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WHAT IS COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CBNRM)?

KEY ELEMENTS OF CBNRM

CBNRM is based in a **community**. The community should be able to define itself—whether it be a whole village or a group of resource users—and its members should agree to cooperate to manage resources.

CBNRM encompasses **natural resources**. Natural resources—the resources people depend upon for their livelihoods—generally mean renewable natural resources, including water, forests, fisheries, rangeland, and wildlife.

CBNRM involves **management**. This implies that there should be rules or regulations governing how, when, or in what quantity the resource can be used. These rules must be understood and agreed to by community members, and recognized and respected beyond the community.



Community members plan a CBNRM initiative in their community forest.
Photo credit: Stephanie Otis, United States Forest Services International Programs

CBNRM AT A GLANCE

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

CBNRM promotes conservation through the sustainable use of natural resources, enables communities to generate income that can be used for rural development, and promotes democracy and good governance in local institutions.

WHY SHOULD YOU SUPPORT CBNRM?

There are a number of reasons why decision makers should support CBNRM.

1 The Southern African Development Community (SADC) recognizes CBNRM as an important strategy in the forestry and wildlife sectors. Article 12 of the Protocol on Forestry **commits SADC States** to: “Adopt national policies and mechanisms” to enable community forest management, and Article 7.4 of the Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement commits SADC States to establishing or introducing “mechanisms for community-based wildlife management.”

2 CBNRM **contributes to rural development and poverty reduction** by providing communities with:

- ◆ *Income* for social welfare projects or infrastructure development.

CBNRM INCOME (US\$) TO COMMUNITIES:

Botswana: \$7,400,000 (2006-2009)

Zambia: \$1,400,000 (2009)

Mozambique: \$2,800,000 (2006-2009)

Zimbabwe: \$1,184,006 (2006)

Namibia: \$4,850,281 (2011)

- ◆ *Jobs* and additional income that can increase household assets (for instance, extra cash to buy a plough, refrigerator, or radio)

CBNRM JOB CREATION:

Zambia: 1,012 village scouts

Zimbabwe: 701 in the CAMPFIRE Program

Namibia: 1,385 permanent and 262 temporary

CBNRM also provides the following development benefits: *diversified land uses and livelihoods; support to local safety nets; and strengthened local institutions* for common property resource management.

3 CBNRM **empowers communities** by providing rights over land and natural resources, building skills and capacity, establishing community decision-making bodies, promoting community advocacy, and enabling women to take up leadership positions. Across Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe at least *6,400 CBNRM management bodies, committees, community-based enterprises, or trusts and at least 4.4 million people* are involved in CBNRM activities.

4 CBNRM **promotes conservation** through sustainable resource management. Wildlife numbers are increasing in successful CBNRM areas in the region and natural habitats are being conserved. Communities are setting aside land for wildlife and tourism, and conserving forests. Community game guards, scouts, and resource monitors are monitoring resources, conducting annual game counts, and helping to stop poaching.

5 The above successes mean that CBNRM **helps decision-makers to reach government goals and objectives** for national development plans and strategies. CBNRM contributes to poverty reduction and alleviation, food security, and rural development—all important aspects in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, CBNRM helps meet commitments to international environmental conventions (biodiversity, desertification, and climate change).



Wildlife are an important revenue stream for many communities practicing CBNRM. Photo credit: Jeremy Keeton, DAI

CBNRM – THE OLD OR THE NEW?

CBNRM is not new. It is what rural communities have been doing for centuries—through traditional leadership, religious beliefs, and cultural rules, people managed their natural resources. In many cases, however, management mechanisms have become weakened by factors such as colonialism, centralization of authority in government, weakening of traditional authorities, population growth, and war. Modern CBNRM activities reaffirm the importance of community management of natural resources. They attempt to create or recreate the conditions under which communities can successfully manage their resources.

WHAT MAKES CBNRM WORK?

In order to make management decisions, communities **need rights over their land and resources and security of tenure**. That is, the communities need the knowledge that these rights will not be arbitrarily removed by government and will be secure over time.

Communities **need representative and accountable institutions** that can make decisions on behalf of their members and manage the distribution of benefits through the sustainable management of resources.

Communities must be able to gain appropriate economic **benefits** from the resources they are managing. They will be unlikely to invest time, effort, and finances into managing a resource if the benefits of management do not exceed the costs.

LAND AND RESOURCE RIGHTS & CBNRM

Secure rights and tenure over land and resources are crucial for successful CBNRM. There is a need to strengthen these rights across the region. However, some countries are taking the lead in providing rights to communities.

For instance, the Fisheries Conservation and Management Regulations in **Malawi** provide for empowerment of beach village committees to scrutinize licenses, enforce fishing regulations and closed seasons, seize vessels, formulate and review regulations, and undertake environmental conservation.

Legislation in **Namibia** gives communal area conservancies ownership over some species of game, enables conservancies to buy and sell game, and enables them to retain all income and decide how to use it.

The Land Law in **Mozambique** is the most advanced in the region, giving communities the opportunity to gain title and secure tenure over their land.

These rights-based approaches are the most likely to lead to long-term CBNRM success.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT CBNRM?

While most governments across the region have established official CBNRM programs, these programs still need strengthening. There are many ways that decision-makers can support and improve CBNRM in the region.

Decision makers need to ensure that communities **have land and resource rights** that are clearly defined in legislation and include provisions for communities to retain income from resource use and for wildlife and tourism to be recognised as productive land uses on communal land. Additionally, natural resource management sectoral legislation (wildlife, forests, fisheries, etc.) should be harmonised as much as possible.

Decision makers should have faith in **incentive-based approaches to conservation**. They should promote light-touch guidance supported by government monitoring of legal compliance rather than imposing regulations that disempower communities.

Decision makers need to ensure that CBNRM is **accepted within government departments**; that officials understand the principles of CBNRM and how it can help their work; and that officials are retrained to provide appropriate services and support to communities.

CBNRM should be **incorporated into National Development Plans** and strategies to achieve the MDGs.

Decision makers need to ensure that good support is given to **building the capacity of communities** to manage their own affairs and exercise **good governance**. Decision makers should allow communities time and space to learn from their own mistakes.

Decision makers should enlist the support of business experts to **guide enterprise development in CBNRM**, and where appropriate, encourage beneficial **partnerships** between communities and the private sector.

Decision makers should ensure that **monitoring and evaluation systems for CBNRM** are implemented so that better decisions are taken and policy and legislation improved.

CBNRM is not necessarily the appropriate strategy for addressing all conservation or rural development problems. It is one among other strategies that can be included in national poverty reduction frameworks and as part of national conservation efforts.