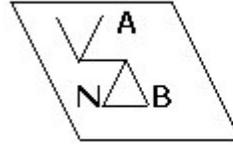




USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



OKACOM

RAPID SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF OKAVANGO RIVER BASIN COMMUNITIES IN KUANDO-KUBANGO PROVINCE, ANGOLA



March 2006

This publication was produced for review by the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) and the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by ARD, Inc. Private Bag 351 Unit # 469 Gaborone, Botswana. The information provided in this report is not official U.S. Government information and does not represent the views or positions of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the U.S. Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	3
Acronyms	4
Introduction	5
Rapid Survey Objectives, Assumptions, and Procedure	5
Methodology\Approach and Summary of Phases	5
Phase 1: Scouting	
Phase 2: Training PRA	
Phase 3: Rapid Assessment	
Constraints	7
Conclusion and Recommendations	8
Photographs\Illustrations	10
Annexes	12
Annex 1: Scouting Report	
Annex 2: PRA Training Report	
Annex 3: PRA Assessment in ten (10) communities	

PREFACE

The USAID/OKACOM Okavango River Basin Project, a four-year initiative is coordinated by the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) and funded by USAID/Southern Africa. The Project collaborates with OKACOM and its technical advisory committee, the Okavango Basin Steering Committee (OBSC), as well as government ministries, active non-governmental organizations in the basin, communities, regional academic and research institutions, and businesses and local government institutions that use and manage the resources in the Okavango River Basin. ARD, Inc. implements this initiative.

This report summarizes the process for conducting a rapid socioecological survey in Kuando Kubango Province. This was a joint effort by the IRBM and the Every River Has Its People Project (ERP), with technical support from and in collaboration with World Vision International-Angola (WVI). These three partners assisted the Association of Environmental Conservation and Integrated Rural Development (ACADIR) conduct this rapid assessment of the socioecological conditions within the province from August to December 2005. This report, prepared by WVI and IRBM, therefore presents the approach and results of the rapid assessments undertaken in ten representative communities.

ACRONYMS

ACADIR	Association of Environmental Conservation and Integrated Rural Development – Angola
ARD	ARD, Inc.
BWF	Basin-wide forum
CBNRM	Community-based natural resources management
CBO	Community-based organization
CDS	Community Development Specialist
DNA	Direccao Nacional de Aguas, Angola
ERP	Every River Has Its People Project
EPSMO	Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin Project
UNDP-GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IDP	Internally displaced people
IRBM	Okavango Integrated River Basin Management Project
KCS	Kalahari Conservation Society
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan – Angola
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OBSC	Okavango Basin Steering Committee
OIM	Organization of International Migration
ORB	Okavango River Basin
OKACOM	Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WVI	World Vision International

I.0. Introduction

Water scarcity in Southern Africa is a growing concern. Population growth and associated demands for domestic, farm, and industrial use are increasing stress on limited water resources. The majority of the region's watersheds are shared between two or more countries. What happens in the upper reaches of rivers and watersheds affects people, wildlife and ecosystems downstream. Regional responses and coordination are required to ensure equitable allocation and use of water resources within river basins.

Angola, Botswana, and Namibia agreed in 1994 to establish the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) to promote coordinated, regional water resources development objectives for the Okavango river basin, while addressing the legitimate social and economic needs of these three riparian states. A coherent approach to managing the basin's resources, based upon equitable allocation, sound environmental management, and sustainable utilization is a key objective of OKACOM's efforts.

USAID/Southern Africa, recognizing the commitment of OKACOM, has agreed to support the commission's institutional development through the Okavango Integrated River Basin Management Project (IRBM). OKACOM and its technical advisory body, the Okavango Basin Steering Committee (OBSC), will implement IRBM in collaboration with government ministries, non-governmental organizations in the basin, communities, regional academic and research institutions, businesses and local governments that use and manage the resources in the Okavango River Basin.

IRBM collaborates with other basin-wide initiatives, such as the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin Project (EPSMO), financed by the UNDP-Global Environment Facility (UNDP-GEF) and the Every River Has Its People Project (ERP), supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) in the implementation of improved river basin management activities. IRBM will also liaise and coordinate with numerous national initiatives and programs.

Three components make up IRBM:

- *organizations' ability to manage river basin resources enhanced;*
- *information systems for biodiversity and natural resource management improved, and;*
- *Improving community management and local governance of natural resources.*

These three components combine to strengthen regional capacity for improved management of selected river basins. Incorporated with these three components are three cross-cutting themes – highlighting HIV/AIDS within the basin, ensuring the participation of women and disadvantaged groups, and promoting the participation of the private-sector.

The Okavango Integrated River Basin Management Project, Every River Has Its People Project, and the UNDP-GEF Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Okavango River Basin Project (EPSMO) required an overview of the socioecological conditions of the Angolan portion of the basin, with an initial emphasis on Kuando Kubango Province. Little had been published recently concerning the province, but it was known, from interviews with key local government officials that due to the war, social and economic development has been minimal if not non-existent and the area could likely experience increasing environmental pressures due to the resettlement of refugees.

Taking into consideration the vastness of the basin in Angola, and the information gaps that exist, an assessment of the existing socioeconomic and environmental situation was considered essential, especially to determine community-based strategies for ERP and IRBM and to assist with the development of the basin Strategic Action Programme under EPSMO. Therefore, ERP and IRBM, in consultation with EPSMO, decided and agreed to collaborate in conducting a rapid survey in Kuando-Kubango province of Angola. The objective was to use the

results of the surveys to assist the three projects design and provide interventions based on natural resources, linked to sustainable river basin management, and most needed by Angolan communities. Also important is a better understanding of approaches that can be used to ensure the active participation of the riparian communities in the process of resource management.

This rapid survey was one of the top five priorities identified by stakeholders at the Strategic Action Planning Workshop, held in February 2005. Specifically, stakeholders directed all the projects operating under OKACOM to consider *assessing community participation in natural resource management and identify possible approaches for community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Angola*.

2.0. Rapid Survey Objectives, Assumptions, and Procedure

The purpose of this activity was to collect information in Kuando-Kubango, Angola that can be integrated with limited existing secondary data to help understand this portion of the basin relevant to the baseline conditions of communities and their impact on their immediate riverine environment. IRBM and ERP will use the results of this assessment to formulate project strategies that support community-based natural resources management, enhance participation in river basin management, and increase awareness of critical environmental issues within the basin. The information generated from the assessment will be further useful to EPSMO in the completion of transboundary diagnostic assessments (TDAs) towards completion of the project's strategic action programme (SAP).

3.0. Methodology\Approach and Summary of Phases

The three projects worked closely in conducting this assessment in Angola, with the assistance of World Vision International (WVI), which is familiar with participatory techniques. WVI with IRBM developed an analytical tool to for determine and collecting required information. The process for conducting the rapid socio-ecological survey in Kuando- Kubango was focused mainly on field work with a participatory approach and targeted transfer of skills to a local non-governmental organization. The Association of Environmental Conservation and Rural Development (ACADIR). This approach involved the following three phases or steps:

Phase I: Scouting

As the first part of the rapid assessment, IRBM and WVI staff, accompanied by Eng. Isidro Pinheiro, Commissioner of the Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) visited Menongue, Kuando-Kubango province, on August 3, 2005 to conduct a scouting exercise. This was a reconnaissance exercise to understand Kuando-Kubango by examining existing government programs, NGOs, and international donors; and also to identify preferences and "attractive" locations in Kuando-Kubango that might serve as sites for field assessments; and also to check on possible logistical constraints to implementing a rapid field survey.

A scouting team, comprising ACADIR, IRBM, and WVI, visited and held discussions with the Governor, his deputies, and officers from different government departments and NGOs in Menongue to:

- Broadly characterize environmental and socioeconomic issues;
- Determine high priority areas, such as areas where residents are known or assumed to possess self-organizing and resource governance and management capacities, areas of high local or national government priority, or areas of ecological significance;
- Determine areas where mines would not render work impossible; and
- Identify areas with the most interesting array of renewable natural resources.

The scouting exercise revealed that the main issue in Menongue city and perhaps the rest of Kuando-Kubango province is the lack of potable water supply systems and proper basic sanitation. In the majority of areas, water for domestic purposes is drawn directly from the rivers. This water is untreated; hence it poses myriad threats to the health of the communities. Second to water supply and sanitation, a high priority for local government is

the improvement of livelihoods. As an area coming out of war, most families in Kuando-Kubango are poor and have relatively few assets. Coupled with a lack of improved agricultural technology and farming implements, families most often cannot feed themselves.

The scouting team, in consultation with OKACOM and some government departments identified ten areas within the province for further rapid field assessment.

1. Lumeta and Kangamba at Kambumbe River (about 5km from Menongue)
2. Bairo Pandera, an area within Menongue
3. Bairo Azul, a locality within Menongue along the Kwebe River
4. São José at the old Catholic Mission (10km from Menongue along Luahuka River)
5. Liapeka (about 30km from Menongue)
6. Kaiundo (about 140km from Menongue)
7. Dirico (municipality about 850km from Menongue)
8. Kuangar (municipality about 400km from Menongue)
9. Kalai (about 600km south of Menongue)
10. Savate (about 210km from Menongue)

A summary of the scouting exercise is contained in **Annex 1**.

Phase 2: Training PRA

Following the scouting exercise, a week-long training, containing fifteen (15) participants (six from ACADIR; 3 ACADIR members, 3 ERP staff), seven from the Basin Wide Forum,¹ and two from WVI was designed and held. Dr. Christophe Asanzi and Mr. Miguel Kassule, of World Vision, Angola, conducted the training. The training was aimed at equipping community and ACADIR representatives with the skills and techniques of participatory rural appraisal (PRA). These techniques include: triangulation, historic profiles, Venn diagrams, seasonal calendars, semi-structured interviews, priorities and hierarchy setting, modeling and mapping, earnings and expenditures tree, and matrix of natural resources.

At the end of this applied and interactive training, participants had an opportunity to engage in a practical session where they had to apply and test their newly acquired skills in a PRA session held with the nearby communities of Kangamba and Lumeta. In preparation for the field assessment, the participants were divided into two teams.

For a full report on the training workshop refer to **Annex 2**.

Phase 3: Rapid Assessment

World Vision International and IRBM led a team of 15 survey assistants in undertaking surveys in ten communities in Kuando-Kubango Province. The communities were selected and agreed upon by ACADIR, IRBM, ERP and WVI. Some of the chosen areas were inaccessible due to the suspected presence of landmines, according to Halo Trust International². Alternative communities were then selected.

The surveys were conducted over a two week period and were completed by August 26, 2005. This was followed by feedback session to validate findings in December, 2005 and January 2006. The survey teams used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques to collect information from the sampled communities. The outcome of this assessment provides guidance on possible community interventions in Angola by project.

¹ A community group set up by the Every River Project, to represent the riparian communities in Kuando-Kubango, Angola

² An International NGO involved with de-mining in Angola

The results of the field surveys, combined with information gathered from semi-structured interviews with key central and local government officials, representatives from other regional projects, management staff from international and national private voluntary organizations and NGOs, revealed in summary, the following:

- Most communities lack the basic life necessities: clean water, food and health services;
- Most residents are farmers but due to the lack of high quality seeds for improved crop varieties, poor soils, and lack of modern farming technologies, communities are experiencing food shortages. As a result they put pressure on the environment to compensate for the lack of food. Community residents harvest the forests for firewood and charcoal (for subsistence and commercial purposes); they hunt the wild animals for meat; they collect honey and other wild fruits in the forests;
- The rivers are the most strained resources as they provide water for all sorts of needs;
- Most community residents possess limited capacity and skills related to natural resource management;
- With its plethora of natural resources, the province has high potential for tourism. The main hindrance has been the war, which left many places with landmines, destabilized people, and halted numerous development programs in the province;
- Environmental regulations and laws exist but there is limited awareness and understanding of these important laws among the populations. In addition, the application of these environmental laws and regulations must be reinforced; and
- There seem to be no central points for garbage disposal; garbage is disposed of in a haphazard manner. Local municipalities are frustrated by the lack of resources to effectively collect and dispose of garbage.

See **Annex 3** for details of the rapid survey in the ten communities.

4.0. Constraints

The team faced some constraints during the scouting exercise and the PRA surveys, which include:

- Some critical officials and NGO representatives were not available at the time of visit;
- Language barriers were a huge hindrance for non-Portuguese speaking members of the team. In addition, the team needed to conduct the assessments in the local languages (not Portuguese) with some communities;
- Certain areas are inaccessible due to bad roads and/or landmines; and
- Most of the trainees had no survey/research background, which made their understanding and application rather slow.

5.0. Conclusion and Recommendations

The recommendations outlined below are based on the outcomes of the PRA assessments in the communities, the scouting exercise, as well as observations made by the survey team during the visit to Kuando-Kubango.

- Diversification of economic options should be a priority for programming, perhaps by supporting enterprise development. Community development projects, coordinated by provincial government, should also be developed. In light of the current water supply, basic sanitation conditions, and total reliance on rivers in Kuando-Kubango, an integrated community-based project could focus on river basin management with water supply systems and basic sanitation, with an income generating activity.
- Capacity strengthening for all departments of local government should be a priority in order to ensure effective performance and the delivery of appropriate technical assistance to the communities. Creating and strengthening community institutions such as village development committees and farmers associations will assist local residents to manage development projects in their communities.

- Successful efforts should be supported and strengthened. For example, the Department of Environment has started a program for the protection of biodiversity. Environmental actions and environmental laws are being introduced into some schools, churches and communities. Twenty-six groups and a number of young people have received training on how to effectively manage the environment. They work with students, teachers, and traditional leaders. Supporting existing initiatives relevant to IRBM and ERP is advisable.
- Programs for the establishment and rehabilitation of forest reserves, utilizing community involvement, need support. Specific species of wood, such as *Girassonde*, are on the verge of extinction and need sustainable management and conservation approaches.
- Kuando-Kubango (Menongue in particular) needs a potable water system and an adequate urbanization plan. The local Environmental Department, responsible for issuing licences to build houses in Menongue, started a program of relocating people away from the river. People have been given plots to build houses in another area of the city where the local administration is already present and reforestation is planned. This initiative could be supported and reinforced.
- Effective programs targeting behavioural change, associated with improving health conditions, should be introduced. Attention should be placed on understanding attitudes that constrain use of improved techniques and technologies, such as introduction of pit latrines and refuse management.
- Agriculture is the main income earner for the people of Kuando-Kubango. Small-scale farmers should be assisted to organize themselves into associations so that they can receive extension services and technical assistance. The Organization of International Migration, in partnership with ACADIR has plans to assist farmers with credit (money) for the purchase of pumps, so that they could produce vegetable crops.
- Kuando-Kubango needs facilities for combating HIV/AIDS. A counselling and testing centre would be ideal as a starting point.
- A feedback session with the surveyed communities should be conducted to validate the findings, missing information, and build close relationships with communities. This could be a weeklong activity undertaken by ACADIR with the help of WVI.

Other useful observations

- IRBM should provide a project base office with necessary facilities such as computers, internet, and telephones in Menongue. ERP already has a base although the office is not totally equipped.
- ACADIR has only one vehicle that was acquired through ERP. This vehicle is overworked. IRBM needs to consider providing a vehicle for implementation of its projects and activities. This has to be a 4x4 type of vehicle.
- The province is characterized by poor infrastructure: extremely bad roads (especially when moving away from Menongue).
- Landmines are a major hindrance and danger to move around the province. An international NGO, Halo Trust, is responsible for de-mining the Province of Kuando-Kubango. They have maps showing the overall condition of roads and other places where minefields are either suspected or known. They have reports on specific areas with maps showing the location of mined areas in the province.

- The telecommunication system is unreliable. In Menongue, Angola Telecom (the national telephone service) exists but the service is not efficient. Phones often do not work. Unitel mobile phone network operates in Menongue but is very expensive. Most international NGOs and other organizations working in the area use a radio-phone system with mobile units fitted into their vehicles.
- Electricity in Menongue and elsewhere in the province comes from generators.
- Menongue is the base for most NGOs. There is one main hospital, a few schools, two functional banks, one hotel, a few guest houses, and a limited choice of restaurants.

6.0. Photographs/Illustrations



1. Scouting Team



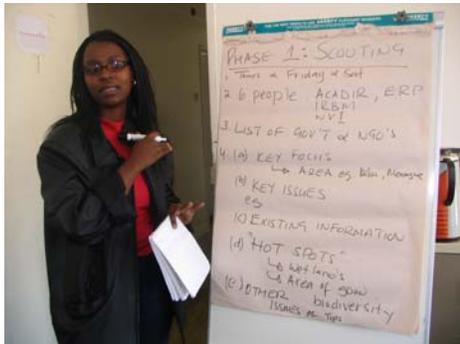
2. PRA Training, Miguel Kassule



3. Leisure activities, Kuebe River



4. Daily Community Activities, Liapeka



5. Scouting process, Tracy Molefi - IRBM



6. Veld fires, Liapeka



7. Hand-Dug Well, Bairro Azul



8. Litter Problem, around Kuebe river



9. Small scale agriculture, along Kuebe river



10. Income earning activities, brick moulding and stone collecting

7.0. Annexes

Annex 1: Scouting Report

Annex 2: PRA Training Report

Annex 3: PRA Assessment in ten (10) communities of Bairro Azul, Sao Jose, Lumeta, Kangamba, Pandera, Liapeka, Dirico, Kalei, Kaiundu, and Kuangar.