



**AUDITS OF MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL
AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS**

**THE COORDINATION AND MONITORING OF THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

**AUTHOR: OFFICE OF AUDITOR GENERAL
(Botswana)**

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BACKGROUND

Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) is an approach to conservation and development that recognises the rights of local people to manage and benefit from the management and use of natural resources in their locality. The CBNRM programme underpins the global concern prompted by the United Nations over the degradation of the world's natural resources base. Therefore, the programme supports the ideals of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) of 1987, whereby the concept of Sustainable Development is paramount. Furthermore, the Rio Earth Summit underscored the importance of the protection of the environment coupled with the promotion of the social and economic development as crucial pillars of sustainable development.

In response to the developments that took place in the international arena, Botswana became signatory to a number of regional and international treaties and protocols. These included *inter alia*; the SADC Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement in Southern Africa (1999), SADC Protocol on Fisheries (2001), SADC Protocol on Forestry (2002), the Convention on Biological Diversity (1992), Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (1973) and the RAMSAR Convention (1971).

In recognition of regional and international treaties and instruments, the Government of Botswana formulated policies that were in support of CBNRM, notably; Wildlife Conservation Policy of 1986, National Policy on Natural Resources Conservation and Development of 1990 and the Tourism Policy of 1990.

In spite of the strides made towards the formulation of regulatory frameworks, it was still argued by environmental practitioners that some of the environmental problems were a result of human ignorance. Consequently, Botswana adopted a conservationist approach that recognised the inter-linkages between resource conservation, people and the rational sustainable use of those resources. Community based conservation and co-management of natural resources was thus, an alternative approach to the conventional natural resources conservation approach.

Notwithstanding the above, the sustainability of the CBNRM programme remains questionable because there are constraints and challenges concerning the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the programme in Botswana.

The Office of the Auditor General therefore, carried out a performance audit to evaluate the performance of the CBNRM programme in Botswana.

AUDIT PLANNING

SCOPE

The audit focused on the coordination and monitoring of the CBNRM programme by the MEWT and its three principal implementing agencies, namely; Wildlife and National Parks and Forestry and Range Resources, as well as the Botswana Tourism Board (Parastatal under the Ministry). Even though the programme started in 1989, the audit only covered the financial years 2004/05 to 2008/09. This period represented the time when the MEWT was fully operational and when all the environmental issues were brought under one roof. Field visits were undertaken to 6 of the 10 Districts countrywide, namely; Central, Kgalagadi, Gantsi, Ngamiland, Chobe and North-East.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To assess how the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism coordinated and monitored the implementation of the CBNRM programme in Botswana.

Specific objectives

- To examine how the community is mobilized to effectively support the activities and development of CBNRM projects.
- To find out if the information on the socio-economic conditions of the community is collected, analysed and used for decision making purposes.
- To establish the necessary requirements for the formation and operation of a Community Organisation.
- To examine how the benefits from the utilization of resources are distributed within the community.
- To assess how the performance of the programme is monitored.

CRITERIA

- The roles and responsibilities of all the involved stakeholders should be clearly defined.
- The activities undertaken and information provided should be clear and concise.

- Socio-economic information should be adequately sourced from the community.
- All the Community Organisations should have Constitutions or Deeds of Trust, should develop and implement Land Use Management Plans and must comply with the conditions of the Head lease.
- Communities should have strategies in place for the equitable distribution of benefits.
- Reports on the performance of CBNRM activities and projects should be produced within stipulated time-frames

METHODOLOGY

Besides conducting interviews and reviewing documents, observations were made on existing community projects.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- There was lack of inter-agency planning amongst the agencies mandated with the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the CBNRM programme.
- The MEWT should develop an appropriate inter-agency planning platform which would ensure that the BTB, DWNP and DFRR establish a collective and cordial working relationship in CBNRM planning and implementation. The approach would assist in synergising the criteria used to develop the plans for effective coordination and monitoring of the CBNRM activities.
- The overall coordination of the mandates of the three agencies involved in CBNRM was minimal and found lacking.
- The MEWT should create a level of executive authority that would be responsible for coordinating the mandates of the DWNP, DFRR and BTB. Such a higher authority would help in dealing with a holistic and comprehensive reporting of all CBNRM issues at a ministerial level.
- The mobilisation of communities was not well coordinated even though there were many organisations interested in working with communities.
- The MEWT should have a clearly written and communicated procedure on how the different stakeholders interested in working with communities may be involved as regards assisting them financially and in kind. The move would provide for better coordination of both local and international stakeholders and would help to mitigate against such individuals and organisations who may be driving their own agenda at the expense of communities. The move would also save valuable time and resources for communities as a result of being compliant to relevant Government's regulatory and administrative frameworks.
- The Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism had not been able to establish indicators of efficiency, effectiveness and impact as part of its initial CBNRM planning framework.
- The MEWT should develop indicators for measuring the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the CBNRM programme. This exercise should form the base for planning of all CBNRM activities. The development of indicators for CBNRM performance monitoring would enable stakeholders at different levels to be able to assess if CBNRM inputs were yielding the desired results of sustainable conservation and rural development.
- Most of the Community Trusts visited had not developed and implemented their Land Use Management Plans during the audit review period.
- The MEWT should encourage Community Trusts to fast track the development, implementation and review of their Management Plans. This move could help communities to conserve the natural resources in their locality and upon which their source of livelihood is derived.
- There was delayed implementation of community projects measured against the initial plans.
- The MEWT agencies should ensure timely implementation of all the projects planned in any particular year
- The MEWT should ensure that all impediments to project implementation, such as delays in conducting environmental assessments and tendering processes, are addressed well in time.
- The MEWT should develop project implementation plans which should be followed, where possible, so as to ensure compliance to the set time frames and cost estimates.
- The MEWT should ensure that the scoping of projects is realistic and achievable, taking into account budgetary and human resources constraints.

All the above recommendations would ensure that CBNRM projects are implemented in a timely manner and consistent with initial planning documents to allow for an efficient utilisation of financial resources from such projects.

IMPACT AND RESULTS

The Auditee Management was in agreement with the recommendations of the report. They also indicated that the audit report was a good overview of CBNRM in the country and had done well to collate literature on the inception of the programme. The Ministry further commended the Auditor General for having raised a number of points that would assist in improving the running of the programme which would lead to improved programme delivery.

The audit project is a new one and as such, there was lack of evidence of environmental benefits resulting from the audit and government's action.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

1. Complexity of the audit

The CBNRM programme involves interactions among the different stakeholders from government, private sector and donor community. It was therefore very difficult to cover all the affected stakeholders. In trying to overcome this challenge, the audit focused on primary stakeholders.

2. Limited human resources

In spite of the fact that CBNRM is a national programme, only one officer audited the performance of the programme both at national and local level. As a solution, proper sampling techniques were employed to ensure that the audit becomes manageable.

3. Logistics

Lack of proper transport impeded accessibility. Field visits to the northern part of the country were undertaken at the time of widespread flooding and it became difficult to access those communities living beyond flooded areas. In resolving the problem, only those places that could be accessed with ease were visited.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Decisive use of secondary sources of information on the performance of the programme rather than relying more on primary field data. These included published materials and website links.
2. Using a combination of various data collection techniques to capture past, present and future scenarios. This was especially important because CBNRM is a fast evolving programme invariably shaped by a diversity of views from the different stakeholders concerning its implementation.