

## Impacts of Transboundary Protected Areas on Local Communities in Three Southern African Initiatives

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### ABSTRACT

*“One of the most effective ways to obtain broad support for biological linkages is to integrate the planning and management with other programmes that deliver benefits in sustainable land management”* (Bennett 2003). The challenge to achieve both development and conservation goals in landscape and transboundary settings in southern Africa frequently requires the support of local communities and that support is usually only secured by addressing their livelihood development goals. Livelihood goals do not just include income improvement but also the recognition of local identity, effective participation and secure rights to land and natural resources.

Recent transboundary protected area (TBPA) initiatives in southern Africa have been dynamic but also characterized by confusion and conflict over their objectives and precise definition. Whilst politicians and conservationists may see ‘parks’ as ecological and economic anchors in a connected landscape communities may perceive the threat of fences and alienation from their land and natural heritage. A policy and programmatic struggle has ensued between the conservation and social justice concerns as well as over top-down versus bottom-up approaches, with the former seeming to threaten a return to fortress style conservation and the latter advocating for consolidating recent gains made in community empowerment approaches.

The politically driven top-down model is increasingly receiving criticism from a rural development perspective and if this perception grows there is the risk that donor agencies may withdraw their support from TBPA's. However, the idea of transboundary collaboration based on clear objectives and a continuum of end states rather than a fixed end of transboundary parks seems valid and worthy of continued exploration.

The paper provides a historical and analytical background to this situation and proceeds to provide three brief case studies. The first case of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park is one where the approach has been initiated at a high political level and been driven from the top primarily by the economic, political and conservation objectives. The next two, from the Zambezi

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region, are examples of more bottom-up approaches that have encouraged initial technical and community collaboration rather than high-level “buy in”.

## 1. General background to Transboundary Protected Areas in southern Africa

Whereas the advocacy of TBPA's in southern Africa has been well promoted and publicized (National Geographic Sep. 2001), criticism of them is growing (IUCN 2002, Munthali & Metcalfe 2003, Wolmer 2003). Unfortunately much of the discourse is marred by confusion over the objectives and the definitions of transboundary initiatives. Transboundary parks, protected areas or natural resource management have a range of objectives, including:<sup>2</sup>

- Conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services, natural and cultural values across boundaries
- Promoting landscape-level ecosystem management
- Peace building and laying the foundations for collaboration (trust, reconciliation and cooperation)
- Increasing the benefits of conservation to communities on both sides of the borders
- Economic development (largely through tourism) to local and national economies
- Cross border control of problems (fire, pests, poaching, pollution and smuggling)

There are also a number of terms and definitions in the transboundary policy arena and their application conditions stakeholder perceptions and the participatory process (Griffin et al. 1999).

**Transboundary parks** (TBPs) describe wildlife conservation areas with common international boundaries managed as a single unit by a joint authority comprising the representatives of the participating countries. This version of transboundary management has been strongly advocated in South Africa and emphasizes state control, centralization and is perceived by critics to have the effect of alienating local communities. It often appeals to traditional park managers and the urban middle classes who use protected areas for recreation and relate to ‘parks’ as true conservation, without understanding the socio-economic implications.

**Transboundary conservation areas** (TBCAs) are cross-border regions where the different component areas have different forms of conservation status (national parks, reserves allowing limited sustainable use like hunting, private game reserves and ranches and community-based natural resource management areas). Collaboration between these areas is not based on the creation of a single entity and is more federal than unitary in organizational structure. This type of transboundary collaboration emphasizes the linkage between public sector managed protected areas and community managed multiple-use areas in a landscape approach that blends conservation and development objectives. The TBCA approach is more appealing to a constituency that feels that conservation and development goals must blend.

**Transboundary Natural Resources Management** (TBNRM) is more process orientated than concerned about establishing a spatially fixed entity. It aims to increase collaboration

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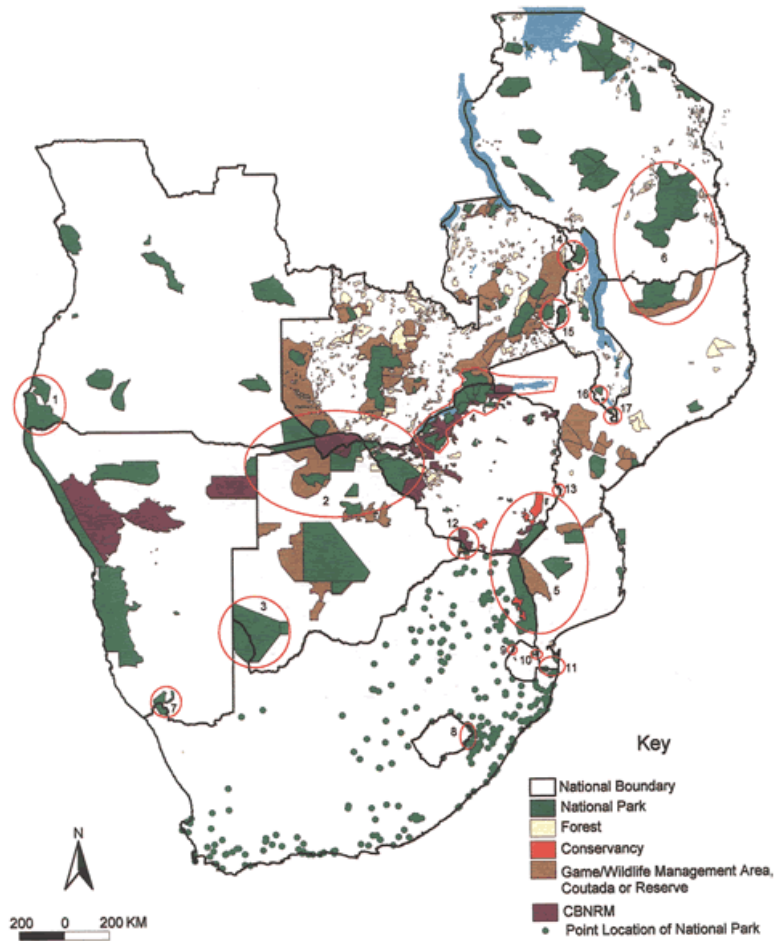
<sup>2</sup> The list of objectives arises from a meeting of African Wildlife Foundation persons involved in five transboundary initiatives in south, east and central Africa, particularly Annette Lanjouw (Virungas TBPA), Harry van der Linde (AWF Program Design), Simon Munthali (Limpopo TBPA) and Simon Metcalfe (AWF Program Design – Southern Africa).

across boundaries and improve the effectiveness of attaining natural resource management or biodiversity conservation goals. TBNRM is perceived as an open-ended approach to collaboration along any national boundary and not necessarily involving protected areas, thus lacking the leadership of “park” authorities. This approach is less appealing to national and media constituencies as it is hard to brand and is the outcome of local initiatives that ultimately depend on approval and support by public authorities.

Donor funding has played an influential role in the three case studies that follow. In the Limpopo transboundary area the World Bank supported the Mozambique government to implement their part of a Limpopo TFCA. The vision of that initiative did not insist that Mozambique’s Coutada 16 (a hunting zone) become a National Park and promoted a sustainable landscape management approach to wildlife, tourism, rural and economic development incorporating both protected areas and multiple use zones. South African authorities successfully promoted the formation of a transfrontier park as a necessary stepping-stone for the TFCA. This caused some consternation for the World Bank TFCA initiative. In the Upper Zambezi transboundary area there have been two main donor initiatives. The Development Bank of Southern Africa has successfully promoted the concept of a regional spatial development initiative related to the development of a tourism destination. This concept is intended to move toward a project preparation phase before implementation. Parallel to this initiative has been a USAID funded TBNRM initiative focused on improving cooperation in the management of shared wildlife and water resources. USAID initially promoted the importance of high-level political support but later accepted an approach aimed at improving sectoral, technical and local collaboration as well as community enterprise. In the Lower Zambezi donor funding has been of a lesser order and managed by NGOs. The spirit of cooperation between technical parties and communities has been positive. In both the Zambezi examples high level government buy-in is increasing but has not yet reached the level of Memorandums of Understanding or the Treaty status achieved in the Limpopo case.

## **2. Communities and Transboundary Conservation in Southern Africa**

Southern African communities in the twentieth century lost land and natural resource rights as a result of colonialism, the establishment of protected areas and the promulgation of statutes that controlled commercial access to natural resources (e.g. wildlife and forests). Countries with European settlement communities were radically deprived of land (e.g. South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia). In all countries communal land was officially designated state land, leaving communities with customary rights weaker than the property rights of the private landholder. In fact community land and natural resource rights became a form of co-management with rights administered by communities, local authorities and the state. Compounding the alienation of local rights to the new centralized nation states was the designation of land to protected areas, especially for wildlife and forest reserves. In addition national boundaries fragmented the cultural and social integrity of many communities (West & Brechin 1991).



MAP 10 Potential TBNRM areas in southern Africa (WWF-SARPO, compiled from various sources)(lakes and marine areas not included). 1 Iona/Skeleton Coast; 2 Okavango/Caprivi-/Chobe/Hwange; 3 Kgalagadi; 4 Mana/Zambezi/Cahora Bassa; 5 Kruger/Zinave /Banhine - /Gonarezhou; 6 Niassa/Selous; 7 Ais Ais/Richtersveld; 8 Drakensberg/Maloti; 9 Malolotja; 10 Maputo/Mlawula 11 Ndumu/Tembe/Maputo; 12 Tuli block; 13 Chimanimani; 14 Nyika/Nyika; 15 Kasungu/Lukusuzi; 16 Lengwe; 17 Mwabvi

Map 1: Protected Areas and Transboundary Sites in the Southern African Community (Griffin et al. 1999)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Note from the transboundary map: (1) Extent of land alienated by communities to protected areas; (2) Proximity of wildlife areas to transboundary areas; (3) Number of micro size reserves in South Africa lacking landscape scale; (4) Connectivity potential in Zambezi basin region

While the establishment of protected areas in Southern Africa was perceived in conservation circles as a success story, the relationship between parks and neighboring communities were characterized by law enforcement by 'insiders' of 'outsiders' (Adams & McShane 1992). Later, insights from conservation biology emphasized the need for ecological connectivity and the fact that many protected areas were not big enough to conserve biodiversity (Shafer 1990). Protected area authorities realized that they needed to collaborate with the very neighbors they had alienated. The 1980's and 1990's witnessed a new narrative in the conservation discourse brought about through a strong advocacy for the devolution of natural resource management rights to communities living near protected areas. The 1992 IVth World Parks Congress in Caracas, Venezuela, was a focal point of this emphasis, followed by the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro and the adoption of the three pillars of sustainable development: efficient, equitable and sustainable use of the world's natural resources. The 1990's saw a massive effort to promote, implement and sustain community based conservation strategies in a regional context through positive collaboration between protected areas and neighboring communities.

The evolution of community based conservation southern Africa in the 1990's set the stage for co-management of wild land between households, communities, the state and the private sector (e.g. Campfire in Zimbabwe; Conservancies in Namibia; NRM Trusts in Botswana). "Empowered" by access to wildlife resources and benefits some communities were positioned to enter partnerships with protected area authorities and the private sector and to collaborate in landscape level conservation, a potential foundation for collaboration between countries (Metcalf 1995). Linked to the promotion of community empowerment outside of protected areas has been a recent debate on the necessity for state ownership, rather than a co-management or community management of the 'parks' themselves (Brown & Kothari 2002).

In some "new world" states like Canada and Australia, governments have accepted the justice of local claims and supported co-management arrangements between state and community, for example Australia's Kakadu National Park (Hill & Press 1994). Generally, post-colonial states in Africa have been inclined to maintain state management and often to see co-management as a state partnership with the private sector rather than with communities. This has equity implications as a public/community sector co-management arrangement would create a more equitable foundation for sustainable development and should ideally precede a collaborative partnership between state, community and the private sector.

Although southern Africa has been a leader in community-based natural resources management (CBNRM), communities have generally struggled to secure and manage fully devolved resource use rights (e.g. Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe) (Metcalf 1994, 1996). Devolution has varied greatly and only in few cases amounted to more than a sharing of some benefits rather than real responsibility (e.g. Botswana, Namibia). Support services to communities to develop their management capacity has generally been insufficient in most countries leading to self-fulfilling prophecies that CBNRM does not work well and that the state should re-assert more control. CBNRM regimes have faced many problems, not least the high transaction costs characteristic of collective action, often exaggerated by confusion within communities between governance and management responsibility. Governance problems also exist through competition within community leadership and interference by external elites. Communities have also faced management problems related to lack of relevant knowledge, administration, accountability, transparency, reporting and monitoring of both ecological and socio-economic impact.

Governments have generally not established supportive partnerships but have tended to take a supervisory role. The fact that communities have a strong claim to ownership, and both use and benefit from the natural resources in the areas they reside does not mean they can automatically manage the resources efficiently, equitably or sustainably (ecologically, economically or institutionally). Communities need assistance, facilitation and training, as well as supervision. This does not need to engender dependency on governments in perpetuity. Communities should be seen as public sector clients to whom the government assures service support to enable them to emerge as genuine resource managers and mutual landscape level partners.

Collaborative partnerships between landholders and private investors are central to managing landscape mosaics economically. If power relationships between landholders (community, public, private sectors) are skewed then the collaboration can become characterized by patronage and cooption by the public and private sectors and a reactive type of participation by communities. The flawed devolution and inadequate institutional development and capacity building typical of community “empowerment” means that collaboration is dominated by the public sector in league with a wealthy private sector. The resource management principle of devolution and the conservation principle of integration and collaboration at landscape scale reinforce a patron–client power structure that can be magnified in transboundary situations.

Formal transboundary activities require high level and high cost meetings between state officials that can leave civic society on the sidelines unless the state makes explicit efforts to inform and consult affected intra-state parties. Whereas public authorities, conservation scientists and tourism investors may be excited about the concept of transfrontier parks, communities can be anxious. One source of anxiety is the term ‘park’ itself with all its associations of land alienation and public sector control. The debate in southern Africa on this issue is especially focused on the respective land and resource property rights of state, community and the private sector and the right to effective participation. Will transboundary conservation use state controlled protected areas (parks) to leverage real development for the neighbouring communities or will they extend state control while promising a “trickle down” of benefits once the state and private sector have carved up the spoils? Having gained some authority through resource devolution through CBNRM policies and programs there is a sense that urban, private and public sector elites may collude at the expense of communities living on the national periphery (Metcalf 1999).

National boundaries remain ‘hard edges’ and although communities might support the opening up of borderland areas if it improved their livelihood options, national governments appear more prepared to legitimate higher levels of coordination than the lower ones. This may be because the legitimacy of global and regional institutions is based on national sovereignty whilst devolution of authority to communities living in border areas might foster a loss of central control and even worse, elements of “micro-nationalism”. Post colonial African states are still in a process of nation building and do not want the benefits of transboundary collaboration to diminish their control of national assets.

The fact that in international law only nation states have sovereign rights empowers national political and technical groups to access collaborative transboundary forums while civic society stakeholders, especially communities, have had little formal access to national or transboundary forums, unless enabled to participate. The potential for transboundary conservation in Southern Africa will only be truly realized when state/community partnerships are in place. NGOs have

fostered an active discourse on the issue but these forums have not had access to the state driven policy arena. Some NGOs that had spent the last decade supporting community conservation initiatives are now again supporting “voiceless” TBPA communities (IUCN, 2002).

There are several TBPA initiatives in southern Africa involving protected and community land, park authorities, rural communities and to lesser extent private landholders. The importance of the private tourism sector is mainly that it seeks exclusive access to market the land and resources of both the public and community sectors. Communities need secure land and resource rights in order to negotiate secure and positive “deals” without depending on the state as a “middle man”. Oversight and support from government is acceptable but lack of transparency, accountability and equitability is not.

### **3. The Limpopo Transfrontier Park and Conservation Area**

#### **3.1 Limpopo transboundary setting**

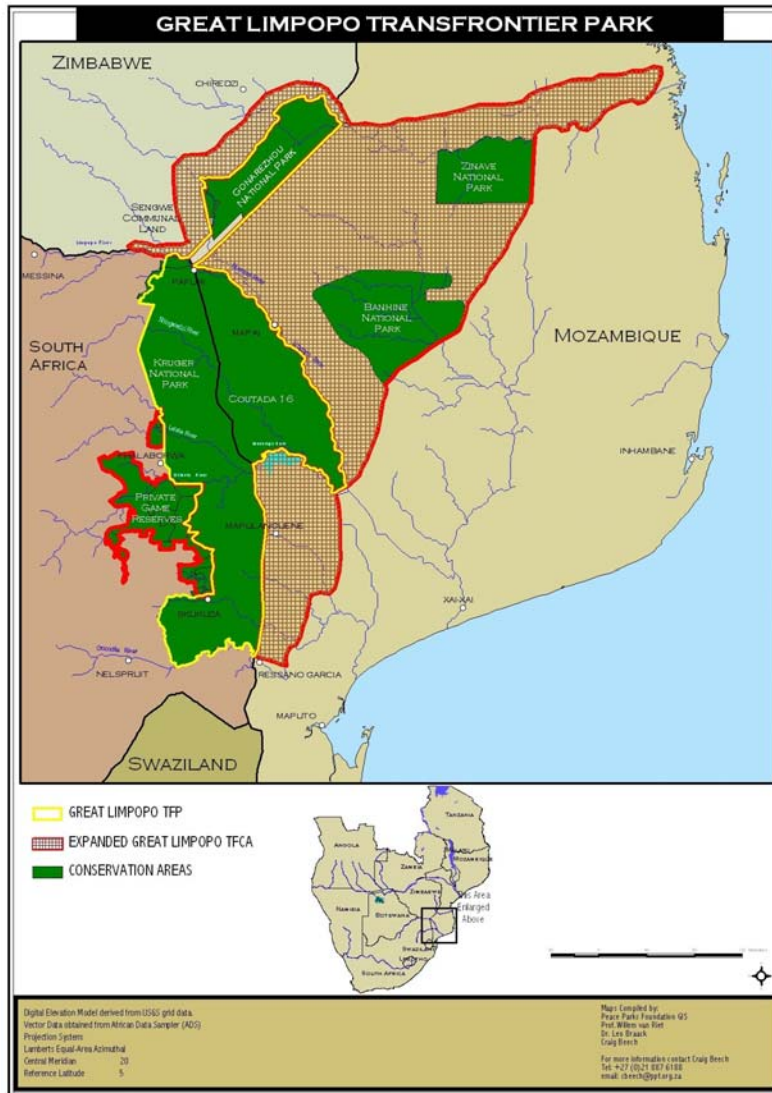
The Limpopo transfrontier region of southern Africa has the potential to create an impressive conservation and development region with an area totaling some 95,700 sq. km. The Kruger National Park represents a very large area with excess capacity in terms of wildlife numbers (notably elephant) and in terms of visitation and commercial exploitation. Since South Africa rejoined the international community, large numbers of international visitors have started to visit this premier park, in addition to the already high levels of visitation by South African citizens.

Across the border in southeast Zimbabwe and in Mozambique wildlife and potential visitors are both in short supply but there are large areas of land with relatively low wildlife population densities and governmental willingness to participate in the creation of a larger conservation area.

The Limpopo transboundary initiative is said to provide several opportunities:

- potential to help leverage a lot of land for biodiversity conservation;
- scope to bring a wildlife focus to a large and visible process supported by economic and political considerations;
- opportunity to test and demonstrate how a TBPA can be used to restore and replenish a large surrounding area.

By ‘dropping fences’ and other barriers, an opportunity exists to reduce some of the pressures on Kruger, especially elephant populations, and at the same time create new value for the other countries. This scenario offers the prospect of expanding wildlife habitat and the possibility of establishing a substantial ecotourism destination that might uplift the regional economy and provide for improved livelihoods of the resident human communities. Although huge strides have already been made in producing a joint management plan and authority for the transfrontier management of this landscape, this progress has depended almost entirely on intergovernmental collaboration with very little civil society participation.



Map 2: Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park and Transfrontier Conservation Area <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Map by Peace Parks Foundation



### 3.2 Limpopo transboundary activities

The Limpopo transboundary area has been the setting for competing approaches. Mozambique, supported by The World Bank, initially promoted a transfrontier conservation area approach (TFCA) whilst South Africa, supported by the Peace Parks Foundation, ultimately promoted a core transfrontier park. The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park (GLTP) seems to have replaced the initial strategic vision of the Limpopo TFCA, at least as a first phase, which has had the effect of replacing a multiple use and multi-stakeholder with a protectionist and state dominated vision. While the GLTP can be seen as an anchor project in a bigger TFCA vision this connection has been overshadowed by the high profile and state dominated GLTP approach.

Whether the Transfrontier Park is an end in itself or a means to a wider TFCA is a critical and confused issue. Wildlife authorities and environment ministries dominate the GLTP policy arena whereas the TFCA approach provides a forum for integrated landscape management where public, community and private sector parties collaborate and develop long-term partnerships. The GLTP approach has meant that governments have held many technical and political meetings before producing a treaty, joint management plan and authority. This achievement has left communities and civic society on the sidelines, especially in Mozambique, and some very important issues hanging.

### 3.3 Transboundary Community Context

The community context in each country involved in the GLTP varies considerably. In **Mozambique**, affected communities lack the understanding, the rights and the institutions to effectively engage the GLTP and the TFCA process. The communities are very poor and have little background in CBNRM or experience of rural development initiatives (e.g. popular participation, local government and institutional development related to improving their livelihoods). The fundamental partnership between state and community is therefore being developed at the same time as a state/private sector partnership. There is mistrust, insecurity and dependency on the part of local communities as issues of re-settlement, land and resource rights are not clear, especially around key resource and riverine areas.

In **South Africa**, affected communities live outside and adjacent to the long established and fenced KNP. The state sector is both powerful and sympathetic to local communities and its transformation policies now have a proven track record of empowerment through land claims and community-public-private sector partnerships. Communities have pursued and continue to pursue land claims in and around Kruger. Some have secured land and established wildlife-based businesses, such as tourism, to secure and diversify their livelihoods. One key challenge has been working with groups with a historic community identity, now often fragmented, to form stable common property management regimes.

In **Zimbabwe**, communities in the TFCA have a strong background in local government, rural development and natural resource management (CAMPFIRE). They are still fairly homogenous, low-density land based communities, aware of the GLTP and TFCA and desire to be positively involved. The Sengwa community area sits in a strategic corridor area and is negotiating with government the parameters of a community contract park connecting Kruger with Gonarezhou NP. The state, community, private sector partnership in Zimbabwe has been disturbed by the recent land reform upheaval and by insufficient devolution through CAMPFIRE.

### **3.4 Limpopo transboundary impacts on communities**

There have been many impacts of the Limpopo transboundary initiative on communities so far: (Munthali & Metcalfe, 2002).

#### **3.4.2 The Conceptual shift from a TFCA to a Transfrontier Park**

The establishment of protected areas has in the past often been associated with rural communities being forced off their land and deprived of access to natural resources. Some promoters of the GLTP advocate the relocation of communities to areas outside it - a pursuit that concerns the communities, some donors and NGOs. South Africa's main contribution to GLTP initiative is Kruger NP itself, a fenced area that has been managed as a Category II protected area without human settlements for over 100 years. While Mozambique and Zimbabwe do not have established solutions for dealing with resident communities, the new South African Government has enacted land restitution legislation.

Negotiated removal of Zimbabwe's Sengwe area residents in order to create a contiguous park boundary contradicts the principles its Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), based on sustainable rural development through local management and direct benefits from indigenous wildlife. The South African example of the Makuleke contract park, just across the Limpopo River, shows it is not necessary to turn community lands into public assets in order to create a 'park'. The Makuleke's land claim against the Kruger NP gave them their own land inside the new GLTP, a precedent other governments have not yet followed. The Sengwe community is attempting to negotiate a similar compromise but it is not yet clear if the Zimbabwe authorities will support this or not.

For Mozambique, the suggested removal of local communities from PNL conflicts with the government's policy and legislation.<sup>5</sup> The Mozambican National Directorate of Forestry and Wildlife (DNFFB), through the GEF/World Bank TFCA Project, has developed guidelines for partnership among the government, private sector and local communities in the development and management of wildlife protected areas. The intention is to encourage communities to use land, whose user rights are conferred by the Land Law, as collateral in partnership formation as one way of contributing to poverty alleviation in the rural areas. It is hard for the Mozambican government to contemplate evicting communities previously displaced by civil wars for the sake of expanding wildlife habitat. Cernea (1999) outlines a number of risk scenarios that are common when local communities are displaced from their land including landlessness, homelessness, marginalization, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, and social disintegration.

#### **3.4.2 Discouragement of a Limpopo Community Transfrontier Forum**

During the development of the GLTP communities were initially encouraged to form a transboundary-working group. However, when the lack of consultative processes in Mozambique became an issue the authorities on the GLTP Steering Committee agreed that

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<sup>5</sup> Local communities in the Land Law of Mozambique are defined as a group of families and individuals at a locality, or lower level, including the residential and agricultural fields, whether they are being tilled or under fallow, forests, places of cultural importance, pastures, water fountains and areas of expansion.

community issues were national competency issues, not subject to a joint transboundary mandate. At the few meetings between communities that did take place there was an apparent difference in how far governments took communities into their confidence. While accepting that politicians and technical parties should meet in transboundary forums it is essential that they fully consult, in country, with civil society.

### **3.4.3 Translocations of wildlife from Kruger to Parque Nacional do Limpopo (PNL)**

As a symbol of co-operation in the development of the GLTP, South Africa is donating a variety of wildlife species; including elephant to the PNL, where wildlife populations were decimated during the civil wars. While most of these animals are being released in a fenced enclosure, at least 25 elephants were, between 28<sup>th</sup> September, and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2001, released in the unfenced part of the park. About 1,000 elephants may be translocated to this park over the next five years. While this exercise draws a lot of international publicity, residents of the PNL feel uncomfortable because of lack of consultation, concern about safety and property and the feeling that community development needs are ignored, in favour of high profile wildlife issues.

### **3.4.4 Fencing of Parque Nacional do Limpopo (PNL) and Sengwe Corridor**

Associated with the wildlife relocation is the issue of dropping the KNP fence, essential for re-establishing key ecological functions previously disrupted by artificial barriers. However, a prerequisite to dropping the Kruger fence is said to be the need to fence the PNL. The justifications for fencing include the need to restrict illegal immigrants from Mozambique to South Africa, curtailing wildlife diseases transmittable to livestock and preventing poaching (JMP<sup>6</sup> 2001). However, Mozambique's policy is to vaccinate cattle against diseases such as foot and mouth and only uses fencing in critical disease out-break situations. Fencing of wildlife areas is an alien concept in Mozambique and where attempted, as at the Maputo Special Reserve, communities were hostile believing it erected to deny them access to the resources they had depended on (e.g., water supply, thatch grass, and traditional medicine) (TFCA Project Annual Report 1998). Similar resentments may erupt if PNL is fenced without community consent on its alignment and provision of access to critical resources. Although the PNL management plan demarcates a 5 km radius buffer zone dedicated to community resource use activities, this has yet to be clarified. Vandalization of the fence and illicit use of the protected resources is a threat.

Fencing of narrow Sengwe Corridor to provide connectivity to Kruger seems unnecessary as the narrow strip involved appears more symbolic than real, a tourist rather than a wildlife corridor (Cesvi, 2002; DNPWLM & AWF, 2002).

### **3.4.5 Wildlife diseases**

For the purpose of disease control, particularly bovine tuberculosis prevalent in KNP, Zimbabwe does not want free movement of animals between Kruger and Gonarezhou. This conflicts with the principles of the GLTP, where animals should move freely within the park. Veterinarians in Zimbabwe advocate for a fence that would allow tourists through but bar animal movement. Other parties believe that wildlife connectivity between Kruger and Gonarezhou is essential.

In Mozambique some communities living in PNL have livestock and wildlife diseases transmittable to livestock may become a problem once vector species such as wildebeest, warthog, and bushpigs become abundant. Local communities might attribute the demise of their livestock to the establishment of the GLTP and work against the initiative. In South Africa,

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<sup>6</sup> Joint Management Plan

diseases of major concern are rabies and foot and mouth. The former has not been detected in wildlife in Kruger NP but is prevalent in domesticated dogs in PNL. The latter disease differs from the form found in buffaloes of Kruger NP, and it is feared that these diseases may become a problem in Kruger once the fence has been removed and (in the case of rabies) if communities opt to remain in PNL. The Joint Management Plan (JMP) for the GLTP does not yet provide definitive recommendations on how to deal with contagious diseases, casting doubt if the KNP's fence will actually be dropped soon to allow for free movement of animals between different component parts of the GLTP.

#### **3.4.6 Nebulous socio-economic benefits**

Conservation benefits of the GLTP, such as habitat expansion and connectivity seem clear and straight forward, but the socio-economic benefits rest on the assumption that ecotourism will become a driving force for socio-economic development. This is based on the fact that Kruger NP, which annually attracts about a million local and international visitors, will serve as a springboard for expanded tourism into other areas of the GLTP. The development of transfrontier parks as tourism destinations is seen as a way to tap into the world's fastest growing global industry (Ashley, 1995), fostered by regional co-operation in tourism development and marketing. Potential benefits are said to include an increase in employment opportunities; stimulation of rural economic development through outsourcing of services to local communities; collection of firewood, medicinal plants and cutting of thatch grass; and that use of agricultural land for conservation will be more beneficial from a financial and employment perspective.

A cursory overview of the current situation and the manner in which the GLTP Park is being developed cast doubts on whether it will provide benefits that would substantially contribute to alleviating poverty in rural areas. Besides, the rhetoric of increasing employment opportunities for local communities, existing development and management plans do not take an explicit position on how to incorporate or empower local communities, build their assets and their capacity to tangibly tap into the predicted tourism development opportunities in and around the TBPA. High illiteracy levels preclude most local communities from high profile and well-earning jobs. The majority can only be employed as labourers which hardly compensates for the opportunity cost of losing their land and resource access. The benefits that may accrue from allowable use of natural resources and out-sourcing tourism services to local communities are not compelling and few institutions exist to support communities to engage in these businesses. Failure to engage in sustainable economic activities may lead to mistrust and non-compliance with the park's management principles by communities, who stand to bear the highest costs of establishing the GLTP through loss of their land and limited access to natural resources.

For Parque Nacional do Limpopo (PNL), restocking of wildlife, development of infrastructure, training of staff and developing a "bush to coast" tourism infrastructure will take time. Over-stressing socio-economic benefits from tourism may inflate expectations, which if not met, could force a return to a "gatekeeper" protectionist approach.

#### **3.4.7 Failure to heed vital lessons from rural development experiences**

The supposed socio-economic benefits for communities arising from the GLTP are vulnerable because many lessons from rural development have been neglected:

- Popular participation of all parties to a development process should occur so that all interests are articulated and ensure that interest groups can identify with the proposed outcome and share in its realization (benefits and costs) (Muller-Glodde 1991)
- Lack of attention to building and maintaining the institutional capacities of the local communities who reside in the GLTP. The willingness and ability of rural people to cooperate with their neighbours to improve their lives is an opportunity for the GLTP not a threat (Krishna, Uphoff and Esman 1997)
- Ignoring the importance of property rights to land and natural resources that help people form the expectations, which they can reasonably hold in their dealings with others. Property rights are a central part of human interaction being a core element of all social institutions (FAO 1992)
- Threatening communities immediate livelihood needs (secure access to land and pasture) while promising an insecure benefit based on an alien land use (tourism).

Communities do not expect the impossible, merely a positive trajectory in their livelihood security. The initial TFCA vision was positive but now seems threatened by the expansion and consolidation of public sector assets willing to “deal” with the private sector and benefit of social elites. Unless the issue of local identity, participation, community asset building and direct benefit are put firmly back into the vision and strategy of the GLTP, economic development will be skewed, poverty not reduced, local livelihoods not secured and sustainability undermined. Clarification of property and use rights within the GLTP and in the multiple use zones of the larger TFCA is a central issue. Property rights specify the different types of claims people have to resources by specifying what one can and cannot do and what benefits one is entitled to. They also determine long-term incentives to invest in, sustain, and improve resources and shape patterns of equality or inequality with respect to resource access. The South African agreement<sup>7</sup> with the Makuleke community to own land within KNP has enabled them to leverage a joint venture tourism business with private investors from which they can make substantial revenues to invest in their own development. The Mozambican and Zimbabwe Governments could adopt a similar model for the Sengwe Corridor in Zimbabwe and parts of the PNL in Mozambique. Mozambique's land law (Lei de Terra) provides a framework for this type of model.

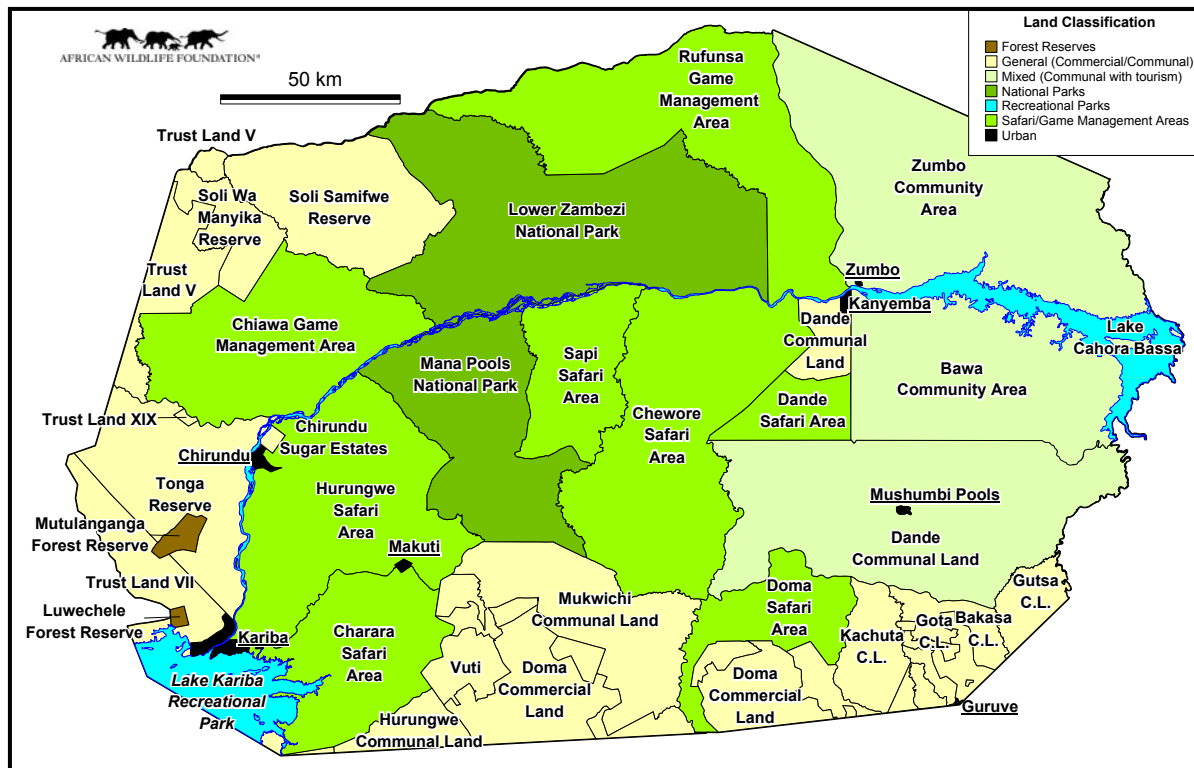
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<sup>7</sup> MOU between Makuleke Community and South African Government 1998

## 4. The Lower Zambezi and ZIMOZA transboundary initiative

### 4.1 Lower Zambezi Transboundary Setting

The Zambezi transboundary area is a three-country landscape that includes rich biological resources along the Zambezi River stretching from Kariba to Cabora Basa Dams. It covers an area of approximately 39,120.86 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of 6,495 km<sup>2</sup> National Parks, 4,885 km<sup>2</sup> Game Management Areas (GMAs), 11,244 km<sup>2</sup> Safari Areas, and 16,496 km<sup>2</sup> of communal land.<sup>8</sup> The protected wildlife areas incorporate some outstanding terrestrial and riverine wildlife viewing and scenic landscape. It is typified by an extended riverine habitat that hosts large elephant herds, hippopotamus, crocodile, lion, leopard, buffalo a variety of antelope, many smaller mammals, reptiles and insects, and until very recently, the black rhino. The potential exists for the endangered black rhino to be relocated back into its natural environment. The area also has an abundant avifauna with over 300 bird species recorded. In addition, the Zambezi River is an



Map 3: Lower Zambezi Transboundary Area

<sup>8</sup> National Parks in Zimbabwe and Zambia protect wildlife and allow no consumptive use. Game Management Areas in Zambia are community land with wildlife protection but allow consumptive use and benefit flows to communities. Safari Areas in Zimbabwe are state land and allow no human settlement or land use but do allow consumptive use. Communal Areas in Zimbabwe allow sustainable use of wildlife by communities through the Campfire Programme.

important reservoir for freshwater fish resources that include the tiger fish, lungfish, a wide variety of cichlid (tilapias) and cyprinid species, some of which are local endemics and rare species.

In Zimbabwe much of the area is protected including Mana Pools NP, a World Heritage Site, which is buffered by large public safari areas, leased to the private sector as hunting and tourism concessions (Charara, Hurungwe, Chewore, Dande and Doma Safari Areas). Communal lands are situated on the periphery of these protected wildlife areas (Hurungwe, Mkwichi and Guruve Communal Lands). The National Park and Safari Areas are state lands under the jurisdiction of Zimbabwe's Wildlife Authority. Communities manage wildlife in Zimbabwe's communal areas through their local authorities with some success through the Campfire initiative. However, the communal and protected areas have never been collaboratively planned at a landscape level.

In Zambia, the Lower Zambezi NP, situated on the north bank of the Zambezi opposite the Mana Pools NP, is a protected area administered by the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA). The park is bordered by the Chiawa GMA in the west, the Rufunsa GMA in the north and the Luangwa GMA in the east (on the Mozambican border). The GMAs are supposed to act as buffer zones between parks and communal areas but allow for human settlement. They fall under the jurisdiction of local chieftaincies but ZAWA has a mandate over the wildlife resources.

Transboundary stakeholders of the landscape are challenged to manage a shared river, fishery, and a tourism and wildlife resource. The elephant population provides a particular focus as a transboundary 'umbrella' species. Cooperation between Zambian and Zimbabwean park authorities was hindered in the 1970's by Zimbabwe's liberation war and in the early 1990's by intense poaching of the Mana NP black rhino population.

## 4.2 Critical threats

Critical threats across the landscape were identified during two AWF sponsored Heartland Conservation Process (HCP) meetings held in 2000 (AWF, 2003). These were a Stakeholder and a Science Planning meeting. Stakeholders, including community leaders from all three countries attended the planning meeting and identified and prioritized threats. A science meeting followed, where scientists from the three countries refined the conservation targets and threats identified. The following conservation targets were identified:

- elephant dispersal and movement corridors;
- declining ungulates;
- large mammal predators;
- the acacia floodplain;
- the Zambezi river and its tributaries;
- wetlands;
- native fishes;
- woodland gradient

The HCP meetings identified stresses, respective sources of stress and critical threats associated with each one of the conservation targets. On the basis of a ranking of the threats, the following **critical threats** across all conservation targets were identified:

- **Incompatible (encroachment of) human settlements**  
All the communal areas have had in-migration on top of normal population growth. This is related to the relative political peace pertaining in the area, to tsetse fly control, irrigation scheme development and the access to fishery resources.
- **Incompatible agriculture**  
In addition to communal agricultural practices there are commercial farms developed with irrigation on the Zambian side of the Zambezi west of the Lower Zambezi National Park.
- **Poaching**  
Joint anti-poaching management across the national borders has always been a challenge to authorities and an opportunity for poachers. In addition, the proximity of the Lower Zambezi NP to the Lusaka urban population has made for a thriving bush meat market.
- **Unmanaged fire**
- **Dam operations**  
The existence of dams altered the natural flow regimes of both the Zambezi and Kafue Rivers. The potential to mitigate this in any way needs exploring with the Zambezi River Authority.
- **Uneven distribution of elephants**  
Higher density of elephant on the Zimbabwe side in comparison to Zambia and Mozambique.
- **Invasive plants (mainly river)**
- **Lack of regional co-ordination**  
An initiative (ZIMOZA) between the three community local authorities in the border area, supported by IUCN ROSA, has progressed well but lacks high level support and linkage to the protected area lands and authorities.

#### **4.3 Lower Zambezi transboundary community context**

The total human population in the site is approximately 120,000, the majority of which derive their livelihoods from subsistence agriculture and livestock husbandry. Because of the nature of livelihood activities, the ecological landscape is threatened by land degradation as a result of forest removal for agriculture, construction timber and fuel, high livestock densities, especially goats, and bush fires set by poachers. The area has a growing population density, which combined with weak common property institutions undermines sustainable resource use. The site has some prime centers for CBNRM projects. Human settlements are located on the Zambian side in the northwestern section of the landscape and where the Zambezi River enters Mozambique there are three small border villages with a long-standing relationship between the neighbouring communities. The area was the westward trading post in previous centuries in ivory and gold for both Arab and Portuguese traders. Zambia and Zimbabwe have gazetted protected conservation areas on either side of the river. The Zambezi was impounded at Kariba



in the 1960 and in Mozambique at Cabora Basa in the 1970's. The creation of vast lakes, in addition to the protected lands had a profound impact on communities including forced resettlement.

After decades of alienation from wildlife resources the communities in all three countries have benefited from recent CBNRM policies and projects. Although there is no protected area in the Mozambique border area there is good habitat and some wildlife especially elephant. Lake Cabora Basa provides a spectacular feature and rich flora biodiversity. The devolution of land and resource use rights to communities, combined with spectacular wildlife, aesthetic and recreational resources have opened up options for new economic opportunities that can be captured through natural resource based enterprises.

Encroachment of the riverfront on the Zambian side in the Chiawa community GMA has occurred in recent times with a mushrooming of private tourist lodges. About 15 private lodges exist on a stretch of 40 km along the river. The community-private sector partnerships are sub-optimal partly because Zambian land law allows traditional leaders to make deals without ensuring equity to the communities or adequate ecological zonation. Artisanal fishing has been assessed as a threat to native fish species caused by the use of illegal fishing gear. Plans are now being put in place to undertake an inventory of fish species and their abundance, which will recommend sustainable fishing efforts for commercially important species and assist in improved community-based management.

#### **4.3.1 Lower Zambezi community activities**

The Lower Zambezi transfrontier landscape has not had the high profile political focus and attention of the Limpopo site. Communities and technical parties are increasingly working together and developing plans for managing shared resources. The ZIMOZA<sup>9</sup> transboundary initiative aims to improve the management of transboundary natural resources on community lands in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The communities living in the transboundary area have been helped by NGOs, especially IUCN ROSA, and their local authorities to develop a framework agreement. The formal agreement is framed as a treaty but ratification depends on the support of national governments. As yet this has not been forthcoming and the process could marginalize communities rather than empower them as intended. This has been a disappointment to the communities who after a three-year period hoped that their community-based transboundary conservation area would be legitimated. The ZIMOZA agreement is unique as it is community based, bottom-up and facilitated by NGOs rather than governments. However, the fact that it does not include protected areas and protected area authorities has handicapped its recognition and provides evidence for the view that community relations across boundaries are less likely to be supported than state driven relations between 'park' authorities.

The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), through its African Heartlands Program, have targeted a larger transboundary landscape that incorporates the ZIMOZA initiative and stretches from Kariba Dam in the west to Cabora Basa Lake in the east linking both protected and community areas. Roughly half the landscape is under the control of the public sector while the rest is under rural community tenure. Technical officials from the wildlife departments and community leaders have

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<sup>9</sup> ZIMOZA – Zimbabwe (Kanyemba), Mozambique (Uzamba), Zambia (Luangwa)– describes the collaboration between 3 districts in the 3 countries. Supported by IUCN ROSA and NGOs: Zambezi Society, CIRAD, Campfire Association, Zimbabwe Trust, WWF, AWF.

met and shared perspectives and jointly identified the main conservation targets and the threats they face. They have also identified common strategies aimed at abating environmental threats while addressing community livelihood needs. Communities are prepared to address conservation issues provided their use of natural resources can uplift their livelihoods. AWF's strategy supports community conservation ventures strategically linked to abating conservation threats.

Cooperation between technical personnel from the transboundary countries is growing through a jointly conceived and endorsed landscape conservation strategy. The relationship between the conservation staff and the communities is improving as the latter have been engaged as an important part of the solution rather than blamed as the cause of conservation problems. The next stage is to build up a partnership between the private sector and the communities so that conservation and development objectives become more compatible and positive. At this point high-level civil servants and political leaders have not been very involved but are aware of the process and sanction it at the level it is presently occurring. There is no formal movement towards a treaty, which was the immediate objective of the Limpopo transfrontier initiative.

Progress to date has been mainly at a technical level involving wildlife and aquatic surveys, disease surveillance, monitoring of conservation targets, differences in policy, law, management approaches and practices affecting the transboundary management of resources in the area. There is a need for more joint planning, zoning and management of future tourism investments as the shared river frontage is becoming increasingly valuable. Any zonation exercise and tourism development plan must address community land rights and institutions and ensure that community livelihoods are improved. Some coordination of law enforcement exists on the ground but could be strengthened between public agencies and between them and communities. Illegal off-take of wildlife is a big threat to wildlife in the area and is complicated by incidences of cross-border poaching.

#### **4.4 Lower Zambezi transboundary impacts on communities**

The potential to improve rural livelihoods exists if wildlife authorities, donors and NGOs collaborate to ensure the tourism potential of the area occurs in such a way that communities are actively involved and benefit from leases, employment, and the sale of goods and services. The development of a Lower Zambezi tourist destination would complement the regional strategy of investing in a network of destinations with sufficient mass to make southern Africa a tourism growth zone. Community areas by themselves do not have the natural, human or financial resources to realize this by themselves but combined with the extensive protected areas they could be well placed to attract investment. Given land and resource rights and help to use and manage them they could become partners in the economic and socio-political landscape with a real vested interest. Communities, the public and the private sector are trying to establish a successful co-management partnership but communities remain vulnerable without further public sector support. Without empowerment policies and support services they could remain on the periphery of the tourism destination.

Communities at site level need space to explore the social and economic possibilities and also need technical support and 'honest brokerage' in dealing with tourism investors. National authorities can meet and plan more easily than communities who need to be assisted to participate in consultative forums if they are to be active rather than reactive participants. The ZIMOZA initiative helped communities from the three countries to exchange knowledge of their respective areas and respective policies and regulatory environments. Exchange visits have

been helpful in facilitating linkages between technicians and also raising their awareness of the socio-economic as well as ecological environment. The development of reliable and routine mechanisms for collaboration among the different stakeholders enhances the gradual development of a shared appreciation of issues and the development of compatible objectives and approaches.

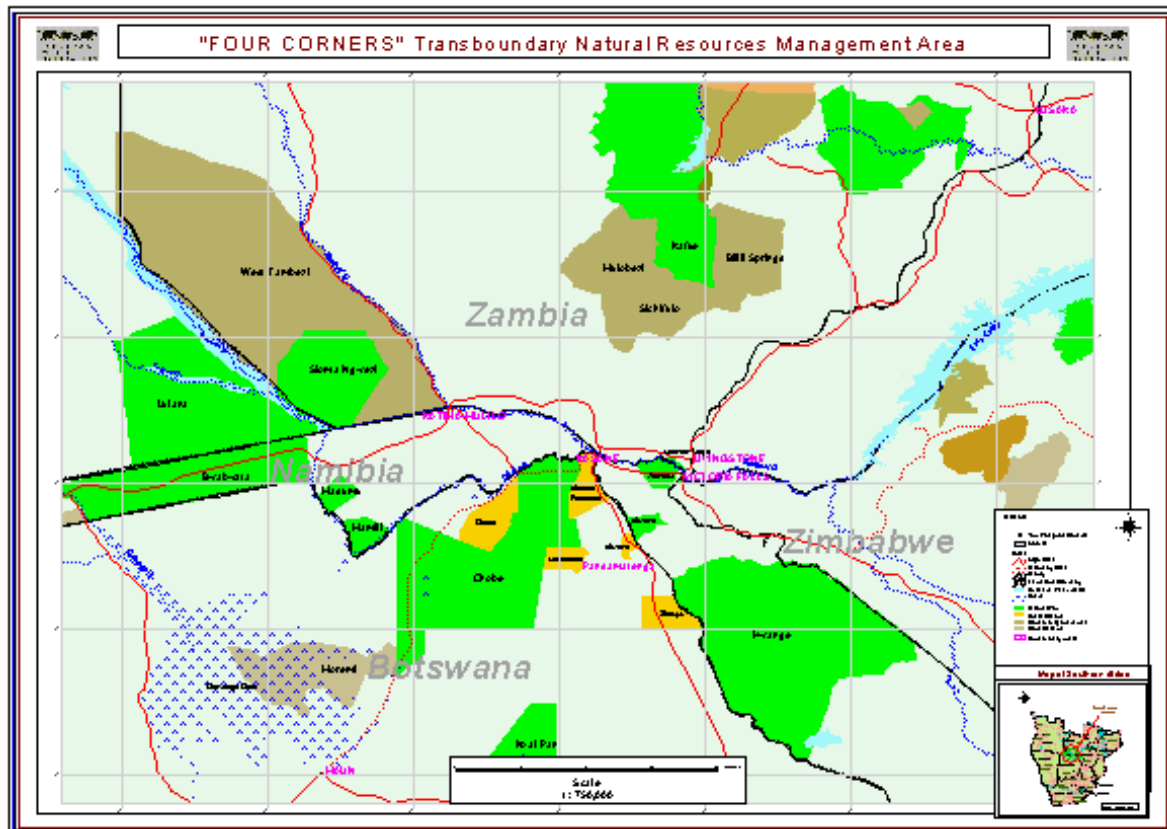
The main contrast between Lower Zambezi and Limpopo is that the state sector is not dominating from the capital cities and leaving local parties and communities behind. The public technical sector at site level has been allowed to work together and identify transboundary issues. The community sector has benefited from national CBNRM policies and also been supported to collaborate across borders between themselves and with their public sector technical partners. There is some way to go but a sense of participation and phased build up is encouraging. Communities experience national level problems related to CBNRM but these have not been made worse by the transboundary context. As yet the transboundary initiative is not necessarily improving community livelihoods but has not been negative. Signs for the future are positive.

## **5. The Upper Zambezi ('Four Corners') Transboundary Initiative**

### **5.1 Upper Zambezi transboundary setting**

The Four Corners transboundary natural resources management area (TBNRMA) covers approximately 290,000 km<sup>2</sup> including eastern Caprivi Strip in Namibia, Ngamiland in Botswana, Hwange District in Zimbabwe and parts of Southern and Western Provinces in Zambia. National Parks and Wildlife Reserve in the area include Chobe and Moremi in Botswana; Mamili, Mudumo and Bwabwata in Namibia; Mosi-Oa-Tunya and Sioma Ngwezi in Zambia; Hwange and Zambezi in Zimbabwe. National Parks and other protected areas (Safari Areas, Game Management Areas, Forest Reserves, Conservancies and Moremi Wildlife Reserve) constitute about 40% of the total area. The Four Corners TBNRMA is a prime wildlife and tourism area and forms one of the most important terrestrial and fresh water ecosystems in Africa. The area holds the highest number of African elephants and contains the Victoria Falls, one of the wonders of the world.

The Zambezi River with a catchment area of 142 million hectares is a major drainage system and a major feature of the Upper Zambezi ecosystem. Mopane (*Colophospermum mopane*) and teak (*Baikiaea plurijuga*) constitutes the major vegetation groups followed by Miombo (dominated by trees in the genera *Brachystegia*, *Julbernardia* and *Isoberlinia*). Other vegetation types in this vast transboundary landscape are riparian woodland, *Combretum* and *Terminalia* thickets and not the least, grassland. The vegetation types of Chobe and east Caprivi wetlands comprise floodplains and permanent seasonal swamps.



Map 4: Upper Zambezi Transboundary Area

## 5.2 Critical threats

Since April 2001 this Upper Zambezi transboundary area received USAID funding for a “Four Corners” TBNRMA Initiative, implemented by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). While this is not the only transboundary initiative in the area it has been a high profile project aimed at increasing cooperation in the management of shared natural resources, primarily aquatic and wildlife.<sup>10</sup> AWF has facilitated government, community, private sector and technical specialists, to establish a number of **key conservation targets** in the TBNRMA.

- The Zambezi River  
Much of the upper catchment is in the TBNRMA. The river, its tributaries, wetlands and riparian habitats constitute the major natural resource component that driving the ecosystem.
- The woodland–grassland mosaic

<sup>10</sup> Another transboundary initiative in the Upper Zambezi region is a regional spatial development initiative known as OUZIT, designed by the Development Bank of Southern Africa and now supported by the Southern African Community (SADC), Tourism Sector (RETOSA). This links to an overall vision for southern Africa partly based on the development of transboundary tourism destinations.

TBNRMA is characterized by Miombo woodlands interspersed with grasslands & supporting distinct vegetation types (i.e. Riparian, Teak, Mopane, Miombo and Acacia)

- Wetlands  
Wetlands in the TBNRMA are critical to the maintenance and natural functioning of the river systems and constitute important habitats for aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity.
- Native fishes  
Rich species diversity occurs in the Chobe, Okavango & Upper Zambezi aquatic habitats.
- Animal and bird species  
The area has over 80 mammal species, a number benefiting especially from having a large area to move across especially the elephant, buffalo, waterbuck, zebra, giraffe, wildebeest, impala, kudu, eland, roan, sable, hartebeest and not least large carnivores such as lion, hyaena, wilddog and leopard. With 120,000 elephants the TBNRMA hosts the world's largest contiguous population.

Transboundary partners have agreed on desirable goals for these targets and analyzed the threats they face. Investments in conservation strategies are focused on the abatement of the most critical threats rather than those of a lesser destructive nature that are easier to address or for which funding was provided. Corrective action is aimed at the *source* of *threat*, as abatement of the source will alleviate the stress and result in higher viability and health of the conservation target(s). The **critical threats** to the Four Corners TBNRMA environmental targets have been assessed as:

- incompatible human settlements;
- commercial agriculture in key wildlife areas;
- subsistence agriculture;
- poor fire management;
- poaching;
- overpopulation and uneven distribution of elephants in some parts of the 4-Corners TBNRMA;
- wood collection for firewood and construction

### 5.3 Upper Zambezi transboundary community context

Land tenure in the TBNRMA is a mosaic of state (national park, forest reserve) and community land cross cut with private sector use rights (e.g. hunting, logging, tourist concessions etc.). Governments tend to have over-riding powers regarding the allocation of resources, costs and benefits, monitoring and rule making. The relationship between state and community is a form of co-management and that with the private sector a concessional right (state land) or form of joint venture (community land).

Tourism is becoming a promising option for the economic and social development of the region. Communities have a huge stake in the sustainable development of natural resource based industries. While the public and communal sectors have access to land they need to partner the private sector, which has access to capital and management expertise. The synergy between land authorities and the private sector has to be achieved within a framework that provides

efficient, equitable and sustainable returns. The opportunity for economic growth must be equitable if it is to be sustainable politically and ecologically. The public sector needs resources to meet its responsibilities, the communal sector needs resources to make a living and the private sector needs a return on investment to make it worth their while. Tourism driven economic development could be a positive force for TBNRMA cooperation but also negative if sectors do not receive the benefits they require.

Balancing the needs and wants of the three sectors, within and between countries, requires that stakeholders meet regularly and openly share information and knowledge of the TBNRMA. The project works to develop multi-sectoral partnerships so that the stakes of the parties become inter-twined in such a way that cooperation becomes institutionalized at various levels. Once the process of cooperation is embedded it becomes in the interests of all to maintain a peaceful, law abiding and openly collaborative approach. This cannot come easily but only through routinely sharing experiences and responsibilities.

Most communities live on the edge of the global economy and even governments are unsure how to engage positively with a private sector that is rapidly becoming regional and transnational. Some governments do not perceive communities as economic agencies in their own right but rather as a socialist sub-sector of the state. Given insecurity of communal land tenure and the partial nature of devolved resource use rights this is a reality. Communities are not bound as strong land companies and local social differences can engender disputes manifested as sub-optimal governance, management and equity. The tourism industry is a dramatically different land use from centuries of pastoralism and subsistence agriculture. It emanates from developed countries and although it promises development it can be perceived in a neo-imperialist light and a source of national and local alienation. Communities in the TBNRMA need help to orientate and positively engage the tourism industry. Creative ideas about the cultural landscape seem to lag far behind those for the ecological and economic landscape.

### **5.3.1 Upper Zambezi transboundary activities**

The African Wildlife Foundation has capitalized on the CBNRM initiatives in the 1990s (Campfire-Zimbabwe; LIFE-Namibia; NRMP-Botswana) enabling it to focus on natural resource enterprises as a strategy for improving livelihoods. The process takes an asset building approach involving the following aspects (Ford Foundation 2002):

- Improving the financial assets of community enterprise through the use of a community enterprise development funding mechanism.
- Harnessing community land and natural resources as a basis for valuable community business ventures.
- Supporting sustainable NRM to ensure stable quality of stocks of natural resources.
- Providing capacity building services to NRM institutions to ensure efficient and equitable use.
- Investing in human resources to improve effective use of common property resources, product design, production and marketing.
- Supporting efficient conservation business ventures to provide income and capital accumulation.
- Enhancing collaboration between community areas related to management as well as production and marketing of natural resources.

- Facilitating policy and environment change to facilitate wider adoption of sustainable land use practices across sectors.
- Facilitating collaboration between local government, land, environment and natural resource sectors and between them and community and private sectors.
- Facilitating enhanced interaction between protected and community areas to create conservation and development synergies.

Development of community conservation business enterprises involves a step-by-step process starting with scoping potential business options, identification of priority businesses, development of business plans and getting approvals from relevant authorities. The project has supported several communities to develop ventures and raise investment finance into such schemes as sport fishing camps and tourist lodges in Zimbabwe and Botswana. In Zambia, support has been given to communities, through their traditional chiefdoms, to establish land trusts capable of entering partnerships with the private sector in a planned co-management approach. In Botswana, the project has supported a community umbrella association to represent Botswana CBOs involved in CBNRM to provide capacity building services to its membership. The project has also assisted the development of a regional community forum for traditional and civic leaders from 14 communities living in the transboundary area. They have agreed to work together to address conservation policy and practice issues; natural resource management challenges and; advocate jointly for the empowerment of communities in regard to land and resource rights and their inclusion in transboundary developments.

A transboundary legal working group has been formed to audit policies and regulations on NRM and conservation business ventures and conduct a comparative analysis of policies and laws, including SADC protocols, and recommend on harmonization needs. The group is also investigating and determining ownership of disputed community areas and preparing agreements and by-laws on NRM and CBVs. The group will audit the performance of various institutions and help to raise awareness of policies and legislation in the region. The legal group is also preparing founding documents for community institutions and facilitating the provision of legal advisory services to communities including conflict resolution.

Communities lag behind in access to information on transboundary activities and the community forum and a newsletter help to redress this. Three editions of a Four Corners newsletter have been distributed to a network of some 500 parties and a Four Corners Heartland and a website has been developed ([www.awf.org/fourcorners](http://www.awf.org/fourcorners)).

#### **5.4 Upper Zambezi transboundary impacts on communities**

The Four Corners initiative has helped technical (wildlife, fisheries, tourism) and civic society (communities and NGOs) sectors to increase their strategic transboundary cooperation. This has fostered an appreciation of the various interests and perspectives involved. Within the **political sector**, early attempts to secure a Memorandum of Understanding providing a framework agreement to cooperate, in principle, more actively on transboundary issues were unsuccessful. The initial attempt aimed to secure the involvement of four permanent secretaries responsible for environment, wildlife and tourism. It proved difficult to get all together at the same time. The fact that the Four Corners initiative was donor driven and NGO led rather than arising out of the political sector was said to have “put the cart before the horse”. Some of the countries involved felt they had not been adequately consulted by the donor and therefore did not accept the priority. At the start Zimbabwe’s Wildlife Directorate and its Environment Ministry

provided leadership. The Zambian counterparts responded but the inclusion of Namibia and Botswana did not happen. Later following Zimbabwe's political difficulties the donor discouraged facilitating high level Zimbabwean participation.

Also, there was another tourism and private sector transboundary initiative, 'OUZIT' (Okavango, Upper Zambezi for International Tourism) being promoted by the Development Bank of Southern Africa that has become a SADC Tourism Sector project. SADC has several sectors relevant to transboundary initiatives – wildlife, tourism, water, and fisheries- and there was uncertainty, which was the lead. In the case of Limpopo the transboundary activity was led by the wildlife sector under the SADC wildlife protocol. The 'Four Corners' Transboundary Initiative has operated without an over-riding political agreement but has nevertheless made progress in increasing cooperation in the management of shared resources in ecological, enterprise, policy and information aspects.

Within the **technical sector** considerable transboundary collaboration has occurred within the wildlife, fisheries and tourism sectors. In particular, the fisheries sector has worked to the point of virtually making operational the SADC Fisheries Protocol at the Upper Zambezi site level. As such it stands as an example of how a regional grouping can use the regional SADC structure in practical terms. The Wildlife Sector has also collaborated in specific instances rather than generally and recently formed a wildlife sector working group. Specialists have cooperation in mapping out wildlife movement areas and land use conflicts thus providing the basis for a transboundary framework for the securing these areas. The wildlife sector has a long history of collaborating on elephant and CITES issues and many of the wildlife technical authorities are used to meeting and working together.

The project has supported communities on three levels: the formation of a transboundary community forum; specific community-based conservation businesses and; information dissemination. These community associations are in the process of legal registration in order that they will be more recognized and able act together in both national and transboundary forums. The Zambian land trusts that are evolving will be able to plan and implement at a significant scale ( $\pm$  200,000 hectares) and be able to establish a holding company able to establish partnerships and sub-leases with the private sector. As half the transboundary landscape is comprised of community land it is vital that a considerable investment is made into their land rights and governance as a foundation for investment and as a basis to ensure they benefit from the projected tourism investment for the region.

The communities' vision is not for a super transboundary park but rather a landscape with parks and multiple use areas developed sustainably in a partnership with the public and private sectors.



## 6. Conclusion

The impact of transboundary initiatives will be hard to monitor unless their objectives are made more explicit. Transboundary parks do not increase species richness (because the areas are contiguous) as much as conserve ecological processes by joint management of aquatic and terrestrial habitats. It is the ecological processes that should be monitored. If rural development is an objective then improved livelihoods must be measured and actions taken to ensure that end. If regional integration is an objective then the political output is a focus and if national economic development then the impact on gross domestic product, exports and direct foreign investment.

Differences between countries, as highlighted between South Africa and Mozambique can lead to asymmetrical relations with one side driving and another responding as best as possible. Equally state and private sector parties can dominate power to the detriment of local communities. This can lead to conflicts and unless they are anticipated in the objectives of transboundary initiatives - could lead to their demise. Tensions between transboundary objectives must be resolved between conservation and development and the interests of states, communities and the private sector. To ensure that trade offs do not lead to sub-optimal solutions it is necessary that policies create the necessary incentive compatibility to ensure innovative synergies between all parties.

One way to improve the chances of success is not to see transboundary initiatives necessarily in the light of a single end state, or transboundary park, but rather as a continuum that would include other milestones such as technical collaboration, data sharing and management, community collaboration, collaborative product design, development and marketing and collaborative management of shared water, wildlife and tourism resources. All these things can be achieved without the necessity of state-dominated protected areas or state-private sector collaboration at the expense of community empowerment and livelihood enhancement. By setting the right goals transboundary collaboration may enhance benefits to many groups but setting the wrong ones may alienate important parties and undermine the conservation objective.

Apart from the top-down issue another contrast between the Limpopo and the two Zambezi initiatives is that a conscious effort has been made in the Zambezi examples to relate to community livelihood issues and include them in transboundary planning and activities. Communities are resilient entities but also sensitive to threats to their identity, organization and way of life. Consideration of these aspects goes a long way to ensure their positive involvement. Promises of downstream benefits are problematic as communities can use them to hold TBPA promoters to account at a later stage and establish an "us" and "them" dichotomy. Involving communities from the outset allows them to make a realistic ongoing appraisal of the costs and benefits for themselves and be actively involved in evaluating the risks entailed. Only through a stakeholder partnership based on trust, transparency and accountability can transboundary cooperation integrated in ecological, socio-economic and political dimensions be realized.

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