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COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CBNRM) AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Climate change will impact wildlife habitat, an important source of revenue for CBNRM projects. Photo credit: Jeremy Keeton, DAI

WHAT IS CBNRM?

CBNRM aims to create the **right incentives and conditions** for an identified group of resource users within defined areas to use natural resources sustainably. This means enabling the resource users to **benefit** from resource management and providing strong **rights and tenure over land and the resources**. CBNRM also supports the development of accountable, decision-making bodies that can represent community members and act in their interests.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is expected to impact in southern Africa in ways that will affect national and local economies. Arid and semi-arid areas in the region are expected to be most affected with **higher temperatures and drier conditions**.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Adaptation is one of the main strategies for coping with the expected impacts of climate change. Adaptation refers to the adjustments we make in response to actual or expected changes in climate that help us to reduce harmful effects and help us take advantage of beneficial opportunities. In large part, adaptation aims to decrease vulnerability and increase the resilience and capacity to cope with climate impacts. An important component of adaptation to climate change is **community-based Adaptation (CBA)**.

EXPECTED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

- ◆ Hotter and drier climate
- ◆ Heavier rainfall over shorter periods
- ◆ Reduced capacity to produce food
- ◆ Reduced area of land suitable for livestock production
- ◆ Increased poverty due to inability of poor people to cope with shocks such as droughts
- ◆ More extreme events such as flooding

COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (CBA)

This approach:

- ◆ Places the community at the center of determining how to respond to the impacts of climate change
- ◆ Emphasizes the importance of community participation
- ◆ Builds on the priorities, knowledge, and capacities of local people
- ◆ Emphasizes the need for community access to and control over natural, human, social, physical, and financial resources
- ◆ Emphasizes the importance of community institutions, so that communities can take action based upon their own decision-making processes



Climate change threatens to bring increased flooding to many parts of Southern Africa. ©CC- Photo credit: Kevin Polden

COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION AND CBNRM

Clearly there is considerable synergy between CBNRM and CBA. CBNRM provides communities with resource rights and supports community institutions. It provides communities with a wide range of skills and new capacities such as wildlife and forest management, business development and operation, office administration, financial management, and democratic governance.

CBNRM provides income for communities to use for local infrastructure and social projects and income to individuals, which they can use to build up household assets. Livelihood and land use diversification are also important characteristics of CBNRM.

Each of these aspects of CBNRM is an important element in CBA to climate change. All help communities adjust to the negative impacts of climate change and to mitigate its worst effects.



Zambian fishermen in a mokoro (boat) on Chobe River. Photo Credit: Mark Atkinson, WCS

CBNRM, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND BIODIVERSITY

Climate change is expected to have **negative effects on biodiversity** in the region, particularly if expected changes in natural habitats take place. In this regard, ensuring **connectivity** between protected areas and natural habitats is viewed as an important measure for addressing potential climate change impacts on biodiversity. Community-conserved areas under CBNRM—where land is set aside for wildlife and tourism—can contribute to achieving connected natural habitats and protected areas.

Community forestry, in particular, can contribute to mitigation where it leads to improved management and rehabilitation of woodlands and forests (including reforestation with drought-resistant tree species). Wildlife-based CBNRM is potentially a more viable land use option in the future if, as is predicted, much of southern Africa becomes more marginal for crop and livestock production.

Despite the clear synergies, little attention is being given to CBNRM as a key contributor to community-based climate change adaptation. **Decision makers can change this situation:**

KEY ACTIONS REGARDING CBNRM AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- ◆ Decision makers should recognize the links between CBNRM and CBA for climate change.
- ◆ Decision-makers should promote CBNRM as an important strategy for addressing the impacts of climate change.
- ◆ CBNRM should be included in national climate change policies and strategies and made eligible for funding under climate change projects.

The findings and recommendations provided in this set of Policy Briefs are based on stocktaking assessments of nearly three decades of CBNRM implementation in southern Africa. A report summarizing the findings of assessments carried out in Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as detailed country assessments can be found at www.frameweb.org/SASStocktakingReports.html.