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# **FRAMEWORK FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CBNRM IN MALAWI**

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Community  
Partnerships for  
Sustainable  
Resource  
Management in  
Malawi

## Framework for Strategic Planning for Community-based Natural Resource Management in Malawi

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## ACRONYMS

BVC	Beach Village Committee
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-based Organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
COMPASS	Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management
CPAR	Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief
CRECCOM	The Creative Centre for Community Mobilization
CURE	Coordination Unit for the Rehabilitation of the Environment
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DNPW	Department of National Parks and Wildlife
EAD	Environmental Affairs Department
ELDP	Evangelical Lutheran Development Programme
EU	European Union
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
FRIM	Forestry Research Institute of Malawi
FSTCU	Forestry Sector Technical Coordinating Unit
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GOM	Government of Malawi
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICRAF	International Centre for Research on Agroforestry
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IR	Intermediate Result
IUCN/ROSA	The World Conservation Union/Regional Office for Southern Africa
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LOMADEF	Lipangwe Organic Manure Demonstration Farm
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFE	Malawi Agroforestry Extension Project
MASAF	Malawi Social Action Fund
MEET	Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust
MMCT	Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust
NARMAP	National Aquatic Resources Management Programme
NCE	National Council on the Environment
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEAP	National Environmental Action Plan
NFP	National Forestry Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NICE	National Initiative for Civic Education
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSO	National Statistics Office
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PROSCARP	Promotion of Soil Conservation and Rural Production
RUFA	Rural Foundation for Agroforestry
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAFIRE	Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources
SHARED	Services for Health, Agriculture, Rural and Enterprise Development
TA	Traditional Authority
TR	Targeted Result

TSP	Training Support Project for CBNRM
VNRC	Village Natural Resource Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WSM	Wildlife Society of Malawi

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On behalf of the Community-based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) Working Group, this paper identifies the current status of CBNRM implementation in Malawi, and suggests the way forward in terms of developing a national strategy and a coordination mechanism. Over the past five years Malawi has made appreciable progress in promoting CBNRM. The most significant achievement has been in formulating policies and legislation in the key resource sectors including forestry, fisheries, parks and wildlife and environmental management supportive of this approach. In this particular respect, Malawi has done more than the other countries in the region. In addition, several community level projects have been initiated with the support of the GOM, about a dozen NGOs, and about half a dozen key donors.

Although in the absence of a monitoring system there has not been a comprehensive evaluation, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the results on the ground are not as encouraging as hoped. Implementation of policies and legislation supportive of CBNRM has been challenging and slow. In fact, in many areas it has hardly begun. The impact of the majority of the projects is insignificant, primarily because the number of projects is relatively small compared to the need and magnitude of the problem. Moreover, the majority of community activities are largely ineffective with no signs of possible sustainability beyond the period of external project funding. At this rate, the potential benefits of legislative reform and project investments will never be realized.

A major problem with CBNRM implementation in Malawi is the lack of a national strategy or planning framework. A second is the lack of an effective coordination mechanism. NRM policy reforms are undertaken on a sector by sector basis while CBNRM community projects are implemented in isolation and often with limited application of CBNRM principles. Many project implementation agencies lack capacity and use ineffective, top-down approaches to community mobilization, while their uncoordinated entry into communities frequently results in conflicts and confusion. The creation of the CBNRM Working Group and the support of the COMPASS project in preparing this draft planning framework is a response to this unfortunate state of affairs.

The CBNRM Working Group, was formed as a technical arm of the National Council on Environment (NCE), with responsibility to advise the council on all CBNRM matters. As the key CBNRM coordination body, the Working Group's work includes assessing the impact of CBNRM, developing a strategic plan and establishing guidelines for monitoring and evaluation. It will in addition establish effective linkages among resource sectors, between communities and decision-makers and provide a mechanism for integrating CBNRM into the decentralized government structure. With a goal of promoting broad-based CBNRM adoption, it plans to support resource sectors in the implementation of their sector policies and projects and identify ways for sustainably financing Malawi's CBNRM initiatives. The purpose of this paper is to provide this group with the background information to initiate discussion and progress towards these goals, and towards the formulation of a CBNRM national strategy and coordination mechanism.

Based on a review of several studies focusing on policy and community levels, and wide consultation with various stakeholders, this paper suggests several actions that could form the basis for developing the national CBNRM strategy and coordination mechanism. These include: providing direction and assistance in developing the CBNRM concept, principles

and approaches; developing a process for updating resource sector policies in the light of emerging experiences and needs; taking the next step beyond policy formulation and developing sector strategies and action plans; developing planning tools such as results frameworks, indicators and benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation; providing strategic support in implementation of projects and policies; and investing sufficiently in performance and impact monitoring and evaluating not just of CBNRM policies and projects but also of the coordination mechanism itself. The paper also recommends that the Working Group purposefully establishes a system for linking these actions in a logical fashion that completes the CBNRM planning and implementation cycle, and takes advantage of the many existing and potential opportunities that have been identified in this and other papers.

Many CBNRM stakeholders in Malawi support the concept of CBNRM and the role of the CBNRM Working Group. At the same time, with memory of the past failures of many coordination efforts, they are apprehensive about the challenge this entails. However, many are hopeful especially given progress to date, and the group's methodical approach starting with the preparation of this paper. In light of the suggested actions of the CBNRM Working Group and concerns expressed by various stakeholders, this paper further identifies several aspects of its the group's organizational structure that might constrain its performance. It also presents some suggestions for possible adjustments that might help and discusses possible opportunities for sustainable financing of the coordination activities.

The next step is for the CBNRM Working Group to review and finalize this background paper, present it to the NCE and start the process of formulating a national strategy. A major challenge for the CBNRM Working Group will be managing a process of change in the face of the many uncertainties inherent in the CBNRM approach. On the other hand, their proposed undertaking is the single most strategic move for breaking the stalemate that seems to have occurred in the implementation of policies and for steering projects towards results with positive and significant impact on both the natural resource base and the people of Malawi.



## **PART I**

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **CBNRM in the region**

Today all countries in the Southern Africa region are involved in some level of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM). The fundamental goal sought by all these countries, including Malawi, is to make an effective transition from traditional resource policing methods to working with communities. The aim is to increase local communities' responsibilities and rights over the management of their resource base while increasing their incomes and livelihood support from the same resources. Countries vary in their emphasis on the different aspects of the CBNRM approach. For example, countries such as Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia put their early focus on community wildlife-based enterprise development, and particularly elephant trophy hunting, and not necessarily making fundamental changes in the policies and legislations that define ownership, use and management of the entire resource base, as did Malawi.

This may now be changing. Botswana, for example, is now working on a broader CBNRM national strategy. Nevertheless, Malawi is clearly ahead of all the rest in its early efforts and its focus on broad-based reforms and institutional restructuring in support of CBNRM. Rather than treating CBNRM as an isolated entity, Malawi is making a major re-orientation, at least in principle, to treating community-based approaches as the development model underpinning its national strategy for fighting rural poverty. Malawi also seems to have realized that the combination of relatively high levels of rural poverty, high dependence on natural resources for survival, and thin budgets in the resource departments, all mean that the usual policing methods are simply not effective. At the moment, the Government of Malawi (GOM) is pursuing broad-based adoption of the CBNRM approach in the management of its entire natural resource base including forests, agricultural land, fisheries, wildlife and National Parks. Other SADC countries including Zambia, South Africa, and Mozambique seem intent on moving along Malawi's path but are much slower, less focused and, as a result, further behind in formulating new policies and legislation, for example. Although these countries have a richer natural resource base, they are proposing less fundamental changes including a bigger (extension-oriented) role for the government and not so much increasing communities' rights and economic incentives.

#### **Policies and legislation in Malawi**

##### ***Progress on policy and legislative reform***

In contrast, Malawi has been particularly dynamic in revising its sectoral natural resource policies and updating legislation to make it more supportive of CBNRM. Though the process of legislative reform must remain dynamic, and a lot remains to be done, at the moment the policies and legislative framework in each resource sector defines the path for making the transition from resource policing to CBNRM approach, and provides the legal basis for effecting this transition. This includes spelling out many more rights and responsibilities for

rural communities in general. On this, Malawi is well ahead of any other country in the region.<sup>1</sup>

For example, in the last five years, Malawi has revised all its key resource sector policies. This includes the Forest Policy and Act revised in 1996 and 1997 respectively, The Environment Management Act in 1996, the Fisheries Policy revised in 1998, and the Wildlife Policy revised early 2000. The Wildlife Department is in the process of updating its current Wildlife Act to take account of the changes made in the policy.

The general thrust of the forest policy and act provides communities with full rights and responsibilities in customary land, primarily through the creation on Village Forest Areas and village by-laws, with the government providing advisory services and technical support. In Forest Reserves the policy provides for co-management arrangements with the Forestry Department being in charge and having overall authority over management plans and decisions on how to involve the communities. The wildlife and fisheries policies in general call for co-management arrangements between the government and the communities, with provision for eventually forging enterprise development partnerships between communities, the government and the formal private sector.

However, perhaps because this is such a new approach and the capacity and responses of communities are not well known, all these policies have kept a check on community rights and responsibilities, and not given them a free hand. Instead, resource management agreements are required in customary land forestry, and co-management arrangements in forest reserves, national parks and fisheries. The legislation makes provision for villagers to formulate their own village by-laws but these need to be endorsed by the government, and by the Minister in the case of forestry, for example<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Stalled policy implementation***

Though Malawi has made such significant progress in policy reform, it has stalled and almost reached a deadlock in the implementation of these policies and legislative reforms. There are hardly any endorsed village by-laws or signed resource management agreements under the new policies and legislation. Also, without much cross-sectoral and NGO – Government coordination, these policies are interpreted somewhat differently and on a sector-by-sector or project-by-project basis. Consequently, what eventually happens at community level seems determined by the interpretation of the implementing agencies, their aggressiveness in

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<sup>1</sup> This was the finding of a recent IUCN-supported regional review of forestry policies covering 15 countries in the Southern and Eastern Africa region (draft to be circulated soon).

<sup>2</sup> COMPASS Document 7 - *Policy Framework for Community-based Natural Resources Management in Malawi* - concluded amongst other findings that:

- Community-based management is an important part of resource management strategy in every resource sector. All policies studied recognized the need to rely on communities to protect and sustain resources. Characterization of resource ownership and control has shifted from government ownership and protection to government as trustee for the benefit of the people. Approaches adopted in laws and policies include participatory management, co-management, and community-based management. Reliance on community-based enforcement is extensive in Malawi.
- Integration of stakeholders in community management is incomplete. Roles for Traditional Authorities and NGOs are notably absent or incomplete in most resource policies.

pursuing their cause, and more so by their varying level of comfort in giving the communities more authority over the resources.

For example, in the case of the Fisheries Department several Beach Village Committees (BVCs) have formulated their own by-laws (primarily focusing on fishing regulations, community policing and imposing penalties on offenders) that they use without waiting for endorsement. In contrast, in forestry few villagers have formulated by-laws and only one has been endorsed by the government (at Kam'mwamba in Mwanza District). Indeed, this one case required such high level GOM involvement that it will be difficult to replicate. In wildlife, one Village Trust has been formed in the Lake Malawi National Park area but not under the provisions of the Wildlife Act or policy but the older legislation dealing with trusts.

All the GOM departments responsible for the various natural resource sectors are aware of the delay in providing communities with the legal tools they need to work with and of the fact that in spite of the legislation, there is now nothing devolving ownership to communities. Yet communities need these legally empowering tools if to be fully committed and move forward in executing their roles and responsibilities stipulated in the various pieces of legislation. The best progress in all sectors has been made in the formation of user groups, primarily the Village Natural Resources Committees (VNRCs) and BVCs in the case of the Fisheries Department. On a national scale, however, even these are too few to have significant impact.

Efforts to move ahead in policy implementation are being made but with a widespread admission that the process is extremely challenging, especially given the legal complexities. Progress remains extremely slow and, in fact, there is good cause to believe that this process may have generally reached a deadlock. For various reasons, the Forestry Department and to an extent the Department of National Parks & Wildlife (DNPW) are being relatively cautious about giving communities substantial control. In the last three years, these Departments have remained quite tentative about devolving their resource management role: decision-making and progress remain extremely slow.

The DNPW is now at the final stages of updating its Act to reflect the changes in the policy. Once this is done it will move ahead with what is required to establish community or village advisory boards and initiate the steps necessary to establish communities as legal entities. Under the provisions of the Wildlife Act, these can enter into agreements with the government and the formal private sector. The Department, though having a relatively positive outlook, is the first to admit that the formation of these community legal tools is complex. Moreover, the wildlife sector and Malawi as a whole lack experience, capacity and perhaps sufficient resources to motivate and mobilize the communities. As things stand, the Department expects progress to be slow, is not able to predict the results and is proceeding extremely cautiously, taking time to weigh the merits of every situation. It plans to craft community involvement, power and activities with circumspection and on a case-by- case basis.

The Forestry Department seems to have had even less confidence in the ability to forge ahead with broad scale institutionalization of CBNRM in Malawi. Its doubts are mainly centered on the capacity of local communities to execute their new resource management responsibilities and the ability of the forests to provide sufficient economic incentives, especially under co-management of reserves. Progress in this Department is affected by the inability of staff to see clearly their role and power base with respect to the new approach. With the support of DFID, however, the Forestry Department has now defined its areas of CBNRM focus under

the National Forestry Program (draft in preparation) and this should provide avenue for progress.

Annex 1 provides additional insights into the various approaches toward implementation of CBNRM in Malawi that have been adopted by different agencies and organizations.

## **Progress in community projects**

### ***The NGOs' role in CBNRM implementation***

As a result of the policy reforms that have occurred in the last few years, Malawi has seen significant growth in CBNRM programs and projects, most of them implemented by NGOs with the support of external aid (see Annex 2). With the blossoming of natural resource management (NRM) NGOs, CURE was created as an umbrella organization to help in the coordination of their efforts. At the moment, CURE provides coordination support to about 50 NGOs through regular quarterly meetings. Over a dozen of these organizations espouse the CBNRM approach. Most of these NGOs focus on forestry activities and the bulk of CBNRM projects involve community forestry. These tend to be small, isolated activities rather than components of a larger program or coordinated strategy to address forestry issues in the country.

There are just a few NGOs engaged in fisheries development. Those that are, tend not to be involved in the core CBNRM activities or application of its principles but address villagers' fishing activities more as part of general livelihood support and rural development. The Wildlife Society of Malawi (WSM) is the main NGO involved in community wildlife activities. Apart from WSM, there are a few other NGOs now beginning to show interest in wildlife and parks management. According to the DNPW staff, however, these NGOs' activities are marginal and tend to lack clear goals and strategies for working in the sector.

There are other non-NRM focused organizations such as MASAF and ELDP and several others with development portfolios that include forestry activities. These NGO's resource management activities typically include rehabilitation of communal areas and establishment of communal and private tree nurseries as part of a broader rural or community development agenda.

### ***Donor support to CBNRM projects***

The growth of NGO interest in resources management seems closely correlated to the growth of donor interest in this area. Malawi has about half a dozen key donors funding CBNRM activities (see Annex 2). The key donors in this area include USAID currently supporting the NATURE program and the COMPASS activity that helps promote CBNRM. USAID also supports several NGO activities through the SHARED project, the MAFE project in the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and also has contributed to the establishment of the Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET). GTZ supports relatively small projects in forestry, wildlife and fisheries management. DANIDA is also supporting fisheries management and spearheads the establishment of District-level environmental services. DANIDA has also promised contributions to the capitalization of MEET. DFID is providing support for the formulation of the National Forestry Program and contributes to the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust (MMCT). DFID may also invest in community-based, livelihood-supporting fisheries management in the near future. The European Union is

supporting the Social Forestry Program within the Forestry Department and the PROSCARP program within the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. The World Bank curtailed their support to the community micro-financing project under EAD but continues interest in the GEF-supported MMCT and may extend its activities into the management of Lake Malawi fisheries through an extension to the earlier GEF Lake Malawi initiative. Other donors in resources management include FINNIDA supporting the forestry sector in privatization and university curricular development.

### ***Regional programs***

There are also a number of regional NRM initiatives that cover Malawi and whose regional offices are based in Malawi. These include the SADC forestry program supported by GTZ/FSTCU and focusing establishing forest CBNRM projects in the region; the SADC/NRM program supported by USAID focusing information exchange and capacity building across the region (based in DNPW); the bilateral Icelandic aid in fisheries management and regional information network; and the IUCN and ICRAF programs. More recently, IFAD has provided support towards developing a regional network (covering five countries including Malawi) for forest product based micro-enterprise development through an effort led by an NGO (SAFIRE) based in Zimbabwe. Malawi has to a limited extent benefited, but certainly not taken full advantage of these and other regional programs. In addition, USAID's Regional Center for Southern Africa has proposed adding Lake Malawi to its list of regional sites for promoting Trans-boundary Natural Resource Management.

### **Progress in CBNRM implementation**

It is difficult to assess the overall performance of CBNRM projects in Malawi because the country lacks a strategy that spells out expected goals, results and performance targets. Moreover, there is no coordinated approach to implementation and monitoring performance and impact. Recent work such as COMPASS' study on grassroots advocacy (Lowore and Wilson, 2000) and some disparate project-by-project information suggest that in spite of the level of effort in policy reform and project initiatives, there are many implementation problems. Many planned project outputs have not been realized.

The main limitation to broad adoption of CBNRM is that activities are still too few and limited in their geographical scope given the magnitude of the problems and needs of the country. Where projects have begun, initial efforts and progress so far have seen the creation of relatively few user groups such as the Village Natural Resource Committees (VNRCs), definition of resource use and regulations, and limited training of community leaders and field extension staff on community mobilization techniques. Little has been accomplished with regard to natural resource management itself or the development of income generating activities.

Community involvement in the protection especially of forests and national parks is still very limited and the division between their role and that of the government still unclear. Communities and implementation agencies alike have limited technical knowledge of how to manage complex indigenous forest systems and the Forestry Department still lacks management plans even for the state-run Forest Reserves.

The few forest management activities concentrate on tree nursery management and tree planting, and not so much the regeneration or protection of existing forests. Community

resources utilization under CBNRM initiatives typically allows limited harvesting of minor products such as wild fruits and vegetables, grass, dead wood for household energy, materials for minor crafts etc. Resource use is geared towards household subsistence support through direct consumption and minor sales, with no projects operating at commercial levels or even involving the formal private sector to any significant degree. At the national level this has not changed much the way communities and households used resources previously. As such, the CBNRM process is still at its early stages and a lot needs to be done to achieve its broad adoption and impact.

## **Projects' impact on CBNRM goals**

### ***Community empowerment***

Some community empowerment has come about as a result of the enabling conditions established by new policies, participation in decision-making forums and affiliation with community institutions that have specified purposes. Such empowerment is especially valuable for very poor people and women who have traditionally been left out of externally funded projects. However, even this incipient sense of empowerment may be short lived if communities continue to lack the legal basis to execute many of their specified roles and responsibilities and as long as a true sense of ownership has not developed. Malawi needs to find a way of breaking the deadlock that now limits communities' ability to sign village by-laws and enter resource management agreements.

### ***Community economic welfare and resource productivity***

At the national scale the impact on the other goals including increased community economic welfare and resource productivity is insignificant or unidentifiable, if present at all. While some projects have generated some limited community benefits, there is no evidence whatsoever that any resource sector (including forestry, parks and wildlife, and fisheries) has reversed the linked trend in poverty and resource degradation as a result of CBNRM efforts. Time and purposeful pursuit and especially the involvement of the formal private sector may help generate higher economic returns. At the moment, however, the general lack of relationship between financial investments in CBNRM projects and growth in communities' resource-based incomes or resources conservation is discouraging. Currently, nearly all CBNRM projects in the country are extremely cost ineffective in terms of kwacha generated for the community resource users per project-dollar spent.

### ***Community attitude transformation***

Though most projects would not pass an economic evaluation, where the approach has been good there is often a valuable impact on transforming attitudes. Communities that have started NRM-based enterprises, for example, under the NARMAP and the WSM community forestry in Mwanza, are beginning to realize the economic value of resources beyond their normal subsistence use and are keen to protect them. In such cases, even if the enterprise activities bring no major economic gains to the communities (primarily because of their limited scale), community attitudes might have been transformed enough to ensure that resources will be protected and at least continue to be available for subsistence use, and possibly for major commercial activities in the future. In this case, even though the short-term economic impact of such projects is relatively small, their longer-term effect may be highly positive and significant.

## *Sustainability*

Long-term benefits will occur only for those projects that during their life succeed in achieving sustainability. Unfortunately, many projects have disregarded the value of sustainability or are unable to identifying processes that are likely to result in sustainability because they pursue short-term gains and rapid results. Most of the CBNRM projects rely on large external support and there is little demonstration that in general these projects can continue to operate and be financially viable after the external funding ends.<sup>3</sup> Where the initial approach made to communities has been poor and without concern for sustainability, the resulting dependency and attitudes could be permanently damaging to the future development of these communities.

Also contributing to this problem is that many CBNRM projects are externally funded and, therefore, required to produce results within the life of the projects - typically not exceeding 5 years. This dilemma between long-term vision with sustainability and the expectation of quick results is understandable and real. For example, it has caused initiatives such as the small grants component under the five-year COMPASS program to debate the merits and disadvantages of its focus on sustainability and learning lessons against the demand for achieving quick and measurable results that is inherent in these types of projects.

## *Distribution*

Distribution is relatively uneven in terms of geographical location of projects. Most NGO-supported CBNRM projects are concentrated in the Southern Region and near urban centers within easy reach by the NGOs. The COMPASS project is again an exception in supporting small projects distributed relatively widely throughout the country. This better suits a community mobilization approach that does not require high levels of supervision. At the project level, at this point we can more accurately think in terms of distribution of participation opportunities and costs rather than benefits as few projects are generating significant economic benefits. Overall, women are relatively well represented with regard to participation in project activities. Women's participation has been relatively high especially because women are traditionally intimately involved in resources and their control especially in matrilineal societies in the South and Central regions. They also respond relatively well to calls for community mobilization and group activities. At this point, many VNRCs and BVCs have women representatives but their contribution in mixed groups remains relatively marginal. Also, there is little to suggest that poorer community members are being excluded from CBNRM initiatives. In fact, a few projects deliberately target the poor including women headed households. However, unless due care and precautions are taken, the poor and women could become marginalized and drop out of the projects if and when tangible benefits begin to flow.

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<sup>3</sup> Out of 18 projects, 4 or 5 projects supported under the COMPASS program show early signs of possible sustainability beyond the period of project funding. This is perhaps because the program uses a different, more hands-off approach and generally provides funds for only one year to initiate interest and launch activities.

## PART II

### WEAKNESSES LIMITING BROAD ADOPTION OF CBNRM IN MALAWI

In spite of the progress made in policy reform and the initiation of a growing number of community projects, at the national level progress and impact have been severely limited by several factors including: inability to implement the new policies, lack of coherent implementation strategies and poor monitoring and evaluation, lack of a commonly shared vision leading to hesitance especially among Government departments, and lack of an effective CBNRM coordination mechanism. CBNRM projects have suffered from lack of awareness and good planning, lack of capacity among Government departments, NGOs and communities, and because a lack of grassroots advocacy has led to a use of community mobilization approaches that increase dependency, undermine possibilities for projects to be replicated and sustained, and often cause confusion and conflicts. This section examines the processes by which these weaknesses constrain broad based adoption of CBNRM in Malawi, as well existing opportunities to overcome them.

#### **Weaknesses related to policy and legislation**

##### *Incomplete policy formulation and legislation*

- Although much progress has been made in developing policy and legislative reforms supportive of CBNRM, several uncertainties remain. On customary land, for example, the precise division of power between the Forestry Department and communities is not clear and nor is the responsibility for protection of these forests. This has in most cases slowed progress in the creation of Village Forest Areas, the preparation of village by-laws and formalization of management agreements.
- The focus on Village Natural Resource Committees (VNRCs) as the new community institutions for CBNRM implementation has limited opportunities for using existing community organizations and leadership structures, often slowing progress, increasing costs and working as a disadvantage for project implementation.
- It is a contradiction that while Traditional Authorities (still recognized and respected by most communities) and NGOs are actively involved in current CBNRM projects, revised sector policies and legislation including forestry, fisheries and wildlife have remained silent on the TAs' roles.
- The sectoral NRM policies are developed in isolation and need to be harmonized. Further harmonization with the more fundamental changes proposed under the Land Reform and Decentralization policies is even more critical.
- In the wildlife and fisheries sectors, final legislative steps (such as gazetting) necessary for finalization of the management agreements were not in place by late September 2000.

**Opportunities:** The CBNRM coordination mechanism should make the policy process dynamic, revising policies as new experiences and lessons emerge. The goal should be to make policies supportive of CBNRM rather than constraining the process of change.

The role of the Traditional Authorities in CBNRM could be appropriately aligned with the more significant roles recommended under the Land Reform Policy while the decentralization policy should help establish the appropriate legal position of NGOs. The National Forestry Program (NFP) draft document has taken a first step in proposing the appropriate roles of local communities and NGOs, the Local Government, the Forestry Department and the private sector in implementing the CBNRM component of the program.

### ***Stalled policy implementation***

- The process of policy implementation has been stalled for several reasons: the sectoral NRM policies and legislation are not well understood at the grassroots; they maintain a critical role for the government departments while the same departments lack capacity and sometimes political will to give the necessary support and to effect the proposed changes. All government departments agree that the procedures involved in the process of preparing legal tools such as village by laws, management agreements, community trusts as legal entities are new and sensitive areas around which they have little knowledge or confidence and are therefore proceeding extremely cautiously and making little progress.

**Opportunities:** The CBNRM Working Group can promote better understanding of the new policies and the roles of the various stakeholders and help overcome the challenges presented by the legal complexities involved in implementation. During the preparation of this paper, several stakeholders have recommended the engagement of an environmental law-oriented NGO such as the Green Wigs to help educate and facilitate this process.

### ***Resistance to a new system***

- Related to the two points above, there is still (though perhaps declining) resistance and practical difficulties in making the transition from the usual approach to policing of resources to working with and for communities. At the central level, senior staff members are not always sure of the significance of their new roles and levels of power under a CBNRM approach, while CBNRM projects have not built sufficient incentives for the effective participation of extension staff from the old system. Some of the resistance is associated with lack of skills, lack of confidence and discomfort with the CBNRM approach.

**Opportunities:** So far, there has been some training but hardly enough. The EU-supported forestry extension training program covering 5 districts has made some progress in training and has had encouraging results even with forest guards and scouts. However, the coverage remains limited and warrants expansion and replication.

### ***Uncertainty about the effects of land reform and decentralization policies***

- The initiation of the land reform and decentralization processes subsequent to the launching of various CBNRM initiatives is unfortunate. Whether the overall effects will be positive or negative, the proposed changes in land use and institutional arrangements under decentralization have created uncertainties about how CBNRM will proceed and further serve to create passiveness and a wait-and-see attitude. In the meantime, government departments are undergoing changes and losing staff in the restructuring

process proposed by IMF, adding to the atmosphere of uncertainty. See Annex 3 for additional comments.

**Opportunities:** The inclusion of the key resource sector and local government policy level decision makers in the Local Government and Lands Department in the CBNRM coordination body is essential for policy coordination, pre-empting conflicts and helping build consensus.

#### **Weaknesses related to limited awareness and vision**

- Many CBNRM implementers have a reasonable understanding that the ultimate goals of CBNRM goals are three-fold: promoting increased productivity of the resource bases; increasing community NRM-based incomes; and general empowerment of these communities, especially through legal rights and stronger community institutions. However, the awareness and vision of the end results in terms of resource management and institutional responsibilities are limited and vague, and the application of CBNRM principles is weak. Opinions and levels of belief in rural communities' ability to undergo the implied transformations and to uphold the implied resources management responsibilities are extremely varied. Consequently, many people in the NRM sectors fear the loss of the traditional government-led resource management system without a proven system to replace it.

**Opportunities:** Many NGOs (including CURE) working at the grassroots level insist that the capacity and traditional knowledge of many rural communities has been grossly underestimated and underutilized. Experience from countries such as India and Nepal that have been promoting CBNRM for more than 20 years now suggest there is no need for government to fear the implied changes. Though difficult at the outset, CBNRM is a valid approach for many developing countries. The CBNRM Working Group could help organize education campaigns and hold special forums for establishing a clear vision among all stakeholders, while helping NRM sectors in the application of CBNRM principles that have already been developed.

#### **Weaknesses related to lack of a national CBNRM strategy, planning and implementation tools**

- Even after the formulation of the NEAP and the Environmental Management Act nearly 5 years ago, Malawi still lacks a comprehensive national CBNRM strategy. So far the resource sectors have operated from policies and legislation rather than CBNRM strategies and action plans. Their CBNRM promoting operations outside of a number of externally funded programs and projects are extremely limited. The sum of the disjointed resource management activities effects is much less than could be achieved if the available resources were employed in more strategic fashion.

**Opportunities:** This situation could change soon for the Forestry Department as it has now nearly completed its long awaited National Forestry Program (NFP) under DFID support. This has turned out to be a valuable strategic planning document; with about a third of the areas focusing directly on CBNRM implementation or providing services supportive of CBNRM. For each of these CBNRM focal areas it assigns roles for the Forestry Department, the Local Government, civil society (including local communities and NGOs) and the private sector. It also identifies the roles and rights that need further considerations and negotiations.

The CBNRM Working Group could help the other government departments including DNPW and Fisheries develop approaches and strategies along the lines of the NFP. The Fisheries Department in particular has expressed interest in working on similar a strategic planning exercise as they update the fisheries policy. Given the less complex nature of their resources, the wildlife and fisheries strategies and plans should be easier to formulate than that of forestry. This approach would also be valuable for the energy, water and land husbandry sectors.

## **Weaknesses related to limited capacity and ineffectiveness of implementing agencies**

### ***Limited personnel and financial capacity***

- Lack of personnel and financial capacity among NRM departments and NGOs limits coverage. This means that many government departments hardly initiate projects. Many NGOs start small programs located within easy reach of their offices, many of them within the Southern Region and not too far from the cities. Many NGOs complain of increasing donor fatigue and decreasing financial support while at the same time government policies such as those removing their duty-free privileges further depress their financial capacity. At the same time, many stakeholders complain of frustration with lack of accountability and corruption among both NGOs and government departments involved in CBNRM.

**Opportunities:** The COMPASS small grants programs offers a different experience by accessing remoter communities but using an approach that does not require intense supervision or extensive project inputs. The CBNRM coordination mechanism might also lobby for increasing NGO financing and reversing constraining policies such as those removing their duty free privileges. The decentralization process might help increase accountability and curb corruption.

### ***Lack of CBNRM knowledge and interest among field extension staff results in waste***

- This country has a wide network of forestry and land husbandry extension field staff that could potentially be very useful for reaching communities deep into rural areas and help overcome constraints created by the limited capacity of central government and NGOs. However, this is not happening to an appreciable degree. At the moment, although programs such as the EU Social Forestry has started training in 5 districts, the majority of field extension personnel are not prepared for CBNRM activities.

**Opportunities:** Opportunities exist for NGO and NRM departments to enter into collaborative arrangements allowing the posting of extension staff on CBNRM projects. This would help NGOs and at the same time motivate field personnel who currently feel uprooted from their traditional roles and yet unable to participate in the new community-based approaches.

### ***Lack of capacity and ineffectiveness at community level***

- CBNRM stakeholders have varying opinions on whether Malawian rural communities have the capacity to undertake effective project planning and implementation, to participate in policy dialogue and reform, or to engage in advocacy. For example, several

NGOs including CURE, WSM and ELDP argue that the ability of the communities is largely underestimated and that they can do much more than they are given a chance to do. Similarly, the proposed approach in the Lower Shire Protected Areas Project is based on this conviction and is planning for increased management responsibilities on the part of communities. In contrast, the recent study by Lowore and Wilson (2000) concluded that even though a lot is said about communities' roles in various processes, in reality their ability is limited. This is also the sense in the DPNW and the main reason for the Forestry Department's tentativeness about transferring forestry management responsibilities to communities.

**Opportunities:** Malawi needs to invest in developing a better understanding of what its rural communities can and cannot do within the context of CBNRM. This could be one of the strategic studies to be commissioned by the CBNRM Working Group. Even more important, the Working Group needs to investigate the circumstances under which communities are able to be effective agencies in their own development and overcome the conditions that create inadequacy, helplessness and even manipulative behavior. In this regard, the experiences of the extension division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation could be insightful. In the last few years this division has tested (in South, Central and Northern regions) some West African-based community mobilization methodologies that have been uniquely successful by some estimates. However, this effort has ceased for various reasons.

#### ***Inappropriate community mobilization approaches exacerbate existing capacity constraints***

- This apparent ownership of projects by implementing agencies many times creates procedures that are by village standards too sophisticated. This in turn creates apparent feelings of inadequacy among villagers. Communities then need a lot of support to implement these external projects while NGOs and Government lack the knowledge or financial and personnel resources to respond effectively to these needs. In a process that is clearly externally led and yielding limited benefits for the communities, the situation becomes one where villagers demand money to attend "your" training and meetings. In such cases, the end of the external project funds becomes the end of what has been referred to as community projects.

**Opportunities:** At the level of community projects and policy implementation, a lot remains to be done on developing methodologies that lead to true community ownership of the choices, activities and processes that affect them. At the same time service providers must play a helpful role that is neither controlling nor spoon-feeding. This is a delicate balance. More open approaches such as those of COMPASS risk having limited results while the more heavily supervised projects seem to have more predictable results but are costly to supervise and implement and are less likely to be sustained after the project support is withdrawn. The CBNRM Working Group should invest time in exploring the various approaches used by several agencies, analyze merits, advantages and disadvantages and use the information to guide implementation.

#### ***Lack of advocacy skills limits community participation in CBNRM processes***

- In most cases, the traditional PRA-based community consultation process falls far short of true consultation and ends up being a forum to educate the community on the objectives of a project or policy - or to co-opt the communities through their leaders only to pre-empt conflict. The COMPASS study on grassroots advocacy (Lowore and Wilson,

2000), for example, argues that in situations where a policy paper or project concept is presented to communities for their input, the majority of the resource users cannot participate. Their lack of experience, knowledge and access to information inhibits their ability (and confidence) to analyze the issues and present arguments. The same study concluded that the existing grassroots organizations including BVCs, VNRCs, village clubs and the few associations (such as the Lake Chilwa Fisheries Association) and indigenous local NGOs (such as LOMADEF, RUFA and Greenline Movement) are “not sufficiently organized to present a powerful voice concerning advocacy.” While CURE is strategically positioned to support these grassroots institutions and other larger NGOs in developing advocacy capacity, it too lacks such capacity in terms of personnel and skills.

**Opportunities:** Advocacy rather than consultation or co-option to pre-empt conflict should allow real community needs and aspirations to be known and offer a fairer process for addressing the confrontational issues. Lowore and Wilson (2000) suggest possible policy-level, grassroots linkages, advocacy channels (see Figure 1) and community-level support that if strengthened and coordinated could be valuable. The presence of informed, confident and committed community representatives (such as at the TA level) in the CBNRM Working Group could help develop a closer dialogue between villagers and decision makers, and help promote the development of advocacy channels.

At present CURE and WSM are involved in an advocacy campaign supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) but that is focussed on a narrow and relatively non-controversial subject on developing energy saving stoves for rural households. This process however has opened dialogue between these NGOs and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on the Environment. Once the precedence is set, and as these NGOs build their advocacy capacity, many more issues needing parliamentary attention could be channeled through this relatively direct route. The CBNRM effort also needs to invest more in developing advocacy skills at various levels.

#### ***Few, hastily formed and generally ineffective VNRCs limit progress***

- Although some progress has made in the formation of village natural resources committees, so far CBNRM community organizations are too few to have insignificant impact at the national level. Some of the main reasons for VNRCs ineffectiveness are associated with poor approaches including too hasty formation (sometimes taking only a few hours) of VNRCs - especially when implementers have to fulfill some requirements at the last minute. There is also a policy driven focus on formation of new VNRCs while there are other existing CBOs that might be more appropriate. The top-down approaches create inadequacies and dependency that makes the VNRCs less effective.

**Opportunity:** Resource policies should remove pressure to form new CBOs and project evaluations should not be based on the number of CBOs formed without paying attention to results and effectiveness.

#### **Weaknesses associated with lack of critical CBNRM support processes**

##### ***Lack of environmental awareness, education and information exchange limits progress***

- Knowledge and information development is one of the least addressed areas of Malawi's CBNRM effort but for which there is great need. The Environmental Education Strategy

so far has been neglected for unclear reasons. Some people suspect lack of funds to implement the suggested actions. Yet this critically constrains CBNRM implementation especially because many key people in government, NGOs and among communities do not fully comprehend the concept of CBNRM and its ultimate purpose. They do not understand the new policies and legislation, their implications, and how to use and apply them. This limited understanding creates a group of implementing agents who are under many circumstances suspicious and often feel threatened by the proposed changes.

**Opportunities:** The Environmental Education Strategy should be revisited and if necessary revised in the face of the new CBNRM spirit and approach. Media campaigns and village drama and school programs would be extremely beneficial especially for creating environmental consciousness and for educating the civil society particularly on the CBNRM's purpose, policies and principles. A recent COMPASS-supported study (Sneed, 2000) provides some technical guidance on how media campaigns could be approached, their nature and what type of information could be targeted to various groups including communities members and school children for maximum impact. This needs to be developed into a strategy, including guidance on strategic actions to help move the process forward.

On village drama, several NGOs including WSM in its Mwanza project, CRECCOM and the Story Workshop Education Trust have done some effective and replicable work. These NGOs could provide some guidance on developing broad-scale use of village drama. The NICE program has an extensive and apparently effective program of civic education. This program is now begging to include environmental messages and has room for expansion. Discussions with NICE staff suggested great possibilities for linkages with CBNRM objectives and opportunities to use their network of field staff who have developed rapport and cost effective ways to reach villagers. The Story Workshop has an innovative approach to mass media campaigns and drama and is already airing two programs focusing on food security. Such an NGO could be instrumental in developing and airing CBNRM messages. While media campaigns are effective because they reach out to the whole country, many villagers cannot afford radio batteries. In response to this constraint, NICE and the EU has provided some few manually operated radios (imported from South Africa) to villagers as incentives for rural development work. Encouraging and supporting wide availability and use of such radios in rural areas is a legitimate and valuable undertaking under CBNRM media campaign strategy.

The new COMPASS information exchange network could be used as a basis for exchanging CBNRM information and lessons. Malawi's planning and implementation staff should be encouraged to use the e-mail system as an efficient way to formally and informally exchange planning and implementation information, and above all to exchange lessons and experiences on a continuous basis. This could replace some of the organized but infrequent and also relatively expensive information exchange forums such as meetings and workshops.

***Lack of resources and socio-economic information limits economic planning and NRM-based enterprise development***

- At the moment, lack of knowledge about resource availability and their economic value makes it difficult to determine the optimal balance between use and conservation, and just how much can be harvested in a sustainable way. Lack of these data further constrains decisions about wide-scale development of NRM-based rural enterprises and consequently makes people cautious about introducing commercial activities.

- Limited knowledge of the socio-economic conditions and cultural factors influencing rural households and how these affect people-resource interaction constrains the formulation of appropriate policies and identification of community level activities. This information is also essential for predicting people's responses to policy and project-level decisions and investments, for understanding how different rural economic classes and men and women are affected by these decisions. Household data are particularly useful to establish baselines against which the impact of CBNRM can be evaluated.

**Opportunities:** These problems can be mitigated by good natural resource surveys especially in areas that are considered appropriate for CBNRM activities. The Environmental Monitoring Unit in the Department of Environmental Affairs has done some resource survey work that could be useful in this direction. These data should be carefully examined and their value in improving the effectiveness and broader adoption of CBNRM activities ascertained. Then further work can be commissioned as required and warranted.

There are also some useful household socioeconomic data developed by other people for other purposes. For example, the National Statistics Office (NSO) conducts nationwide integrated household surveys that generate valuable information that can be tapped for CBNRM planning. Similarly, the Policy Research Unit of Bunda College conducts regular (3 times a year) nation-wide household surveys that generate household economic and demographic data that if properly and purposefully analyzed could be very valuable to the CBNRM initiative. The strategic planning process could facilitate coordination and collaborative arrangements with such established data institutions. CBNRM projects should also collect project level monitoring information on a regular basis as part of their implementation activities, while the CBNRM Working Group and the CBNRM M&E system should include external evaluations of impact.

***Weak natural resource base, lack of alternative incomes and entrepreneurial skills limit progress on NRM-based enterprise development***

- Malawi's wildlife and forest resources cannot support activities that generate significant economic profits. In contrast with countries having abundant large game populations such as Zimbabwe and Botswana or with rich forests such as Zambia, in Malawi community resource-based enterprises in general are limited to minor economic activities. There is a fear that these may not generate sufficient community benefits and encourage participation.

In general, limited entrepreneurial skills and lack of working capital (associated with lack of alternative incomes) and market information greatly reduces the chances of successful enterprises that subsequently limits private sector interest and involvement. Effects of macro and sector policies on prices, food security, and the general levels of rural poverty, further influence enterprise performance.

The relatively weak natural resource base augurs that CBNRM to look beyond the direct benefits of harvestable resource products, and to invest in market research and demand-driven development of resource-based community enterprises. CBNRM efforts could legitimately include other economic activities and encourage general rural development and alternative income sources, and particularly non-land using income generating activities. At the same time, CBNRM projects could focus on adding value to primary products and

eventually expand to fully commercialized operations. This would reduce dependence on donor funded private enterprises.

**Opportunities:** Some projects such as the Lower Shire Protected Areas Project are considering opportunities for developing community enterprises with forward and backward linkages, and that increase economic impact by creating employment among villagers. On the other hand, there are now some regional efforts (for example, through the SAFIRE program) to develop regional networks for marketing forest products. If successful, These would allow a number of countries, including Malawi, to pool resources, achieve economies of scale and find common markets for these products. The CBNRM Working Group should support seeking such opportunities for Malawi.

### **Weaknesses related to lack of coordination**

#### ***NRM sector policies formulated and implemented in isolation***

- Each of the resource sector policies and legislation are developed in isolation. At the same time, the implementation of these policies through CBNRM projects are carried out in the same communities sometimes following conflicting and confusing approaches. In contrast, households and communities do not think and plan on a sector-by-sector basis but in terms of their livelihoods and in more integrated fashion. In many communities, the same people serve on the different committees whether organized through fisheries, agriculture, forestry, wildlife programs, community development programs and others. Many times the sector-by-sector approach presents artificial situations making it difficult both for the communities and the change agents bound by their sector and project specific agendas.

**Opportunities:** While the sector-by-sector approach to planning might never go away given that the government and development programs are organized sectorally, attempts can be made to minimize the conflicts especially through policy and program level coordination - at least in the case of closely related and sectorally-focussed rural development policies and programs.

#### ***CBNRM projects have conflicting operational procedures***

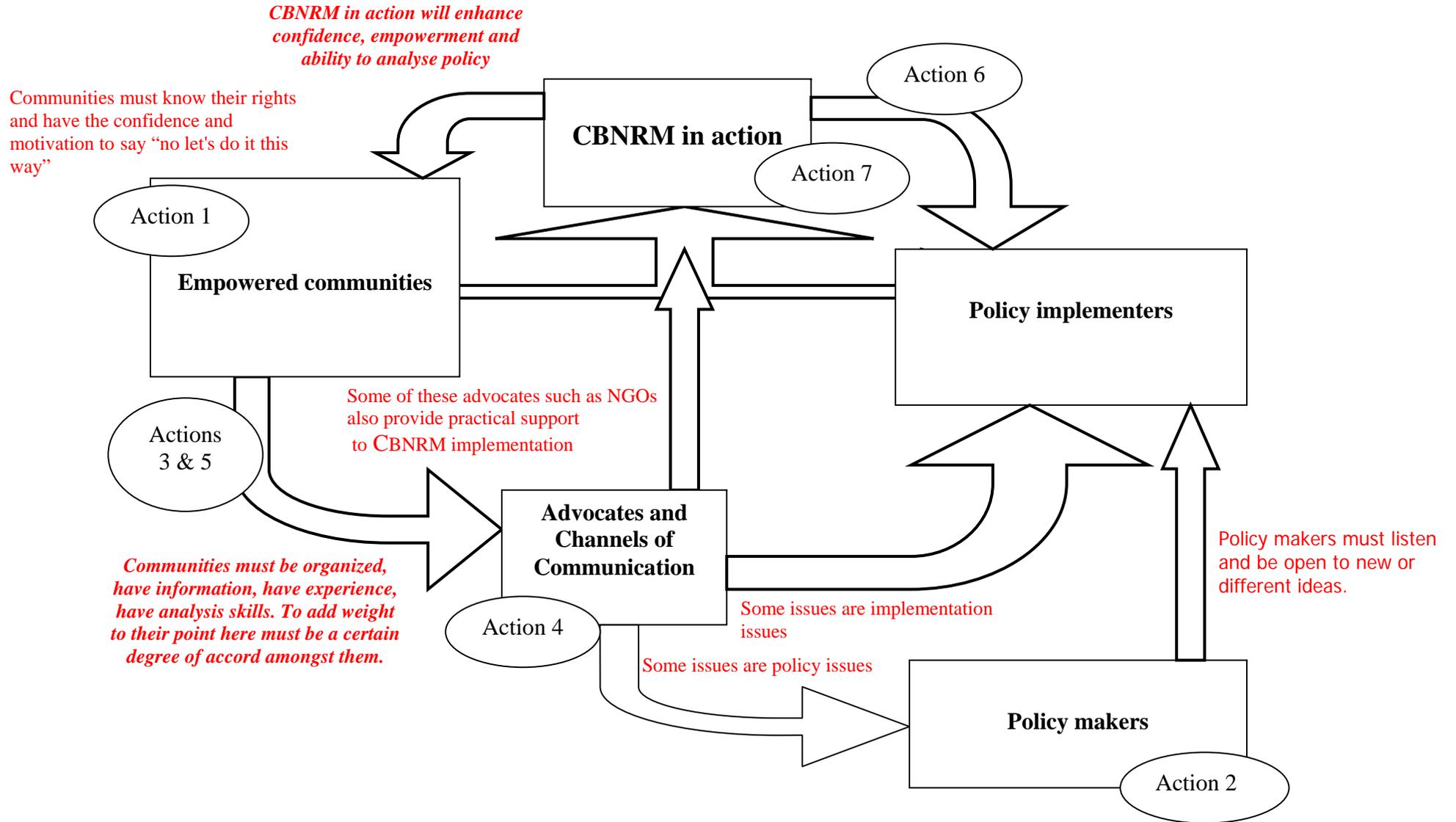
- The range of CBNRM project implementation procedures among different NGOs, donors and government departments is almost as diverse as the organizations themselves (see Annex 4, a summary of project implementation approaches prepared by Carl Bruessow). The consequence is serious conflict and duplication of effort once more than one agency is working in the same community. This has caused much contention amongst agencies supporting a wide range of community projects, including CBNRM projects. The worst effect comes from NGOs providing what is commonly referred to as “artificial incentives.” These are usually payments in form of food or cash that some NGOs give community members attending meetings or sitting on various committees. The MASAF approach is widely quoted for causing this problem throughout the country. For example, in contrast to most CBNRM projects, MASAF’s approach to the development of community tree nurseries in their food for work programs involves initial payments, limited demand on communities for follow up activities, and typically little follow up by MASAF itself.

- The communities in rural Malawi are typically small and the same villagers and community leaders may frequently serve on the different committees organized through the fisheries, agriculture, forestry, wildlife programs as well as committees organized under general community and rural development activities. In this case, villagers typically make comparisons and neglect those projects that do not provide handouts while often requiring their longer-term involvement.

### *Uncoordinated donor activities*

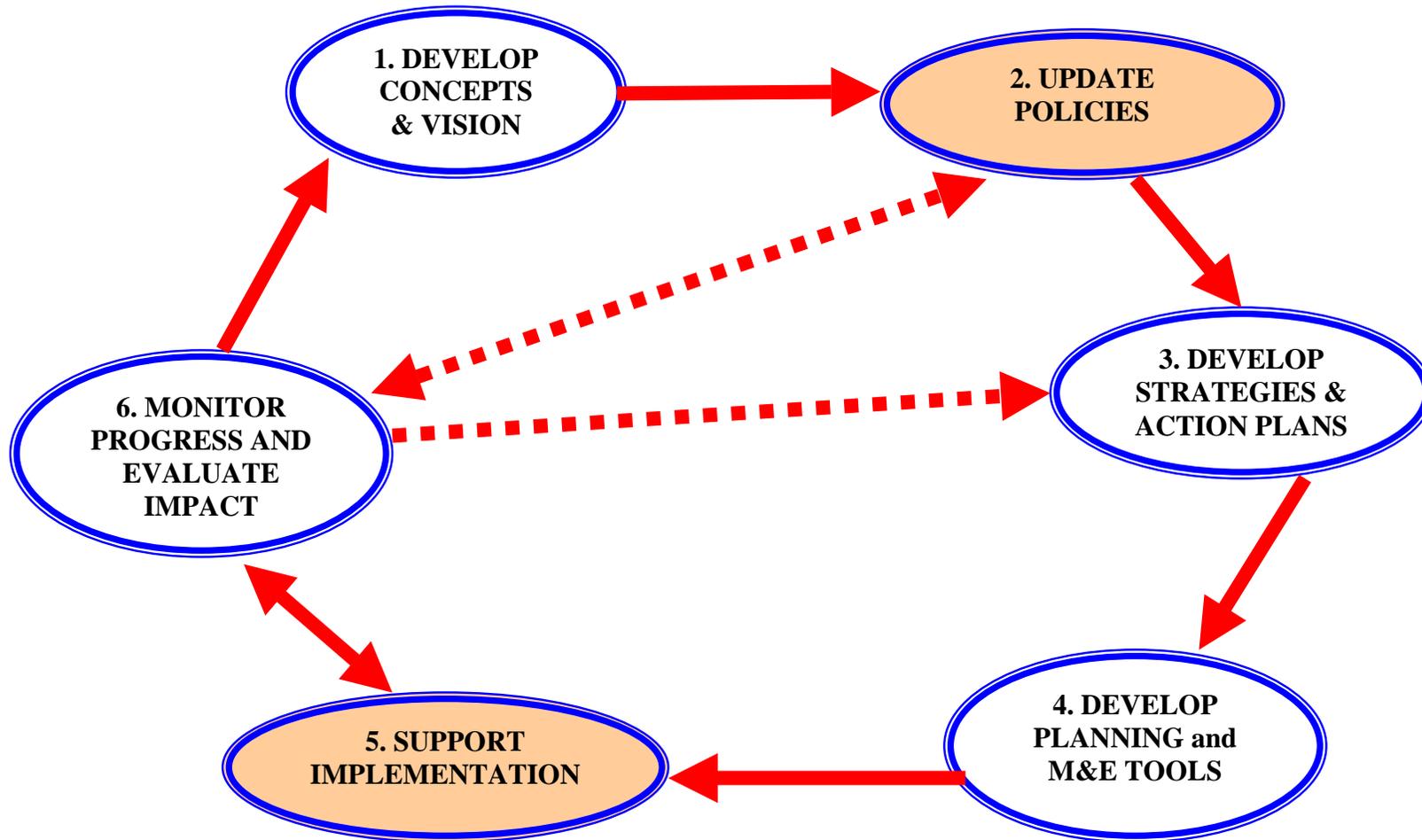
- About half a dozen donors are driving most of CBNRM activities in Malawi. However, there is little coordination of activities and approaches among them and between them and the GOM and NGOs. This constrains sharing of information, coordination of the use of financial resources and exchange of experiences and lessons. This further limits the potential impact of the resources being expended and slows down the process of developing the best CBNRM models for Malawi.
- The informal donor coordination meetings started to address these concerns. The Director of Environmental Affairs and CURE attended the meetings. The meetings provided a link between donors, resource sectors and NGOs. Unfortunately, this forum is not enjoying full participation at present. Initially it was meant to be a forum for exchange of technical information but many issues of policy needed to be addressed and needed the presence of policy makers. Some previous members who have now lost interest explained that this forum, while a good idea, over time ceased to be of much value for their own time. For one, problems were not investigated deeply. Then there was the problem of dealing with an open group with unfocused agendas, little continuity, and in many meetings a mismatch between the membership and the issues discussed. Eventually, many people did not find the meetings very valuable and in the face of time constraints stopped attending.

**Opportunities:** Donor coordination is essential especially because donors are such a critical force in financing CBNRM programs and projects. Many CBNRM projects have a donor-supported technical assistant working hand in hand with the government staff and NGOs. In fact this is the group providing much of the CBNRM technical expertise especially in Government Departments. It seems valuable to resurrect the donor group but with a carefully thought out membership and more focused agenda for the meetings. One possibility is to have periodic meetings of the CBNRM Technical Assistants who meet to exchange experiences, discuss ideas and current CBNRM issues. This forum can address issues coming out of the CBNRM Working Group, and provide some level of technical back up to this group.



**FIGURE 1 - FLOWCHART TO SHOW HOW THE GRASSROOTS CAN ENTER THE POLICY DEBATE (AFTER LOWORE AND WILSON, 2000)**

**FIGURE 2 - CBNRM PLANNING & IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE**



## **PART III**

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

#### **Developing a national CBNRM strategy and coordination mechanism**

Having invested so much already to achieve broad adoption of CBNRM, Malawi should now develop a strategy and mechanism for effective coordination. This process must attempt to reverse the current trend where scarce resources have been invested in policy reforms and legislation that are hardly implemented, CBNRM projects started but are hardly community based, implemented in isolation, cost ineffective, unsustainable and with negligible impact at the national scale. Short of reversing these trends, the efforts put in policy and legislative reform and project initiatives in the last five years will amount to little in terms of increased resource productivity or rural communities that are better off. Perpetuation of the current weaknesses in community level approaches and application of CBNRM principles could be permanently damaging if communities lose faith in CBNRM and the agencies that promote it and become increasingly dependent on outsiders.

Many of these weaknesses can be addressed by completing various components of a CBNRM planning cycle, providing strategic support to implementing agencies and putting in place an effective CBNRM coordination mechanism. The rest of this paper summarizes strategic actions to address current weaknesses including: first, strategic CBNRM planning and implementation support, and second, an effective CBNRM coordination mechanism.

## **PART IIIA**

### **CBNRM STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ACTIONS**

The most strategic role of a CBNRM coordinating effort is to help Malawi complete the CBNRM planning cycle cohesively and logically (see Figure 2). This can be thought of in six discrete stages.

As depicted in Figure 2, this involves: first, assisting in the understanding and acceptance of the CBNRM concept, approaches and principals, and developing a common CBNRM vision and goal; second, formulating supportive and cohesive policies, third, developing CBNRM implementation strategies and strategic actions; fourth, developing tools to guide planning and implementation; fifth providing strategic support towards processes that systematically constrain implementation; and sixth investing in the monitoring of progress and evaluation of impact on the defined goals. Just as critical is putting together a sustainable system for linking the various components of the cycle for the purpose of feedback and continuous improvement (as indicated by the arrows).

At the moment, Malawi has put its effort in the second step, especially in terms of revising policies to make them more supportive of CBNRM, but has then effectively jumped to certain aspects of the fifth step (implementation) without much investment in the next two logical steps (developing strategies and action plans and developing planning and implementation tools). The country lacks an overall system for monitoring progress and impact and a system that logically links any of the six steps. However, there are some limited efforts started in each of the steps but these are tackled in isolation under various resource sectors and externally funded programs and projects, not as part of one strategic plan for the

country. Moreover, they are not always mutually supportive or consistent. The key *strategic actions* and *opportunities* for developing each of these steps and processes to link them are summarized below:

### **Strategic Action 1: Developing a commonly understood CBNRM concept and vision**

A CBNRM coordination mechanism needs to help develop a common vision and understanding of the need, benefits and possibilities for broad adoption of CBNRM in the context of Malawi (see Annex 1). This process then could help the country, resource departments and NGOs develop a realistic pace for the envisioned change to occur and roles that are commensurate with the available personnel and financial resources. At the same time, it would help direct time and resources towards areas of highest need and likely maximum impact. This can be enhanced through analysis of the problems, examination of options, understanding risks and how to minimize them and dialogue to share experiences from within and outside the country.

### **Strategic Action 2: Maintaining a dynamic policy reform process**

The CBNRM Working Group needs to help maintain a dynamic policy process. In particular, it should help sector policies to match the role of Government, NGO's, Traditional Authority, CBOs and the private sector with their appropriate capacities and strengths. Sectoral policies need to be coordinated and made cohesive with the more fundamental changes proposed under the land reform and decentralization policies. This requires the CBNRM coordinating body's membership to include high level decision makers from both the resource sectors and from these other crucial ministries, especially Local Government.

### **Strategic Action 3: Developing CBNRM sectoral strategies and action plans**

Policies and legislation need to be taken one step further into CBNRM sectoral strategies and action plans. In this, the coordination effort should further the interest and progress made by various resource sectors, but play a critical role in providing technical support and making the different strategies and plans cohesive. Wherever possible these should be mutually reinforcing. The process followed in the preparation of the National Forest Program and its inclusion and treatment of the CBNRM component could be insightful for other resource sectors. To provide support in formulating strategies and action plans, the CBNRM coordination body needs to include strong technical people.

### **Strategic Action 4: Developing planning and implementation tools**

A national CBNRM coordination mechanism needs to help develop three types of CBNRM planning and implementation tools including: 1) guidelines on CBNRM principles and criteria for selecting and adopting various approaches to community level activities; 2) a CBNRM planning framework in the form of logical or results frameworks that identify linked goals, objectives, outputs (or results), inputs (or activities) and bench marks with a time frame, and 3), monitoring and evaluation tools mainly focusing on identifying indicators for each of the levels and activities of the logical framework, how to measure these indicators and the sources of information and data to measure them.

### ***Guidelines on CBNRM principles***

The first step in developing CBNRM principals was achieved during the 1999 Workshop in Blantyre. These guiding principals are presented in COMPASS Document 10 *Workshop on Principles and Approaches for CBNRM in Malawi: an Assessment of the Needs for Effective Implementation of CBNRM*. These guidelines need to be widely shared and formally discussed with each resource sector and updated if necessary. Each resource sector then should take a step further and interpret each principle within its context and decide how to apply it.

### ***Guidelines on CBNRM approaches***

The Blantyre workshop did not focus much on addressing the wide range of CBNRM approaches. In addition to CBNRM principles, planning and implementing agencies dealing with scarce development resources need guidance on balancing or setting priorities for the three fundamental CBNRM goals including: increasing the productivity of the resource base, increasing communities' resource-based incomes and empowering communities in terms of institutional and legal strengthening. Such agencies also need guidance or criteria to help deal with the trade-offs that are inherent in pursuing multiple goals, to help tailor CBNRM approaches to the particular resource situations, and to maximizing the impact of their investments. They would also benefit from a time frame that helps phase the achievement of the various goals.

### ***CBNRM implementation framework and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system and tools***

As part of strategic planning, a CBNRM coordinating body needs to have a national CBNRM framework and help develop sector and project level logical (or results) frameworks and monitoring and evaluation systems. This should be done at the national, sector and project levels and should include both implementation activities as well as the processes that support implementation. While there are some planning and implementation frameworks at the project level, Malawi lacks an operational national and sector level planning tools.

At the national level, one of the recent advances in this direction has been made under the COMPASS project. COMPASS has developed an illustrative framework that includes ways of organizing CBNRM support processes that address several of the weaknesses identified in this paper (see Annex 5). This includes organizing the inputs into, and results of, the policy process, community mobilization skills, information systems and the development of a CBNRM coordination mechanism. These are organized into a Results Framework around which a monitoring and evaluation system has also been built (Figure 3).

This framework could be expanded into a national framework that also includes support in other weak areas identified in this paper. Such expansion could, for example, explicitly include inputs and results on awareness creation among implementers and planners, sector strategy development, development of grassroots advocacy mechanisms and the development CBNRM planning and market development data. The COMPASS developed results framework includes more comprehensive indicators of the expected changes in the resource base, and to an extent on the community socioeconomic goals. It could be improved to be more explicit on the third goal of community empowerment. Such a framework could then be

used to develop sector specific planning frameworks and M&E systems adapted to the specific resource types and interest and strengths of each sector.

At the project level, log frames and M&E systems developed, for example, under the GTZ/SADC/WSM projects and under the EU Social Forestry program, and perhaps others, could serve as good examples for project level planning and for use by NGOs.

### **Strategic Action 5: Providing strategic implementation support**

The CBNRM Working Group should provide strategic support to certain processes that critically constrain current implementation efforts including:

1. Revitalizing the stalled policy implementation process.
2. Developing CBNRM education, awareness and information systems.
3. Developing mechanisms and skills for grassroots advocacy.
4. Developing resources and socioeconomic data for planning, implementation and evaluation purposes.
5. Developing market data for enterprise development and involvement of the private sector.
6. Improving community mobilization methodologies to achieve replicability, independency and sustainability.
7. Identifying and supporting mechanisms for sustainable financial support to increase CBNRM coverage and improved services.
8. Identifying and supporting ways for developing alternative community incomes.

### **Strategic Action 6: Investing in Monitoring and Evaluation**

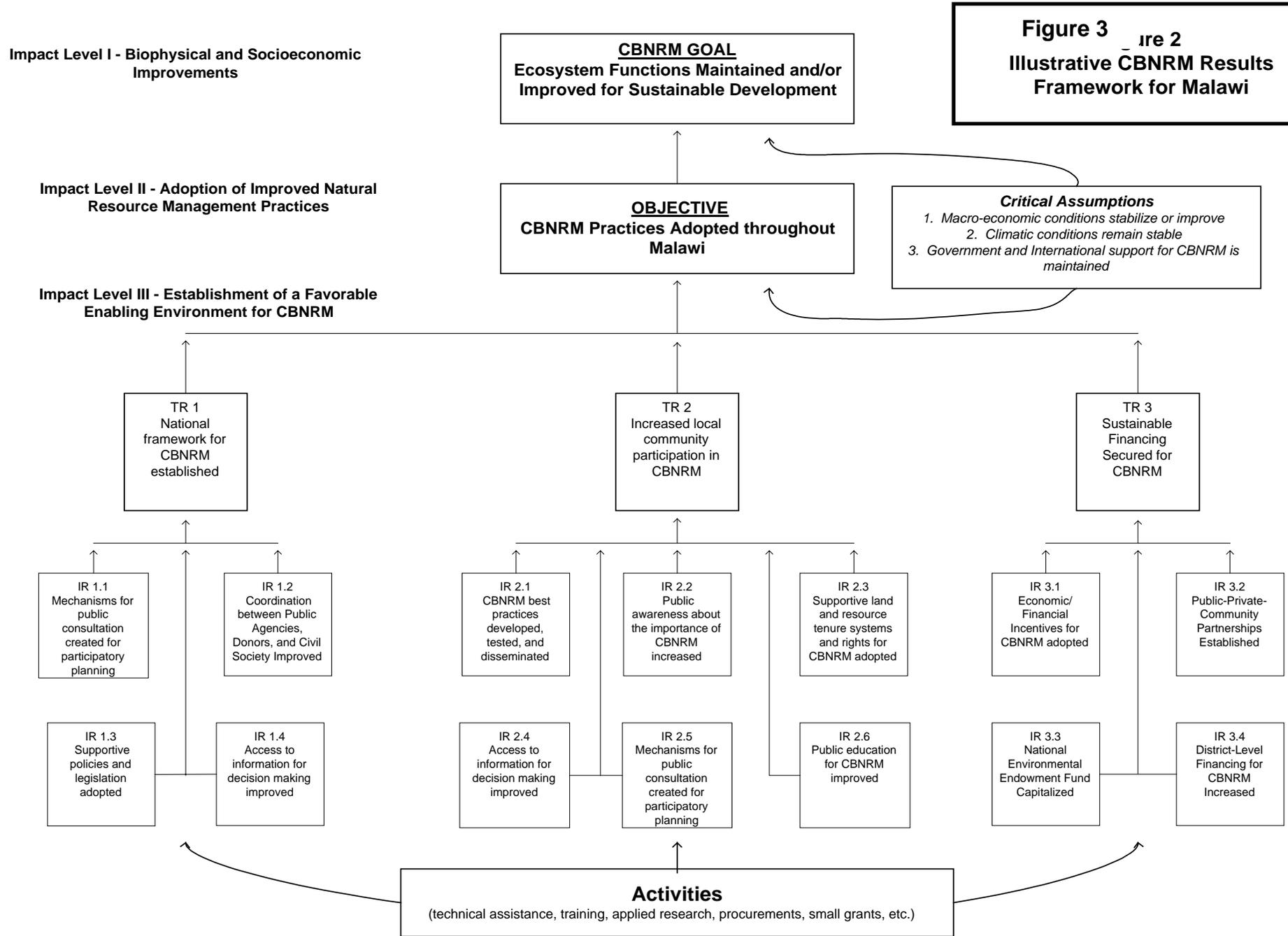
Malawi needs to invest more on monitoring and evaluation of CBNRM activities and processes and to use that information to track progress and evaluate impact. It also needs a dynamic process for feed back into the policy (step 2) and strategic planning process (step 3) and for improving decisions about the most strategic implementation support (step 5).

The level of investment in M&E activities is best decided after examining the indicators that need to be measured and exactly how they will be measured. Then the coordination effort must help identify the most cost-effective way to get and use that data. Some suggestions for establishing an M&E system that monitors CBNRM progress and evaluates impact and possible sources of data are attached to this report (Annex 5).

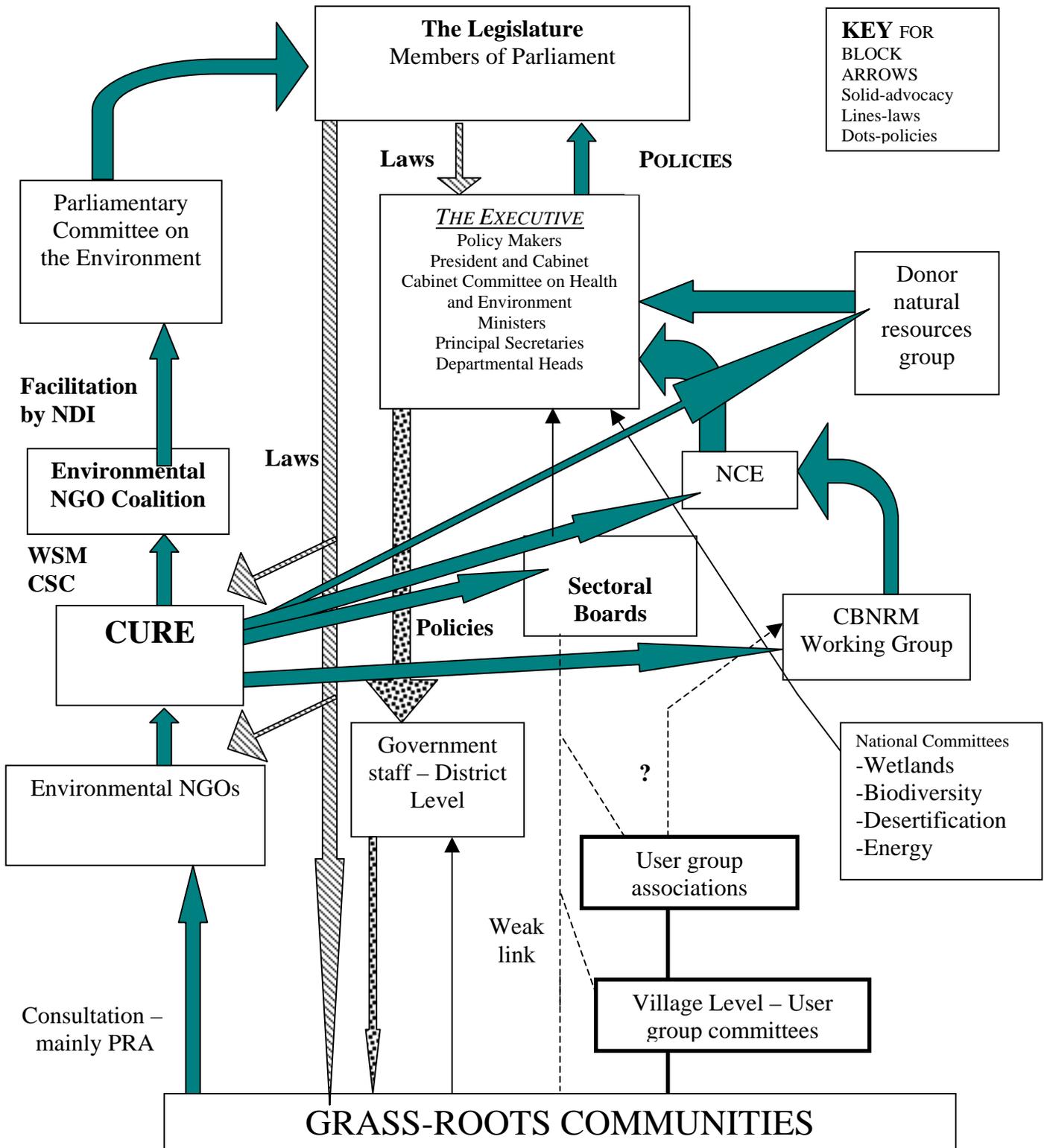
### **Other strategic actions**

Other strategic actions include establishing sustainable linkages and feed back system (as depicted by arrows in Figure 2) and capitalizing on the various opportunities identified in this study to help achieve the objectives of its strategic actions.

**Figure 3** *Figure 2*  
**Illustrative CBNRM Results Framework for Malawi**



**FIGURE - 4 CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES FOR NATURAL RESOURCE POLICY ADVOCACY (AFTER LOWORE & WILSON, 2000)**



## **PART III B**

### **DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE CBNRM COORDINATION MECHANISM**

The creation of a CBNRM coordination mechanism has been talked about for several years now, but for various reasons this has not been fully achieved. The Environmental Management Act (1996) makes the Minister for Environmental Affairs, the Environmental Affairs Department and the National Council on the Environment (NCE) responsible for coordinating policies for protection and sustainable utilization of natural resources. Under this jurisdiction, it is the strategic duty of these institutions to create and implement an effective CBNRM coordination mechanism. This process has begun with the formation of the CBNRM Working Group, but is not yet fully operational.

Apart from the CBNRM Working Group there are other related, loosely connected or parallel coordination structures all involved in some aspects of resources management and CBNRM (Figure 4). The sum of efforts of each of these informally linked groups does not yet amount to a cohesive national CBNRM coordination mechanism - especially because they are not operating around a national strategy or action plan and are not necessarily CBNRM-focused. Though potentially possible, at present the representation of local organizations and communities in all these coordination bodies is relatively weak and unstructured, and the linkages between the top and the bottom levels undeveloped. At the moment, the NCE itself has limited representation of resources management and CBNRM-oriented professionals.

#### **The CBNRM Working Group as the core CBNRM coordination body**

The most recent progress in CBNRM coordination has been the formation of the CBNRM Working Group (as the technical arm of the NCE) with responsibility to advise the NCE on matters concerning CBNRM. The CBNRM Working Group has representatives from 14 different institutions including the key resource sectors, related non-resource sectors including Local Government, CURE as a representative of NGOs, one TA as a representative of communities, the MEET and the EAD as the secretariat (see Annex 6 for a list of membership). It has been thought appropriate for this group to have a women's representative or advocate, but this has not yet happened.

This group has the mandate to assess the impact of CBNRM, develop a strategic plan and develop guidelines for monitoring and evaluation (see Annex 7 for the Working Group's terms of reference). The primary purpose of this paper is to provide this working group with background information to initiate discussion and progress towards these goals and terms of reference.

#### ***Current structure and functions of the CBNRM Working Group***

In the process of preparing this paper the structure and functioning of the CBNRM Working Group became a subject of keen interest among many CBNRM stakeholders. Some because they were apprehensive that so many similar efforts have failed in the past and some because they felt it should work in principle but would prove extremely challenging in practice. Its value was never questioned or doubted.

To perform the coordination and implementation of a full CBNRM cycle (see Figure 2) including policy reform, development of strategies and action plans, development of planning

and M&E tools and providing strategic implementation support, the structure and functions of the CBNRM Working Group need to be crafted purposefully and with care. In this context, and based on discussions with various stakeholders, the current set up of the CBNRM Working Group presents several limitations:

***The group has extended institutional membership but limited participation***

At the moment the membership of 14 institutions normally would be rather large for proper functioning but the CBNRM group meetings attendance most times has been only about 50%. In these meetings, participation of sectors other than forestry, fisheries and wildlife is limited and undirected. This is perhaps because the linkages of their activities to CBNRM has been implicit and their particular roles in this group not been quite clear. This should improve once there is a clear strategy to work with, action plans and tasks to perform.

***The group lacks the attendance of senior level decision-makers***

Given the varied terms of reference and especially the need to help resolve high level cross-sectoral policy decisions and deal with non-NMR sectors such as local government, the group meetings need to be attended by senior people with decision making responsibilities. In the preparation of this paper, discussions with such senior people in the represented institutions suggest that this has not always been the case and that attendance has more often than not been delegated to lower level staff.

***The group may be too weighted toward government given its responsibilities***

Based on the strategic actions suggested in this paper and the critical need for establishing close linkages with NGOs, community leaders and the private sector, the membership appears to be too government heavy, and has no women members. A membership structure that mismatches function and attendance puts the CBNRM Working Group runs the risk of having the same fate as the informal donor coordination group, in which many people have now lost interest.

***The group's structuring of the technical force is insufficient and informal***

A successful national CBNRM strategy in addition needs to deal with technical issues such as formulating and implementing strategic frameworks and monitoring and evaluation systems, capacity building, application of CBNRM principles and approaches and community mobilization skills and advocacy. This implies the need for strong technical force formally in the CBNRM Working Group or behind it. The current membership, not to mention poor attendance, does not seem well crafted to this wide scope of responsibilities. In practice, it lacks sufficient representation of high level decision makers, while the level of people who might guide technical level operations and promote wide adoption of CBNRM attend on ad hoc basis rather than being formally and seriously engaged.

***The group's leadership structure may need strengthening***

At the moment, the chairman is elected at each sitting which must limit continuity and sense of responsibility. Then, the group's secretariat has an enormous role (dealing with coordination, policy and technical matters) for which it may not be sufficiently equipped- especially on the technical side.

## **Possible adjustments to improve the functioning and effectiveness of the Working Group**

From the many discussions and the nature of the suggested strategic areas for action and approach, the following adjustments in the structure of the CBNRM Working Group could be considered:

1. To deal with the problems likely from too large a group, maintain the regular attendance of the CBNRM critical sectors and institutions (such as forestry, fisheries, wildlife, land husbandry, local government, MEET, COMPASS (as a technical advisor), EAD, CURE, TAs) and reduce the regular attendance of sectors that are not focused on the direct implementing of CBNRM policies and projects and whose community development portfolios are comparatively smaller. These might include sectors such as energy, water, health, the Centre for Social Research. The participation of these sectors could be left at the level of invitation to strategic forums to discuss first the CBNRM strategy, the envisaged cross-sectoral linkages, and after that include them on as-is-relevant basis.
2. Subdivide the group into 1) a policy and decision making level and 2) a technical level and strengthen each group. Eventually this effort would benefit immensely from 3 or 4 strong technical people in the CBNRM Working Group who then help create a critical mass of strong CBNRM believers and keen practitioners, say, 40-50 of them spread throughout the country.
3. Alternatively, or in addition, the technical requirements of the group could be addressed through strengthening the professional and technical capacity of EAD to perform its role as the CBNRM Working Group secretariat. This effort could involve hiring 3 or 4 strong professionals carefully selected to cover all aspects of strategic actions of the coordinating group, and to have the necessary analytical skills – currently weak at the policy, planning and project levels.<sup>4</sup> This process could also strengthen EAD's M&E unit to handle the M&E component of the CBNRM strategy and to take advantage of the unused data already developed by the unit.
4. Strengthen CURE to undertake coordination of a more substantive nature including coordination of NGO programs and activities to fit within the overall national framework and plans, and to help build NGO capacity along the same lines.
5. Elect a permanent Chair Person and Vice for the group to assure continuity in leadership and actions. The position should be rotated on an annual basis.
6. Include in the group a person who specifically represents and advocates for women's concerns and opportunities. This could be a highly qualified analytical person with extensive grassroots experience and interest in natural resource management and the CBNRM approach.

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<sup>4</sup> At least one of these should be a social scientist with expertise in resource and household economics and issues of gender and rural economic classes. These aspects are recognized to be important for successful CBNRM but the lack of related information and analysis is evident in all aspects of CBNRM including policies and programs and at the level of community projects.

## **Institutional and financial sustainability of the coordination mechanism**

### ***Financial implications and needs***

The operational processes of the CBNRM Working Group in terms of coordination, strategic planning and providing strategic support to CBNRM implementing agencies as suggested here has significant financial cost implications. First, the Group must maintain its coordination function and then it must help find financial support necessary to develop and maintain the processes that support CBNRM implementation. This includes strong support to individual government resource sectors and NGOs in preparation of strategic frameworks and action plans and maintaining cross-sectoral coordination. It also includes support in areas such as environmental and CBNRM education and information networks, developing and applying monitoring and evaluation and community advocacy. There is also the need for capacity building in EAD as the group's secretariat and in CURE as the focal point for NGOs involvement in the national CBNRM strategy and coordination mechanism. At the District and local levels, it will be challenging but valuable to build the kind of capacity that makes CBNRM operationally strong under the decentralized government structure and to instill processes that capitalize on the advantages that decentralization offers while actively resolving and pre-empting potential conflicts.

### ***Sources and sustainability of long-term financing<sup>5</sup>***

At the moment, the operations of the CBNRM Working Group including the preparation of this paper are primarily financed under the USAID supported COMPASS activity. Over the remaining four years of the activity, COMPASS will help finish the process of CBNRM strategy formulation and most likely continue to be involved in the Working Group's operations to provide some strategic support from time to time. However, the CBNRM Working Group needs to identify sources for its financing that are fully sustainable. In the short term it could still obtain more strategic support from COMPASS and from other donors interested in CBNRM if its performance proves worthy of continued support.

For example, the initiation of the COMPASS project a year ago was a response to the realization that Malawi's CBNRM activities are implemented in isolation, without strategy or much coordination and subsequently have little impact. The primary objective of this umbrella project is to promote broad based adoption of the CBNRM approach by supporting agencies interested in, and involved in the process. COMPASS specifically plans to help the country set up an effective CBNRM coordination mechanism, develop a national strategy and M&E system for broad-based adoption of the CBNRM approach, and support various CBNRM processes including policy reform and information networks. It also aims at helping improve application of CBNRM principles and community mobilization, and in addition use its small grants component to generate lessons and guidelines for best practices under Malawi's specific resource base and socio-economic conditions.

The CBNRM Working Group should be able to identify sources of long term funding for its operations and at the same time encourage NGO and community level activities that can be financially self-supporting. This might mean more NGOs getting into income generating activities including charging for professional services. Community projects should consider

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<sup>5</sup> This is the subject of a linked study undertaken by COMPASS (Document 22 - *Opportunities for Sustainable Financing of CBNRM in Malawi*).

establishing systems such as community cooperatives, revolving funds, and putting more effort in increasing economic returns by pooling resources to get economies of scale. They should also aim at higher-level operations by involving the formal private sector with commercial interest and capacity, and by using a more demand-driven, rather than the current supply-driven approach to NRM-enterprise development.

At the national level, the CBNRM Working Group could help deal with the problems on non-sustainability inherent in short-term externally funded programs, by putting effort in the development of the Environment Endowment Funds now in their early stages of development. There is intention to move into this direction including organizing the various Funds under one overall fund that could legitimately, and quite appropriately, support this initiative. Unfortunately, progress in setting up and institutionalizing several of these funds including the Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust has been slow. The best progress has been made under the Malawi Environment Endowment Trust (MEET) that is now almost operational. Its Board of Trustees and Board of Governors are set up; its capital investment guidelines are in place and its grant disbursement policy concept paper in the process of completion. MEET has remained close to the CBNRM process and is represented in the CBNRM Working Group. In its draft grants disbursement concept paper it has a vision of supporting the various processes that could eventually make CBNRM principles the working principles of all those working at the grassroots level. Realizing this takes time, it hopes to utilize its long term, self-financing nature to help make the CBNRM principles the normal way of doing business among the wide network of Government and NGOs working at the field level. This would be progress away from the current situation where CBNRM is pursued as isolated, externally driven initiatives.

Sooner or later, it is hoped that the functioning of the CBNRM working group could be, and should be legitimately supported from the GOM Treasury. Eventually, if this group proves to be highly valuable, its services will be demanded to the level where people are willing to pay for them. At that point, this could be a permanently self-financing body. Demand for its services will be the best indicator of value.

## SUMMARY

This paper and the consultation process upon which it is based focused on identifying the current status of CBNRM in Malawi and identifying the way forward in formulating a national strategy and establishing an effective coordination mechanism. This information will help the CBNRM Working Group initiate discussions and the process for developing a national CBNRM strategy. To achieve this, the paper has identified the key constraints at both the policy and project implementation levels and then suggests various strategic actions for the CBNRM Working Group including six steps that would complete a CBNRM planning and implementation cycle. It further identifies current weaknesses of the group structure and suggests adjustments such as restructuring membership and building various capacities especially of its technical force and the secretariat. It is hoped that the suggested adjustments will help improve the Group's functional activities and improve the chances that the Group will fulfill its mandate.

In moving to the next step, the CBNRM Working Group and the various stakeholders should know that it can be confidently concluded that Malawi has exceeded other countries in the region in its efforts to revise resource sector policies and make them supportive of the CBNRM approach. In fact, Malawi is unique in adopting community-based approaches as the basis for its wider national strategy for fighting rural poverty. However, the country has not done nearly as well in either implementing these new policies or projects with significant impact on the resource base or the communities. There are many constraints to the policy and project implementation process including the complexity and challenge of developing legal tools as stipulated in the sectoral policies. NRM departments thus far have worked from policies and acts, unable to move to the next step and develop sector strategies and action plans or monitoring and evaluation systems. Most sectors and NGOs are seriously constrained by lack of financial and human resources capacity so that their project activities are small in nature, and their national coverage minimal. To an extent, lack of knowledge of the CBNRM concept and principles limits the political will and confidence in the feasibility of the CBNRM approach. Implementing agencies are also seriously constrained by lack of information and access to lessons on best practices and an inability to use effective community mobilization techniques.

To a large extent, current weaknesses are associated with the lack of a national strategy and coordination mechanism that gives guidance and strategic support to implementing agencies. Several sector by sector strategic planning exercises have been initiated but, as is the case with current policies and projects, this is being done in isolation and is incomplete. Especially in the Departments of Fisheries and National Parks and Wildlife, sector planning is being talked about but the process has hardly begun. A successful CBNRM coordination mechanism should help resource sectors and NGOs build on what is already in place, improve their coordination and provide some strategic policy and project implementation support. In doing this, the CBNRM Working Group must take advantage of existing national and regional opportunities for broad adoption of CBNRM in Malawi, for sustainable financing of CBNRM activities and the functioning of the coordination mechanism itself.

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## ANNEX 1

### APPROACHES TO CBNRM PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN MALAWI

The November 1999 workshop on CBNRM “Principles and Approaches” in Malawi (COMPASS Document 10) developed valuable guidelines on the principals but did not quite address the question of approaches. This is a summary that can shed some light on approach issues, and that could be used for further discussion and perhaps for preparation on some guidelines for implementing agencies.

#### *Needs*

Malawi's CBNRM strategy needs to develop a common understanding of the various approaches being used by project implementers and provide some guidance on evaluating different situations and making sure that the approaches used make the best sense under Malawi's circumstances. The best approaches are those that can be implemented, and planned while being cost effective and increasing the likelihood of maximizing impact on the stated CBNRM goals – empowering communities, increasing their economic welfare and improving the resource base.

#### *Challenges*

At the moment, CBNRM project implementers with limited funds, personnel capacity and time have to balance their emphasis between potentially competing goals including:

- 1) Focus on institutional, legal and political empowerment of communities with project implementers geared towards reduced dependency and sustainability. This implies an approach that gives communities more rights and autonomy to lead project implementation activities and processes but risks efficiency.
- 2) Focus on development of resource based enterprises (and alternative community development activities) with project implementers geared towards providing technical enterprise development support including guiding harvesting, processing and marketing of the products. This promises better control and increases likelihood of results but could leave the communities dependent on outsiders and making the activities unsustainable.
- 3) Focus on the integrity of the resource base geared towards conservation and protection and rehabilitation with little focus on the human issues. This might mean that at least one of the ultimate goals receives assured attention while it might not receive as much attention under the other two scenarios. It also means that the social aspect is neglected and not much progress is made toward improved NRM.
- 4) Focus on increasing the likelihood of achieving results in the short term or sustainability in the longer run at the risk of slow initial results.

Most implementers are trying to deal with all these aspects, integrating them as best they can. The process is proving challenging and approaches must adapt to different situations. The approach has often been determined not by careful analysis but the disciplinary orientation, philosophical position, professional capacity and fears of the of the lead person or funding

agency. Others are proceeding from day to day without a clear focus and without awareness or paying much attention to the trade-offs or how to deal with them.

### **Community involvement in decision-making versus minor involvement in resource use and management**

Some of the questions and issues that need to be addressed as implementation progresses and that might help in preparing guidelines include:

*Should communities just benefit from use of resources and give back what they can or should they have major resource management decision-making responsibilities?*

For example, should communities take leadership in making management decisions for National Parks including issues such as zoning, restocking of game, where to put watering points, where communities should collect products, what products and how much? In fisheries, should communities be involved in deciding the length of closed season, allowable fishing gear, penalties for breaking regulations, involvement of the private sector, making decisions about enterprise development, the role of BVCs, the type of legal entities that communities become, how to enter negotiations with the government and so on. In forestry, to what extent should the community user groups decide on the forest management plans, how and where to demarcate Village Forest Areas, what to do with confiscated forest products and to what extent must the Department of Forestry take leadership on this?

### **Some remarks on levels of community authority**

The DNPW in general is not prepared to give communities a major stake in the management of National Parks because they do not feel they are ready. For example, the Department (Humphrey Nzima) argues that to give extremely poor people such responsibilities merely intimidates them while they lack capacity to be effective. In any case, DNPW argues that the parks would most likely not provide sufficient incentives for such a level of involvement. At this point, the major CBNRM wildlife projects such as Nyika-Vwaza and Liwonde National Parks do not involve communities in decision-making.

Based on a different conviction (Richard Hartley), initiatives such the Lower Shire Protected Areas Project have been designed around the belief that to be effectively involved and engaged, communities must be involved in major parks management and use decisions. Certainly, they must be supported with the technical guidance required for them to be effective managers but the communities are capable. The COMPASS small grants program covering all resource sectors encourages major decisions to be taken by communities who receive short-term grants and limited supervision.

The fisheries sector gives communities a relatively high stake in fisheries management decisions but this sector is also seen to be less complicated. Also, this is not as difficult a transition since the villagers, and not the government, have always done the fishing. On the other hand, the Forestry Department does not seem to taken a strong position either way and is not pro-active in either promoting or stopping communities involvement in major management decisions. What happens in forestry-based CBNRM projects is much determined by the donors and NGOs involved. The main control by the Department is afforded by the policy requirements that the Director needs to sign management agreements and endorse village by-laws.

## **Some remarks on conservation-based approaches *versus* community development activities**

It is widely recognized that Malawi has a comparatively weak resource base especially with regard to wildlife and to some extent forest resources particularly in the Southern Region where most forestry CBNM projects are located. The use of forest or National Park resources (and perhaps even fisheries) may not create sufficient economic incentives for communities to be interested and engaged to put much of their time and available resources in to CBNRM activities. For example, just collecting grass or wild mushrooms from National Parks or Forest Reserves is hardly enough motivation, especially given that these same communities could collect the same or even more without being involved in the more potentially restrictive CBNRM projects.

The Border Zone Development Project around Nyika-Vwaza has taken the old approach used under the Integrated Conservation-Development Projects (ICDPs) initiated by conservation organizations throughout the world in the 1980s. This takes the form of investing in socio-economic community development projects (community schools and clinics, boreholes, agricultural and enterprise development credit and so on) for communities bordering parks. It is founded on the assumption that this will reduce poverty and thereby reduce pressure on resources. Hence, communities realize the benefits and there is an increased incentive to preserve the parks. They abide by the regulations, pressure is reduced and people are even willing to give some of their time and resources to the conservation of the park. Along the same lines, many people see the need to not just focus on community forests or reserves and parks but to extend activities to private land (including soil and water conservation) with the aim of increasing individual incentives and generally widening the income base for communities involved in CBNRM.

A major argument against this approach is that government NRM agencies have their staff trained and experienced to manage specific resources and may not have the capacity, financial resources and technical skills to implement community development projects. Still, the DNPW takes the position that the bulk of community involvement in the parks will never amount to much more than access to minor resources in the park. The DNPW and the CBNRM effort should then try to convince rural development programs to pay special attention to communities surrounding parks as a matter of protecting a national asset.

Unfortunately, the existence of a positive relationship between investment in community development and improvement in park management has not been established. Evaluations in many countries (including those by the World Bank in 23 countries through the "Parks and People" initiative) and an evaluation of the Nyika-Vwaza project found the results to be empirically inconclusive.

Possibly, this lack of identifiable relationship may come from the fact that rural development projects themselves do not generate significant economic gains and incentives given that community development is itself a challenge. Many community development projects have failed to have impact on villagers' livelihoods, incomes or attitudes, so that these evaluations may not have measured the lack of a relation but the lack of achievement of the first step.

A different approach is guiding the Lower Shire Protected Areas Project. The tenet is that DNPW staff and projects should focus strictly on the park resources but give communities more management responsibilities. In addition, the economic value of park resources and

wilderness could be increased by developing enterprises of a commercial nature. If successful, the economic base and community economic incentives could be increased significantly by purposefully developing forward and backward linkages and by giving priorities to enterprises that create local employment and have multiplier effects in the community. In order for such ventures to be successful, there is a need strong community-based public relations and improved awareness.

### **Focusing on outputs *versus* sustainability and an experiential approach**

CBNRM projects in the wildlife, fisheries and forestry sectors implemented primarily by NGOs and donors have invested substantially in helping plan and set up community activities. They guide communities closely on proposal preparation, initial planning, formation of user groups on so on. Focusing primarily on achieving the planned outputs, they invest in training and how to carry out the agreed activities; they are tightly supervised. This has accounted for the progress made in formation of user groups and marketing of various forest products under the WSM Kam'mwamba project in Mwanza District.

On the other hand the COMPASS small grants component takes a more hands off approach attaching substantial value to letting communities do what they are capable of doing and only providing limited financial support and minimal supervision. The 25 CBNRM activities supported under this component differ in being oriented towards generation of lessons rather than strictly controlling the process with a focus on outputs.

For example, the project staff provide some guidelines on proposal preparation and requirements for book keeping and financial accounting. The project personnel have minimum input in proposal preparation, planning and creation of user groups, designing activities or supervision. Funded activities could be for any NRM-linked purpose identified by the community members. This limited role of project staff is geared towards promoting communities that develop at their own pace, work relatively independently and undertake activities with a high chance of sustainability once COMPASS funding has ceased.

Such an open approach runs the risk of limited immediate outputs but also offers other types of benefits especially possibilities for sustainability. It could be viewed as an experimental approach geared towards developing a better understanding of communities' capacities and limitations, and assessing the impact of such an approach on outputs, community empowerment and sustainability. If the approach is well planned and structured, with a good system for tracking and documenting and sharing lessons, it could be extremely valuable in terms of addressing many weakness inherent in the current top down, high cost CBNRM approaches that require intensive supervision. If the ultimate goal was to implement successful community projects, many of the community projects might produce disappointing results based on communities' comparatively weak capacity for planning, identifying activities and implementation.

The CBNRM Working Group could deliberate on these different approaches and positions and provide some guidance on how to get the most out of the resources being expended.

## **ANNEX 2**

### **INVENTORY OF CBNRM INITIATIVES**

### CBNRM Initiatives in Malawi<sup>6</sup>

Name of Organization	Number of CBNRM initiatives	Number of targeted communities	Estimated number of beneficiaries	Monetary value of support	Source of funding	Performance period	Technical theme
<b>DONOR ORGANIZATIONS</b>							
No responses	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>PROJECTS &amp; PROGRAMMES</b>							
COMPASS	24 grants	200 +	50,000 +	\$5.25M	USAID	2-99 to 2-04	NRM
DANIDA - Land Management Mapping	-	-	Govt. Departments	\$1.5M	DANIDA	12-99 to 12-01	Land policy
EU Social Forestry	5 Districts	116	?	\$ 4.0M	EU	11-97 to 11-01	Forestry/Soil
Lake Chilwa	50 micro projects	50	200-10,000	\$1.3M	DANIDA	7-98 to 12-01	NRM
NARMAP	220	?	300,000	\$6.0M	KfW/German Govt.	7-98 to 7-10	Fisheries
PROSCARP	21	270	35,000	\$1.0M	EU	7-00 to 7-01	Soil & Water
TSP	6	N/a	600	\$1.0M	Dutch Govt.	9-99 to ?	Forestry/ Agriculture
VSO	2	12	?	\$36,000	VSO	5-00 to 5-02	Wildlife
<b>GOVERNMENT AGENCIES</b>							
Fisheries (NARMAP)	1	?	300,000 to 400,000	\$6M	Various	1995 - ?	Fisheries
Fisheries (Zomba)	2	55	7,000	\$10,000	Various	7-00 to 6-01	Fisheries
FRIM	5	20	5,000 +	\$35,000	Various	1997 to 2002	Forestry
<b>NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS</b>							
Concern Universal	4	210	19,000 households	\$2M	Various	Various	NRM
CPAR	7	20	1,615 households	\$800,000	CIDA	12-96 to 6-99 and 1-99 to 3-01	Fisheries, Soil & water, Agriculture
CRECCOM	1	23	23,000	\$34,000	African Resources Trust	5-00 to 10-00	NRM
Development Centre	-	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
OXFAM	5	N/a	4,020	\$120,000/annum	Self-funding	3 years	Capacity building

<sup>6</sup> Information provided here was solicited through distribution of a questionnaire to some 35 organizations via the Internet using the COMPASS ListServ. The level of response was about 30% (18 respondents) and this in itself might be regarded as a strong indicator of lack of commitment among certain types of organization.

Story Workshop	6	?	10,000 +	\$40,000	EU, DANIDA, ICRAF	1997 - ?	NRM
TOTAL	-	1,000 +	600,000 +	\$24M <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-

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<sup>7</sup> Excludes \$6M included twice in the table under NARMAP and Fisheries Department



## ANNEX 3

### REVIEW OF EFFECTS OF LAND REFORM AND DECENTRALIZATION POLICIES

Part of the passiveness of GOM Departments responsible for NRM stems from anticipation of major changes associated with upcoming land reform and decentralization policies and processes. The Departments lack a clear idea of how these will affect their efforts to promote and implement CBNRM. These two bodies of policy and legislation will result in fundamental changes in authority over resources and institutional arrangements.

Previous reviews of the effect of these policies on CBNRM suggest there are some real concerns especially with the effects of decentralization<sup>8</sup>. However, with some further negotiations on certain points and clearer allocation of roles and responsibility, it seems the overall effect of the proposed changes is likely to help, rather than hinder, CBNRM.

#### Land Reform

The Land Commission empowers local level leadership especially by making the Traditional Authority, not Government, the trustee for customary land on behalf of communities. It gives them the authority to settle land disputes and to preside over land tribunals. This should speed up dispute resolution, make the process more responsive to community interests and also take advantage of the communities' knowledge. The Commission has also proposed expanding customary land, which will increase the potential benefits from use and management.

The main disparity here is that while the Land Commission explicitly empowers the TAs and charges them with key leadership responsibilities, the resource policies focus on the formation of VNRCs while being silent about the role of TAs in CBNRM initiatives. Agents implementing CBNRM activities have formally followed the policies and made the VNRCs the core institutions. For practical purposes, the continued social role of TAs and recognition and the respect they receive from their communities must be acknowledged. Experience has led the NRM agencies to informally engage the TAs in CBNRM implementation since they are currently playing an important role anyway. Most people working at the grassroots believe that TAs must be instrumental in the CBNRM process and that this should be explicitly recognized in the NRM policies and legislation. Such an adjustment would make the Land Commission's recommendations and the CBNRM approach consistent.

#### Decentralization

The likely effects of decentralization are less clear. It should help rather than hinder CBNRM if its overall purposes of bringing government closer to the people, instilling transparency, democratic principals and transparency are accomplished. The main concerns again include its exclusion of an instrumental role for Traditional Authorities (a non-voting member of the District Assembly). District Assemblies have overall authority over forests and fisheries (not wildlife and parks), and will make District by-laws that could, and probably will override village by-laws. They can assess and tax customary land and are responsible for licensing

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<sup>8</sup> See COMPASS Document 7 - *Policy Framework for Community-based Natural Resources Management in Malawi: A Review of Laws, Policies and Practices* and COMPASS Document 14 - *Grass-roots Advocacy for CBNRM Policy Reform*

fees. This level of authority of District Assemblies may conflict with both the power given to Traditional Authorities by the Land Commission and the power and entitlement over resources given to VNRCs under CBNRM agreements. Trick (2000), for example, concluded that communities could find themselves caught between respected Traditional Authority and modern, progressive local government.

During this study all NRM departments expressed serious concern that the District Authorities and elected councilors in leadership positions will most likely lack sufficient technical knowledge and interest in proper NRM. At the same time, NRM staff such as District Forestry and Fisheries Officers may lack the administrative capacity and charisma to participate fully and influence District-level funding decisions in favor of environment. With this concern, many stakeholders contacted during the course of this study argued that, as in the case of National Parks, Forest Reserves and fisheries should not be under the responsibilities of the District Assemblies - at least at the outset. This is in keeping with the conclusions of an earlier analysis by Tony Seymour. They propose that this transition should be approached cautiously and decisions made only when evidence of adequate management capacity emerges. In any case, resource sectors will need time for institutional restructuring in order to fit in with the proposed administrative and fiscal decentralization. The decentralization process is planned to start with the four ministries that include all the NRM sectors but few personnel in these departments feel fully prepared for it.

## ANNEX 4

### **CONFLICTING IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES: Suggested Guidelines for Standardizing Incentives for Encouraging CBNRM and Ensuring Sustainable Financing Mechanisms for CBNRM Initiatives<sup>9</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

What is CBNRM to Malawi? This most essential question has to be asked and answered.... so as to clearly understand the paradigm within, and therefore the associated principles to which we challenge ourselves to work. We understand that our people are largely rural and dependent on their immediate environment... To maintain and increase their standard of living, and therefore local natural resources have to be approached with a view to economically sustaining current livelihoods until new and innovative developmental opportunities prevail themselves. So sustainability becomes central. However, our Malawian context provides two conflicting premises, that of a trend of increasing population and a trend of depleting natural resources, both very challenging to slow and even more so, difficult to reverse.

Decentralisation is the frame or context within which current NRM and other developmental initiatives are being drawn up, and thought to this process must be given if our approach is to be validated. The incentive and financing issues are essential not only to our sector but also to all others that will work within this new context to respond to other socio-economic needs. Incentives cost, and that factor alone needs very careful attention should we wish to be in a situation that we can cope with this budget line for the foreseeable future. Should this not be thought out very carefully, not only will this new development agenda be expensive, and therefore perhaps unaffordable but we could find ourselves breaking down before the journey even starts.

#### **A) INCENTIVES**

We can for our own common understanding define incentives within natural resource management simply as motivational factors to attract and influence a party's involvement to assist to achieve a common agenda and set of objectives. An ideal set of incentives could include legal rights, technical support, capacity services, finance, and a market place. Others are more insidious such as money, free inputs, food for work, and can be viewed as forms subsidy.

The Malawi situation attracts the introduction of subsidy-style incentives due to the prevalent and pervasive poverty, where the natural resource regime is generally depleted and therefore a sustainable use (ideal) equation is currently difficult to develop. Communities are seen to be poverty-stricken and the subsidies are introduced on the assumption there is no local cash flow or as development agenda with the `poor`.

However, our thoughts about `subsidy-style` incentives run counter to the sustainability ethic that we strive to attain through the adoption of a CBNRM ethic.... Or does it? Do we believe

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<sup>9</sup> Prepared by Carl Bruessow, Coordinator of the Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust for the workshop on Principles and Approaches to CBNRM in Malawi in November 1999.

that we have a monopoly to enjoy certain privileges, because should it transcend to be at the expense of the communities' funds then conflict situations shall arise.

This situation is in contrast to other SADC states that enjoy a sound wildlife resource base, enabling the introduction of a modified management regime (CBNRM) which has brought early and meaningful benefit streams encouraging community ownership and involvement. Concurrently, such management allows for both the maintenance of a sound sustainable regenerative resource base and the development of alternative benefits. The fundamental understanding within a CBNRM paradigm is that the community here can decide to do with its income as it chooses.

The subsidy-style incentive distortion can be traced back to the development approaches used. Do we have different and contradictory approaches amongst the facilitators and implementers as a direct consequence of the variety of funding sources, with donors unprepared or unable to minimize their divergence of modalities. Should we pursue the CBNRM ethos and perhaps motivate a common approach (community-based) from the communities to request and manage support from us? And then work towards improving that idea.

Looking at the necessary essential ingredients for ideal CBNRM, we can see that Malawi is not yet at the right position for local sustainable solutions to have success. It is these basic requirements, which if available can be referred to as true incentives to motivating community-based opportunities.

**CBNRM Basics**

**Current Situation**

Community Institutions

Legally Constrained/Limited Capacity

Tenure Rights  
Partners  
Knowledge  
Finance

Land & Water Rights?/Others CM Negotiable  
Limited Technical Services/Few Networks  
Policy & Acts Ignorance/Skills Required  
Limited Grants/Credit Restricted/Income?

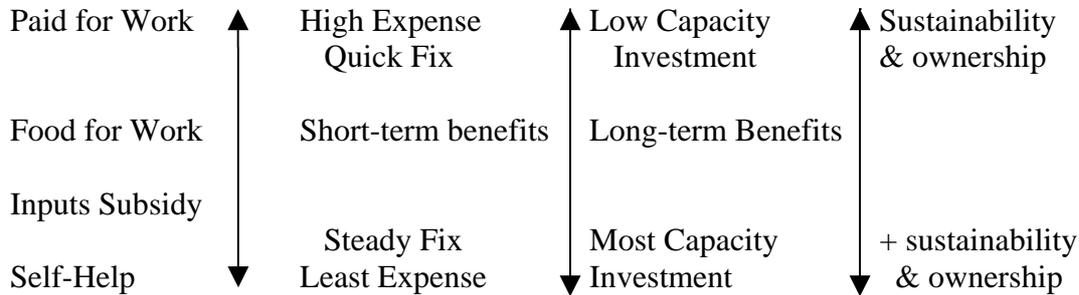
In the absence of some of the above basic factors, we are trying to motivate CBNRM by adding a project/programme/process approach to facilitate for capacity support where required and provide inputs support to potential activities. However, a national CBNRM process could be inspired by concurrently finalizing tenure aspects appropriately and enabling the community as a legal institution. In this vacuum, we shall have to see the common use of Collaborative Management (CM) agreements that can spell out rights of use and responsibility and the equation of benefit sharing.

Moving out from our paradigm, we can see how development approaches can be misused in the apparent objective of achieving the same agenda. Through the power-play we see a dichotomy arise between:

- **A supply oriented agenda** – Where a developmental agenda driven by external factors such as time constraints and success, utilizes a range of attractive motivational factors to maintain schedule and rectify the problem statement. And And
- **A demand driven agenda** - Where a community originated or inspired process

Calls for minimal incentives and can be assisted towards a sustainable use/equitable benefits situation.

These different agendas play out to have specific characteristics:



Unfortunately, as stated earlier, due to the poor generative ability of natural resources to currently provide for meaningful income, food or household goods; the potential opportunity even within ideal CBNRM ventures is taken to exploit activities for allowances as a means of extracting a short-term benefit. Facilitating agencies and service providers should recognize this situation and restrain from introducing any distortions into the community circumstances within their areas of activities. Even the daily meals should be contributed to some means from both the community and cooperating agency.

***B) FINANCING MECHANISMS***

The current situation is largely based upon unsustainable and distant sources of finance, with no recognizable cycle of funds. Funding into the community generates no definable outward stream aside from limited tax to central government and the resource base in ‘mined’ for advantage with minimal reinvestment taking place.

A more ideal scenario would be one where a range of sustainable finance channels are available to community institutions through various agreements and shared facilities, and a flow of funds can be seen to enable local development action, allow for local service delivery and inspire commercial enterprise.



## ANNEX 5

### PERFORMANCE MONITORING FOR CBNRM IN MALAWI

The fundamental approach to managing natural resources in Malawi is undergoing a dramatic shift. Prior to the mid-1990s, the central government controlled natural resources through a strict regime of laws and regulations. Widespread environmental decline attests to the weakness of this command-and-control approach. Under the current democratically elected government, community-based natural resource management is being promoted. With assistance from donors and NGOs, Malawi is making a significant investment to turn CBNRM into a reality. New institutional structures and programs are being set up. Policies promoting decentralization are taking root. Local and national governments are being mobilized in a nationwide planning process for CBNRM. And communities are being trained in more environmentally sound management practices. How well the country adopts CBNRM will have profound implications for the citizens of Malawi and their ability to meet their basic needs well into the future.

The development of a strategic plan and performance monitoring system that allows communities and decision-makers to track their progress in achieving their objectives under CBNRM will be an essential tool in this transition period and beyond. Monitoring permits resource managers and decision-makers to collect data and information to assess whether CBNRM projects and programs are achieving their desired result and impact. Throughout the world, countries are developing performance-monitoring systems for adaptive management. This means that management practices are continually being assessed and modified to enhance the achievement of objectives. Performance monitoring, therefore, is a valuable management tool.

Many different approaches are being adopted for performance monitoring. Each approach has its unique strengths and weaknesses. This section is designed to introduce one possible option that the CBNRM Working Group may consider for monitoring the performance and impacts of CBNRM initiatives in the country. The approach is based on current best practice adopted by countries around the world for monitoring environmental programs, as developed by USAID. It relies on the development of a strategic plan that is depicted in a result framework and identifying indicators to gauge progress against these desired results. The approach is intended to provide a methodology to ensure that all the basic building blocks for CBNRM are monitored systematically.

#### **Current environmental monitoring in Malawi**

As a first step to assist in building a performance monitoring system for CBNRM, COMPASS conducted a rapid appraisal of current national-level environmental monitoring activities. This exercise was designed to identify existing monitoring systems upon which a CBNRM performance system could be built. As part of the appraisal, the COMPASS team spoke with government officials in the Departments of Environmental Affairs, Forestry, National Parks & Wildlife and Fisheries; various NGO and university representatives; local government officials; and donor agencies involved in CBNRM. Several key findings emerged from the assessment that have far-reaching implications for CBNRM performance monitoring:

- ***Confidence levels regarding the validity of current environmental data is uneven***

For the Departments of Fisheries, National Parks & Wildlife, and Forestry, current monitoring relies on district environmental, fisheries, park, and forest specialists to compile and report monitoring data to Lilongwe headquarter offices. In theory, headquarter offices are responsible for compiling the district-level data into a national report. The assessment found that in some NRM sectors, such as fisheries, Malawi has a long and rich tradition of gathering data. The compilation and reporting of this data, however, is generally regarded as more problematic. Indeed, current bottlenecks to environmental monitoring include insufficient funding for field technicians to gather data in their districts, the use of inconsistent methodologies for collecting data that precludes aggregation of the data at the national level, and a lack of a clear use for the data once it is collected and analyzed.

- ***Recent national level data on environmental conditions do not exist***

For several sectors, comprehensive nationwide environmental assessments exist, but they need to be updated. For example, deforestation rates and forest cover appearing in current environmental literature still refer to a study conducted in 1992 as the most recent source for forestry data. The *1999 Resource Report* by the Fisheries Department contains national data and analysis of fish stocks up to 1996. Nationwide data on fauna dates back to 1994, although the Parks Department does maintain more recent statistics on animal counts and management practices inside its parks and reserves. Furthermore, data do not exist for several important environment areas. According to the *1998 State of the Environment Report*, data for soil erosion, which is commonly ranked as the most serious environmental problem, “is very scanty and the little data [that is] available is inconsistent.” Similarly, a comprehensive baseline assessment of fish stocks in Lake Malawi has yet to be undertaken, despite the fact that the country’s largest waterbody is its primary source of fish and is widely considered to be the most biodiverse freshwater lake in the world with more than 400 endemic species recorded.

- ***Current environmental monitoring conducted by the GOM is highly sectoral in focus***

Monitoring currently targets individual sub-sectors within the environmental arena, such as fisheries, forests, and wildlife. No evidence exists to indicate that a broader, ecosystems-based approach is being adopted for monitoring that recognizes the inter-relatedness of ecological systems. For example, the Fisheries Department measures fish catch but does not maintain data on whether the habitat of vital nursery grounds are being maintained.

In general, environmental monitoring is regarded as a top-down bureaucratic requirement and as an end in-and-of itself, rather than a tool to help make better decisions. It is reported that district environmental and technical specialists currently collect data as a job requirement, but often do not analyze or use the data to assist in promoting better environmental programs and practices. The dearth of environmental data hampers the ability of decision-makers at all levels to adopt policies and practices that are based on current and reliable information.

Fortunately, several steps are currently underway to begin to address several of these issues. For example, the Environmental Affairs Department (EAD) is now mandated under the 1996 Environmental Management Act to produce an annual state of the environment report for review by Parliament. The *1998 State of the Environment Report* provides a good overview

of key environmental issues and trends in the country. Environmental information within individual sections of the current report, however, is often outdated or missing.

In addition, the EAD and its partners have initiated a process to create a national level committee to coordinate CBNRM policy and programs throughout the country. One of the committee's responsibilities will be to monitor and assess the impact of CBNRM. The establishment of the CBNRM coordinating committee to serve as a single focal point for CBNRM monitoring should enhance the prospect for improved environmental monitoring.

The growing recognition of the importance of collecting environmental information for decision making, in combination with the legal mandate to produce the state of the environment report, has resulted in several efforts to bolster environmental monitoring. For example, DANIDA and UNDP are providing technical assistance and equipment to help districts to produce environmental action plans that rely on baseline assessments of key natural resources. As part of the program, plans call for each district to produce their own state of the environment report by the end of 2000, which will be compiled into the national level report each year. It is unclear, however, whether common national indicators will be employed to facilitate the collection and aggregation of data. The Department of Forestry recently obtained a NOAA satellite feed to receive land and cloud cover information. In addition, more attention is expected to focus on environmental monitoring once the CBNRM coordinating committee is established. Furthermore, COMPASS is prepared to offer technical assistance as needed for CBNRM performance monitoring.

As additional attention is directed toward performance monitoring for CBNRM, several issues will need to be addressed to ensure that a monitoring system actually can translate into better environmental practices:

- A CBNRM monitoring plan will need to recognize that natural resource management requires a broader, ecosystem perspective that considers not only bio-physical parameters, but also areas such as improvements in key enabling conditions for CBNRM and the adoption of CBNRM practices. Such areas would require measuring indicators for social and economic welfare, policy reform, financing, and other management information, which have yet to be integrated into current monitoring practice.
- The current policy of decentralization places greater emphasis on forging new partnerships with districts, traditional authorities, community organizations, and non-governmental organizations, which have little experience in collecting or using environmental information for decision making. Training these partners in performance monitoring for adaptive management will be required.
- Current CBNRM projects are not following any common or objective methodology for performance monitoring. The lack of a consistent or common approach for monitoring creates difficulties in assessing which CBNRM activities are the most successful and should be considered for replication. Any future CBNRM monitoring system should consider the adoption of a core set of common indicators that can be aggregated nationwide so that the development and environment community can identify more systematically what is working and what is not working in CBNRM. This knowledge will assist in targeting future programs and policies.

- With over 25% of Malawi’s territory covered by water, a CBNRM performance-monitoring plan should consider using the watershed as the basic management unit for monitoring. Greater focus on a watershed-level monitoring plan would reflect recognition of natural boundaries and the strong interrelationships between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Monitoring at a watershed level could also feed into an integrated system to improve coordination of current programs. In the case of Malawi, a watershed approach may require transboundary cooperation.

### **Developing a monitoring system for CBNRM**

As EAD and its partners move forward with promoting CBNRM, several options are available for developing a monitoring system for CBNRM activities and policies. This section presents illustrative results framework and a preliminary list of indicators that are designed to demonstrate the types of parameters that could be measured for CBNRM monitoring. The results framework and indicators are by no means final. This section is not intended to be a step-by-step guide for developing a performance-monitoring plan for CBNRM. Instead, it is designed to provide a starting point for discussing how a CBNRM strategy and monitoring system could be structured and the types of information that could be monitored. It stresses several elements: the need for a standard methodology and system to measure the different levels of performance and impacts, the use of a common list of indicators and data collection methodologies to assist in aggregation, and the need to keep environmental monitoring as simple as possible. Fundamental to the success of any monitoring plan is that it should be practical, useful, and participatory. Fortunately, several sectors in Malawi already have a long tradition of collecting environmental data. This history should greatly enhance CBNRM performance monitoring.

### **Illustrative result framework for CBNRM in Malawi**

A first step for establishing a CBNRM monitoring plan is to develop a results framework to guide the selection of the most useful indicators that can logically link performance data together to measure progress within a strategy. The illustrative result framework in Figure 3 attempts to synthesize current CBNRM work and approaches in Malawi into one comprehensive framework that can be used as the building blocks for a CBNRM strategic plan, as well as for a performance monitoring plan. The result framework, which was developed in consultation with several Malawian CBNRM experts, presents a conceptual framework that neatly links programmatic results and environmental and socio-economic impacts.

This result framework is based on a hierarchy of results or “impact levels”. At the base of the framework stands three mutually supportive “targeted results,” or TRs, which are required to create a positive “enabling environment” for CBNRM. CBNRM objectives are divided into three higher level TRs:

- TR 1 – National framework for CBNRM established,
- TR 2 – Community mobilization for CBNRM increased, and
- TR 3 – Sustainable financing for CBNRM secured.

These TRs are the results that need to be pursued concurrently in the medium-term, from approximately three to five years, in order to build the enabling environment required for CBNRM to take hold in Malawi (impact level III). It is important to note that the TRs

capture the results to be pursued, that is, the objectives that will be achieved within a pre-determined time period. Each TR is in turn supported by lower-level “intermediate results” (IRs). These lower-level IRs are pursued within an even shorter-term time horizon, from one to two years. To make this strategy operational, activities must be specially tailored to support each lower level IR. These activities may include a combination of training, technical assistance, procurement of equipment, applied research, credit or small grant programs, etc.

Under this hierarchy, the assumption is that once a positive enabling environment has been created – through the combination of the right national framework for CBNRM, mobilization of local communities, and creation of sustainable financing mechanisms – the expected result will be that resource users will adopt improved natural resource management practices (impact level II). These practices may include sustainable forest management practices, improved soil conservation techniques for farming, or less destructive fishing practices. As resource users improve their management practices, the impact should be that key environmental threats are reduced: high deforestation rates will decrease; fishing effort will reach more sustainable levels; and wildlife poaching will decline. The culmination of improved resource management practices and reduced environmental threats should be that ecosystem functions are, at minimum, maintained and preferably improved for sustainable development (impact level I). This improvement may mean that forest cover will remain stable and perhaps increase, soil erosion will decrease, or depleted fish stocks will recover. In short, the basic integrity and equilibrium of vital ecosystem services will be revived for sustainable development.

Under the framework, it is important to note that while the impacts of poor environmental management can be immediately apparent, it can take many years for the impacts of improved resource management practices to be measurable. Considerable time lags can separate improvements in natural resource management and the resulting biophysical changes. For instance, the adoption of agroforestry practices will only show measurable effects on soil fertility or biomass in several years. Recovery of certain populations of wildlife may take several generations.

### **Illustrative indicators for CBNRM monitoring**

Once a result framework has been developed, the selection of indicators can follow a straightforward and systematic approach. In association with the illustrative result framework presented above, table 2 provides a list of illustrative indicators that the CBNRM coordinating committee may consider for national CBNRM monitoring. The list of illustrative indicators are categorized hierarchically according the result framework, with each indicator tailored to measure the performance of achieving a particular result within the CBNRM strategy. Thus, progress in achieving the CBNRM strategy can be assessed using a consistent, timely, and systematically approach through the comprehensive performance monitoring plan. Should performance for a particular indicator show that a target is not being achieved, program managers can identify corrective actions early within strategy implementation. This is the essence of adaptive management.

In designing these illustrative indicators, seven common criteria were kept in mind. Indicators were developed to be:

- Measurable – can be recorded and analyzed in quantitative or qualitative terms.
- Precise – are defined the same way by everyone.

- Relevant – provides information required for decision making.
- Readily understandable – can be clearly interpreted by intended users of the data.
- Consistent – always measuring the same thing.
- Sensitive – measures can be adjusted to changes in conditions.
- Direct – measures designed to track as closely as possible the progress of particular result.

Simple indicators may well be more cost effective as well as meaningful. Simplicity and a standardized methodology for data collection will ensure that monitoring conducted at different sites or times or by different investigators can be compared with a high level of confidence.

**Table 1 - Illustrative Indicators for Malawi CBNRM Performance Monitoring Plan**

<b>CBNRM Goal</b>	
<b>Ecosystem Functions Maintained and/or Improved for Sustainable Development</b>	
<b>Objective/Result Statement</b>	<b>Illustrative Indicator(s)</b>
<b>Biophysical Indicators</b>	
<b>Forest Cover Maintained and/or Increased</b>	Hectares of forest cover (natural, plantation, reforested/afforested) Rate of deforestation in forest reserves and estates.
<b>Rate of Soil Erosion Reduced</b>	Sediment yield in major rivers Rates of soil erosion (tones/ha/yr) in key sites
<b>Fish Catch Maintained at Sustainable Levels</b>	Commercial and subsistence fish-catch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catch per unit effort per species</li> </ul>
<b>Biological Diversity Conserved</b>	Population of key species found throughout Malawi: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elephants, Buffaloes, Hippos, Impalas, Crocodiles;</li> <li>• Indicator species to provide an overall indication of ecosystem health</li> <li>• Aquatic biodiversity in Lake Malawi - Species number and size</li> </ul>
<b>Water Quality and Quantity Improved</b>	Water quality of key waterbodies Water efficiency in agriculture Height of water table
<b>Socio-Economic Indicators</b>	
<b>Rural Incomes Increased</b>	Average household income in communities with effective CBNRM practices
<b>Improved Water Resources Management</b>	Percent of population with access to potable water Percent of population with access to sanitation

<b>Increased Availability of Energy</b>	Amount of time required to gather firewood Price of firewood Use of alternative energy
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<b>Objective</b> <b>CBNRM Practices Adopted throughout Malawi</b>	
<b>Objective/Result Statement</b>	<b>Illustrative Indicator(s)</b>
<b>CBNRM Practices Adopted throughout Malawi</b>	Number, percent of communities effectively adopting CBNRM practices Hectares under effective CBNRM Hectares under effective protection for biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management

<b>Targeted Result 1</b> <b>National framework for CBNRM established</b>	
<b>Objective/Result Statement</b>	<b>Illustrative Indicator(s)</b>
<i>Targeted Result 1 – National framework for CBNRM established</i>	To be determined
IR 1.1 - Mechanisms for public consultation created for participatory planning	Number of NGOs able to effectively participate in policy advocacy process
IR 1.2 - Coordination between public agencies, donors, and civil society improved	To be determined
IR 1.3 – Supportive policies and legislation adopted	Success rate for passage of key CBNRM reforms as articulated by the CBNRM Task Force achieved
IR 1.4 -Access to information for decision making improved	Production of annual state of the environment report

<b>Targeted Result 2</b>	
<b>Increased Local Community Participation in CBNRM</b>	
<b>Objective/Result Statement</b>	<b>Illustrative Indicator(s)</b>
<i>Targeted Result 2 – Increased local community participation in CBNRM</i>	Number of districts with CBNRM components in environmental action plans Number of districts achieving CBNRM targets within their action plans Number of communities adopting CBNRM in local development plans
IR 2.1 - CBNRM best practices developed, tested, and disseminated	Number of CBNRM best practices developed, tested, and disseminated in key environmental sectors
IR 2.2 - Public awareness about the importance of CBNRM increased	Percent of Malawians who can name environmental problems and solutions
IR 2.3 - Resource users granted legal stewardship over resources	To be determined
IR 2.4 - Access to information for decision making improved	Number of districts producing annual state of the environment reports
IR 2.5 - Mechanisms for public consultation created for participatory planning	Percent of communities with functional Village Natural Resource Committees
IR 2.6 – Public education for CBNRM improved	Number of schools with environmental curricula  Number of EDOs, technical specialists, and government extension workers demonstrating proficiency in CBNRM best practices, concepts and approaches
<b>Targeted Result 3</b>	
<b>Sustainable CBNRM Financing Secured</b>	
<b>Objective/Result Statement</b>	<b>Illustrative Indicator(s)</b>
Targeted Result 3 - Sustainable CBNRM Financing Secured	Amount of money secured for CBNRM
IR 3.1 - Public-Sector Economic Incentives for CBNRM adopted	Key policy reforms (i.e., cost recovery for water, removal of subsidies) implemented  Market access for CBNRM products improved (certification)
IR 3.2 - Public-Private - Community Sector Partnerships Established	Amount of funding generated by CBNRM activities (ecotourism, agroforestry, sustainable fisheries, etc.)  Percent of park gate receipts channeled to communities.
IR 3.3 - National Environmental Endowment Fund Capitalized	Funds disbursed from endowment fund for CBNRM  Amount secured for national environmental endowment fund capitalization

## Next Steps

The illustrative result framework and indicators are examples of how a CBNRM performance-monitoring plan for Malawi could be structured. It is important to keep in mind that performance monitoring is designed to promote adaptive management and informed decision making by emphasizing the systematic tracking and analysis of performance, and the subsequent modification of work plans and objectives. Ultimately, a CBNRM monitoring plan for Malawi needs to respond to two fundamental issues: how well CBNRM is being adopted by communities, and whether CBNRM is having a positive impact on environmental quality and socioeconomic development. When performance monitoring is tied to CBNRM program objectives, monitoring will enhance program successes by allowing managers to make better decisions. Iteration will often be the key to the entire management cycle. CBNRM activities may be repeatedly modified as new information becomes available about the effectiveness of management actions.

The performance-monitoring plan itself is not exempt from this process. Once the monitoring plan has been designed, it needs to be tested, revised in response to the test results, and revised again. As resource managers learn which types of information are useful and cost effective and which are not, the monitoring plan can be modified. New information-needs will also continue to arise, while some types of information previously collected may become less relevant. Furthermore, monitoring is of no use unless the results of the monitoring efforts help to revise and improve community management as well as the overall program being monitored.

As the Government of Malawi, communities, NGOs, donors, and their partners move forward with CBNRM, several possible options exist for developing a cost-effective, practical, and useful performance-monitoring plan:

1. Given the dearth of environmental data for Malawi and the difficulties this presents for basic environmental planning, donors and the government should consider developing an action plan that selectively targets key environmental parameters as priorities for monitoring. The year 2001 and the launching of CBNRM initiatives throughout the country offer a logical and convenient point for collecting new data for such parameters as forest cover, soil erosion, water quality, fisheries stocks, and national wildlife populations.
2. Little awareness exists among Malawians at all levels of decision making about current adaptive management and performance monitoring approaches and uses for environmental planning and management. Performance monitoring training and “learning by doing” exercises of CBNRM partners could begin to create new awareness and skills that could greatly enhance the achievement of CBNRM objectives in the country.

Malawian CBNRM stakeholders and decision-makers need to develop a consensus on a strategic plan and a performance monitoring plan for CBNRM. This consensus needs to be forged using participatory approaches that ensures a strong sense of ownership over results to be pursued and indicators to be monitored.



## **ANNEX 6**

### **MEMBERSHIP OF THE CBNRM WORKING GROUP**

The CBNRM Working Group comprises the following members:

Department of Forestry  
Department of National Parks and Wildlife  
Department of Fisheries  
Department of Land Resources and Conservation  
Ministry of Water Development  
Department of Energy  
Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Local Government  
Ministry of Community Services  
One Traditional Leader  
CURE  
Centre for Social Research  
Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust  
Department of Environmental Affairs (as Secretariat)



## ANNEX 7

### TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CBNRM WORKING GROUP

The mandate of the Working Group is to focus on the coordination of the implementation and of policy issues relating to CBNRM activities in the country as stipulated in the terms of reference.

The following are the proposed Terms of Reference:

- 1 - The Working Group shall coordinate the formulation and implementation of policies and programs/projects relating to CBNRM in the country.
- 2 - It shall commission investigations and studies into the social and economic aspects of CBNRM as may be required by the Council.
- 3 - Specifically, the Working Group shall coordinate CBNRM activities by undertaking the following:
  - a - commission the development of a strategic plan for implementing CBNRM in Malawi;
  - b - develop tools and mechanisms to ensure that CBNRM guidelines are adhered to by all stakeholders including:
    - i - ensuring that options for sustainable financing of CBNRM are fully explored; and
    - ii - providing guidance on public awareness campaigns for CBNRM
  - c - give guidance on the development and review of sectoral policies that impinge upon CBNRM activities in the country;
  - d - ensure the formulation of procedures for improved coordination of CBNRM activities in the country and ensure their implementation;
  - e - commission the development of a monitoring system for the CBNRM process in the country;
  - f - ensure the development of elaborate procedures for ensuring representation of local communities in the CBNRM process;
  - g - facilitate the development of guidelines to ensure that the costs and benefits of sustainable management of natural resources are distributed equitably; and
  - h - facilitate the annual assessment of CBNRM activities in Malawi.



## **ANNEX 8**

### **LIST OF CONTACTS**

#### **Government Departments:**

1. Environmental Affairs Department (EAD): The Director - Ralph Kabwaza
  2. Forestry Department: The Deputy Director - Sam Kainja
  3. Fisheries Department: The Director - Sam Mapila and Deputy Director - Sloans Chimatiro
  4. National Parks and Wildlife: The Director - Leonard Sefu and Deputy Director - Humphrey Nzima
- Southern Shire Co-Management of Wildlife and Protected Areas: Richard Hartley
5. Department of Energy and Mines: Mr. Chitenje
  6. Ministry of Agriculture, Land Resources & Conservation Department: Vincent Mkandawire

MAFE project (USAID): Trent Bunderson and Ian Hayes

PROSCARP project (EU): John Dickinson

#### **NGOs:**

1. The Story Workshop: Marvin Hanke
2. National Institute for Civic Education (NICE)/GTZ: Anette Mertens
3. Greenwigs (also Mbendera, Chibambo and Associates): Patrice Nkhono
4. CURE, Robert Kafakoma
5. Wildlife Society of Malawi (WSM): Daulos Mauambeta

#### **Donors:**

1. DFID: Harry Potter
2. GTZ: Peter Jarchau, Uwe Scholtz (NARMAP); Martin Skottke (SADC/Forestry Sector Technical Coordinating Unit)
3. World Bank: Francis M'buka
4. EU: Des Mahony, Bob Bowles (EU Social Forestry Extension Training project).
5. USAID: Andrew Watson and Anax Umphawi (COMPASS); Steve Machira

**Other:**

1. Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust: Carl Bruessow

### COMPASS Publications

Document Number	Title	Author(s)	Date
Document 1	COMPASS Year 1 Work Plan	COMPASS	Jul-99
Document 2	COMPASS Small Grants Management Manual	Umphawi, A., Clausen, R., Watson, A.	Sep-99
Document 3	Year 2 Annual Work Plan	COMPASS	Dec-99
Document 4	July 1-September 30, 1999: Quarterly Report	COMPASS	Oct-99
Document 5	Training Needs Assessment: Responsive Modules & Training Approach	Mwakanema, G.	Nov-99
Document 6	Guidelines and Tools for Community-Based Monitoring	Svendsen, D.	Nov-99
Document 7	Policy Framework for CBNRM in Malawi: A Review of Laws, Policies and Practices	Trick, P.	Dec-99
Document 8	Performance Monitoring for COMPASS and for CBNRM in Malawi	Zador, M.	Feb-00
Document 9	October 1 - December 31, 1999: Quarterly Report	COMPASS	Jan-00
Document 10	Workshop on Principles and Approaches for CBNRM in Malawi: An assessment of needs for effective implementation of CBNRM	Watson, A.	Mar-00
Document 11	January 1 - March 31, 2000: Quarterly Report	COMPASS	Apr-00
Document 12	Thandizo la Ndalama za Kasamalidwe ka Zachilengedwe (Small Grants Manual in Chichewa)	Mphaka, P.	Apr-00
Document 13	Njira Zomwe Gulu Lingatsate Powunikira Limodzi Momwe Ntchito Ikuyendera (Guidelines and Tools for Community-based Monitoring in Chichewa)	Svendsen, D. - Translated by Mphaka, P. and Umphawi, A.	May-00
Document 14	Grass-roots Advocacy for Policy Reform: The Institutional Mechanisms, Sectoral Issues and Key Agenda Items	Lowore, J. and Wilson, J.	Jun-00
Document 15	A Strategic Framework for CBNRM Media Campaigns in Malawi	Sneed, T.	Jul-00
Document 16	Training Activities for Community-based Monitoring	Svendsen, D.	Jul-00
Document 17	April 1 - June 30, 2000: Quarterly Report	COMPASS	Jul-00
Document 18	Crocodile and Hippopotamus Management in the Lower Shire	Kaloweckamo, F.	Sep-00

Document 19	Cost-Sharing Principles and Guidelines for CBNRM Activities	Nobel Moyo	Sep-00
Document 20	Workplan: Year 2001	COMPASS	Sep-00
Document 21	July 1 - September 30: Quarterly Report	COMPASS	Oct-00
Document 22	Opportunities for Sustainable Financing of CBNRM in Malawi	Watson, A.	Oct-00
Draft 23	Draft Strategic Plan for CBNRM in Malawi	Simons, G.	Nov-00
Internal Report 1	Building GIS Capabilities for the COMPASS Information System	Craven, D.	Nov-99
Internal Report 2	Reference Catalogue	COMPASS	Feb-00
Internal Report 3	Workshop on Strategic Planning for the Wildlife Society of Malawi	Quinlan, K.	Apr-00
Internal Report 4	Directory of CBNRM Organizations	COMPASS	Jun-00
Internal Report 5	Proceedings of Water Hyacinth Workshop for Mthunzi wa Malawi	Kapila, M. (editor)	Jun-00
Internal Report 6	COMPASS Grantee Performance Report	Umphawi, A.	Jun-00
Internal Report 7	Examples of CBNRM Best-Practices in Malawi	Moyo, N. and Epulani, F.	Jul-00
Internal Report 8	Software Application Training for COMPASS	Di Lorenzo, N.A.	Sep-00