

Ex Post-Evaluation Brief

NAMIBIA: Promoting community forests in Namibia



Sector	31220 Forest development	
Project/Client	Promoting community forests in Namibia BMZ no. 2001 66 116*	
Programme executing agency	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF), Directorate of Forestry (DoF)	
Year of sample/ex post evaluation report: 2013/2013		
	Appraisal (planned)	Ex post-evaluation (actual)
Investment costs (total)	EUR 2.86 million	EUR 2.86 million
Own contribution	EUR 0.81 million	EUR 0.81 million
Funding, of which budget funds (BMZ)	EUR 2.05 million EUR 2.05 million	EUR 2.05 million EUR 2.05 million

* random sample 2013

Short description: The programme “*Community Forestry in Namibia*” (CFN) has been implemented since January 2004 in Northern Namibia. The Directorate of Forestry in the Ministry for Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) acted as project-executing agency, with the DED (now GIZ) as cooperation partner. Specific programme measures comprised:

- development, coordination and standardisation of administrative processes and technical methods for gazetting community forests by the MAWF
- development of appropriate guidelines and other sets of rules (management plans)
- promotion of the processing and marketing of forestry products
- infrastructure (communal forestry offices, storage buildings) for *Forest Management Committees* (FMCs)
- Support for communal orchards and tree nurseries.

Objectives: The overall goal (intended impact) was to preserve forests as livelihood source for the target group. The programme objective (outcome) was environmentally sustainable management of community forests by means of the agreed management plans in order to generate income for the target group from forest husbandry. Outcome indicators were (i) the forest area managed by the communities three years after the start of the intervention and (ii) the avoidance of any apparent negative effects or limitations for adjacent communities; the primary objective was to increase the target groups' income (profits of the FMCs and other beneficiaries) and to maintain the forested areas in an intact state.

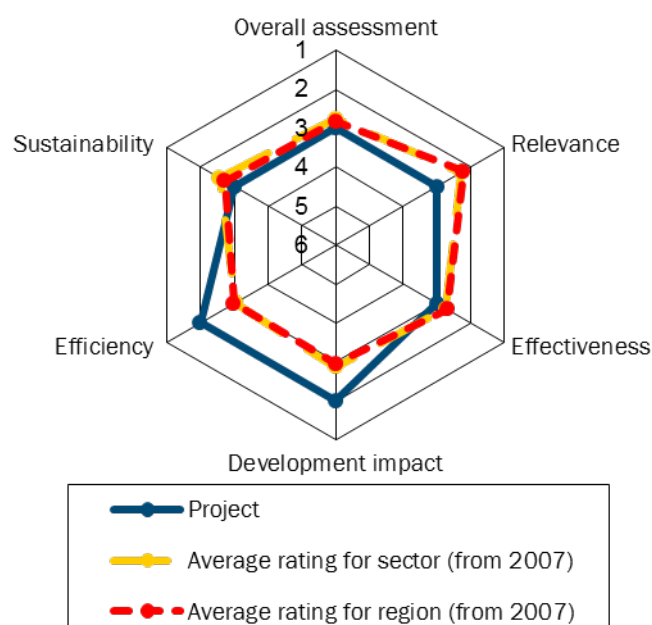
Target group: The target group is the forest-using population of the participating municipalities in Namibia.

Overall rating: 3

The promotion of community-based forestry required respective legislation, which was passed at the start of the programme. On that basis the programme was aligned to national objectives. A closer coordination (possibly even an amalgamation) with existing structures for managing *communal wildlife conservancies* would have been advantageous from the start. Pronounced positive conservation effects contrast with – In some cases – very limited economic capacity.

Points to note: The available human and financial resources were sufficient for a period of more than seven years rather than the three years planned originally. Unfortunately there was then a gap in starting the follow-up phase (2013); as a consequence, several community forests, whose registration was almost completed, are still awaiting support for official gazetting.

Rating by DAC criteria



EVALUATION SUMMARY

Overall rating

The overall rating takes into particular account in the positive forest conservation results; equally important, the largely poor population living in the programme areas was only enabled to sustainably and legally use their community forests once the latter's legal status had been assured. Patchy implementation of forest management plans and - in various cases - limited financial returns of forest use constitute clear flaws.

Rating: 3

Relevance

In view of the rate of deforestation of 3 % p.a. in the years before programme appraisal, the relevance was high. This was especially the case at the beginning, when the new legislation enabled the establishment of community forests and at least offered the largely impoverished population of Northern Namibia prospects for maintaining its natural livelihood basis of subsistence, whilst at the same time increasing its income potential. The programme support provided to the *Forest Management Committees/FMCs* in terms of advisory services and equipment (offices, stores, workshops) generated a lot of interest among the target group. The selected approach was suitable for addressing the core issues of poverty and forest destruction, despite funding constraints.

The project corresponded to Namibia's priorities. Other donors, for example the Finnish co-operation, supported forest management especially with advisory services and training. That partition of tasks worked well until Finland ended its involvement in 2005.

In retrospect, the integration of community forests with *game conservancies* would have been called for this would have resulted in additional income from game hunting and less competition for the same forest areas. With the benefit of hindsight, it is no longer understandable why these structures, which, were not used at the start of the CFN project so that community forests could also be established on the basis of those conservancies – especially, as, in many cases, conservancies had already been established five to ten years earlier. Furthermore, at the time it was the same ministry (*Ministry of Environment and Tourism/ MET*) that supported both land use strategies. With responsibilities for wildlife management and forestry now split between MET and MAWF, both ministries are now endeavoring (reportedly with limited success) to agree on the integration of both concepts once they affect the same municipality. In addition, the Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR) supports a programme to promote agriculture by establishing small farms, which in some municipalities obviously encroaches on previously certified community forest areas. Considerable usage conflicts are foreseeable in this regard.

The relevance of the CFN project is currently considered to be only satisfactory due to the deficient *ex ante* coordination with other land use concepts.

Sub-Rating: 3

Effectiveness

The programme objective (maintaining community forest areas and their sustainable management by FMCs according to agreed management plans, with the establishment of orchards and nurseries) seems reasonable from the today's perspective and was largely achieved (see table below). The management plans were an essential prerequisite for officially designating (*gazetting*) the forest areas for economic use by the communities. The intended economic viability has to be seen critically to date: A long-term and hence sustainable self-financing of the forestry committees out of community forest revenues often seems not possible. It is likely, however, that this can be achieved in most cases by additional game management income (e.g. hunting licences or similar). In retrospect, the concept's limitation to forestry use *per se* seems over ambitious, given the very difficult (usually too dry) site conditions. Wood use is conducted on a small-scale and selective basis with so-called *block permits*, which are issued by the Directorate of Forestry to the FMCs, primarily for the collection of firewood and to a lesser extent for timber for posts, construction, etc.

Indicators	Status of ex-post evaluation 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of total forested area of programme region accounted for by community forestry areas • Area of orchards and tree nurseries 	<p>The total forested area within the programme region comprises approx. 8 million ha, of which around 4.34 million ha were initially (2003) identified as potential areas for community forests. By project completion (2011) a target area of 3 million ha was stated, which in 2009 was 15 % achieved. By August 2012, a total of 32 community forests with an area of 3.02 million ha were officially recognised. This corresponds to 38% of the total area and 70% of the potential area identified in the appraisal. The forested area that was considered as achievable in 2011 was achieved – even if somewhat later than planned. There are no new data about orchards and tree nurseries. In the <i>End of Program Evaluation for CFN</i> of 2011, it is reported that 151 out of 207 established orchards, (i.e. 73%) are still being successfully operated. Overall, the indicator is considered to be largely met.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the management plans 	<p>This indicator can only be considered partially fulfilled: although management plans are a prerequisite for the gazettment of community forests, the degree of subsequent compliance varied significantly. Some FMCs are obviously not in the position to meet elementary requirements on reporting, accounting and monitoring. To what extent the scheduled activities will actually still be implemented after the end of external support (either by the programme or the Directorate of Forestry) is questionable at least in part. Frequently, both financial resources and incentives are lacking - as are staff capacities. The Directorate of Forestry appears to be understaffed – and at present hardly in a position to offer effective support to the FMCs.</p>

The forest areas are in principle easy to register, and the generally positive trend in forest coverage can be easily followed as e.g. documented in the Okonga region by GIZ. Nonetheless, sufficiently reliable basic data is lacking for the other indicators (orchard cultivation, tree nurseries, income growth), whereby the income effects are to be dealt with in the overall objective or *impact* category.

In summary, the project's effectiveness is to be assessed as positive due to the forest conservation achieved, but significant reservations remain due to the - at best partial - implementation of the management plans.

Sub-Rating: 3

Efficiency

When relating total costs to the protected forest area (3.02 million ha), the production efficiency of 0.68 EUR/ ha is very high. This also highlights the critical aspect of vast areas assigned to communities with a very low population density: The number of beneficiaries per km² in the first 13 community forests was 8, but with the 19 areas certified by 2012, it was only just under 2 per km². Even for well organised forestry committees, the area to be managed is so large that the monitoring actually taking place is barely sufficient.

The smallest community forests in the initial phase usually have areas of between 5,000-15,000ha. At that stage, the sheer number of certified forests mattered most. Later it was realised that small areas did not afford an adequate economic basis for FMCs, and thus larger units were selected. The largest areas extend to over 300,000 ha - and in one case even to 775,767 ha. Still, the comparatively low investment level has generally resulted in a positive balance in relation to the conservational effect.

The question of alternative implementation methods is open to debate. The direct commissioning of the DED plays a key role in this respect. Its advisors have been working since 1999 in coordination with the forestry service and other donors (including Finland) towards improved forest conservation and management in the country's North ("*communal lands*"). The first conservation areas have jointly been identified with local municipalities and those forests have been prepared for official certification. Due to DED's involvement of the, it was thus possible to seamlessly integrate the German Financial Cooperation project from 2004 and to use the experience gained during the pilot phase in terms of staff, the regional forest management bodies were not in the position to deal with the amount of work preceding the designation of the community forests.

The involvement of external advisors signaled obvious significant donor interest, which distracted the target groups' motivation away from the actual programme objectives towards more "immediate" benefits in the form of material equipment (vehicles, buildings), *per diem* allowances, etc. The certification of new community forests apparently ceased by the end of

the programme in 2011 and it is likely that it will not be resumed until the start of the successor project ("Phase II").

The extensive preparations in the lead up to the gazettement of a community forest can basically be considered to be a one-off task, practically an investment. This justifies the external intervention. In any case, a greater involvement of local partners (especially, the NGO active in the sector) – by virtue of more intensive follow-up after official gazettement – would have produced more sustainable results. With this fact having been acknowledged as valuable experience, the successor phase is therefore being implemented in partnership with a local NGO, whose staff will still be on site after programme completion.

With limited resources, the project has established enduring structures ("FMCs"), which increase awareness of forest conservation; it has also created instruments (*Community Forestry Manual, Tool Box*) with which large areas of communal land can be better protected. All in all, the project's efficiency is rated as good.

Sub-Rating: 2

Impact

The primary goal was to maintain the forests as livelihood basis for the target group. The greatest threats at that stage were unclear ownership structure and the lack of awareness by in the target group: it was a challenge to overcome the notion of forests belonging to an anonymous government and thus being open to over-exploitation to meet short-term needs. This was ultimately achieved by close involvement of the local population and cultivating their *sense of ownership* awakened by the certification procedure. It can be assumed that initiatives introduced over 10 - 15 years to promote "*Community Based Natural Resource Management*" (CBNRM) are not sufficient for a comprehensive change of attitude in the local population. Even then, the interest expressed locally in forest conservation among the (approx. 50) contacts within the communities was impressively discernible. Both illegal logging and (formerly habitual) uncontrolled forest fires have decreased according to reports by the Directorate of Forestry and external advisors. This is illustrated with the example of the Okongo community forest (75,518 ha, Ohangwena region) on the country's northern border with Angola, which has been certified since 2006 and is regarded as a model. The risk of uncontrolled fires still exists, and the theft of wood cannot be effectively controlled due to the huge area. Even so, the high rate of deforestation of around 3% p.a. has significantly fallen since the mid-1990s - following the establishment of the community forests. According to the estimates of the responsible parties involved, forest loss has been limited to local "thinning" of forests, while large scale deforestations have largely ceased. Whilst there are no directly comparable data available, the prohibition of commercial logging (with the exception of controlled FMC sales by means of *block permits*) has largely caused significant over-exploitation or deforestation to cease in the programme region. As the certified communal areas now cover around 3 million ha and hence almost 40 % of the forests in the region, this general decrease in forest destruction may be attributed to a considerable extent to the project.

In some cases, the target groups' economic situation has been significantly improved by the project, especially in communities with diversified forestry use (construction timber, firewood) or in the case of collection of the medicinal herb “devil's claw”. As the harvest of this herb has in some cases led to over-exploitation (according to some FMCs by external “poachers”), the MET has introduced strict controls after local or temporary bans on collection. The household incomes have significantly increased in some programme areas due to project-related promotional measures, such as the production of wood carvings. A survey of current income data was only possible to a limited extent due to mainly subsistence-dominated livelihoods (no data / virtually no formal employment contracts). However, plausibility analyses and concrete calculations for individual municipalities do exist. In one FMC, the sale of medicinal herbs (in particular devil's claw) led to a 20% average income increase in for all households.

Although activities such as beekeeping, wood carving or similar also generate income, their significance is generally lower. The protection of community forests thus affords a basis for the continuation of the customary lifestyle at subsistence level, but cannot improve the basis for general prosperity. Only two of the visited nine FMCs reported sufficient income from controlled sales of wood and other activities. The objective of generating sufficient income to cover FMC costs can however be reached – especially, if the FMC cooperates well with local conservancies or even has an identical membership base. This interaction operates well in several cases, for example in four community forests gazetted in 2006, whose forest committees were already integrated into the respective conservancies. In order to encourage this constellation as often as possible, such partnerships are now actively promoted. In future, community forests, wherever reasonable and possible, should be combined with the respective conservancies. The partnership has advantages for both parties, as the conservancy benefits from the community forests' more comprehensive legal protection status and the latter benefit from the conservancies' economic strength.

An unforeseen positive effect of the project is the education of community members trained for the FMCs. Some of these have switched to other, better paid activities. The training received under the programme has equipped them for jobs in the economy (e.g. on commercial farms).

The most important lesson for initiatives to conserve natural resources is the very close and active involvement of and input by the people concerned: their “*sense of ownership*” constituted a decisive factor in the present case. This is evidenced by the extensive preparations for certification that can only be completed in close cooperation with the communities: this was performed in an exemplary fashion.

The 11 milestones prescribed in the *Community Forestry Manual* for the way towards certification could possibly be streamlined to some extent. However – and in essence, they are a proven practical concept, which can be transferred to other countries or regions. The overall impact is thus rated as good.

Sub-Rating: 2

Sustainability

In view of the results presented above, the sustainability, measured in particular by the continued existence of community forests can be regarded as assured, with some qualifications. Not in all cases, the established forest committees' attractiveness or functional efficiency is sufficiently assured - due to frequently insufficient income from sales of wood and other activities (see above). The problem has, however, been recognised and is to be resolved in future by the integration with the respective conservancies that has already been initiated in various cases. Even if institutional sustainability, in particular, leaves much to be desired, the prospect for a positive long-term developmental effectiveness exists. Overall, sustainability is considered to be satisfactory.

Sub-Rating: 3

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:

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

Ratings 1-3 denote a positive or successful assessment while ratings 4-6 denote a not positive or unsuccessful 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. Ratings 1-3 of the overall rating denote a "successful" project while ratings 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" (rating 3).