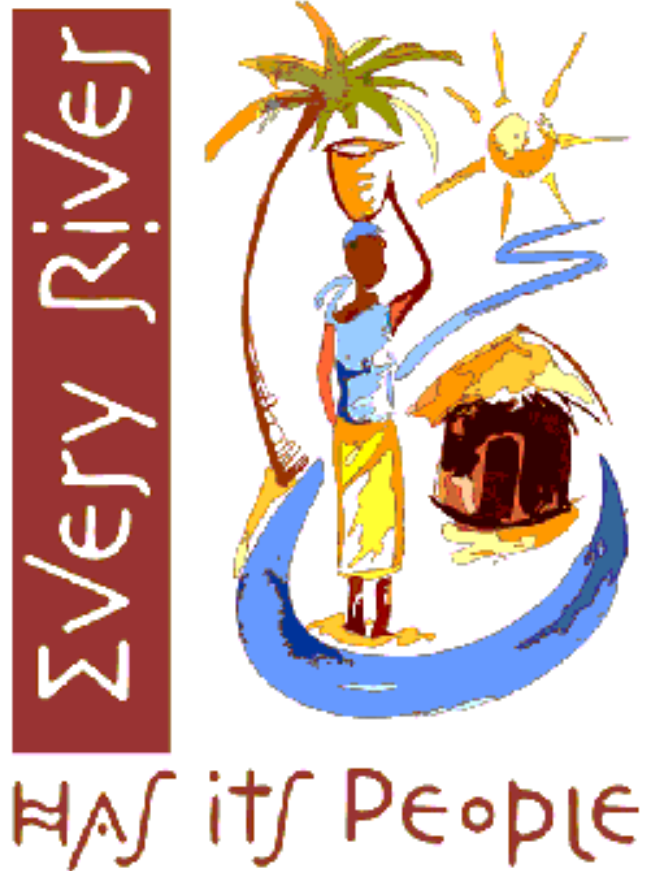


Socio - Ecological Survey Report For The Okavango Basin



(Botswana and Namibia - 2001)

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The *Every River has its People* project was developed and implemented in support of the Okavango river basin work being promoted and conducted by OKACOM, a permanent Okavango River Basin Commission established by the governments of the three basin countries of Angola, Botswana and Namibia.

OKACOM has decided to develop an integrated basin-wide management plan to guide the future development and management of the basin, which is one of the most important transboundary natural resources in the region. One of the expressed goals of OKACOM, and one of the key recommendations from the first phase of their work, is that stakeholders – and particularly those living in the basin and dependent on the natural resources of the basin – should have an opportunity to be involved in upcoming phases of OKACOM’s work. OKACOM has stated that “the success of the planning exercise will depend on stakeholders as much as on the efforts of government and specialists” and that “stakeholders’ positive collaboration has to be formalised at an early stage”.

The acknowledged need for stakeholder participation in the OKACOM planning process is based on the sound principle that long-term sustainable development is based on reconciling social, economic and ecological objectives, and developing options that meet the needs of different countries and stakeholders in optimal ways. To this end, OKACOM has recognised that civil society has an important role to play, and that non-governmental organisations can assist the process as valuable partners.

The *Every River has its People* Project is thus a partnership between the implementing NGOs and OKACOM. OKACOM is hereby acknowledged for creating a supportive and enabling environment for this project to be carried out, and for giving advice and guidance.

EVERY RIVER HAS ITS PEOPLE PROJECT

SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT FOR THE OKAVANGO BASIN WITHIN BOTSWANA AND NAMIBIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates the success in meeting project objectives of the socio-ecological surveys carried out in Botswana and Namibia as part of the first phase of the Every River has its People project. The report also makes recommendations on how the output of the surveys can be incorporated into subsequent phases of project implementation.

The survey process in both countries has been successful in introducing the project and related issues to communities and other partners. Information dissemination will continue throughout the next phases of the project. The surveys have provided the project with sufficient data regarding the main issues relevant for the project. From the data it is possible to build a picture of the way in which people depend upon the use of natural resources for their livelihoods. The survey has provided the project with an insight into some of the indigenous management practices and knowledge of residents. The project can build on the fact that traditional management techniques are still known and/or practised.

The survey has also identified a range of key local institutions that form part of communities' capacity to participate in natural resource management. It is clear that there are existing institutions that the project can work with in future activities, although some of these institutions might require capacity building support. To some extent, the Namibian survey process included some consensus building activities as the survey progressed. In Botswana this was left to later phases of the project and the follow-up meetings to the survey. In both countries, the process of building trust of relevant stakeholders has begun. Some negative attitudes exist towards the private sector tourism operators in both countries. More interaction between communities and the private sector could help build better trust.

Three aspects of the original objectives for the survey process need further attention. These are: a) develop a shared set of actions within the scope of the project to solve the problems; b) develop a common vision with communities and relevant stakeholders for what will be accomplished in this project and how the results will contribute towards the larger long-term goal for the Okavango River Basin; and c) agree on roles and responsibilities of different community and other organisations in achieving the vision for the project. However, these objectives are more relevant for the post survey activities than they are for the survey phase itself and will be addressed in the next phase.

The following table summarises the main recommendations of the report:

Activity	Recommendation
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Provide support and capacity building for the Namibian and Botswana delegates chosen to represent their countries in basin-wide fora. E.g. information on the functions and operation of OKACOM, and ensuring that OKACOM gives a hearing to the delegates. <li>ii) Assist the delegates to develop some form of accountability, communication and feedback mechanisms to the communities in their own countries. <li>iii) Develop links between the different layers of decision-making within each country (National government, regional/district government, communities and other stakeholders).
Information dissemination/exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Exchange of information on resource use and status between local residents and scientists to develop a common understanding of what is happening <li>ii) Provide information about modern conservation methods and ways of integrating these with traditional methods - this could flow from the process started in i) <li>iii) Specific advice and information on income generating activities using natural resources that were mentioned during the surveys
Longer term activities (if additional funding can be found)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) In Namibia proposals for community conservation initiatives should be further investigated and viable initiatives supported <li>ii) In Botswana, future work could focus on capacity building to emerging trusts that do not have NGO support and assistance to the CBNRM forum as a mechanism for coordination and information dissemination

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the third and final report of the Basin-wide Consultant in terms of the agreement between the consultant and the Namibia Nature Foundation. In accordance with the consultant's Terms of Reference (TOR) (see Annexe 1) the report evaluates the success in meeting project objectives of the socio-ecological surveys carried out in Botswana and Namibia as part of the first phase of the project. Also in accordance with the TOR, the report makes recommendations on how the output of the surveys can be incorporated into subsequent phases of the programme implementation. In addition, the report addresses issues agreed at the basin-wide project committee meeting held on August 29, 2001. These are the following: a) to identify common issues identified by the communities surveyed; b) to identify cross-cutting themes emerging from the results of the surveys in Botswana and Namibia; c) to identify the main differences in the results of the two surveys; and d) to identify the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the co-management of the Okavango River Basin.

2. SUCCESS OF THE SURVEYS IN NAMIBIA AND BOTSWANA IN MEETING PROJECT OBJECTIVES

2.1 Project goal and objectives

Project Goal

The overall goal of the project is:

to promote the sustainable management of natural resources in the Okavango River Basin for the benefit of basin residents and states through promoting and facilitating the effective participation of basin stakeholders in natural resource decision-making and management, particularly related to water resources

Project Objectives

The Objectives of the project are:

- 1) To increase the capacity of communities and other local stakeholders to participate effectively in decision making about natural resources of the Okavango River Basin, particularly those related to water resources, at local, national and regional levels

- 2) To develop mechanisms to promote and facilitate the participation of communities and other local stakeholders in natural resource management and decision-making, particularly those related to water resources, at local, national and basin-wide levels

Phase 1 of the project was aimed at carrying out socio-ecological surveys in Botswana and Namibia in order to provide a solid foundation for moving on to the next phases of the project. These phases are planned to focus mainly on the design and dissemination of information and educational materials and building community capacity to play a role in decision-making concerning the Okavango River basin. Specifically the socio-ecological surveys were designed to achieve the following:

- i. introduce the project and related issues to communities and other partners
- ii. develop a shared understanding of resources in the area
- iii. develop a shared understanding of the issues, aspirations, problems around the basin as well as a shared set of actions within the scope of the project to solve the problems
- iv. start the process of building trust of relevant stakeholders
- v. develop a common vision with communities and relevant stakeholders for what will be accomplished in this project and how the results will contribute towards the larger long-term goal for the Okavango River Basin
- vi. gather information about the communities' utilisation of and perception of the role of the Okavango River Basin resources in their lives.
- vii. gather information on indigenous management practises and knowledge
- viii. identify gaps in understanding about the Okavango River Basin and define information needs and determine the appropriate approach to education and capacity building
- ix. identify local institutions, e.g., tribal leadership structures and government extension officers that form part of communities' capacity to participate in natural resource management
- x. agree on roles and responsibilities of different community and other organisations in achieving the vision for the project

In the above list of objectives of the socio-ecological surveys three main groupings of activity can be identified:

- I. Information giving (objective i.)
- II. Information gathering (objectives vi. – ix.)
- III. Consensus building and action planning (objectives ii. – v. and x.)

The surveys in each country are evaluated against their success in meeting these broad objectives.

2.2 Success of the survey in meeting project objectives

I. Information giving

The survey process in both countries has been successful in introducing the project and related issues to communities and other partners. In Botswana, this process began with the Kalahari Conservation Society Outreach Team holding a series of community meetings prior to the start of the survey work itself. These meetings introduced the Every River Project and the purpose of the survey.

Namibian project partners held an initial meeting with the governor of Kavango Region, regional councillors and government officials to introduce the project early in 2001. The Namibian outreach team spent time prior to the survey visiting traditional leaders and regional councillors to further explain the aims of the project. The information provided has been re-iterated at the formal meetings held during the Namibian survey and during village focus group discussions. The formal meetings of the Namibian survey provided an opportunity for information sharing between community members, government officials and other stakeholders such as NGOs. Information on the project has also been disseminated through radio programmes and posters.

The process of information giving by the project continued with the Botswana stakeholders' meeting held in Maun in April, 2001 and a meeting of communities from Botswana and Namibia held in Maun during October, 2001. From observation at the October meeting it is clear to the basin-wide consultant that the Botswana and Namibian community representatives present had a clear idea of the project and its aims and objectives.

II. Information gathering

The socio-ecological survey in Botswana has collected data using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The foundation for the survey was a quantitative household survey that gathered data on the use of the river and associated resources, numbers of livestock, sources of household income, land ownership, village institutions etc. This household survey was backed up by focus group discussions that allowed more opportunity to explore issues and debate them. Usually the focus group was a large community forum, rather than the normal size focus group of around 5-12 participants, but discussions were also held with smaller resource user groups such as basket makers or fishers.

The socio-ecological survey in Namibia followed a different methodology to the Botswana survey. The Namibian survey focused on qualitative approaches, mainly because a number of quantitative surveys had already been carried out in the Kavango Region, but also because such an approach was most consistent

with the Terms of Reference. Basic socio-economic information regarding household income, land ownership, livestock numbers etc. is contained in a separate project publication providing a preliminary socio-ecological profile of the Kavango Region (El Obeid and Mendelsohn 2001).

The survey process in both countries has provided the project with sufficient data regarding the main issues relevant for the project. From the data it is possible to build a picture of the way in which people depend upon the use of natural resources for their livelihoods. It is clear that the river plays a major role in the lives of residents. The survey has provided the project with an insight into some of the indigenous management practices and knowledge of residents, although the data gathered are clearly not exhaustive. The project can build on the knowledge that traditional management techniques are still known and/or practised.

The survey has also identified a range of key local institutions that form part of communities' capacity to participate in natural resource management. It is clear that there are existing institutions that the project can work with in future activities, although some of these institutions might require capacity building support. The survey did not focus specifically on the role of the community trusts in Botswana that have been established in some areas to manage various resources. It might be useful to gain a more comprehensive understanding of some of these trusts (their representativeness, their capacity to manage resources, their relationships with other community institutions) for future project activities. There are also institutions in Kavango such as village natural resource management committees that could be investigated further. The trusts in Botswana and natural resource management committees in Namibia might be useful entry points for further interventions because they already have a natural resource management focus.

The survey has begun to identify gaps in the understanding that residents have about the Okavango River Basin. In particular it is clear that residents of the delta do not have a good understanding of the ecology of the river upstream in Namibia and Angola. For example, there is a persistent feeling that the river is being blocked in one of these countries. In Kavango there is a perception that there is a blockage in Angola and a need to understand what is happening upstream. The survey has provided sufficient data to begin defining information needs and to determine the appropriate approach to education and capacity building. Both survey reports make a number of conclusions and recommendations in this regard based on the survey findings.

III. Consensus building and action planning

The data gathering activities of the survey in Botswana have not specifically been geared to the processes of consensus building and action planning. Although the focus group activities provided the opportunity for discussion there was no attempt to lead participants to reaching consensus on particular issues. This was left to later phases of the project and the follow-up meetings to the survey (see below).

To some extent, the Namibian survey process included some consensus building activities as the survey progressed. The formal meetings of the survey were used to report back to traditional leaders and other stakeholders on the findings of the survey in each of the areas surveyed. The participants helped to validate survey findings and agreement was sought on the priority issues and problems. Participants were also asked to suggest and agree upon solutions to the problems.

In both countries, the data gathering phase has assisted the project outreach teams in starting the process of building trust of relevant stakeholders. Through their interaction with village leaders and local residents, a platform of trust has been established on which future activities can be built. This process of building trust will continue with subsequent project activities. There is perhaps a need to expand the process beyond relationships between the project staff and residents to include other stakeholders such as government officials and the private sector. The Botswana and Namibia surveys revealed some negative attitudes towards the private sector. In Namibia, there was some limited private sector involvement in the formal meetings of the survey. More contact and discussion between community representatives and the private sector might help to resolve some of the concerns expressed by residents about private sector activities. Such contact might also help increase private sector understanding of community perspectives.

Three important meetings have been held in Botswana subsequent to the data gathering phase. A meeting was held in Maun in April 2001 to bring together all Botswana stakeholders in a forum where they could discuss issues that were raised during the survey and validate the survey findings. The second meeting was held in Maun for traditional leaders in preparation for the third meeting in Maun in October 2001. This third meeting brought together community representatives from Namibia and Botswana to compare survey results and map out a way forward. These meetings have provided a platform for consensus building and action planning. For Botswana, they have brought together community representatives from different parts of the delta, giving them an opportunity to share perspectives and ideas. District officials and representatives of various government departments and NGOs were also present at these

meetings and participated in the discussions. These two meetings in particular have helped to develop a shared understanding of resources in the area, and a shared understanding of the issues, aspirations, and problems concerning the delta. The second meeting, which brought together representatives from the two countries, helped to start the process of building a shared understanding of basin-wide issues.

Three aspects of the original objectives for the survey process need further attention. These are: a) develop a shared set of actions within the scope of the project to solve the problems; b) develop a common vision with communities and relevant stakeholders for what will be accomplished in this project and how the results will contribute towards the larger long-term goal for the Okavango River Basin; and c) agree on roles and responsibilities of different community and other organisations in achieving the vision for the project. With hindsight, however, these objectives are more relevant for the post survey activities than they are for the survey phase itself. The project is only now entering a phase of deciding in detail what the survey will accomplish. While the survey data provides a foundation for deciding on future activities, the process of “developing a common vision” for what the project will accomplish and agreeing on roles and responsibilities within the project still needs to be carried out.

2.3 Effectiveness of the survey methods

In both Botswana and Namibia, the approaches employed allowed community members to participate at community meetings, group discussions and in one-on-one discussions. When combined with consultations with political and traditional leaders under other fora, the mixture of approaches utilised has established a firm ground for further consultations during programme implementation. Nevertheless, within the context of the project, there is room for improvement.

In Namibia, the selection of field officers was not based on the technical ability of the field officers to conduct the qualitative consultations. Therefore, the quality of the information, and the value of the consultations in terms of building the base for future community involvement in the programme, was not what it should have been. While the selected officers worked extremely hard and did their best, in future officers selected for this role should be screened with these skills in mind, skills which would be useful for the long-term success of the project.

In Botswana, it might have been better to consider using qualitative consultative approaches rather than employing a quantitative survey. Quantitative surveys are, by design, extractive in nature, and do not stimulate a process of dialogue. Properly conducted qualitative approaches, on the other hand, can stimulate dialogue. Certain qualitative approaches have been specifically designed, or

modified, to facilitate participation, and in recent years this process has been termed participatory appraisal. These methods have been used throughout Africa as part of programme design, are also used during programme implementation, and now form the basis for participatory evaluation of programmes and projects. They are particularly important when trying to engage people in a programme across gender, social class, ethnic, power or other factors that sometimes inhibit broad-based participation.

In conclusion, the process of engaging affected communities in Kavango Region and Ngamiland District through the socio-ecological survey has yielded a number of lessons that should be considered for any future consultations. The programme should now consider the use of techniques often referred to as 'participatory rural appraisal' when further consultations are required in the next stages of programme implementation.

3. MAIN COMMON ISSUES AND DIFFERENCES EMERGING FROM THE SURVEY

3.1 General comments

Although different methodologies were used for implementing the Botswana and Namibian surveys, there is sufficient compatibility in the approaches to be able to compare the data. This was illustrated during the basin-wide community meeting held in Maun in October 2001. Without any prior consultation, both the Namibian and Botswana presentations on findings of the survey followed almost exactly the same format and presented data on the same categories of information.

In general the survey findings reveal more common issues than differences. A number of the differences can be explained by contextual diversity. For example, the physical environment of the river in Namibia is mostly different to that of Botswana, where it is characterised by the myriad channels and islands of the delta. In Botswana, a greater dependence by residents on tourism as a contribution to their livelihoods, is likely to affect attitudes to resources such as wildlife and economic opportunities associated with tourism.

The main common issues and differences from the surveys in the two countries are summarised below.

3.2 Concern about the health of the river and the status of certain resources

In both countries, there is concern among community members about the overall health of the river. In Namibia residents are concerned that over the past years, the river has been becoming shallower, and in Botswana there is concern at the

drying of channels and a lack of water in some channels all year round. In Botswana, residents are convinced Namibia must be doing something to block the river, while in Namibia, the Angolans are to blame. There is however, an understanding among some residents in both countries that reduced rainfall has been a cause of diminished river flow.

In both countries there is concern at the decline in certain resources. According to the Botswana survey report, the main resources perceived to be declining are palm trees, water lilies, medicinal plants, building material and papyrus reeds. In Namibia the main resources reported to be declining were reeds, fish, grazing, water (inland villages), a certain type of thatching grass found near the river, wild fruit trees and wildlife. In Botswana, some species of wildlife, particularly elephants were thought to be increasing. A major difference between the two surveys in perceptions regarding the decline in resources concerns fish. Throughout most of the Kavango survey area, fish were thought to be declining, while in Botswana fish were thought to be increasing. Reasons given for the increase included the use of appropriate harvesting techniques such as keeping only the large fish and returning the small ones. In Namibia, there are widespread reports of the use of small mesh nets and even mosquito nets, which catch fish of all sizes.

In both countries, increased human population is given as a reason for the decline in some of the resources. In Namibia residents also point to the increased livestock population, leading to overgrazing, and the clearing of land for cultivation. The Botswana survey report refers to the main reason for the decline in resources as being the lack of guidelines for natural resources utilisation and management and the lack of definition of the roles and responsibilities of communities and other stakeholders towards the conservation of natural resources.

3.3 Community institutions

The surveys reveal a similar array of local institutions in both countries, ranging from traditional authorities to school boards. In both Kavango and the Delta, some of these institutions exist in name, while others are active.

In Botswana the main village institution is the Village Development Committee (VDC), although the *Kgosi*, or headman, also retains some influence and presides over the village meeting forum, the *kgotla*. In Namibia, the VDCs have only recently been established and have no decision-making authority. They are linked to constituency development committees based on electoral constituencies, which in turn are linked to the Regional Development Co-ordinating Committee for the Kavango Region.

In Kavango, the traditional leadership still plays an important role in land and natural resource management. Land and Farming committees appointed by the chiefs allocate land and advise the chiefs on land administration. The traditional authorities still have a role in making and enforcing traditional laws regarding the use of natural resources, although their authority in this regard is being contested. An increasing number of people, both local and from other areas, are refusing to acknowledge the rights of traditional leaders to impose fines and other punishments. In Botswana, land is allocated by the District Land Board and chief's powers over natural resources have been curtailed by national legislation.

Both surveys reveal the existence of local level natural resource committees. In Botswana, the community trusts mostly comprise more than one village and focus on wildlife and tourism, although some are involved in the harvesting and sale of resources such as thatching grass. In Kavango, conservancies and community forests (the equivalent level institutions to community trusts) are still being discussed and planned. In some areas of Kavango there are village level natural resource management committees and water point committees have been established in most villages, particularly in the inland areas.

3.4 Natural resource use

Communities in both countries are dependent upon natural resources for their livelihoods. The surveys reveal a wide variety of resources used for various purposes. The most commonly used resources in and around the delta are: wildlife; fish; palm trees; veld products; reeds; grass; and trees. In Namibia, the main resources used are: Fish; grass (grazing and thatching); trees; reeds; small wild animals; wild fruits and wild vegetables. Use of resources in both countries can be disaggregated by gender with men using certain resources (e.g. wood for carving) and women others (e.g. palm leaves for basket making). There are of course localised differences in the presence of certain resources and the use of these resources within each country.

In Botswana it was reported that riparian communities were more dependent upon natural resources than non-riparian communities. It is not clear if this is a reference to the use of natural resources in general or those specifically associated with the river such as fish and reeds. In Namibia, non-riparian communities are just as dependent upon natural resources use as riparian communities (although there is less dependence upon resources such as fish and reeds and more dependence upon wild fruits, thatching grass and grazing). It was also noted in the Botswana survey report that there were "lower levels" of wildlife utilisation. However, in Namibia, the use of small wild animals such as spring hare and steenbuck was widely reported.

In both countries, wildlife causes problems for residents, ranging from crop damage by various species, through destruction of livestock by predators to killing of humans by crocodiles and lions.

3.5 Traditional knowledge and management practices

Both surveys revealed that communities have a considerable body of knowledge about the uses to which resources can be put and about how resources can be managed sustainably. There are some similarities and differences in the specific management practices mentioned in each survey. In both countries, for example, burning is used as a management tool, but in Botswana there appears to be more use of seasonal grazing compared to Namibia where it was only reported in one village as something that was done in the past. An interesting feature reported in Botswana, but not in Namibia, is the former use of community resource guards who informed the community when rules on resource use were being violated.

Examples of management practices in Botswana include: Control of hunting and hunting seasons by chiefs; establishment of chief's hunting grounds; burning of papyrus to open channels; establishment of resource use rules by traditional authority. In Namibia examples include; conservation of wild fruit trees; fishing methods that trap only large fish; fines by the traditional authority for illegal hunting.

In both countries, the tendency is for some traditional harvesting methods to remain in use while at the same time more "modern" and more exploitative methods are being introduced. Residents of the delta and of Kavango Region called for a better integration between traditional and modern methods of harvesting and conserving resources. In Botswana, residents complained that they were not consulted by government before laws on natural resource use were designed and promulgated. This resulted in communities not knowing or understanding the contents of laws governing their relationship with natural resources, and this situation led to conflicts over the use of resources among different stakeholders.

In Namibia, a number of traditional rules exist for the use of certain resources. Traditional authorities made a plea for greater cooperation and support from the central government departments in the enforcement of these rules and in the issuing of permits to harvest resources "controlled" at a local level.

3.6 Cultural, social and religious aspect of resource use

The data from both surveys shows that there are a number of cultural, social and religious purposes for various resources associated with the river. However, in Kavango and in the delta, there is a close link between cultural and social aspects of resource use and economic aspects. In both surveys, responses to questions on the cultural and social aspects of resources use were similar to the responses to questions regarding economic use. It emerged quite clearly from the Namibian survey that respondents attach an aesthetic value to resources such as trees and wildlife. Although this did not emerge so clearly from the Botswana survey, it would be surprising if residents of the delta did not do the same.

3.7 Rights of other resource users

Communities of both countries believe that the river and its resources should be shared by a variety of resources users. In neither country do riparian residents believe they have sole rights to the resources. In Namibia, in particular residents emphasised that rights to use the resources should be dependent upon permission being obtained from the local traditional authorities.

In Botswana, there appeared to be a greater awareness or understanding of issues concerning rights of upstream or downstream or out of basin users. This might however, be as a result of different methodologies being used. In Botswana, communities were given statements to which they could agree or disagree regarding the rights of other users. In Namibia a more open-ended approach was used which might not have been sufficiently clear to respondents, or might not have been well explained by the inexperienced data gatherers.

3.8 Natural resource governance

Communities in both countries expressed the need for more control over natural resources to be given to the local level. In Botswana respondents felt that the role of communities in the utilisation and management of natural resources was not sound and meaningful because they did not have full decision-making powers over the resources around them. In Namibia there were frequent calls for more control to be given to traditional authorities and other community institutions. Both surveys also reveal problems of overlapping authority between different institutions and different levels of decision-making concerning natural resources. The Botswana survey concludes that there is no need to create new

institutions for natural resource management. The main need is to develop appropriate links between existing ones and clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of decision-making. In Namibia, however, there is a need to establish institutions such as conservancies and community forests that provide a village or villages with specific rights over resources. There is also a need to establish more local level institutions such as village natural resource management committees.

3.9 Sustainable use of resources

Respondents from both surveys demonstrated an understanding of the concept of sustainable resource use. They do not think that resources should be left in their natural state, but believe they should be accessible for human use. At the same time, communities do not think that there should be large-scale transformation of land and habitats. They want to keep existing resources for future use by themselves and future generations.

3.10 Information needs

Both surveys show a need for information regarding the overall ecology of the river basin that explains what is happening to the river upstream and downstream. In particular communities need to understand what is causing the flow of the river to decline, especially in light of increased external demands on the water. Where communities perceive the decline or increase in certain resources it would be useful to provide an exchange of information between local residents and scientific experts to compare and discuss perceptions on the status of resources.

Both surveys identify the need for communities to receive more information about modern conservation methods and for these to be integrated with traditional methods. In some cases there is a need for greater awareness of the damage that certain practices can cause, but there is also a need for specific training and information on income generating activities using natural resources.

4. CROSS CUTTING THEMES EMERGING FROM THE TWO SURVEYS

4.1 Opportunities for project implementation

The surveys reveal some important opportunities for further project implementation. Chief of these is that communities in both countries recognise that there are problems with the status of certain resources and wish to do something to address these problems. It might seem obvious to say that this provides the project with a good foundation on which to build. However, the important point is that the problems have been identified by the communities themselves and not by outsiders. The project needs to ensure that it continues to address issues that the communities think are important rather than issues that outsiders think are important. This will ensure that the project is not simply consulting communities about an agenda generated by outside interests and concerns. The project, can however, play an important role in building consensus between communities and other stakeholders, such as government, regarding these issues.

In Namibia, the decline of resources has reached a stage where many communities are calling for the establishment of community conservation areas where controls are put in place and enforced regarding the use of resources. Longer term support to communities arising from the project could focus on areas that appear viable for introducing some form of community-based conservation.

The existence of natural resource management committees in both countries also provides the project with important opportunities. The Botswana survey report concluded that the local institutions dealing with natural resources were particularly active because they appeared to address the felt needs of residents and because they have received some form of empowerment training from government and NGOs. The interface between these organisations and the private sector was also deemed to be important. In Namibia, communities identified the need for a variety of resource management committees to deal with fish, fire, trees, wildlife etc. Communities would clearly welcome activities that help them establish such institutions.

4.2 Governance issues

Issues related to decision-making over resources are prominent in both surveys. An important cross-cutting theme is the need for communities to have greater control over their resources. There is also a growing number of institutions that have some degree of authority or responsibility for natural resources management. There is a need to define the roles and responsibilities of these institutions more clearly and identify the appropriate levels in which authority

should be vested. For instance in Namibia, what should be the roles of the Regional Development Coordinating Committee, the Constituency Development Committee and the Village Development Committee compared to the traditional authority or emerging conservancies and community forests? What should be the relationships between them? Where should most control over resources lie? At the regional level or at the village level? The issues are similar in Botswana where there are also overlapping layers of authority and responsibility between the district authority, community trusts, government departments and village institutions such as the VDC.

There are also issues of governance at the local level that are important. In Namibia the authority of traditional leaders to control natural resource use is being contested. In some cases the management regime for some resources described by respondents appears to be that of “open access” where there are no controls.

4.3 Sustainable use

Communities in both countries still rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods and the continued existence of these resources is central to the future of these communities. The approach to resource use is that conservation measures need to be introduced for resources that are declining, but this does not mean banning their use completely. Resources are there to be utilised, not kept in their “natural state”.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CO-MANAGEMENT OF THE BASIN

Data from the surveys and the two project meetings held in Maun (April and October 2001) show that four main categories of stakeholders have been identified. These are: Government; communities; the business sector and non-government organisations (NGOs). Each of these categories can be broken down into sub-components. Thus, government consists of central and regional or district levels and communities are represented by different types of institution, some operating at different scales (e.g community trusts that manage resources over a large area and sometimes over several villages, compared to a headmen with jurisdiction over one village and a smaller land area). The business sector comprises many different sub-components of which safari operators are probably the most important in terms of the project. In Namibia, there is an additional category of stakeholder that does not easily fit into the above categories. There are several large agricultural development projects in Kavango that contribute to the local economy and also draw water from the river for irrigation and take up considerable parcels of land. These projects have in the past been run by a

parastatal development agency but are being transferred to private business people. In some cases, however, such as the Shankara project, these projects are carrying out activities normally associated with NGOs (e.g. support to community vegetable gardening).

Another category missing from the above analysis is that of international stakeholders. Hasler (undated) for example draws attention to competing claims on local Okavango Delta water resources and concludes that a considerable share of these claims arise from the international arena. Hasler notes that international institutions dealing with competing claims on the water of the Okavango include international agreements such as RAMSAR and regional planning bodies such as OKACOM. He also refers to Namibia's plans to abstract water from the river to supply the capital, Windhoek and existing Angolan plans for dams on the river.

To a large extent, the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders are determined and defined by government policy and legislation in both countries. Thus in Namibia, there are guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of the various development committees and legislation requires traditional authorities to promote the sustainable use of natural resources. In Botswana, the roles of central government, the district authorities, VDCs and community trusts are all well-defined in policy and legislation. Table 1 sets out suggestions for broad roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders based on the results of the surveys.

However, the key issues to emerge from a deeper analysis of the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders are those of competing claims over the same resources and of overlapping authority. Hasler (undated) details the different stakeholders exercising claims over the water of the Okavango River at different levels: International, National and Local. It is also clear, however, that not only are there overlapping claims on resources, but there is an increasing trend towards overlapping authority. In both Namibia and Botswana, a variety of institutions have authority over the same resources. Central government, regional/district government, traditional authorities, community-based organisations and the private sector all have rights and duties over natural resources. In many cases, these rights and duties are being contested, with governments to some extent resisting devolution to lower levels and communities, for example, calling for greater local control over resources. There is a need to establish appropriate links between these different layers of decision-making, and facilitate relationships suitable for the promotion of co-management of the resources.

Table 1. Suggested general roles and responsibilities of the main stakeholders in the Okavango Basin

Stakeholder	Roles and responsibilities
International commissions/agreements	Provide the framework and mechanisms for international cooperation of governments and civil society in the management of the basin and its resources
National and regional/district government	Provide the national policy and legislative framework/enforce legislation Monitor the use of the river and its natural resources Educate the public on conservation Consult stakeholders and encourage civil society participation in decision-making National and district level planning
Communities	Sustainable use of resources through appropriate practices (traditional or modern/scientific) Involvement in decision-making at all levels Local level control over resources Local level planning
NGOs	Provide support to government and communities (resources, capacity building etc.) Advocacy and lobbying Environmental education
Business sector	Income generation Support to local communities Responsible and sustainable use of resources Involvement in decision-making

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations on how the output of the surveys can be incorporated into subsequent phases of the project. Given the short term of the remainder of the project and the need for the project to focus on a few targeted activities, this list of recommendations has been kept deliberately short.

6.1 Capacity building

The surveys reveal a range of capacity building needs at community level. Much needs to be done to support the development of effective and democratic local level natural resource management institutions. However, given the time remaining for the project and the limited funds available, the project is not in a position to take on in the short term such activities.

It is recommended that capacity building and support to institutions focus on two main activities:

- a) Support and capacity building for the Namibian and Botswana delegates chosen to represent their countries in basin-wide fora. This support should take the form of information concerning institutions such as OKACOM and the issues that OKACOM deals with, and lobbying with OKACOM to ensure that mechanisms are developed for these delegates to be heard. There is also a need to assist these delegates to develop some form of accountability to the communities in their own countries. They need to have mechanisms for soliciting community opinion and agreeing on a position before attending national and international meetings and they need to have mechanisms of providing feedback to their communities. If such procedures and mechanisms are not put in place they will only have a token role in representing communities at the national and international levels.
- b) Developing links between the different layers of decision-making within each country (national government, regional/district government, communities and other stakeholders). These links can be promoted by holding further workshops bringing these stakeholders together to further promote the establishment of a common understanding of issues and problems within the basin. Such workshops could specifically focus on issues raised during the survey such as the need for clear definition of roles and responsibilities and calls for greater community control over resources. Discussion could also focus on means of providing better links and coordination between different initiatives (in Botswana between the variety of projects focusing on planning and research in the delta, in Namibia between conservancies, community forests and other community conservation activities). These workshops could be held under the auspices of appropriate existing fora in each country (e.g.

the CBNRM forum in Ngamiland, the Regional Development Coordinating Committee in Kavango). There should be more emphasis on private sector involvement in both countries.

6.2 Information

The surveys reveal a range of information needs identified by communities. It is recommended that the following receive attention:

- a) Feedback to the communities on survey findings (where this has not yet been completed), the next steps in project activities and what the project hopes to achieve in its next phases
- b) Where communities perceive the decline or increase in certain resources it would be useful to provide an exchange of information between local residents and scientific experts to compare and discuss perceptions on the status of resources and develop a common understanding of what is happening. These exchanges could also be used to discuss modern conservation methods and ways of integrating these with traditional methods. In some cases there is a need for greater awareness of the damage that certain practices can cause. This should be linked to a better understanding of constraints facing communities in adopting improved practices, and liaising with other agencies that can help overcome these constraints. The results of these discussions could be used as the foundation for information materials concerning the integration of traditional and modern management practices, particularly focusing on sustainable harvesting of resources.
- c) Information on the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders as established by existing national policy and legislation
- d) Specific advice and information on the viability of income generating activities using natural resources such as irrigated gardening, fish farming etc. (particularly in Namibia where many people believe these activities will help them)

6.3 Longer term activities

If additional funding can be found to support longer term activities, the following is recommended:

- a) In Namibia, the various proposals for community conservation initiatives (community forests, conservancies etc.) should be further investigated and viable initiatives supported. Negotiations should be opened with the various

government departments responsible and appropriate NGOs to develop partnerships that can support community initiatives. Ongoing work should continue to promote appropriate links between the various natural resource management institutions and the various layers of decision-making.

- b) In Botswana, future work could focus on capacity building to emerging trusts that do not have NGO support or on villages with a developing vision of how they want to manage their resources. Future work could also focus on assistance to the CBNRM forum as a mechanism for coordination and information dissemination on natural resource management issues.

7. CONCLUSION

The socio-ecological surveys in Botswana and Namibia have raised expectations of further project activities. In both countries, many similar surveys have been carried out, and residents say they never receive any feedback or see any concrete results. So far the project has succeeded in providing feedback to communities through different mechanisms in each country. In Namibia, though, mechanisms still need to be found to provide feedback on the final survey report and to update communities on the results of the basin-wide meeting in Maun in October 2001.

It will be important however, for the project partners to ensure that communities perceive some specific results flowing from the initial surveys. The establishment of the basin-wide community forum will represent one very specific output of the project. Whether communities perceive this to be a benefit of the project will depend upon how effectively it operates and on its level of communication and interaction with the communities themselves.

The project has a major focus on information and education-based capacity building linked to the co-management of the river basin. However, given the nature of the issues raised by the communities themselves (particularly those related to institutional relationships and governance), there is a strong need for interventions that go beyond information and environmental education. Some small-scale activities in pilot communities to assist residents in their visioning and planning, linked to improving institutional relationships with other layers of authority could go a long way to meet some of the expectations raised by the surveys. It is strongly recommended that project partners find ways to initiate such activities.

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Windhoek
14.12.01

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ANNEXE 1

Terms of Reference for the Basin-wide consultant

1. SYNOPSIS

Every River Has its People is a project designed to enhance the participation of communities living in the Okavango River Basin in management plan processes for the basin through:

- Increasing the capacity of communities and other local stakeholders to participate effectively in decision making about natural resources of the Okavango River Basin, particularly those related to water resources, at local, national and regional levels and,
- Developing mechanisms to promote and facilitate the participation of communities and other local stakeholders in natural resource management and decision making, particularly those related to water resources, at local, national and basin-wide levels

The project seeks to ensure that the project is an appropriate one that is supported by the communities and whose significance the communities will understand. The project also seeks to ensure that communities provide input into the project design and determine its direction in order that they participate in it to the fullest extent. It is therefore proposed that the initial phase of the project implementation be a “Socio-ecological Survey” that will be conducted within the communities in order to:

- introduce the project and related issues to communities and other partners
- develop a shared understanding of resources in the area
- develop a shared understanding of the issues, aspirations, problems around the basin as well as a shared set of actions within the scope of the project to solve the problems
- start the process of building trust of relevant stakeholders
- develop a common vision with communities and relevant stakeholders for what will be accomplished in this project and how the results will contribute towards the larger long-term goal for the Okavango River Basin
- gather information about the communities’ utilisation of and perception of the role of the Okavango River Basin resources in their lives.
- gather information about community perception of the role of the Okavango in their lives
- gather information on indigenous management practises and knowledge

- identify gaps in understanding about the Okavango River Basin and define information needs and determine the appropriate approach to education and capacity building
- identify local institutions, e.g., tribal leadership structures and government extension officers that form part of communities' capacity to participate in natural resource management
- agree on roles and responsibilities of different community and other organisations in achieving the vision for the project

The survey will be implemented in Namibia and Botswana with national consultants and project partners overseeing the implementation of the projects in the respective countries. The region-wide Consultant will be responsible for ensuring that the national-level activities are coordinated and harmonised between countries to the degree appropriate and that the output of the surveys in both countries is consistent with the objectives. Further, the region-wide Consultant will ensure the careful alignment of work through regular communication and comparing of methodology and results, consequently supporting and facilitating synergy between the two national teams in the implementation of the surveys.

In Botswana the survey will be implemented by three coordinated teams, who will work simultaneously to collect data in 18 communities in and around the Delta over a period of three months. Each team will be made up of four surveyors. Two of the surveyors will be people with experience in community liaison and who will focus on collecting qualitative information related to resource use, condition, people's attitudes and perceptions etc., while the other two will be enumerators whose primary responsibility will be to collect demographic data. Coordination and supervision of the teams will be the primary responsibility of the Project Coordinator, based in Maun. The three teams will collect, collate, and report on the data generated through the survey. The information is to be gathered through a combination of participatory techniques and conventional data collection methods. A national consultant will be responsible for the training the teams, literature review and producing the report of the surveys.

In Namibia, the survey will be undertaken by a team with skills and experiences in social, institutional, ecological and land-use issues, based on the procedures developed over the course of past similar surveys in five different regions of Namibia. The "social" survey team will hold meetings with the Regional Governor and his Councillors, chiefs, headmen and other leaders in each focal area. It will then hold meetings with selected communities, where after it will meet with individuals and with small focal groups. The "ecological" survey team will visit all important habitats within each focal area, with emphasis on important, productive and threatened ecosystems, areas with endemic species, important biodiversity hotspots, areas with known or expected red-data species and areas that offer the potential for wildlife, tourism and other natural-resource-based production. This

work will be directed from the results obtained from desk studies by the ecological team prior to the start of the survey.

2. STUDY AREA

The region-wide Consultant will be responsible for covering the work done in the Kavango/ Caprivi region in Namibia and the Okavango Delta region in Botswana.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

With guidance from the project partners through meetings with a Steering Committee, the region-wide Consultant is expected to carry out the following work at the various stages of survey development and implementation as specified below:-

i) Survey Preparation

- The national consultants will design the initial draft of questionnaires. The region-wide Consultant is expected to review and comment on the format and content of questionnaires (and/or other relevant tools) that will be used to collect demographic information. This information will include household size and make-up, education, age; income, occupation, sources of remittance, livelihoods; natural resource use; languages spoken in the home and ethnic affiliations etc. Quantitative info on the number of people drawing water out of the river, size of fields etc. is also required.
- The national consultants will be responsible for the design of participatory methodology tools. The region-wide Consultant is expected to review and comment on the format and content of these tools which must cover collecting qualitative data and an inventory on people's attitudes, perceptions, and visions on the natural resources and the river. The tools could include focus group discussions, interviews etc. The project will require information on:
 - cultural, religious, social significance of the river to people living within the basin
 - perception of communities on the state of the resource
 - who is using the resource, how and who has control
 - institutions and governance within the community
 - traditional knowledge and management systems of natural resources
 - perceptions on rights that people upstream and downstream have
 - perceptions on rights that out of basin resource users have
 - perceptions on rights (within local context) non-riparian communities have
 - consequences of their use of the resource

- the history of that community as told by them
- how the river and its resources can help develop community members' lives
- management structures that communities would like to see
- the institutional, info-sharing, capacity, resources communities see as needed
- people's views on whether the resource be developed or kept in its natural state

ii) On the job training

The region-wide Consultant will ensure that as part of the survey exercise, survey team members receive on the job training. This training could include observing survey staff and providing guidance and constructive criticism where necessary. The region-wide Consultant will also participate in the survey planning workshops as well as team training workshops.

iii) Oversight Of Portion Of Survey Implementation

The region-wide Consultant will oversee and be involved with certain periods of data collection and related survey work conducted in the field to ensure quality results. This would likely entail accompanying teams into the field for the first community surveys, and participating in feedback sessions to share results with communities.

iv) Ongoing Input

The consultant will review the ongoing analysis and interpretation of the findings carried out by the national consultants, and facilitate the integration between social and natural resource sectors as well as coordination between institutions.

v) Survey Write Up.

The region-wide Consultant will contribute to and review the national survey reports on the results and outcomes of the survey, which work will be the primary responsibility of the national consultants.

vi) Any other aspects which the Consultant considers necessary for the success of the survey.

The discussion of these should be reflected in the inception report.

4. REPORTING PROCEDURE

At the initial stage, the region-wide Consultant is required to prepare an inception report indicating the approach to be used for the surveys for review by the partner NGOs before beginning the surveys.

The region-wide Consultant is to produce one interim report midway through the survey period. The midterm report should assess effectiveness of:

- a) questionnaires and other survey tools developed
- b) teams conducting the surveys
- c) overall strategy.

The report should also detail the problems encountered in the coordination and harmonisation of survey implementation in both countries and the solutions proposed to counter these. Significant personnel issues should also be covered. Finally the interim report should include recommendations for changes in strategy, if appropriate.

At the end of the survey period the Consultant is to produce a final report evaluating the level of success of the survey in achieving the set objectives and make recommendations on how the output of the surveys can be incorporated into subsequent phases of the program implementation.

5. TIME SCHEDULE

While the concurrent implementation of the surveys in both Namibia and Botswana would have been the ideal, due to the situation of conflict in Kavango/Caprivi area, the survey exercise in Namibia will be delayed indefinitely until it is safe. There will therefore be a time lag between implementation of the surveys in the two regions. Innovative ways therefore need to be found to address both the approach and the timing issues and the consultant is to discuss how they plan to address this situation in the inception report.

The region-wide Consultant will work with the project for a period of a total of fifty (50) working days over the implementation of the surveys in Botswana and in Namibia as follows:

- a) Ten (10) days of this period will be spent in participating in preparation planning of the Socio-Ecological Survey as well as reviewing the questionnaires, the sample design and participatory tools to be used for collecting data in Botswana and another ten (10) days in Namibia for the same purpose.
- b) Ten (10) days will be spent in the field checking on and overseeing the data collection and reporting work conducted by the field teams in Botswana and another ten (10) days in Namibia. Of the ten days spent in each country seven (7) will be spent on the initial survey observation while the remaining three (3) will be spent in feedback observation sessions. Ten (10) days will be spent in reviewing the report produced by national consultants and writing up the region-wide consultant's report.