

the  
state  
of



# community conservation in Namibia

a status summary of  
communal conservancies  
community forests and other CBNRM initiatives



summary

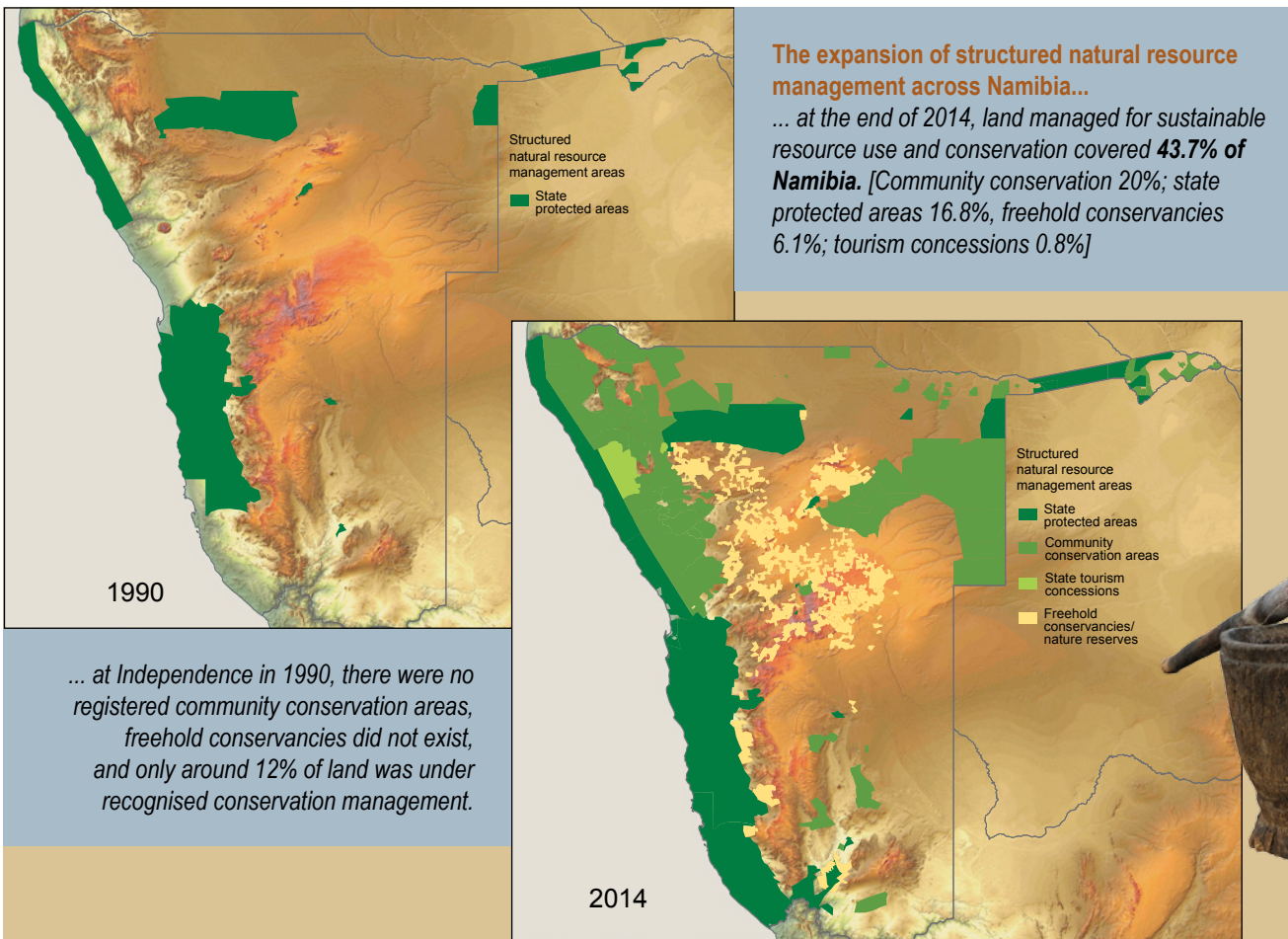
# 2014/15

This brochure summarises data from the annual Community Conservation Report; The full report is available as a PDF at [www.nacso.org.na](http://www.nacso.org.na) or as a printed report at the NACSO office in Windhoek.



PLACES





**The expansion of structured natural resource management across Namibia...**  
... at the end of 2014, land managed for sustainable resource use and conservation covered **43.7% of Namibia**. [Community conservation 20%; state protected areas 16.8%, freehold conservancies 6.1%; tourism concessions 0.8%]

... at Independence in 1990, there were no registered community conservation areas, freehold conservancies did not exist, and only around 12% of land was under recognised conservation management.

**a little history...** The earliest community-based conservation initiatives in Namibia, which grew into what is today the national CBNRM programme, started before Independence, when the first community game guards were appointed by local headmen in an attempt to reverse wildlife declines. At the time, people living in communal areas had few rights to use wildlife. Wild animals were seen as little more than a threat to crops, livestock and infrastructure, as well as community safety. Ground-breaking legislation passed in the mid-nineties laid the foundation for a new approach to natural resource use. By forming

legally recognised community conservation organisations such as conservancies and community forests, people in communal areas can now actively manage – and generate returns from – natural resources in their area. This continues to encourage wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration. While community conservation organisations are resource management units, they are defined by social ties, uniting groups of people with the common goal of managing their resources. The first conservancies were registered in 1998, and the first community forests in 2006.

CBNRM stands for *community-based natural resource management* and is used interchangeably with the term *community conservation*

Conservation hunting is legal, controlled trophy hunting of free-roaming, indigenous game with clear, measurable conservation and human development outcomes



## Community conservation in Namibia:

### At the end of 2014 there were...

- 82 registered communal conservancies
- 1 community conservation association in a national park (Kyaramacan Association, managed like a conservancy)
- 17 concessions in national parks or on other state land held by 20 conservancies (some shared concessions)
- 32 registered community forests
- 66 community rangeland management areas
- and 2 community fish reserves

### What's being achieved?

#### Community conservation...

- covers over 165,182 km<sup>2</sup>, which is about 53.9% of all communal land with about 184,000 residents (another about 5,400 members of the Kyaramacan Association live in Bwabwata National Park)
- of this area, conservancies manage 162,030 km<sup>2</sup>, which is about 19.6% of Namibia
- community forests cover 30,827 km<sup>2</sup>, 90% of it overlapping with conservancies
- community rangeland management areas cover 4,004 km<sup>2</sup>, much of it overlapping with conservancies
- from the beginning of 1990 to the end of 2014, community conservation contributed about N\$ 4.15 billion to Namibia's net national income
- during 2014, community conservation generated about N\$ 91.2 million in returns for local communities
- community conservation facilitated 5,808 jobs in 2014
- 57 conservancies had a total of 184 enterprises based on natural resources in 2014
- community conservation supports wildlife recoveries and environmental restoration
- Namibia's elephant population grew from around 7,500 to around 20,000 between 1995 and 2014
- Namibia has an expanding free-roaming lion population outside national parks

# living with wildlife

## to live with wildlife...

... means striving for balanced land use and a healthy environment. Game does not need to be eradicated from a landscape because it may pose a threat to crops or livestock. Wildlife can create a great range of returns that far exceed its costs. Game - and all natural resource use - can be integrated with other rural livelihood activities for the benefit of the people and the land...



Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area

*Community conservation is about managing natural resources sustainably to generate returns for rural people. Conservancies, community forests and other community conservation initiatives create the needed legal framework for this. By choosing to live with wildlife, rural communities are broadening their livelihood options as well as enabling a healthier environment. Through wise and sustainable management and use, the resources are conserved for future generations while providing significant returns today.*



# building foundations

## to build foundations...

... means creating structures that enable wise and effective governance, and that empower rural people to control their environmental policies, actions, affairs and resources for a common, sustainable good...



## Governance at a glance:

### At the end of 2014 there were...

- 45 management plans in place
- 20 sustainable business and financial plans in place
- 50 annual financial reports presented
- 60 annual general meetings held
- 15% female chairpersons
- 39% female treasurers/financial managers
- 35% female management committee members
- and 30% female staff members in communal conservancies in Namibia



## What's being achieved?

### Community conservation means...

- contributing to improved democracy in rural areas
- empowering individuals, including women, to actively participate in decision-making
- employing staff to manage a broad range of resources
- working according to management and benefit distribution plans
- unlocking human potential by providing new access to diverse training and capacity building
- enabling controlled tourism development and conservation hunting activities
- covering an increasing portion of operational costs through own income
- linking into regional conservation structures

## Institutional development in conservancies in 2014

The information shows that conservancy management capacities fluctuate, influenced by staff and committee changes, as well as the degree of external support. Many conservancies have strong female participation and a substantial number of conservancies that used to be dependent on grant aid are now covering their operational costs from own income, with many also distributing benefits to members or investing in community projects. The Kyaramacan Association is included as a de facto conservancy.

## the three pillars of community conservation

### institutional development

- good governance creates the basis for resource management and the capture and distribution of returns

### natural resource management

- innovative resource management enables biodiversity conservation and sustainable use

### business, enterprises and livelihoods

- market-based approaches enable a wide range of community returns

Institutional development status category	Status in 2014
Registered conservancies (incl. Kyaramacan Ass.)	83
Conservancies generating returns	63
covering operational costs from own income	30
distributing cash or in-kind benefits to members, or investing in community projects	38
Conservancy management committee members	905
female management committee members	317
female chairpersons	11
female treasurers/financial managers	29
Conservancy staff members	680
female staff members	205
Conservancies with Management Plans	45
Sustainable Business and Financial Plans	20
Conservancy AGMs held	60
financial reports presented at AGM	50
financial reports approved at AGM	43
budgets approved at AGM	43

## building foundations

### for sustainable resource management

Prior to Independence, without the existence of formal management structures and lacking ownership over resources, people in communal areas undertook few coordinated natural resource management activities. This resulted in fragmentation, neglect and over-exploitation. Today, community conservation not only monitors and manages resource use, it also provides legitimate structures for the tourism and conservation hunting industries, as well as a suite of other private sector, government and donor stakeholders, to formally engage with communities in an equitable manner. Legally recognised entities such as conservancies and community forests have empowered communities to stand up for their rights.

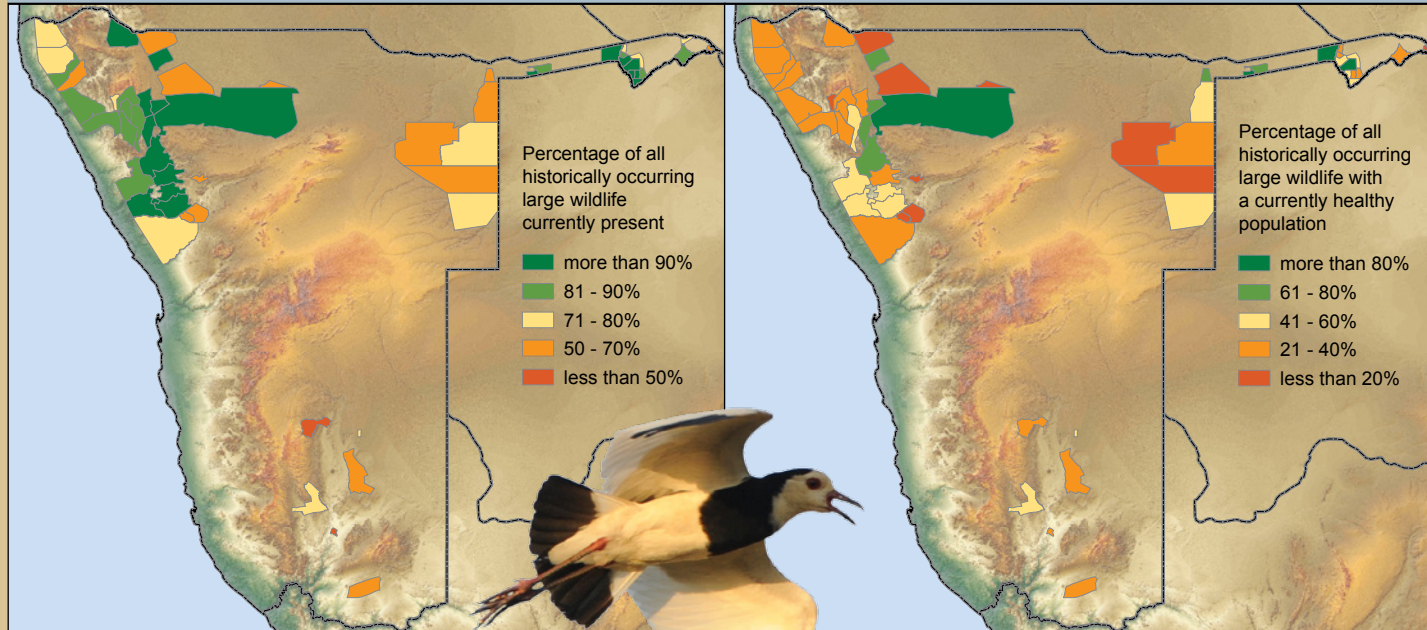


Ohungu Conservancy office



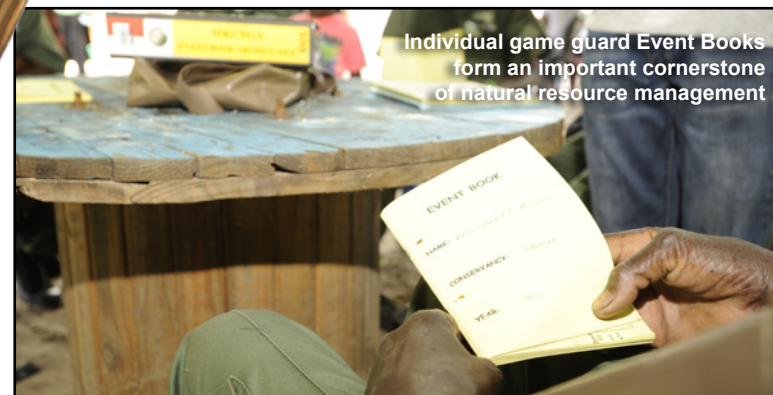
### Species richness and population health of wildlife in conservancies

The **wildlife species richness** map (left) indicates the percentage of all large wildlife species that historically occurred, which are currently present in a particular conservancy. The **wildlife population health** (right) indicates the percentage of all large wildlife species that historically occurred, which currently have a healthy population in a particular conservancy. Etosha, Mamili, Mudumu and the core areas of Bwabwata National Park are included on the maps for comparison.



### a broad spectrum of communal resources

Modern approaches have not only returned the rights to the people and the wildlife to the land, but are enabling an increasing range of returns from natural resources, which were unheard of only a few decades ago. This success is based on community empowerment, as well as innovative systems and tools that enable effective management and sustainable use of natural resources. These include the Event Book monitoring tool, annual game counts and quota setting, as well as wildlife management and zonation plans.



Individual game guard Event Books form an important cornerstone of natural resource management

# managing resources

### to manage resources...

... means ensuring that they are used wisely so that the resource base (the natural environment) stays healthy and maximum returns are generated without negative impact...



Dehorned rhino cow with calf, Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area

### Natural resources at a glance:

#### At the end of 2014 there were...

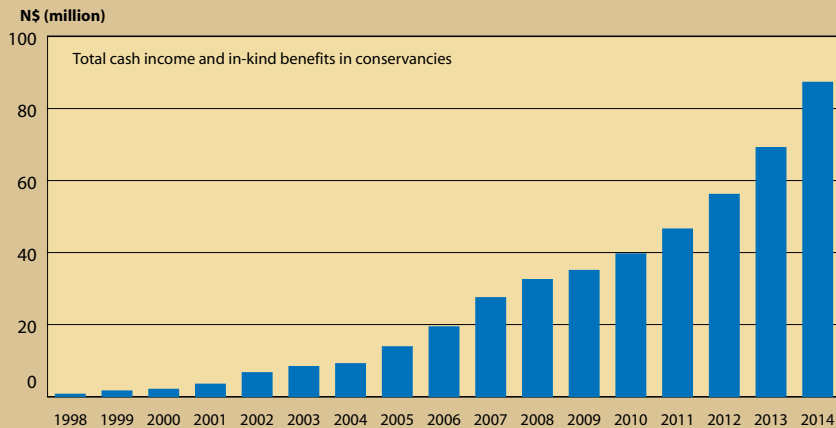
- 83 conservancies using the Event Book monitoring tool
- 52 conservancies conducting an annual game count
- 4 national parks undertaking collaborative monitoring with conservancies
- 38 conservancies directly involved in tourism activities
- 70 conservancies holding quota setting feedback meetings
- 70 conservancies with own-use harvesting quotas
- 48 conservancies with conservation hunting concessions
- 20 conservancies with shoot & sell harvesting contracts
- 45 conservancies with a wildlife management plan
- 40 conservancies with a zonation plan
- 532 game guards working in conservancies (figures include 3 unregistered, emerging conservancies & the Kyaramacan Association)

### What's being achieved?

#### Community conservation means...

- combatting poaching and other illegal activities
- mitigating human-wildlife conflict and limiting losses incurred through living with wildlife
- zoning areas for different land uses to reduce conflicts
- enabling wildlife recoveries, effective natural resource management and environmental restoration
- working with neighbours to promote a large landscape approach to natural resource management
- black rhinos occur in 14 conservancies
- elephants occur in 48 conservancies
- lions occur in 24 conservancies
- species that had become locally extinct in the Zambezi Region, such as eland, giraffe and blue wildebeest, are thriving after re-introductions
- the Erongo-Kunene Game Count is the largest annual, road-based game count in the world





### Total returns to conservancies and members

The total cash income and in-kind benefits generated in conservancies (incl. Kyaramacan Ass.) grew from less than N\$ 1 million in 1998 to more than N\$ 87 million in 2014. This includes all directly measurable income and in-kind benefits being generated, and can be divided into cash income to conservancies (mostly through partnerships with private sector operators), cash income to residents (mostly through employment and the sale of products), as well as in-kind benefits to residents (mostly the distribution of harvested game meat).



## improving rural lives

Conservancies are showing that community conservation can generate a broad range of community and individual returns while covering its operational costs from own income. Community conservation is funding rural development projects and empowering communities, while individual households are benefiting through job creation and new income opportunities, as well as in-kind benefits and improved access to a range of services. Community conservation is diversifying options and increasing opportunities for rural people.

### Sources of returns to conservancies and their members in 2014

The spectrum of natural resource sectors generating returns for communities continues to widen. Joint-venture tourism and conservation hunting are making the greatest contributions. (Figures incl. Kyaramacan Ass. returns)

Source of cash income or in-kind benefits	Value in N\$	Percentage of total cash income and in-kind benefits
Joint-venture tourism (includes all cash income and in-kind benefits to conservancies and members)	39,586,078	45.3%
Conservation hunting (includes all cash income to conservancies and members)	24,106,436	27.6%
Conservation hunting meat	7,371,740	8.4%
Community-based tourism and other small to medium enterprises	3,534,926	4%
Indigenous plant products	3,496,849	4%
Own-use game harvesting meat	3,139,140	3.6%
Miscellaneous (e.g. interest)	1,872,788	2.1%
Crafts	1,209,927	1.4%
Tatching grass	1,199,845	1.4%
Shoot-and-sell game harvesting	1,076,921	1.2%
Other hunting or game harvesting (e.g. problem animal control)	698,135	0.8%
Live game sales	18,000	< 0.1%
Premium hunting	-	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>87,310,785</b>	<b>100%</b>



Waitress Romansia Roman, Damaraland Camp Torra Conservancy

# improving lives

## to improve lives...

... means facilitating economic opportunities and empowering people to make their own choices from amongst a range of livelihood options that enable a healthy and dignified existence...

## CBNRM returns at a glance:

### At the end of 2014 there were...

- 40 joint-venture tourism enterprises with 708 full time and 230 part time employees
- 48 conservation hunting concessions with 134 full time and 108 part time employees
- 32 small/medium enterprises (mostly tourism/crafts) with 156 full time and 40 part time employees
- 680 conservancy employees
- 905 conservancy representatives receiving allowances
- 2,082 indigenous plant product harvesters
- and 765 craft producers

in communal conservancies in Namibia (part time employment includes seasonal labour)

## What's being achieved?

### Community conservation...

- generated total cash income and in-kind benefits to rural communities of over N\$ 91,153,126 in 2014; of this, conservation hunting generated N\$ 21,861,482, tourism generated N\$11,394,916 and indigenous plants generated N\$ 142,915 in fees for conservancies
- conservancy residents earned a total cash income of N\$ 44,049,635 from enterprise wages, of which N\$ 26,386,260 was from joint-venture tourism, N\$ 11,031,642 from conservancies, N\$ 3,929,312 from conservation hunting and N\$ 2,273,974 from SMEs
- conservancy residents earned a total cash income of N\$ 3,353,934 from indigenous plants and N\$ 1,209,928 from crafts
- 522,104 kg of game meat worth N\$ 10,510,880 was distributed to conservancy residents N\$ 6,979,965 in cash benefits was distributed to conservancy residents and used to support community projects
- indigenous plant sales outside conservancies (mostly thatching grass) generated N\$ 2,903,969 for communities and craft sales outside conservancies generated N\$ 938,370



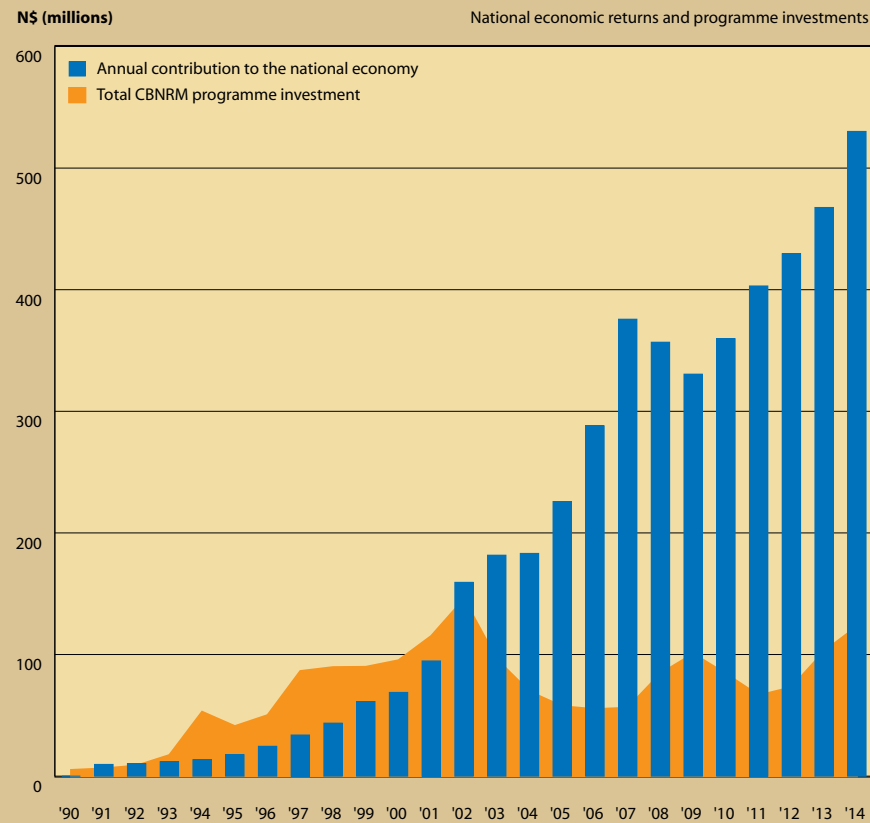
**Estimates of the national economic returns from CBNRM compared to economic investment costs**

In 2014, the net national income (NNI) contribution made by CBNRM was about N\$ 530 million. Between 1990 and 2014, the cumulative value of the NNI contributions amounts to an estimated N\$ 4.15 billion\*.

The graph also shows the value of spending on the CBNRM programme each year, which cumulatively adds up to about N\$ 1.8 billion of investment between 1990 and 2014. Donors supplied most of the funds, while the MET and NGOs also provided inputs, mainly as 'in-kind' contributions such as staff, vehicles and other kinds of support.

Year	Economic rate of return	Net present value at 6%
15	5%	- N\$ 9.7 million
17	16%	N\$ 188.8 million
19	19%	N\$ 350.5 million
21	21%	N\$ 525.0 million
23	23%	N\$ 708.5 million
24	23%	N\$ 803.4 million

**The economic efficiency of CBNRM**  
 Since 1990, the programme has had an economic internal rate of return of 23% and has earned an economic net present value of some N\$ 803 million. This is a highly positive economic return for a programme investment.



\* Figures have been adjusted for inflation to be equivalent to the value of Namibia dollars in 2013. This means they are not directly comparable with those used in the 2012 Community Conservation Report, which used figures equivalent to the value of Namibian dollars in 2012.



**The future at a glance:**

**Community conservation may grow to...**

- 90-100 conservancies and 40-50 community forests
- cover over 21% of Namibia and well over 50% of all communal land
- embrace up to 15% of all communal area residents and well over 50% of rural communal areas residents in suitable areas

**What might be achieved?**

**Community conservation can...**

- facilitate significant further growth of tourism in communal areas and increase local involvement
- enhance the reputation of communal areas as offering some of the country's most spectacular destinations
- entrench Namibia's position as offering some of the best conservation hunting on unfenced land in Africa
- mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing dependence on subsistence agriculture
- maximise the potential of indigenous plants through further strategic international partnerships
- strengthen incentives for people to live with and manage wildlife so our children's children can continue to share in this important African heritage

**New for 2015:**

- roll-out of SOPs and mandatory conservancy compliance requirements by the MET
- roll-out of a game guard certification system



# working for a common vision

Erongo-Kunene Community Conservation Area

**to work for a common vision...**

... means focussing on what can be achieved, rather than yielding to difficulties; looking beyond individual activities and local impacts to bigger regional, national and trans-boundary connections, influences and achievements, while facing challenges, anticipating change and striving for sustainability...



**The biggest challenges?**

- enabling optimum conservancy governance capacities, effective decision-making and wise leadership, as well as pro-active members
- countering the pressure (based on urban moral ideals) to ban the legal and well-controlled sustainable use of wildlife
- optimising land allocation and administration in communal areas
- ensuring long-term technical support to community conservation structures
- achieving self-sufficiency and programmatic sustainability

Gustaph Tjiudukamba, Kunene Region Community Conservancy Association Chairman

EMPOWERMENT  
BENEFITS  
SUSTAINABILITY

## Community conservation

grew out of the recognition that wildlife and other natural resources were disappearing in many communal areas, and that these losses could be reversed, and both rural livelihoods and the environment could be improved, if local communities were empowered to manage and use the resources themselves



The Namibian CBNRM Programme is based on strong partnerships between the Namibian government, international donor agencies, local and international NGOs, the private sector and community conservation organisations



more information at [www.nacso.org.na](http://www.nacso.org.na)