



# Country Pilot Partnership for Integrated Sustainable Land Management



## A Newsletter of the CPP - ISLM Programme

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How could this be prevented?

## Namibia steps up efforts to fight land degradation

Namibia has been hailed as the shining example in the fight against land degradation and desertification. With the preparation of the Country Pilot Partnership for Integrated Sustainable Land Use Management programme, it is striving to complete and fine-tune past efforts to once and for all tackle the root causes of land degradation.

Since Namibia signed the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 1994, it has undergone various projects and activities to fight the threat of land degradation.

However, although valuable lessons have been learned, these activities have targeted symptoms while neglecting the root causes in the form of policy, institutional and capacity barriers, with the consequence that impacts on the ground remain localised and on small scale not achieving an area which is large enough to reverse land degradation in Namibia.

Against this background five Ministries (National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAWF), Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), Ministry of Lands and Resettlement (MLR), Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development (MRLGHRD), to each of whom degradation is of particular concern, decided to join forces and identify ap-

proaches to combat land degradation in integrated and coordinated fashion targeting not just symptoms, but actual root problems through a Country Pilot Partnership (CPP) for Integrated Sustainable Land Management (ISLM).

This partnership seeks to involve anyone to whom sustainable land management is important, starting at local level, up to the donor community. The activities will be funded through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as implementing lead agency, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), World Bank, Sida, GTZ, European Union and the United Nations Environmental Programme (Unep).

The goal is to set up mechanisms at national level, that allow all local resource users – be they farmers, pastoralists, aquaculturalists, foresters or water point managers – to call for the appropriate support and extension services that empower them to use resources with a long term view, i.e. sustainably. As importantly, the CPP targets to identify business opportunities based on the sustainable use of natural resources, that enable communities to use resources not just for subsistence benefits but to gain an actual return, increasing the incentive to manage Namibia's natural heritage in a sustainable manner.



“SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS DEVELOPMENT THAT MEETS OUR CURRENT NEEDS WITHOUT COMPROMISING ON THE ABILITY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS”





As desertification and land degradation takes its toll in Namibia livestock finds it hard to survive. Photo: Conservation and the Environment in Namibia (2003/4)

# Challenges facing Namibia in achieving sustainable land use

Namibia has had a long history of battling with land degradation and by now cause-effect relationships are fairly well understood. On the ground, the immediate causes of land degradation are large cattle numbers which exceed the grazing potential of the rangeland with the repercussion not only that vegetation is lost and soils are eroded but that cattle is of poorer quality.

Inappropriate agricultural practices that leads to the loss of nutrients in the soil are another factor that contributes to land degradation.

Use of timber for building purposes, and as a source of energy is the third most pertinent cause of land degradation. Water management, such as the uneven spread of boreholes, which forces cattle to overgraze certain parts while leaving others untouched, also overabstraction of water through excessive water demand is yet a further cause of land degradation.

However, these are just symptoms of more fundamental barriers: first and foremost, land degradation is tightly linked to poverty: all the above problems arise as resource users, especially in communal lands, do not have the choice to use or not to use land resources such as rangeland, wood and water; without money rural communities have to rely on the resources around them.

At the same time, lack of tenure and management rights over land and resources in communal areas, creates disincentives to look after resources and manage them with foresight. These problems at policy level are aggravated through institutional weaknesses at national level: land resources are used locally, while much of land use planning and management is done at national level.

Although resource users have the greatest interest in and often know best how to use resources sustainably, this information is often not considered at higher levels, in planning and policy design, by extension service providers, or other support organisations. Furthermore, while natural cycles such as water and nutrient cycles require to view resources within the whole ecosystem, resource management focuses on individual resources: the Department of Water Affairs looks after Water, the Department of Agriculture after soil properties, the Department of Forestry (which only recently moved to MAWF) after Forests and many of those ministries who are critically involved in land use and land use planning do not fully recognise the need for environmentally sustainable resource use.

Thus, another problem of land degradation is the sectoral planning and implementation of land use

planning and management. This is aggravated by the problem that Namibia lacks skilled people, who are capable to turn rhetoric and good will into action and bring ISLM onto the ground. HIV-AIDS contributes to diminish the capabilities of Namibia's population, weakening its physical and intellectual capabilities even further. The CPP-ISLM seeks to address and overcome these challenges directly, to remove barriers to Sustainable Land Management which impact negatively on Namibia's people and environment.

## Some areas of particular concerns

- Breaking the vicious circle of poverty and land degradation
- Identifying economic opportunities, which build on and sustain Namibia's comparative advantages as stated in Vision 2030.
- Setting up institutional mechanisms that allow all partners to coordinate their activities and support local resource users most effectively
- Harmonising policies and mainstream concerns of land degradation into national development plans
- Building skills and capacity for integrated sustainable land management

# Cost of land degradation - benefits from ISLM

Land degradation in Namibia incurs not only large environmental losses but actual economic costs, which mostly affect the rural poor. In turn, Integrated Sustainable Land Management promises not only to reverse land degradation but more importantly to increase economic returns, which will directly contribute to poverty eradication especially in Namibia's communal areas.

About 70 per cent of Namibians are directly dependent on natural resources in some form or the other to sustain their daily lives: wood serves as building material, fuel and light, cattle is not only a source of meat, but also milk, drought power and dung for fertilisation, the veld and forests of Namibia do not only provide timber but also additional food stuffs, medicinal plants and ultimately, water is the critical resource to sustain resources as well as livelihoods.

If the integrity of the veld and forests is disrupted through land degradation, the declining availability of these resources has severe backlashes on the lives of the rural communities. Less grazing and water weakens livestock,

decreasing milk and meat production; with the depletion of timber, increasingly more time and energy needs to be expended to collect fuel for cooking and housing materials; disappearing veld and forest fruits impact on nutrition and availability of traditional medicines, which are critical for those with limited access to health care and medicines.

In numbers, it has been estimated that if households were to replace all goods and services which they derive directly from the land and its resources with purchased products, this would lead to expenses between N\$3,500 and N\$4,500 per year, a substantial sum of money in a country where 50% of households live on an income of at best N\$6,000.

Yet, there is an even more important way through which Integrated Sustainable Land Management can contribute to livelihoods apart from saving costs. The CPP seeks to identify alternatives, which create income opportunities for local communities while minimising negative impacts on the land and its natural resources. In other words, the partnership will promote business opportunities, which

are based on sustainable use of natural resources and create an economic return in the form of income and employment beyond mere subsistence values.

Possibilities vary depending on the environmental context of a region and the availability of resources but include first and foremost tourism, wildlife and game management, the sustainable harvest and processing of veld products such as devil's claw and fisheries, to name just the most obvious examples.

The benefits which can be derived from sustainable use of resources, which includes the various use of game, community-based tourism, crafts sales, forest products, etc. has been demonstrated by the CBRNM approach, which has been spearheaded successfully in Namibia over the past decade: cash—and non cash incomes to conservancies and income from CBRNM activities generated N\$13,231,165 in 2003.

Theoretically studies estimate that the diversification of livelihoods to include sustainable use of wildlife, forest, veld and water resources in the sites directly targeted by the CPP, could create direct economic benefits to communities, ranging between N\$6 to 9 million. Successful replication of best practices implies that similar benefits could be generated in communal areas across the country beyond the initial target sites of the CPP.



A regional CPP-ISLM stakeholders workshop at Okakarara

## Sources of income based on Sustainable Natural Resources Use

- Tourism and spin off activities: campsites, lodges, crafts, guided tours, trophy hunting tourism, concessions from joint ventures with private sector
- Game ranching and production and processing of meat and skins
- Sustainable harvest and processing of veld fruits and forest products such as Devil's claw, Marula, Hoodia, !Nara Melon, Polls, Thatching grass



Desertification, land degradation and loss of productivity are the most serious environmental problems facing Namibia. Photo: Kevin Roberts

## What has been done so far

The last 12 months have seen intensive efforts to develop the framework for CCP-ISLM that was submitted to GEF council for the application for funding of the programme at the end of September. Exactly one year ago, at the inception workshop for the CCP preparation phase, the then Permanent Secretaries (PS) of the partner ministries (NPC, MAWF, MET, MLR, MRLGHRD) publicly declared their concern about land degradation. They pointed towards the pressing need to take adequate measures to achieve sustainable land management in integrated and coordinated fashion, bringing impacts on the ground across the whole country, rather than in single pilot sites.

Since then, the Namibia Nature Foundation with the support of the UNDP as key implementing agency of the GEF, organised four regional, and two national workshops to consult stakeholders at all levels to identify root causes of land degradation and possible solutions. Community representatives, regional governors, traditional authorities,

NGO's, the Agricultural Unions, community based organisations, representatives of Namibia's academic and research institutions, donors and last but not least ministerial delegates discussed and provided inputs to the formulation of the CCP-ISLM framework, taking into account the environmental, social and cultural diversity of Namibia's different regions and local level needs.

Commitment at the highest level was secured through regular information of the relevant PSs, which enabled the CPP to secure financial commitments in form of match-funding from each of the partner ministries.

The joint effort of all partners was rewarded by the inclusion of the umbrella framework into the work programme of the GEF, implying that the CCP-ISLM is only one step away from actual implementation due to commence as early as 2006.

**For more information on the CCP-ISLM programme visit: [www.ccpnam.net](http://www.ccpnam.net)**

This newsletter was produced by the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF), an implementing partner organisation of the CPP-ISLM Programme Framework Preparation, on behalf of the Namibian Government.