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## SCAPES LANDSCAPE PROFILE: MOVING ‘BEYOND FENCES’ IN THE KAVANGO-ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (KAZA TFCA)



OKAVANGO RIVER, ANGOLA, 2012: Rising in the northern Angolan highlands, two rivers converge to form the Okavango River (known as the Kavango River in Namibia), one of the last free-flowing rivers in the world, which eventually empties into the sandy expanses of Botswana’s Kalahari Desert, forming the Okavango Delta. Photo by Mark W. Atkinson for WCS / AHEAD

### THE KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (KAZA) AT A GLANCE

- KAZA TFCA straddles five countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and covers more than 450,000 square kilometers.
- The project was implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society, with additional assistance from the Rockefeller Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE

Across large swaths of semi-arid southern Africa, where crops are difficult to grow, millions of people depend on raising livestock for their livelihoods. Livestock graze across large parts of the landscape, and share the land with wildlife such as the African buffalo, which can carry transboundary animal diseases like foot and mouth, caused by a virus. This poses a challenge for farmers, for if they wish to sell their healthy, free-range beef on the lucrative export market, they must abide by international trade regulations — regulations that demand that cattle be physically separated from wildlife by fences out of concern for disease.

In response, over decades countries in the region have built thousands of miles of fences to separate livestock from neighboring wildlife. Although the practice enables some livestock owners to export beef, it does not help other farmers and pastoralists who live closest to wildlife. The vast fences also compromise larger conservation goals because they disrupt wildlife migration routes, blocking critical access to water and grazing. As wildlife is impacted, opportunities for nature-based tourism and its extraordinary economic potential are also compromised.

Throughout southern Africa, transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) may incorporate, for example, national parks, game reserves, conservancies and land under traditional communal tenure. They provide opportunities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, and they are a priority for the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In fact, SADC is aiming for over 100 million hectares of transfrontier conservation areas — one of the boldest visions for conservation in the world.

The largest of southern Africa's 14 terrestrial transfrontier conservation areas is the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA. It is home to more than 2.5 million people and their livestock, and it harbors some 250,000 elephants, the largest population left in the world. If the threat of key diseases at the wildlife / livestock interface can be mitigated in the KAZA TFCA, the lessons learned can perhaps be applied in East Africa and Central Asia as well.



MAKGADIKGADI PANS, BOTSWANA, 2013: Veterinary Cordon Fence. Photo by Mark W. Atkinson for WCS / AHEAD

## THE CHALLENGE

The KAZA TFCA was one of nine transboundary landscape-scale areas of focus under USAID's Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems (SCAPES) project. In the KAZA TFCA, the SCAPES "Beyond Fences" activity was implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with USAID funding complemented by assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Rockefeller Foundation. The work focused on creating an enabling environment for solving land-use conflicts between the livestock and wildlife sectors. The project engaged stakeholders such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN. This ultimately led to fundamental changes in foot and mouth disease management policy that may now enable the true potential of the region's transfrontier conservation areas to be realized.

One of the project's foremost aims was to find new ways ahead for the beef trade, focusing on the safety of the meat production process rather than a cow's place of origin. This focus on meat production biosafety instead of on where cattle and wildlife are neighbors means farmers can export their beef, and wildlife migrations need not be compromised by fences – an all-around win.

The 'Beyond Fences' approach encouraged dialogue to enhance compatibility between international food safety standards and animal disease management standards, which are currently governed by separate international bodies. The SCAPES project sought to streamline these regulatory mechanisms, both of which are ultimately about the mitigation of potential biological hazards. The project also conducted a first-of-its-kind analysis of the socioeconomic implications of different scenarios related to livestock- and wildlife-based land uses in a SADC transfrontier conservation area.

Communication was vital to the project, with a focus on generating awareness among stakeholders at all levels. Through e-newsletters, videos, small gatherings and the hosting of major conferences, the project facilitated an exchange of ideas and played a vital part in the debate over animal health policy. By playing the role of honest broker while working with multiple sectors — all with acknowledged vested interests — 'Beyond Fences' maintained the objectivity necessary to secure ongoing cooperation on issues impacting animal health as well as sustainable rural livelihoods.



ZAMBEZI REGION, NAMIBIA, 2010: Draught oxen in wildlife conservancy. Photo by Mark W. Atkinson for WCS / AHEAD

## THE LESSONS

The SADC Livestock Technical Committee was an instrumental partner over the years, as were veterinary and wildlife department personnel in the five countries of the KAZA TFCA. "Shuttle biplomacy" was at the heart of the project's progress. That said, the dominant land-use policies in the region have been in place for

more than 50 years. Changing them will require ongoing patience and persistence. Nonetheless, policies related to animal disease management have started to change, offering real prospects for moving 'Beyond Fences' in the years to come.



KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER  
CONSERVATION AREA, NAMIBIA, 2012:  
KAZA TFCA Official Launch.  
Photo by Shirley Atkinson for WCS / AHEAD



ZIMBABWE, 2010: Elephant testing fence. Photo by Mark W. Atkinson for WCS / AHEAD