The presence of strong advocates with the appropriate professional skills and a clear mandate to develop a programme of systematic participatory livelihoods and poverty-focused support is lacking. The new phases of funding that will help shape the future of CBNRM and the development of the conservancies (through USAID and the



World Bank Global Environment Facility) provide an important opportunity to address this limitation.

A focus on improving participation is a priority in terms of ensuring that conservancies are able to address both the livelihood security needs of their communities and the continued support of members and residents for the conservancy initiative.

### Recommendations:

1. Assist conservancies in the production and circulation of policies and guidelines relating to the roles and responsibilities of staff. This will minimise the opportunities there are for bias and for local power groups to act with impunity.
2. Ensure that the different levels of authority, particularly existing traditional authorities, have a role and are represented at conservancy level, but leave the nature of relationships with the traditional authority to be developed locally reflecting regional and local contexts.
3. Support the efforts of central Government to decentralise, and where functioning work with village and other level development committees (constituency and regional) to coordinate the various activities of the Government and service providers.
4. Ensure that conservancy activities and plans are integrated through these forums with the plans and activities of other institutions.
5. Support organisations, particularly NGOs through NACSO, need to incorporate a strong social development component within the current organisational structures of support.
6. Based on the above, the appropriate support organisations (either existing or new) must address the issue of participation. The following process or something very similar must form the foundation for improving participation. Conduct preparatory studies with community groups to address the issue of participation. The focus of this should be on working with community groups to identify existing networks of cooperation (institutional or otherwise); the resources and issues that are currently the focus of these groups; issues of inclusion (who is included and who is not, and why?); and what the current linkages are between these groups and conservancies or other bodies. This dialogue could then form the basis of support to establish lower-tier representative conservancy groups. These could be through any existing networks (e.g. church, traditional authority structures, water point committees, neighbourhood groups, kin networks) and there may be more than one or many. Support should then be given to assist these groups with the identification of their core functions, responsibilities and linkages to other

groups. Then there should be an opportunity to pilot the appropriateness of the establishment of these groups in a number of different conservancy contexts (biophysical, social etc.) and assist in establishing effective linkages with the conservancy institutions.

## Policy, Legislation and Institutions

Throughout this report the issue of policy and legislation has been highlighted as a constraint to livelihood and conservancy development. From the discussion of the evolution of CBNRM and associated policy, through the discussion of conservancy membership to recognition of a lack of security in terms of group tenure, policy and legislation play an extremely important role in shaping the opportunities available to both conservancies and individuals. Here the discussion provides a summary of key policy issues that require attention.

The question of whether or not the intentions of policy are currently being met is important. A key issue here relates to the 'gap' between the intention of policy in terms of devolving rights and benefits to a *rural community* and the focus on building the capacity of the legal *institutions* to achieve these rights. This has led to a lack of 'internal legitimacy' within the conservancies. The issue of membership highlights the problem. This issue has important implications for ownership and empowerment in the context of the management and use of resources. The notion of community is particularly problematic as it is defined in different contexts differently. As such it is not a term that can be predefined – for example, as a group of registered conservancy members. Here there is also a potential legal issue relating to the difference between the Wildlife Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 and regulations. On the one hand, the Act is enabling, giving rights to communities; but on the other hand, the regulations are restrictive and prescriptive not allowing communities the autonomy to define for themselves who is a member of the conservancy and therefore who can be beneficiaries. This issue needs further review, but relates to the issue of rights – i.e. communities given the right to define themselves in the Act, but regulations say those who can benefit are only registered members. In many cases this does not fit with community members' own understanding of who is in and who is out. The implications of this are that there are concerns relating to equity in terms of the distribution of benefits.

The legislation provides rights to conservancy committees and not the community: this breaks the chain of accountability. Conservancy committees are legally accountable upwards to the Government, but not downwards to their members. Evidence for this has been provided in a number of places throughout this report.