

Ex post evaluation – Namibia

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Sector: Biodiversity (41030)
Project: Bwabwata Mudumu Mamili National Parks, Phase II, BMZ no. 2005 66 539*
Implementing agency: Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET)



Ex post evaluation report: 2018

		Planned	Actual
Investment costs (total)	EUR million	5.07	4.41
Counterpart contribution	EUR million	1.57	1.14
Funding	EUR million	3.50	3.27
of which BMZ budget funds	EUR million	3.50	3.27**

*) Random sample 2017;

**) EUR 0.23 million in residual funds for phase III

Summary: The project was based on an initiative of the Namibian government to create a national park network in the northern regions of Kavango and Zambezi, and supported the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism in developing and implementing integrated park management approaches in the three national parks of Bwabwata, Mudumu and Mamili (renamed as Nkasa Ruparo in 2012). In particular, the appropriate participation of the local population in decision-making processes and revenues was ensured in order to reduce the external pressure on protected areas. Phase II (2011–2013) to be evaluated here comprised the funding of infrastructure and equipment for the national parks as well as support measures in the adjacent areas and consulting services as part of the park management and cooperation with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on nature conservation and tourism issues. The project area is part of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA).

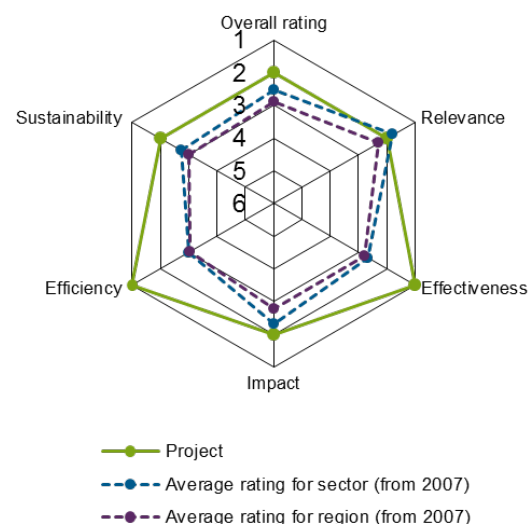
Objectives: Overarching developmental objectives (impact): 1) Contribution to ecological development by maintaining the corridor function for wildlife migration in the KAZA area, and 2) Economic development of the population and local residents. Project objective (outcome): The creation of effective park management, taking due account of the interests of residents and neighbours of the parks and their participation in the economic exploitation of the parks.

Target group: Project participants consist of the project-executing agency, the park administrations, the residents and neighbours of the parks as well as global society.

Overall rating: 2

Rationale: By consolidating the selected parks, the evaluated project made a marked contribution to the recovery of the wildlife population and the preservation of biodiversity in the project region. Through the participatory involvement of the local population in so-called conservancies (communal conservation areas), poverty and utilisation pressure were taken into adequate account. The aim was thus to strike a balance of interests between the use and protection of natural resources. The effectiveness of the administration structure was supported so that it could carry out its tasks within the park and in cooperation with the communities concerned. This contributed to the fact that even five years after the end of the project, the parks and most of the neighbouring areas are managed sustainably and in accordance with the various national protection and land-use plans. The goals set were largely achieved, in some cases surpassed, and the financed infrastructure is still in full use today.

Highlights: Despite far-reaching progress, it was not possible to prevent the international poaching crisis of 2013–2017 from spreading to the project region.



Rating according to DAC criteria

Overall rating: 2

General conditions and classification of the project

The project supported the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism in the development and implementation of integrated park management approaches in the three northern national parks of Bwabwata, Mudumu and Mamili (renamed Nkasa Rupara in 2012; the complex has since been known as the BMN Parks) over several phases. Phase I of the BMN project (2006–2011) laid down the essential foundations for sustainable park management. Phase II, evaluated here, comprised the financing of infrastructure and equipment for the national parks, support measures in adjacent areas, and consulting services in the context of participatory park management. Phase II was followed seamlessly by phases III and IIIb, which are still ongoing.

Relevance

The project had two target dimensions: the improved and integrated management of selected parks in the Kavango/Zambezi region was intended to contribute to 1) the cross-border ecological stabilisation of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA) and 2) the economic development of the population and local residents. The project therefore took into account the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development's (BMZ) concept for biosphere reserves, according to which the effective and sustainable protection of natural resources can only be guaranteed if a balance of interests is achieved between the protection and use of natural resources.

In line with phase I, the project consisted of four components: i) strengthening the capacity for effective park management, ii) developing and implementing community-friendly park management, iii) supporting residents in generating income from the parks and adjacent areas, and iv) strengthening the role of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in the context of KAZA. The project therefore supported the implementation of the national strategies and goals of the Namibian government ("National Development Plan IV, 2012–2016", "Second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2013–2022", "Tourism Investment and Development Plan, 2012"), which promote the sustainable use of natural resources and the reduction of rural poverty. The high priority of this project for the Namibian government was also reflected in the comparatively high counterpart contribution of the Namibian government, which totaled EUR 1.14 million.

The relevance of the project from today's perspective is assessed on the basis of the following criteria: 1) **Selection of the region:** Ensuring the effectiveness of a wildlife corridor between Botswana and Angola and protecting Namibia's unique natural environment between the Okavango and Kwando rivers continue to be of high importance for the biodiversity objective. 2) **Development potential of hunting tourism:** In addition to the construction of the Trans-Caprivi highway and the modest contributions of agriculture, (hunting) tourism in particular has made an important contribution to economic recovery in the region over the past 10 years. This potential was well recognised in the project concept. 3) **Coherent intervention logic:** The organisation of the local population in conservancies, through which residents participate in the development of the parks, potentially increases their personal responsibility for natural (wildlife) resources; this, together with the revenues generated by sustainable (hunting) tourism, create a platform for the acceptance of the parks and the wildlife population. Even by today's standards, the participation of the population in the economic benefits of wildlife conservation remains an appropriate approach to mitigating potential trade-offs between economic development and biodiversity conservation. Overall, the intervention logic can also be considered coherent from today's perspective, since the project adequately addressed external pressures, weaknesses in park management and infrastructure as well as the needs of the local population through the intervention measures described above. A new challenge arose as a result of the international poaching crisis that began to hit large parts of southern Africa in 2013. In the future, new concepts will be needed to sustainably combat these exogenous threats to wildlife populations.

Relevance rating: 2 (good)

Effectiveness

The project objective and sections of the indicators were adapted on the basis of the conceptual project objectives within the context of the ex post evaluation, and the objective was defined as “The creation of effective park management, taking due account of the interests of residents in the vicinity of the parks and their participation in the economic use of the parks”. At the time of the ex post evaluation, the project had largely achieved and in some cases exceeded its objectives, with the funded project measures still in full use today. The achievement of the project objectives in the ex post evaluation was assessed using the following indicators:

Indicator	Status PA, Target value PA	Ex post evaluation 2017
(1) The areas adjacent to the park are managed in an environmentally sound manner, i.e. in accordance with nationally established protection and land use zones (protected area, game reserve, community forest, hunting area)*	Status (PA): 66% of the area Target value: 2006: 70% 2007: 75% 2008: 80% 2009: 85%	2008: 69% 2009: 72% 2011: 72% 2015: 82% The project objective was not completely fulfilled.
(2) The number of community-developed and implemented park management plans	Status (PA): 0% Target value: 100% Indicator added during EPE	Completely fulfilled at the time of the ex post evaluation (not at the end of the project): Plans of a sufficient quality are in place in all the parks; these are broken down into annual plans and implemented.
(3) Management quality and effectiveness based on the assessment of park management using NAMETT* (Namibia Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool).	Baseline: Bwabwata 34 Mudumu 36 Mamili 32 Target (2009): Bwabwata 42 Mudumu 45 Mamili 39	2009 Bwabwata 58 Mudumu 58 Mamili 51 2012 Bwabwata 62 Mudumu 63 Mamili 55 Fulfilled by the end of the project in 2012, but then no longer assessed; according to the executing agency, the assessment system will be reintroduced as of 2017.
(4) The number of agreements with local communities on the economic use of resources in the parks and the number of commercial tourism initiatives in and around the parks.	Status (PA): 13 Target value: 2006: 16 2007: 18 2008: 20 2009: 22 2010: 24 2011: 26 2012: 28	2006: 17 2007: 24 2008: 27 2009: 30 2015: 36 The project objective was fulfilled by the end of the project, and is still fulfilled at the time of the ex post evaluation as almost all agreements are still in force.

* Re. point 1: The environmentally sound management practices and forms of use are defined in the Project Operational Plan/Manual according to criteria which are valid at the national level.

* Re. point 3: NAMETT – Namibia Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool – uses a structured questionnaire to determine the quality of park management for each individual park and serves as a management tool which records strengths and weaknesses; it is the trend, not the absolute number, that is particularly meaningful here. The criteria evaluated on the scorecard include context, planning processes, inputs, management processes, outputs and outcomes.

The project has helped to establish effective nature conservation administration which fulfils its tasks, both within the park and in cooperation with local communities, such that, even five years after the end of the project, the majority of adjacent areas are managed in an environmentally compatible way in line with the valid, nationally defined criteria (protected area, game reserve, community forest, hunting area). Coherent park development, management, tourism, budget and operational plans are available for all selected parks; these plans are of a satisfactory quality and are used in day-to-day operations. The central park stations in Bwabwata and Mudumu national park were built and equipped as part of the project. The new park stations consist of 20 (Bwabwata) and 15 (Mudumu national park) buildings with living space for park employees, offices, workshops, storerooms, garages and strongrooms. The park buildings are all still in good condition and in full use. Six off-road vehicles were also procured, in addition to equipment for inspections and firefighting. The rehabilitation or redevelopment of the park infrastructure, including the park entrances, which was financed by the project, has significantly contributed to improving the management and revenue situation, since entrance fees are now collected at the park entrance and it is not possible to visit the parks illegally. According to feedback from many interviewees, the redevelopment of the stations and the improved working conditions associated with this have contributed to increased job satisfaction and thus to better and more professional work amongst the park rangers and managers; this can also be seen in the surveys, statements and positive trends in NAMETT.

It has been reported that the close cooperation between park management and the neighbouring communities, based on written agreements with the conservancies, has contributed significantly to reducing land usage conflicts and traditional poaching at the local level. Prior to the involvement of the conservancies, the threat of sanctions was unable to prevent widespread poaching, and conflicts between the parks and local residents were exacerbated rather than resolved. Involving the conservancies in handling revenues from (hunting) tourism has created transparency and accountability in the communities with regard to the management of revenues and increased awareness of the link between the conservation of wildlife stocks and increased income. The positive incentive systems, along with a sense of greater regained personal responsibility, have helped the target group to take pride in and care about the wildlife both inside and outside of the parks.

Against this background, the effectiveness can be rated as very good.

Effectiveness rating: 1 (very good)

Efficiency

Microeconomic assessment: Park and local residents are affected by damage to fences and crop failures due to increasing wildlife migration, particularly along the corridor on the Zambezi river. This is offset mainly by revenues from hunting concessions and compensation payments from the MET. The MET often does not provide full compensation for the damages, however. With regard to the efficiency of operation, it should be noted that income from the parks (ticket sales, revenues from concessions) does not directly benefit park management. The operating costs and a portion of capital costs continue to be covered exclusively by national budget allocations. Investments are also funded by the public Game Products Trust Fund (GPTF), which is funded in turn using revenues from hunting concessions.

The project implementation and the provision of services and infrastructure can be described as highly cost-effective. With the support of an excellent implementation consultant for planning, procurement and works supervision, the partner succeeded in ensuring, despite its relatively small budget, that the ranger facilities were available in a timely manner, and that these were in line with requirements and of an appropriate quality.

Allocation efficiency: The evaluation did not reveal any investment alternatives that would have allowed the same effects to be achieved at comparable or lower cost. The project contributes to the development of nature-based tourism in Namibia. The overall contribution of the tourism industry in Namibia in 2016 is estimated at USD 1.6 billion, or 14.9% (2008: 14.5%) of GDP, and accounts for up to 14.9% (2009: 18.2%) of employment. The benefits of biodiversity conservation in the BMNPs and the contribution to bi-

odiversity conservation in neighbouring countries are not quantifiable, with the result that a macroeconomic cost recovery ratio cannot be determined. In light of the key geographical position (corridor function) in relation to the conservation of biodiversity and the growth of wildlife populations in neighbouring regions, and taking into account the investment costs in the amount of EUR 3.27 million, the macroeconomic efficiency can be considered high.

Efficiency rating: 1 (very good)

Impact

The overarching objective of the project in terms of development policy was specified and defined in the context of the ex post evaluation as “Contribution to ecological stabilisation by preserving the corridor function for wildlife migration and to the economic development of the population and local residents of the KAZA area”.

Indicator						
(1) Development of wildlife stocks (number of animals recorded during the annual wildlife censuses in the parks)*		Elephant	Buffalo	Giraffe	Antelope	Sable
	2005	334	45	16	16	29
	2009	2150	2146	34	232	293
	2010	2334	1057	37	175	274
	2011	2551	1828	123	111	517
	2012	3835	3882	78	367	446
	2013	3812	1158	64	287	587
	2015	3614	2353	65	192	643
	The development of stocks shows a positive trend across all selected key species; this is not only relevant for the parks – it also has significant regional and cross-regional significance for adjacent areas and neighbouring regions due to migratory movements.*					
Indicator	Status at PA/financial proposal		Ex post evaluation status			
(2) Value of total income from tourism and other natural resource related economic activities of those living in and around the BMN Parks (in NAD, nominal).	2006	7,149,455	2010	15,402,656		
	2007	7,864,401	2011	16,446,903		
	2008	8,650,841	2012	20,492,996		
	2009	9,515,925	2013	24,117,424		
			2014	29,812,790		
		2015	36,735,284			

*Re. the survey method for indicator 1: as part of a transect, defined areas or defined lines in the parks are traversed and the observed species are recorded once per year. This can result in large variations between the individual inspections; however, these are offset by the large number of inspections across all parks and at the same time allow conclusions to be drawn regarding the increase in wildlife migration and thus the growth trend in the number of species across the entire region.

Although the development of the wildlife populations is highly volatile at times due to migratory movements and the survey method used, a clear positive trend can be seen over the project period and up to the time of the ex post evaluation. During the field visit, interviewees from all groups – farmers, park attendants, conservancies – confirmed that the number of animals in the region has either recovered or drastically increased over the last 10 to 15 years. In addition to the direct contributions made by the project measures and outcomes, the creation of cross-border migration corridors is also an important reason for the recovery of stocks. Elephants in particular are thus able to better avoid the areas subject to usage pressure, local droughts or the recent increase in hunting pressure caused by the dramatic rise in poaching. However, the positive development in wildlife stock has also been accompanied by an increase in the number of human-wildlife conflicts.

Despite the achievements at the local level, it was not possible to prevent the international poaching crisis in southern Africa from spreading into the project region. Increased demand and very high black-market prices for poaching products have increased the incentive to break park rules and have also encouraged local corruption.¹ Long boundary lines, short distances to neighbouring countries and professional smugglers make effective border control difficult. Without high penalties for poaching and an accompanying expansion in monitoring and cross-border prosecution, it is hardly conceivable that poaching can be controlled in future. However, the poaching crisis has also demonstrated that the project has made an important contribution to raising local awareness of the issue by promoting improved and closer cooperation between parks and conservancies. The resulting “solidarity” with the local population – which, according to several interviewees, can be considered the most important and first “line of defence” in the fight against poaching – has made a crucial contribution to the Namibian government’s efforts to combat poaching. At the same time, the project created the conditions for a cross-border solution to the problem, with strengthened cooperation between players from all neighbouring states.

The increased visitor numbers show that the entire region has experienced a tourism boom in recent years; this can be attributed to the improvement of tourist activities in the region – particularly in the parks – and thus also to the contributions made by the project. Thanks to professionalised park management and the creation of joint forums, the project has promoted and institutionalised for mutual benefit not only cooperation between the parks and local communities, but also links with the private sector and with hunting and tourism companies in particular. This has created greater planning security and more reliable framework conditions for private investors and, together with improved tourism infrastructure and better marketing, increased revenues for the parks and conservancies.

The revenue of the conservancies, and thus of the local communities, has increased dramatically in recent years thanks largely to the lease payments from local, privately run lodges and the sale of hunting concessions to professional hunters. Tourism businesses and communities thus benefit directly from the improved management and sustainable use of wildlife resources by the parks and conservancies. The support of the conservancies is considered to have brought structural benefits for the establishment of further protected areas similar to KAZA, considering that all participants believed the willingness and openness of Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe to participate in cross-border cooperation would have been much lower had it not been for this example of cross-border success. The conservancies therefore also represent a sustainable structure in rural areas which can, all things considered, serve as a gateway for the support of the still traditionally organised rural communities. Working on the basis of the local situation and the statements of interviewees, it can be assumed that the overall situation of the target group in the parks and in the adjacent zones has improved as a result of their participation in the development of the park and its revenues. It was not possible to determine in the course of the evaluation to what extent the increased revenues of the conservancies have improved the living conditions at household level and counteracted incentives for the unsustainable use of natural resources in individual cases. The following statement can be made with regard to the poverty reduction targets: In Namibia, the conservancies – in coordination with the municipalities – adequately finance local development and investment measures (e.g. scholarships, rehabilitation of school buildings, improved local electrification and water supply, support for those in need, compensation payments) and thus contribute to widespread development. At the same time, experience of a different approach in countries such as Zimbabwe has shown that the nationwide disbursement of revenue to all members and households produces no significant measurable effects, as these “peter out” at the household level due to the very small amounts.

Impact rating: 2 (good)

Sustainability

The strengthening of participatory measures and the economic benefits prompt the conservancies to protect natural resources and biodiversity better at their own expense (patrols, monitoring of wildlife stock). The executing agency used the project to develop national guidelines for the “Creation of park management plans” as well as for “Cooperation with conservancies”, basing these on the processes – funded by

¹ Financial Intelligence Center of the Republic of Namibia (2017): Rhino and Elephant Poaching, Illegal Trade in Related Wildlife Products and Associated Money Laundering in Namibia.

the project – for the coherent preparation of various park plans (these are still in use today) and the cooperation – supported by the project – between park management, the conservancies and the private sector. These guidelines are used in other national parks throughout the country for improved planning and cooperation with conservancies, and thus bring about a structural effect in the partner institution. With regard to the financed infrastructure, it is already clear that the maintenance measures which have been used up to now will not be sufficient over the long term. This applies not only to individual buildings, but also to the maintenance of vehicles in almost all parks. Time and again, just one or two vehicles were observed to be in working order across an entire park, jeopardising the park rangers' efficient work. In the past, shortcomings or repair bottlenecks could be remedied in part by the subsequent phases of the project. All things considered, however, the responsibilities for maintenance in the Namibian government and administrative system are not sufficiently clear, and the partner has failed to provide an appropriate budget to cover the increased maintenance costs resulting from the project expenditure. The continued success of the project cannot be guaranteed if this question of maintenance and repair is not promptly resolved both institutionally and financially – for example by increasing the personal responsibility of the park management and establishing appropriate budgets for maintenance. Against the background of the current Namibian budget crisis it is to be expected that the situation will worsen in the future. The conservancies, serving as social institutions and points of contact in rural areas, played and continue to play an important role in ensuring the long-term success of the project. Not only do they ensure the sustainable use of wildlife resources and the management of revenues in the long-term interests of members and communities, they also contribute positively to cooperation with private investors. However, the institutional support of the conservancies and their members – which change frequently due to their democratic nature – will require a great deal of patience. The success of the project has seen an increase in the number of conflicts between humans and animals in the region. In this context, it is positive to note that the executing agency is trying to address the issue by revising national legislation on human-wildlife conflicts in order to provide more appropriate compensation for those affected in the future. At the same time, a community trust fund from which compensation payments will be made in the future is now under construction with the support of NGOs. The sustainability is therefore still assessed as good.

Sustainability rating: 2 (good)

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects (and programmes) are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being **relevance, effectiveness, efficiency** and **overarching developmental impact**. The ratings are also used to arrive at a **final assessment** of a project's overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

Level 1	Very good result that clearly exceeds expectations
Level 2	Good result, fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
Level 3	Satisfactory result – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
Level 4	Unsatisfactory result – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
Level 5	Clearly inadequate result – despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
Level 6	The project has no impact or the situation has actually deteriorated

Rating levels 1-3 denote a positive assessment or successful project while rating levels 4-6 denote a negative assessment.

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected).

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability): The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and is very unlikely to improve. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The **overall rating** on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. Rating levels 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while rating levels 4-6 denote an "unsuccessful" project. It should be noted that a project can generally be considered developmentally "successful" only if the achievement of the project objective ("effectiveness"), the impact on the overall objective ("overarching developmental impact") and the sustainability are rated at least "satisfactory" (level 3).