Munwe omwe taupwai njina

One finger cannot crush a louse by itself.
(Tonga proverb)

An internal mid-term evaluation of CONASA

by Andy Lyons

with case studies by
Friday Mwaba, Mwangala Mukamba,
Liberty Habeenzu, Highland Hamududu,
Goodwin Kabumbwe, and Robby Mwiinga

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Meaning of the proverb
The title of this report is taken from the Tonga proverb, *Munwe omwe taupwai njina*, or "One finger cannot crush a louse by itself". This proverb applies to CONASA at two levels. First, it highlights the importance of many fingers working together, which is reflected in CONASA's focus on participatory development strategies and strengthening of local institutions. Second, the proverb emphasizes that each finger plays a role in solving a problem, in much the same way that CONASA uses a multi-layered, multi-sector approach to increasing livelihood security and improving natural resource management.

Cover Photos
o Upper left – Bumper maize harvest, Nkandazovu VAG. May 2003 *Photo by Liberty Habeenzu.* o Upper right – women's craft group training, Choma Museum. April 2003 *Photo by Anja Held* o Middle left – Raymond Siamalyata, Moomba CRB, at leadership skills training, Choma. April 2003 *Photo by Mwangala Mukamba* o Middle right – market information billboard, Bbilili VAG. December 2003 *Photo by Andy Lyons* o Lower left – Chiefs Shezongo, Moomba, and Chikanta on exchange visit to Chobe, Botswana. October 2001 *Photo by Charles Akashambatwa* o Lower right – Kafue National Park Stakeholders Forum. Mumbwa, May 2003 *Photo by Nancy Bwalya-Mukumbuta*

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While this report and anything good that might come out of it is the collective product of a number of individuals, the author accepts responsibility for all errors, oversights, and omissions.

Andy Lyons
alyons@nature.berkeley.edu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONASA is currently in its fourth and final year of programming under a cooperative agreement with USAID/Zambia to improve livelihood security and sustainable resource management in Southern Province. CONASA is pursuing these twin goals through a three-pronged approach that corresponds to the three components of the project: 1) supporting rural livelihoods through agricultural production and small business development, 2) policy and advocacy, and 3) TBNRM. This evaluation was commissioned at the end of year three to assess what the project had achieved during its first three years of operation, discuss trends and special issues, and explore future directions. The focus on this evaluation was exclusively on programmatic results, while questions concerning project management and finances are to be addressed in separate study.

The context in which CONASA operates was not highly conducive for either of its goals when the project started in 2001, and in many ways has deteriorated since then. The size of the project area, its remoteness from the road and rail network, poor communication infrastructure, lack of market support institutions, weak private sector presence, dry climate, marginal soil fertility, back-to-back droughts, limited government services, and stagnant macro economy combine to form formidable barriers to enterprise development and agricultural production. On the resource management side, a two-year ban on safari hunting, a lengthy restructuring of ZAWA, a near total lack of law enforcement for over two years, and expansion of settlements into core habitat has cast doubt on whether the most profitable form of wildlife enterprise—safari hunting—will ever generate the levels of revenue it did as recent as the 1990s. It is important for the project to be cognizant of the context in which it operates in order to develop realistic expectations and strategies.

CONASA is guided by a results framework that was specified in USAID's original RFA for the project, divided into three components. The project has done an admirable job in staying focused on the results framework, and all reporting and activity planning is structured by result. While adherence to a results framework has overall helped the project to stay focused, the push to achieve targets as quickly as possible has also resulted in a trade-off with sustainability and efficiency. Thus for example the agriculture strategy is focused primarily on improving the yields of annual crops with little attention to sustainable agroforestry systems, the enterprise section builds businesses instead of developing markets, and the capacity building team has sometimes provided leadership training when there were no activities to lead.

Two months after it began operating, CONASA was informed by USAID that its total budget had been reduced by $2 million USD. CONASA's response was to reduce the lifespan of the project from five years to four, and eliminate one GMA from its service area. However the results framework and performance targets were not adjusted. Consequently what was already an ambitious and possibly unrealistic set of goals for five years was compressed to four. CONASA has also stuck to its original strategy even though significant changes in the project context, most notably the total lack of new safari hunting revenue, has greatly reduced the effectiveness of some of its interventions.

There was not a lot of on-the-ground impact during the first year, as most of this period was spent on setting up the project infrastructure, forming and strengthening CBOs, and collecting information on the area, products, markets, and policy studies. However in years two and three, results started to show up in all components. This trend of becoming more efficient and effective as time goes on speaks well for the project, and demonstrates that its strategy of building interventions on a solid foundation of needs assessment and grassroots CBOs is generally working.

Component one is concerned with strengthening household livelihood security and production of natural resources in the project area. The most significant achievements under the HLS activities include:

- formation of CBOs (CRBs, VAGs, and VMCs) in the project area, involving community mobilization, skills assessment, and training
- several successful strategies to boost local food production, including formation of locally managed revolving seed schemes, off-season seed multiplication, use of improved seed varieties, and extension training
- formation and training of dozens of enterprise groups, with promising signs of a viable model in a handful of them

The total population of the project area is roughly 110,000 people. A conservative estimate, based on two lines of evidence, of the proportion of people that have improved their livelihoods through CONASA's HLS activities is ¼, and possibly as many as ½.

Within the CBO support unit, greater attention is needed on building sustainable institutions, as opposed to building the capacity of individual members. This includes more reflection on the economic viability of CRBs and VAGs, and a review the roles of CRBs and VAGs relative to their comparative advantages. An over-reliance on volunteerism and lack of permanent staff to provide continuity between boards is also problematic and needs to be addressed. There is also a need to establish horizontal support systems for ongoing organisational needs, including training, auditing, and monitoring.

Challenges for the HLS sections include increasing the reach of activities that boost food production. This might require complementing proven strategies, such as community level seed multiplication, with a different model of agricultural support that, for example, offers more training to private sector providers, reduces transaction costs for input provision, and makes greater use of community distribution and training systems. The enterprise section also needs to broaden impact, perhaps by focusing on just two or three enterprises, establishing or strengthening institutions that support markets (e.g., information systems, mutual insurance schemes), and more focus on strengthening local markets. The G-MED microfinance activity has been troubled from the start, however the funds have finally started to flow promising to expand income generation through the provision of much needed start-up capital for emerging enterprises.

The main achievements under resource management include:

- numerous successful community mobilization and sensitisation campaigns for conservation, resulting in several examples of voluntary surrendering of firearms
- facilitation of numerous meetings involving ZAWA and CRBs to improve community relations, increase skills in resource management, and implement safari hunting concession agreements
- formation of local NRM plans and local bylaws in four out of five CRBs, which are currently going through the process of legal ratification through a provision in the Local Government Act
- numerous product development and marketing studies on non-timber forest products, with additional progress in developing two of these into enterprises (honey and mungongo nuts)

The training of livelihood skills for reformed poachers, which CONASA facilitated, and the development of local-level NRM plans, strengthen the foundations for conservation, however wildlife and forest resources are still under threat in most areas. Future challenges for resource management in CONASA include strengthening the linkages between conservation and other sections in the project, notably agriculture, enterprise, and policy and advocacy work, and supporting the implementation of NRM plans through education and communication campaigns, resource monitoring, and targeted HLS activities. The project

also needs to conduct a more detailed analysis and mapping of conservation targets and threats so it can better strategize and prioritise its interventions. It should also be noted that the work CONASA is engaged in with respect to resource management is mostly focused on the edges of the problem, and the core threats (expansion of settlements, demand for bushmeat in urban markets, migration, rural poverty, and high opportunity costs for conservation) will not likely be dented without significantly higher levels of investment.

The goals of component two are to build civil society support for CBNRM, support the implementation of a bottom-up approach to resource management in ZAWA, and strengthen the capacity of civil society for policy analysis and advocacy. The most significant achievements under this component include:

- training on the importance and content of natural resource policies (implemented in conjunction with component three) that was fairly widespread and effective
- a baseline report on the polices in the wildlife, forestry, water, and fisheries sectors, and widespread dissemination and discussion of these analyses
- the establishment of the Natural Resources Consultative Forum in a manner which was inclusive and eventually handed over to government
- support for ZAWA's reorientation to grassroots NRM by facilitating several small activities and strengthening communication channels
- formation of a regional CRB association
- helping communities take advantage of opportunities to provide input into policy formation by facilitating a community presentation to a parliamentary committee on forestry, and input into the draft land policy review process
- smoothing relations between ZAWA, communities, and safari operators through meetings and forums

The remaining challenges for component two include ensuring that gains so far are made sustainable and backed up by structures and processes that can persist without project support. CONASA also needs to identify new ways to support implementation of policy reforms in ZAWA, and strengthen linkage between the on-the-ground HLS activities and conservation. To prepare for future programming, component two needs to redefine its relevance for the project goals as a whole, review its role as the needs in advocacy evolve from structure and processes to specific issues, and identify how policy can contribute toward a more level playing field for joint venture partnerships between CBOs and foreign investors.

Component three is concerned with supporting many of the structures and processes as components one and two, but at a transboundary level. The most significant achievements in component three include:

- support for the development of enterprises with the potential to reach regional markets
- exchange visits that created new social linkages between the Zambian CBOs and CBNRM programmes in neighbouring countries
- sensitisation and training in natural resource policy
- development of natural resource bylaws and resource management plans
- formation and strengthening of several Community Development Trusts in the open areas
- collection of preliminary information on wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity between Kafue NP and the Zambezi

While the TBNRM component has officially ended, many of the activities are still ongoing and require further attention from CONASA. Priority issues from component three include continuing the support for selected enterprises, in particular the Dundumwezi Campsite, mungongo nut collecting/processing, and honey production/marketing, and finding a way to provide legal services to CBOs which were lost with the closure of the CONASA CSC. There is also a need to complete the work on analysing habitat connectivity and wildlife

conflicts in the "corridor", and use this analysis to develop a plan for additional research and exploration of management options. Other activities still very much in the early stages but worth supporting include the ZAZIBONA transboundary forum and the preliminary efforts to establish a Kafue-Zambezi conservancy in Chief Sekute's area. Although the efforts to create linkages between regional markets and ecosystems were not hugely successful in CONASA's first phase, the potentials are still very much there and CONASA should continue to support the conditions under which such linkages can emerge.

While the activities in CONASA's three components are complementary, there is limited evidence of synergy across or within components, with the exception of CBO formation and capacity building which serves as the implementation structure for nearly all activities at the community level. Some of the reasons why weak levels of synergy exist between sections and components include activities operating at different temporal and organisational scales (e.g., national policy analysis and local agricultural production), unfocused spatial targeting, and insufficient saturation of nearly all activities. While it may be unrealistic, even in the best circumstances, to expect to see synergistic effects between activities operating at different temporal and spatial scales in just four years, there could and should be stronger forms of synergy among activities at the local level. To achieve greater synergy, CONASA needs to focus on building a critical mass of intervention in a given area, supporting the conditions for the emergence of synergy (which include strong local institutions, links with markets, and information systems), and reducing the gap in temporal and spatial scales of activities (i.e., making policy and advocacy relevant to community needs).

One of the goals of the mid-term evaluation was to put CONASA's data systems to the test in preparation for a possible external evaluation and/or final evaluation. The evaluation found that documentation and reporting is well above average overall, with extensive high quality documentation of process and outputs. However gaps seem to be present in the areas of impact monitoring (which is inherently difficult), combining performance and financial/human resource allocation for efficiency analysis, and overall synthesis (particularly in components two and three). There are also a weak links in information management which negatively impact the project's ability to assess its performance. The most pressing of these weaknesses are the inadequate information systems for training, commodity groups, microfinance and CBOs. Spatial information has been collected for many of the activities, but has not been mainstreamed across all sections, and the project is reaping only a small fraction of the potential benefits from its investments in spatial technologies. The annual planning process appears to be systematic, highly inclusive, and well documented, although reflection, analysis, and considerations of efficiency need to be strengthened. It is also extremely difficult to synthesise overall achievement when activities are reported in literally dozens of separate, non-indexed, documents. This evaluation therefore highly recommends that CONASA implement a more systematic means of activity reporting. Several options are discussed.

Throughout the evaluation, targeting emerged as an operational issue that deserves greater attention. The targeting approach in enterprise development has been one of broad-spectrum outreach aimed at groups. The project has learned that groups do not always offer inherent advantages over individuals, and an individual entrepreneur can be far more effective in certain types of enterprises. The project has also recognised that outreach does not always result in the most viable enterprises, and a more targeted strategy that involves self-selection and/or soft elimination may be needed to increase the levels of success in emergent businesses. The project has a good opportunity to test a more competitive approach to targeting through the initial round of community grants. More strategic targeting is also needed to strengthen the linkages between livelihood activities and conservation goals, such as specifically aiming livelihood activities towards those segments of the population that have a disproportionate impact on the resource base. Finally, targeting can be used as a means to selectively strengthen transboundary processes that are mutually reinforcing.

In terms of sustainability of project results, there appear to be two opposing forces operating simultaneously within the project. On the one hand, the HLS, CBNRM and policy frameworks are inherently holistic, and should lead to sustainability through activities that strengthen the long-term context for livelihood security and sustainable resource management. On the other hand, a heavy focus on achieving results within the short timeframe of the project has lead to the introduction of some processes and structures which seem highly unlikely to be self-sustaining after the project has withdrawn. CONASA should be cautioned against introducing processes or structures which are totally dependent on project oversight or finances, as the inevitable collapse of such interventions can do more harm than good in the long run. The greatest concern over sustainability in the long-term is the financial viability of CRBs, because if this level of the CBO structure cannot function effectively, nearly all community-wide grassroots development activities will grind to a halt.

A third cross-cutting theme that emerged during the evaluation is the issue of attempting to engineer specific outcomes versus creating enabling conditions and institutions. CONASA has pursued both of these strategies albeit in different mixes for different sections. In the policy and advocacy activities, the results framework was focused on supporting enabling conditions (e.g., forums, skills, policy analyses) and CONASA made a fair bit of progress, although few of the final results have been achieved. In the enterprise support section, the focus has been on engineering outcomes (e.g., building businesses), even though the enabling conditions are generally weak or absent. Agriculture has focused on enabling increased food production at the local level, but market linkages have mostly been engineered, making them more vulnerable to falling apart after CONASA leaves. CONASA should be mindful of how it mixes enabling and engineering strategies, and take note of the lessons from development theory which stress the importance of enabling condition especially in the development of markets, institutions, and conservation.

In the remaining time under its current contract, CONASA needs to consolidate the gains it has achieved so far, intensify efforts in existing areas before considering further expansion, create linkages across sections and components, document results and lessons learned, and address issues of sustainability. As part of the planning process for a possible phase two, the project and the CRBs should define what they realistically hope to achieve in terms of both resource management and community development (i.e., a vision for the next 5-10 years). An important part of this process will be to collect the information needed to develop a long-range plan. Foremost among the information needs is a forecast of CRB revenues under a variety of scenarios. CONASA also needs take note of important shifts in the project's context, including new development and planning initiatives coming online, infrastructure projects that are opening up the area to regional trade, an uncertain future for safari hunting, and increasing interest from all sides in attracting outside investors.

This evaluation recommends that future programming become more targeted, spatially concentrated, and strategic by building upon what CONASA does best and dropping or exploring new partnerships for what CONASA does least well. Programmatic areas that combine CONASA's strengths with ongoing needs include rebuilding the production assets of households that have been hit hard by consecutive years of drought, building resilient local institutions that can take advantage of emerging opportunities, creating horizontal linkages between CBOs, facilitating land use planning, information systems, special studies, and facilitating dialogue between CBOs, the private sector, and government. Rather than trying to socially engineer predetermined outcomes in a non-conducive context, which is inefficient at best and a complete failure at worst, CONASA might be better off putting more focus on supporting the conditions under which development and conservation can occur. This would require a slight shift in the emphasis of the results framework toward institutions, institutional capacity, production capacity, social capital, and access to information and business services.

In summary, CONASA has come a long way in a short period of time under very difficult circumstances, but still has a long way to go. CONASA does not yet represent a coherent unified, approach to rural development and conservation, but more closely resembles a collection of complementary streams of activities operating in parallel with occasional intersections. However the trend is in the right direction, and we are seeing increasing signs of activities working together synergistically when that are implemented at the same time, same place, at the same scale, and with sufficient density. To remain relevant, CONASA needs to articulate a realistic vision for the future and tighten its strategy to achieve that vision, being mindful that the context in which it operates is evolving at a rapid pace.

ACRONYMS

ACCBNRM	African College for Community Based Natural Resources Management
AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CBNRM	community-based natural resources management
CBO	community-based organization
CDT	Community development trust
CG	Commodity Group
CLA	Community Livestock Auxiliary
CONASA	Community Based Natural resource Management and Sustainable Agriculture
COP	Chief of Party
CRB	Community Resource Board
CSC	Conservation Service Centre
CSM	community self-monitoring
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System
GEF	Global Environment Fund
G-MED	Grant Mechanisms for Enterprise Development
GMA	Game Management Area
HLS	Household livelihood security
HR	human resources
HURID	Human Rights, Intellectual Property and Development Trust
KNP	Kafue National Park
KNP-CF	Kafue National Park Consultative Forum
LFSP	Livingstone Food Security Project
MER	Monitoring Evaluation and Response
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MTERN	Ministry of Tourism Environment and Natural Resources
MUSIBI	Mulobezi Sichifulo Bbilili CRB Association
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NRCF	Natural Resources Consultative Forum
NRM	natural resources management
NTFP	non-timber forest product
PMP	performance monitoring plan
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
PRSP	poverty reduction strategy paper
RBA	rights based approach
RFA	Request for Applications
SAFIRE	Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources
SME	small and medium enterprise
SO	Strategic Objective
TBNRM	Transboundary natural resources management
TOR	terms of reference
UNDP	United National Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAG	Village Area Group
VMC	Village Management Committee
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society of New York
ZNTB	Zambia National Tender Board
ZAWA	Zambia Wildlife Authority

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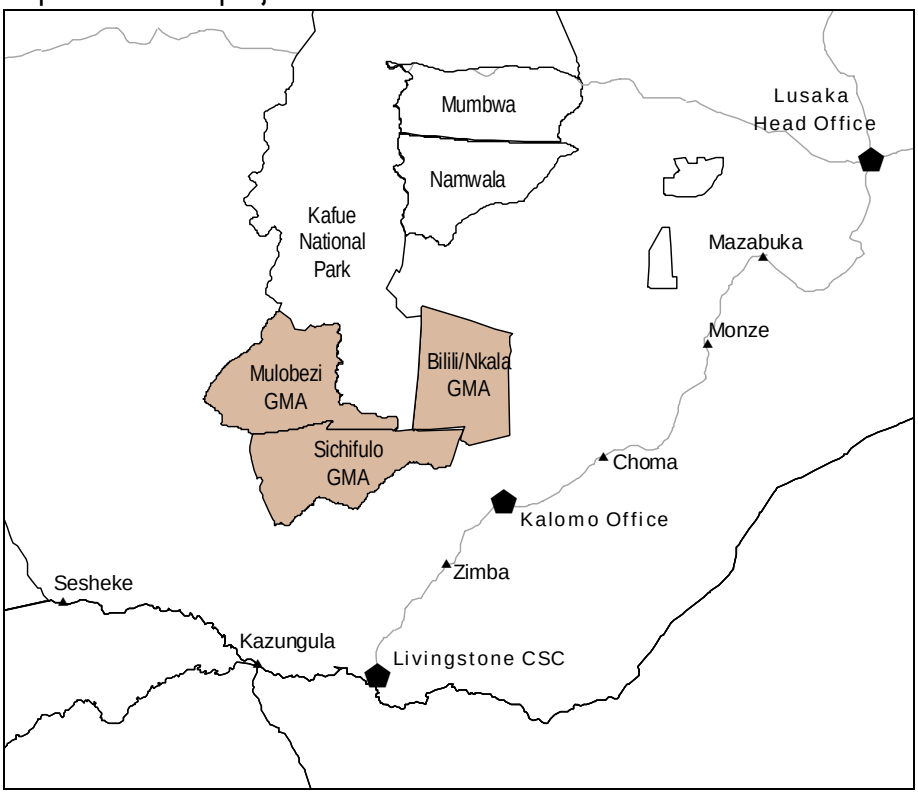
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of CONASA

CONASA is a USAID-funded development project operating in Zambia's Southern Province, seeking to achieve what many might consider to be the 'holy grail' of rural development: simultaneous improvements in household livelihood security and sustainable natural resource management. CONASA originated out of a USAID Request for Applications[1] (RFA) that was issued in July 2000, and officially began operations in February2001[2]. The primary project area consists of three Game Management Areas (GMAs) to the south of Kafue National Park and the bordering communities (Map 1). Some activities have also taken place farther south in an effort to strengthen linkages between the GMAs and regional markets (see for example Map 5, page 159). CONASA coordinates all of its activities through offices in Lusaka, Kalomo, and Livingstone.

Map 1. CONASA project area



CONASA is being implemented by a consortium of three NGOs led by CARE International. The other two primary partners are the Wildlife Conservation Society of New York (WCS), and the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF). Each of the primary consortium organisations receives financial resources through the cooperative agreement with USAID, and in turn contributes staff, administrative support, and physical resources to the activities of CONASA. In addition to the three main NGOs, several secondary partners have also been contracted to provide support in specific activities. The most active of these secondary partners include SAFIRE, the US Peace Corps, and German Development Service. CONASA's total annual budget is a little over $1 million USD per year, and it currently has funding from USAID through January 2005.

[1] 690-00-007

[2] CONASA was initially called *INSAKA*, but changed its name a few months after it was launched to avoid confusion with another CARE project called *INSAKA* and because of certain connotations the word INSAKA has in the local languages. For the purposes of this document, the name CONASA will be used to refer to all phases of the project, although reports and documents that were written under the name *INSAKA* will be referenced accordingly.

1.2. Components

CONASA's organisational structure, as well as its programming, is centered around three components or streams of activities. Component one, which is being spearheaded by CARE international, focuses on improving household livelihood security through strengthening community level institutions, increasing agricultural production, enterprise development, and natural resource production. The second component, overseen by WCS, focuses on improving the policy environment for conservation and resource management in GMAs, as well as supporting the implementation of policy reforms in the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA). The goal of the third component, implemented by AWF, includes a mixture of elements from the first two, but with an added geographic focus on the transboundary area centered around Livingstone and Victoria Falls. In practice, staff from the three components work side by side in shared offices, and many activities contribute to objectives in more than one component.

1.3. Objectives of the internal mid-term evaluation

CONASA's cooperative agreement with USAID stipulates that the project must conduct an internal mid-term evaluation approximately half way through its funding period. The internal mid-term evaluation was initially scheduled for year three of the five-year project. A budget cut in year one forced a one-year reduction in the project's lifespan, however project management chose to keep the internal mid-term evaluation in year three based on the rationale that an evaluation exercise would have been premature after only two years of operation.

A terms of reference (TOR) for an internal mid-term evaluation was developed by a consultant in July of 2003 after a period of consultations with project staff. The breadth of the issues raised in the draft TOR was judged to be beyond the scope of what could be feasibly addressed in a single evaluation, so it was decided to break the evaluation into two pieces. This report presents the findings of CONASA's programming activities, while a second internal evaluation, scheduled for 2004, will look at financial and managerial aspects of the project. CONASA is also expecting USAID to conduct an external evaluation sometime in 2004.

The complete terms of reference for this evaluation are included in Appendix 2 (page 323). The overall goals of this evaluation are listed below.

Goals of the internal mid-term evaluation
o to review the impacts the project has made in regard to its twin objectives of increasing household livelihood security and strengthening sustainable natural resource management
o to assess the project's achievements and strategy and in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, and sustainability
o to review special issues including the strength of synergies and linkages across components, monitoring and evaluation systems, investments in training, and the status of institutional relationships
o to make an assessment of the project's information systems in anticipation of an external evaluation
o to articulate lessons learned by the project
o to make recommendations to improve program effectiveness

As noted previously, the terms of reference for this exercise were narrowed down and removed many of the managerial and financial issues typical of a project evaluation. Hence many important questions concerning the efficiency of project programming are not well documented in this report. However it is hoped that the assessments of impact included in this report will provide useful input into analyses of efficiency that will be a major component of an upcoming evaluation of

management and financial issues. Other issues that were not incorporated into this evaluation are listed in *19.0 – Additional Evaluation Issues*, page 319.

1.4. Context

One can not fully appreciate the achievements of CONASA, or the challenges it faces, without first understanding the context in which it works. The geographic, climatic, economic, political and historical context of the project area have all profoundly shaped the strategies, pace, and effectiveness of CONASA's first three years of programming. It is well beyond the scope of this report to present a complete picture of the context CONASA works in, much of which is described in the project proposal and several documents produced since then. However a few key highlights of the context are offered below.

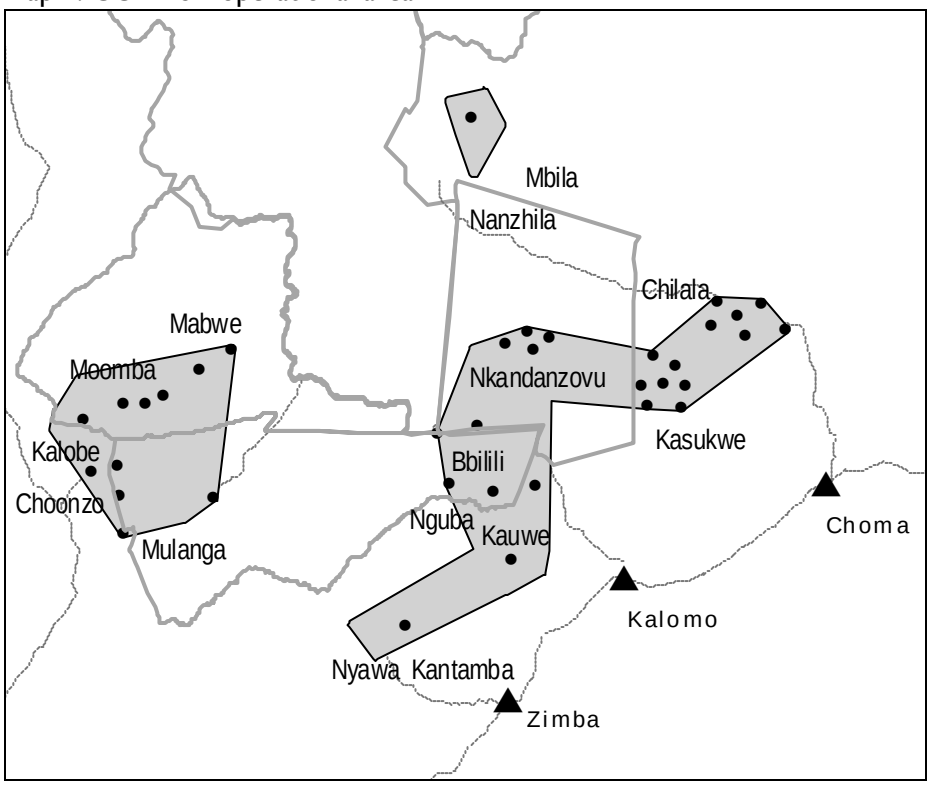
1.4.1. Geographic characteristics

The project area is nominally defined as the three GMAs to the south of Kafue National Park. However operationally, CONASA works mainly with the communities that live in or adjacent to the three GMAs. These communities are distributed in two clusters. The smaller of the two clusters is group of settlements centered around Mulobezi town in the west. However the majority of communities CONASA works with live in a string of settlements in the east, covering the entire eastern side Bbilili GMA, through the open area to the south, and as far west as the eastern edge of Sichifulo GMA (see *Map 6 – Human settlements in the project area*, page 339). Much of Sichifulo GMA that lies between Mulobezi and the settlements on the eastern border remains unsettled, however in recent years there has been a steady stream of migrants moving toward the centre of the GMA from the east and south.

The size of the three GMAs themselves is approximately 9,950 km^2, however as noted above this is not the best measure of the project area because target populations do not live throughout the entire GMAs, and many settlements actually fall outside of the GMAs (see *Map 10 – CONASA supported enterprises*, page 343). The size of CONASA's area of operationis also not easy to measure because activities are clustered in little pockets across the landscape, as opposed to being evenly distributed. Furthermore, area may not even the most meaningful measure of coverage, because 95% of CONASA's activities are providing services to people in villages, as opposed managing habitat or plantations. From this perspective, a better measure of CONASA's coverage would be the proportion of the population participating in activities (see *1.4.2 – Human population*, page 5). Nevertheless, developing a measure of the physical area the project serves is a useful exercise to help answer questions such as "Are we spread out too thin?" and "Are we getting enough saturation to have meaningful impact?" and "Are we creating opportunities for synergy?"

For the purposes of this evaluation, a measure of the operational area of the project was developed as follows. First, a map (admittedly incomplete) representing project activities was taken from the project database. The activities were then grouped into spatial clusters and corridors, and a minimum convex polygon was constructed around each. Finally the polygons were merged and given a 1 km buffer. This produced an operational area measuring 4,900 km^2 (see Map 2), approximately half of the areas of the three GMAs. This estimate is not meant to be definitive by any means, but to provide a rough idea of how large an area the project is serving, and suggest a methodology the project can use to generate more accurate assessments as additional data becomes available.

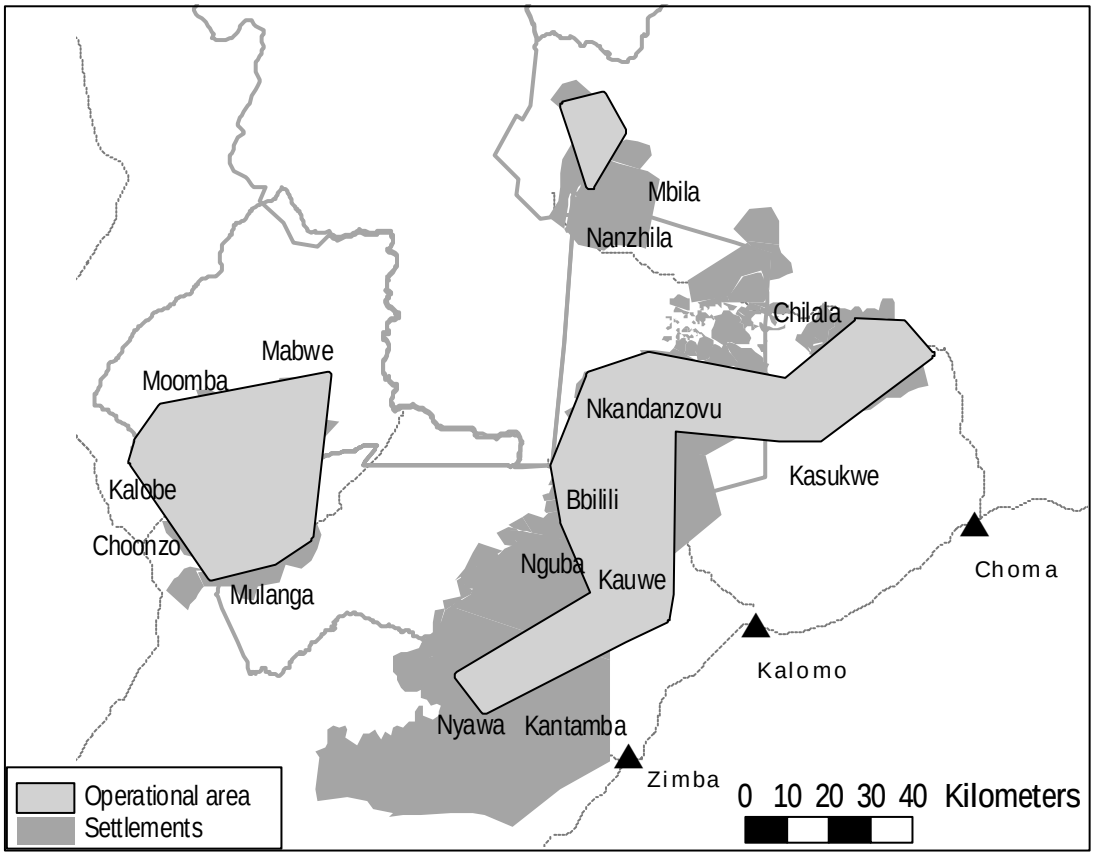
Map 2. CONASA operational area



This estimate does not represent an entirely accurate picture because it excludes a number activities, including several agricultural and CBO capacity building activities where spatial information has not been recorded. It also excludes many of component three's activities in the open area (see *Map 5 – CONASA CSC activity sites*, page 159). Nevertheless, as a first attempt in measuring CONASA's area of operations, Map 2 above demonstrates that the project is servicing a huge geographic area. Bug as big as this area is, there are still sizable human population settlements that are not receiving project services. Overlaying the operational area with known settlements, we see that there are many under-serviced areas, particularly near the eastern boundaries of Sichifulo and Northern Bbilili (see Map 3 below).

Ecologically, the landscape south of KNP is dominated by miombo woodlands interspersed with dambos, grassy plains and teak forests. The soil is generally poor (see Map 12, page 345), limiting the potential for agricultural production particularly when there is no irrigation or fertiliser. Depletion of soil fertility on farms is believed to be severe and widespread. A recent survey by CONASA found that the lifespan of a field is less than 3 years, and a 2003 study reported similar rates of soil fertility depletion in other rural areas of Southern Province (FASAZ 2003). The loss of soil fertility is therefore a major factor fuelling both intra-rural migration and agricultural expansion into new areas.

Map 3. Operational area relative to human settlements



Although agricultural productivity is limited, in the recent past Sichifulo and Mulobezi GMAs supported sizable wildlife populations (see Map 11, page 344), generating hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue from foreign safari hunting in the mid and late 1990s. Mulobezi was known for having some of the best buffalo hunting in the region, and Sichifulo was well known for its large sable. Today wildlife populations are heavily depleted, believed to be caused primarily by rampant poaching that took place during the restructuring of ZAWA when there was little law enforcement. However wildlife depletion has also been driven by habitat fragmentation, excessive burning, and competition with people around the few dry season water points. The area still supports populations of a number of smaller species, including wild dog which is a highly threatened species.

In terms of infrastructure, there are no tarmac roads in the GMAs and many areas are cut off during the rains. There is however weekly train service to Mulobezi, which carries most of the trade in and out of the GMA. Some communities in Nyawa can pick up a cellular telephone signal, but other than that there is no phone service in any of the communities, although ZAWA camps and some health clinics have radio connections for relaying messages. Electricity service is not available in any of the communities, and very few people have generators.

1.4.2. Human population

The main unit of social organisation in rural areas is the chiefdom, while the unit of local governance that CONASA mostly deals with in GMAs are the Community Resource Boards (CRBs). Chiefdoms are approximately equivalent to CRBs in terms of area and population, as the 1998 Wildlife Act called for the establishment of CRBs along the lines of chiefdoms. Due to the large size of most CRBs, they have been divided into Village Area Groups (VAGs) for planning and administrative purposes. Some VAGs, particularly those in heavily populated areas, have further sub-divided into sub-VAGs.

CONASA works with five CRBs: Chikanta, Shezongo, Siachatema, Nyawa, and Moomba, although it is not active in all VAGs. In 2003, the project began to gather population figures for the VAGs in which it works, using community facilitators to compile data from village headmen whom traditionally maintain village records. Based on data available in November 2003, and extrapolating estimates for villages not yet recorded, the human population in the operational area lies somewhere between 92,000 and 97,000 people (Table 1).

Table 1. Population size per VAG

VAG	VMCs		Counted Population	Village Size		Estimated Total†	
	Num	Have data		Average	St. Dev.	Low	High
BBILILI GMA							
Chikanta CRB							
Chikanta Central							
Chilala *	29	20 (69%)	3,189	159	103.2	4,412	4,828
Habulile *	23	23 (100%)	5,824	253	120.7	5,824	5,824
Kasukwe *	31	31 (100%)	6,036	195	103	6,036	6,036
Mabombo *	21		5,710			5,710	5,710
Nkandanzovu *	61	42 (69%)	7,547	180	90.6	10,696	11,227
Total	*165*		*28,306*			*32,678*	*33,625*
Shezongo CRB							
Kakuse *	17	17 (100%)	3,602	212	110.3	3,602	3,602
Mbila *	28	28 (100%)	5,070	181	89.1	5,070	5,070
Nanzhila *	30	23 (77%)	1,923	84	59	2,422	2,594
Total	*75*		*10,595*			*11,094*	*11,266*
MULOBEZI GMA							
Moomba CRB							
Choonzo *	5	5 (100%)	353	71	39	353	353
Kalobe *	30	30 (100%)	971	39	17.8	971	971
Mabwe *	3	3 (100%)	133	44	2.1	133	133
Moomba Central *	21	19 (90%)	1,019	54	47.1	1,105	1,149
Mulanga *	5	4 (80%)	160	40	15	193	208
Total	*64*		*2,636*			*2,755*	*2,814*
SICHIFULO GMA							
Nyawa CRB							
Chooma	17	17 (100%)	1,251	74	54.5	1,251	1,251
Kantamba *	27	20 (74%)	2,187	109	77.8	2,831	3,074
Kauwe *	39	30 (77%)	4,615	154	141.8	5,766	6,233
Nguba *	19	19 (100%)	3,298	174	72.3	3,298	3,298
Nyawa Central *	41	14 (34%)	2,479	177	114.7	6,432	8,088
Total	*143*		*13,830*			*19,578*	*21,944*
Siachitema CRB							
Bbilili *	37	20 (54%)	5,897	294	168.4	10,269	11,550
Chifusa							
Naluja *	7	6 (86%)	3,931	655	555	4,360	4,813
Siachitema Central*	32	32 (100%)	13,731	429	212.4	13,731	13,731
Simwanda *	7	7 (100%)	3,550	507	215.6	3,550	3,550
Total	*46*		*27,109*			*31,910*	*33,644*
Total	493		76,766			98,015	103,291

† population of uncounted villages estimated to be average village size plus or minus one standard error (standard deviation divided by square root of n)

* VAGs covered by CONASA project interventions

The data collected by CONASA suggests approximately 100,000 people live in the project area. This number concurs with estimates derived from the Zambian Census 2000. Table 2 below presents the population figures from the preliminary report of

the 2000 census for the 13 wards in the project area[3]. Although CRBs and VAGs do not represent the same geographic area as a ward, and the project is not active in some VAGs, the estimates are reasonably close.

Table 2. Census 2000 population for wards in the project area

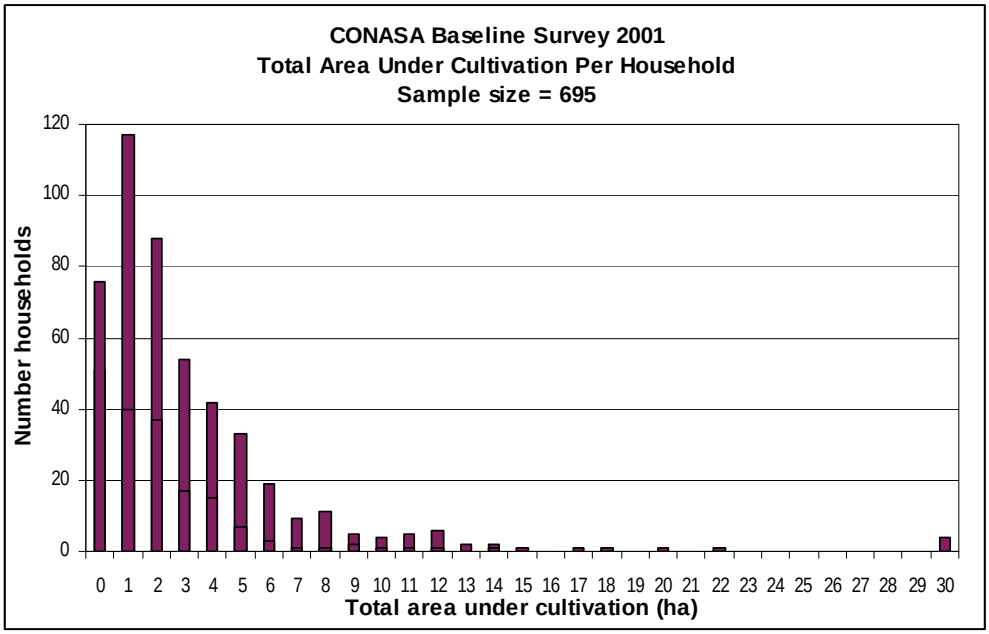
Ward	Households	Total Pop
Kalomo District		
Siachitema	3,122	20,027
Kalonda	1,838	11,102
Choonga	2,541	14,691
Chikanta	1,297	9,081
Munyeke	1,286	7,739
Kasukwe	1,806	12,961
Chamuka	247	1,785
Namela	1,688	11,799
Total	13,825	89,185
Kazungula District		
Nyawa	925	5,732
Kauwe	1,659	11,379
Chooma	509	3,077
Total	3,093	20,188
Itezhitezhi District		
Luchena	427	2,277
Mbila	755	5,713
Total	1,182	7,990
Total	18,100	117,363

The human population in the project area are predominantly from the Tonga and Ila speaking ethnic groups. CONASA collected demographic data for 900 randomly selected households as part of the 2001 household survey, however this data was never entered into the database. Recently the M&E section revisited 122 of those households and again collected demographic data as part of a follow-up study. Based on this data, the average household size is between 6 and 7 individuals, there are slightly more females than males, and the age distribution represents a pyramid, with more than half of the population 20 years old or younger. Additional demographic statistics are currently being generated. This demographic profile concurs with figures from the census 2000 data and survey data from the Livingstone Food Security Project.

Based on findings from the 2001 PRA exercises and household survey, the most important livelihood strategies by far are agriculture and livestock. In terms of area under cultivation, an important predictor of agricultural production and livelihood security, the vast majority of households are "small scale", farming less than 5 hectares of land. In fact based on the 2001 household survey, more than half (56%) of all households farm less than 2 ha of land (Figure 1).

[3] This tabulation of Census 2000 data, which came from CONASA, differs significantly by another summary made by CONASA in the *CONASA Annual Performance Report For the Period January to December 2003*, which arrived at an estimate of 177,000 people living in the 5 CRBs. The discrepancy is probably due to summing different wards, and highlights the need for the project to better organize its data on human population (see Recommendation 55, page 249)

Figure 1. Access to cultivated land



Migration is known to be an important process in the project area, particularly in Bbilili and Sichifulo GMAs. Migrants have been coming to these areas for many years, however anecdotal evidence suggests the pace is accelerating and settlers are moving into new areas where they have never been seen before. CONASA has not yet collected much information about migration (see *12.5.1.5 – Migration*, page 253), however the majority of migrants seem to come from other rural areas and are attracted to this area because of a perception that there is better soil fertility and better rainfall (both of which are associated with the presence of trees found in uncultivated areas). Kinship ties also play a key role in attracting second generation migrants. Smaller numbers of migrants come from urban areas as retirees or retrenched workers from parastatals or the civil service. Many migrants are descendents of Gwembe Tonga refugees displaced by the construction of Kariba dam. While an increasing human population provides opportunities for agricultural and economic growth, the pace of migration and an apparent lack of mechanisms to coordinate new settlements is creating a huge challenge for the sustainable management of natural resources and efforts to rebuild wildlife populations in the GMAs.

A second change currently taking place in the human populations is the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Statistics on prevalence rates in the project area are not available, however the DHS 2001 survey found the national average infection rate for rural areas to be 8.9% for men, and 12.4% for women, with prevalence rates in Southern Province about 13% higher than the national averages in general (CSO 2003). These figures are not all that useful for programming purposes however because they mask out important variation across age groups, gender, and geographic areas.

HIV/AIDS research that may be more relevant for CONASA than prevalence rates concerns the impacts of HIV/AIDS on rural livelihoods. A 2003 study in nearby districts of Southern Province found that HIV/AIDS has negative impacts on rural livelihoods through a variety of mechanisms, including an increased burden of orphans, reduced income and expenditure, lowered labour availability, reduced agricultural production, and reduced access to education. These impacts have reached an extent in some families that they threaten the stability of the extended family system, which has been the main social safety net in rural areas for generations. However the burden is not evenly distributed across households, with female-headed households more likely to be burdened with taking care of orphans

and the sick. The epidemic also has an impact on natural resources, as burdened households were more likely to harvest fuelwood for income generation and collect wild foods (FASAZ 2003).

1.4.3. Local institutions

The 2001 PRA exercises documented low levels of institutional capacity at the local level. Although the legal basis for CRBs was officially established by the 1998 Wildlife Act, CRBs in the project were only formed within the last five years (Table 3), and some CRBs had been inactive until recently. Prior to the 1998 Wildlife Act, GMAs were managed by committees called *sub-authorities*. Sub-authorities were established by NPWS to help manage wildlife resources and invest community shares from safari revenue into local development projects. The sub-authority system suffered from a number of drawbacks however, including delayed and/or reduced flows of revenue from NPWS to the sub-authorities, low levels of financial accountability, untransparent decision making, and favouritism and patronage in allocation of revenue. Thus despite significant streams of hunting revenue in the 1990s, few if any development projects were actually completed on the ground, organisational capacity of local institutions was low, and there was not much popular support or understanding of the concepts of CBNRM. This is the context that CONASA found when it entered in 2001.

Table 3. Dates of formation of CRBs

CRB	Year Formed
Shezongo	1999
Chikanta	2002
Moomba	1999
Nyawa	1999
Siachitema	1999

A local institutional dynamic that CONASA 'walked into' was a ongoing transformation of the role of traditional authorities in resource management. Prior to the establishment of CRBs, Chiefs served as chairs of the sub-authorities and exerted a large influence over the decisions of the sub-authorities, including the allocation of revenue. Under the current structure, boundaries of CRBs still coincide with chiefdoms, but chiefs are officially non-voting patrons on the CRB who automatically receive 5% of all revenues generated from wildlife. While CRBs are expected to eventually be the focal point for community level discussions on resource management, traditional authorities continue to play a strong role in all aspects of local development and land management. While many chiefs understandably were not supportive of their reduced influence over decision-making, most have accepted their new roles, remain positively engaged with the CRBs, and enjoy an expanding presence in forums and policy discussions.

The one notable exception to a relatively smooth relationship between chiefs and CRBs is in Nyawa. After the 1997 death of Chief Nyawa III, there was no clear successor, and to this day there is a conflict between two headmen vying for the position. This conflict has made it difficult for any organisation, including CONASA, ZAWA, the council, and private sector interests, to conduct activities in the area out of concern to not factionalise the community any further. In the meantime, the CRB has initiated some activities on its own, but is largely unable to deal with difficult resource management and settlement issues until consensus is reached on who the next chief is.

1.4.4. Climate, drought, and livestock disease

Southern Province is officially classified as semi-arid, receiving 600-700 mm of rainfall annually on average, but with high inter-annual variation. The area is also drought prone, and has experienced several severe droughts in the past decade. The two worst droughts were in 1991/92 and 2001/02 (CONASA's first farming season). In addition to erratic patterns in total rainfall, intra-season dry spells are also common and can reduce agricultural production in localised areas. According to PRA exercises conducted by both LFSP in 1996 and CONASA in 2001, elders in the area have observed a long-term decline in precipitation in the last 50 years.

CONASA's efforts to increase food security were set back by two back-to-back droughts. In 2000-01, an unusually dry growing season resulted in reduced grain production throughout much of Zambia, and in particular Southern Province. Again in 2001-02, one of the worst droughts in recent memory resulted in an estimated 56% overall reduction in maize production for Southern Province. The effects of the second drought were compounded by late delivery of inputs from government, and heavy rains late in the season which caused crop rotting. Although the total rainfall improved in 2002-03, the pattern of precipitation was still erratic and crop production was below normal. A food assessment carried out by CARE in April 2003 concluded that overall crop loss (in Southern Province) was 50-60%, and all districts in the province would run out of food between September and December 2003.

Although CONASA's project area, in terms of drought and disease, may not be the worst area in Southern Province (e.g., compared to Sinazongwe), it has still been hit hard and is also indirectly affected by hardship in other districts through intra-rural migration. Many of the settlers moving into Bbilili and Sichifulo GMAs come from areas suffering worse problems with drought and soil infertility, and are attracted by the relative abundance of trees in the GMAs, which are perceived to be a sign of better soil quality and higher rainfall. Communities are also affected by drought through unpredictable fluctuations in the maize market that result from mitigation actions by government and relief programs. For example a CARE study revealed that 85% of the sampled population in Southern Province received food relief after the 2001-02 growing season[4] even though the relief exercise had been disrupted by the debate over the safety of GMO maize.

To make matters worse, the coping ability of rural households in the CONASA project have been constrained by a long-term reduction in the number of cattle, which were first hit hard by East Coast Fever in the 1990s. A MAFF livestock census for Kalomo district showed that there were 150,000 cattle in 1992 but only 14,000 in 1999, a reduction of over 90%. The loss of household 'walking bank accounts' has forced many households into alternative coping strategies, including charcoal production, poaching, reduced food consumption, piecework, and selling household assets. The death of cattle has also hampered food production directly because cattle are widely used form of draft power.

[4] a survey by C-SAFE around the same time found a slightly higher percentage, 93%

1.4.5. Macro economy

The majority of Zambians continue to suffer from almost two continuous decades of a sluggish economy[5]. In 2002, Zambia's GDP stood at US$ 3.7 billion, slightly less than it was back in 1982. Thus while the size of economy hasn't changed much in 20 years, the population has grown by nearly 50%[6] resulting in approximately half as much wealth available per person on average. Per capita GDP in 2003 stood at $395 USD.

Zambia also continues to suffer from a high foreign debt, much of which was taken on by the first republic in the 1970s and 80s after copper prices started to decline. In 2002, Zambia's debt stood at $5.4 billion USD, representing 147% of GDP and consuming nearly half (45%) of all export earnings for debt servicing. Currently, the government spends twice as much on debt payments than it does on all social service programs put together. Zambia qualified for the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) debt relief in 2000, but has yet to meet all of the performance criteria required by the multilateral donor institutions. In particular continued overspending on civil service wages has delayed HIPC completion point. If the government adheres to its 2004 austerity budget, which freezes civil service wages and raises a number of taxes, HIPC completion could come as early as late 2004. If and when Zambia meets the conditionalities of HIPC, its debt could be reduced by some US$ 3.8 billion.

In the early and mid 1990s, to stimulate economic growth and gain access to additional emergency loans, Zambia embarked upon a course of neoliberal policy reform involving economic deregulation, downsizing of government, privatisation, and trade liberalisation. Although adoption of policy reforms has sometimes been slow, partial, and certainly come at a high social cost, there are signs that the economy as a whole may be improving. In 2002, total GDP and GDP per capita were both increasing in by 3.0% and 1.3% respectively, and exports of goods and services were up by 6.2%.

However despite a small amount of growth at the aggregate level, there has been little "trickle-down" effects to distribute the benefits of economic growth to poor people, particularly in rural areas. Inflation in consumer prices has hovered around 20% for the past several years, and the percentage of the population below the poverty line has remained above an unacceptable 70% (83% in rural areas). Infant mortality remains at 112 per 1,000 live births, one of the highest in Africa. To make matters worse, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has caused life expectancy to drop from over 50 years to 37, reducing the most product segment of the labour pool. HIV/AIDS has also put severe strain on affected families and the health system as a whole.

"Trickle-down" benefits from growth have also been inhibited by the distribution of wealth in Zambia, which is highly unequal. In 1998, Zambia's GINI coefficient[7] was 52.6, a high rate by international standards, particularly for Africa (World Bank 2002), and approaching the levels of inequality more typical of Latin America. This represents a society in which the top 10% of the population receives over half of the per capita income, whilst the bottom 10% receives 0.5%. Inequality got slightly better and then slightly worse in rural areas during the 1990s, however the changes were small and varied from province to province (McCulloch et al, 2000). There has

[5] Economic data in this section come from World Bank Group (2003), Bureau of African Affairs (2004), The Republic of Zambia (2002), and McEwan (2003). See Appendix 1 for complete citation information.

[6] 1996-2002 annual population growth rate was 2.1%

[7] an index of inequality which ranges from 0 to, 100 where 0 represents perfect equality in income distribution and 100 represents perfect inequality

not been a good national study of household income (including inequality) since the 1998 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey, although results from the 2002 Living Conditions Monitoring Survey should be published in 2004.

Changes in the macro-economic and policy context have affected rural people in CONASA's project area in at least three ways. First, the central role of government in subsidizing and coordinating agricultural inputs and marketing disappeared virtually overnight with the onset of liberalization. It was hoped that these roles would be filled by the private sector, but this has largely not happened at least in Southern Province.

Second, government services in education, health, livestock, and infrastructure have been hit hard by the loss in government revenue and adoption of austerity measures including a cash budget. Consequently many public institutions that previously provided "public goods", social safety nets, or helped to create a conducive context for business activity are weak or absent in most rural areas.

Third, the deterioration in human and social capital at the household level, and government capacity at all levels, has severely eroded local autonomy and capacity for self-help. Although there is some room for rural households and institutions to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the liberalised economy, the reality is that rural communities have increasingly little to bargain with, and are increasingly at the mercy of donors, NGOs and so-called 'investors' for defining and implementing a development agenda. For example, the recent debate about GMOs and food relief illustrated how marginalized the voice of rural populations have become, as has the recent removal of VAT exemption for agricultural inputs for small holders. The adoption of a neo-liberal Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which calls for the permanent conversion of communal lands into private farming blocks with "trickle-down" effects in the form of agricultural labour on foreign-owned commercial farms is another example of a macro political economy that keeps small holders at the periphery.

CONASA's activities, particularly in the TBNRM component, are also affected by the macro-economic contexts in the neighbouring countries. The most significant changes that have been seen in the neighbouring countries are of course in Zimbabwe, where the government's fast track land reform process has had profound implications for the country's economy, particularly in tourism and agriculture. This has affected the work CONASA is trying to produce in at least two ways. First, a key assumption of the TBNRM component was that tourism around Victoria Falls would continue to be vibrant and growing, and provide ample opportunities for new enterprises for the communities in the southern Kafue GMAs. The reality is that tourism has been greatly depressed in Zimbabwe since the start of the project, and while it has not collapsed completely the expected "tourist overflow" that was expected to create demand for alternative destinations and products on the Zambian side has not materialised.

Second, the high levels of inflation in Zimbabwe and ten-fold currency devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar has had a significant impact on prices of traded goods. For the communities in CONASA's project area, this has had both negative (e.g., competition from lower priced maize and poultry) as well as positive effects (e.g., cheaper sources of agricultural inputs, increased demand for Zambian products).

1.4.6. ZAWA

ZAWA is the arm of government with the mandate and legal authority to manage wildlife throughout all of Zambia. Consequently ZAWA has the greatest on-the-ground presence of any unit of government in GMAs. In 2000, ZAWA officially started a restructuring process that had been many years in the planning,

transforming the organisation from a government department (NPWS) to a semi-autonomous wildlife authority. The restructuring took much longer than anyone anticipated, and was characterized by almost constant confusion and conflict between the European Union funded consultants hired to spearhead the restructuring, and the "old guard" NPWS and Zambia politicians. As a consequence many top management positions remained vacant for extended periods and the organisation was paralysed to make critical operational decisions on personnel, policy, finances, etc.

The end result of the restructuring was that for nearly two years only a bare minimum of field operations were conducted in many GMAs, policy issues were put on hold, financial flows to the CRBs trickled to a halt, and little communication was made with the communities. To exacerbate the difficulties in field operations, the interim management fired all the village scouts who had been the backbone of law enforcement in GMAs. When CONASA conducted PRA exercises in May and June of 2001, poaching was said to be rampant in all areas, and it was reported that poachers had even moved into abandoned scout camps and were using them as bases of operation.

Today ZAWA has largely stabilised, and there is at least some continuity in all levels of personnel. Hence important policy decisions are moving forward, monitoring and research is on the increase, flows of communication with CRBs are increasing, and donors are starting to re-engage the authority. The authority still faces enormous challenges, however, particularly financial. Recently the European Union withdrew assistance amounting to 10 million euros (K48 billion) after government misappropriated some of the funds[8]. To address the huge shortfall in its budget, ZAWA is increasingly relying on safari hunting fees, setting a stage for potential conflicts with communities over revenue distribution and accounting.

1.4.7. Safari hunting

In the late 1990s, the southern Kafue GMAs were some of the highest earning areas in the country in terms of wildlife. Table 4 below presents the total revenues earned from Bilili/Nkala, Mulobezi, and Sichifulo hunting blocks for the years 1997 to 1999. These figures include all types of fees from wildlife use, however license fees from foreign safari hunters is by far the biggest source of revenue. Central government kept 50% of most fees, NPWS kept another 12.5% for the Wildlife Conservation Revolving Fund, and 37.5% was supposed to go to the communities for resource management and community development projects. In practice disbursement of revenue was frequently delayed, and poorly accounted for.

Table 4. Wildlife revenue generated by Bbilili, Mulobezi, and Sichifulo 1997-99

Hunting Block	1997	1998	1999
Bilili/Nkala	$62,917	$103,283	$72,906
Mulobezi	$139,184	$125,885	$139,206
Sichifulo	$133,824	$90,353	$85,321

Source: WCRF database

In 2001, all safari hunting in Zambia was banned by President Chiluba for a complicated set of reasons involving irregularities in the awarding of hunting concessions and election year politics. Unfortunately the problems in awarding hunting concessions could not be solved by 2002, and hunting remained banned for a second year. Hunting was allowed again in 2003 in most areas, but unfortunately the two-year gap in revenue, coinciding with ZAWA's troubles deploying personnel and the firing of village scouts, had taken their toll. Wildlife populations were heavily depleted during the restructuring process and by 2003, safari hunting revenue in

[8] Times of Zambia, 2004. Wildlife Sector Loses EU Support. 28 April, 2004.

Mulobezi was down by more than half[9] (Table 5). Sichifulo hunting block sold nearly all of its allocated licenses in 2003, but only generated about $2,600 in hunting sales because only licenses for resident Zambians, which are about 1/10 the cost as safari licenses, were put on quota due to a continuing court injunction over the hunting concession. 45% of hunting revenue is supposed to be returned to CRBs for community development and resource management activities, and 5% to the chief.

Table 5. Revenue from Hunting Licenses in Mulobezi Hunting Block 2003

Species	National Licenses					Safari Licenses				Total Revenue
	Quota	Issued	Price Kwacha	Price USD	Revenue	Quota	Issued	Price USD	Revenue	
Baboon	5	0	K25,200	$5		6	0	$50		
Buffalo	12	12	K675,000	$142	$1,705	15	0	$1,000		$1,705
Bushbuck	3	3	K75,240	$16	$48	5	0	$320		$48
Bushpig	3	3	K37,620	$8	$24	2	1	$270	$270	$294
Duiker	3	3	K62,640	$13	$40	3	1	$230	$230	$270
Eland	0	0	K1,170,000	$246		4	0	$1,500		
Grysbok	0	0	K37,620	$8		1	1	$210	$210	$210
Hartebeest	6	6	K187,740	$40	$237	8	3	$560	$1,680	$1,917
Impala	16	16	K87,480	$18	$295	3	1	$100	$100	$395
Kudu	0	0	K1,125,000	$237		8	0	$1,000		
Leopard	0	0	K2,500,000	$526		5	0	$1,750		
Lion	0	0	K2,500,000	$526		4	1	$2,750	$2,750	$2,750
Oribi	2	2	K43,920	$9	$18	6	1	$210	$210	$228
Reedbuck	6	6	K125,100	$26	$158	7	1	$300	$300	$458
Roan	0	0	K2,100,240	$442		4	0	$3,500		
Sable	0	0	K1,875,000	$395		7	3	$2,700	$8,100	$8,100
Warthog	4	4	K125,000	$26	$105	10	0	$300		$105
Waterbuck	10	10	K450,000	$95	$947	6	1	$1,000	$1,000	$1,947
Wildebeest	6	6	K225,000	$47	$284	8	0	$850		$284
Zebra	9	1	K625,000	$132	$132	8	2	$600	$1,200	$1,332
Total					$3,993	120	16		$16,050	$20,043

Source: ZAWA, 28-November 2003. Concession fees not included.

The loss of significant amounts of safari hunting revenue may not have been greatly missed on the ground because in practice it had rarely been effectively used for local development in the 1990s. However it was a huge disappointment for the emerging CRBs and CONASA, who had hoped the revenue could fuel local initiatives and capitalise on the skills development provided by CONASA. It remains to be seen whether safari hunting will ever be a viable industry in the project area again. Even if law enforcement were to be made effective, the expansion of settlements has fragmented habitats and cut wildlife off from critical dry season surface water, effectively eliminating areas that once harboured large wildlife populations (Map 11, page 344).

1.4.8. Policy trends

CONASA's work has been greatly affected by, and in some ways helped to shape, the broader policy context. Patterns in policy and policy implementation in Zambia, as most other countries, are complex and non-linear, with implementation and written policy often moving in multiple directions simultaneously. Thus it is dangerous to make broad generalizations about policy trends, however some general patterns are visible across multiple sectors.

Zambia as whole continues to officially embrace liberalisation and a market-driven approach to development, continuing a trend that was started in earnest in the 1990s. Government has greatly reduced its role in direct forms of economic

[9] total revenues for 2003 are not yet available

regulation and has privatised most parastatals. However government continues to yield an enormous influence over certain key markets, most notably maize and agricultural inputs, through massive exercises in buying, stocking, and selling. Another sector which still feels the strong hand of government is wildlife, where all wildlife in parks or communal areas are still the property of the State. Although ZAWA is becoming more independent, and corruptive practices such as the excessive issuance of special hunting licenses are not common, State House and Parliament are still able to intervene in resource management, such as when State House banned all safari hunting on both private and public lands in 2001.

A second policy movement can be seen in the effort to diversify Zambia's economy. Major policy initiatives and financial resources have been devoted to promoting agriculture (mostly large scale commercial) and tourism. To entice big players to invest in Zambia's agriculture and tourism sectors, government is trying to improve infrastructure and offer incentives in the form of preferential tax and tariff policies. Critics of these policies note that economic liberalisation and investment incentives tend to result in more land being alienated (Scott 2002).

A third policy trend is the general devolution of government services and responsibilities to provincial, district, and community levels. Although critics cry that much of the "devolution" would be more accurately labelled "decentralization," because government often withholds funding and retains authority, the fact is that districts and communities are becoming more engaged in setting and implementing policy. Government is also making an effort to establish mechanisms for stronger grassroots input into policy formation. The recent tour of the Ministry of Lands to gather feedback on the new land policy, and initiations by Parliament for public comment on specific policy issues, are but two examples of this trend. In many sectors, however, there is still a strong policy bias in favour of urban areas (Scott 2002).

A fourth trend can be seen in the shifting relationships between communities, the State, and NGOs. As units of government become more and more stressed by imposed fiscal austerity, NGOs are stepping in to fill roles once played by government. On the surface NGOs would seem to be gaining in influence, but in many ways they are still dependent on the State and vulnerable to a backlash either from government or communities. The resulting shifts in the balance of influence and power between communities, NGOs, and government, are complex and delicate.

1.4.9. Discussion

While it is beyond the scope of this report to provide much analysis of the context in which CONASA works, a few points are worth noting. First, the overall picture in Zambia in the early 21st century is one of economic stagnation, increasing levels of poverty, diminishing government services, increasing inequality, and an HIV/AIDS epidemic whose worst effects have yet to be felt. Unlike some economies in the region like Mozambique, Zambia is not yet experiencing a period of growth and is either continuing to decline or more optimistically has begun to stabilise. Within this broader national context, the project area is even more disadvantaged due to its erratic climate, marginal and declining soil fertility, and lack of infrastructure.

"CONASA was extraordinarily unlucky to begin operations at a time when three very unfortunate events were converging"

Second, the project was extraordinarily unlucky to begin operations at a time when three very unfortunate events were converging: the 2001/02 drought, the two year consecutive ban on safari hunting, and the restructuring of ZAWA. These events greatly limited or at least delayed the ability of the project to increase agricultural production, harness local sources of capital to stimulate enterprise, or make much headway on improving natural resource management when one of the main stakeholders was not fully available. To its credit CONASA, adapted to these events and found ways to restore household production assets and make progress on other fronts.

Lesson Learned

When major changes in the context take place between project design and implementation, a review of the strategies and results framework is warranted.

The non-conducive national context, even more marginal local environment, and simultaneous convergence of three unfortunate shocks at the start of the project should not serve to discourage CONASA from its work, but highlight the need for realistic expectations and flexible strategy. In a context where 4 out of 5 factors disfavour agricultural and economic growth, livelihood relief and stabilisation might represent more relevant and realistic goals for the majority of households. This has implications for the project's results framework and performance indicators, which are currently focused on increasing income and agricultural production (livelihood promotion) but may be more appropriate to focus on creating safety nets (livelihood provision) or building resilience from shocks (livelihood protection). These goals are by no means mutually exclusive, but are also not identical. The context also has implications for the development of CONASA's long-term goals and how it conceives sustainability (see *17.3 – Alternative views of sustainability*, page 301).

Third, the size of the area and its population is extremely large relative to the size of the programming staff. CONASA has ten programming staff who are primarily field based, producing a ratio on the order of one staff person per every 10,000 people, or one staff person per 500 km^2. CONASA's targeting of activities is based on a strategy of covering the greatest possible area, as opposed to maximising intensity of interventions, and hoping that local CBOs will spread the reach and impact of activities. There are strong arguments supporting this approach, however the project also needs to realize that "low intensity" development takes longer to yield results, reduces the opportunities for synergy, and might preclude some types of interventions (such as enterprise) that require achieving economies of scale in simultaneously increasing production volume, financing, technology, marketing, etc.

Fourth, the size, density, and mobility of the human population on the eastern side of the project area raises questions and poses new challenges regarding the applicability of the "communal approach" to development and resource management. CBNRM has proven most successful in small homogenous communities where CBOs are small enough to meet under a tree and the pace of social change is slow. It remains to be seen to what degree one can successfully apply the concepts and tools of CBNRM and community based development to rural areas containing as many as 25,000 (Chikanta) or 30,000 (Siachitema) people.

It also remains to be seen whether the current CBO structure can adequately represent, unite, and serve such large and socially differentiated populations. There is reason to be hopeful when we see, for example, a VAG like Nkandanzovu respond to these challenges by creating sub-VAGs units and mobilize—with almost no resources—local goodwill and cooperation to reduce internal and external threats to natural resources. However one also wonders how CRBs representing large communities that are highly dispersed, diverse in endowments, and home to a good number of migrants will be able to articulate a development vision that encompasses all, and deals with difficult issues like settlement and land use.

Finally, while CONASA has given itself the twin goal of enterprise development and conservation, it is rare that the geographic characteristics of a given area is optimal for both. Conservation works best in areas that have low human population densities, are isolated by natural geographic features such as mountains or rivers, are connected to other conservation areas by non-fragmented habitat, and are experiencing low rates of social change. Economic growth, by contrast, works best in areas that are focused around spatially small hubs or production corridors, are well connected into transport and communication networks, and have high levels of trade into and out of the area. CONASA is attempting to achieve both goals in a project area that is optimal for neither, but particularly non-conducive for enterprise development. This has implications for how the project pursues enterprise development, whether it continues with a wide "push" approach focusing on production, or uses a more narrow "pull" approach focused on developing business development services at specific nodes or production corridors. The size and density of the project area also has implications for how (and where) the project pursues its conservation goals.

"While CONASA has given itself the twin goal of enterprise development and conservation, it is rare that the geographic characteristics of a given area is optimal for both."

2.0 RESULTS FRAMEWORK

2.1. Results-oriented programming

CONASA operates under a results framework for planning and implementation, and is very much a 'results-oriented' project. The results framework is integral to the management of the project, guiding not only the selection of streams of activities but also the structure of performance monitoring, evaluation, reporting, division of responsibilities among the primary consortium partners, placement of staff, and to a large extent internal channels of communication. Senior management has made a concerted effort to ensure that the project adheres to its results framework, and there has been little if any deviation in programming from the core set of results.

"CONASA's senior management has made a concerted effort to ensure that the project adheres to its results framework, and there has been little if any deviation in programming from the core set of results."

Implementing project activities according to a results framework is generally considered a 'best practice' in both development and conservation circles, at both the project and portfolio level. Results frameworks stress impact over process, thereby helping program staff remain focused on their ultimate objectives, avoid being side-tracked into tangential activities, and implement programming which is both effective and efficient. USAID in particular has adopted results-oriented programming at both country and global levels, and expects supported projects to also adhere to a results framework.

Because CONASA is so devoutly a results-oriented project, any evaluation of its achievements and impacts must naturally begin with a review of its results framework. The results framework defines the scope and strategy of the project, and represents the "high-water mark" the project is aiming for. Conversely, any contradictions, gaps, or unrealistic assumptions underlying the results framework will fundamentally constrain the amount of success a project is able to achieve. Reviewing the results framework is also useful because although a results framework can not normally be modified during a funding cycle, results frameworks can and do evolve over time, particularly between funding cycles, as new experiences and lessons learned accumulate. As CONASA enters its fourth and final year under its current results framework, it has a somewhat unique opportunity to reflect on what has been learned.

2.2. Origins of CONASA's results framework

CONASA's results framework has 11 results which are divided into three components. In components one and two, all but one of the eight results were explicitly stated in the original USAID RFA (Table 6). The consortium members recrafted the wording of one of the expected, results and added an additional result for *increased sustainable agricultural and natural resource production*.

Shortly after the initial RFA was issued, USAID issued an amendment announcing the availability of additional resources for programming to support transboundary resource management objectives in Zambia. Although the results articulated in the RFA amendment were not as explicit as those in the original RFA, the spirit was clear and the consortium responded with three additional results.

Table 6. Genesis of CONASA's results framework

Expectation specified in USAID RFA	Corresponding CONASA result
Component I. Livelihood, enterprise, and CBNRM	
"Strategy and methodologies for increasing broad-based community participation identified and tested"	1. Community institutional structures enable broad-based participation in development planning and management
"Short-term increases in the capacity of rural families to manage activities that effectively address their needs and that may successfully contribute to improved natural resource management"	2. Technical skills for livelihood strategies developed
"Creative, yet practical, alternative product and marketing options are identified and accessible to communities to address the constraints of chronic food insecurity and limited economic options in GMAs"	3. Diverse market opportunities for agriculture and NRM products identified and developed
"CBNRM decisions in the program area are based on reliable biophysical and management information"	4. Community information systems developed for CBRNM and HLS monitoring and evaluation
n/a	5. Increased sustainable agricultural and natural resource production
Component II. Policy, advocacy, and civil society support for CBNRM	
"Facilitate the development of civil society institutions that can consistently contribute to existing and new environmental and NRM policies"	6. Capacity for policy advocacy enhanced in local and national civil society institutions
"Strengthen ZAWA and its relationships with local communities to support CBNRM interventions"	7. ZAWA's orientation to bottom-up resource management institutionalised
"Strengthen the role of civil society and national NGOs in support of CBNRM"	8. Civil society and NGOs support for CBNRM increased
Component III. Transboundary natural resource management	
Ecological Activity-Level Results ▪ Natural resources management plans and/or monitoring programs agreed to by two or more countries. ▪ Consultative process in the management of shared natural resources within the TBNRMA ▪ Ecological monitoring systems, to track change, in place in target communities within the transboundary area. ▪ Biodiversity and ecosystem integrity addressed in the TBNRMA development planning process. ▪ Information on conservation, management and sustainable utilization of TBNRM resources exchanged and shared	9. Kafue Area effectively linked to the Four Corners TBNRMA

Expectation specified in USAID RFA	Corresponding CONASA result
Socio-economic Activity Level Results ▪ Tourism potential of the TBNRMA and/or potential to supply other natural resources ▪ products/services assessed, developed and promoted ▪ Joint standards for classification of natural resources products and services, including ▪ tourism and/or destinations, developed and promoted within the TBNRMA, where appropriate. ▪ Increased economic and other benefits, such as income and employment, from NRM and sustainable tourism within pilot areas ▪ Communities involved as stakeholders and as active participants and beneficiaries in the development of the TBNRMA ▪ Gender considerations integrated into TBNRMA activities	10. Increased regional business investment in Zambia and the Kafue Area
Policy Activity-level Results ▪ Natural Resources Management Area Agreement(s) or MOU(s) signed by two or more countries ▪ NRM Policy impediments to TBNRMA development identified and removed ▪ More streamlined movement of tourists and natural resources products/services facilitated within the TBNRMA	11. Increased rural incomes from regional markets

After reviewing the original RFA, the proposal developed by CARE/WCS/AWF, and the streams of activities that have been actually implemented by CONASA, this evaluation concludes that the design of CONASA adheres to the expected results laid out by USAID in both spirit and detail. There have not been any changes in CONASA's results framework since the start of the project, nor have there been any significant deviations from the expected results in terms of implementation of activities. Within specific results, the project has adjusted strategies and adapted activities in light of lessons learned and changing conditions in the field, however all of the core design elements of the project are intact and operational.

2.3. Impact of the budget cut

CONASA officially began operations on February 1st, 2001, with a time frame of five years and a total budget of $8.5 million USD. However shortly before CONASA's official start, a new political administration took office in Washington with a somewhat different set of priorities for foreign assistance. In April 2001, CARE received a letter stating that review of budget priorities in Washington resulted in a net reduction for USAID/Zambia's agriculture and natural resources programs. Consequently CONASA was asked to resubmit an implementation plan with a revised budget of $5.5 million USD for components one and two, $2 million (27%) less than the original funding level. The $1 million for the transboundary activities in component three, which were channelled through the USAID Regional Office for Southern Africa in Gaborone, was not affected.

The project responded with a plan to accommodate the reduced resource allocation through two major changes. First, it proposed to reduce the area of operations from four GMAs to three, completely cutting out activities in Namwala. This eliminated costs

associated with a satellite office that was to be established in Itezhi-tezhi, as well as staffing and other programming expenses. Secondly, the project reduced its time frame from five years to four. Nothing else in the results framework, or the initial set of performance targets, was altered.

The combination of reducing the geographic area and shortening the project lifespan was felt to be the best way to meet the new budget restrictions but still maintain all the core components of the project, thereby maximizing opportunities for impact and cross-component synergies in the remaining areas. However because neither the results framework nor performance targets were altered, the implication for implementation was that CONASA basically had to "hurry up" its programming to achieve the same set of results in a shorter period of time. What was already an ambitious, and probably unrealistic, set of targets for five years now had to be achieved in four.

The compression of the project lifespan, without any corresponding adjustment to its results framework or strategy, has had an effect on programming. Program staff know they have to work diligently to reach their performance benchmarks in the shortest period possible. While this incentive has had some positive effects in providing focus to activities, it has also had some detrimental effects, particularly regarding the sustainability of project achievements. Field staff, whether they are engaged in enterprise development, agriculture, or skills development, know that the easiest and fastest way to achieve results is through direct implementation, for example sourcing inputs directly, making marketing contacts on behalf of commodity groups, conducting training in-house, etc. The disadvantage of direct implementation is the creation of dependency on the project, which is unsustainable once project activities wind down. Staff are keenly aware of this. However they also know that building linkages with other service providers, creating institutions for more efficient markets, and tackling the root causes of unstable food production, etc. takes far longer than four years to show results. The consequence has been a suite of activities that are heavy on direct implementation and a strong focus on community level institution building, but relatively weak on facilitating linkages with other organizations. The pressure to achieve results in a relatively short period of time is certainly not the only reason why there has been such a heavy emphasis on direct implementation, however it certainly reduces the amount of "breathing space" staff feel they have to invest in longer-term processes.

> "The pressure to achieve results in a relatively short period of time has reduced the amount of 'breathing space' program staff feel they have to invest in longer-term processes."

2.4. Results framework analysis

Because CONASA is so strongly a results-oriented project, any assessment of its performance and impact should begin with a review of its fundamental design principles. As described in section 2.2 above, CONASA's results framework was essentially provided to the consortium 'top-down' by the USAID RFA and amendment one, although the consortium members had the flexibility to recraft and operationalize specific results in term of their own conceptual frameworks and experiences. Thus many of the lessons learned from the results framework are as equally valuable to USAID, who as the donor has a great deal of influence over project design.

2.4.1. Holistic approach

One of the most visible characteristics of CONASA's results framework is its holistic nature. The framework lays out an approach to development/conservation that incorporates community level institution building, enterprise and market development, increased food production, natural resource production and protection, community information systems, policy analysis, advocacy, implementation of policy reforms in a unit of government, and strengthening ecological and economic linkages at the regional level. It would be difficult to find a project with a more complete suite of interventions. The only rural development strategies *not* being implemented in CONASA are in education, health, water, and energy.

This holistic character of CONASA's results framework reflects the lessons learned from previous USAID/Zambia investments in rural development, and represents one of CONASA's greatest strengths. It also represents one of CONASA's greatest challenges, because never before in Zambia (or many other places for that matter) have so many streams of activities been housed under a single HLS/CBNRM project. CONASA has needed to develop organisational capacity in many different areas, as well as the much more difficult task of coordinating so many different streams of activities at different spatial and temporal scales in a way that they will mutually support each to achieve synergistic effects.

The multi-pronged, holistic nature of CONASA's approach is based upon a rather complex set of assumptions about how the various activity streams fit together. This has also made it challenging for the project to articulate its approach, or develop a 'brand', in a digestible sound bite. In some sense the design of CONASA is somewhat experimental by testing the feasibility of building so many streams of activity under one roof. Whether or not it is realistically feasible to manage such a multi-faceted project using an NGO-based model of implementation, whether beneficiaries can absorb so many sets of activities, and whether a project can achieve enough impact in so many program areas to achieve synergy, are important questions that the experiences of CONASA will hopefully illuminate.

2.4.2. Relevance

The first question one might ask regarding the results framework of a project is: *Is it relevant*? In the case of CONASA, one needs to ask the question of relevance from three perspectives: Is CONASA's results framework relevant to the expressed needs of the people of Southern Province? Is it relevant given the context of the project area? And is the results framework relevant to the needs of USAID and the primary members of the consortium?

2.4.2.1. RELEVANCE TO THE NEEDS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

The rural communities in CONASA's project area, like rural communities everywhere, are highly heterogeneous, with livelihood needs that vary greatly across geographic areas, households, and gender. For CONASA, the best measure of expressed needs comes from the PRA exercises conducted in 2001, which were designed to uncover both the overall collective needs, as well as the needs of specific sub-groups in the community. A review of these nine PRA exercises revealed the most common needs as:

- inadequate supply of water
- lack of inputs and implements
- poor soils
- livestock disease (cattle and poultry)
- poor markets for crops and natural resource products
- high cost of transport

- lack of credit
- lack of clinics and schools
- crop damage from pests and wildlife
- lack of hammer mills

What is interesting about the needs expressed by community members during the 2001 PRA exercises is that the majority of the expressed needs represent inadequate "stuff" or infrastructure. A couple of the discussion groups also identified knowledge, skills or organisation as needs, but for the most part the focus was on material conditions. It would be an interesting experiment to repeat the needs analysis exercises now after three years of protect activity to see if perception of needs have shifted at all toward the ideas of knowledge, skills, and empowerment, or if they are still primarily focused on material conditions.

Although CONASA's approach has never been about giving out "stuff" as a primary strategy, there is a close and dynamic relationship between "capacity building" and material resources. A strategy of improving material conditions without any attention to local capacity to manage and administer is vulnerable to being hijacked by local elites and unlikely to be sustainable in the medium to long term. Conversely, improving "capacity" through skills training, but without additional resources, tends to be self-defeating, as the newly skilled organisations or individuals have no way to apply their skills, and their new capacity quickly disintegrates and is forgotten.

CONASA's results framework has a heavy focus on capacity building with only one activity stream, the community grant fund, providing significant amounts of direct financial support to CBOs. This programming mix which favours capacity building over capital is entirely appropriate as CONASA does not have the budgetary resources to provide significant amounts of capital to community groups, and NGOs are typically much better equipped for skills development than they are at providing goods and services to large numbers of people.

One of the key assumptions underlying CONASA's strategy was that there would be financial resources from other sources (primarily safari hunting) that could be harnessed to apply the enhanced capacity of CBOs. Unfortunately as described in section 1.4.6 above, there was a total ban on international safari hunting in 2001 and 2002, and a court injunction against hunting in 2003 for Sichifulo GMA. To make matters worse, during this same period there was little or no law enforcement presence from ZAWA in the project area, and poaching was reported to be rampant. Hence the expected revenue that was going to fuel development projects identified by communities never materialized. Furthermore, judging by the results of the 2003 hunting season, it doesn't seem likely that safari hunting will provide a sizable amount of revenue for many years to come, if ever, due to heavily depleted wildlife stocks.

"The relevance of CONASA's results framework depends on whether its activities will eventually lead to improvements in material conditions."

The message for CONASA is to remember that the expressed needs of the communities are heavily focused on material conditions, provision of services, and infrastructure. Hence the relevance of its results framework depends on whether its capacity building activities will eventually lead to improvements in

material conditions. If there are no financial resources to "kick start" activities, then capacity building activities, no matter how well designed, will have limited impact. To be relevant CONASA needs to target its capacity building interventions where they are likely to have an impact, which may involve reducing or shifting the geographic focus of the project area to match available sources of capital.

In regard to CONASA's second overall goal of improving sustainable resource management, the results framework addresses an important need that has been known for a long time in Zambia but never tackled directly in project context: the need to review the policy environment and strengthen the ability of civil society organisations to play a more active role in policy formation. CONASA's other result which addresses conservation, *Increased sustainable agricultural and natural resource production*, is broad enough to be relevant to the needs of conservation, however this evaluation argues that this same flexibility which guarantees relevance has not provided enough clarity to develop a conservation strategy which is relevant in the local context (see *2.4.4 – Role of natural resources*, page 30).

2.4.2.2. RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEXT

The question of the relevance to the context concerns whether CONASA's results framework is fundamentally realistic and viable given the geography, population, climate, history, macro-economy, and ecological characteristics of the project area. If the results framework is out of synch with the project context, then the activity streams that flow from the expected results and sub-results are essentially doomed to failure.

USAID and the primary consortium members have had years of experience in rural development and natural resource management in Zambia, particularly in southern province. Much of the results framework was built upon the achievement and lessons learned from previous USAID investments in agriculture and natural resources, most notably the CARE Livingstone Food Security Project and WCS support to ADMADE. The experience of these projects demonstrated fairly clearly that it is feasible to build community institutions for increased participation in local development, to increase food production through use of appropriate technology, to establish community based monitoring systems, and to increase natural resources production. Thus results 1, 2, 4, and 5 are definitely relevant and realistic in Southern Province.

However there is one result under component one whose relevance to the project context has come under question: *Result 3 – Diverse market opportunities for agriculture and NRM products identified and developed*. The assumptions underlying this result are first that market opportunities exist, and second that these opportunities can be identified and developed. While no one would doubt that there is a *need* to identify and develop market opportunities, and most would agree that there might be a few identifiable 'niche' opportunities in the project area (such as tourism and safari hunting), other assumptions underlying result 3 appear to be problematic.

Several well-known characteristics of the project area make it arguably one of the least conducive in Zambia for market development. The area is enormous and spread out, the road infrastructure is poor, soil fertility is marginal in most areas, the climate is officially categorized as 'semi-arid', there is close to a 50-50 chance of a moderate to severe drought in any given year, and large parts of the area are infected by Trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and/or Theilerioses (East Coast Fever or corridor disease). Very few of these constraints are within the capacity of CONASA or the communities to address. To make matters

worse, many of the supporting institutions required for market activity are weak or nonexistent in the project area. There are no banking facilities, no postal service, no phone service, no sources of credit, little titled land, no insurance providers, no credit tracking agencies, and so on. Thus while increasing business activity is certainly needed and would be a great thing, identifying and developing market opportunities as a development strategy for the project might not be highly relevant in the current context.

The challenge for CONASA is not to abandon business development altogether, but to craft a result that is more relevant to the project context. One way this could be done would be to focus more on strengthening market institutions, such as market information systems, efficiency of the transportation network, improved access to banking facilities, systems for bulking production, and harnessing the social capital of CBOs to reduce risk, provide alternative forms of insurance, and reduce the cost of contract enforcement. A second way would be to focus more specifically on local markets, where the volume of exchange isn't likely to be as great but market constraints are not as severe. A third way would be to focus on creating a conducive context specifically for joint-venture tourism enterprises. While the current wording of result 3 does not preclude these activities, the current focus of the result and its associated performance indicator have contributed to an incentive for the project to play a direct role in running business in an uphill battle to increase income in a non-conducive context.

"The challenge for CONASA is to craft a result for business development that is more relevant and realistic given the project context."

A second area where the results framework is somewhat out of touch with the project context is in the area of water provision. During the 2001 PRA exercises, lack of water was consistently listed as the first or second most serious constraint to livelihoods. However CONASA's result framework has no result or sub-result for water provision, water quality improvement, promotion of water harvesting technologies, etc. This is a pretty big hole in the results framework given that water is one of the biggest constraints to both food security and enterprise. Water projects are also one of the few development interventions that have been shown effective in managing settlement patterns (people like to settle near water) to support conservation, and also improve livestock health. CONASA has tried to partner with JICA, UNICEF and other projects that dig boreholes and windmills, but there are still many unmet needs.

The three results under component two represent the newest additions to the suite of strategies to strengthen CBNRM in Zambia: increasing civil society support for CBRNM, policy and advocacy training, and support for the implementation of institutional reforms in ZAWA. These results are certainly relevant to the needs of CBNRM in Zambia, which was frequently characterized during the 1990's as suffering from chronic policy constraints, little or no visible support from civil society (primarily NGOs and the private sector), and limited implementation of devolutionary policies in ZAWA. In this sense the results under component two are certainly relevant to the <u>needs</u> facing the development of CBNRM.

Whether the component two results are relevant and realistic given the context of the project is a story still unfolding. Early indications suggest that it is realistic to build a capacity for policy analysis and advocacy at both local and national level, although we have yet to see how this new capacity will fully interact with the dynamics of Zambia's complex and often contentious natural resources sector. CONASA's first three years of experience also demonstrate that supporting the implementation of decentralization reforms in ZAWA is reasonable and realistic, although ZAWA's context of extreme financial pressure, deep embeddedness in national politics, and the momentum of institutional history (a large boat does not turn quickly), has made this process much slower than most would have hoped.

The one result in component two which seemed reasonable in 2000 but has been shown to be out of alignment with the overall context is the result to build civil society support for CBNRM. The underlying assumptions behind this result were that NGOs and the private sector would be more involved in supporting the devolution of natural resource management if given awareness and training in the tools of advocacy. The experiences of CONASA's first two years of intervention demonstrated that few NGOs or resource based businesses had an institutional mandate and financial resources to support CBNRM, despite being given awareness and training. The focus of this component has since shifted to building the capacity of CBOs, who have a much more direct interest in supporting CBNRM policies.

The results in component three were based upon the assumptions that there are strong but undeveloped social, economic and ecological linkages to be built between the CONASA project area and the Four Corners TBNRMA. As far as ecological connectivity, this result is very relevant to the project context. It is well known that less than a century ago the area between what is today Kafue National Park and the Zambezi River was mostly open savannah woodland, with relatively free movement of wildlife. It is also well established in conservation circles that protected areas are more likely to maintain persistence of large species if there are connections or corridors between protected areas for migratory behaviour, the reestablishment of depleted populations, and gene flow.

The relevance of social connections also appears to be strong. Each of the four countries represented in the TBNRMA have experimented with various flavours of CBNRM, but there has been little opportunity for the community members in these programs to communicate with each other. There are also strong ethnic linkages across the transboundary area, although it isn't clear whether the families in CONASA's project area have strong kinship or social ties across the Zambezi.

The relevance of results 10 and 11, to increase income and business investment from regional markets, is a story still being told. On the one hand, no one can deny that are regional markets that could potentially play a greater role in household income and business transactions in the project area. On the other hand, it is not clear whether the context of the project area is conducive enough to make this desire a reality. The project area is still quite some distance from Livingstone, the road network is poor, and the lack of capital and supporting institutions for market development limit the opportunities for building business linkages.

2.4.2.3. RELEVANCE TO THE DONOR AND THE CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

At first glance, it would appear that CONASA's results framework should be highly relevant to USAID's strategic interests, because they had the greatest role

in its definition. USAID has supported natural resource management and the livelihood approach to reducing rural poverty in southern Zambia for more than 10 years. They have repeatedly pledged to support their previous investments in these sectors and this part of the country, and their continued support for CBNRM and HLS, particularly when financial resources for the SO team were cut back in 2001, is a good example of that commitment.

That being said, it is not immediately apparent how CONASA's results framework fits in with USAID/Zambia's previous strategic objectives in agriculture and natural resource management, the main thrust of which is increased rural incomes. CONASA's project area is certainly not the most conducive for increasing income in absolute terms, for many of the reasons mentioned in section 2.4.2.2 above. However CONASA has the potential to make great strides in raising income if measured in relative terms (e.g., as a percent increase) and in terms of reduced poverty or vulnerability. It is also not apparent how CONASA fits in USAID/Zambia's new country strategic plan for agriculture and natural resources, which focuses on making the private sector in Zambia more competitive. Given that the current context of southern province is so non-conducive for small business development, a focus on supporting the institutions and systems needed for economic growth might shift CONASA more to the centre of USAID's programs.

CONASA's work may also support the objectives of USAID's strategic objective to improve governance in Zambia. Although it might be a bit premature to claim that CONASA is stimulating a "rural renaissance", its work in supporting the implementation of government decentralization policies, building capacity for grassroots advocacy, and facilitating alliances between traditional leadership and new structures of local governance has the potential for profound implications for rural governance across Zambia. CONASA also has the potential to make a contribution toward USAID's strategic objective in reducing the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, although this is not currently a strong focus of the project.

"CONASA's work in supporting the implementation of government decentralization policies, building capacity for grassroots advocacy, and facilitating alliances between traditional leadership and new structures of local governance has the potential for profound implications for rural governance across Zambia."

One could also rationally assume that CONASA's results framework is relevant to the institutional interests of CARE, WCS, and AWF. As primary consortium partners, these NGOs had the opportunity to interpret and recast the expected results from USAID in terms of their own frameworks, strengths, and experience. For CARE, CONASA represents an opportunity to capitalise on its strengths in using the livelihood approach for rural development in Southern Province, while at the same time gaining experience in natural resource management, enterprise development, and policy/advocacy. CONASA's integration of the livelihood approach and policy analysis is also quite compatible with the rights based approach to programming (see *16.0 – Rights Based Programming*, page 291). RBA is one of CARE/Zambia's strategic thrusts in it long

range strategic plan, but an approach which CARE does not have a lot of experience with in Zambia.

For WCS, which is currently in a period of expansion in Zambia, CONASA represents an opportunity to build upon its experiences in supporting CBNRM under ADMADE program, strengthen operational relationships with other NGOs, and gain experience in policy analysis and advocacy. Although WCS was disappointed that the budget reduction in year one forced the closure of its field office at Itezhi-tezhi, and that the linkages between conservation and livelihood activities have not always received top priority, developments in 2003 demonstrate that the focus on conservation is growing in CONASA and its efforts to support policy analysis and advocacy are bearing fruit.

For AWF, the results in component three are a natural extension of its work in the Four Corners area. The focus on regional markets and ecological linkages are highly relevant to AWF's programmatic focus on ecoregional 'heartlands'. CONASA also represents an opportunity for AWF to further refine its implementation of the Conservation Service Centre approach, and gain lessons learned from supporting enterprises linked to regional markets.

2.4.3. Clarity of results

The holistic nature of CONASA's results framework, and the somewhat disjointed process by which they were developed, has resulted in a bit of overlap between some of the results and created some confusion for project in terms of reporting, division of responsibility, and lines of communication. For example result 3, *Diverse market opportunities for agriculture and NRM products identified and developed*, and result 11, *Increased rural incomes from regional markets* both focus on marketing, albeit result 11 specifies the market to be 'regional'. To make the waters even murkier, marketing activities can also fall under result 8, *Civil society and NGOs support for CBNRM increased,* as private sector business are the mainstay of civil society and trade is one form of support for community level institutions.

Other results suffer from a certain amount of ambiguity, which can also lead to overlap and potentially lack of focus. For example result 5, *Increased sustainable agricultural and natural resource production,* is broad enough to include encompass everything from increased production of staple crops, cash crops, timber, to wildlife. Result 9, *Kafue Area effectively linked to the Four Corners TBNRMA*, suffers from two forms of ambiguity, the notion of 'effectively linked' can be interpreted to mean almost anything from political linkage, economic, ecological, cultural, etc., and the vague geographic references "Kafue area" and "TBNRMA" don't provide much guidance in identifying which areas to target interventions. While the open ended wording provides a good deal of flexibility to programming, the danger is that not all types of linkages are worth the investment, and not all parts of the 220,000 km^2 TBNRMA are of equal ecological or economic value (Zambezi Society 2004).

The somewhat ambiguous and overlapping wording of the results framework has not been a major impediment to CONASA's progress, however it has caused some confusion particularly in the early stages and particularly around enterprise development. Staff positions, and their reporting requirements, are closely structured to specific results, so there were some issues of multiple staff reporting results for the same activity. Also the ambiguity of some of the results in some ways defeated the purpose of having a results framework in the first place – to provide clarity and focus to project activities.

Another challenge created by the results framework came in the development of performance indicators. Because specific commodities, geographic areas, policy issues, other types of 'linkages' were not clearly articulated in the results framework,

the performance monitoring team spent a great deal of time developing indicators that would capture all possible types of interventions. The result is a performance monitoring system with 39 separate indicators, a size which makes it challenging to provide feedback into programming (see section *12.2 – Performance monitoring*, page 229).

One way CONASA staff have responded to the vagueness in certain results is by developing sub-results which suggest more specific directions and strategies. Although it isn't clear whether sub-results grew out of a project-level initiative, or they were developed by individual program staff or components on an ad-hoc basis, sub-results started showing up in annual performance reviews and quarterly reports in year two. In hindsight, because the project was new and in some ways exploratory, it is probably just as well that sub-results were left open for development based on the accumulated experiences of the first two years. It also appears that the natural evolution of sub-results has helped project staff articulate how their day-to-day work fits into the larger results framework.

Lesson Learned

Developing intermediate results is a useful tool for conceptualising the connections between activities and impact, and tracking the progress of long-term processes.

To gain additional value from the evolution of sub-results, CONASA can do two things. First, it should shift from the terminology and connotation of *sub-results* to that of *intermediate results*. A *Sub-result* merely implies an additional categorization of the final result, which might make reporting easier but does little to clarify strategy. A more useful concept is that of an intermediate result, which forces one to think about strategy and sequencing. The development of intermediate results is also useful because some of the results in the result framework suffer from a significant disconnect in lifespan of the project and the pace of change one can realistically expect given the project context. By defining (and developing indicators for) intermediate results, the project can show track whether progress is or is not moving in the right direction, even if there is little change in end result. Currently, many of the 'sub-results' used in performance reviews are in fact intermediate results, although others are merely a categorization of end results. When planning future programming, CONASA should clarify this distinction and adopt the use of intermediate results.

A second way that CONASA can gain value from the use of intermediate results is to incorporate them more fully into the project design. Currently, sub-results are listed in quarterly reports, but there are no indicators for intermediate results and they do not appear in the annual performance reports. By incorporating intermediate results more formally into the results framework and developing performance indicators, CONASA could give its results framework in phase two what it was missing in phase one – a strategy. Adopting a result-intermediate result structure would also add clarity to the performance indicators, which currently are a mixture of measures of both end results and intermediate results (see also *12.2.2.4 – Is the performance monitoring* system useful?, page 235).

Recommendation 1. Future programming should centre around a set of results which are specific, overlap as little as possible, articulate intermediate results, and provide clarity and focus to project planning.

2.4.4. Role of natural resources

There appears to be something of a disconnect between the importance of the natural environment in the project area, and the expected outcomes as articulated in the results framework. On the one hand, the RFA refers repeatedly refers to the

importance of the biological resources in the project area for both ecological and economic reasons. Indeed it would appear that USAID selected the project area *primarily* on the basis of the presence of Game Management Areas and proximity to Kafue National Park (it certainly wasn't selected based on its conduciveness for enterprise development). Additionally two of the three primary consortium partners are primarily conservation organizations (Wildlife Conservation Society and African Wildlife Foundation).

Despite the implicit importance of natural resources, and the well-known array of threats to resource sustainability, the results framework is relatively weak on articulating specific conservation outcomes or processes. The one result that is conservation oriented, result 5, *Increased sustainable agricultural and natural resource production*, was not even included in the original RFA, but was added by the consortium members. And while this result is worded broadly enough to justify a wide array of conservation activities, the danger is that the same ambiguity can be satisfied with very weak conservation interventions. For example, converting savannah habitat to mono-culture forest plantations would technically constitute increased natural resource production, but most conservationists would argue that ecosystem simplification is not a highly desirable outcome. Similarly activities which promote fish production in settled areas might appear to be a conservation achievement according to result 5, but most biologists would again argue that healthy wildlife populations and large contiguous tracts of habitat are far more important targets.

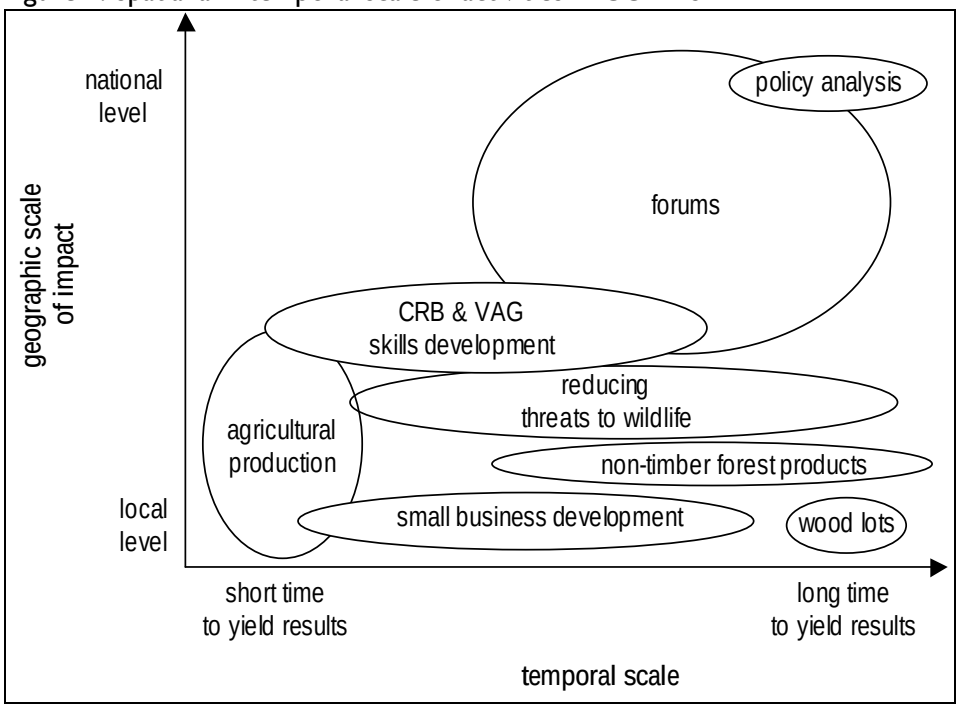
Once again, the issue is not that result 5 doesn't encompass CONASA's overall objectives, but that it fails to provide clarity and focus to project programming. CONASA staff have struggled to create linkages between conservation, increased agricultural production, advocacy, and enterprise development. If the importance of specific biological resources, desired outcomes, and strategies were more explicitly articulated in the results framework, creating those linkages would most likely be easier and more effective.

Recommendation 2. CONASA's conservation goals and strategy should be more clearly articulated, preferably through more specific wording of results and intermediate results.

2.4.5. Spatial and temporal scales

One of the tremendous challenges of implementing holistic programmes is dealing with multiple temporal and spatial scales at which activities are designed, implemented, and generate results. CONASA has been forced to deal with this challenge in a big way. This is illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Spatial and temporal scale of activities in CONASA



Lesson Learned

Synergistic effects are most likely to be seen between activities that are operating at similar spatial and temporal scales.

The wide range of spatial and temporal scales at which CONASA's activities operate presents at least two challenges. First, it is quite difficult to achieve synergist benefits across different sets of activities when they operate at different scales. The best you can hope to achieve when, for example, you are working to improve the long-term policy context at the national level and also supporting short-term small-scale businesses at the local level is that eventually the policy work will result in a more conducive environment for business activity. However this is a much weaker form of synergy than you could hope for between two activities operating at the same spatial and temporal scale, for example boosting agricultural production through improved seed varieties and marketing.

The second challenge for CONASA is how to reap or demonstrate the impact of activities that yield results over the long-term when the lifespan of the project is a mere four years. Out of all of the programming CONASA is engaged in, the only stream of activities that one could reasonably expect to see real impact in four years is agricultural production. Enterprise development takes a long time to see benefits (for example CLUSA/Zambia focuses on a 20 year time frame in its programs) as does natural resource management, advocacy, and TBNRM. Building the capacity of local CBOs is designed to improve the context in which development takes place, but is only a means to an end because you can't eat capacity.

There is no magic solution to dealing with disconnects in spatial and temporal scale. However it is important that both CONASA and USAID understand and recognize the implications of scale on the results framework, and adjust expectations, performance measures, and funding commitments accordingly. One might also argue that if disconnects in scale make it highly improbable that synergistic effects across activities will be possible, then there might not be much added value to housing these activities under a single project framework. Put another way, one could hypothesize that development and conservation projects are most effective and efficient when they work within a single temporal and spatial scale. CONASA is in a unique position to shed light on this debate, and should make an effort to document its experiences.

3.0 CBO CAPACITY BUILDING

3.1. Strategy

3.1.1. Goals

The ultimate goal of CONASA's strategy is to improve livelihood security at the household level, however CBOs lie at the heart of nearly all of CONASA's community-level activities. Following the lessons of other development and conservation projects, including LFSP and ADMADE, CONASA works through CBOs for several reasons:

- CBOs give voice to the community that helps ensure that development activities are relevant to local needs, including the needs of vulnerable sub groups
- the 1998 Wildlife Act specifically mandates the formation of Community Resource Boards in GMAs to oversee the management of natural resources and act as a comanagement partner to ZAWA
- implementing development through CBOs expands the reach and impact of activities for the same amount of time and investment
- CBOs provide a mechanism by which local resources, including labour, can be mobilized to strengthen public goods and services
- CBOs can lower transaction costs in business ventures, increase volumes of production, and lower risks
- working in groups creates opportunities for development that may not possible otherwise, including access to loans and the ability to enter contracts
- strong CBOs are believed to improve the sustainability of activities
- working in groups is commonplace in traditional culture and resonates with the experiences of rural people
- CBOs and CBO associations strengthen the ability of rural households to struggle their own agenda when dealing with more powerful actors including businesses, investors, the State, and NGOs

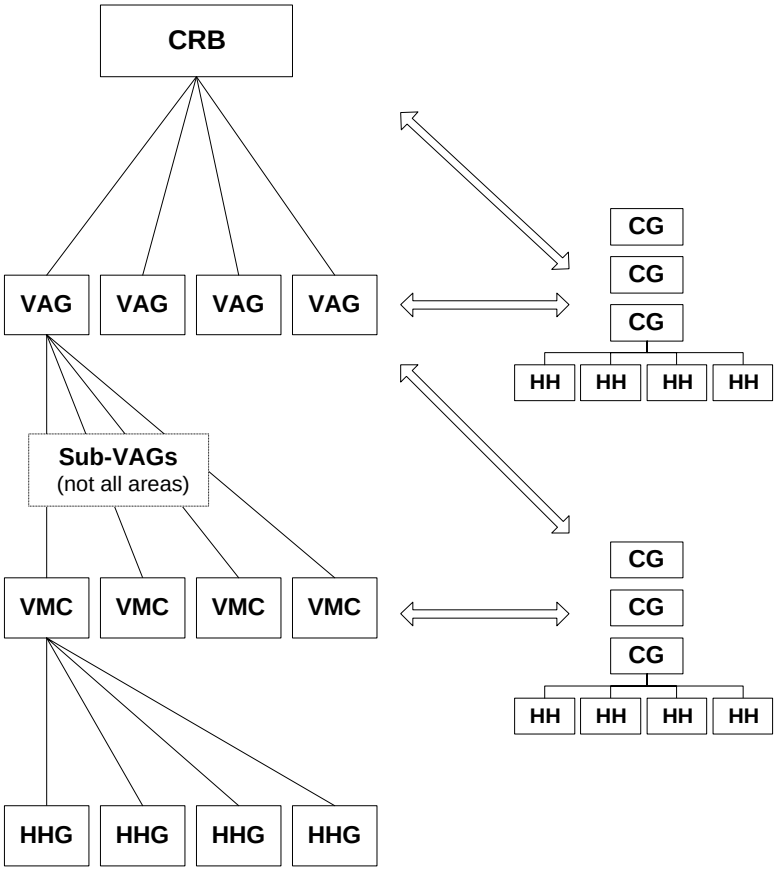
3.1.2. Parallel CBO structure

3.1.2.1. PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

One lesson CONASA has picked up from the experiences of past CBNRM projects in Zambia can be seen in the support of a parallel CBO structure. This approach is based upon the recognition that the required functions of local institutions naturally fall into two categories – one dealing with issues of governance and resource management, and another dealing with income generation and food production. Until recently, many CBNRM projects focused on supporting a single type of CBO with the hope that they could take the lead in resource management, governance and income generation activities. Not surprisingly, this often produced disappointing results.

The experiences of CBNRM programs suggest that while local democratically elected institutions are necessary for collective decision making on resource management policies and local development initiatives, such organisations are inherently limited by their size, skills, and mandate, making them poorly equipped to improve household livelihoods on a broad scale. CONASA is therefore providing support to a "parallel" set of local organisations, whereby one group of nested CBOs deals with collective decision making, and the other group of CBOs focuses on "enterprise" in the form of food production or small-scale businesses. Each of these two categories of CBOs can exist at different spatial or organisational scales depending on needs and opportunities, and be linked both vertically and horizontally, as depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Parallel CBO structure



Key: CRB = community resource board; VAG = village area group; VMC = village management committee, HHG = household group; CG = commodity group; HH = household

The number of members or lower level organisations represented at each level of the CBO structure is shown below.

Table 7. CBO membership size

CBO	Average size	Drawn from
CRB	10 members	an equal representation from all VAGs
VAG	10-15 members	drawn from all VMCs
sub-VAG	3-10 VMCs	VMCs, but only if needed because of population size or geography
VMC	10-15 HHGs	heads of household groups
HHG	5-10 households	clusters of households

3.1.2.2. INCORPORATION OF TRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

The traditional structures (i.e., chiefs and headmen) are of course the most established and widely recognized form of local government, universally respected by local residents, GRZ, NGOs, and the private sector. CONASA's approach in regard to traditional authorities has been to include them as stakeholders in nearly all activities, with a particular emphasis on participation in policy, advocacy and exchange visits. In these areas, Chiefs have a central and somewhat unique role as community spokesmen.

In terms of uniting the traditional and new CBO structures, CONASA inherited an arrangement whereby Chiefs are represented on the CRBs as a patron, and are entitled to a flat 5% of safari hunting revenues from ZAWA. In reality, the influence of chiefs is greater than their positions as a non-voting CRB members

might suggest, but this arrangement has more checks and balances than the previous sub-authority structure of the ADMADE program, which was widely criticized for promoting patronage and autocracy.

3.1.2.3. PRE-EXISTING CBOS

During the 2000 and 2001 PRA exercises, CONASA conducted an inventory of local CBOs in the project area. Most of the GMAs already had CRBs formed under the ADMADE program (see Table 3, page 9) by the time CONASA arrived, although the activity level and popular support of CRBs was not always high. In addition, a variety of other local organisations were found, including PTA groups, women's clubs, farmer cooperatives, health committees, football committees, area development committees, and structures established by other projects including LFSP, CLUSA, and ZAMSIF. CONASA's approach has been to incorporate existing structures whenever possible, and in particular the VMCs and AMCs (which became VAGs) supported by LFSP.

3.1.3. Capacity building strategy

CONASA followed similar strategies for establishing and strengthening HHGs, VMCs, VAGs, and CRBs as well as commodity groups. However commodity groups were most often formed at different times and/or through different processes. Thus this section of the report only discusses the activities and issues regarding CBO capacity building section, while commodity group formation and support is discussed under enterprise in 5.0 (page 101). Similarly in this section the term *CBO* will only refer to CRBs, VAGs, VMCs, and HHGs, while commodity groups will only be referred to as CGs (even though commodity groups can be technically be considered as a CBO).

CONASA's strategy for CBO capacity building involves five elements:

1. CBO formation (as needed)
2. training
3. establish community information systems
4. providing start-up support for local projects
5. continued support until self-sufficiency

3.1.3.1. CBO FORMATION

The first step in establishing the CBO structure was to form CBOs. The preferred strategy was to use a bottom-up approach, forming household groups first, then VMCs, VAGs, and finally CRBs. However in four out of the five chiefdoms, the CRBs had already been formed so there was a simultaneous top-down and bottom-up approach in regard to CBO formation. Establishing CBOs generally requires an initial round of community meetings to introduce the project and the proposed structures, followed by development of a constitution and elections. During CBO formation, CONASA staff were attentive to ensure that leadership committees included sufficient numbers of women, and were spatially representative of the area (see also *11.3.2.1 – Gender patterns in CBO leadership*, page 223).

3.1.3.2. LEADERSHIP SKILLS TRAINING

The second step of CONASA's CBO capacity building strategy is to provide training in organisational and leadership skills. The majority of this "multi-purpose" training is implemented by CONASA's program staff, both in village settings as well as town, depending on the number of participants, their distribution, and the available facilities. CONASA has a three-tiered institutional

training curriculum, as outlined in Table 8 below. The specific content of training workshops is tailored to the type of organisation (i.e., CRB, VAG, or VMC).

Table 8. CBO training topics

Level 1 – Foundation	Level 2 – Intermediate	Level 3 – Advanced
▪ Background of the project ▪ Development ▪ Introduction to group dynamics ▪ Participation ▪ Team building ▪ CBO structure ▪ Leadership skills (Basic) ▪ Communication skills ▪ Record keeping ▪ Constitution drafting ▪ Problem identification ▪ Proposal writing	▪ Communication skills (cont'd) ▪ Decision making ▪ Team building (cont'd) ▪ Facilitation and moderating ▪ Conflict resolution ▪ Budgeting ▪ Financial management	▪ Planning ▪ Implementation ▪ External relations ▪ Project management ▪ Participatory M&E

In addition to training from its own field staff, CONASA's capacity building strategy also calls for the formation of a network of community-based trainers. Prior to CONASA's entry, most of the CRBs had one or two *Community Coordinators*. Community Coordinators are local residents who have gone for specialised training at the African College for CBNRM (ACCBNRM). Community Coordinators are paid employees of the CRB, although their salaries were temporarily covered by WCS during 2001-02 to help bridge what was expected to be a temporary gap in revenue due to a Presidential ban on safari hunting.

CONASA's approach for CBO training also involves a new type of multi-purpose community-based trainer, called *Community Facilitators*. Unlike Community Coordinators who are paid by the CRB, Facilitators are volunteers from the local area who undergo training in a variety of topics, and then provide training and farmer-to-farmer extension services in their own communities. The role of facilitators is designed to fill a gap in training at the lower level structures (VAGs, VMCs, and commodity groups) not met by Community Coordinators who work more at the CRB level.

3.1.3.3. ESTABLISH COMMUNITY INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The third leg of CONASA's CBO capacity building strategy involves the establishment of a community-based livelihood monitoring system called the CSM (Community Self-Monitoring). The objective of the CSM is to equip community leaders to track household living conditions for the purposes of project planning and self-assessment. This approach builds upon the experiences of the Livingstone Food Security Project which supported a similar system with modest levels of success. In practice, the CSM involves the maintenance of village ledger books by someone at the VMC level who monitors both village level and household level variables.

3.1.3.4. START-UP SUPPORT FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

The fourth step of CONASA's capacity building strategy is to help each CBO apply their newly acquired skills by undertaking a project. During the project design, it was envisioned that CBOs could undertake projects ranging from village seed banks, to dip tanks, to habitat management. It was also envisioned

that CBOs would be able to access start-up financing from safari hunting revenue (through the CRB) and/or CONASA's own micro-grant facility (see *5.2.3 – Provision of start-up capital*, page 103). Together, the promises of training and start-up financing have undoubtedly been the biggest "carrot" CONASA has utilised to build interest in the formation of CBOs.

3.1.3.5. CONTINUED SUPPORT UNTIL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

The fourth step of CONASA's capacity building strategy is to continue to provide technical support until the CBOs can manage on their own. This stage is reached when a CBO can "initiate and implement their own activities," and represents the most advanced level in the 'graduation criteria'. After CBOs can initiate and manage their own activities, it is expected that CONASA would begin to reduce it level of support to the CBO, and/or build linkages to other service providing organisations in government or the private sector.

3.1.4. Linking CBOs

The final element of CONASA's strategy for building strong CBOs is to support linkages between CBOs, both vertically and horizontally, and both within and between the parallel structure of CBOs. In other words, CONASA wants to operationalize the arrows in Figure 3 (page 34), based on the hypothesis that if CBOs multiply the strengths of individuals, then strong associations of CBOs can further multiply those strengths.

Vertical linkages within the CBO structure were envisioned to connect individual CRBs with the sub-structure, for example joint activities between CRBs, VAGs, sub-VAGs, and VMCs. The reasons for the nested CBO structure is to allow broad-based participation in development planning, and provide a structure to implement household level support schemes (e.g., local seed banks) throughout an entire chiefdom.

Horizontal linkages within the CBO structure were envisioned to involve associations of CBOs for the purposes of sharing lessons learned, facilitating more efficient and effective dialogue with government, advocacy, and possibly large-scale joint ventures such as coordinated land use planning, habitat management or large scale production of non-timber forest products (e.g., honey or mungongo nuts). Finally, linkages between CBOs and commodity groups were envisioned to involve service provision such as training, contract negotiation, legal support, and conflict resolution.

3.2. Achievements

3.2.1. Establishment of CBO Structure

While 4 out of 5 CRBs were already established in the project area when the project started (see Table 3, page 9), CONASA facilitated the establishment of the fifth CRB and has help to set up nearly all of the substructures. While not all of these CBOs are actively managing projects, each has gone through a minimum amount of sensitisation and training, laying a foundation for grassroots input into development planning, and a structure for extension and information exchange.

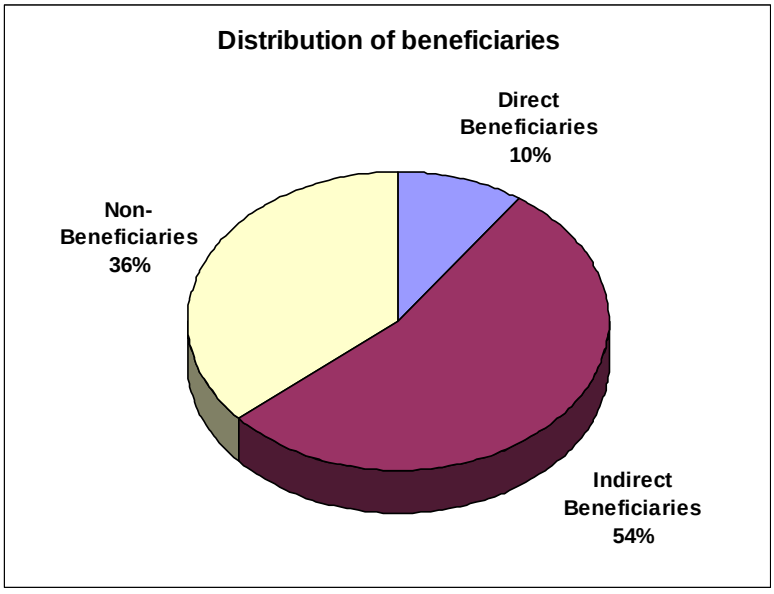
Table 9. Number of CBOs established by end of 2003

CBO	Quantity
CRB	5
VAG	22
VMC	409
HHG	1064 (5,977 households)

3.2.2. Outreach and participation

As of the end of 2003, CONASA was active in 22 of 23 VAGs, made up of 409 VMCs representing 1,064 household groups. The number of direct beneficiaries, defined as people receiving direct benefits including training, finance, marketing support, and agricultural inputs, was estimated to be 11,000. A total of 64,000 people were considered indirect beneficiaries, defined as being registered in a household group. The estimated remaining 36,000 people living in the project area are not considered to be beneficiaries.

Figure 4. Direct and indirect beneficiaries[10]



3.2.3. Training

Training is a strategy used in almost all program sections in CONASA. This section presents the main achievements in organisational and multi-purpose skills training. Achievements in technical training are reported in the sections on agriculture and livestock (see *4.2.4 – Training*, page 81), enterprise (see *5.3.7 – Training*, page 110), policy and advocacy (see *6.2.5 – Policy Training*, page 126), and resource management (see *9.4.4 – NRM training*, page 185).

3.2.3.1. TRAINING CBO LEADERS

The biggest set of activities in the CBO Capacity Building Section has been training. As can be seen in Table 10 below, the largest set of trainings have focused around leadership skills, with community self-monitoring coming in second.

[10] source: CONASA Annual Performance Report For Period January to December 2003

Table 10. CRB and VAG level organisational training 2001–2003

Training Type	Number of Individuals
Leadership skills	858
Community self-monitoring	380
Community coordinator training	4
Local facilitator training	39
General NRM skills	13
Field visits	25

3.2.3.2. COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINERS

In the first quarter of 2003, 50 local residents were identified as potential Community Facilitators. Of these, 39, representing all VAGS and including 3 women, successfully completed a two-week training in Choma. Facilitator training covered a variety of skills including extension methods, gender awareness, HIV/AIDS awareness, and farming methods for the five major crops in the area (maize, sunflower, ground nuts, sorghum, and cow peas). Some of these facilitators also attended a Start Your Business workshop in October 2003, with the purpose of building their ability to assist commodity groups prepare applications for CONASA's G-MED fund. Nine facilitators were also taken by CONASA to attend a Field Day at GART-Batoka Livestock Development Centre in Choma to learn about improved goat rearing, conservation farming, and smallholder dairy production.

CONASA has also provided additional training for the Community Coordinators. In the first quarter of 2003, three community coordinators attended a four-day training-for-trainers (TOT) workshop in 'Start Your Business' in Kalomo. The primary objective of this training was also to enable the Community Coordinators to help commodity groups prepare applications for microfunding from CONASA's G-MED fund.

3.2.3.3. FIELD TRIPS AND EXCHANGE VISITS

A third approach CONASA has utilised to train CBO leaders is taking them on field trips and exchange visits to see other development projects.

In September 2003, CONASA took 15 CBO leaders (including 5 women) to visit three development projects in Southern Province being implemented by GTZ, Zambia National Farmers Union (ZNFU), and Women for Change (WFC). Among the activities the group saw were agro-forestry support, conservation farming, mushroom growing, soap making, improved goat and poultry production, water points, community-based HIV/AIDS education, cattle restocking and disease prevention, and an affirmative female leadership training program.

The CONASA CSC also conducted three field trips to CBNRM programmes in Botswana and Namibia. These are described in section *8.2.2 – Creating inter-community links with Botswana and Namibia*, page 157.

3.2.4. Sourcing external funds

Another stream of activities has been geared toward identifying alternative sources of funds, including government, donors, and civil society. Like other strategies under CBO capacity building, the goal behind this activity is to attract development support by leveraging the CBO capacity built by CONASA. This activity became particularly relevant after it became apparent that little or no money from safari hunting was going to be available for community development projects.

A number of potential funding sources have been identified and visited by CONASA staff, including NGOs (e.g., GTZ), embassies, and donors. Of these enquiries, the Germany embassy seemed the most promising with a small fund that CONASA communities could apply for. Other promising leads were found at the Irish, Japanese, and Netherlands embassies, and UNICEF. As of the end of 2003, no monies from external sources had actually been applied for.

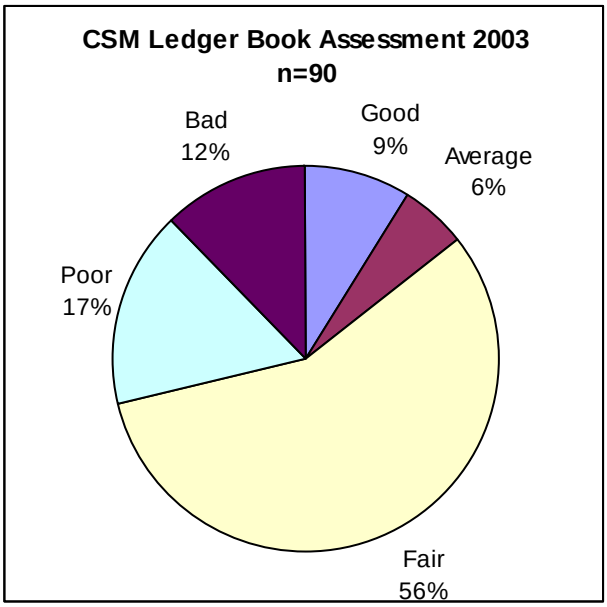
3.2.5. Community self-monitoring

During its first two years, CONASA staff provided training in community self-monitoring to a total of 492 CBO members (13% female) in 12 VAGs[11]. These trainings were conducted in the field at the VMC level, but were separate from the trainings in CBO leadership skills. CSM training was offered in two phases. Phase one introduced the general concepts about information, the types of information found in a village context, communication processes, traditional systems for sharing information, and ways in which information can be used for planning local development. Phase two covered the mechanics of maintaining a CSM ledger book. As part of these trainings, CONASA distributed 206 CSM ledgers.

After receiving training and the blank CSM books, VMC leaders began collecting information. At the village level, the CSM stores information on total village population, livestock disease prevalence, qualitative descriptions of weather patterns, health issues, births and deaths. At the household level, data is supposed to be collected twice a year on household demographics, assets, agricultural production, income, food security, and livestock.

In 2003, the MER section conducted a series of follow-up visits to assess how the trained CBOs were collecting and using information in the CSMs, and provide support as needed. The team visited 183 VMCs in 10 of the 12 VAGs, and reviewed almost half of the books distributed. After examining and rating each book, the team found that approximately 71% of the books were being maintained at a level of fair, average, or good quality (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Quality assessment of CSM ledgers



Assessment Key

Good: capturing all the variables 100% & good management

Average: capturing some data

Fair: Almost 80% of the variables with at least good management

Poor: At least able to collect some data on some variables.

Bad: No information at all and bad management.

While the assessment did not report any examples of VMCs actually using their CSM records for planning or decision making purposes, there have been anecdotal

[11] source: Mukamba, Mwangala. *CSM System in CONASA*. Kalomo. December 2003.

examples of CBOs using their CSM. For example the chairman of Nkandanzovu VAG has stated that they have used the CSM to identify areas for input supply. More discussion about the CSM can be seen in *3.3.4 – CSM*, page 55.

3.2.6. Formation of a CRB association

CONASA played a central role in facilitating the formation of MUSIBI, an association of the 5 CRBs in the project area. This association effectively extends the CRB structure upward, providing mechanisms for participation in the national Natural Resources Consultative Forum (see *6.2.3 – Forums*, page 124), ZAZIBONA (see *8.2.6 – ZAZIBONA TBNRM Forum*, page 162), and an eventual national association of CRBs. The formation of MUSIBI is reported in section *6.2.4 – Formation of a CRB Association*, page 126.

3.3. Discussion

3.3.1. Impact

3.3.1.1. CBOs – A LASTING LEGACY

While CONASA's strategy for capacity building and interactions with CBOs have had their ups and downs, it is worth noting first off that nothing CONASA has or will achieve is likely to have a more lasting impact than the establishment and training of CBOs. Ten years down the road, when the CONASA motor bikes and land cruisers are a distant memory, we can still expect some form of local organisational capacity to be present. It probably won't be the same structure of CBOs that exist today, however people will have the vision, skills, and ability to form groups to meet new needs and take advantage of opportunities in governance or the market. The LFSP internal mid-term evaluation found that group formation was one of the biggest achievements among a predominantly Tonga population, who are said to independent culturally and don't have a long history of grassroots organisations. The same can basically be said for CONASA.

> "Nothing CONASA has or will achieve is likely to have a more lasting impact than the establishment and training of CBOs."

3.3.1.2. CBO INITIATED ACTIVITIES

Measuring the "impact" of a CBO is always challenging and often problematic. Aside from the challenge that 'capacity' is difficult to measure, the time scale at which change takes place can be quite long, changes are often subtle and non-linear, and the outcomes more qualitative than quantitative. CONASA has come up with an array of indicators in its Performance Monitoring Plan (see *12.2 – Performance monitoring*, page 229) to measure the degree to which supported CBOs are successful. One of the main indicators is "the number of CBOs initiating and managing projects". While the reporting of CBO initiated projects is not systematic and focuses mostly on the CRBs, there have been several interesting examples of CBO projects.

Examples of CBO self-initiated activities

The ultimate objective and indicator of capacity building is for CBOs to initiate and implement their own activities. The following are examples of local initiatives that were planned and executed by supported CBO structures, but without any direct input from CONASA.

- **Maize bulking**. Soon after the 2003 harvest, Nyawa CRB bought maize from local farmers, stored it in a community shed, and hired a security guard to watch the premises. This maize was then resold to the local community over the next several months during the 'hungry season' when local maize stocks run low and prices in town fluctuate greatly.
- **Bicycle purchases**. Nyawa and Siachitema CRBs bought bicycles and stationery items to support their local facilitators using past safari hunting revenues. While modest in size, this act represents a reinvestment in the structures that the CRB depends on to facilitate local development.
- **Construction of camp houses**. Moomba CRB used some of their safari hunting revenue to construct houses for scouts at Kalika Camp.
- **Recruitment of village scouts**. Acting on their own, Shezongo CRB recruited and employed 6 village scouts using their own safari hunting monies. The scouts started working along side ZAWA scouts at Ngoma and efforts are underway to provide them with additional training.
- **Lobbying the Forestry Department.** After participating in CONASA policy and advocacy trainings, Mulobezi CRB wrote a letter to the Forestry Department complaining about the practices of a commercial logging operation in their area. This led to the revocation of the company's logging permit, and ultimately a testimony from the CRB before Parliament (see *6.2.6.1 – Moomba CRB presentation in parliament*, page 130)
- **Negotiating deals with private sector.** Chikanta CRB initiated contact with potential investors interested in building a) a crocodile farm or b) a game ranch. While neither of these initiatives has reached the implementation stage, these discussions demonstrate a vision on the part of the CRB of a future involving conservation, joint venture enterprises, and livelihoods.
- **School construction.** Shezongo CRB confiscated timber that was illegally harvested, sold it for K8 million, and used the revenue to help renovate four local schools.

Another measure of capacity is the development of workplans. A review of the CRB workplan reveals even more ambitious set of activities (Table 11). While many of these planned activities are contingent on funding which may or may not materialize, they at least provide a very tangible measure of the role that CRBs see themselves in, and their vision for local development and resource management.

Table 11. Main activities in CRB 2003 annual workplans

CRB	Planned activities for 2003
Moomba	▪ construction of a rest house at Moomba Central ▪ purchase and repairing of a hammer mill ▪ purchase of a truck ▪ build 22 houses for village scouts at Katete camp ▪ construct 2 dams at Moomba and Mulenga ▪ formation of beekeeping commodity groups ▪ consolidating the timber group ▪ construction of 2 schools in Choonzo and Mabwe ▪ construction of CRB office ▪ construction of the Chief's house

CRB	Planned activities for 2003
Nyawa	▪ formation of bee-keeping groups (3) ▪ formation of garden groups (2) ▪ formation of timber cutting groups in Nyawa and Choma ▪ formation of weaving and cutting groups ▪ formation of one pottery group ▪ construction of a restaurant at Nyawa Central
Siachitema	▪ train village scouts/RMC in quota setting ▪ establish a community campsite at Dundumwezi ▪ purchase a community hammer mill ▪ form 5 beekeeping groups ▪ form 2 poultry groups ▪ form 5 gardening groups ▪ conduct a tree planting exercise
Shezongo	▪ construct a camp for scouts at Idiamaala ▪ formation of poultry group ▪ formation bee keeping groups ▪ formation of basket making groups ▪ drill boreholes for humans ▪ sale of crafts ▪ tree planting ▪ construction of CRB administration office ▪ holding meetings
Chikanta	▪ install water pumps and dams ▪ formation of commodity groups ▪ recruit village scouts ▪ conduct trainings ▪ holding meetings

3.3.1.3. QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENTS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

Quantitative impact measures such as number of activities initiated, number of meetings, etc., fail to capture the more qualitative forms of capacity building, such as confidence, empowerment, and cohesion. Because qualitative outcomes are so difficult to measure systematically, they are often ignored by performance monitoring systems, but are important nonetheless (see for example Ashley 1998). The best way to assess qualitative forms of impact is to ask CBO leaders themselves, which was done as part of this assessment (see Appendix 3 – Fieldwork schedule of the consultant, page 337). After visiting CRBs and VAGs in Chikanta and Nyawa, there is little doubt that some CBOs have become more capable as a direct result of CONASA's training activities. They speak with confidence, can articulate their current and planned activities, and will tell you directly that they can do more now than before CONASA. This impression has been confirmed by other actors who have interacted with CBO leaders trained by CONASA, including senior officials at ZAWA and other NGOs.

> "CBO leaders speak with confidence, can articulate their current and planned activities, and will tell you directly that they can do more now than before CONASA."

It is also true however that some CBO leaders have not demonstrated much progress in their leadership skills and level of understanding. They sit glassy-eyed at workshops, can not recall what topics have been discussed, and speak primarily about their endless material needs rather than their own resources or initiatives. Some have even been jokingly labelled as "untrainable" by their own colleagues. The challenge for CONASA is to develop selection mechanisms in its training programs so that it targets those who are most likely to benefit.

3.3.1.4. IMPACTS ON HOUSEHOLDS

Ultimately, CONASA's goal is increase the livelihood security of households. Building the capacity of CBOs is but a means to that end. An important question then is what has been the impact of CBO capacity building on household livelihood security?

Linkages between CBOs and households have not been well studied by CONASA, although project management understands the importance of this connection and has proposed it as the focus of special study on more than one occasion. Certainly there is a small amount of direct benefit to the households of the CBO leaders and their immediate kinship network, from the increased skills and income from attending CONASA's workshops. There are also certainly many examples of households receiving access to inputs, technical training, and start up capital by virtue of their association with a VAG, CRB, or VMC. It has been estimated that at least 25% of all households have received benefits directly from CONASA (see *4.3.2.1 – Input supply*, page 85)

Without a more focused study beyond the scope of this evaluation, there are not many conclusions that can be made about the benefits that CBO capacity building generates for households. However a few reasonable propositions or hypotheses can be drawn. These hypotheses could form the core of a special study on the topic (see *12.5.1.3 – Connection between CBO capacity and households*, page 252).

Propositions about the connections between CBO capacity building and HLS
o Benefits to households from CBO capacity building efforts can be direct (e.g., increased skills or income of family members resulting from participation in trainings), or indirect (increased income from an enterprise facilitated by a CBO).
o Direct benefits are likely to produce strong linkages, but reach a relatively small number of households. The majority of households are likely to benefit indirectly, if at all.
o Activities that are most likely to improve household level livelihood security on a wide scale are agriculture schemes, livestock health, and support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
o The strength of the connection between CBOs and HHs will therefore depend strongly on the performance of the CBO in supporting agriculture schemes, livestock health, and SMEs.
o NRM activities have relatively little impact on livelihood security in the short term, but are important for long-term security and coping strategies.
o There is also a potential for a negative impact on HLS if CBO activities reduce access to resources, create competition, or distort prices.

While the issue of CBO capacity and HLS has not been properly studied, some initial evidence suggests that the connection may be quite weak. The 2003 CBO assessment study found that the level of the CBOs structure which has received the greatest amount of capacity building training by far has been the CRBs.

However a look at the workplans of the five CRBs (see Table 11, page 42) reveals a fairly limited number of activities that are likely to have a direct impact on HLS. Most notably, there is almost a complete absence of interventions in agriculture and livestock health.

Lesson Learned

The strength of the linkage between CBO capacity building and HLS depends on the degree to which CBOs are engaged in supporting core livelihood strategies.

An even better measure of CRB focus is the record of past performance. According to the report of the 2003 Bottom Up Assessment of ZAWA from component two, monies disbursed to CRBs in 2003 mostly went to social infrastructure projects (schools and clinics), and support for village scouts (training, rations). Again there was a notable lack of support for agriculture and livestock health schemes.

It should not be too surprising that the capacity building activities for CRBs may not be having a strong impact on HLS. After all, the primary mandate of CRBs, their interactions with government, and the focus of much of their training, all centers around NRM. Only relatively recently have the issues of food security and support for businesses been linked to conservation objectives, and the trend seems to be in the right direction. Attendance at any recent CRB gathering will reveal that issues of human development are very much on the agenda, and now that CRBs are involved in administering the G-MED fund, we should expect to see a greater connection to HLS.

Still, the link between CRB activities and HLS may never be strong, for no other reason than the CRB is primarily designed for NRM at the GMA level and policy input. What then should be CONASA's strategy for strengthening HLS? The answer lies below the CRB level, where VAGs, VMCs, and commodity groups have more direct contact with households. These structures have benefited less from CONASA's training, but offer the greatest hope for making impacts at the household level.

Lesson Learned

The greatest hope for building linkages between CBO capacity building and household livelihood security lies at the VAG and VMC levels, which have the greatest amount of interaction with households and businesses.

Recommendation 3. To strengthen the connections between CBO capacity building and household livelihood security, CONASA should increase training and support at the VAG and VMC levels, which has a greater role in supporting agricultural schemes, livestock health, and SMEs.

3.3.2. CBO–CBO relationships

3.3.2.1. HORIZONTAL LINKAGES: CRBS & CGS

The parallel CBO structure which CONASA is promoting is based on the assumption or hope that governance-oriented CBOs (CRBs and VAGs) will provide support to enterprise oriented CBOs (small businesses and production groups), and vice-versa. It has been argued in the previous section that this connection is critical if the efforts to build the capacity of CRBs are to "trickle down" to stronger household livelihoods. So an important question is, "Is there

any evidence of horizontal CBO linkages?" The short answer is yes and no, with the trend heading in the right direction.

Probably the best example of positive interactions between governance and enterprise oriented CBOs can be seen in Nyawa, an area which has had relatively little assistance from CONASA due to a unresolved internal conflict over the successor to Chief Nyawa III. Nyawa CRB has on its own established a registration system whereby commodity groups pay an annual registration fee of K25,000 to the CRB. In return, registered commodity groups get services from the CRB, including technical assistance from local facilitators and the opportunity to apply for micro-loans for start-up funding.

Whether or not Nyawa's CG registration system is sustainable, or meets the needs of commodity groups, is still unfolding, but the initiative represents an important step for at least two reasons. First, it gives the CRB some operating capital to provide services in an otherwise cash-strapped environment (Nyawa is the only CRB which has bought bicycles for its facilitators). More importantly, the registration system establishes a kind of unwritten contract between the CRB and CGs, with expectations being created on both sides. The exact nature of the expectations on each side will inevitably evolve as terms and conditions get renegotiated over time, but a relationship has been established that provides a foundation for continued interactions.

Another example of support can be seen in Nkandanzovu, where the VAG has successfully reinvested seed loan repayments into a second season of inputs, and helped secure a grant for a local entrepreneur to set up a sunflower press in the community. Other forthcoming examples can be seen in the annual workplans of CRBs (see Table 11, page 42), where for example Siachitema CRB is planning to help establish several commodity groups for the production of honey, poultry, and vegetables.

> "It is still to early to declare the observed interactions between CRBs, VAGs, and enterprise groups as conclusive evidence that the parallel CBO structure works."

However anecdotes aside, it is still to early to declare the interactions between CRBs/VAGs and enterprise groups as conclusive evidence that the parallel CBO structure works. These examples demonstrate that it is possible for local governance CBOs to support enterprise groups, but it should still be seen as a hypothesis. In some areas these relationships do not seem to be emerging, and in other areas CRBs are in fact becoming directly engaged in enterprise themselves, thereby creating the potential for competition with enterprise groups. In fact the expansion of the mandate of CRBs and the blurring of roles stands to invalidate the parallel CBO model. CONASA must also be on the alert for forms of assistance to enterprise groups which are in fact little more than thinly veiled kickbacks to CRB and VAG leaders and their families.

3.3.2.2. VERTICAL LINKAGES: CRBS AND VAGS

A second critical set of linkages in the CBO structure lie between CRBs and VAGs. The vision of this relationship, as outlined in CONASA's project document, is that CRBs would be primarily engaged with setting resource management policy at the GMA level, while allocating resources for

development projects to lower level CBOs. VAGs in turn were expected to play a key role in managing local development projects, supporting local commodity groups, and providing input to the CRBs on development priorities and resource management policies. An important question then is how has the relationship between VAGs and CRBs actually evolved?

> "It appears that due in part to a lack of financial resources at all levels, the relationship between some CRBs and VAGs has an element of competition to it."

While the relationship between CRBs and VAGs has not been explicitly studied by CONASA, nor was it within the scope of this evaluation to explore in much detail, a few preliminary comments can be made. First, it appears that due in part to a lack of financial resources at all levels, the relationship between some CRBs and VAGs has an element of competition to it. For example in at least two VAGs reviewed, the VAG committee decided not to forward seed loan repayments to the CRB as expected, because they believed that if they forwarded the loan repayments to the CRB they would never see it flow back to the community from which it came. Instead, these VAGs decided on their own to use the cash repayments to purchase new inputs to loan to additional farmer groups in their own area. The decisions in this example reveal not only a lack of financial resources at both the CRB and VAG levels, but also a vote of no confidence in the CRB, and probably indicates communication problems as well. In other areas, the relationship between the CRB and VAGs appears to work better.

It is important for CONASA to recognize that the relationship between CRBs and VAGs can be greatly affected by CONASA's capacity building activities. As stated earlier, CONASA's own CBO Assessment noted an apparent bias in training in favour CRBs at the expense of VAGs and VMCs, creating "over-strengthening" of the CRBs and possibly some resentment or jealousy at the lower levels. Another activity that is likely to alter the relationship between CRBs and VAGs is G-MED. Under current arrangements, the G-MED facility is to be administered by the CRBs, however some VAG members have stated that they feel left out of the process of reviewing and selecting funding proposals, but are being asked to do the "leg work" of monitoring and collecting repayments. Early observations made during this evaluation also raise the question of whether CRBs will have the capacity to administer and monitoring projects funded through the G-MED facility.

Finally, information flow between CRBs and lower level structures appears to be weak in some CRBs. Although this has not been studied in any depth, numerous anecdotal reports and comments made by CONASA program staff suggest that information about training, policies and other developments at the CRB level is often not passed down to lower level structures. Technically, CRBs and VAGs are supposed to hold open community meetings to share information and solicit community input, however in practice this may not be highly feasible. The CBO Assessment also found that some public meetings are not well attended. Poor information exchange got so bad in one area that it required facilitation by CONASA (see *9.4.10 – Facilitation of intra-community conflicts*, page 187). The weak levels of information flow within the GMAs is one of the chief reasons behind a recommendation to consider radio programming (see 18.2.5.3, page 315).

3.3.3. Training

3.3.3.1. A CHICKEN AND EGG DILEMMA

Training is a core strategy in all sections of CONASA, and is by far the biggest activity stream in the CBO capacity building section, particularly during the first two years of the project. Evaluating the impact of training is complex and challenging, and like many other projects before it, CONASA has experiences a number of internal debates about the strategy, value, and impact of training.

On the one hand, program staff see the need for leadership skills development, and view training as an effective way to quickly build capacity to a large audience. This viewpoint is reflected in the mantra of the CBO section head, "education never ends". Others in the project have felt at times that CONASA was doing too much leadership training, with little to show for it. In early 2003, some training activities were removed from the annual workplan because they were not resulting in "money in the pocket".

Debates about training like this one can be exasperating and circular because the heart of the matter is a chicken and egg type problem. The chicken people don't see much value in training because training doesn't put food in the belly or money in the pocket. They would like to see less training and more livelihood activities. The egg people on the other hand point out that you can't have activities without first training the people. So the debate becomes circular and ultimately non-productive as both sides have valid points. Ideally data would be available to help clarify the issue, but unfortunately the monitoring of both the process and the impact of training is fairly weak in CONASA (see *3.3.3.3 – Challenges in institutional skills training*, below).

3.3.3.2. MAKING TRAINING EFFECTIVE

Perhaps a more useful way to approach questions about training is through the lens of what makes training effective. A wide body research on the subject has identified a number of principles for effective training. This research shows that training is more likely to be effective when:

- it fills a perceived need
- participants have a demonstrated interest in learning
- it is applied and action oriented
- it is based on a sequential curriculum
- it is coupled with follow-up support
- training programs are designed and implemented using an adaptive management framework (i.e., assess the need, design courses, implement, monitor, evaluate, improve)

Based upon a set of principles like these, we see that if there are problems with leadership and organisational training in CONASA, they are not necessarily because there has been "too much" training but because it has not always been coupled with the other elements that make training effective.

> "The problem is not that there has been "too much" leadership training, but that it has not always been coupled with the other elements needed to make training effective."

3.3.3.3. CHALLENGES IN INSTITUTIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

Based upon conversations with program staff and participation at numerous planning meetings, the top five problems with leadership and skills training in CONASA, are:

1. Conducted in isolation of development activities

The number one problem which has limited the effectiveness of leadership skills training in CONASA is that in many cases it has been provided before there were any activities to plan or administer. When CRBs and VAGs are taught how to manage processes without any manageable processes at hand, two things happen. First, the training ultimately winds up providing answers to questions that have never been asked. This reduces genuine interest in the topic, and the ability of participants to absorb what it being taught. Second, training by necessity becomes a rather theoretical exercise, instead of a learning-by-doing approach. Thus the ability of participants to comprehend the material is reduced, and whatever capacity is built slowly disintegrates because there are few or no resources to manage, workplans to make, proposals to write, etc.

Two factors help explain how this "cart before the horse" situation arose. First, the loss of safari hunting revenue (see *1.4.7 – Safari hunting*, page 13) greatly reduced the opportunities (and therefore need) for CBOs to plan and implement projects. Second, like other sections of the project, the capacity building unit has continuously has tried to reach its performance targets, and therefore went ahead with the original planned training schedule even when it knew it was building more capacity than was probably needed. In hindsight, CONASA perhaps should have adjusted its game plan when the situation with safari hunting revenue worsened, concentrating its relatively scarce training and technical resources into a few core areas so that each could build upon the other.

Recommendation 4. CONASA should strengthen linkages between leadership training and actual activity implementation so that more leadership training is provided on an "as needed" basis.

2. Targeting and incentives

A second problem with the leadership training has to do with the targeting strategy (i.e., how participants are selected) and the incentive structure this creates. To date, the majority of trainings are introduced when field staff or a driver visit an area and inform pre-selected CBO leaders that there will be a training on such-and-such topic on a certain date at a certain venue, and their presence is requested. Participants then show up for the training, collect their per diem, and go home.

This method of pre-selecting topics and participants is certainly efficient, and the majority of trainings go off on schedule, the correct number of people attend, and the planned material is covered, and targets are achieved. However pre-selection also creates two problems. First, most participants will attend training regardless of whether they are interested in the topic or not, and because the topics are pre-selected, there is no way to tell whether they are genuinely interested or perceive a need for a topic. This creates a set of incentives where the primary interest in training is not education, but the "perks" of attending a workshop, including per diem, the opportunity to travel, good food, and good company.

While material incentives for attending trainings are an issue in almost all development projects, there is ample evidence to suggest that the problem is widespread in CONASA. Meetings have been halted over concerns of per diem, workshop participants have sent bills to CONASA for unauthorized workshop expenses, and complaints about transport allowance and lodging are common. Training in short has deteriorated into an income generating activity for certain CBO leaders, although by no means all. Putting money into the pockets of CBO leaders would in itself not be a bad thing (see 3.3.6 – Over-reliance on volunteerism, page 65) if it did not detract from the educational value of trainings. One VAG member interviewed for this evaluation stated he had been to over 10 trainings, but could remember the titles of less than half of them.

The second problem created by the current approach for participant selection is that it creates a sense of resentment back in the home community when the same individuals are constantly being called for trainings. This perception was observed during the 2003 CBO Assessment, where people interviewed felt CONASA was helping to create a class of elites through its excessive capacity building. It would be paradoxical and self-defeating if CONASA's capacity building strategy eroded grassroots support for the CBO structure by concentrating benefits into the hands of a privileged few.

Recommendation 5. CONASA should test different selection mechanisms for workshops that place more focus on demonstrated participant interest, and less on financial incentives.

3. M&E

The third most serious problem with the training program in CONASA has been the relatively weak M&E. Without a way to monitor and assess the process and outcomes of training, debates like the chicken and egg problem above become difficult if not impossible to resolve, and the project has little basis upon which to determine whether its training strategy is effective and/or efficient.

This is not to say that no records are kept on training exercise. All project staff involved in training keep records on the process (names of participants, gender, dates, topics covered, etc.). However the records are not organised in a way that enables one to see whether there are still gaps to be covered, the geographic distribution of training, duplications, etc. It is not even possible to get an accurate number of the total number of people who have been trained, because the way the records are maintained does not allow the project to count which people have attended multiple trainings.

Ultimately CONASA needs to know the impact of its training. Measuring the impact of training is inherently difficult for a number of reasons, and it probably best approached using a special study approach similar to the 2003 CBO assessment. However even a superb special study of training will be extremely limited without a better M&E system for tracking the processes of training. See also *12.3.3 – Special issues in information management*, page 241.

Recommendation 6. CONASA should strengthen its monitoring of training by developing an information system that can track individual progress and generate summaries according to topic, VAG, gender, and cost.

4. Dissemination of new skills

An additional challenge identified by project staff is how to get workshop participants to the spread the message and disseminate new skills back in their home communities. Rarely are all CRB or VAG leaders able to attend a workshop, so CONASA therefore expects workshop participants to teach their fellow leaders what they learned when they return home. However anecdotal reports suggest that a number CBO leaders go home and "sit" on the information, thereby creating resentment among their colleagues and diminishing the benefits of the training. It isn't clear however whether this problem is the norm or exception. The position of community facilitator was designed in part to help fill a need for better dissemination of skills training that may not achieved through workshops.

If relatively few CBO leaders are able to attend a workshop, even fewer are able to participate in field trips and exchange visits. Visits to other development projects, like the field trip to the projects around Choma or component three's trips to Botswana and Namibia, can be eye-opening experiences for the participants who go. However they are not easy to scale up due to the expense and time required.

The keys for making visits to other areas an effective learning device are, 1) selecting participants who are active, likely to spread the message, and likely apply what they learn, 2) visiting sites or projects that are similar in context, and 3) documenting the visit in a format that can reach a large number of people. Video is an excellent medium for documenting visits that has not been highly utilised by CONASA, although one of the trips to Botswana was videoed. Slide photography and audio can also be used to spread messages from an exchange visit. Facilitating a learning tour after the trip would also help disseminate lessons, or CONASA may wish to truly adopt the model of an *exchange* visit, whereby representatives of the visited area come back to CONASA's area to share experiences. Given that the project spends so much time and money to organise a trip, it might be worth spending a little extra to make sure the lessons and inspiration reach more than just the handful of people who could fit in the vehicle.

5. CRB Bias

The 2003 CBO Assessment detected an apparent training bias toward CRBs: "The CRB seems to have been over-strengthened at the expense of the VAG and other lower structures". This finding may at first seem counter intuitive because CRB members are by definition also members of VAGs and VMCs. However in practice the roles and responsibilities of CRBs and VAGs are more divided, and training to a CRB member does not automatically translate into capacity building for lower level CBOs.

The reasons why a pattern of bias toward CRBs might emerge is easy to understand. There are only 5 CRBs so it's a much more manageable set of organisations to work with than 20 VAGs, and dozens of VMCs. CRBs are also in need of training to fulfil their duties as the only CBO legally recognised by ZAWA. Furthermore, components two and three also have lines of activities aimed at the CRBs, resulting in a number of joint-training programs. However the observation of a CRB bias warrants some concern

as CONASA has also seen the limitations of CRBs for project implementation, caused if nothing else by disconnects in scale, and that the VAGs are probably better positioned to administer smaller scale projects such as those involving agriculture and livestock.

> "VAGs are probably better positioned than CRBs to administer smaller scale projects such as those involving agriculture and livestock."

6. Cross-section coordination

Almost every section in CONASA uses training as a strategy to achieve its goals, and coordinating this training has been at times difficult. While there have been isolated examples of direct conflicts between trainings, in terms of scheduling or resources, a more common problem is training overload. Some CRB members and facilitators have said they are so busy getting new capacity they don't have time to use the capacity they already have. CONASA's ability to coordinate training appears not to have a full grasp of where gaps and overlaps occur in content, absorption capacity, sequencing and timing needed to couple trainings with actual need, etc.

3.3.3.4. FACILITATORS

In 2003, CONASA sought to train 50 community facilitators and successfully trained 39. The 2004 workplan calls for the recruitment and training of an additional 80 facilitators. These numbers alone indicate the level of investment and high expectations CONASA has in the community facilitators. If all goes according to plan, these facilitators will provide training in agriculture and business skills to a large number of farmers and spread the message on a variety of other topics regarding the CBO structure and NRM. The hopes are that through a network of local facilitators problems in delivering training at the community level will be all but solved.

However it is not only the training problems that the facilitators will solve. Facilitators have also been asked to help commodity groups write business plans, G-MED proposals, check up on CSM books to make sure that data is being collected timely and correctly, and conduct sensitisation meetings on HIV/AIDs. In some areas, facilitators have also been recruited for maintaining community billboards, monitoring resource threats, and contracted to do survey work for CONASA.

Incentive structure

The problem with this picture however is that there are strong concerns about its sustainability. As described above, the duties of community facilitators are quite numerous, however in all areas community facilitators work on a volunteer basis. The gap between workload and incentives creates at least three potential problems. First, one can't expect a network of rural extension agents to work for free indefinitely. The majority of facilitators are highly optimistic, active, and enthusiastic about their contribution toward rural development. These qualities are necessary characteristics to be successful in their positions, however they are by no means sufficient. Facilitators also have their own families, needs, and aspirations, and it is unrealistic to expect them to work for free forever. The training provided by CONASA is certainly an incentive, and Nyawa CRB has bought bicycles for their facilitators, but it is unlikely that these incentives

will be enough in the long-run. When the evaluation team asked two very active facilitators who had been working for almost a year without pay, their response began with the usual rhetoric about supporting local development but ended with the statement: "and we are expecting to get something in future."

Aside from being unsustainable, the danger of relying on a network of volunteer extension workers is that once they give up hope on getting paid in cash or kind, they could use their position to capture other forms of benefits. For example their role in assisting commodity groups in developing business proposals, and serving as CONASA's and the CRB's 'eyes and ears' gives them opportunities to collude or otherwise divert resources for their personal gain. The danger is not that these activities will provide some resources for the facilitators, which indeed is a good thing, but that they can reduce the effectiveness of other activities and potentially erode grassroots support and trust in the entire CBO structure.

The third problem with relying on volunteers to provide extension training is that it limits the ability of CBOs to supervise facilitators. Without any form of support, neither the CRBs, CONASA, or farmer groups have much leverage over facilitators. Relationships built on trust, goodwill, and future expectations are much more tenuous than those based on contracts or exchanges of goods and services.

Also worrisome as the unrealistic incentive structure for facilitators is the lack of concern from CRBs and to some degree CONASA. During a December 2003 pre-planning meeting for the annual workplan planning meeting, representatives of all CRBs were asked to discuss their views about the sustainability of facilitators and report back to the group. Their responses fell into two categories: 1) facilitators should continue working on a volunteer basis indefinitely, or 2) CONASA recruited and trained them, therefore CONASA should pay them. During this same conversation, many CONASA staff made remarks to the effect that if CRBs see value in the facilitators, they will find ways to support them.

Additional challenges

While the unrealistic incentive structure appears to be a serious design flaw in the facilitator system, other problems exist as well. These include:

- **Training for new facilitators**. CONASA has yet to identify a way in which new facilitators can be trained after the project withdraws. Without such a mechanism, the facilitator network is almost certainly a temporary structure. It may therefore be more sustainable to "out source" facilitator training to an established training centre like ACCBNRM.

- **Gender**. The first batch of facilitators was 92% male. CONASA hopes to recruit more women facilitators in the second intake, however the lack of compensation for their work is likely to prevent many women from becoming active facilitators.

- **M&E**. The work and impact of facilitators is not tracked very well. Technically, facilitators are supposed to send monthly activity reports to CONASA, however only about half actually do according to the CBO section head. Reporting directly to CONASA also gives the impression that the facilitators are working under CONASA. Trainings provided by

facilitators are probably the single-largest category of impact not being captured by CONASA's performance monitoring system.

> "Trainings organised by local facilitators are probably the single-largest category of impact not being captured by CONASA's performance monitoring system."

Summary and the way forward – facilitators

Community facilitators fill an important role in providing training and technical support to farmers and small businesses at the community level. The work CONASA has done thus far in recruiting and training facilitators is an important step in strengthening community-based extension. However training is just one leg of the stool for community based extension workers, and without the other two legs this achievement will be short-lived. What remains to be put in place is an appropriate compensation package for facilitators and a way to provide continued support that doesn't depend entirely on CONASA. CONASA has the primary responsibility for addressing these issues because it unilaterally established the facilitator network which seems doomed to a short lifespan in its current configuration.

CONASA should educate the CRBs to recognize the importance of a sustainable compensation package for facilitators and work with them to take corrective action. This part of a broader set of recommendations which stresses more focus is needed strengthening the resilience of *institutions* versus strengthening the skills of *individuals*. Actions which can help to realign the incentive structure of facilitators include any combination of the following:

- Reduce the number of facilitators to a level which can be sustainably supported
- Pay facilitators from CRB revenues (but given the gloomy outlook of revenue forecasts this option may not be viable in the near future)
- Allow facilitators to charge user fees, in cash or kind, for the services they provide. This would effectively be creating a market for extension services, because farmer groups would set the level of demand, standards of quality, and price structure for services.
- Make facilitator duties less-intensive and more specialised (e.g., agricultural extension provided by lead farmers, business support services provided by a second set of local 'business consultants' on a drop-in basis, livestock health services provided by CLAs).
- Raise external funds to pay facilitators as part of a 'CRB support package' which aims to cover core administrative costs but not distort market prices or create perverse incentives (see also *18.2.5.2 – Support sustainable institutions*, page 314).

Recommendation 7. CONASA should work with CRBs to develop a more realistic strategy for balancing the workload and performance incentives for local facilitators.

3.3.3.5. ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING – SUMMARY AND THE WAY FORWARD

The CBO capacity building section has invested a lot into organisational and leadership skills development. There is a good deal of anecdotal evidence suggesting that this training has paid off in terms of the ability of some CBOs to articulate their own development agendas, plan activities, and interact with other agencies including potential investors, other NGOs, and ZAWA. The training of community facilitators has established a network for community extension which has greatly expanded the amount of training for both agriculture and business planning.

However there is still much work to be done and room for improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of leadership training and the facilitators is relatively weak, both in terms of process and impact. Although much of the evidence is qualitative and patchy, it appears that much leadership training was delivered before there were any development processes to manage, so was not absorbed or put into practice. Workshops have also become an income generating activity, thereby attracting participants for the wrong reasons and most likely creating resentment and jealousy within and between CBOs. The network of community facilitators has gotten of to a promising start, but is built upon an unrealistic incentive structure that is likely to be unsustainable or will result in unanticipated outcomes as facilitators attempt to capture benefits in other ways. These problems in CONASA's training strategy appear in part to be caused by an institutional pressure within CONASA to "reach the numbers" as quickly and expeditiously as possible.

In the short term, CONASA can improve its leadership skills training by:

- **Organising training records** so process can be summarized and evaluated. The most obvious approach for organising training records would be to incorporate it in to the project database, a relatively modest enhancement (see *12.3.3.2 – CONASA Data Manager*, page 242).
- **Redesigning the targeting strategy** for training so that participants have to actively demonstrate an interest in training rather than being bribed to attend. There are many options for altering the selection strategy, including making training performance based, reducing per diem rates, or even charging participants for training provided. Most options involving any change in per diem would be difficult to introduce now that CONASA (and other NGOs) have created expectations of entitlement, and might result in lower attendance in the short term. However there are a variety of ways for making training performance based and/or more competitive.
- **Addressing the unsustainable compensation** package for facilitators. Options for making the incentives for facilitators proportionate to the demands of the job are discussed in section 3.3.3.4, page 52.
- **Strengthening the coupling of training with activities**, so that most training is provided on an as-needed basis. Training which is not needed is training wasted.

3.3.4. CSM

3.3.4.1. ADDRESSING A CORE CAPACITY BUILDING NEED

The CSM represents an important activity that addresses two chronic weaknesses in rural development planning: 1) relatively weak capacity at the local level to collect and manage information, and 2) a lack of reliable information upon which to base planning and assessment. In other words, the CSM system has been designed to serve two overlapping but different goals:

- to strengthen the ability of communities to plan activities and see the progress of their own development "with their own eyes"
- to provide a source of local information upon which development professionals (like CONASA) can plan and evaluate their programs

The CSM fits in well with CONASA's overall suite of activities. Collecting and managing information is an important organisational skill that local CBOs currently lack but will absolutely need to implement their own development activities. According to most schools of thought, information systems act as a public good that can serve to "lubricate" a variety of efforts to provide public services and support market growth. Finally, supporting information systems is the type of work an NGO based project like CONASA can do well because it draws on the institutional strengthens in training, communication, and technical innovation.

While the CSM training activities in CONASA have gone reasonably well, it would be premature to claim the CSM system has been solidly established. The 2003 assessment found that even when CSM books were being maintained correctly, "it would appear that communities do not quite appreciate why they collect records"[12]. In other words, while almost ¾ of the trained VMCs have learned to record data proficiently, most still do not seem to know what to do with it. This gap between collection and use of information mirrors the experiences of the Livingstone Food Security Project, upon which CONASA's CSM implementation has been based. An assessment of the CSM system in LFSP was also conducted in 2002 (with the participation of some CONASA MER staff), with many findings similar to those in CONASA's assessment of its own CSM.

Key Findings of the Study of the CSM in LFSP
o some households were reluctant to divulge the number of cattle they owned, as this is a key asset in Tonga society
o data collection is not always reliable or regular: "laziness and commitment to other duties on the part of data collectors contributed to omission of some important issues being recorded"
o CSM training generally focused on data collection. Skills in data analysis and incorporating aggregated information into decision making processes were generally weak.
o there was a widespread perception that CSM data was collected primarily for LFSP
o CSM data was not widely used by CBOs for planning or implementing development activities, although there were some very interesting exceptions (such as food relief operations)

3.3.4.2. CONSTRAINTS

What therefore might be limiting the success of the CSM in CONASA, as it did in LFSP? Several possibilities exist:

- **Inadequate implementation**. The most common explanation for incomplete or unused CSM books given by project staff is simply that not enough time and support has been given. It takes a long time for skills in information processing and analysis to be developed, and frequent field support. According to this perspective, the way forward therefore is to give development of the CSM more time, provide more field support, and more training.

[12] Quarterly Report #8, p.14

- **Lack of applications**. According to this theory, the CSM might be like a hammer without a nail. In other words, it might be a great tool that has no use. We know in theory that a local information system can be used to plan, implement, and evaluate development activities, but if there is no capital, no markets to tap, no external partners, no technical capacity, no change in local livelihoods to measure, etc., then all the information in the world isn't going to make much difference. The way forward from this perspective would be to promote development opportunities that rely on local information systems, or alternately reduce our set of expectations for the CSM.

- **Misplaced sense of ownership and control**. Another possible reason for the incomplete embracement of the CSM might be a perception on the part of VMCs that the system is basically the creation of CONASA, and therefore somehow 'belongs' to CONASA and not the communities. Despite consistent messages to the contrary, one can see how this perception might be instilled. Training for the CSM system was delivered as part of CONASA's capacity building 'package', and few if any VMCs actually requested it on their own. And although the CSM trainings presented a rationale for the need for community based information systems, ultimately they were told how CONASA wanted them to do it. A perception of misplaced ownership would naturally lead to a feeling of being monitoring "contractors" for CONASA, and therefore data collection would be dependent on the level of oversight and incentives from CONASA.

  Two examples, one from CONASA and one from LFSP, serve as evidence of this syndrome. The first is the many requests CONASA receives for stationery for the CSM. If VMCs felt true ownership of the CSM, they could easily mobilize the resources to acquire a pencil and exercise book to keep records. A second example can be seen in the response of a certain AMC secretary in the LFSP program. This person had meticulously maintained the CSM book and kept it in a secure place in his house. When asked who else had seen the book he replied "no one". When asked why, the AMC Secretary replied, "I'm waiting for Jasper [an LFSP staff person] to come look at it" (Lyons 1998).

- **Insufficient incentives.** It could also be possible that the incentives for maintaining the CSM are not proportionate to the costs. The costs of maintaining the CSM include the time required for conducting household surveys, and the cost of stationery. The benefit to the individual who maintains the CSM is the knowledge that his/her work might help the community take advantage of an unspecified development opportunity sometime in the future. There may also be social benefits, or costs, for maintaining the CSM in terms of an individual's standing in the community. Another potential benefit for the individual as well as the community is the opportunity to receive additional training and other forms of development assistance from CONASA.

  It is possible that in some VMCs the costs may outweigh the perceived benefits of maintaining the CSM, from the perspective of the individual or CBO responsible for the job. Information systems, like transport and communication systems, generally fall in the category of 'infrastructure', and therefore rarely generate a direct and immediate return on investment. Consequently information systems, like other forms of infrastructure, tend to be publicly funded and supported. CONASA on the other hand, is relying a network of volunteers to maintain the CSM, driven by a sense of civic duty

and optimism that development opportunities are not far down the road. While these incentives are real and can be powerful, they may not offset the costs in the long term. For the CSM to be sustained, some form of subsidy may need to be provided to those who maintain it with their labour, or the development pay-off must become much more real and immediate.

- **Methodological issues**. Finally, the incomplete level of adoption may be due to something about the methodology of the CSM – it may be too complex, the training might be inadequate, the books themselves may not be practical to maintain, VMC areas may be too large or too small, etc. There is little evidence to suggest that this set of concerns is a major problem in CONASA, however methodological issues have not been studied in detail.

3.3.4.3. CSM ASSESSMENT

To some extent, all of the constraints listed above are real challenges for the CSM in CONASA. Based upon the project's own internal assessment and supplementary information gathered for this evaluation, the following issues seem to be the most pressing constraints for the CSM (in approximate ascending order of importance):

- **Lack of applications & perceived need**. Because development opportunities are so few in the GMAs, there appears to be little perceived need for a local monitoring system. A general principle of development work is that systems and institutional structures are most likely to be successful when they meet a perceived need. When there is no sense of need, CBOs are unlikely to see systems like the CSM as their own, leading to a sense of misplaced ownership and dependency on the project for oversight. In other words, the perception that the CSM is owned by and serves the interests of CONASA (which is definitely present as well) is a symptom rather than the core issue. If VMCs perceived a strong need for the information collected in the CSM, they would have no problem in appropriating the system from CONASA and making it their own.

  Because CONASA was in a hurry to get the CSM "up and running", it introduced a system before there was a real perceived need at the local level for an information system. A more natural sequence of implementation would have been to first introduce development opportunities that required synthesis of local information for planning purposes, challenging the VMCs to collect and analyse their own data (perhaps in a competitive format), and then offering the CSM training as a tool that can be used to solve a problem. CONASA's sequencing of the CSM deployment has suffered from a cart-before-the-horse syndrome.

- **Economics and incentives**. The second biggest challenge facing the CSM in CONASA is the issue of economics and incentives. Information collection and processing has a cost, and in almost no public institution do we see information systems maintained in perpetuity by volunteers. This constraint may not have fully revealed itself yet in the CSM, because CONASA is still in the picture to provide incentives in the form of training, and spoken or unspoken expectations of forthcoming development assistance. But as soon as CONASA winds down, we can safely assume that the CSM will also wind down unless substitute incentives can be found either in the form of a subsidy, form either local or external sources, or strong linkages between the CSM and development progress. The lack of recognition of the costs associated with an information system is an example of a larger issue of over-reliance on volunteerism (see *3.3.6 – Over-reliance on volunteerism*, page 65).

- **Methodological challenges**. There are other, less serious, problems with the methodology of the CSM. These include concerns about the validity of the data, which can be compromised by both recall issues as well as hidden agendas (e.g., reducing production estimates to increase levels of assistance or prevent jealousy from neighbours). Another methodological issue that has not been adequately dealt with is analysis techniques. CONASA has made limited progress in developing and testing techniques and tools for aggregating and summarizing CSM data. Weak analysis is often the trade-off of using low-tech monitoring systems, however analysis methods are available in both low-tech and high-tech flavours.

- **Linkages with other sections**. Another set of constraints facing the CSM is its apparent lack of integration with other activity lines. The CSM has largely been the domain of MER and the capacity building unit as part of the overall "package" of institutional tools and training provided by the project. However neither CONASA nor the CBOs have scratched the surface of its potential uses in planning agriculture interventions, resource threat assessment, threat reduction, enterprise and market development, and HIV/AIDS programming. Strengthening the connections between the CSM and other activity lines would not only improve the effectiveness and efficiency of various program activities, but would also serve to highlight the need for recording village and household level data.

- **Value as an M&E source**. Finally, another irony of the CSM is that even though the system has largely been designed by CONASA, and set up to capture important variables that measure impact of project activities, the project has in fact made little use of it as a source of information for M&E. The only attempt to summarize CSM record was during the 2003 CSM assessment, which only produced only a coarse qualitative summary of selected VMCs. The lack of tools and techniques to aggregate and analyse CSM data has been a hindrance in CONASA as it was in LFSP (Lyons 1998, Lyons et. al., 2000).

In summary, this evaluation finds that the CSM is a potentially useful tool which has been under-utilized by both the CBOs and the project. While it is true that not enough time has elapsed or support provided to see the full value of the CSM, the constraints which have contributed to its partial success thus far include a lack of perceived need, an incentive structure that is out of alignment with the actual costs (which is more of a long-term concern), and some methodological issues particularly in regard to data aggregation and analysis.

3.3.4.4. WAY FORWARD FOR THE CSM

The CSM is a valuable activity in CONASA that hasn't shown a lot of results so far, but should by no means be scrapped or abandoned. Instead the project should reflect upon the lessons from its own experiences as well as that of LFSP, and plan a course of action to increase the value of investments to establish and support the CSM.

1. Conceptualisation

The first thing that needs to be done is to conceptually clarify and articulate how the CSM fits in with CONASA's entire suite of activities and vision of rural development. Currently the CSM is thought of, and implemented as, a generic stand-alone activity without strong connections to any other section. In actuality, it represents an important component of social capital and a sign of stronger local governance. The CSM should therefore be thought of as a piece of local infrastructure, not unlike transport and communication

networks. Like any kind of infrastructure, the CSM will not generate a return on its own but can lead to improved sustainable livelihoods when combined with other elements such as capital, market access, and technology. Conceptualising the CSM as infrastructure, three conclusions are inevitable:

- the CSM should be thought of as a public good that incurs a cost to produce but benefits the collective
- the CSM should be supported by public revenues, or donor subsidies
- the CSM has little development value unless combined with other ingredients needed for increased economic activity, food production, or provision of social services

2. Develop analysis tools

A major limitation of the CSM system for both project and CBO uses is the lack of tools and techniques for data aggregation and analysis. CONASA should therefore develop and pilot-test appropriate tools, and then expand as appropriate. Low-tech tools could involve templates, paper mapping methods, instruction manuals, etc. that allow household and village level data to be aggregated, summarized, and presented in a usable manner. High tech tools could involve the use of software on laptops or PDAs (e.g., Palm Pilot) at either the VMC or VAG level. For example, a Palm database application could be written for facilitators or CONASA field staff to enter CSM data in an electronic format and provide immediate summaries. A second set of technologies that might also be appropriate use optical scanning techniques.

3. Strengthen integration with other sections

It has been argued above that the CSM will only have value if it can be used to plan or evaluate local development initiatives. For this to occur, the CSM must be better integrated into the other sections of the project or development initiatives. For example, CONASA could make it a requirement for participation in agricultural schemes that participating CBOs present an analysis of households in their area and justify how groups were selected based on demographic and production profiles. Invitations to training workshops could be made contingent on participant presentations of household living conditions in their area. The enterprise section can select which groups to work with based on analyses derived from CSM data. Measures like these incur a start-up cost, but will strengthen the effectiveness of other activities and demonstrate the value of have the CSM available for development planning.

4. Focus in areas with activities

To increase efficiency, CONASA may want to consider only promoting the CSM in areas where the other ingredients for development progress are in place. In other words, to introduce or support the CSM in areas where "nothing's happening" might an inefficient use of the project's time and resources.

5. Recognize costs and realign incentives

CONASA and the CBOs need to recognize that information gathering and analysis incurs a cost, and work to create sustainable incentive structures *before* CONASA leaves. This may involve charging user fees to access to CSM data, particularly for outside agencies that can afford it. This could also involve identifying funds for the long-term support of the CSM, either from local or external sources. Most schools of thought in development believe that supporting social infrastructure, such as roads, communication networks, health and education facilities, and information systems, is a good

use of development money because it enables social and economic development without distorting market forces.

6. Document innovation and new applications

The full range of applications for the CSM has not yet been fully explored. Several VMCs have enhanced the CSM by incorporating additional variables on their own, creating possibilities for new uses for example in infrastructure monitoring, biodiversity threat assessment, and tracking both human and animal disease outbreaks. Such innovations need to be documented and shared with other communities so the system can evolve and improve.

7. Integrate with other information programming

This evaluation has suggested that information programming should play an increased role in CONASA's future because it is something CONASA can do well, costs little, makes markets and service delivery work more efficiently, and increases the possibility of synergistic interactions across sections (see *18.2.5.3 – Information programming*, page 315). The CSM can play an important role in a linked network of information systems that include market information, agriculture and livestock extension, and regional level resource monitoring. Presently each of these information systems are in the preliminary stages and have been implemented as stand-alone activities. If CONASA were to develop the institutional structures and analytical tools to link these systems together, it could greatly increase the range of potential applications.

Recommendation 8. To move the CSM beyond data collection and into the realm of analysis and application, CONASA should 1) reconceptualise how the CSM fits into CONASA's entire suite of activities and CBO structure, 2) develop tools for data aggregation and analysis, 3) strengthen integration with other sections, 4) focus in areas with activities, 5) recognize costs and realign incentives for maintaining the CSM, 6) document innovation and new applications, and 7) integrate the CSM within a broader set of activities in information programming.

3.3.5. M&E

3.3.5.1. MONITORING ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES AND COMMUNITY DYNAMICS

Organisational processes are among the most difficult to evaluate due to their qualitative nature and shifting character. Monitoring in CONASA's CBO capacity building section has so far focused on simple, countable measures of process – numbers of CBOs formed, numbers of individuals trained, gender ratios in training and positions of leadership, etc. As processes get more subtle or complex, the current set of M&E approaches become less and less satisfactory. For example measuring CBO capacity by *the number of projects initiated* fails to capture underlying processes including participation, power relationships, trust, discourse, conflict management, gender, sequencing, etc.

Despite the methodological challenges of monitoring organisational and community processes, there is probably no other topic where M&E is more important. This is because organisational and community dynamics have traditionally been the "Achilles heal" of community based development projects in general, and CBNRM programs in Zambia in particular. For example the ADMADE programme never reached its full potential not because of technical

difficulties or market failures, but because the complex power relationships between traditional authorities, communities, and government was not fully understood and incorporated into the programme's structures. Unfortunately it is not hard to find other examples of rural development projects that suffered from an incomplete understanding of community dynamics.

"Despite the methodological challenges of monitoring organisational and community processes, there is probably no other topic where M&E is more needed because community dynamics have historically been the 'Achilles heal' of CBNRM in Zambia."

CONASA is in a bit of a dilemma when it comes to monitoring community processes. On the one hand, it can not afford the costs and staff time needed to get a more thorough understanding of how its activities are altering interactions within and between communities, but on the other hand it can not afford not to. There are a number of processes that have the potential to completely derail, or even reverse, CONASA's efforts to promote livelihood security and conservation. These "soft spots" include delicate and shifting relationships between the CRBs and traditional authorities, client-patron relations at all levels, any activity that might modify land use or access to land, activities that alter the status quo of existing power relations, relations between CBOs and ZAWA, claims for restitution from historical injustices, etc.

Even at this relatively early stage in the project, is not hard to find examples where intra-community dynamics have conflicted with CONASA's workplan. For example, a conflict between traditional authorities in Mulobezi derailed progress on a guesthouse project, and required CONASA to redraft its MOU with the project committee. In Nyawa, a long standing conflict within the royal establishment has all but eliminated CONASA's ability to implement activities, and has contributed to the rapid influx of settlers in an area that was once one of the most profitable safari hunting areas in Zambia. A less dramatic example is presented below.

Case study: Influence of community and macro-political forces on local development initiatives

In late 2002, Chilala VAG received an allotment of maize inputs from CONASA. The idea behind the project was to provide start-up support to a few local farmer groups to produce maize on a commercial basis in order to build a local commercial maize industry and increase cash flow in the community. According to the plan, after the first harvest the groups which received inputs would repay the VAG in cash, which would then use the money to purchase inputs for additional farmers in year two, and so on.

Based on this design, the VAG applied for and received inputs from CONASA for three farmer groups, totalling 75 individual farmers. Enough inputs were given to allow each farmer to plant one hectare of maize. However after the inputs had been received, the VAG accepted an additional 70 farmers into the scheme, so that each farmer would now only receive inputs for 0.5 ha. Additionally, the VAG wanted to change the repayment terms to conform to

government's free-pack program, where input loans are repaid in kind rather than in cash.

This example clearly illustrates the role that both local and external social forces play in local development projects. From the perspective of the VAG leadership, giving out inputs to a greater number of farmers and relaxing the terms of repayment was both politically and socially beneficial. However from the perspective of building a local commercial maize industry, as well as the benefits of sticking to business plans, their decisions might have been less than optimal. These pressures represent just a fraction of the 'unknowns' that can affect the development outcomes. The lessons for both CONASA and the CBOs include:

- trying to "engineer" development processes rarely works – there will almost always be unexpected issues and problems to deal with
- capacity building efforts needs to focus on building an *understanding* of development processes and markets, and not just teach planning as a sequence of steps to follow.

Source: CONASA Quarterly Report #8

CONASA staff are quite aware of the importance of power relations within rural communities, but are poorly positioned to explore and document the local political landscape. What then should be the role for M&E?

The first requirement for an effective M&E of organisational and community dynamics is to see the emerging CBO structure as a working hypothesis. To do this CONASA needs to recognize that its "model" of a parallel set of hierarchical nested CBOs, operating more-or-less independently of traditional structures, is at best an educated guess of what the optimal set of institutions for the local context should look like. Even with the support of CONASA this structure is showing the signs of stress, and the configuration will undoubtedly change as soon as CONASA withdraws and/or another major player enters or leaves the arena.

"CONASA should recognize that its 'model' of a parallel set of nested CBOs, operating more-or-less independently of traditional structures, is at best an educated guess of what the optimal set of institutions for the local context will look like."

CONASA's M&E should therefore view the current configuration of CBOs as a single frame of a much longer movie, and articulate hypotheses about the roles of CBOs, and their relationships with each other and other actors. For example one hypothesis may be, "we believe that VAGs, if given training and the support of the CRB, are the appropriate level for administering a revolving seed bank for producer groups, that participation in a such a scheme will be equitable and based on accepted criteria, and this is what we have done to test this." Another hypothesis could be, "we believe that chiefs, if given training and a 5% cut of all safari hunting revenue, will recognize the authority of a democratically elected CRBs, will lend support to CRBs, and will not try to appropriate benefits for their personal gain, and this is the evidence we have to evaluate."

After framing the key questions as hypotheses instead of a prescriptive model, the next step for CONASA M&E is to explore each hypothesis. While CONASA can and should attempt to explore community dynamics on its own, project staff are in a somewhat disadvantaged position when it comes to exploring sensitive issues, because their primary role in dishing out goods and services can easily bias responses.

However CONASA can take at least two steps to go beyond its own resources. First, CONASA can organise background information about the development processes it has supported (i.e., PRA results, background information on CBO leadership, trainings, demographic data). Second it can support, if not actively solicit, external researchers to study the impact of its activities on community dynamics. Post-secondary students can be good resources for qualitative studies, as can local consultants if resources are available. Regardless of who explores the issues, CONASA should frame the issues and facilitate the input of community members as much as possible.

Recommendation 9. CONASA should work toward conducting an assessment of the impact of its capacity building activities on community dynamics, coalitions, power structures, and relations with the State, preferably using outside evaluators.

3.3.5.2. OTHER MONITORING ISSUES

The need for better M&E of training activities has already been described (see *3.3.3.3 – Challenges in institutional skills training*, page 49). Other M&E issues related to CBO capacity building that would benefit from more work include:

- **Impact relative to the entire population**. A set of questions exists around the overall impact CONASA is having relative to the population of the entire area. For example, what is the level of understanding of the CBO structure in the population living in the project area? What proportion of entire population is represented in the CBO structure, and what are the mechanisms of participation? These issues could form the basis of a special study, or be incorporated into a larger study of changes to organisational and community dynamics.

- **CBO Sustainability**. CBO sustainability is very much an issue that CONASA should feel responsibility for, because it is playing a large role in shaping the institutional structures that will succeed or fail in the years to come. There are many aspects of CBO sustainability that can be explored even in the early stages of CBO development (see *3.3.7 – Sustainability of the CBO structure*, page 66). In addition, there is a golden opportunity for CONASA to document the sustainability of CBOs formerly supported under LFSP. These CBOs are quite similar in structure and focus to those being supported by CONASA, and the capacity building strategy used by CONASA is quite similar to that of LFSP.

Recommendation 10. Because the CBO structures and capacity building structures used by CONASA are quite similar to those of the former Livingstone Food Security Program, CONASA/CARE should conduct a follow up study of former LFSP AMCs and VMCs to assess sustainability of those structures and identify lessons learned.

A Case Study in CBO Sustainability:
The Kazungula Milk Station

The Kazungula Milk Station (KMS) offers an interesting case study of what can happen to a CBO when project support ends. The KMS was established in 2001 as a cooperative with the intent of buying milk from local farmers and selling it to milk processor in Livingstone. KMS was established via a partnership between the communities and LFSP, which helped to mobilize the community and provide training. Additional support was provided by ZATAC, which provided a seed loan and helped secure equipment.

Not long after KMS was established, LFSP phased out and the cooperative found itself basically on its own. It encountered problems first with transporting milk to FINTA, and then with hygiene. Additional problems with stock theft, drought, and low production volumes—particularly during the dry season—threatened the viability of the operation.

However rather than give up, the cooperative responded by reducing its dependency on FINTA, selling more fresh milk locally, and supplying the sour milk market in Livingstone. Today the cooperative continues to grow, and has plans to introduce Pasteurisation at the collection centre and diversify into other economic activities.

Lessons learned from the KMS case study include:

- CBOs are more likely to survive on their own when they have a viable social or economic enterprise that can generate benefits
- local markets offer advantages over distant markets, particularly when transaction costs are high
- enterprises don't always work as planned, but with good leadership the CBO can adapt to changes in the context
- CBOs are more likely to succeed when they have more than one support organisation or market they can turn to

Source: Robby Mwiinga

3.3.6. Over-reliance on volunteerism

The CBO structure that CONASA is promoting is almost completely reliant on volunteers. From the Chairman of MUSIBI, to community facilitators, all the way down to the smallest VMC, nearly all positions are on a volunteer basis. The only paid personnel are CRB bookkeepers, and Community Coordinators. The rationale for not having paid officers in CBOs is two-fold. First, there is not enough money to pay CBO leaders, and second there is a feeling that CBO leaders should be driven first and foremost by a sense of loyalty to the community. If salaries were offered for leadership positions, there is a common feeling that the wrong types of incentives would be created.

While the arguments in support of an all-volunteer leadership are valid, there are also dangers associated with too much reliance on volunteerism. First, when there

are no tangible benefits attached to a position, the logical response of any rational actor is to attempt to capture benefits in other ways. Thus we see signs that some CBO leaders value training primarily as an income generating activity, and CRB members granting loans to their own commodity groups. It would be naïve to expect any other outcome under the circumstances.

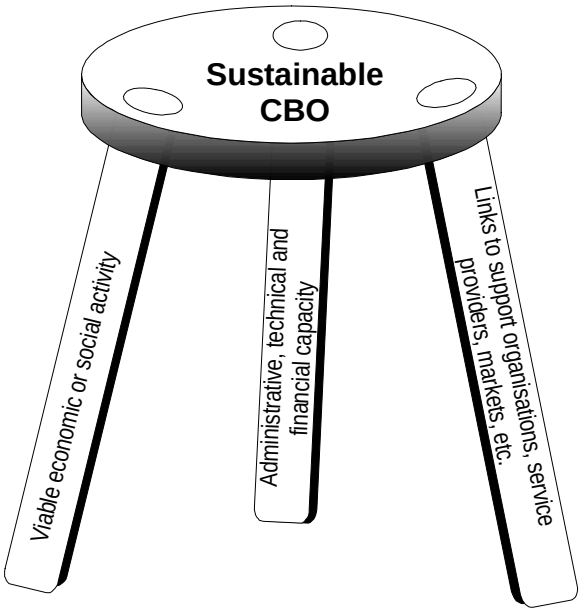
The second danger of an all-volunteer leadership are the increased risks of weak commitment and sustainability. One can only expect so much from volunteers, and as CRBs and VAGs become involved in more labour intensive activities, such as administering loan schemes, their ability to devote an adequate amount of time to required tasks becomes increasingly in question.

There is no magic solution to mitigate the dangers of over-reliance on volunteerism, while still preserving the altruistic spirit that volunteer positions foster. If resources were available, it would certainly be worth considering providing a modest amount of compensation for CBO leaders, preferably linked to performance, to reduce the pressure of distortionary incentives. Communities can also sensitised to the need for rewarding good CBO leaders directly, and challenged to come up with suggestions for financial or non-financial compensation.

3.3.7. Sustainability of the CBO structure

A wide body of research has explored the characteristics of sustainable local institutions. While there are many ways to address this question, a fairly simplistic set of principles is depicted in Figure 6. According to this framework, CBOs will be sustainable when they have a viable social or economic activity to manage; the necessary administrative, technical, and financial capacity; and links to external institutions, including support organisations, service providers, and markets. While there are certainly more comprehensive frameworks available, these three criteria will be the "lens" used by this evaluation to assess the viability of the CBO structure.

Figure 6. Three legs of a sustainable CBO



3.3.7.1. VIABLE SOCIAL OR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

The first "leg" of a viable CBO is a social or economic activity to manage. Table 12 below lists the main activities that have been implemented by each type of CBO.

Table 12. Activities implemented at each CBO

Activity	CRB	VAG	VMC	HHG	CG
campsite/guesthouse	✓				
administer G-MED	✓				
office construction	✓				
croc farm and game ranch ventures	✓				
borehole and well construction	✓				
housing construction for village scouts	✓				
overseeing safari hunting operations	✓				
input into setting hunting quotas	✓				
administer input loans	✓	✓	✓	✓	
land-use planning	✓	✓			
school & clinic construction		✓	✓		
administer billboards		✓			
tree nurseries		✓			
dip tank construction		✓			
agricultural & livestock production					✓
crafts and curios production					✓

Source: 2003 CBO Assessment preliminary findings

To determine whether an activity is viable, several issues must be considered, including the mandate of the CBO, economic viability, and ecological viability.

Mandate of the CBO

A CBO's mandate refers to the set of activities it is allowed to do based on its legal status (*de jure*) and whatever the general consensus of the organisation's purpose is (*de facto*). The legal basis of CRBs is the 1998 Wildlife Act, which opened the door for chiefdoms in or near GMAs to form CRBs, share hunting revenue with government, and develop resource management plans in collaboration with ZAWA. Under the act, CRBs must be registered by ZAWA before they can receive hunting revenue or implement resource management plans. The Act also stipulates that ZAWA has the authority to oversee and even disband CRBs. The lower level CBOs, VAGs and VMCs, don't have legal recognition on their own, and therefore need to go through the CRB for any transaction that requires a contract.

In addition to their *de jure* mandate, CBOs have a *de facto* mandate, which is the role of the organisation in their own eyes and the eyes of the community. This is where CONASA comes in, because although CONASA has not modified the provisions of the Wildlife Act, its capacity building activities have played a key role in shaping the perceived purpose of these CBOs. More specifically, CONASA's training has prepared CRBs and VAGs to fill a wide variety of development functions, including planning and implementing projects in agriculture, livestock health, infrastructure, livelihood monitoring, and enterprise development.

At the current time, none of the CBOs have been challenged for exceeding their legal mandate, in part because their mandates are so broad, and in part because CONASA has helped to facilitate meetings between stakeholders to explain the purpose of each CBO. The involvement of CRBs in planning local development initiatives might appear at first to go beyond their primary legal mandate, which is providing input into resource management, however so far ZAWA, the communities, traditional authorities, and councils appear to be comfortable with the CRBs getting involved in development issues. Likewise VAGs are able to conduct community sensitisation meetings on conservation issues and natural resource bylaws, as well as implement small-

scale development projects, under the blessing of the CRBs. However the landscape of organisational roles and authority is constantly evolving and getting renegotiated, and it is still possible that challenges over CBO mandate may come in the future. For example, it is conceivable that there could be challenges from the councils, traditional authorities, private sector, ZAWA, or other units of government.

> "There is often a big difference between what a CBO can get away with doing, what they're good at doing, and what is worth doing."

It is also worth noting that there is often a big difference between what a CBO can get away with doing, what they're good at doing, and what is worth doing. Currently, it would appear that CRBs are willing to tackle almost everything, from building their own guesthouses and campsites, to land use planning, to administering micro-credit. It is easy to understand why CRBs are attracted to livelihood activities, as this is a sector where new sources of funding are emerging and is virtually guaranteed to generate political support. However CRBs have yet to analyse their own resources, capacities, and mandates to identify what they can do best, what they are poorly positioned to do, and what would be more efficient to implement at a VAG or VMC level.

The recent special study on livelihoods and conservation noted that the increasing involvement of CRBs in livelihood activities may be detracting from their core set of resource management responsibilities. Another potential danger may emerge if CRBs engage in enterprises that result in unfair competition with local businesses. Currently the enterprises that CRBs are engaged in directly (campsites, guesthouses) are relatively new and do not appear to be crowding out existing businesses, however it is worth watching out for and preventing problems before they occur.

While some CRBs have almost certainly bitten off more than they can chew, this is not necessarily a bad thing because experimenting with many types of activities can be part of a learning-by-doing approach. However without the proper experimental and reflective attitude, the outcome of a trial-and-error approach can also be a sense of collective failure and public embarrassment. It is important therefore that sometime in the next year or two CONASA works the CRBs and VAGs to analyse their own strengths and weaknesses and identify what set of activities each is best equipped to perform. This exercise will also require some self-reflection on the part of CONASA, which has supported if not driven the expansion of CRB roles.

Recommendation 11. Sometime in the next year or two, CONASA should work with the CRBs and VAGs to conduct a review of the last two years of activity, and perform an assessment of CBO strengths, weaknesses, and strategic roles.

Finally, Table 12 (page 67) highlights the relative lack of activities at the VMC and HHG level. While some VMCs are engaged in small projects, the majority appear to be inactive. CONASA facilitated the establishment of VMCs as a way to introduce the project to the community, and as a vehicle

to provide input to the VAGs. VAGs may also use the VMCs as a way to disseminate information, and they could be useful in community wide exercises such as food relief, mobilizing labour for infrastructure project, etc. However CONASA could probably do a better job at documenting the roles of VMCs and HHGs, which might reveal untapped opportunities at this level.

Economic viability

A second criteria for determining whether a CBO activity is viable is whether it is economically feasible. For activities involving the provision of public goods (e.g., school construction), economic viability essentially means whether there is funding to provide and maintain the good. For activities involving production or enterprise, economic viability means whether the activity can generate a profit.

"The majority of CRB and VAG activities focus on the provision of public goods."

The majority of CRB and VAG activities focus on the provision of public goods, with three exceptions: a couple of campsite/guesthouse projects, input loans, and the G-MED facility. The economic viability of the campsite/guesthouse projects is not clear, although experience from elsewhere suggests that these types of projects have difficulties being profitable (Murphree and Nyika, 1997). Neither CONASA nor the CRBs appear to have conducted an analysis of projected revenue, operating expenses, occupancy rates, rates, etc., to evaluate under what sets of conditions these projects might be profitable.

The two revolving loan schemes, G-MED and several ag-input schemes, have been capitalised by CONASA, however experience from elsewhere also suggests that these schemes are difficult to maintain without a loss. Like the guesthouse projects, no analysis of repayment terms, default rate, volume of loans, etc. has been done to determine what set of conditions are required for these schemes to be sustainable. Numerous tools and examples exist for financial analysis of SMEs (see for example the tourism viability analyses by Murphree and Nyika, 1997, in the CONASA library, or the recommended literature in the special study on enterprise development).

Recommendation 12. CONASA should conduct or facilitate an economic viability analysis of all CBO activities that are expected to generate revenue, including loan schemes, campsites, and guesthouses.

Ecological viability

A third issue which applies to some CBO activities is the ecological viability. This criteria concerns the relationship between the activity and the resource base, and the direction of this relationship over multiple spatial and temporal scales.

The CRB activities that have a direct connection to the resource base include overseeing safari hunting operations, support for village scouts,

setting hunting quotas, and land use planning. Little information or analysis is available to assess how much the resource base can withstand, and what is the appropriate scale for management. However a few preliminary remarks can be made:

- The current state of wildlife populations is widely believed to be greatly reduced from 10 years ago, but the magnitude of depletion and possible restocking rates are not known.
- The natural boundaries that make the most sense from an ecological standpoint (e.g., watersheds, habitat zones, migratory corridors) do not correspond to either the boundaries of GMAs or chiefdoms. This makes it problematic to manage, protect, or monitor natural resources.
- There appears to be a disconnect between the boundaries of hunting blocks and the number and location of CRBs sharing the revenue. Hunting block boundaries do not correspond to chiefdoms, resulting in certain chiefdoms split across multiple hunting blocks (e.g., Moomba and Siachitema), and some hunting blocks being shared by multiple CRBs. For example revenue from the Bbilili-Nkala hunting block is currently being shared by 4 CRBs, although not equally, while revenue from Sichifulo hunting block is shared between Nyawa and Siachitema CRBs. Although a proper financial analysis has not been conducted, with so much diffusion of revenue diffusion some CRBs will not be able to cover their core management costs (e.g., village scout salaries), much less community development projects.
- The mismatch between natural boundaries and management units has already adversely affected the resource base. For example the rapid influx of settlers around key waterholes in Sichifulo has gone unchecked because that piece of the habitat falls under a management unit which is going through a temporary period of dysfunction. Likewise, efforts to introduce management to the Kafue-Zambezi wildlife corridor will be challenged by the multiple land-holders in both the GMAs and open areas.

Issues around the ecological viability of safari hunting and other forms of resource extraction are challenging because neither CONASA nor the CRBs have much influence over ecological processes. However at a minimum the issues should be described, and whenever possible quantified, so that revenue forecasts, management schemes, and institutional structures can be designed so that they are ecologically realistic and don't result in environmental degradation.

3.3.7.2. ADMINISTRATIVE, TECHNICAL, AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY

The second leg of CBO viability is administrative, technical, and financial capacity. CONASA has made great progress in developing the human capacity of CRBs and VAGs through it skills training programmes, however concerns still exist, particularly the long-term outlook of financial assets.

Sustainability of administrative capacity

CONASA has pumped a considerable amount of resources into providing training in development planning, financial management, project implementation, etc., This training has benefited the current set of CBO leaders, most of whom have a fair amount of administrative and technical capacity. However a weak spot in the design of the CBO structure threatens the longevity of these achievements: the lack of permanent administrative staff. With the exception of a paid bookkeeper, which most CRBs employ, the core administrative functions are left to the board members themselves.

While a lack of paid staff to provide continuity between boards is not uncommon in small organisations, it presents challenges and limitations that need to be addressed. Record keeping and filing systems need to be well managed, activities that have a long duration need to be coordinated by external committees, and mechanisms put into place to train newly elected leaders. This type of organisational sustainability assessment has yet to be conducted by CONASA or the CRBs, but failure to prepare for changes in board membership will result in tremendous disruption when new board members are elected. An equally unappealing alternative is that the current crop of leaders could leverage their skills and experience as a reason to stay in power indefinitely.

A second set of concerns about technical capacity applies to some CRBs which have begun implementing their own projects, including campsites, guesthouses, and revolving input loans, and micro-credit schemes. All of these activities are highly labour intensive to administer, and some require a fair amount of technical expertise. CONASA is currently back-stopping CRBs to manage these projects, but this may be tantamount to treating a symptom while ignoring the underlying problem. If CRBs are to be in the business of administering development projects, they should have the human and technical resources to coordinate implementation in a timely and efficient manner. Without this capacity, they would be better off limiting their roles to that of politicians (setting policies and soliciting input) and bankers (dispersing and overseeing the use of funds).

Financial capacity

Viable CBOs must have sufficient revenue to cover their operational as well as program costs. Although a proper analysis of projected CRB revenues has not been done, two 'back of the envelope' analyses suggest that under the current revenue streams there will continue to be significant shortfalls between CRB revenue and even a barebones budget (see MTE exit presentation in Appendix 9 (page 373) and the study on conservation and livelihoods). The situation with VAGs is even worse, as they have no secure source of funds other than handouts from the CRB. Only under the most optimistic set of conditions, where safari hunting revenues return to their highpoints in the mid-1990s, might the safari hunting revenue be enough to support core functions and a bit of community development.

> "A continued shortfall in safari hunting revenue is the number one threat facing the sustainability of the entire CBO structure."

The expected continued shortfall in revenue due to depleted safari hunting areas is the number one threat facing the entire CBO structure. CONASA, for its part, has not flagged the issue as much as it should have, and has not done enough to encourage CRBs to trim down their expenses, be more efficient with their resources, and seek alternative sources of income generation. On the contrary, in many ways CONASA is still introducing activities (e.g., micro-credit administration) and structures (e.g., facilitators) which are very unlikely to be sustainable once the project pulls out.

CONASA would be doing the CRBs a greater service if it were to first help them estimate future revenue streams under a variety of scenarios. This is a

critical step in planning a realistic vision of sustainability, and needs to be done to avoid "digging the hole deeper" (i.e., introducing additional employees or activities for which there is no prospect for short or long-term support). Once realistic forecasts are made of medium-term revenue and expenses, this analysis (and not prayers that the future will take care of itself) should form the basis of identifying activities that can be undertaken.

Recommendation 13: CONASA should conduct or contract a study of the economic viability of CRBs over the next 5-10 years, with the goal of forecasting revenue and costs under poor, fair, and favourable scenarios of hunting revenue, loan repayment, joint venture investment, etc.

Identifying alternative revenue sources

Based upon conversations with a cross section of CRB and VAG members, it would appear that many CRB and VAGs have a very traditional view of their roles and sources of revenue of expenditure. Most people view CBOs as a vehicle by which revenue given from government and donors is channelled to provide community goods and services free of charge. When asked about how expected shortfalls in revenue might be overcome, answers almost always centre on ways to extract more money out of government or donors.

There are signs however that a shift in thinking has started to occur. CBO leaders increasingly see safari hunting revenue as *their* money, which passes *through* government but is earned by the community. This shift in thinking has in turn altered the terms of discussions with government. For example CRBs continue to put pressure on ZAWA to release hunting concession fees because they view this as revenue earned from their land.

More significantly, some CRBs have started to position themselves as a service-providing institution which is justified to charge for its services. The paid registration of commodity groups in Nyawa CRB is a good example of this model (see *3.3.2.1 – Horizontal linkages: CRBs & CGs*, page 45). Other opportunities exist for nominal charges for CBO services: use of the community billboards, facilitator training, input packs, etc. While some CRB and VAG members (and even CONASA staff) believe that services from public institutions should always be provided free of cost, they may eventually be faced with the choice of charging user fees, or eliminating the service altogether. This is particularly true at the VAG level, which has no secure source of revenue on its own.

3.3.7.3. LINKS TO EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONS

The third leg of a viable CBO is links to external institutions, including support organisations, service providers, and markets. The types of linkages that CRBs require now and in the future include:

- training for new CBO leaders
- facilitation support for elections
- financial auditing services
- access to markets and market information
- legal services for developing contracts and dispute resolution
- technical support for resource management and monitoring
- links to support associations for advocacy campaigns

Currently, CONASA is playing these roles or facilitating most of the outside connections needed by CRBs. Once CONASA leaves, these roles will have to be picked up by ZAWA (financial auditing, facilitating elections, and technical support for resource management), MUSIBI CRB Association (support for advocacy campaigns), or another service provider. The long-term needs that have no identified service provider include access to training for new CRB leaders, access to market information, and legal and contract services. In the remaining time it has left, CONASA should work toward developing service contracts for all types of CRB needs, and in particular those that have no clear partner to work with. A useful role for an association of CRBs would be to provide or source service providers for CRBs.

3.3.8. Implications for rural governance

The progress CONASA has achieved in CBO formation and capacity building has potential significance far beyond the project's relatively narrow focus on livelihoods and resource management. The larger context within which CONASA and the emerging CBOs are operating is a shifting set of governance issues at the local, provincial, and national levels. The narrowly focused work CONASA is doing has the potential to ripple across the political landscape with implications that extend far beyond the project area.

> "CONASA's work has the potential to ripple across the political landscape with implications that extend far beyond the project area."

One of the larger processes that CONASA's work has engaged is a long-term bias in development policy in Zambia in favour of urban areas at the expense of programs for rural areas. By strengthening the capacity of rural people to self-organise, generate revenue, and voice their needs and interests, CONASA is contributing to a growing grassroots movement which seeks to reverse this bias. One the one hand, this move toward strengthening rural governance is very opportune, as there are elements within government, and donors which back them, and that wish to expand small-scale agriculture and community-based tourism. However CONASA and the CRBs should also be aware that political victories usually have to be fought for, and progress in one sector often triggers a backlash from advocates for another set of priorities.

The second set of processes which CONASA is influencing is the emergence of a new "democratic" form of rural governance separate from traditional authorities. For generations, traditional authorities have been the primary form of community organisation. CONASA and a handful of like-minded projects are supporting an alternative model of local government, based on principles of democracy and grassroots participation. It remains to be seen, how these new structures will work – Will they be able to stand on their own? Will they be elitist? Will they be driven by client-patron politics? Will they feature checks and balances? Will they serve the needs of the many, or be co-opted by local elites? These questions are part of an unfolding story in Zambia, in which CONASA's experimentation with CBO capacity building is a chapter.

A related implication of CONASA's work concerns the mechanics of rural governance. CONASA is currently working with a three-tiered CBO structure (VMCs, VAG, CRB), and some areas have further demarcated sub-VAGs. It remains to be seen whether "three tiers fits all", or the number and size of CBOs should based on geography or population density. The number of levels needed for genuine forms of grassroots participation may also depend on the state of technology

available for communication, transport, information dissemination, meetings, conducting elections, etc. The experiences of CONASA, which supports CRBs which vary from less than 3,000 people to over 30,000, can help illuminate what types of governance structures might work in other rural areas.

While there can be little doubt that CONASA and other CBNRM projects are "tinkering" with the processes of rural governance, the final outcomes of this intervention remain to be seen. An optimistic view of CONASA's role in local governance is that it is heralding in a new age of strong democratic local institutions, blending the virtues of traditional structures with the best of modern forms of government, and will stimulate a new rural in renaissance development. A pessimistic view would argue that CONASA is blindly tinkering with local structures, sidelining government and traditional authorities alike in favour of a completely new set of institutions that are completely unproven, most likely non-viable, and controlled by local elites.

While each of these perspectives has elements of truth in it, a more realistic middle-ground view is that CONASA's support to CBOs is 'stirring the pot' of a continually shifting terrain of governance and institutions. This viewpoint recognizes the CONASA's work plays an important role in the evolution of rural governance, but is by no means alone or decisive. From this "stirring the pot" perspective, the appropriate role of a support organisation like CONASA is not necessarily to engineer local institutions, but to support the conditions under which vibrant local institutions can emerge. This includes much of the work CONASA has already supported, including building human capital, facilitating dialogue, and providing start-up capital for micro projects. Much of this work falls could be classified under the label of social capital. But it also requires more of an institutional focus – building systems instead of just people skills, and relationships that can withstand the passage of individual leaders.

Is CONASA building social capital?

Social capital is roughly defined as the quantity and quality of relationships between civil society organisations, businesses, and government at a local level. A wide body of research suggests that when local organisations work together and support each other, it can speed economic development. While social capital can not by itself drive economic growth, the concept is attractive to development professionals because it represents a "cheap" way of making the most of what you got.

Is CONASA building social capital? The answer is almost certainly yes. CONASA has been instrumental in forming and training CRBs, VAGs, and enterprise groups, and bringing these groups to the table to discuss various activities. Regardless of whether the specific activities being promoted by CONASA are successful or sustainable, connections across CBOs are being formed, opening the possibilities for future relationships to emerge. To maintain and increase the current level of cohesion, CONASA will need to make sure that economic growth doesn't come at the expense of equity.

CONASA has also played a central role in strengthening the flow and focus of dialogue between CRBs, government (in particular ZAWA), and companies in tourism and agriculture.

CONASA has almost definitely played a role in strengthening social capital – the real question that is not yet clear is whether viable social or income generating activities can be established for this new social capital to optimise.

3.4. Summary and the way forward

CONASA's greatest and longest lasting legacy will probably be the CBO structure it has helped to establish and support. The formation of CBOs, training of CBO leaders, and facilitation of CBO relationships has created a new layer of local governance than can be leveraged for a wide variety of development and commercial activities. The strengthening of the local CBO structure is also quite timely, as there are a number of movements within government to decentralise management and decision making, and in some cases devolve ownership. The most notable of these movements is of course the 1998 Wildlife Act which established CRBs, but there are similar moves in other ministries. Strengthening CBOs is also appropriate work for an NGO because it is something that NGOs can do relatively well, is not too expensive, does not distort market forces, and allows under-served rural communities to take advantage of opportunities created by reforms in government and the marketplace.

The biggest challenge facing the CBO structure is how to maintain their relevance. The primary incentive from the community perspective for agreeing to form CBOs were expectations that benefits would be forthcoming. It is well known that CBOs are most likely to persist when they have a viable social or economic activity to manage that brings benefits. Some CBOs have found their niche, although many others have not. Currently the distribution of activities is rather top-heavy, with CRBs engaged in probably more than they can handle, and too many lower level structures going idle.

CONASA has done what it can to provide resources to CBOs for activities, however its resources are rather limited compared to the demand. Unfortunately safari hunting revenue has also failed to materialise at the expected levels. CRBs and CONASA therefore need to develop more ways to leverage CBO capacity to attract investment and other forms of support. For example, a CBO structure can lower the risks of contract violations, improve the efficiency of service delivery, reduce enforcement costs, and streamline planning processes. These capabilities are all attractive assets to investors and support organisations. However for these assets to translate into higher levels of investment and support, CONASA and the CBOs need to 1) understand the needs of private investors and support agencies, 2) ensure that the required capabilities exist in the CBO structure, and 3) let more people know about the CBOs and their abilities.

A second challenge for CONASA is to continue to tweak its capacity building strategy so that it shifts from an almost exclusive focus on building people skills, to one that also incorporates an organisational approach. An outcome of the "people approach" can be seen in the almost complete reliance on volunteers for CBO leadership, community-based training, maintaining the CSM, etc. The individuals who fill these roles have been well trained, but their organisations are in danger of falling apart when this founder generation moves on. Other risks with an all-volunteer CBO structure is the increased danger of leaders hijacking benefits for personal again, low levels of commitment, and difficulty in supervision. An "organisational approach" would also address training needs but also focus more on establishing benefit streams so core paid positions can be created, developing service contracts, diversifying organisational income sources, building information and communication systems, and operationalising relationships with other units of government.

Two recent external evaluations have expressed concern that the CRBs may be biting off more than they can chew, and/or exceeding their mandate. This evaluation is less concerned with CRBs pushing the envelope of their mandate, which so far has not been challenged, but sees a problem with CRBs getting into activities for which they have little technical or material capacity (e.g., administering a micro-credit scheme). Exceeding capacity or mandates poses a risk to these institutions, but also an opportunity if framed and guided as a learning-by-doing approach. It is recommended that in the not-too-distant future CONASA facilitates a review of CRB activities with the goal of helping

them identify what they can do best, and what they should outsource or devolve to lower levels.

> "It is recommended that CONASA facilitate a review of CRBs with the goal of helping them identify what they can do best, and what they should outsource or devolve to lower levels."

Taking a longer-term perspective, there is an urgent need to make realistic projections of CRB and VAG revenue streams, and begin to bring expectations and workplans into alignment with available resources. CONASA for its part should stop raising expectations by building unneeded capacity and introducing unsustainable activities/structures, and focus more on helping the CRBs and VAGs know their limits and make the most with what they have. In the meantime, CRBs and VAGs need to also explore other sources of income, including user fees for service provision. CONASA can also play a pivotal role in sourcing long-term financing to cover core administrative costs for CRBs and VAGs, which could be an attractive investment option for donors and conservationists provided that linkages can be made to improved livelihood security and conservation.

4.0 AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

Like most rural areas, the people in Mulobezi, Sichifulo, and Bbilili GMAs practice a mix of livelihood strategies, including fishing, piecework, crafts, trading, beer brewing, and collecting forest products. However the two most important strategies by far are agriculture and livestock. This was verified in the 2001 baseline survey which revealed that over 75% of household income on average was generated by agriculture and livestock, and the vast majority of food consumed was either self-grown or purchased with earnings from the sales of crops and livestock. Agricultural and livestock production therefore form the foundation of livelihood security for the overwhelming majority of households.

Livelihood Security
CONASA's foremost objective is to increase household livelihood security for people living in the project area. As described in the CARE's version of the HLS framework, a livelihood is secure when households have: o Sufficient food to feed all household members o Reliable ownership of, or access to, resources o Income generating opportunities o Savings to smooth consumption, off-set risks, ease shocks and meet contingencies

Somewhat ironically, the centrality of agriculture and livestock in household livelihood strategies also helps to explain why the area is so food insecure. The erratic climate and high prevalence of livestock diseases combine with livelihood strategies focused almost entirely on food production, resulting in high inter-annual variability in livelihoods. The unpredictable agroecological environment results in inadequate agricultural yields ¼ to ½ of the time. Bad years in turn can deplete household stocks of inputs and production assets, which in turn can force people to adopt low-risk but also low-yielding production strategies. The 2001 PRA exercises revealed that the number one priority for people in the project area was to improve food production. Production constraints that were common in all areas include:

- low soil fertility
- inadequate seed
- post harvest losses
- lack of animal draft power
- cattle disease

Livestock are almost equally important as agriculture in most households. Livestock are used in cultivation, as a source of protein, and as a household "walking bank account" that is culturally important and can be liquidated in times of stress. Because the project area has been, and will continue to be, highly vulnerable to drought and other environmental shocks, building an asset base at the household level that can be drawn upon during periods of stress is a critical component of livelihood security. Increasing agricultural productivity alone is unlikely to reduce poverty, as least not for very long, so a second focus of CONASA's agricultural activities is supporting livestock production and access to veterinary services.

4.1. Goals and strategy

CONASA's strategy to strengthen agriculture and livestock production builds upon the lessons learned from the Livingstone Food Security Project. The goals of the agriculture section are to:

1. increase the production of agricultural crops and livestock
2. increase income from agriculture and livestock
3. reduce losses from diseases or post-harvest
4. reduce clearing of new land

To achieve the above goals, key elements of the agriculture strategy include:

- rebuild the seed stocks of farmers hit hard by multiple years of drought through seed multiplication schemes and revolving seed banks
- promote crops and seed varieties tailored to the agroecological characteristics of each area
- promote the practice of improved farming practices by linking input loans to training
- promote cash crops in combination with group production and marketing
- provide business skills to improve income generation
- reduce loss of livestock to disease by establishing community based livestock health services
- promote permanent cropping (e.g., gardens, fruit trees) to reduce the amount of new land clearing

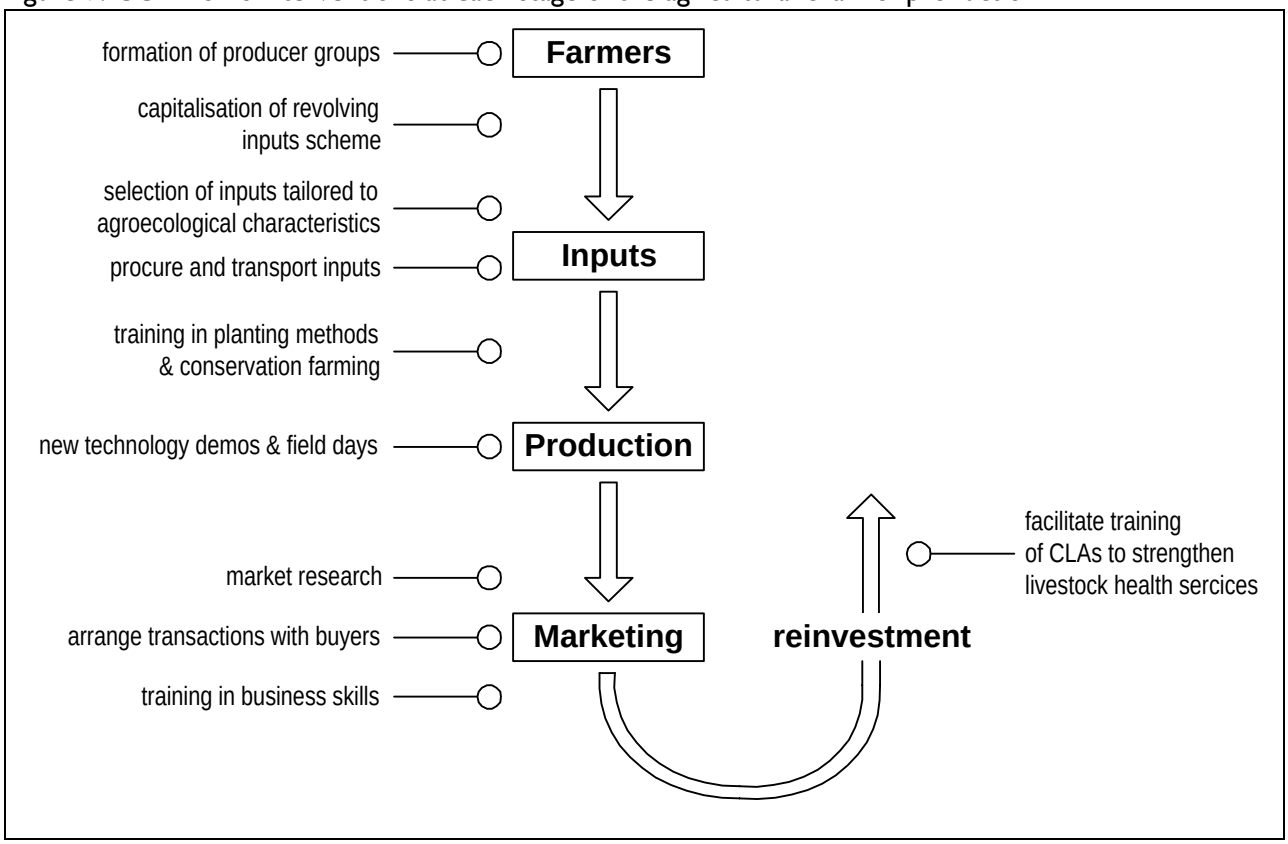
To put these strategies into groups, we can see that CONASA has tried to improve local food security by 1) providing initial stocks for locally managed revolving seed banks, 2) providing training in improved farming technologies, 3) facilitating group marketing of agricultural products, and 4) improving access to livestock health services.

The activities the agriculture section has used to implement the above strategies include:

- formation of production groups
- provision of input packs (fertilizers and improved varieties of seed) to producer groups through the VAG or CRB
- providing technical training in improved farming methods such as conservation farming and off-season seed gardens
- providing starter livestock on a loan basis
- facilitating the marketing of agricultural products by 1) serving as the middle man between producers and buyers, and 2) providing training in local production bulking and group marketing

These activities are shown at their place along the production chain in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7. CONASA's interventions at each stage of the agricultural chain of production



4.2. Achievements

4.2.1. Formation of producer groups

By the end of 2003, 34 commodity groups had been formed for the purpose of agricultural production, while another seven had been formed for seed production. The formation of producer groups requires several initial meetings with members to discuss the purpose of the group and how it will function. Once formed, groups usually receive training in production methods, followed by inputs, and sometimes assistance with marketing the harvest.

4.2.2. Input provision

Much of CONASA's achievement in increasing food production has come from the provision of inputs to producer groups. Selection of inputs are tailored to the agroecological characteristics of each area. CG's in VAGs with better soil and rainfall are likely to get hybrid maize, sunflower, vegetables, while marginal areas are more likely to get cassava, sorghum, sweet potatoes, cow peas, or maize.

The goal of input provision is not only to provide a one-time pulse of new seed and fertiliser, but to give CBOs the capacity to provide further inputs to their farmers. Thus CONASA gives inputs to CRBs and VAGs as grants, who in turn distribute them to households on a loan basis. CONASA is therefore effectively capitalising a revolving seed bank. Interest rates for repayment, which are set by the VAG, range from 150% to 500% (usually paid in kind) depending on the crop and area. Terms of the revolving seed schemes usually include the following provisions:

- seed is dispersed through household groups
- members who receive inputs must be willing to undergo training
- a household group will be assisted with seed for not more than two seasons

- recipients generally receive 3 types of food crop seeds, plus a soil improver seed (e.g., legume or cover crop)

A total of K182 million has been spent by CONASA on agricultural inputs, Table 13 below provide a breakdown. CONASA has also help to distribute donated inputs from relief agencies, for example in 2002 "lima" input packs donated by CARE were distributed to 630 farmers in Mulobezi. Other inputs have been donated by PAM and MACO.

Table 13. Value of inputs purchased by CONASA

Commodity Groups	Value of inputs (ZMK)
Commercial agricultural	168,440,000
Vegetable	8,200,000
Poultry	6,200,000
Total	**K 182,840,000**

It is difficult to provide a further breakdown of inputs given to farmers in terms of year, crop, area, gender, etc., as records are scattered in various reports and do not provide cumulative totals. An example of seed distributed for the 2002-03 season is shown in Table 14 below.

Table 14. Seed planted by supported farmers 2002-03

Crop	Variety	Seed (mT)	Area (ha)	HHs
Maize	MRI 455	1	50	50
	MRI 614	2	100	100
	Pannar 67	1	50	50
Sunflower	Pannar 7371	1	200	200

Source: Quarterly report 8

4.2.3. Seed multiplication

Seed multiplication schemes are a second way that CONASA is helping communities rebuild their seed stocks and strengthen their capacity to maintain their own seed supply. Seed multiplication schemes take place at the VAG or VMC level.

One of the more successful seed multiplication schemes has involved the use of off-season irrigated seed gardens. This activity started in the winter of 2002, after a near-complete loss of the 2001-02 harvest due to a severe drought. Both the communities, and even CONASA, found it difficult to procure new seed stocks. CONASA therefore provided approximately 300 maize seeds and 1000 cowpea seeds to each participating farmer to multiply in their gardens. After multiplicaiton this small quantity of starter seed generally produced enough seed to plant 0.5 ha of maize and 0.25 lima of cowpeas per household. Below are other highlights of the achievements in seed multiplication:

- In 2002, CONASA distributed 2000 cassava cuttings and 1000 kg of sweet potato cuttings to farmers in Nanzhila and Mulobezi for irrigated off-season multiplication.
- In 2002, 31 households in Kauwe VAG participated in off-season production of Pool 16 maize. For each kilogram of starter seed received, the groups were able to produce 4.8 kg of seed for planting.
- In 2002, 137 households in Siachitema and Chikanta CRBs participated in off-season irrigated vegetable gardening and seed production. Six treadle pumps were provided to help with the irrigation.

An example of seed multiplication success:
The case of Mr. Mwanakopa

The 2000-01 cropping season was not favourable in CONASA's project area. Many farmers lost their crops and had no food or seed for planting the next season. As if that was not enough, the 2001-02 season harvest was equally bad. Most households ran out of grain forcing them to consume even their seed. It therefore became obvious that there would be a severe seed shortage for planting in the 2002-03 season. This prompted CONASA to start off-season seed multiplication during the 2002 dry season, aimed at producing seed in time for planting for the 2002-03 season.

Two crop types were promoted, early maturing maize (MMV 400) and cowpea (bubebe). 240-300 maize seeds and 1000 cowpea seeds were given to each participating farmer, enough to produce under bucket irrigation enough seed for two limas (0.5 ha) of maize and a lima (0.25 ha) for cowpeas. Land was prepared for planting using a hoe and rows, with planting stations that were marked before planting. Basal and top fertilizer dressing were applied at an appropriate growth stage, and the plot was fenced for protection against stray animals. This took off in the last week of July 2002.

At the time of receiving his seed, Mr. Sailas Mwanakopa of Nkandanzovu was quoted as saying, "300 seeds! This is a joke. We are not kids to start planting such small quantities. Anyway, we will plant to shame CONASA".

Six months later, Mr. Mwanakopa had become a convert. The seed he multiplied enabled him to harvest a hectare of maize, not including that which the family consumed while it was still in the field. He was also able to plant half a lima of cowpeas, and shared with 42 other farmers most of whom are his neighbours. They started enjoying cowpeas relish from early February. Mr. Mwanakopa also realized that it is possible to harvest two crops of cowpeas in one season on the same piece of land. Mr. Mwanakopa attributed his success to self-determination and a commitment to see to it that the project was a success. This is a clear lesson for other farmers to copy as it leads to seed security and ultimately food security.

With a hectare of maize and a half a lima of cowpeas in his grainary, Mr. Mwanakopa has been converted into an envoy of seed multiplication.

Source: Liberty Habeenzu

4.2.4. Training

To complement the provision of inputs, CONASA provides training as part of the standard support "package" to producer groups. Unlike most other sections in the project, nearly all agricultural training has been given in the field with small groups of farmers. A partial summary of the numbers of individuals trained in each topic is shown in Table 15 below.

Table 15. Training in agriculture 2001–2003

Training Type	Number of individuals trained
crop production	264
conservation farming	146
paprika production	254
vegetable production	66
cooking and fruit preservation	264

Source: Component I Mid-Year Review Report, August 2003

Most of the agricultural training has been provided directly by the agriculture section. However in 2003, 39 local facilitators were trained to provide a variety of support services including agricultural extension (see *3.2.3.2 – Community-based trainers*, page 39). Nine of the local facilitators were also taken to GART in Choma for a field day, where they learned about improved goat production, conservation farming and improved smallholder dairy.

In addition to local facilitators, 20 individuals were identified for training to become Community Livestock Auxiliaries (CLAs). Once trained as CLAs, these individuals will be able to provide basic livestock health services, as well as administer a limited number of drugs under the supervision of a veterinarian from the Livestock Department. Training is scheduled for 2004. CONASA has also provided some of it own training in livestock health and disease prevention, see *4.2.8 – Livestock production and health*, page 83.

4.2.5. Outgrower schemes

In 2002, CONASA facilitated the establishment of an outgrower scheme for paprika production in partnership with Cheetah Zambia. For its part, CONASA mobilised 367 farmers to form producer groups, made contact with Cheetah and negotiated the terms of the contract, and paid the down payment on inputs. Cheetah Zambia provided the inputs, monitoring, and training. The crop did not do well however due to a mid-season drought and possibly poor quality inputs. Other problems might have included inadequate training and/or targeting of the exercise. Half way through the season, the scheme was scrapped. This experience parallels a similar failure with a paprika outgrower scheme under LFSP with Bimzi (Lyons et. al., 2000).

4.2.6. Field day

In early 2003, CONASA sponsored an agricultural field day in Nkandanzovu VAG in Chikanta CRB. Topics presented at the field day included improved crop production practices, crop diversity, and seed gardening. The field day also included several dramas on conservation and HIV/AIDS. The event was well attended including over 300 community members, Chief Chikanta, Village Headmen, officers from CARE, MACO, ZIS, NAIS, the Ward Councillor, and the Kalomo District Administrator. The most significant impact of the field day was making the community aware of the breadth of CONASA's activities to support agriculture, because up to that time there had been lingering suspicions that CONASA was part of ZAWA's security wing.

4.2.7. Technology demonstrations

Another element of CONASA's strategy to increase food production is the promotion of improved farming technologies. CONASA's approach toward production technology has been to test established methods on a small-scale basis, and then expand up the most promising techniques. CONASA does not consider itself to be a research project, so technology demonstrations are not proper field trials per se. The goal of technology demonstrations is to test the feasibility of the techniques, and provide evidence to demonstrate to farmers whether these innovations are effective. Technologies promoted by CONASA include:

- **Improved seed varieties**. Drought resistant and early maturing seed varieties have been distributed in all areas. CONASA tries to distribute open pollinated varieties whenever possible, but has also distributed a few hybrids, particularly Pool 16 maize. The improved seed varieties being promoted by CONASA have been widely used by farmers in the project area for several years, and so are generally effective and easily accepted.

- **Conservation farming**. Conservation farming comprises a complementary set of farming practices including minimum tillage, cultivation techniques that improve plant take-up of water and nutrients, and an emphasis on timing. CF has been under development and testing in Zambia for over 10 years, and is widely promoted by both government and NGOs. CONASA has taught CF in its own trainings, as well as through the community facilitators. Although some farmers have greatly improved their yields through CF, adoption has been slow because many others have been hesitant to adopt CF because it tends to be more labour intensive than traditional methods, particularly when draft power is not available.

- **Off season irrigated seed gardens**. CONASA has supported the establishment of off-season irrigated seed gardens as a way to multiply seed stocks with as few as 300 starter seeds per farmer. The activity has been successful, however its expandability is limited due to a lack of permanent surface water.

- **Treadle pumps**. CONASA distributed 6 treadle pumps (foot-powered irrigation pumps) as part of the start-up support for off-season vegetable and seed multiplication. The pumps have worked well, however the requirement for permanent surface water points limits their expansion.

- **Rippers**. A ripper is an ox-drawn implement that works well in hard soils and is essential for the minimum tillage approach to field preparation. CONASA demonstrated a ripper in Chooma VAG (Nyawa CRB), after which 170 farmers expressed interest in buying rippers. However the purchase fell through after an unexpected rise in the price and the lack of a direct channel of communication with the supplier.

4.2.8. Livestock production and health

CONASA has support livestock and livestock health through the same model it has used to support agriculture: 1) form groups, 2) give training, 3) give inputs. In addition CONASA has supported improvements in community-based livestock health services, and monitoring. Achievements in livestock production and health include:

- **Livestock disease management**. During the first two years, CONASA provided training on group approaches to disease control, in particular cattle diseases. The training covered the importance of using a collective approach to control tick-borne diseases like Theilerioses (east coast fever), managing herds to minimize contact with outside animals, and community dipping programs.

  The project has also on occasion provided material support to prevent or contain disease outbreaks. For example in 2003 CONASA responded to reports of an outbreak of New Castle Disease by providing Lasota vaccine for 200 birds and emergency training in disease management.

- **Monitoring livestock and livestock health**. Part of the CSM (see *3.2.5 – Community self-monitoring*, page 40) records information about livestock populations, disease prevalence, and type of livestock at a village level. CONASA has taught VAGs and CRBs to use this information to monitor trends in livestock health and prioritise interventions.

- **Supporting community-based livestock health extension**. CONASA has helped selected VAGs take advantage of the Community Livestock Auxiliary (CLA) program, a government initiative to develop community-based veterinary services. In late 2002, the project worked with VAG committees in four areas

rich in cattle (Kakuse, Nanzhila, Mbila, and Chilala) to identify 20 individuals for training as CLAs. The training was scheduled for 2003.

CONASA has also included livestock health as a topic in its own training program for community facilitators (see *3.2.3.2 – Community-based trainers*, page 39). In addition to a module on livestock during the initial two-week training that all facilitators underwent, nine facilitators learned about improved goat production during a field trip to the GART-Batoka Livestock Development Centre in Choma

- **Provision of small livestock starter stock**. CONASA has facilitated the formation of 14 commodity groups for the production of poultry/livestock. Some of these groups have received training and starter stock. For example, in 2002, 136 local chickens were given to Mulanga Poultry CG (Mulanga VAG) representing 16 households. Other commodity groups are focused on production of pigs and goats.

4.2.9. Marketing

From the very beginning, CONASA has sought to identify businesses that buy agricultural products or sell inputs in an effort to increase the volume of transactions with the private sector. Identifying trading partners for farmers is an on-going exercise for the agriculture section. On a few occasions, CONASA has conducted formal market survey research. For example in June 2001 as part of the sub-sector market analyses, the team spoke with buyers of maize, sunflower, cotton, and paprika. In early 2003, the agriculture section conducted another market survey visiting businesses shown in Table 16.

> "Identifying trading partners for farmers is an on-going exercise for the agriculture section."

Table 16. Businesses visit in 2003 market survey

Lusaka	Mazabuka	Choma
▪ ACF (Agricultural Consultative Forum) ▪ SFAP (Agri-Business-Forum) ▪ SHEMP (Small Holder Enterprise Marketing Project) ▪ OPAZ ▪ Amanita ▪ ZNFU	▪ Parmalat milk ▪ Zambia Sugar Co.	▪ Choma milling ▪ Country ▪ Cooking oil trader ▪ Open market local chicken traders

Most of CONASA's efforts in marketing have gone into organising and often subsidizing transactions with businesses in urban areas. To a lesser degree, CONASA has also worked to strengthen local markets, for example supporting commodity groups involved in maize marketing or sunflower processing. Experiences with local markets have in some ways been more successful than establishing connections to urban markets because the cost of transport and information is much less.

4.3. Discussion

4.3.1. Goals and strategy

In terms of household livelihood security, probably no other section of CONASA has had more of a direct impact than the agriculture section. The goals of the agriculture section – increasing the capacity of farmers to produce their own food and withstand shocks – could not be more relevant or important. Agriculture will continue to form that backbone of CONASA's HLS strategy because it generates food as well as income, improves the welfare of both highly-vulnerable and less-vulnerable households, and is tightly correlated with improvements in human capital in general, including health and education.

"In terms of household livelihood security, probably no other section of CONASA has had more of a direct impact than the agriculture section."

The importance of agriculture to rural livelihoods is reflected in the high levels of approval of CONASA's agricultural activities. Support for agriculture was consistently mentioned as one of the most important benefits CONASA has brought during participatory review meetings for this and other studies (e.g., September 2003 Participatory Review with M. Drinkwater, Special Study on Enterprise, Special Study on Livelihoods and Conservation). Agriculture was also one of the main achievements of LFSP (Lyons et. al., 2000), and has been embraced by government as one of the top strategies for rural poverty alleviation (GRZ, 2002).

CONASA's strategy for strengthening the productivity and consistency of agricultural production contains all of the main ingredients that have proven effective elsewhere: producer groups, use of appropriate technology, community based extension, and micro-financing. The one element that does not feature prominently in CONASA's strategy is the use of market forces to stimulate demand-driven production gains. Like all other sections of the project, agricultural activities in CONASA are guided by a set of results, benchmarks, and performance targets, and the section has clearly been focused on achieving targets.

4.3.2. Impact

4.3.2.1. INPUT SUPPLY

Out of all of the strategies in the agriculture section, provision of inputs has received the greatest attention and produced the greatest impact. The rationale for this focus is clear – seed stocks were severely depleted after several years of drought, and input provision is almost guaranteed to generate returns within a single season.

Lesson Learned

Increasing the supply of inputs is almost guaranteed to improve food production within a single season.

CONASA's efforts to rebuild input stocks began the very first year of the project. Unfortunately gains made during the first year were soon lost as the 2001-02 drought resulted in almost total loss of the harvest and seed stocks. Nevertheless households which had received inputs of cassava and early maturing maize varieties did better than the area as a whole.

Lesson Learned

When water is available in the dry season, irrigated seed gardens are an effective way of increasing seed supplies from very small amounts of starter stock.

In year two, CONASA continued to provide direct inputs to producer groups, but also added a second method to improve the seed supply: off-season irrigated seed gardens. These gardens were generally quite successful in multiplying new seed, but limited to the few areas that have permanent surface water during the dry season.

There is little doubt that CONASA's support of inputs has strengthened seed stocks in targeted areas. As an added bonus, the way inputs have been provided (as grants to CBOs, then as loans to households) helps to ensure that the benefits of this pulse of inputs will last more than a single season, and reach a greater number of households. Repayment rates of input loans have been generally high, with one survey finding 92% of input loans had been repaid. Some VMCs are also constructing seed banks to store the revolving seed stocks. CBOs are wisely selling the grain from hybrid varieties (which lose their beneficial characteristics with each generation) to purchase early maturing varieties that are open pollinated.

With the exception of the seed gardens, all of the new inputs provided to producer groups have come through CONASA's own sweat, and usually its own funding (although the project has also done well in attracting input donations from other projects). CONASA has made relatively few in-roads in developing the commercial market for inputs. In fact preliminary evidence from an internal study suggests that CONASA may in fact be depressing private sector supplies of inputs (see *Special study on food security and technology adoption*, page 88). Reasons for this might include the pressure to achieve impact as quickly as possible, staff experience, or lack of analysis to determine whether the input market is unviable or just constrained.

> "CONASA has made relatively few in-roads in developing the commercial market for inputs."

The project has also not yet fully explored the possibilities of developing local seed production as a commercial enterprise, although a small number of commodity groups are experimenting with seed production. The experiences with irrigated seed gardens suggests that local seed production may indeed be able to achieve sufficient production volumes to be a viable enterprise, and it may even be possible to multiply hybrid seed provided that isolation distance is maintained through VAG level land use planning. The experiences of CBOs in managing their own revolving seed schemes makes these areas fertile ground for attracting inputs through outgrower schemes, provided that the economics including transport costs can be worked out.

Recommendation 14. CONASA should continue to work on creating a sustainable source of inputs by 1) using the CBO structure to strengthen linkages to commercial input providers, and 2) promoting local seed production schemes as a for-profit enterprise.

4.3.2.2. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGY

The rationale behind improved production practices is to overcome limiting factors in the agroecological environment. The 2001 PRA exercises revealed that the main limiting factors to agriculture are water, labour, and nutrients. Thus the technologies that one would expect to be most effective are those that improve the factor productivity of water, labour, and nutrients.

CONASA is not a research project, and does not intensively monitor demonstrations of new farming practices. However feedback from farmers provides a qualitative measure of the effectiveness of agricultural technologies, summarized below.

Agricultural technologies:
What works, and what doesn't

- **Early maturing seed varieties**. These seed varieties have a higher efficiency of plant growth per unit of water input, with little or no additional need for labour or nutrients. They are therefore readily adopted and tend to perform quite well. Examples include MMV400 (maize), Pool 16 (maize), and Bubebe (cowpea). Cassava has also done well, even when faced with in-season dry spells.

- **Conservation farming**. This mix of cultivation and planting practices maximize efficiency of water and nutrient use, however CF is also more labour intensive. CF tends to result in higher and more sustainable yields, but adoption has been slow because of the labour requirements and in some cases soil that is too sandy. Individual elements of CF that work well in ox-power farming systems (e.g., ripping) tend to be adopted faster.

- **Off-season irrigated seed multiplication**. Irrigated seed gardens place additional demands on labour, but at a time of the year when other demands for farm labour are low, and food stocks tend to be adequate. The returns to both labour and water are high. Unfortunately this technology is limited to sites with year-round water, which is a tiny fraction of the project area.

- **Treadle pumps**. Treadle pumps maximize the factor productivity of both labour and water, and are therefore quite effective and popular. However their usefulness is also limited to sites with reliable surface water.

- **Soil improvers**. Farming methods such crop rotations, inter-cropping with legumes, green manure, and cover crops help to improve the soil nutrient content and water holding capacity. CONASA promotes these techniques in their trainings, most of which are already fairly well-known and accepted. However additional labour requirements may dissuade some households from adopting certain soil improvement practices.

- **Chemical fertilisers**. Fertiliser is well-known for improving the returns to labour and water, and is therefore extremely popular. However the beneficial effects of fertilisers unfortunately only last a season, and their cost and availability limits their use to households that are relatively well-off, or connected to an outgrower scheme or project like CONASA.

The one category of technologies that is not well represented in CONASA's line of activities are those than can improve the soil for more than one season, including agro-forestry and improved fallows.

Lesson Learned

Early maturing and drought resistance seed varieties improve yields, reduce risk of total crop failure, can be widely distributed at low cost, and can be maintained by locally-managed seed schemes..

Out of all the improved farming technologies being promoted by CONASA, the group that stands to have the greatest impact for the greatest number of people are the improved seed varieties. These tend to be easily adopted, are easily distributed, and can be sustained through community structures. Improved seed varieties can be combined with other farming techniques to increase productivity, but the core focus should continue to be increased availability of early maturing and drought resistant varieties, combined with community-based seed multiplication and credit schemes.

4.3.2.3. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The final goal of increased inputs and technology is increased production and productivity. Measuring agricultural production is a challenge which CONASA has not yet found a good way to monitor. Anecdotal reports suggest an increase in production, particularly in dry areas when compared to non-participating households. In 2003, the project conducted a survey on household livelihood food security and technology adoption, but the preliminary results were difficult to interpret with trends seen in both directions for different crops, and almost no multivariate analysis. The agriculture section also conducts its own crop cuts which has shown slight increases in yields on average, but a lack of statistical measures of confidence makes the findings difficult to interpret.

Special study on food security and technology adoption: Preliminary results

In the third quarter of 2003, CONASA's M&E section conducted a study to look for changes in food security and adoption rates of farming technologies promoted by CONASA. Using a stratified random sample and local facilitators as enumerators, the team interviewed 122 of the 910 households that were surveyed as part of the baseline survey in 2001. Although data analysis is still underway, some of the preliminary findings include:

- maize remains the most preferred crop, followed by cowpeas.
- crop rotation is the most common practice for enhancing soil fertility
- the most common practices to maximize yields were improved seed varieties combined with proper planting spacing and depth
- the top two constraints to agriculture were reported as 1) rainfall and 2) crop damage by insects
- group marketing increased by nearly a third between 2001 and 2003
- nearly a ¼ of all households had received seed from CONASA in 2003
- seed purchases from the private sector went down

4.3.2.4. LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION AND HEALTH

Like input provision and agricultural training, it is difficult to get a complete picture of CONASA's overall impact in livestock production and health, as records of activities are scattered in various documents and formats making it difficult to generate cumulative totals. Ihe institutional structures CONASA has supported (in particular the CBOs and bylaws) provide a strong foundation for a community-level response to disease management, and progress in livestock production has clearly been made in some areas where activities are focused.

The upcoming training of CLAs also bodes well for improvement in the availability of livestock health services.

There is a performance indicator in CONASA's PMP which is designed to capture changes in livestock production: *PI 5.4 Average number of key domestic animals per household for members of selected CBOs.* To provide a baseline "staring point" for PI 5.4, a section about livestock was included on the household questionnaire in 2001. For the 910 households surveyed, the average number of key domestic animals was 2.88 cattle, 3.07 goats, and 12.84 cattle. Unfortunately the analysis of the questionnaire data did not include any additional breakdowns of these numbers in terms of VAG, shape of the distribution, or correlations with gender, family size, income, etc. In 2003, 122 of these households were revisited as part of a study on Food Security and technology adoption. Unfortunately however this study did not ask any questions about livestock, perhaps missing an opportunity to look at changes in livestock during the first three years of the project.

For additional discussion of the livestock support activities, see *4.3.3 – Livestock*, page 90.

4.3.2.5. LIVELIHOOD SECURITY

Food production and livestock form the core household livelihood strategies in rural areas of Southern Province. By strengthening these two strategies, CONASA has without a doubt improved the livelihoods of a number of households. By its own estimates, roughly 11,000 people have benefited directly from project services, approximately 10% of the total population (see *Figure 4 – Direct and indirect beneficiaries*, page 38). If we assume that the vast majority of these beneficiaries were involved in agriculture and livestock activities, then even allowing for counting and duplication errors we can safely say that the number of real beneficiaries is in the low thousands. And if we assume that average household contains six people, then even factoring in an unequal distribution of benefits within households we can conservatively estimate that between ¼ and ½ of the total population has seen improved livelihoods as a result of CONASA's activities in agriculture and livestock. This estimate concurs with the results of a special study on food production and technology adoption, which found that ¼ of a stratified random sample of households had received inputs from CONASA.

> "A conservative estimate is that between ¼ and ½ of the total population has seen improved livelihoods as a result of CONASA's activities in agriculture and livestock."

A more difficult question however is whether these livelihood gains are secure. CONASA has made efforts to ensure that production gains are sustainable by gradually passing support services over to community structures. Thus for example more and more inputs are being distributed by VAGs and CRBs, and training is increasingly delivered through community facilitators. There is some evidence that CONASA is also starting to focus more on long-term production investments (see *4.3.5 – Sustainable agriculture*, page 93).

However given the erratic pattern of rainfall in the project area, sustained production gains are far from certain. Hence another characteristic of household

livelihood security is diversification in food production and income generation strategies. CONASA has promoted diversification through it mixed cropping packages in the input supply programme, as well as staggered planting dates to reduce the likelihood of total crop failure. However the degree to which these strategies are actually being practiced has not been well documented.

A third characteristic of a secure livelihood is development of an asset base that is resistant to depreciation, can be liquidated in times of stress, and can be leveraged for alternative production strategies. There is little evidence to illuminate how farmers are actually investing production gains, but one might assume that farmers are probably investing their profits into cattle, farming implements, and household assets. It does not appear however that CONASA has focused much on explicitly strengthening this component of livelihood security (see also *4.3.6 – Production gains and investment opportunities*, page 94). Hence the real test of livelihood security will come when there is another drought, or perhaps an even greater shock – the departure of CONASA!

4.3.3. Livestock

A quantitative assessment of CONASA's activities to strengthen livestock production is not possible because of the project's system for recording activities. However a few qualitative observations are possible. First, it is apparent that the investments in livestock production and health have been much smaller than the activities in agriculture. However given the smaller amount of activity, the project is also clearly focusing its efforts in areas that have felt the greatest impact of recent outbreaks of cattle disease. This is a wise approach given the limited resources available for this section.

Second, CONASA has also been wise to focus on group approaches to disease control, as the management of tick-borne diseases is essentially a collective action problem that the CBO structure should be very capable of dealing with. Research on outbreaks of livestock disease emphasizes that effective management of tick borne diseases requires group approaches to herd management. Elements of a containment strategy include intensified management of water points and grazing areas, mandatory dipping, aggressive monitoring, quarantine areas for exposed animals, preventing contact with outside animals, etc. These are management actions that can only be implemented with a strong and participatory CBO structure.

"CONASA has been wise to focus on group approaches to disease control, as the management of tick-borne diseases is essentially a collective action problem that the CBO structure should be very capable of dealing with."

Another reason for the slower pace of strengthening livestock health services may be because CONASA is facilitating participation in the Ministry of Agriculture's CLA program, rather than trying to create its own livestock health system. This approach bodes well for the sustainability of any achievements, but comes at the costs of slower implementation.

One piece of the strategy to support livestock production that needs strengthening is marketing. Efficient marketing for livestock products is particularly important for

cattle, which remain the primary form of household savings in the project area. Without markets that enable households to protect their cattle from depreciating in value through disease, and convert their cattle into cash during periods of stress, the entire economy of the area will be crippled because there is no effective form of savings. CONASA has made some preliminary efforts in strengthening the market for livestock products, for example supporting the formation of an abattoir to reduce inefficiencies in the conversion of cattle to cash (see *8.2.3.4 – Enterprises in the preliminary stages*, page 160). However this is just the tip of the iceberg, and the market for livestock health services remains almost non-existent. Farmers also need connections to organisations that can help with restocking, like the Heifer Project.

"Without markets that enable households to protect their cattle from depreciating in value and convert cattle into cash during periods of stress, the entire economy of the area will be crippled because there is no effective form of savings."

Another area which could use some improvement is monitoring. In addition to improving monitoring of both the process and impact of project interventions, much of which is "merely" an exercise in information management, there are several critical cause-effect relationships that have hardly been explored. These include:

- **Cattle–conservation**. The impact of cattle on forest and wildlife resources is complex, with the potential to be simultaneously beneficial and harmful. Mechanisms which shape the relationship between cattle and conservation include impacts on livelihood security, disease vectors, competition for water points, forage patterns, and secondary poaching. While all of these mechanisms are potentially important, in each context one or two of these processes will dominate the relationship. A better understanding of these mechanisms, and how they are affected by the spatial distribution and institutional environment, is critical for developing a long-term conservation plan in cattle areas, warranting a special study on the topic (see also *12.5.1.1 – Cattle, livelihoods, and conservation*, page 251).

- **Cattle-livelihoods**. While cattle are the main form of savings in the project area, this does not necessarily make them good for livelihoods. Intra-household dynamics, the efficiency of markets, and cultural values determined whether increased cattle production will result in better health, education, and livelihood security at the household level. These relationships, and the external factors which affect them, have not been fully studied thereby making it difficult to make claims about the impact of cattle on HLS.

- **Methods for monitoring livestock**. Asking people about their livestock is somewhat sensitive because it is such an important asset both economically and culturally. Standard survey methods are known to produce biases. CONASA has innovated alternative methods for monitoring cattle, including the CSM, however these methods still need improvement particularly in tools for aggregation and analysis. Documenting these lessons would help advance the field of livestock services in rural areas and help extend the model in other area.

Considering the importance of cattle to household livelihoods, and the relatively few number of activities in livestock production and health, this might be one section of CONASA where resources are simply stretched too thin. There is only one field officer assigned to design, implement, and monitor both livestock and agricultural interventions. This might not be enough to cover a service area of over 100,000 people.

Recommendation 15. CONASA should increase the amount of resources devoted to activities in livestock production, health, and market development, to better reflect the importance of livestock in household production, savings, and conservation.

4.3.4. Marketing

The 2001 PRA exercises highlighted marketing as a major problem constraining agricultural production in almost every area. Communities complained that markets for inputs largely didn't exist, and markets for harvested crops were either non-existent or extremely inefficient (e.g., "scavenger" businessmen buying maize at extremely low prices).

When markets are not working, projects like CONASA have three options for intervention: 1) build institutions to get the market working, 2) take the transaction out of the formal market, 3) substitute for the market. To correct market failures in agriculture, CONASA has used elements of all three types of strategies.

For example, in setting up community billboards, it has attempted to build an information system, one of the institutions required for market transactions to take place. We can see an example of the second strategy in CONASA's activity to provide the start-up capital for community-based revolving seed schemes, which have effectively taken the input supply out of the formal market system.

"CONASA's strategy to capitalise community-based revolving seed schemes has effectively taken input supply out of a formal market system that wasn't working."

However the dominant strategy by far has been for CONASA to serve the roles that the market normally would. For example CONASA provides 90% of the communication services between buyers and sellers, it provides transport services, it provides capital, it provides storage facilities for crops, it sources inputs and finds buyers for outputs. And it provides all of these services free of cost to both the buyer and seller.

The rationale behind CONASA's selection of interventions is quite clear: a drive to achieve impact as quickly as possible. However playing the role of the market in so many ways is risky in two aspects. First, it sets an upper limit on the impact the project can have, because one project with a limited budget, finite lifespan, and only one field officer for 100,000 people will never be able to serve more than a tiny percentage of the population. More importantly, CONASA may inadvertently be hindering development of certain markets by providing goods and services for free.

The lines between building market institutions, correcting market inefficiencies, and filling the role of the market are fuzzy, and one could easily argue that all of the roles that CONASA has played to date are temporary steps until self-sustaining institutions can be developed. This line of reasoning is valid, however what is not evident enough in some parts of CONASA's strategy are steps to build the institutions which can eventually play the role that CONASA is 'temporarily' filling. For example, CONASA currently does a lot of "information work", researching products, identifying buyers, organising transport, etc. It has done little however to create an institution which can play this role after CONASA is gone. The community billboards are a good start for a market information system, but are just one link in a long information chain. Similarly CONASA's provision of transport services and micro-financing are distorting the real value of transactions which may come back to haunt the communities once this type of subsidy no longer exists.

"What is not evident enough in some parts of CONASA's strategy are steps to build institutions which can eventually takeover the role that CONASA is 'temporarily' filling."

CONASA has done a good job in boosting agricultural production, albeit on a small scale, and has demonstrated that it knows what farmers require in terms of a market for inputs, outputs, and financial services. But developing a market requires more than just identifying a willing seller and willing buyer. To expand the impact of its activities, as well as ensure the sustainability of production gains, CONASA needs to analyse its role from a market development perspective, and plan a course of action to build institutions in the roles it currently plays, or take transactions out of the formal marketplace.

Recommendation 16. CONASA needs to analyse its role in supporting agriculture and livestock from a market development perspective, and plan a course of action to build institutions to fill the roles the project currently plays, or take additional transactions out of the formal marketplace.

4.3.5. Sustainable agriculture

CONASA's agriculture strategy uses a mix of long-term and short-term strategies. The bulk of the activities are designed to generate short-term returns, such as provision of seed, chemical fertiliser, and use of early maturing and drought resistant seed varieties. A few activities will show impact in the medium term (2-4 years), such as promotion of conservation farming, crop rotation, and formation of revolving seed schemes. Few if any activities have been implemented to achieve results in 5+ years (e.g., agro-forestry, fruit orchards, development of market institutions, infrastructure improvements).

CONASA has had internal debates about the mix of short versus long-term strategies in the agriculture section. The special study on conservation and livelihoods also commented on the issue, recommending a more sustainable mix of agro-forestry methods.

Given the recent history of droughts in the project area, the focus of the results framework on HLS, and the longer timeframe of most of the other sections, the bias in favour of short-term agricultural production seems warranted. However as the pressure from hunger reduces in certain areas, and structures such as the seed schemes become self-sustaining, CONASA should continue to focus on medium and long-term interventions. There are a number of reasons for this:

- **Soil fertility and conservation**. Soil fertility in many areas is marginal and easily depleted, with low rates of natural regeneration. This widespread problem appears to be driving internal migration, which is in turn the greatest long-term threat to wildlife. Failing to address long-term soil fertility through management practices like agro-forestry, intercropping, improved fallows, and green manure, shifting kraals, etc., is effectively condemning the area in the long-term to the ravishing effects of environmental degradation seen in parts of the Zambezi Valley and other areas in Zambia.

- **Resilience to climatic shocks**. While it is not very difficult to increase production during a good year, resilience to repeated shocks of drought, in-season dry spells, outbreaks of disease, pests, etc. requires a strong foundation in the farming system. Short term production gains – particularly those heavily dependent on external assistance – can be easily reversed as was seen in some LFSP areas. Building a strong foundation of CBOs, input markets, soil management practices, etc. not only reduces the impact of climatic shocks, but also makes it easier for affected households to 'bounce back' with just a little outside assistance.

Recommendation 17. To improve the longevity of livelihood gains, CONASA should gradually shift from promoting short-term to long-term agricultural production strategies in areas where 1) the short-term risks of hunger have been brought under control, and 2) internal migration is high.

4.3.6. Production gains and investment opportunities

Agricultural activities that are starting to show signs of success will only "catch on" and spread to nearby areas and other sectors of the economy if farmers have mechanisms for reinvesting their profits from increased production. With the exception of cattle, which are vulnerable to depreciation and not always easy to liquidate, opportunities for reinvestment into production are generally weak. In theory farmers could use their increased incomes to purchase additional fertiliser and inputs, procure farming implements like ploughs and rippers, small livestock, food processing or storage equipment, fruit trees, fencing, water lifting devices, or start a side business.

"A stark reminder of the lack of opportunities for reinvestment can be found in the many complaints of 'scavenger' businessmen who come to the GMAs to barter crops for saraula."

However the 2001 PRA exercises revealed that markets for these products—as well as most non-productive household assets—are distant or come with high transaction costs. Savings instruments are also generally absent (see also *5.3.11 – Savings and investment instruments*, page 114). A stark reminder of the lack of

opportunities for reinvestment can be found in the many complaints of "scavenger" businessmen who come to the GMAs to barter crops for saraula (used clothing).

The lack of mechanisms for investments and savings has not been urgent for CONASA, as many households are still rebuilding basic assets. However the lack of markets for production assets represents a constraint that reduces synergy and limits the return on agricultural investments. There are several options for strengthening these markets, some of which can also help address the sustainability issues facing the CBO structure.

Using the current suite of activities, CONASA should at a minimum continue to promote community based livestock health services and disease management so that investments into cattle and small livestock are not wiped out by an epidemic or drought. To strengthen markets for production assets, CONASA could also assist CBOs in developing a system to share market information. Thus for example, information about vendors and prices of implements could be posted on community billboards, or shared via other information channels.

Taking a slightly more active approach, local facilitators, VAGs, or commodity groups could play the role as sales agents, providing information, placing orders, and offering technical support in partnership with businesses in town. The need for this type of service can be seen in the recent collapse of a potential order of rippers in Chooma VAG. After CONASA demonstrated the ripper, 170 farmers expressed interest in buying one. However because there was no sales agent in the area, the job of organising the purchase fell on the head of CONASA's extremely busy agricultural officer. By the time CONASA was able to contact the vendor, the price had gone up, money had been spent on other items, and the sale fell through. Had a local facilitator or commodity group been available to facilitate the sale, it is quite likely that at least some of those farmers would have been able to complete the purchase. Allowing local facilitators to earn commission as sales and extension agents for private business and would also address a key sustainability concern of CONASA's community-based extension network.

An even more proactive approach, that would probably only be feasible in heavily populated areas, could involve setting up a coop-type structure to coordinate transactions. This is essentially the model being used by WCS in its support of the Lundazi Trading Center, which has been a lot of work but is showing early signs of success.

4.3.7. Linkages

Linkages between the activities under agriculture and other sections of the project are described elsewhere in this report as follows:

- Conservation ↔ Agriculture : see *9.5.5.2 – Agriculture and conservation*, page 200
- Enterprise ↔ Agriculture : see *4.3.4 – Marketing*, page 92 above
- Policy ↔ Agriculture: see *6.3.4.1 – Policy and HLS linkages*, page 139, and *Supporting advocacy issues,* page 97.

See also *14.0 – Synergy and Linkages*, page 273.

4.3.8. M&E

Monitoring and evaluation of activities in agriculture has focused on activity reporting through monthly and quarterly reports (numbers of groups formed, quantity of inputs distributed, etc), crop assessments (mostly qualitative but a few involving crop-cuts), and one special study involving follow-up interviews to households initially visited in 2001. Like other sections in the project, the driving

force behind M&E in agriculture are the requirements to report benchmarks (measures of activity progress) and performance indicators (impact).

M&E in the agriculture section has generally satisfied the "minimum" requirements for reporting. However due to a few weak links in the system, CONASA is failing to reap the full value of its investments in agriculture, particularly in terms of scaling up technology trials, capturing multiplier effects, building support for advocacy issues, and attracting outgrower schemes. M&E elements that could use a little improvement include:

- **Information management**. Although CONASA keeps numerous records on agriculture activities, they are not in a format that lends itself to aggregation and analysis. Even simple statistics such as the total number of inputs provided, individuals trained, groups formed, etc. requires reviewing documents from numerous quarterly reports and annual performance reviews. Summaries of achievements broken down by crop variety, VAG, gender, year, buyer, etc. are not available. Making activity reporting more systematic is a relatively simple exercise in information management, with several high-tech and low-tech options to choose from (see *12.3 – Information management*, page 237).

Recommendation 18. CONASA needs to strengthen process monitoring of agricultural interventions such as training and input provision. The system should be able to generate tabular summaries of outcomes, cross-indexed by commodity, VAG, gender, and time.

- **Multiplier effects**. Numerous anecdotal reports suggest that multiplier effects are common (e.g., farmers sharing their newly increased inputs or knowledge with other farmers), however this important source of impact has not been well-studied or captured. A study on multiplier effects in LFSP found that project interventions often resulted in transactions with additional farmers up to 20 km away.

- **Commodity group performance**. A second area where M&E could be stronger is tracking performance of agricultural commodity groups. Documenting the achievements and experiences of producer groups serves two important purposes. First it represents an important source of project impact that is often not captured in the traditional reporting formats. More importantly, the experiences of commodity groups provide valuable lessons that can be used to evaluate support services and improve strategies in the future. Among the many questions worth considering are:

  - **economics of the operation** – production costs, transaction costs, profit margin, labour requirements, price fluctuations over time, transport, etc.
  - **group dynamics** – how the group functioned, decision making style, leadership, communication, and conflict resolution
  - **risk management** – how the group managed risk, relationships between strong and weak producers, coping strategies
  - **information sources** – information the group used to make decisions about timing of purchases and sales, how markets were selected, crop selection, selection of farming methods
  - **investment and savings** – how were profits reinvested back into the operation, put into savings, or consumed

- **Revolving loan scheme**. Outgrower schemes have been popular in Zambia, and are currently being promoted by both government and donors as one of the key mechanisms to stimulate smallholder agriculture. Many outgrower schemes involve direct transactions between producer groups and a commercial or government entity, perhaps with an NGO serving as the go-between. CONASA is testing a relatively innovative model of input loans, using a nested CBO structure as the local administrative unit. Early evidence suggests that this approach can be highly effective, with repayment rates high enough to be commercially viable, and (presumably) equitable targeting. CONASA and the CBOs stand to gain a lot by documenting the experiences of CRBs and VAGs in administering input schemes, however only if enough effort is put into documenting both successes and failures. It will be important that monitoring of locally administered input schemes includes a strong economic analysis, because it is often the economic parameters that determine whether one model can be "transplanted" to another area or commodity.

"CONASA is testing a relatively innovative model of input loans, using a nested CBO structure as the local administrative unit."

- **Scaling up technology demonstrations**. CONASA has been promoting various improved technologies, such as off-season seed multiplication, conservation farming, and foot-powered irrigation. The project has not made as much progress in scaling up these demonstrations, due in part to lack of criteria for success. Stronger monitoring of technology trials will help CONASA, the CBOs, and other development partners decide whether these technologies are good investments, thereby improving their ability to promote them and attract additional support.

- **Supporting advocacy issues**. The policy component has done reasonably well in identifying policy issues that affect household livelihoods, but there remains a large data gap in demonstrating how policies actually affect real households. The forums and CRBs require supporting data from the field in order to make headway in their efforts to challenge "hot topic" policies such as crop damage compensation, government interference in maize markets, the urban bias in infrastructure development, etc.

- **Cattle issues**. Questions concerning cattle that have not been well studied include the links between cattle & conservation, and the links between cattle & livelihoods. See *4.3.3 – Livestock*, page 90, for more discussion of these topics.

- **Spatial data**. Most of the under-studied M&E issues described above require information on the spatial distribution of agricultural activities. For example, estimating the extent of multiplier effects will be strongly influenced by the spatial pattern of agricultural activities, the performance of revolving loan schemes will be influenced by distance to markets, questions about the relationship between cattle and conservation will be shaped by proximity to wildlife areas and water sources, etc. Currently, spatial data is not being collected for agricultural activities, as it has been for supported enterprises, resulting in one less pair of glasses through which the project can review its performance. See also *12.4 – Use of spatial data*, page 245, for additional discussion and recommendations regarding the collection of spatial data.

Recommendation 19. CONASA should work toward collecting spatial data on all agricultural interventions.

- **Food production and security**. Measuring changes in food production and food security is methodologically challenging, requiring a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques, but also extremely important for a livelihood security project. CONASA is not currently in a position to provide a complete and accurate picture of the impact its activities have had on food production. The only real effort CONASA has made to directly measure changes in food production and security was the 2003 special study on food production and technology adoption (see *Special study on food security and technology adoption*, page 88). It would be extremely useful to validate this study using another method or data source such as the CSM.

  Equally important as the question of average change in food production are the socio-economic variables associated with changes in food production. It is not uncommon for rural development activities to favour better-off, and/or larger, households, leaving the vulnerable households even further behind. CONASA has designed its support programme to ensure that all households can benefit, but ultimately community dynamics play a large role in determining who benefits and who doesn't. It is therefore crucial that CONASA examine production changes broken down by wealth category to evaluate if and how vulnerable households are benefiting.

- **Livelihood security**. CONASA is ultimately interested in promoting not food security but livelihood security. Food production is a key element of most rural livelihoods, but it is by no means the only strategy and by no means guarantees security. CONASA's claims that it is strengthening livelihood security are weakened by a lack of evidence on the other characteristics of a secure livelihood, such as diversity in production systems, alternative income generating opportunities, improvements in human capital (health and education), and connections to social support networks. Without these other characteristics, households cannot be said to have secure livelihoods. CONASA therefore needs to examine the other characteristics of livelihood security to know where additional support is needed.

4.4. Summary and way forward

Agriculture and livestock are the top two livelihood strategies for households in the three GMAs, making this stream of activities in CONASA one of the most important in the project. The goal of CONASA is not only to increase levels of food and livestock production, but to also give households the means of continued production and greater resilience to the frequent droughts that plague the area.

To achieve its goals in agriculture, CONASA has played three key roles: banker, teacher, and businessman. As a banker, CONASA has provided start-up capital for community-level revolving seed loan schemes. CONASA's input support has focused on providing crop mixes appropriate to each agroecological area, and commonly features early maturing and drought resistant seed varieties. As a teacher, CONASA has provided training in tried-and-true farming methods—such as crop rotation, optimal planting practices, inter-cropping, and cover crops—as well as some relatively new methods like off-season irrigated seed gardens and conservation tillage. As a businessman, CONASA has developed business skills and linked producer groups to buyers and sellers of agricultural products, often playing the role of middle-man in transactions.

CONASA's achievements in agriculture are draw strength from the underlying CBO structure. The project is gradually turning over administration of input schemes and training to community structures, thereby broadening impact and helping to ensure sustainability. A conservative estimate, based on two independent sources of data, suggests that a minimum of ¼ and as many as ½ of all households in the project area have benefited from CONASA's agriculture activities.

In the months and years to come, CONASA needs to consolidate its achievements and continue to build the assets of farmers who are still feeling the cumulative effects of multiple droughts. Improving the seed supply through community seed banks and multiplication schemes, and promoting improved seed varieties, are the two best short-term options for increasing food production. However there is a need to improve monitoring of these schemes, as the current system is weak in summarising both process and impact. Scaling-up technology demonstrations can also help expand and sustain impact, but this too requires better monitoring.

CONASA needs to think more about the "next step" in its programming, in particular how increased food production will be sustained during periods of stress, and how achievements in food production will result in better livelihood security. To make cattle more effective as a form of savings, more work is needed in improving access to livestock health services, and reducing the transaction costs of cattle marketing. More attention is also needed in developing markets for inputs, either by developing local production sources or facilitating linkages with urban centres. Similarly, the market for production assets and other opportunities for reinvestment are poorly developed. To strengthen these, CONASA needs to be more analytical in how it thinks about marketing, and make greater use of quantitative methods for assessing viability.

Although the project area is still drought prone, and poorly integrated with the rest of Zambia, there are reasons to be cautiously optimistic for the future of food production. Outgrower schemes are currently riding a wave of popularity with both government and donors. Many of the communities in CONASA's area are well-positioned to attract these programmes as they have managed to implement their own seed loan activities, but CONASA needs to help them tell their story. CONASA's G-MED microfinance facility is currently coming online, which if properly targeted will stimulate complementary enterprises, such as food processing and inputs, which can further stimulate agricultural production. Finally, infrastructure improvements along the Zambezi, and a major World Bank project promoting tourism in KNP and Livingstone, stand to help build linkages with tourism and agriculture markets which have so far been elusive. As CONASA prepares for either phase out or phase two, it needs to equip the communities to take advantage of emerging opportunities and seek alternatives solutions for the services CONASA is currently providing.

5.0 ENTERPRISE

Income generation is a core element of a secure livelihood (see *Livelihood Security*, page 77), and an essential ingredient for breaking the cycle of poverty. Small-scale businesses are not well developed in rural areas, a point that came out strongly in the 2001 PRA exercises. Among the many constraints that small-scale businesses in the project area must face include poor access to markets, poor road and communication infrastructure, little or no banking facilities, little or no access to credit, inefficient production systems, lack of production or processing technology, no access to insurance, low levels of business skills, poor access to market information, and low levels of technical support.

Although market conditions in the project area are some of the most inhospitable for emerging businesses, the paramount importance of income for HLS compelled CONASA to include an enterprise support component. A second goal for CONASA's enterprise support program is to create benefits for conservation. The underlying assumption behind this goal is the belief that food insecurity drives unsustainable resource exploitation (in particular poaching), and therefore resource-based enterprises can both decrease the direct pressure on resources from hunger, as well as provide positive incentives by giving resources an economic value.

Based on the experiences of LFSP, CONASA had some idea of which types of small-scale enterprises might be viable. These include maize production, maize marketing (trading), production of cash crops, crafts, vegetable production, poultry, diary, beer brewing, and non-timber forest products. In addition to these small-scale enterprises, there were hopes that larger business ventures could also be established, such as guesthouses, campsites, game ranches, and habitat management.

In late 2003, CONASA contracted Luqman Ahmad to review its achievements and strategy toward enterprise development. The majority of material in this section summarizes the main findings of that study.

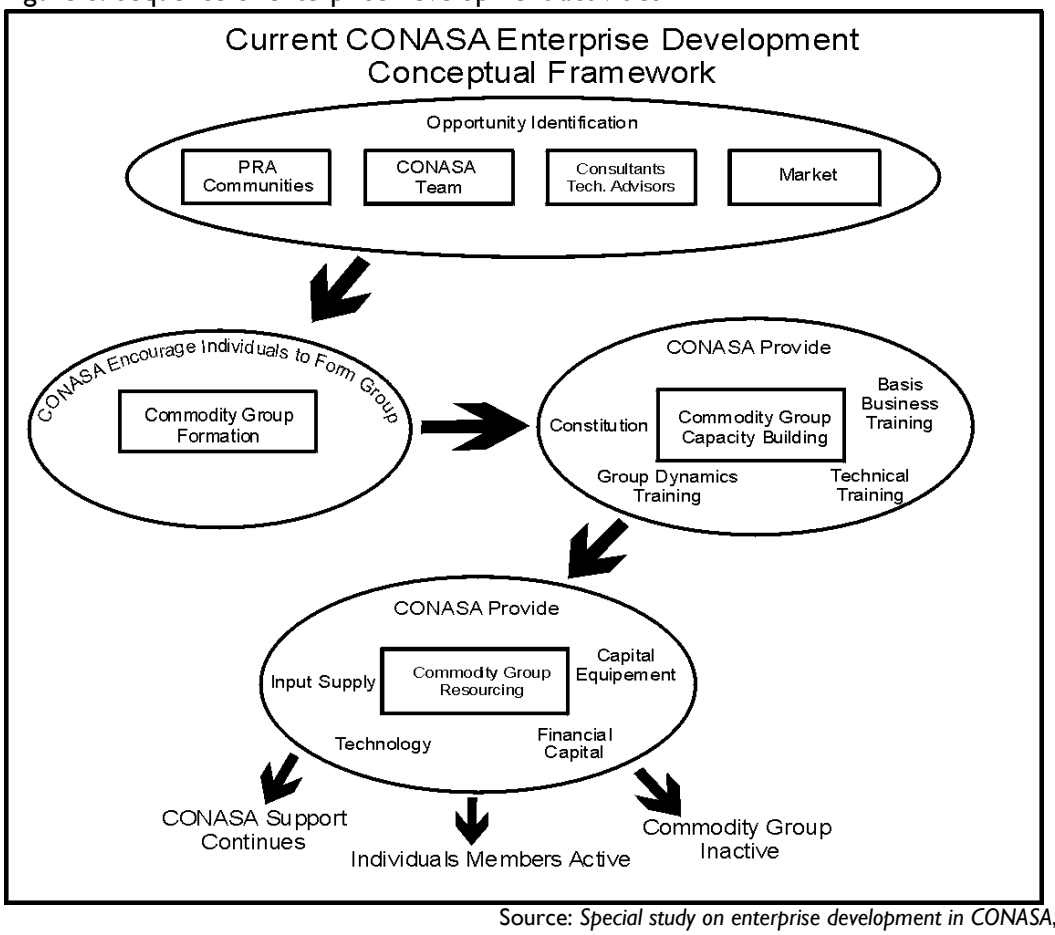
5.1. Strategy

The core elements of CONASA's strategy to support enterprise have included:

- product identification and development
- market research
- commodity group formation
- training
- micro-financing
- legal services
- facilitation in contract negotiation, marketing, technical support, etc.

In practice, the sequencing of these elements usually starts with product identification and market research. From this information base, a few products are selected for further development. The team then visits select areas which seem promising and invites local people to form commodity groups. These groups are then provided business and technical training, after which they can apply for start-up funding. This sequence is depicted in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8. Sequence of enterprise development activities



Source: *Special study on enterprise development in CONASA*, 2004

5.2. Achievements

5.2.1. Product and market research

CONASA has conducted studies on a number of potential products for enterprise development. Product studies have been completed using CONASA staff working with experts from SAFIRE and consultants. These studies typically include an assessment of product quality, production guidelines, recommended areas, skills, and potential buyers. Products which have been researched include:

Table 17. Completed product studies for enterprise development

Product	Study Date	Conducted by
handicrafts	August 2001	CONASA, SAFIRE
honey	2001	CONASA, SAFIRE
sunflower	2001	CONASA, TechnoServ
mungongo nuts	2001	SAFIRE
maize	2002	CONASA
paprika	2001	CONASA, TechnoServ
guest-house/lodge (Mulobezi)	2002	CONASA
campsite (Dundumwezi)	2002	ZAWA
game ranch	2002	CONASA

5.2.2. Formation of commodity groups

Based upon the findings of product studies, CONASA has facilitated the formation of 74 commodity groups. These groups provide a focus for training, receiving start-up capital, and ultimately conducting the business. CG's are comprised of up to 25

individual members. To see the spatial distribution of commodity groups, please see *Map 10 – CONASA supported enterprises*, page 343.

Table 18. Commodity groups established

Product	Number of CGs
carpentry/pit sawing	13
handicrafts	4
honey	14
mungongo nut	3
poultry/livestock	14
maize/seed	9
sunflower	7
vegetables/fruits	10

5.2.3. Provision of start-up capital

CONASA has given out micro-grants to a handful of trained commodity groups to support start-up costs. Some of these grants have been used to capitalize community based credit schemes, such as rotating seed loans. The amounts dispersed through the end of 2003 are shown in Table 19. A large increase in grant disbursement is expected for 2004 now that the G-MED facility is fully operational.

Table 19. Grants accessed by selected CBOs.

Year	Value (USD)
2001	$ 0
2002	$ 48,200
2003	$ 1,495
Total	**$ 49,695**

Source: 2003 Annual Performance Report

5.2.4. Income generated

The ultimate goal of the enterprise support program is to "put money in people's pockets". Table 20 below summarises total sales for various commodity groups. These figures however should only be used to get a rough estimate of revenues earned, because many sales are never recorded, and the figures don't provide a breakdown of costs of the business, per capita shares, etc.

Table 20. Sales from commodity groups

Product	Total CG sales (ZMK)
Maize	198,546,000
Sunflower	40,792,500
Cooking oil	32,000,000
Cowpeas	35,000,000
Baskets	72,000
Crafts	1,100,000
Seed production	8,100,000
Total	**K 315,610,500**

Source: 2003 Annual Performance Report

Case Study in Successful Enterprise Development: The Kasukwe Sunflower Oil Extractor

When CONASA held its first sensitisation meetings in Kasukwe VAG in 2001, one of the main requests from the community was assistance in revitalising sunflower production. Sunflower was once a common cash crop in Southern Province back when marketing was controlled by government cooperatives, but declined dramatically after market liberalisation. In the 1990s, AFRICARE introduced yenga presses to Kasukwe, but the hand-powered presses had limited crushing capacity and only a few farmers used them to crush their own harvest.

To increase sunflower production and crushing capacity, CONASA provided sunflower inputs to 50 farmers organised in groups in 2001-02, as well as a gas-powered crusher which was loaned to one commodity group on a demonstration basis. Rains were poor that year and the commodity group entrusted with the oil press failed to come up with money for operating expenses. The press was sitting idle until one of the members, Mr. Kalilo, who had experience with the manual yenga presses began to operate the press from his own pocket. He began crushing for other farmers for a fee.

After the first season, a meeting was held with the VAG committee where it was debated whether to continue to current group arrangement or allow Mr. Kalilo to operate the press individually. After much discussion, the community saw the benefits of a single operator, and let Mr. Kalilo buy the machine for approximately K8 million, to be paid back to the VAG over a period of time. CONASA provided additional business training and arranged for advanced training on oil press operation from someone at AFRICARE.

The next growing season, production increased. Approximately 12.2 tons of sunflower were purchased from local farmers for K7.5 million, and 2,300 litres of oil produced and sold for K13.7 million. After deducting expenses to operate the machine (K3.1 million), Mr. Kalilo was still able to run the operation at a profit. He even loaned sunflower seed, sourced from Zimbabwe, to 25 local farmers in the 2002-03 growing season (all of whom repaid their loans), and expected to make almost twice as many input loans to new farmers in 2003-04.

As a result of CONASA's support for the Kasukwe sunflower oil extractor project, there is now a new market for oil processing which gives local sunflower producers a better price for their product, without the hassles of selling in town. Because transaction costs for producers are lowered, more money goes into people's pockets. As a result of this new market, local production has been simulated and a new locally run micro-credit scheme was born.

This case study is important for CONASA because it illustrates a number of important points:

- It is possible to establish vibrant rural businesses with the right combination of production capacity, an enterprising business owner, training, technology, capital, and support from local CBOs.
- Not all enterprises work best operated as a group. In this case study, the requirements for skilled manpower, machinery maintenance, and quick decision-making made individual ownership the only viable business model.
- Local markets offer certain advantages over urban markets and should not be overlooked.
- Successful businesses can generate spill-over effects. In this case, the successful sunflower processing business spurred a new market for micro-credit, as well as sourcing inputs from regional sources.

Source: *Highland Hamududu*

5.2.5. Market information billboards

CONASA has made preliminary steps toward the development of a market information system. The project is currently pilot-testing billboards in four VAGs (see picture on front cover). The billboards are maintained by a VAG member or facilitator, and can be used free-of-cost by any community member to post information about items for sale, items wanted, market prices, input sources, etc. The billboards have led to several transactions between community members.

5.3. Discussion

5.3.1. Analysis of enterprise performance

With a couple of exceptions most of the enterprises supported by CONASA have had disappointing results. Constraints ranged from an inability to achieve required production volumes (e.g., honey), quality (e.g., crafts), to problems with the market (e.g., maize). Many more enterprises would have been encountered problems had it not been the direct intervention of CONASA. Table 21 below summarizes the main constraints in each type of enterprise.

Table 21. Summary of enterprise constraints

product	inputs available	capital	production volume	product quality	market	# people benefiting
crafts	✓	✓	×	×	✓	low
honey	✓	**C**	×	✓	✓	low
sunflower	**C**	**C**	✓	✓	✓	low (↑)
mungongo	✓	**C**	×	✓	**C**	low
maize	**C**	**C**	✓	✓	✓ & ×	high
paprika	**C**	**C**	×	×	×	low
guesthouse	**C**	×	×	?	?	low
campsite	**C**	× **(C)**	×	?	✓	low
bird ranch	× – no suitable site			?	?	low
game ranch	× – prohibited by policy			?	?	low

Key: × = constraint; ✓ = not a constraint; **C** = supplied by CONASA

5.3.2. Findings of the special study on enterprise

To help it improve its enterprise strategy, in the last quarter of 2003 CONASA contracted a review of its enterprise development strategy. Key findings from this study are provided below, followed by additional discussion on select topics.

- *"CONASA's outreach and understanding of the communities are excellent and a good basis upon which to build enterprise development programming.*
- *The current conceptual framework for enterprise development is, to mobilise communities into cooperative enterprises and is founded on the assumption that cooperatives would provide members with an advantage in the market. The viability of these enterprises was not investigated and none have been found to be generating incomes.*
- *Through supply led interventions these enterprises have been provided with business development services and capital, additionally CONASA is running businesses.*
- *While community based organisations have been developed to support these enterprises, other market-based institutions have not been.*
- *Enterprise development good practises are not well understood and subsequently have not been incorporated into interventions.*
- *The enabling environment for enterprise in the project area is poor and activities have been undertaken to improve understanding and awareness of their implications.*
- *While a mixture of grants and loans have been provided, it is not likely these will address the weak financial services markets.*

- *Conservation ideals form part of enterprise development interventions, however impacts are not easily measured.*
- *Enterprise activities form an integral part of a household's livelihood, and increased income generating opportunities contribute to livelihood security.*
- *Sustainability has not been part of intervention design, however is increasingly being considered"*

Source: Luqman Ahmad. Special study on enterprise development in CONASA, 2004

5.3.3. Groups vs. individuals

CONASA's enterprise development strategy is designed around the concept of group owned and operated businesses, called Commodity Groups in CONASA's jargon. As the project was being designed, a group approach toward business development was seen to be a cheap and efficient way of providing training, technical support, and start-up capital, and offers inherent advantages in terms of pooling labour, bulking production volumes, reducing transaction costs of sales and purchases, and mitigating the impact of individual failure. Group approaches were also attractive because they stand to benefit a greater number of people are therefore viewed as more equitable.

"Even before the special study on enterprise, CONASA staff were already coming to grips with the realisation that group approaches also incur a cost, which sometimes overshadows any advantage."

However even before the special study on enterprise was conducted, CONASA staff were already coming to grips with the realisation that group approaches also incur a cost, which sometimes overshadows any advantage. Decision making is often less efficient in a group setting, and the constant danger of free-riding can serve as a disincentive for stronger members who don't wish to carry the burden of weaker members. Experiences which illustrated the disadvantages of a group approach include:

- **Group poultry production**. Free-riding has been reported to be a problem when farmers try to raise chickens as a group. Inevitably some members shirk from their responsibilities to care for the birds, resulting in a small number of members doing most of the work. This leads to disputes in the distribution of benefits. CONASA has found a better model is to offer poultry training and marketing as a group, but let production be done on an individual basis.

- **Handicrafts**. CONASA put a considerable amount of effort into forming four handicrafts groups, sending them for training, and identifying markets for their products. At two trainings held at the Choma museum, CONASA staff were frustrated that many of the craftsmen did not seem interested in making crafts full-time, and were instead content with producing crafts on a part time basis. After the CSC brokered an order for 60 baskets, the contracted group failed to produce enough baskets on time, and many of the products were rejected by the buyer due to poor quality. Despite this failure at the group level, there was one individual in the group who could have filled the order by herself. These experiences suggest two lessons: group approaches to production are not necessarily more efficient than individual production, and supply-side interventions (e.g., providing training when there really wasn't an interest in pursuing handicrafts as a livelihood strategy) can be an inefficient use of resources.

The special study on enterprise development validated CONASA's evolving perspective on the merits of a group approach, and today there is a more nuanced understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of group versus individuals. The group approach is still considered to have inherent advantages for some stages of the business, such procuring inputs and marketing, however other stages, such as production, may work better on an individual basis. CONASA has also found that certain businesses, such as those involving machinery or special skills like crafts production, are more likely to succeed when operated by an individual (see *The Kasukwe Sunflower Oil Extractor Case Study*, page 104).

Lesson Learned

The relative merits of group versus individual approaches toward enterprise support depend on the nature of the business, the type of support services needed, and the level of technical skills and flexibility required to run the business.

The findings of special study on enterprise development resulted in more discussions on groups vs. individuals, leading to a conceptual breakthrough in CONASA's understanding of enterprise development. However there is still a challenge to fully incorporate these understandings into the enterprise support program. CONASA's strategies for targeting and training are still very much group oriented, and there are still anxieties both in the CRBs and CONASA that supporting individual entrepreneurs is inherently inequitable and may not benefit the community. Some of the applications for support from the G-MED facility are for individually owned businesses, which may provide some interesting case studies on the advantages and disadvantages of individually owned businesses.

5.3.4. Understanding market and market development

A second set of findings of the special study on enterprise development focused on correcting some misconceptions or incomplete understandings of markets and market development. Improving CONASA's model of market development, both in design as well as in practice, is critical because activities are designed and implemented based on how project staff understand enterprise. Some of the issues highlighted include:

- **Communities vs. the private sector**. CONASA's literature and staff comments frequently refer to communities and the private sector as though they were two separate species. However the reality is that the overwhelming majority of rural farmers are private entrepreneurs, and therefore fall within the category of private sector. Failing to see rural communities as part of the private sector can result in missed opportunities for economic exchange. Indeed CONASA has found that sometimes "local markets" (i.e., other farmers) have important advantages over urban markets.

"CONASA's literature frequently refers to communities and the private sector as though they were two separate species."

- **Market constraints and inefficiencies vs. unviable enterprises**. CONASA has struggled to differentiate market constraints and inefficiencies, which conceivably could be corrected, with factors that cause enterprises to simply be not viable. For example when a business cannot procure inputs because it doesn't know who the suppliers are, that's most likely a correctable constraint

in the market. However when the cost of production of a commodity exceeds the selling price, that's most likely an unviable enterprise. CONASA's difficulty distinguishing what can be corrected and what cannot has hindered its ability to make decisions about abandoning non-performing enterprises.

Lesson Learned

Building market connections involves more than just identifying a willing buyer and willing seller. It requires looking at institutions, constraints, transaction costs, etc.

- **Business development services**. CONASA has tried to play a number of roles in its efforts to get businesses off the ground. However the special study on enterprise noted that the project doesn't have a clear picture of how markets function, the types of services and institutions needed by emerging businesses, nor how to establish markets for these services. Markets are more than just a willing seller and willing buyer. The role of financial markets, savings instruments, legal framework, and investment patterns are not well understood, and therefore tend to be ignored in CONASA's enterprise programming.

- **Viability analysis**. CONASA has not conducted in-depth analyses of viability before deciding to invest in specific enterprises. Forecasts of revenue, expenses, labour, asset depreciation, pricing, and market demand have not been estimated for any of the enterprises CONASA has invested in, although these tools and methods are widely available.

5.3.5. Equity

Discussions with CBO leaders as well as CONASA staff reveal that equity is an important value. There is a strong feeling that project resources should be distributed as evenly and fairly as possible, and there is something inherently unfair about certain individuals benefiting more than others. The anxiety about supporting individually owned and operated businesses is but one example of how values about equity manifest themselves in activity planning.

Aside from being a cultural value, there are several practical reasons why equity is generally a good thing to achieve. Many of the activities CONASA is supporting, particularly concerning resource management, are essentially collective action problems. In the absence of a strong dominant force like the State or large commercial businesses, collective action problems tend to be resolved most successfully when there is group cohesion. When people perceive that public offices and activities benefit one group more than the rest, this often has the effect of reducing cohesion.

Lesson Learned

Support for small-scale agriculture is an effective way of increasing household incomes while still preserving intra-community equity.

There is a potential trade-off between enterprise development and equity. While some enterprises like agricultural production can benefit a large number of households, the marketplace typically favours entrepreneurs who already have greater assets, capital, labour resources, and access to decision makers. This is not necessarily bad, particularly when the thriving businesses are inherently pro-poor, such as businesses which create local jobs or stimulate demand for support services. Even when a business tends not to benefit many people directly (e.g., safari hunting), policies can be put into place to create benefits for a wider spectrum of people. However experiences from many other places remind us that the "trickle-down" effect of concentrated enterprise growth is by no means a guaranteed outcome.

So far none of CONASA's activities appear to have created new elites or been delivered unfairly. However the project needs to be aware of these issues in particular as it considers more enterprise support to individually owned businesses.

CONASA should also prepare some measure of equity when it monitors and reports income generation and household income. For example, a simple histogram of per capita income for selected commodity groups would highlight if there was a big skew in the distribution of earnings, and the Gini coefficient[13] could be calculated to measure changes in the distribution of wealth of an entire VAG or CRB. These measures can be easily incorporated into the project's information system (see *12.3.3.2 – CONASA Data Manager*, page 242).

The project should also measure and report spin-off benefits from all supported enterprises, especially those that appear to favour a small number of individuals. For example, the difference between the value of sunflower bought by the local oil press business in Kasukwe, and the price local farmers would have earned for their sunflower in town, represents additional income for all of the farmers who sell their harvest locally (see *The Kasukwe Sunflower Oil Extractor* case study, page 104).

Recommendation 20. CONASA should monitor the effects of its enterprise development activities on equity and group cohesion by 1) reporting the distribution of income and not just total amount of income from supported enterprises, and 2) estimating the economic value of spin-off benefits for all supported enterprises.

5.3.6. Impact and efficiency

The special study on enterprise also noted that most of the businesses supported by CONASA were "Micky Mouse" enterprises, in other words benefiting a tiny number of people relative to the entire population. Even an enterprise with as much symbolic value as a community-owned campsite or guesthouse will typically generate benefits for a handful of households. The small size of businesses supported by CONASA may have something to do with its heavy focus on eco-friendly enterprises, its product-focused approach as opposed to a market-focused approach, and pressure to produce measurable results as quickly as possible. It may also reflect a more general deficiency of efficiency awareness in the project, and the weak ability of CONASA's monitoring systems to measure efficiency of its strategies

> "Even an enterprise with as much symbolic value as a community-owned and operated campsite or guesthouse will typically generate benefits for only a handful of households."

While it isn't clear whether there are many opportunities for high-volume enterprise in the project area, as much as possible CONASA should try to promote enterprises that can benefit large numbers of people. These are more likely to be found in businesses that support core livelihood strategies, e.g., input supply, food storage and processing, dairy and poultry, cattle marketing, leather craft, transport and communication, etc. If and when tourism investments come to the area, CONASA and the CRBs should also seek to attract pro-poor tourism ventures and equip the communities to take advantage of economic opportunities in tourism (e.g., through skills training, start-up capital). CONASA should also keep its ears open for

[13] a common measure of inequality used by economists

opportunities for public works projects in the area, such as road rehabilitation, habitat management, water projects, etc.

A second strategy that might broaden impact is shifting toward market development approaches, as opposed to product-based enterprises. The G-MED activity is a good example of compensating for market failure (in this case market for capital) by taking the transaction out of the formal market place. G-MED is also promising by using a competitive approach instead of pre-selecting products, and focusing more on local markets.

5.3.7. Training

While most of the training in the enterprise section was technically oriented and applied to real business applications, some of the same issues that were seen in leadership and organisational training (see *3.3.3.3 – Challenges in institutional skills training*, page 49) were also present in enterprise training to some extent. Workshops were sometimes viewed as income generating opportunities, as seen in this description of a crafts training:

CONASA staff members have reported that in their opinion that although community members express a desire and enthusiasm to engage in training activities, particularly related to enterprise development, attitudes while under going training are not commensurate with the enthusiasm demonstrated for the training…. Training opportunities can sometime be seen in themselves as a livelihood enhancement opportunity. Although individuals receive no payment to undertake training, there are direct immediate benefits such as meals provided during the training period.

Source: Quarterly report 9, April-June 2003

Lesson Learned

Problems with training being viewed primarily as an income generating activity can be reduced if training is held in-situ, is led by local facilitators, and is directly linked to an ongoing enterprise or social activity that generates benefits.

However the enterprise in general avoided many problems with training by conducting most trainings in the field, using facilitators to provide much of the business skills training, and coupling training with income generating activities. Monitoring and evaluation of training in enterprise could have been stronger, however, like training in other sections of the project.

5.3.8. Links to conservation

Links between enterprise and sustainable resource management are discussed in *9.5.5.3 – Enterprise and conservation*, page 201.

5.3.9. Information programming

The strongest recommendation of the special study on enterprise was a greater focus on information programming. The study felt this focus would be appropriate for CONASA because 1) its feasible, 2) a number of market constraints are related to poor information flow, and 3) better information would allow household to make decisions that develop sustainable returns from their livelihood strategies.

CONASA has tip-toed into the development of a market information through the community billboards project. This project is a good start, but even if CONASA can counter the perception that the CONASA owns the billboards and greatly expand the number of billboards, they will still be limited to facilitating intra-community information exchanges. CONASA and the CRBs have yet to come up with a reliable system for exchanging market information with urban centres, although GTZ in Choma has offered to share its monthly market bulletins.

"CONASA has tip-toed into the development of a market information through the community billboards project."

A wide variety of tools, models, and experiences with market information systems are available. Some of these are referenced in Appendix III of the enterprise study report. Other possibilities for strong information programming are outlined in *18.2.5.3 – Information programming*, page 315, and the digital presentation in *Appendix 9*, page 373. The goal is to set up a system that meets the information needs of farmers and businesses, incorporates the costs of gathering information, provides appropriate incentives for maintenance of the system, and doesn't rely completely on volunteers.

5.3.10. G-MED

5.3.10.1. GOALS

The Grant Mechanism for Enterprise Development (G-MED) has probably been the most problematic activity in CONASA's enterprise strategy. The fund was designed to address two important needs: 1) a lack of start-up capital for small-scale business, and 2) inexperience of the CRBs in managing funds and implementing projects. It was envisioned that the funds would be given to CRBs to allocate as they see fit, provided that funded activities stimulate economic activity. Appropriate uses could be CRB grants or loans to emerging businesses, small-scale infrastructure projects (e.g., road rehabilitation), input packs, etc. The project document called for the fund to start flowing in year 2, so as to not overshadow capacity building activities, at the tune of approximately $75,000 per year.

5.3.10.2. TROUBLED IMPLEMENTATION

As of the end of 2003, project records indicated that only about $50,000 (12.5%) of the fund had been disbursed. Furthermore the funds distributed in years two and three were provided directly to commodity groups from CONASA as grants (mostly for inputs), and none had been given to the CRBs as envisioned. Implementing the activity has consumed a huge amount of project resources in terms of staff time and planning meetings, as CONASA has learned first hand "the devil is in the details".

"Implementing G-MED has consumed a huge amount of project resources in terms of staff time and planning meetings, as CONASA has learned first hand that: 'the devil is in the details'."

A number of problems have hindered the implementation of the fund, including:

- **Perceived lack of capacity at the CRB level**. CONASA staff perceived a lack of capacity of CRBs to manage and account for funds. This created delays as CONASA required CRB members to go through additional training on financial management.

- **Internal communication problems in CONASA**. The committee within CONASA assigned to develop policies and review applications for G-MED was based in Lusaka, met only once a quarter, and had limited interaction with the CRB leaders. The first set of guidelines were not accepted and had to be rewritten, causing delays. Coordination of G-MED between the head office and Kalomo office has often been characterised by delays and miscommunication.

- **Development of application forms**. CONASA took a long time to develop the forms that commodity groups would use to apply to the fund. The goal was to adopt a generic business proposal format to give enterprise groups experience in preparing business proposals that could be used for a variety of funding sources. CONASA obtained sample formats from other NGOs and adopted one of them. However the resulting forms were complicated and caused a considerable amount of confusion including CONASA staff. A group of farmers that merely wanted to get a loan for inputs still had to fill out a 10-15 page application. Important pieces of information were not asked, such as whether the group had gone through any training. Additional delays were created when CONASA decided to revise the forms, and then had to retrain facilitators, community coordinators, and CRB members to fill out the forms.

- **Disbursement of funds**. Other delays were encountered in the disbursement of approved funds. This appears to be due to bureaucratic delays and poor communication between the CONASA head office, field office, and CARE head office (which handles most of CONASA's finances). The delays caused considerable problems, most notably for the construction of the Dundumwezi campsite for which CONASA pledged K90,000,000 in November 2002 but as of December 2003 was little more than a pile of sand and bricks.

The problems with the G-MED have cost CONASA a lot of goodwill among the communities. Although the G-MED was a relatively small piece of CONASA's overall programming, it was the most important from the perspective of CRBs and commodity groups because it was one of the few activities that provided immediate tangible benefits. The frustration felt by CRBs was palpable at meetings, and management of the activity created a lot of tension between the field and head office. The delays also hindered the progress of other sections in the project, in particular enterprise and agriculture sections, which had little capital to couple with training.

5.3.10.3. UNDERLYING ISSUES

To its credit CONASA has learned from its mistakes, however clearly the G-MED facility was mishandled almost from the beginning. The constraints outlined above were the symptoms of the problem, but the more important lessons for CONASA are the underlying issues.

- **Lack of expertise**. Part of the problem with G-MED stemmed from the fact that no one at CONASA had experience in administering a micro-finance program. Thus from the start the team had a learn-as-we-go approach, resulting in slow progress and a few wrong turns.

- **Management structure of CONASA**. A second underlying problem was that the G-MED facility was managed out of Lusaka, while interactions with the CRB members and field staff were based in Kalomo. While this arrangement might work for an activity that is already established and

running, developing G-MED clearly required better communication than was possible between two offices five hours apart.

- **Lack of trust**. While an implicit goal of the G-MED facility was to demonstrate the trustworthiness of CRBs, everything about how the activity was developed and implemented revealed a lack of trust. Even within CONASA, the centralized management of G-MED contributed to a perception at the Kalomo office that field staff were not considered trustworthy.

- **NGOs and microfinance**. There's a reason why NGOs tend not to get involved with microfinance – they're usually not well equipped for the huge workload required. CARE-WCS-AWF knew this when CONASA was being designed, which is why G-MED was designed to be a grant facility instead of a credit facility. However managing the activity the way it's been implemented in CONASA requires almost as much work as a micro-credit scheme, because everything except for collection of loans is needed. CONASA apparently under-estimated the amount of resources that would be needed to administer this facility. Disbursement of funds has also problematic because CONASA does not manage its own finances and has to go through deep layers of slow bureaucracy at CARE's head office.

  CONASA's experiences with G-MED validate the lesson that most NGOs are not well-equipped to do microfinance. Even CLUSA, Zambia's microfinance "specialist", contracts out the credit component to a private lending institution. CONASA's experiences with the community grant fund also have implications for CRBs, which have now received the torch of G-MED (see next).

> "CONASA's experiences with G-MED validate the lesson that most NGOs are not well-equipped to do microfinance."

5.3.10.4. WAY FORWARD FOR G-MED

While CONASA has gotten through most of G-MED's birthing pains, there is still a lot of work to be done before the activity can achieve its goals. Many of the remaining challenges lie in lap of the CRBs, which are responsible for administering most of the funds in the form of micro-loans to commodity groups. CONASA may be tempted to step back and let the CRBs manage on their own, but it still has a responsibility to provide support where needed. The types of support needed by CRBs include:

- **Economic planning**. Based on observations at a CRB meeting at which G-MED applications were reviewed, it appeared that the initial round of reviews was guided entirely by an assessment of the merit of individual applications. Beyond this, there did not appear to be any sort of criteria for approval other than a general desire to ensure that each VAG had some proposals accepted. There was no evidence that an economic plan for the area existed, that the CRB had sought to encourage complementary businesses in the same area (e.g., production and processing), create links to conservation, etc. Regional economic planning is a skill that CRBs have yet to acquire, but need assistance both in terms of training and facilitation.

- **Account administration and analysis**. Despite its birthing problems, the G-MED facility provides an invaluable opportunity to learn about micro-enterprise development. The activity is essentially an example of action research, where each funded enterprise represents an experiment on what types of businesses are possible in marginal environments. However in order for this experiment to produce useful lessons, the supported enterprises must be monitored and evaluated. It seems unlikely that the CRBs have the skills or capacity to properly monitor supported exercises, so there is a need for CONASA to help them set up record keeping systems, reporting templates, etc. If CONASA were to produce nothing else but a good report on the lessons learned about what it takes for small-scale businesses to emerge and survive in Southern Province, the project would be well worth USAID's investment.

- **Application review and assessment**. Administering micro-credit is a new experience for the CRBs, and it is highly likely that they will make some mistakes the first round. There will be a strong need in the not-too-distant future to review the experiences of the activity, and identify ways to improve it. CRBs may find it necessary to devolve parts of the process to VAGs or even VMCs, get outside assistance, simplify the application system, renegotiate the terms of repayment, etc. CONASA should play a key role in facilitating this review as it will provide valuable lessons for the project as well.

5.3.11. Savings and investment instruments

Every school of economic thought acknowledges the importance of savings for economic growth. Currently, there are virtually no savings institutions in the project area, limiting the ability of emerging businesses to reinvest their profits back into the business. At the household level, the main options for savings include purchasing household assets, production implements, or cattle. One of the unfortunate lessons of the LFSP program, whose farmers also pumped their savings into cattle, is that cattle are not the best investments due to the risks of disease and lack of a secure market.

The lack of savings and investment instruments has not been critically felt as of yet, as most households are still restocking their production assets and seed stocks after several years of stress. However as businesses begin to emerge and turn a profit, there will be increasing need for secure savings instruments. This is an area where CONASA can and should play a role at least in providing advice if not facilitating the development of savings institutions. The project should also take note of the lessons from LFSP, which tried and failed to set up a rural savings and credit program. Options to consider for strengthening savings instruments include:

- **Livestock health and marketing**. The most familiar and widely practiced form of savings in CONASA's project area is cattle. CONASA can make this form of savings less risky and more efficient by continuing to promote livestock health and access to markets (see *4.3.6 – Production gains and investment opportunities*, page 94).

- **Rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs)**. ROSCAs are informal associations whereby a group of friends meet on a regular basis and pool their money which goes to one member each time on a rotating basis. They can be found all over the world and are highly effective and efficient forms of savings.

- **Formal banking facilities**. Although banking in Zambia is problematic for small-scale businesses due to high inflation which exceeds interest rates on

savings accounts, there may possible to attract a 'mobile bank' or otherwise facilitate or subsidize a savings program in the formal banking system.

- **Production technology**. Another secure form of investment that also generates returns for production are improved production technologies. This could include farming implements, such as a ripper or treadle pump, or food processing or storage technology. CONASA can help source these items and/or help to set up a purchasing agents through the VAGs or facilitator network.

Recommendation 21. Now that some businesses are making money, CONASA should re-examine the need for savings and investment instruments, and identify an appropriate strategy for each category of enterprise.

5.3.12. Joint ventures and investors

Investors and joint ventures are increasingly seen as the preferred means of raising capital at all levels of Zambia's struggling economy. Even a cursory review of newspapers or government planning documents such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper reveals the large magnitude of Zambia's hopes that investment will lead to development and poverty reduction on a wide scale (Republic of Zambia 2002).

The five CRBs supported by CONASA have also heard this tune, and are all interested in attracting investors for joint venture enterprises. Many of the CRBs already have experience with safari hunting businesses in their areas, although their role has been relatively minor as ZAWA awards and manages hunting concessions. Still, the CRBs have high expectations that external partners will help stimulate enterprise, and many CRBs have approached or been approached by private investors (Table 22). CONASA has tried to identify investors for several potential enterprises (see for example *8.2.3.1 – Dundumwezi campsite*, page 159, and *8.2.3.4 – Enterprises in the preliminary* stages, page 160), with little success.

Lesson Learned

CRBs can identify potential joint venture partners on their own, perhaps more efficiently than a project.

Table 22. Joint ventures discussed or in progress

CRB	Joint ventures discussed or in progress
Siachitema	campsite
Shezongo	game ranch
Moomba	guesthouse campsite timber harvesting
Chikanta	crocodile farm game ranch bird sanctuary banana plantation
Nyawa	photo tourism game ranch

The potential of outside investors is a source of great hope, as well as potential danger. While there are some examples of outside investments generating benefits for a broad spectrum of the host community, there are unfortunately many more examples of communities benefiting little, none, or even becoming further

marginalized from outside investors (see for example *6.2.6.1 – Moomba CRB presentation in parliament*, page 130).

A recent study examined a number of investments in rural areas in Zambia and found that investments are more likely to benefit the local community when they don't alienate land (Scott 2002). This same study also found that investments in the agriculture sector (e.g., commercial farms) tend to be less alienating than investments in tourism or NRM. Another study that looked at joint ventures between communities and tourism companies in South Africa found that wages were by far the most important form of benefit to the community, while lease revenue, equity, and demand for services generated only marginal revenue (Spenceley and Seif, 2003).

"A recent study examined a number of investments in rural Zambia and found that investments in the agriculture sector (commercial farms) tend to be *less* alienating than investments in tourism or NRM."

Given that further interactions with outside investors are all but certain, and that joint ventures can have positive, neutral, or even negative impact, an appropriate question for CONASA is: Are the CRBs ready?

When asked this exact question, several CRB members interviewed stated that they were confident about their ability to negotiate with potential investors, thanks in large part to the capacity building provided by CONASA. This includes the policy sensitisation workshops, business trainings, and two workshops specifically on legal and policy issues affecting joint venture enterprises (see *6.2.5.1 – Policy review and analysis workshops*, page 126). The 2003 CBO assessment also found that these trainings have resulted in CRBs being more capable in forming linkages to outside organisations than before.

On the other hand, CONASA staff who facilitated the pre-season meetings between safari operators and CRBs noted that some CRBs still have a long way to go before they have the skills to negotiate with the private sector on equal ground. The recent special study on enterprise development also noted that while community leaders seem to know that private sector investors bring money, they are less clear why they will come, and what they will come to do.

A lot stands to ride on the outcome of future deals with outside investors, so in preparation CONASA should therefore work on:

- **Contract negotiation training and legal support**. CRB members and chiefs must be properly trained and sensitised in the opportunities and dangers in engaging in joint ventures with investors, and have access to the necessary legal and technical support.

- **Development of marketing materials**. In order to attract the widest possible spectrum of investment offers, information about investment opportunities in the GMAs must be widely and easily available. The project document called for the preparation of marketing materials or investment guides (i.e., "this is our area and this is what we have to offer"), however these have yet to be developed. Since CONASA started in 2001, there has yet to be a joint venture enterprise established, but the time may be ripe for such a venture now

that the CBO structure is firmly established, social capital has been strengthened, micro-financing is flowing, etc.

Among the goals of a marketing campaign should be casting community organisational capacity as a strength which should attract investors, and counteract any stereotypes which portray strong CBOs as a liability and scare investors away. The internet may be an untapped medium to advertise investment opportunities in GMAs (see *12.6.8 – CONASA web* site, page 259).

- **Building linkages for support skills training**. Experiences from projects in Zambia and elsewhere suggest that wages are the greatest benefit generated by joint venture enterprises. A skilled labour force is also an incentive for a potential employer to commit resources to the area. CONASA should work toward building linkages to appropriate training institutions for support skills training. A great example of creating linkages can be seen when CONASA recently sent Dundumwezi campsite staff for on-the-job training in lodges in Livingstone.

> **Recommendation 22**. In preparation for development of joint ventures with outside investors, CONASA should 1) ensure that CRBs and chiefs have been properly sensitised and trained in contract negotiation techniques, 2) develop marketing guides for the entire area so CRBs are able to attract the widest spectrum of investment offers, and 3) build linkages with training institutions to support employment skills development

5.3.13. M&E

5.3.13.1. CAPTURING IMPACT

Measuring the impact of enterprise development activities is as difficult as it is important for CONASA. Much of the reporting of business revenue has so far been somewhat ad-hoc and opportunistic, and without a doubt some generated income has gone unrecorded. Clearly the project doesn't have the capacity to track every transaction of every supported enterprise, so it needs to develop a reporting mechanism by which it can collect data on revenue earned, such as profit and loss statements. The project has also struggled to aggregate income data because it has not been entered in a systematic format, even though a database was designed for this exact purpose (see *12.3.3.2 – CONASA Data Manager*, page 242).

5.3.13.2. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

CONASA's performance monitoring system is well equipped to capture the desired end result of the enterprise development section (increased household income), but is less satisfactory when it comes to measuring progress along the steps to get there. This may partly be due to CONASA's lack of a clear model of market development, and partly due to a lack of intermediate results in the results framework. The recent special study on enterprise development recommended three general types of performance indicators that capture both final impact and intermediate steps:

- **Market development**, measured for example by the price and quality of products and services available, enterprise awareness, repeat transactions, the level of satisfaction of enterprise, and the extent to which linkages are benefiting previously underserved populations.

- **Institutional performance**, according to indicators of outreach and cost effectiveness.
- **Client impact**, in terms of changes in enterprise performance (e.g., sales, value added, profitability), or broader social and economic impact (employment, poverty alleviation, etc.).

5.3.13.3. EQUITY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

It has be argued elsewhere that growth in business activity often disproportionately benefits a few households more than others, and that CONASA and the CRBs should be alert to the possibility that increasing levels of inequality could reduce community cohesion (see *5.3.5 – Equity*, page 108). CONASA's monitoring program should therefore include at least coarse measures of equity, such as histograms of wealth or income, so that CRBs and the project are at least aware of what is happening and can consider responses if needed.

5.3.13.4. LEARNING BY DOING

Much of CONASA's approach to enterprise development has been guided by instinct, and not a lot of effort has gone into incorporating an action research approach into enterprise development. It has been argued elsewhere that by systematically incorporating a process for documenting lessons learned can generate useful information whether the enterprise succeeds or not (see *13.0 – CONASA as a Learning* , page 261). For example, even though most of the enterprises supported by CONASA have not taken off, the project should have a enough information on process, prices, yields, cost-benefit ratios of various technologies, rates of asset depreciation, transport costs, capital and labour requirements, etc., to write manuals on a half-dozen enterprises.

5.3.13.5. G-MED

The G-MED community grant facility provides both incredible opportunities and challenges for CONASA. The opportunities include the possibilities of achieving quick and tangible impact in terms of income generation for selected commodity groups and individuals. However equally important is the opportunity to learn a considerable amount from the successes and failures of commodity groups receiving micro-financing from the fund for self-selected activities.

> "G-MED provides incredible opportunities to learn a considerable amount about the successes and failures of enterprises groups receiving microfinance for self-selected activities."

Currently it appears that CONASA does not have plans to play much of a role in monitoring the achievements of recipients of the community grant fund, viewing that task as primarily the responsibility of the CRBs. This stance is entirely understandable because i) CONASA with its limited staff is not well positioned to conduct detailed monitoring of grant recipients, and ii) the whole idea of the community grant fund was to give CRBs some financial resources to build their own capacity for administering and monitoring community level projects.

Nevertheless, it is definitely within CONASA's strategic interest to ensure that information from the recipients of community grants is collected and analysed, both to capture impact and more importantly gather lessons learned from the broad suite of enterprises supported by the fund. The need for CONASA to stay involved is even more acute given that there is not a lot of evidence to suggest that the CRBs are equipped and capable of monitoring funded projects on their own. This pair of observations leads to the following recommendation:

Recommendation 23. CONASA should provide the necessary support to CRBs to ensure that information about the outcomes of G-MED loans is collected in a timely and organised manner in order to i) capture impact, and ii) document lessons learned in supporting micro-enterprise.

5.4. Summary and Way Forward

The main achievements of CONASA's enterprise activities have been skills development, a modest number of emerging businesses, increased incomes for a handful of groups and individuals, and an impressive amount of information compiled on products and buyers. CONASA's enterprise activities would probably have had a greater impact if the context had stronger market institutions and infrastructure, however an almost complete lack of business development services has led to CONASA to inefficient intervention strategies where it plays many roles in an attempt to get businesses going and reach performance targets.

Although the pace of progress and level of impact have been low in enterprise development, CONASA's experiences with enterprise are by no means untypical. NGOs which specialise in rural business development are pleased when one in ten supported businesses "hits". CONASA's strategy has not been flawless, however, and the project can and should try to improve its approach. In particular, its inefficient management of the G-MED facility delayed the flow of start up capital by more than a year, overuse of a group business model bypassed opportunities where an individually owned and operated approach would have worked better, and an almost complete lack of viability analysis has hindered its ability to make decisions about what to support and what to drop.

Moving forward, CONASA should concentrate on the emerging businesses that have shown the most promise, and exit from their high risk and low potential activities. As much as possible, CONASA should also move away from direct service provision to facilitation of information, correcting market inefficiencies, and creating incentives for the private sector to provide business development services (such as input supply chains, financial services, and market information). CONASA can also play a helpful role in strengthening an information system, and preparing CRBs to negotiate contracts with outside investors.

The G-MED facility should be seen as an experiment to test a wide variety of small business models, and then pick the winners. For this to happen, monitoring of G-MED grants and loans will have to be strengthened. The enterprise team should also expand its understanding of market development and use of tools of the trade, such as enterprise mapping (a.k.a. sub-sector analysis) and viability analysis.

There is reason to be cautiously optimistic about CONASA's enterprise program. The enterprise section has done a pretty good job learning from its mistakes, and many of the corrections recommended by the special study on enterprise were already in progress as this evaluation was being conducted. The G-MED facility will be also fully

operational in 2004, creating opportunities both for income generation as well as learning. Finally, the team has started to cut support to under-performing enterprises and take a more analytical approach in how it designs its suite of activities. The switch from implementation to facilitation will not be easy however, particularly during CONASA's last year of programming when the project is under pressure to demonstrate short-term impact.

"There is reason to be cautiously optimistic about CONASA's enterprise program."

6.0 POLICY AND ADVOCACY

6.1. Goals and Strategy

A stream of activities on policy and advocacy was built into CONASA to address the gaps and constraints in natural resource policy and policy implementation in Zambia that have been known for sometime, but have not seen any progress in a long time. According to the analysis laid out in USAID's RFA, a central reason for the lack of progress in improving the policy context for CBNRM in Zambia is because there is little or no environmental lobby or other types of civil society support for CBNRM. The focus of CONASA's strategy therefore has been to build the capacity of civil society organisations to understand policy issues and be able to engage in dialogue with policy makers and advocate for policy change where needed.

Although some NGOs engage in direct forms of policy advocacy, CONASA chose to take a 'back seat' role and build the capacity of CBOs and NGOs to engage in policy debates. It was believed that a 'back seat' role is more appropriate for CONASA due to 1) it's limited lifespan, 2) it's backing by international NGOs which lack the political legitimacy of Zambian organisations, and 3) the strategic advantage of NGOs which may not well suited for the needs of advocacy work.

"Although some NGOs engage in direct forms of policy advocacy, CONASA chose to take a 'back seat' role and strengthen the capacity of CBOs and NGOs to become engaged in policy discussions."

The second arm of CONASA's policy strategy is to use existing policy mechanisms to better operationalise the implementation of CBNRM at the community level. This strategy is based primarily upon a provision in the Local Government Act that enables District Councils to develop bylaws at the sub-district (e.g., chiefdom) level to implement and customise to the local level the principles and broad strokes outlined in national Acts. This provision opens the door to a participatory planning process for natural resources and land management, with a final product that is recognized and enforceable by traditional authorities, the emerging CBO structure, and local government.

The specific mechanisms used by CONASA to achieve the goals in policy and advocacy include:

- developing and maintaining a database and capacity assessment of civil society organisations with interests in CBNRM
- commissioning studies of the natural resource policy framework
- providing training in policy analysis and advocacy
- supporting the establishment of forums to discuss and build consensus on policy issues and provide an opportunity for dialogue with policy makers
- facilitating other opportunities for civil society to engage with policy makers
- facilitating the development of natural resource management plans and associated bylaws

6.2. Achievements

6.2.1. Civil Society Database

In order to finalise a strategy for increasing the level of support for CBNRM in civil society organisations, CONASA first compiled a list of 286 organisations with real or potential interests in CBNRM. From this list, they next interviewed 122 organisations which seemed most likely and able to provide support to CBOs either through advocacy or direct support (Table 23). Finally, the project administered 47 focussed surveys which collected information about organisational capacity.

The purpose of the exercise was to identify those organisations who would benefit from training and partnering to increase the level of support to CBNRM in Zambia.

Table 23. Organisations interviewed for CONASA civil society database

Type of Organisation	Frequency	Percentage
NGO (Local)	41	33.61%
NGO (International)	23	18.85%
Commercial Business	16	13.11%
Private Sector	9	7.38%
Community Institution	8	6.56%
Quasi Governmental	5	4.10%
Government Ministry	3	2.46%
Project	3	2.46%
Commercial Association	3	2.46%
(Unknown)	2	1.64%
UN Agency	2	1.64%
Business Association	2	1.64%
Other	1	0.82%
University	1	0.82%
Government Project	1	0.82%
Limited Company	1	0.82%
Development Project	1	0.82%
Total	**122**	

6.2.2. Development of a policy agenda

When CONASA started its work, the project had some ideas about where natural resources policies were weak, however there was no consensus, or even discussion, on priority policy needs within the sector. To develop a common agenda for policy reform and advocacy, CONASA sought to first identify policy needs. To achieve this, it employed two tools – a contracted policy study and a survey of policy needs.

6.2.2.1. POLICY ANALYSES

> "CBNRM in Zambia made a great leap forward when CONASA contracted a local consulting firm to conduct a thorough review of policies in the environmental sector."

CBNRM in Zambia made a great leap forward when CONASA contracted a local consulting firm, Human Rights, Intellectual Property and Development Trust (HURID), to conduct a thorough review of policies in the environmental sector. The findings from the first study on policies in the fisheries, forestry, wildlife and water sectors were presented at a special meeting of the NRCF, and

were warmly received by all sides including representatives from government. A second study on local government, land, and agriculture policy is due out in 2004. In addition to these two major studies, CONASA staff also wrote several policy review papers on their own (Table 24), which were presented at policy sensitisation workshops in 2002 (see *6.2.5.1 – Policy review and analysis workshops*, page 126).

Table 24. Policy reviews conducted

Title	Date	Author	Dissemination
Land-use (agriculture) policies and legislation	Feb 2002	Ernest Mwape (CONASA)	workshop participants internal
Community-private sector joint business ventures: Legal and policy issues	April 2002	Patricia Jere (CONASA)	workshop participants internal
Policy and legislation review of the fisheries, forestry, wildlife and water sectors	May 2002	HURID	90 hardcopies numerous electronic copies presented at NRCF forum on web site
Review of Zambia's natural resource policy documents	Oct. 2002	Ernest Mwape (CONASA)	internal web site
Study on local government, land, and agriculture	due 2004	HURID	TBA

6.2.2.2. SURVEY OF POLICY NEEDS

The desktop policy studies laid a foundation for discussion of policy, but the project still needed to get consensus on what policy issues were the "hot topics" for key stakeholders. To ascertain this, component two took a two-pronged approach. First, they sent out a questionnaire on key issues and policy needs to NGOs and private businesses operating in and around Kafue National Park. Second, community members were asked about their views on policy on numerous occasions, including the policy sensitisation workshops in 2002, NGO and MUSIBI advocacy workshops, and community meetings for the Land Policy Review Process. Based on these inputs, the main "hot topic" policy issues are listed in Table 25.

Table 25. "Hot topic" policy issues

Policy	Issue(s)
Tender process for safari hunting concessions	CRBs are only marginally involved in short-listing companies, while the ultimate decision lies with ZAWA, and the ZNTB which has a history of disregarding community interests.
Land tenure conversion	Under the 1995 land act, when communal land is converted to 99-leasehold tenure, it never returns to communal ownership and remains permanently under the discretion of the State.
Land use restrictions in GMAs	Certain land uses, such as game ranches, and bird sanctuaries, are prohibited in GMAs, even though they are compatible with wildlife conservation and could help fuel economic development.
Problem animal control	The current system for problem animal control in GMAs is impractical for crop damage, and does not provide for any compensation for loss of livestock or human life.
Quota setting	Responsibility for setting hunting quotas lies with ZAWA wardens. ZAWA has recently made efforts to involve communities in quota setting, but is not legally

Policy	Issue(s)
	required to do so.
Financial transparency and withholding of concession fees	Accounting of safari hunting revenue continues to be opaque in ZAWA. While this may be due to technical constraints within ZAWA, communities are worried that ZAWA may not feel that it needs to be accountable for the revenue it collects on behalf of the CRBs. Also, CRBs are not happy that ZAWA appears to be keeping concession fees[14].
Joint forest management	An act calling for Joint Forest Management was passed by Parliament in 1999, but has yet to be enacted by the Forestry Department. CRBs are anxious to see this Act implemented so the principles of CBNRM can also be applied in forest management.
Government involvement in maize markets	Government has been involved for a long time in input provision, maize purchasing at guaranteed floor prices, and relief maize. These policies have increased the volatility of maize prices, diminished the involvement of the private sector in maize markets, and made it difficult for CONASA farmers to engage in commercial maize production.
Protected area network	Zambia's current protected area system was developed soon after independence, and has not seen any major revisions since the 1960s, despite enormous changes in the country. The current demarcation of GMAs and policies govern land use appear to be sub-optimal for conservation and development.

6.2.3. Forums

One of the most visible achievements of component two has been the establishment of stakeholder forums[15]. The goal of these forums is generally to 1) provide opportunities for stakeholders with common interests to meet and discuss issues related to the success of CBNRM in Zambia, and 2) stimulate dialogue between stakeholders and government, 3) provide an opportunity for stakeholder input into the policy formation process. Prior to CONASA, there was little opportunity for stakeholders in CBNRM to get together amongst themselves, much less engage in dialogue with representatives from government. Hence the sector was characterised by disjointedness and fractionalisation.

Lesson Learned

A tiered forum structure is more appropriate than a single forum when the number stakeholders is so great that it becomes impractical to discuss all issues of interest in a single meeting.

CONASA has followed an adaptive approach in its support of forums, taking advantage of needs and opportunities. Initially it was envisaged that a single forum on CBNRM might be adequate to represent the sector, however after a couple of meetings and consultations with other projects supporting similar structures (e.g., IUCN, SNV, ESP), it quickly became apparent that there were a number of stakeholder groups who wanted to be involved and interests that extended beyond CBNRM. What eventually evolved was a two-tiered structure with a national forum on general natural resources issues on top, fed by several sector-specific forums, as outlined in Figure 9 below. Table 26 presents a chronology of forum meetings that CONASA sponsored.

[14] a flat-rate fee that each foreign safari hunter pays independent of individual trophy fees

[15] CONASA has used term 'forum' to refer both to bodies that convene on a periodic basis as well as specific meetings. For the sake of clarity, this report uses the term forum to mean a group of people that meet on a periodic basis, while meetings of those forums will be referred to as forum *meetings*.

Figure 9. Natural resource forums

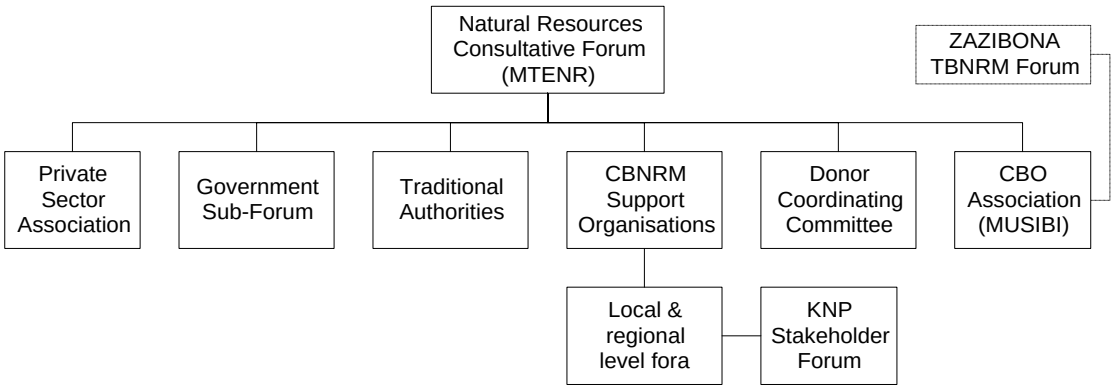


Table 26. Chronology of forum meetings

Date	Forum	Venue	Purpose/theme
June 2001	Wildlife Sector Stakeholders Forum*	Lusaka	Build consensus on the need/ structure for a CBNRM/NRM forum
July 2001	Wildlife Sector Stakeholders Forum*	Lusaka	"Hear it from the communities". Perspectives on CBNRM.
November 2001	NRM Stakeholders Forum*	Lusaka	Overview of TBNRM, policies and legislation affecting joint ventures with private sector businesses, findings from Chobe Enclave exchange visit
April 2002	KNP Consultative Forum	Lusaka	Build consensus on the need/structure of the KNP-CF
March 2003	KNP Consultative Forum	Choma	Build consensus on the need/structure of the KNP-CF to Kalomo area stakeholders
February 2003	NRCF	Lusaka	Presentation of findings from HURID report on policies in fisheries, forestry, wildlife and water
May 2003	KNP Consultative Forum	Mumbwa	Build consensus on the need/structure of the KNP-CF to Mumbwa area stakeholders
May 2003	CBNRM-SO	Lusaka	Discuss role that NGOs and CBRNM support organisations can play on the NRCF, and discuss synergies and common interests between CBRNM programmes.

* eventually evolved into the NRCF

In as much as government has a monopoly on creating and enforcing policy, and is therefore the primary audience for the forums, the natural choice for hosting the NCRF secretariat is the Ministry of Tourism Environment and Natural Resources (MTENR). MTENR enthusiastically took up the lead role and has sought official approval from Cabinet for the NCRF.

To monitor the effectiveness of the NRCF and sub-forums in regard to facilitating policy analysis and advocacy, CONASA developed an index for "Forum Effectiveness for Achieving Policy Advocacy Objectives". The index incorporates variables such as frequency of

Lesson Learned

Government is generally eager to meet with CBOs and other stakeholders, provided that the process is participatory and no single agenda dominates the discussions.

meetings, number of groups represented, attendance, outputs, and links to decisions makers. However it is not clear whether the index has been evaluated since the project started.

6.2.4. Formation of a CRB Association

CONASA was instrumental in the formation of MUSIBI, an association of CRBs on the southern side of Kafue. CONASA initially supported the participation of the five CRBs it supports in developing a national CRB association by facilitating an organisational meeting and training workshop at the ACCBNRM in May and July 2001. However this effort stagnated as it became logistically and financially impractical to organise meetings at a national level. Subsequently at the second CBNRM forum, CRBs with the assistance of CONASA and other CBNRM support organisations, decided to first form regional CRB associations as an intermediate step before eventually forming a national association.

MUSIBI (an acronym for Mulobezi Sichifulo Bbilili) was officially inaugurated in September 2002 at a meeting facilitated by CONASA. MUSIBI's constitution calls for it to be governed by a board comprising of 10 elected members from the 5 CRBs (2 from each CRB), and overseen by a Board of Trustees consisting of four chiefs and four private sector members. CONASA then facilitated a strategic planning meeting in November 2002 in Choma at which MUSIBI developed a five-year workplan. Main activities on the workplan include fund raising for the association, habitat improvements, promotion of sustainable agriculture, resource inventories and monitoring, lobbying, value added marketing, and gender sensitisation. The association currently has no source of funding other than contributions from its own members, although it is seeking funds to support a secretariat.

In June 2003, CONASA conducted an advocacy training workshop for 20 representatives from MUSIBI (see *6.2.5.2 – Advocacy training*, page 128). MUSIBI was registered with the Society of Registrars in July 2003. Because MUSIBI is registered with the Society Of Registrars, it is less dependent on ZAWA and has greater flexibility than individual CRBs (if it can get funding). MUSIBI is also represented on ZAZIBONA, the transboundary natural resource forum (see *8.2.6 – ZAZIBONA TBNRM Forum*, page 162).

6.2.5. Policy Training

Staff from components two and three conducted a series of workshops (Table 27) to build the capacity of civil society groups to be conversant with policy issues and be effective advocates for a more conducive policy context for CBNRM. The CONASA CSC took the lead on organising most workshops on natural resource policy and bylaws, while component two staff organised complementary training in advocacy strategies. Workshops were jointly implemented by staff from both components, often with additional assistance from component one.

6.2.5.1. POLICY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS

Staff from the CONASA CSC led a series of workshop in 2002 designed to sensitise chiefs, CRB members, and representatives from government about the policies affecting natural resource management in Zambia. These timing of these workshops was coordinated with component two, which was developing complementary workshops on policy and advocacy, while the content was built upon the desktop policy review studies completed by the legal officer and first presented at the NRM Stakeholders forum in November 2001.

Table 27. Workshops on policy, advocacy, and bylaws

Date	Workshop Title	Venue	Participants
24-28 Sept. 2001	Advocacy for NGO leaders	Kabwe	21 (10 women)
25 Feb. – 1 March 2002	Sensitisation of policy and legal issues related to CBNRM	Livingstone	40 (2 women)
Mar. 2002	CRB Advocacy training	Choma	25 (3 women)
7-10 April 2002	Enhancing the role of local communities in natural resource management	Livingstone	23 (2 women)
29 April – 1 May 2002	Community-private sector joint business ventures – Legal and policy issues	Lusaka	not recorded
27 May – 1 June 2002	Natural resource legislation and policy training workshop	Livingstone	41 (6 women)
16-20 June 2002	Introduction to natural resource bylaws	Livingstone	
17-19 July 2002	Natural resource bylaws formulation for Chikanta and Moomba	Livingstone	42
29 July - 3 August 2002	Participatory resource assessment and management planning	Livingstone	39
16-20 June 2003	MUSIBI Advocacy training	Choma	21 (2 women)
22-31 August 2003	Natural resource management plan and bylaws formulation for Shezongo	Itezhi-tezhi	

The first policy workshop was held in Livingstone from the 25 February – 1 March 2002. Forty participants attended including CRB members, Chiefs, ZNTB, Cabinet Office Livingstone, Forestry Department, Kazungula District Council, Ministry of Agriculture, and Chief Mukuni of the Toka Leya. Among the issues discussed were land tenure, fisheries act, wildlife act, and forestry act.

In early April 2002, a second workshop entitled "Enhancing the role of local communities in natural resource management" was sponsored by the CONASA CSC and attended by 23 participants. The objective of this workshop was to provide a foundation for CRBs to develop joint venture agreements. Topics presented included the role of NGOs in developing community–private sector partnerships, the role of CBOs in comanagement agreements, regional experiences with wildlife and natural resource comanagement agreements, tour operators' experiences with comanagement agreements, and contract negotiation and enforcement.

In late May 2002, a third workshop on "Natural resource legislation and policy training" was held for 41 participants (6 women). This workshop continued where the February workshop left off, covering material on CBNRM in legal and policy frameworks. A number of guest presenters presented papers, and participants developed action plans for their own areas.

6.2.5.2. ADVOCACY TRAINING

The first advocacy workshop was held in September 2001. The target audience for this workshop was NGO leaders, selecting using the survey of civil society organisations with current or potential interests in CBNRM (see 6.2.1 above). After the workshop, CONASA hoped to see these NGOs become engaged in support activities for CBNRM, including advocacy, and tried to play a facilitating role. However monitoring and follow-up revealed that most NGOs had prior programmatic commitments and/or a lack of financial resources to take up new lines of activities. Thus although CONASA had reduced one problem through its skills training, funding remained a barrier. In 2002, the project then decided to concentrate policy and advocacy training activities at the CBO level (i.e., CRBs and MUSIBI).

Lesson Learned

In order for local NGOs and private businesses to become effective advocates for CBNRM, they require more than just training and sensitisation; they also require an organisational mandate and financial resources for advocacy activities.

In March 2002, a second advocacy workshop was held in Choma for 25 CRB and VAG members. Participants identified policy issues and developed advocacy plans. However the workshop facilitators felt the material might have been too advanced, because the participants "could not cope well with the detailed presentations. This may call for review of the manual by the resource persons and CONASA" (Quarterly report 4).

In June 2003, CONASA held a third advocacy workshop for 20 representatives from MUSIBI, with the assistance of the Environmental Law Institute in Washington, DC. Participants were introduced to everything from the policy formation process to the steps of an advocacy campaign. In the remainder of 2003, the CRBs do not yet appear to have started a concerted advocacy campaign, however observers have commented that several individual CRB members have become more articulate and assertive in discussions with government officials at meetings facilitated by CONASA.

6.2.5.3. BYLAWS AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Under the Local Government Act, section 76, District Councils are allowed to enact bylaws. The intent of bylaws is to enable district and sub-district structures to operationalise site-specific regulations and procedures as long as they don't conflict with national Acts. Bylaws are often rooted in traditional norms and practices, but carry additional weight when they become enforceable statutory instruments under the authority of the councils.

Learning from the experiences of other CBNRM support projects in Zambia, CONASA has facilitated the development of bylaws as a means to fill a gap in local level resource management planning and enforcement. The use of bylaws to operationalise resource management plans is relatively new in Zambia, but offers the promise of implementing the principles of CBNRM in a way that national legislation never could. In addition to being customized to the local ecological and social context, bylaws can be developed through a grassroots participatory process that would not be possible at a national level.

"The use of bylaws to operationalise resource management plans is relatively new in Zambia, but offers the promise of implementing the principles of CBNRM in a way that national legislation never could."

The development of bylaws in CONASA's project area was preceded by several workshops on the principal Acts which govern land and natural resources in Zambia (see 6.2.5.1 above). Based on this foundation, the CONASA CSC held a workshop on the Community By-Laws formulation process in Livingstone 23-26 June 2002. This workshop included a detailed case study of the Shangombo community in western province which successfully completed the entire process of forming natural resource bylaws in 2001.

Lesson Learned

The bylaws provision of the Local Government Act offers a tool which can be used by CRBs to develop and enforce local natural resource management and land use plans.

An output from this workshop was a unanimous decision to move forward with formulating bylaws for CRBs supported by CONASA. In July 2002, a second workshop was held to formulate bylaws for the first two pilot areas, Chikanta and Moomba. This workshop was attended by over 40 participants, including all of the chiefs, CRB members, councillors, Registrar of Societies, Forestry Department, National Heritage Conservation Commission, ZAWA Director of GMAs, Zambia National Tourism Board, MTERN, and business owners from the private sector. The main output from this workshop was a set of draft bylaws for Moomba and Chikanta. These bylaws have since been submitted and approved by the appropriate District Councils.

The CONASA CSC next held a workshop from 29 July to 3 August, 2002, on participatory resource assessment and management. The workshop was aimed at Resource Management Committee members (a sub-committee of the CRB) and was facilitated by CONASA's consortium partner SAFIRE. The workshop focused on forest management practices, the development of resource management plans, and bylaws.

In August 2003, CONASA helped facilitate another workshop to form bylaws, this time for Shezongo CRB. The lead agency in this exercise was MTERN, which has also been supporting the development of local natural resource management plans. CONASA also helped develop a natural resource management planning manual that was pilot-tested at the Shezongo workshop (see *6.2.5.4 – Natural resource management planning manual*, page 130).

After bylaws are formed at the local level, their enactment takes a long time as they must get the approval of number of government offices, shown below. The status of bylaw formation is shown for each CRB in Table 28.

Steps for the Enactment of Natural Resource Bylaws
1. formulation at the local level
2. submission and approval by the District Council
3. submission and approval by the Ministry of Local Government
4. submission and approval by the Ministry of Legal Affairs
5. gazetted by the government printer

Table 28. Status of bylaws formation

CRB	Formulation	Submitted to Council	Adopted by Council	Submitted to MLG	Gazetted
Chikanta	Yes	Yes	Yes	?	No
Moomba	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Siachitema	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Shezongo	Yes	No	No	No	No
Nyawa*	No	No	No	No	No

* Only sensitisation meetings done: conflicts are resurfacing affecting the implementation of development activities.
Source: 2003 Annual Performance Report

6.2.5.4. NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANNING MANUAL

As CONASA and other stakeholders became more involved in facilitating the development of natural resource management plans, of which bylaws are the final product, it quickly became apparent that each government agency with any kind of mandate to manage natural resources had their own approach toward NRM planning. These include ZAWA, Forestry Department, Department of Fisheries, and Environmental Council of Zambia. Some preliminary discussions had already taken place among stakeholders about the need harmonise approaches to NRM planning. CONASA therefore took advantage of the consensus for the need for harmonisation of planning approaches, and facilitated a meeting whereby representatives from a variety of government departments came together and developed a common approach that satisfied the planning requirements of all departments.

Lesson Learned

Harmonising approaches to natural resource management planning is a cheap and effective way of getting the simultaneous endorsement and support of multiple government departments.

The final outcome of this meeting was a draft NRM planning manual prepared by a technical committee set up by MTENR. The manual is still being tested in CONASA and PFAP areas, after which it will be reviewed and possibly adopted country-wide. The harmonisation of a planning methodology may not seem like a major technical achievement, but will greatly streamline the development—and endorsement—of resource management plans across the country.

6.2.6. Strengthening grassroots input to policy processes

The last leg of CONASA's strategy for improving the policy context is supporting mechanisms for CBO input into policy formation. The forums represent one important mechanism, however CONASA has also facilitated other channels for input and dialogue.

6.2.6.1. MOOMBA CRB PRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT

Moomba VAG is blessed with rich timber resources, but those resources became a mixed blessing after the Forestry Department awarded timber and timber processing concessions to two foreign companies, Keshengula and Livingstone Sawmills, without any consultation with the CRB. During the PRA exercises, the community complained that these two companies were failing to honour the terms of their contract, over-cutting immature trees, felling species not on the concession agreement, failing to pay employees, sub-contracting illegally, and causing unnecessary environmental damage.

After CONASA held workshops sensitising chiefs and CRB leaders on policy and legislation governing resource extraction, the CRB began to write letters to the company and Forestry Department detailing the alleged abuses. The company

failed to respond, but CONASA was copied on the correspondence and became aware of the issue.

Not long after, in March 2003, Parliament placed an advertisement in local newspapers inviting public comment on various Department Committees, one of three structures created by the house to examine and scrutinize government administration and expenditure. Once of the issues on the agenda of the Committee on Energy, Environment and Tourism was "Timber Felling and Externalisation from Zambia and in Particular Mulobezi". This was one of the first times Parliament invited comment from civil society organisations, but reflects a bigger trend in Zambia to strengthen grassroots participation in government. The open invitation could not have come at a better time for the Moomba community which had little success resolving the problems with the two timber companies on its own.

CONASA informed the Moomba CRB about the opportunity to testify, and assisted them in preparing their paper and presentation. The presentation was well received, and the Committee included their concerns into their official letter to the Forestry Department. The Forestry Department has also suspended the license of Livingstone Sawmills based on information provided by the CRB.

Lesson Learned

Projects like CONASA are needed to allow isolated community-based organisations take advantage of emerging opportunities in the political arena.

The testimony of the Moomba CRB could not have been possible just two years ago, because it resulted from the convergence of two processes: the opening-up of government to increased public input, and the increased capacity of the Moomba CRB to understand the policy context and assert their statutory rights. CONASA provided the bridge that allowed a small emerging CBO in an isolated rural area take advantage of increasing openness in the political process at the national level.

"CONASA provided the bridge that allowed a small emerging CBO in an isolated rural area take advantage of increasing openness in the political process at the national level."

6.2.6.2. LAND POLICY REVIEW PROCESS

Land in Zambia is governed by the Land Act, which has undergone revisions in 1972, 1985, and 1995. Currently a new draft of the Land Act is being considered, updating sections of the 1995 Act. As part of the public input process, the Ministry of Lands, with support of the Land Alliance (an alliance of NGOs) is conducting a national tour to educate the general public on the proposed changes and solicit feedback. The team is visiting two districts in each province, and two villages in each selected district.

To help ensure that the views of GMA residents are considered in the draft land policy review process, CONASA facilitated meetings between the Ministry of Lands and communities in all five chiefdoms. During these meetings, community members gave their views on key aspects of the draft act, including vestment of land, the dual classification system of land tenure, land administration, a proposal to allocate 30% of land to women, land dispute resolution, and allocation of land

to foreigners. Among the views expressed, there was almost unanimous opinion that customary land should not be converted to state land, title deeds were not wanted in communal areas, and the 99-year leasehold title for foreigners was perceived to be too long. The proposal to allocate 30% of all land to women was generally supported, but there was some division as to whether married women should own land.

The Land Review Meetings served two important functions. First, they allowed the views of the communities in the three GMAs to be known by the Ministry of Lands and considered as part of the review process for the draft Act. Equally important, the discussions raised awareness within the communities of the importance of land, and the laws and policies which govern land use and access. There is a wide body of development literature from around the world that highlights the importance of land in rural development, because when peasants loose their land the cycle of poverty becomes incredibly difficult to break. Access to arable land is already a problem in some districts in Zambia, and is driving migration into the GMAs south of KNP. Zambian peasant farmers won't be secure on their land until an effective grassroots lobby exists to ensure that legislation effectively regulates the alienation of land to private individuals and the State.

6.2.6.3. PRE-SEASON SAFARI HUNTING MEETINGS

A third channel of communication strengthened by CONASA is between the communities and safari hunting operators. In 2003, international safari hunting was re-opened in Mulobezi and Bbilili-Nkala[16] GMAs, although hunting in Sichifulo was restricted to resident hunters due to a court injunction on foreign safari hunting. However even though ZAWA had awarded hunting concessions in Mulobezi and Bbilili-Nkala, and even though these concessions included development pledges and other forms of interactions with the community, there had been little or no contact between the safari operators, their professional hunters hired to manage operations, and the CRBs.

In July 2003, CONASA facilitated a meeting between the four CRBs that share revenue from the Bbilili-Nkala hunting block, ZAWA, and the safari operator. At this meeting the history of the area and details of concession agreement were reviewed, and agreements made on procedures for selecting a Community Liaison Officer and implementing pledges. A similar meeting with similar outputs was held in Mulobezi. All parties agreed that the meetings were highly beneficial and helped lay the groundwork for a relationship between the safari operators and CRBs which is expected to last for the 10-year concession agreement.

6.3. Discussion

6.3.1. Impact

6.3.1.1. A COMPLEMENTARY SET OF ACTIVITIES

The achievements of the policy component can be placed into three categories: new and improved information, new and improved skills, and new and improved channels of communication.

[16] Bbilili and Nkala form one hunting block, but the hunting concession also includes Namwala GMA

"The achievements of the policy component can be placed into three categories: new and improved information, new and improved skills, and new and improved channels of communication."

These achievements are significant in their own right, but have also reinforced each other. For example, analyses of the current policy context (new information) has been a great focus for creating dialogue between CRBs, NGOs, and government (new channels of communication). Similarly, the trainings in policy sensitisation provided a foundation that enabled focused dialogue between CRBs and government when the HURID study was released.

In addition to being synergistic, CONASA's implementation of policy activities has also been extremely systematic. Targeting for the advocacy training was based on the findings of the NGO survey, while the content of the trainings was based on a questionnaire and feedback from previous meetings. Similarly, each forum meeting was built upon the results of the previous one, eventually resulting in the two-tiered structure that could not have been envisioned at the onset.

This systematic approach in policy work has helped CONASA learn as it goes, as it did when it realised that advocacy training to NGOs was a waste of resources unless advocacy was already part of their institutional mandate and funding was available. CONASA's incremental approach may have slowed down the progress of the section, however was absolutely appropriate because this type of programming are new areas for CONASA, new for the sector, and relatively new for Zambia.

Lesson Learned

Being systematic in planning and reviewing progress at regular intervals is particularly important when there are no implementation models to follow.

6.3.1.2. STARTING WITH THE EASY FRUIT

The experiences of the forums and meetings between stakeholders demonstrate how much can be accomplished with little more than facilitating dialogue. This simple act has allowed communities to benefit from political processes at the national level (e.g., Moomba CRB testimony in parliament and getting the license of Mulobezi Sawmills suspended), and helped improve the implementation of existing policies (e.g., ZAWA facilitating community input into quota setting, smoother implementation of safari hunting concession agreements).

These initial achievements are significant but are akin to "picking the easy fruit" because they mostly focus on improving implementation of existing policy. The challenges that were overcome were mostly logistical and resource oriented, but there was little need to develop new arguments, present new evidence, debate positions, or twist arms to change policy.

There are still a lot of needs related to implementing policy that are caused by poor dialogue or lack of resources, which CONASA can and should continue to address. However there is also a whole other set of needs that require not only better implementation but actual shifts in policy. For these challenges, the "hard fruit", dialogue will be critical but not enough on its own. We have yet to see a

Lesson Learned

Many constraints in policy and policy implementation can be resolved merely by facilitating dialogue between stakeholders and government.

concerted advocacy campaign from the communities to tackle the more substantial policy issues, like game ranching in GMAs or complete devolution of ownership, however many of the pieces of the process are in place.

6.3.1.3. THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE

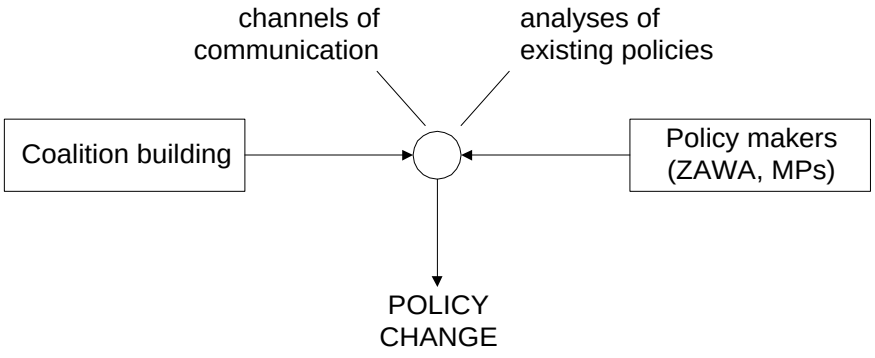
While there are already many little impacts described above, there have not been any dramatic improvements in CBNRM policy in Zambia since CONASA started. However given the short time frame the project has existed, that is probably not the right question. The returns to an investment in capacity building are inherently non-linear. Unlike an agriculture project where each bag of maize is a small step forward, the impact of policy and advocacy support is more like a staircase, with long periods of seemingly little progress interspersed with "great leaps forward".

> "The impact of policy and advocacy support is more like a staircase, with long periods of seemingly little progress interspersed with 'great leaps forward'."

6.3.1.4. AN ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The appropriate impact question for CONASA then is not whether policy goals have been achieved, but whether progress is moving in the right direction to achieve desired policy changes. However in order to answer that question, one needs a theory or model of how policy gets formed, and how advocacy activities can eventually lead to changes in policy. CONASA has not formally articulated how it understands the process of policy changes, although the activity has been on the workplan since year one. However its selection of activities reveals a strong belief in the value of communication, coalition building, and analyses of existing policies. Thus the *de facto* conceptual framework CONASA has been operating under looks something like Figure 10.

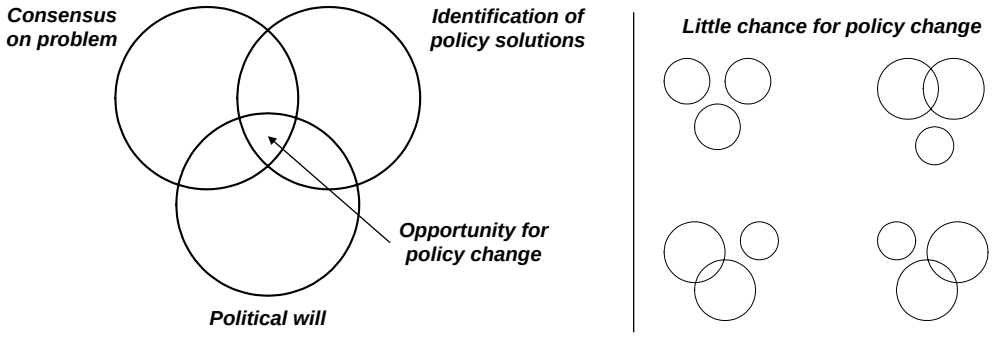
Figure 10. CONASA's de facto conceptual framework of policy change process



Recommendation 24. As part of the planning process for future programming, CONASA should review it experiences in policy formation and update its "road map" or conceptual framework for policy formation and advocacy.

To assess whether CONASA's activities are 'leading in the right direction', this evaluation will instead employ a model of policy change based upon research by political scientists, the multiple streams model (Porter and Hicks, 1995). This theory stresses that policy formation is rarely a linear process, and therefore cannot be easily engineered. Instead, policy change becomes possible when three separate processes converge: consensus on the problem is reached, consensus on a solution, and political will (Figure 11). Using this understanding of policy formation as a basis for analysis, we can then look at the strengths and weaknesses of CONASA's approach to supporting advocacy.

Figure 11. Multiple-streams model of policy change



6.3.1.5. BUILDING CONSENSUS ON THE PROBLEM

The policy studies and workshops that have come out of components two and three represent a breakthrough in building consensus on what the problems are in the policy environment. These studies were professionally developed by a consulting firm outside the sector, and are therefore considered accurate and unbiased. The way in which the studies were presented and discussed in multi-stakeholder forums was also participatory and contributed to the acceptance of the analyses.

There are however remaining challenges. Not all stakeholders agree on where the problems lie, due in part to information gaps and in part to differing priorities. For example, the CRBs view the restriction on game ranches in GMAs as a major hindrance to both conservation and development. The position of ZAWA, on the other hand, is that game ranches would be inconsistent with the role of GMAs as buffers between parks and open areas. Currently the issue is playing out as a clash of wills. Perhaps a more effective way to move forward would be to get a better understanding of the interests and beliefs on each side, identify gaps in information, and gather additional information as needed. Once the two sides can reach consensus on what the real problems are, progress can be made.

"Not all stakeholders agree on where the problems lie, due in part to information gaps and in part to differing priorities."

A second set of questions on problem identification concerns whether all audiences are being reached. CONASA's policy activities has thus far focused on sensitising ZAWA and MTERN, and to a lesser extent district councils, local

MPs, and other ministries. These are indeed the most critical audiences, but there may be other influential audiences whose support will be needed to change policies. Questions asked by MPs during the testimony of the Moomba CRB (see *6.2.6.1 – Moomba CRB presentation in parliament*, page 130) revealed a startling lack of awareness of issues facing communities and the principles underlying CBNRM, suggesting a need to reach out to a broader cross-section of Parliament. The Zambia National Tender Board (ZNTB), which plays a key role in awarding safari hunting, forestry, and tourism concessions, also has a history of ignoring community input, but has not been targeted by CONASA's outreach efforts. Likewise, the Ministry of Local Government is responsible for approving natural resource bylaws and must therefore understand the principles and rationale for CBNRM. Another CONASA report noted that comments made by district council officials at a Ministry of Lands conference in November 2002 reflected a lack of awareness of CBNRM. In order for the outputs of current activities to lead to policy change, CONASA needs to ensure that all actors in the policy process are brought on board to have a common vision of where the current policy framework needs strengthening.

6.3.1.6. CREATING POLITICAL WILL

In many ways, there is already a lot of political will for adopting a more bottom-up approach to resource management. Although there are still a few 'old-school' officials that embrace a top-down command and control approach to resource management, the trend in general has been toward devolution for many years. It has been almost 6 years since Parliament officially enacted the revised Wildlife Act, and programmes like ADMADE, pressure from donors, and increasing assertiveness from community members have all helped created incentives for government to continue down the road of CBRNM. CONASA's activities in opening communication channels between government and civil society have helped to focus these incentives for policy makers.

However Zambia's path toward resource devolution has not been linear, and there are still powerful individuals and organisations with vested interests in the current status quo. These include "old school" politicians who view natural resources as a means to build political patronage, timber and hunting companies which stand to profit more when communities are disempowered, tourism and conservation investors who believe in a fences and fines approach to resource management, and a variety of actors benefiting from the illegal trade in meat and ivory. These forces, many of which are not highly visible, serve to counter-act the efforts of CONASA and CRBs to build political will to create a more conducive policy context for CBNRM.

Dealing directly with murky political relations at this level is probably beyond the abilities and mandate of CONASA, however the project and CRBs should at least understand the vested interests on the "other-side", and the mechanisms by which they also exert an influence over decision makers. There are also a number of studies of the complex political relations in conservation (see for example Gibson 1995, or Marks 1984). Only after all the forces affecting policy makers are understood can an effective advocacy strategy be developed.

6.3.1.7. BUILDING CONSENSUS ON SOLUTIONS

The third process which must be present in order for policy change to occur is the development of a consensus on solutions. CONASA has made some progress on solution identification, however not as much as in building consensus on the problems and political will. The HURID report and other policy studies presented recommendations and implicitly suggested alternatives to identified policy constraints, however these are just the first steps. Before

suggested policy options will become incorporated into new legislation or policy, they must be subjected to economic and social analysis, debated, compared to other options, etc.

> "CONASA has made less progress in identifying policy solutions than it has in building consensus on the problems."

For example a major complaint of CRBs is that the 99-leasehold tenure for foreign investors is too long. But before the Ministry of Lands would ever consider altering this provision, it would need to see an analysis of the economic implications, socials costs and benefits, political ramifications, experiences from elsewhere, etc. Similarly all the other "hot topic" policy issues identified by communities (see Table 25, page 123) have potentially far reaching economic, ecological, and social consequences.

The processes and structures CONASA has already built for problem identification provide a good foundation for building consensus on solutions. Issues have already been identified, skills and understanding developed, and the forums provide a fertile environment to develop, study, and debate policy alternatives. Additional work however will be needed to study options in greater details, and draft language for policy makers to consider. These tasks will require financial and technical support beyond the means of CRBs, suggesting a possible role for CONASA in the future.

6.3.2. Gender

Out of all of CONASA's activities, the activities in the policy component seem to have the worst gender representation. Women are almost non-existent in senior leadership positions on CRBs, and attendance at policy trainings are overwhelmingly male dominated (see Table 27 – *Workshops on policy, advocacy*, page 127).

The male bias in policy discussions and training is not surprising, as participation in policy activities is drawn from CRBs, which themselves are male dominated. However the skewed gender distribution in policy activities is also not a harmless demographic statistic, for it both reflects and in some ways perpetuates an underlying disempowerment of women. This pattern came out during the community meetings for Land Policy review process (see 6.2.6.2, page 131), where everyone agreed that women were discriminated against during land allocation, but some men were still unsupportive of a new clause stating that 30% of land should be reserved for women.

CONASA has for the most part streamlined gender concerns throughout all of their programming, and gender issues are discussed during policy workshops and CRB trainings. Nevertheless, the low representation of women in policy activities can not be ignored, particularly given the well-established connections between gender and resource use. CONASA should continue to highlight the gendered aspects of resource policy, and teach CRB leaders and government officials to look at policy through a gender lens. It should also work toward improving the representation of women in policy discussions and advocacy campaigns. One strategy which may help somewhat is inviting some of the women's rights NGOs – arguably the most effective grassroots lobby group in Zambia – to participate in the forums, and/or become involved in mobilising grassroots women groups for advocacy.

Recommendation 25. CONASA should develop a strategy to strengthen the representation of women in policy processes.

6.3.3. M&E

The documentation of process in the policy section has been exemplary. With a couple of exceptions, all meetings and workshops have been well documented, including background information, summaries of plenary discussions, presentations, recommendations, and usually participant lists. These reports and proceedings make it easy to retrace the goals and outcomes of each workshop.

The documentation of process in the policy section has been exemplary.

To measure impact, the policy section has a handful of simple but quantifiable performance indicators such as *number of policies reviewed contributing to the success of CBNRM* and *number of advocacy activities of selected civil society institutions*. The section also uses two composite performance indicators to measure forum effectiveness, in which a single index number is calculated based on a several qualitative scoring of roughly 8 characteristics. Component two staff state these indices are relevant and useful, and help guide future work by identifying weak spots. However it is not clear how often these indices are calculated.

But beyond documentation of workshops and forums, and a handful of relatively simple performance indicators, there has not been a lot of monitoring and evaluation in the policy component. One area in particular where stronger M&E is needed is tracking training. Together with Component three, the policy component has invested a lot into training workshops, but there isn't information available to evaluate whether the training was needed, whether participants were presented everything they needed, what they remember, and what they have done with the knowledge after they returned home.

CONASA has also not done well in synthesizing the "big picture" of what has been achieved in the policy component, and where it is all going. This is a bit unfortunate as the policy component is perhaps the most innovative set of activities in CONASA, and there are a lot of qualitative processes and lessons learned that are significant but not being captured. Topics that are quite interesting even at an early stage include how policy sensitisation affects the narratives and discourse used in policy discussions, why government is sometimes receptive to community input while other times it is hesitant, the role of bylaws in operationalising the principles of CBNRM, and how CONASA's experiences in policy and advocacy validate or challenge broader debates about CRNRM.

The study of complex social processes like these is more difficult than simple measures of livelihood security, and requires qualitative research methods (see for example Ashley, 1998). Some other reasons why M&E in the policy component has not probed much deeper than performance indicators might include:

- policy component staff may not have time for M&E, or may not consider M&E as their responsibility
- M&E staff may not have the time, may not be familiar with M&E methods in policy, may not see component two as their responsibility, or may be too busy with supporting M&E in component one (see *12.6.2 – Component one bias*, page 254)

- policy component staff may consider the policy analyses studies to fulfill most of the M&E needs
- project staff may not have a good road map or conceptual understanding of policy formation and advocacy, thereby making it difficult to assess where processes are headed, test hypotheses, etc.

Recommendation 26. CONASA needs to document through a special study or contracted research the impacts of its sizable investments in policy sensitisation and training.

6.3.4. Linkages

6.3.4.1. POLICY AND HLS LINKAGES

Several discussions at planning meetings in CONASA have drawn attention to the challenges of making links between the activities in policy and advocacy support, and other sections of the project. While there have been some linkages between the work under policy and HLS, such as the suspension of Mulobezi Sawmills and facilitation of Siachitema CRB winning bid for Dundumwezi campsite, project staff have expressed concern that the activities in the policy component have little or no bearing on household livelihood security.

The lack of a strong linkage between policy, advocacy, and HLS appears to be real, but is not entirely surprising as even in the best of circumstances the two streams of activities produce results at different time scales (see *2.4.5 – Spatial and temporal scales*, page 31). The more relevant question for CONASA is not whether linkages have been seen in the first three years of the project, but whether the two streams of activities are moving in directions that will eventually intersect down the road.

"The more relevant question for CONASA is not whether HLS-policy linkages have been seen in the first three years of the project, but whether the two streams of activities are moving in directions that will eventually intersect down the road."

The answer to this question is yes, but a weak yes. Most of the policy issues that have identified as "hot topics" (see Table 25, page 123) are related to resource management, and have the potential to eventually increase revenues to CRBs and ensure that natural resources are managed sustainably. However current experience suggests that the connections between CRB activities, and household level livelihood security are indirect at best (see *3.3.1.4 – Impacts on households*, page 44), and connections between resource management and HLS are also weak (see *9.5.3 – Linkages between HLS and conservation*, page 195). The only two "hot topic" policy issues that stand to have direct benefits to households are providing compensation for wildlife conflicts, and rationalising government involvement in maize markets.

CONASA can work toward strengthening the linkages between policy-advocacy and HLS by focusing on policy issues that have a more direct bearing on HLS. This includes some of the topics that will be covered in the next HURID report due out in 2004, including local government, land, and agriculture. Other policies that impact rural households and would be useful to study and debate are those that govern the support and regulation of small businesses, subsidies for large businesses, and an apparent urban bias in development planning.

Recommendation 27. CONASA should identify more policy issues that have a direct bearing on HLS as potential topics for advocacy.

6.3.4.2. POLICY AND ENTERPRISE LINKAGES

Both policy advocacy and enterprise development are long-term processes, so it is not terribly surprising that strong connections between these two sets of activities have not materialized. There are some signs however that connections are possible in two forms: 1) CBOs have taken advantage of new opportunities in enterprise made possible by recent policy development, and 2) the forums could be used to advocate for policy shifts that would create a more conducive environment for small-scale businesses.

An example of the first type of linkage can be seen in the Dundumwezi campsite project. ZAWA's announcement for campsite concession that was open to, and even targeted for, community-based groups represents a shift in policy that would have been difficult to imagine just a few years ago. CONASA, for its part, had already helped the Siachitema CRB develop project planning skills, so it was well prepared to submit a bid for the campsite. The result is a community-owned and operated enterprise that is on its way to providing jobs and earning revenue.

"ZAWA's announcement for campsite concession that was open to, and even targeted for, community-based groups represents a shift in policy that would have been difficult to imagine just a few years ago."

Like the Siachitema CRB, other CRBs are well positioned to capitalise on enterprise opportunities as they develop. The legal framework for joint venture agreements was the topic of one of the policy sensitisation workshops, which also provided skills in contract negotiation and enforcement (see *6.2.5.1 – Policy review and analysis workshops*, page 126). Although no joint venture enterprises have yet to materialise, the CRBs now have the knowledge and skills to use the policy environment to their utmost advantage.

The second type of linkage – advocating for a better policy environment for small scale enterprise – features less in CONASA's policy work to date. Most of the identified "hot topic" policy issues (see Table 25, page 123) deal primarily with the ownership and management of natural resources, although some like game ranching and government involvement in maize markets, have the potential to contribute to enterprise growth. Policy areas that will be reviewed in 2004,

including agriculture, have the potential to be more directly related to enterprise.

A second output of CONASA work, the forums, have yet not generated much direct benefit for enterprise. Although it was envisioned that forums could help leverage civil society support for CBNRM and promote trade, the focus thus far has been on policy. There is still a large potential for the forums to help stimulate enterprise, both by advocating for better policies and services from government, but also by using its networking resources to help CRBs market their production capacities and investment opportunities. The biggest private sector associations in the environmental sector are all represented on the NRCF: the Tourism Council of Zambia, the Natural Resources Producer Association, and The Association of Commercial and Artesian Fisheries.

Recommendation 28. CONASA should continue to explore the potential for the forums to support CBNRM through facilitating trade and investment opportunities.

6.3.5. Sustainability

6.3.5.1. INFORMATION PRODUCTS

Of the three types of achievements in the policy section, the new information products (policy analyses) are the most secure in terms of sustainability. CONASA has done a good job disseminating the policy studies, making them available on the internet, and presenting summary findings at the NRCF.

To ensure that the information products remain widely available, CONASA should ensure that the HURID reports are available in resource libraries (e.g., ZAMSIF, UNZA), as well as online databases (e.g., Institute for Development Studies, Regional CBNRM network, Development Experience Clearinghouse). CONASA may also wish to get an ISBN number for major reports so that library indexing services will also pick up the studies.

One threat facing the sustainability of information products is that they will become eventually become obsolete as the policy environment changes. To prevent this, CONASA should produce updates on these studies whenever new legislation is passed.

Recommendation 29. CONASA should develop a strategy to ensure that policy analyses are available from public sources other than CONASA, and are kept up to date as the policy context evolves.

6.3.5.2. IMPROVED SKILLS

The second set of achievements – improved skills in understanding policy issues – is less secure in terms of its sustainability, as most of the capacity building that has taken place has been directed at CRB members who have a finite term of office. After the current generation of CRB leaders steps down, the communities might be back to square one in terms of the skill of their leadership. In the near-term, this will probably not be critical as many of the more capable CRB leaders are likely to be re-elected. In the medium and long-term, the loss of skills may become more of problem. CONASA can help to prevent such problems by 1) documenting its experiences in policy sensitisation

and advocacy training (which it is largely doing), and 2) working to build a capacity within more permanent structures – such as the NCRF, MUSIBI, and ACCBRNM – to provide good policy training.

6.3.5.3. COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The third group of achievements are communication channels that CONASA has opened up or strengthened.

- **NCRF.** Sustainability of the NCRF was given a tremendous boost when leadership was passed to MTERN. By supporting the Ministry's request to host the forum secretariat, CONASA helped to strengthen both the legitimacy and longevity of the forum. However funding for the forum is not currently secure. Options are for the Ministry to take the forum into its own budget, raise funds from donors, or work out a mechanism for members to contribute. In the short term this should not be a crisis because donors have verbally expressed an interest to support the forum for at least the first three years, but no commitments have been made.

- **Association of CBNRM Support Organisations**. The sustainability of an association of CBNRM support organisations was strengthened at least for the short term when IUCN offered to sponsor the secretariat. WWF is also working on supporting a regional CBNRM support network, and may have resources for this association.

6.3.5.4. MUSIBI

While the prospects for funding the NCRF and its sub-forums are reasonably bright, MUSIBI currently has no source of long-term support lined up. This is unfortunate given that MUSIBI represents southern Kafue GMAs in both the NCRF as well as ZAZIBONA forums. For these forums to work, the sub-forums must also have at least a minimal amount of support. Conservation donors would probably be willing to support an association like MUSIBI, provided that they can demonstrate a strong linkage to improvements in conservation and policy. CONASA can strengthen the sustainability of MUSIBI by helping them to demonstrate the connections they will need to attract and sustain funding.

> "CONASA can strengthen the sustainability of MUSIBI by helping them to demonstrate connections to livelihoods and conservation which they will need to attract and sustain support."

MUSIBI and other CRB associations face a second challenge for sustainability, which is their shifting membership. This is compounded by the lack of permanent staff. CRBs and CRB associations like MUSIBI cannot claim to be truly sustainable until they survive the passage of the founding generation of leaders. New members will need to be brought up to speed on policy and development issues.

Recommendation 30. CONASA should continue to help MUSIBI develop a strategic plan which is financially viable, focuses on its sustainability as an institution as opposed to development of the board, develops a capacity to account for resources, and is connected to service providers with greater longevity than CONASA.

6.3.6. Advocacy – what next?

Now that the forums are basically established, and the last of the policy reviews will be published in 2004, CONASA has achieved much of what it set out to accomplish in its current results framework. However the final goal has not yet been achieved, so CONASA needs to consider what it can and should do to keep the process moving forward. While there are no easy answers, a good basis for planning is a review of needs.

- **Conceptualising advocacy**. CONASA's ability to plan its future role in advocacy is shaped by its understanding of how policies get formed and how advocacy activities eventually lead to policy change. It has been suggested earlier that the policy component has gained a lot of experience and insights into supporting advocacy, and has some general ideas about the sequence of events that will result in policy change in the Zambian context. However CONASA has yet to articulate a clear vision of how its work will lead to an improved policy context (see *6.3.1.4 – An assessment framework*, page 134). The first need therefore is to make sure everyone is on the same wavelength by developing such a road map. This exercise will be somewhat difficult because there are so few examples of successful grassroots advocacy in Zambia, however there is a large body of literature on the subject, case studies from similar contexts, and many experiences from the last three years to learn from.

- **Keeping the forums going**. The two-tiered design of the NRCF, and the home of the secretariat within MTERN, appear to be acceptable to all stakeholders and provides a workable structure for both horizontal and vertical discussion. It remains to be seen however whether MTERN will be able to keep the momentum of the forums going; early signs suggest they may have problems maintaining the same frequency of meetings. However there are at least two other NGOs with interests in supporting a natural resources forum, WWF and IUCN, so there may not be any need for CONASA to provide direct support to the secretariat. However it is in CONASA's interests to make sure that CBNRM and policy issues remain a focus of the NCRF, so it may wish to think about how it can play a narrower role, perhaps in technical assistance or support for specific meetings or topics concerning KNP.

- **Moving from structures to issues**. The trainings and forums CONASA has helped to support provide a wonderful mechanism and set of skills for policy analysis and dialogue, however analysis and dialogue themselves won't result in an improved policy context. The next logical step is to start moving from building structures and processes to promoting specific issues. CONASA need not and should not play a lead role in selecting which issues to move forward on, however it can continue to provide guidance on what makes a good issue for advocacy.

"The next logical step is to start moving from building structures and processes to promoting specific issues."

- **Strengthening the engagement of NGOs and private businesses**. Zambian NGOs and private sector companies still don't have a strong capacity to engage in advocacy. CONASA's early efforts to train civil society organisations in advocacy ran into a brick wall when it was found that few

organisations had the mandate or financial resources to take on advocacy activities.

Still, the lack of a strong NGO and private sector engagement in policy debates is unfortunate for Zambia, because private sector associations yield economic clout, which can be a formidable asset for advocacy when combined with the political and social clout of CBOs. CONASA should therefore continue to reach out to private sector businesses and trade associations, emphasising how they can benefit from participation in policy discussions. Now that the groundwork for advocacy has been laid, there might be more inventive to get involved. Sometimes people are more willing to jump onto a train once its already moving and they don't have to absorb the costs of organisation.

- **Research**. One of the main advocacy tools that has not been well utilized by CONASA or the CRBs is research. Research can play an important role both in building consensus as to what exactly the problem is, and identifying policy alternatives. Experience from elsewhere reminds us that good research by itself will not lead to policy improvements, however without research it is extremely difficult to evaluate and debate policy options. It is very likely that CRBs and their associations will need support to design and implement appropriate research studies, not only to meet the technical needs of research but also to ensure that studies are perceived to be accurate and unbiased.

"One of the main advocacy tools that has not been well utilized by CONASA or the CRBs is research."

- **Consolidation of CRB associations**. MUSIBI has gotten off to a good start, thanks in large part to the efforts of CONASA. However although the association has an ambitious five-year workplan, and its leadership represents the "best" of the CRBs, it has few resources to draw upon and little capacity beyond the board members themselves. Furthermore, there is still no national level CRB association to represent and articulate the interests of CRBs across the country. Therefore CONASA can play a useful role in helping MUSIBI make the most of what is has, and working with ZAWA and other CBNRM support organisations to facilitate the formation of a national CRB association.

  A related need can be seen in the relatively low level of input of Community Development Trusts from the open areas into resource policy discussions. CONASA's experience in supporting CDTs (see *8.2.4 – Formation of Community Development Trusts*, page 161) suggests that many have skills and abilities equal to if not greater than some CRBs, and several have taken a keen interest in improving resource management to attract joint venture tourism enterprises. The CDTs can be valuable allies in the movement to address gaps in policy and policy implementation, but only if they have a place at the table.

- **Building links to HLS and enterprise**. Currently the links between the work in policy, and HLS and enterprise, are relatively weak. Along the lines with the discussion in section *6.3.4 – Linkages* (page 139), CONASA should work toward make the connections more direct by focusing on policy issues directly related to enterprise and HLS, and promote a set of activities within the forums that will help CRBs market their productive capacities and investment opportunities.

As CONASA reviews the options for its future role in policy and advocacy, it must also consider how each type of engagement will affect its relationships with government. So far, CONASA has managed to maintain a relatively neutral position by using a highly participatory approach, enabling government to take the lead whenever possible, and supporting generic structures and communication channels that serve a variety of agendas and purposes.

However as the needs in policy evolve from generic capacity building to promoting specific issues, it will become increasingly difficult for CONASA to take a neutral position and still have a positive influence on outcomes. Most NGOs, particularly international NGOs, prefer to stay out of the political arena, but advocacy work is inherently political. CONASA must therefore think about what its goals are, what methods are needed, and plot of course of action based on the amount of risk its willing to assume. The set of ideas and experiences encapsulated in the Rights Based Approach (see *16.0 – Rights Based Programming*, page 291) may provide some guidance in making these strategic decisions.

Recommendation 31. CONASA should take the following steps to help it define its future role in advocacy: 1) develop a conceptual framework for advocacy that incorporates a more holistic understanding of policy formation, 2) review the concepts of an RBA and clearly articulate how much it wants to become directly engaged in policy, 3) review what it is best-positioned to contribute, such as research and facilitation services, and 4) identify strategies that will strengthen the linkages between advocacy and HLS.

6.4. Summary and the way forward

CONASA's activities to improve the policy context have resulted in a number of impacts in terms of new information produced on the policy context, new channels of communication between government and civil society, and new skills in understanding policy issues particularly at the CRB level. These achievements collectively represent a breakthrough for CBNRM in Zambia, and lay the foundation for a "great leap forward" in the policy arena.

While there have not yet been any major shifts in resource policy, this is not an entirely fair expectation because even in the best of circumstances it is unrealistic to see major policy shifts in only three years. It is not entirely clear why there hasn't been more progress in policy change, and in order to understand this CONASA needs to be more analytical in how it understands the policy formation process. Creating channels of dialogue and a common understanding of the existing policy environment have resulted in progress on some of the easy problems, but will not be enough in the future. To achieve the final goal, CRBs will need to explore the details of policy options, and solidify a consensus on both the problems and solutions.

CONASA needs to decide what role it will play in the future in the policy arena. As the needs of the movement evolve from support for general analyses and communication, to technical and financial support for analysis and promotion of specific policy alternatives, it will be increasingly difficult for CONASA to play a "back seat" neutral role. If being engaged in the policy arena might conflict with its other activities, CONASA might want to reduce its role to that of a banker, financing policy and advocacy activities but letting CRBs take the lead, or transforming the policy component into a stand-alone project.

Figure 12. Participants at Wildlife Sector Stakeholders Forum, July 2001

7.0 SUPPORT TO ZAWA

7.1. Background and objectives

The Zambia Wildlife Authority is the arm of government that CONASA works with most closely. ZAWA has the legal authority for management of all natural resources in GMAs, including but not limited to wildlife. ZAWA plays the dominant role in the establishment of all management policies, including setting hunting quotas, awarding hunting concessions, and regulating tourism development such as campgrounds, lodges, and game ranches. At the field level, ZAWA is operationally responsible for resource management activities including law enforcement, regulation of safari hunting, and resource monitoring.

Equally if not more significant for CONASA, ZAWA is also the arm of government that 1) established, and 2) provides legitimacy to Community Resource Boards. The Wildlife Act of 1998, which established the legal basis of CRBs, also broadly defined ZAWA's role in registering and providing oversight to CRBs. One CONASA officer summed up the importance of CONASA's relationship with ZAWA by saying, *ZAWA is absolutely central to the work CONASA is doing. Without ZAWA, there would be no basis for our work with the CRBs and the lower level structures.*

CONASA's operational relationship with ZAWA is guided by result 7 in the results framework: *ZAWA's orientation to bottom-up resource management institutionalised.* In other words, CONASA's objective is to support the implementation of policy reforms in ZAWA that were formally encapsulated in the 1998 Wildlife Act. This landmark act laid out a vision of decentralized natural resources management in GMAs, through a comanagement partnership of government and local communities. However the operational details of this shift from top-down to bottom-up management have been slow to emerge, due in large part to interruptions in ZAWA staffing caused by the long and bumpy restructuring process that began in earnest in 2000.

7.2. Achievements

To facilitate communication with ZAWA officers, and help design and implement activities consistent with CONASA's goals of supporting CBNRM implementation, CONASA has a full-time staff person based at ZAWA headquarters in Chilanga. The main achievements of CONASA's activities to support ZAWA's efforts to operationalise community-centered management are described below.

7.2.1. CRB registration guidelines

CONASA initiated the process of establishing registration guidelines by drafting a document outlining a process for CRB elections, registration procedures, etc. The draft was discussed and modified in ZAWA, and is currently being reviewed by the CRBs.

7.2.2. Development of a CBNRM policy

One of the pre-requisites for the institutionalisation of a bottom-up approach in ZAWA is the development of an official CBNRM policy for the authority. Currently ZAWA does not have a formal policy document regarding CBNRM, and has been either following previous policies developed under NPWS or delaying any major decisions pending the adoption of an official policy. To support the development of a CBRNM policy, CONASA first facilitated a meeting between ZAWA and CRB in June 2002 where agreements were reached on a number of issues. In 2003, CONASA provided technical input into a terms of reference for ZAWA for a consultancy to conduct country-wide consultations and develop a draft CBNRM policy for ZAWA. CONASA also contributed funds for the exercise, although the

consultancy was been delayed until 2004 due to ongoing negotiations between the identified consultant and ZAWA.

7.2.3. Quota setting

CONASA facilitated quota setting training for CRB members in the project area. CONASA provided financing and helped with the logistics, while the training was conducted by ZAWA staff. This training paved the way for CRBs to participate in quota setting exercises, an important element of a "bottom-up" approach to CBNRM, which has been embraced by ZAWA.

7.2.4. Resource monitoring

CONASA funded the duplication of data forms for safari hunting monitoring. CONASA has also, through its affiliation with WCS, provided technical input into the design of ZAWA's safari hunting monitoring system, and contributed to the development of IWIMIS (Integrated Wildlife Management Information System), a database used by ZAWA for analysing safari hunting monitoring data.

7.2.5. Natural resource management planning manual

Strengthening the capacity of CRBs to manage natural resources is one of the basic pre-requites for a genuine co-management approach to resource management. CONASA has supported the development of natural resource management manual by facilitating meetings between ZAWA, Environmental Council of Zambia, Planning and Information Department of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. The draft manual was adopted by a National Steering Committee and is now being tested in pilot areas. See also *6.2.5.4 – Natural resource management planning manual*, page 130.

7.2.6. Stronger community-ZAWA relations

Lesson Learned

By maintaining neutrality and facilitating dialogue, a project like CONASA can smooth relations and resolve conflicts between communities and government.

CONASA has played a pivotal role in softening the relations between ZAWA and communities in the project area. Prior to CONASA, relations with ZAWA were strained in most areas, and even hostile in a couple. Acting as a relatively neutral third party, with something to offer to both parties, CONASA has been able to facilitate meetings and broker agreements between ZAWA and community leaders. This has lead to better relations in many areas, and in some cases an extraordinary turn-around in attitudes toward conservation (see for example the case study of Nkandanzovu, page 183).

7.2.7. Dialogue between ZAWA, communities, & private sector

In 2003, CONASA facilitated pre-season meetings in Bbilili/Nkala and Mulobezi GMAs between CRBs, safari operators, and ZAWA to discuss the terms and conditions of safari hunting concessions. These meetings clarified the roles of the professional hunter and safari hunting company, reviewed pledges made by the company, arrived at a consensus for a selection process for a community liaison office, and gave the safari company an opportunity to discuss its expectations of the community. By all accounts, these meetings were extremely useful. They helped establish good relations between the private sector, the communities, and ZAWA, and made a lot of progress in operationalizing many of the details of a rather complex tri-party agreement. See also *6.2.6.3 – Pre-season safari hunting meetings*, page 132.

7.2.8. Forums and CRB Association

CONASA has facilitated the establishment of the Natural Resources Consultative Forum, the Association of CBNRM Support Organisations, the Kafue National Park Stakeholders Forum, MUSIBI, and ZAZIBONA. ZAWA has been involved at all stages of these forums, and found the structures extremely useful for disseminating information and soliciting community input. For more details on the forums and CRB association, see *6.2.3 – Forums*, page 124, and *6.2.4 – Formation of a CRB Association*, page 126.

Has ZAWA adopted a bottom-up approach to CBNRM?
Key findings from a CONASA assessment

In December 2003, a team from CONASA conducted a mini review of ZAWA's approach toward the implementation of CBNRM. Armed with several different indicators of 'bottom-up-ness', the team interviewed ZAWA officers in Chilanga and field offices, and surveyed eight CRBs in the project area. Key findings from the assessment include:

- CRB registration guidelines exist (although not yet finalized), and have been used to register CRBs.
- Disbursements of safari hunting and other revenue to CRBs have dramatically improved since the ban on safari hunting was lifted, however there are still problems with transparency and accounting of hunting revenue.
- Disputes between CRBs and safari operators still exist, but several problems have been resolved through the facilitation of ZAWA.
- ZAWA has provided training to CRBs in quota setting, but more work training is needed particularly in financial management and management of community development projects.
- ZAWA has greatly improved genuine forms of participation of CRBs in important wildlife management decisions such as quota setting; however much remains to be done in terms of developing local land use and resource management plans.
- There are still problems with information flow between ZAWA and the communities.
- CRBs maintain a variety of institutional records, but there is still a need for ZAWA to provide oversight and facilitate audits of community accounts.

7.3. Issues and constraints

Although the relationship between CONASA and ZAWA has been mutually beneficial for both organizations, the relationship has not been without constraints. Staff turnover is one constraint that both organizations have had to contend with. CONASA's first ZAWA liaison officer resigned after the first year, and the second officer left in early 2004. Staff turnover has also been high in ZAWA, due in large part to the restructuring. When CONASA first began, several senior positions at ZAWA were vacant, and field staff were still being reassigned. However currently all senior positions in ZAWA have been filled, field offices have settled, and it is expected that a more continuous relationship will be possible. This should also help improve dialogue, clarify some of the misconceptions in both organisations, and strengthen opportunities to move forward on implementing more substantive activities like land use planning.

"Staff turnover is a constraint that both CONASA and ZAWA have had to contend with."

CONASA's relationship with ZAWA has also been constrained by some displeasure in ZAWA over how support is delivered. CONASA's relatively narrow focus on CBNRM implementation, and indirect approach to supporting ZAWA, was largely defined by USAID's RFA. However this approach in some sense put CONASA in immediate disfavour with certain officers in ZAWA from day one. ZAWA, like NPWS before it, had been accustomed to, and naturally prefers, more direct forms of support from donors. For example USAID provided direct funding to NPWS in the early and mid 1990's for support of the ADMADE programme, and a host of other support projects have provided direct support to ZAWA over the years and even to this day (e.g., NORAD). USAID's RFA for CONASA was very clear that the project was to be implemented by an NGO, or NGO consortium, and not targeted for government. Nevertheless, many officers in ZAWA continue to believe that USAID could have—or should have—provided direct support to ZAWA, and that CONASA in some way has 'stolen' money that was rightfully ZAWA's.

"CONASA's relatively narrow focus on CBNRM implementation, and indirect approach to supporting ZAWA, put the project in immediate disfavour with certain offices from day one."

A third issue that has constrained the relationship, at least with some officers in ZAWA, centres on a perception that CONASA is unfairly competing with ZAWA for community goodwill, and in some cases has acted as an 'agitator'. This perception has a number of origins and shades of colour to it. Some officers in ZAWA have expressed a mixture of resentment and/or jealousy because they don't have the field presence in the communities that CONASA has in order to promote or explain their operations and policies. Nor do they have access to resources such as agricultural inputs to gain community good will. This attitude seems to be based upon on an assumption that community good will is a zero-sum gain, and any support for CONASA will necessarily mean a loss for ZAWA.

The perception of CONASA as an agitator stems in part from CONASA's activities to raise awareness of policy issues that affect communities in GMAs, and more specifically the issue of game ranches. ZAWA's current interpretation of policy bans the establishment of either private or communal game ranches in GMAs. At least two CRBs have expressed interest in setting up community-owned game ranches in their areas, and view the ZAWA ban as an obstacle to these plans. CONASA has not played a direct role in advocating for any change in policy, but it does recognize the potential of game ranches to generate income and increase natural resource production, particularly in densely human populated GMAs. In the first year, before ZAWA's opposition to game ranches was known, CONASA also supported some planning exercises for developing game ranches, and it has used the issue as an example in workshops on policy awareness and advocacy. Some CRBs have also spoken to their MPs about the issue, and/or continued discussions with ZAWA over the possibility of setting up alternative production systems such as a crocodile farm.

In addition to clarifying and operationalizing its relationship with ZAWA, CONASA also had to devote a good bit of time the first year to explaining to communities the project's relationship to ZAWA. The PRA exercises conducted in the first year revealed a number of misconceptions about ZAWA and ADMADE (many people thought that ZAWA replaced ADMADE, as opposed to being a programme of ZAWA). There were

also concerns that CONASA had come to play a direct role in ZAWA operations, such as law enforcement. Clarifying these issues was an important task that CONASA needed to tackle before it could start supporting activities in resource management.

With so many misconceptions, partial knowledge, negative attitudes, and high levels of staff turnover in both organisations, good communication has been extremely important for the relationship between CONASA and ZAWA. The role of the CONASA's ZAWA liaison officer, who is based at ZAWA's headquarters in Chilanga, has been invaluable. The Natural Resources Consultative Forum and other forums have also provided opportunities to discuss issues and clarify roles. CONASA also sends copies of quarterly reports and other reports to ZAWA. These lines of communication have helped to improve understanding and strengthen the working relationship.

Lesson Learned

A full time liaison officer is extremely helpful for maintaining smooth relations with key government departments.

There is still room for improvement however, as individuals in both CONASA and ZAWA have expressed a feeling that greater communication is needed between the two organizations. This need is felt to be most acute at the higher levels of each organisation, and particularly in the area of work planning. CONASA does invite ZAWA representatives to attend planning meetings, but these offers have not always been taken up. It is not known whether ZAWA invites CONASA to its planning meetings.

Recommendation 32. CONASA should continue to view communication with ZAWA as a top priority, and work toward strengthening lines of communication at all levels, in particular senior management.

7.4. Pending issues with ZAWA

While progress in supporting a bottom-up approach in ZAWA has made on a number of fronts, there remain a few outstanding issues that have yet to be resolved, and threaten the gains that have built in other areas. Some of the main unresolved issues include:

7.4.1. Transparency and accountability of safari hunting revenue

The collection of safari hunting revenue is still centralized at ZAWA, and transparency and accountability of the funds is still weak. In 2003 several of the CRBs did receive revenue disbursements from ZAWA from previous hunting revenue, collected before the first hunting ban in 2001, however the money came as a lump sum, months if not years late, with no breakdown of how it was collected or allocated, interest earned, etc. The question of whether CRBs are, or should be, receiving concession fees, as they did under NPWS, has also surfaced as a contentious issue by CRBs, and progress is constrained by a lack of information. As of the end of 2003, it appeared that ZAWA still had not updated its licensing system since the WCRF database was developed in the mid-1990s, or if they had it was not apparent in the records provided to the CRBs. Thus some of the lack of transparency in accounting may be due to technical accounting issues within ZAWA, which would be in CONASA's best interest to help solve.

Some of the problems with transparency in accounting may be due to technical accounting constraints within ZAWA, which would be in CONASA's best interest to help solve.

Concerns over financial transparency of hunting revenues are not new. Many critics have noted that a lack of transparency and accountability in safari hunting revenue was the single-most problematic area of CBNRM in Zambia under NPWS, and one which was never fully resolved. Although only ZAWA can take the lead in developing a better system of financial transparency and accountability, CONASA can and should play a role in facilitating discussion between ZAWA and the CRBs, and support ZAWA's efforts to upgrade its accounting systems.

Another issue which has generated some confusion is whether ZAWA should be a signatory on CRB accounts. Conflicting information has come from the command and headquarters needs to be resolved. One thing however is clear: ZAWA is legally mandated by the Wildlife Act to monitor and provide financial oversight of CRBs. Hence if the financial relationships between ZAWA and the CRBs continues to be problematic, it is unlikely that other aspects of the relationship will be successful.

Recommendation 33. CONASA's efforts to support a bottom-up approach in ZAWA should include support for the development of stronger accounting systems for financial management, and communication systems which improve dialogue between ZAWA and CRBs.

7.4.2. Village Scouts

Village scouts were initially introduced under the ADMADE program as a way of simultaneously increasing anti-poaching efforts, strengthening community input into law enforcement, and monitoring. Village scouts are recruited locally and paid by CRBs from their portion of hunting revenue, however their duties are almost indistinguishable from ZAWA scouts, and they work side-by-side ZAWA scouts. Although not problem-free, the Village Scout program is considered by many to be the most effective structure introduced by ADMADE in terms of conservation impact.

During ZAWA's restructuring process, all village scouts were fired by the transition team. This decision contributed to the near complete lack of law enforcement in many GMAs, and generated widespread displeasure in the communities, which came out strongly in the 2001 PRA exercises. In 2001, most CRBs rehired village scouts under a support project from the EU, which provided one-year of temporary funding for village scout salaries. CONASA facilitated the training of a new intake of Village Scouts at ACCBNRM. The EU funding ended in 2002, after which Village Scouts fell back under the support of CRBs. Today village scouts are nominally still employed, but most CRBs don't have the money to pay them. The recent livelihoods-conservation study encountered a number of village scouts who had not been paid in six months.

The current system of village scouts is unviable at best, and extremely dangerous at worst. Many village scouts were former poachers, and not paying them for months at a time is a recipe for disaster. There is also a question as to what value village scouts add to law enforcement. If they are primarily supplementary personnel to increase law enforcement effort at minimal additional cost, then the communities are effectively providing a subsidy to ZAWA for management operations. If on the other hand Village Scouts are supposed to act an interface between ZAWA and the communities, then their roles need to be reoriented more towards community service, such as problem animal control.

Clearly there is a difference of opinions between CRBs and ZAWA over the importance, roles, and who should be responsible for supporting Village Scouts. The resolution of this issue will have important consequences for CBNRM across Zambia. While it is not CONASA's responsibility, nor within its resources, to resolve the issue of Village Scouts, community participation in wildlife management is an important aspect of a bottom up approach. CONASA should therefore work with other players in the wildlife sector to help facilitate the discussions over Village Scouts and provide technical support as appropriate.

Recommendation 34. CONASA should continue to keep the issue of village scouts on the "front burner", and work with CRBs to 1) make a realistic projection on the amount funding available for village scouts, 2) realign the number of scouts with the resources available, 3) review whether the current roles and responsibilities of village scouts are taking advantage of their unique advantages.

7.4.3. Restrictions on game ranches

ZAWA currently bans game ranches in GMAs, but CRBs argue that game ranches and other artificial production systems can be the most viable way of conserving wildlife, particularly in densely populated areas that are depleted of natural populations. See 6.2.2 – *Development of a policy agenda*, page 122, for more discussion.

7.5. Summary and way forward

Although the relationship between CONASA and ZAWA has not been 100% satisfactory, both organisations should recognize that their respective objectives are intertwined and they have much to gain by working together. Communication should continue to be a top priority for CONASA, to allow the two organisations move forward on joint activities, clear up misconceptions, and improve dialog around any substantive issues that could be causing conflict. There is also a continuing need to educate new personnel in both organizations. For example in November 2003, the ZAWA command at Ngoma assumed responsibility for supervising field operations in CONASA GMAs, taking over from the Mosi O'tunya command.

In addition to continuing to focus on communication, the relationship between ZAWA and CONASA can continue to grow by building upon the several successful areas of collaboration. The training of community members in resource management is one area where both organisations have worked well together, as is the technical and financial input CONASA has provided in developing materials for resource management planning, monitoring, and the development of ZAWA's CBNRM policy. ZAWA officials have also expressed appreciation for CONASA's support of the NRCF, as well as the analyses of resource policies in forestry, wildlife, and fisheries.

"One area of potential collaboration which has not been fully explored is stronger cooperation in resource monitoring."

One area of potential collaboration which has not been fully explored is stronger cooperation in resource monitoring. Natural resource monitoring is an essential input into management decisions such as quota setting, fire management, sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, and planning of future land use patterns including human settlements. ZAWA has a fairly well developed system for monitoring

safari hunting and disturbances to wildlife, but CONASA also has assets which could be use to develop complementary community-based monitoring systems. In particular CONASA has in-house technical expertise in forestry, wildlife, GIS, and information technology, and working relationships with a fairly wide network of CBOs. By bringing their relative strengths together, ZAWA and CONASA can develop partnerships for resource monitoring that would make the project area a pioneer in co-management.

In summary, to strengthen the relationship between CONASA and ZAWA, bridges should be built at all levels, from the COP and DG level, to the lowest extension staff, from highly technical issues to the policy arena, and from the field level to the national level. Institutionalisation of a bottom-up approach in ZAWA by definition requires buy-in at all levels and offices, and CONASA, among all the CBNRM support NGOs in Zambia, is perhaps uniquely equipped to support a reform process at so many levels.

Institutionalisation of a bottom-up approach in ZAWA requires buy-in at all levels from top to bottom, and of all the CBNRM support projects in Zambia, CONASA is perhaps uniquely equipped to support a reform process at so many levels.

8.0 TBNRM

8.1. Rationale and strategy

The activities of the TBNRM component are guided by Results 9: *Greater Kafue landscape effectively linked to the four-corners TBNRMA*, 10: *Increased regional business investment in Zambia and the Kafue area*, and 11: *Increased rural incomes from regional markets*. As described in *Section 2.2 – Origins of CONASA's results framework* (page 19), these results were crafted after an amendment to the initial RFA was issued by USAID in response to additional funds becoming available by the USAID ROSA. The motivation for providing additional funds for a TBNRM component was to facilitate Zambia's participation in a larger set of regional processes being supported by another USAID funded project, the Four Corners Project.

The boundaries of Four Corners TBNRMA are not precisely defined, but are generally defined by the major national parks and game reserves in the five countries that flow into the Zambezi immediately north and south of Victoria Falls (see Table 29 below, Map 14 & Map 15 page 346). Including the open areas between these conservation areas, the size of Four Corners TBNRMA lies between 220,000 and 322,00 km^2, depending on whether you include Makgadikgadi Pans NP in Botswana (Zambezi Society, 2004).

Table 29. Major conservation areas in the Four Corners TBNRMA

- Zambia – Kafue, Mosi-O'tunya, and Sioma Ngwezi National Parks; Mulobezi, Sichifulo, and Bbilili GMAs
- Namibia – Bwabwata, Mudumu and Mamili National Parks
- Botswana – Chobe NP, Makgadikgadi Pans NP, Nxai Pan NP, and the Moremi Wildlife Reserve
- Zimbabwe – Zambezi, Kazuma Pan, and Hwange National Parks
- Angola – Luiana Partial Reserve

TBNRM represents a relatively new set of tools and strategies for conservation and development. While it is far beyond the scope of this report to discuss the genesis of TBNRM, the rationale for a transboundary approach usually centres around four needs:

- Natural ecosystems are large geographic areas that require an integrated and coordinated approach to management. Political boundaries often cut across ecosystems resulting in disconnected and sometimes even opposing management and land-use practices.
- Regional economies and business activity are inherently linked, however many opportunities for investment and trade are missed due to policies or lack of information flow that limits access to regional markets. The tourism industry in particular is constrained by different economic and immigration policies in border areas.
- Rural communities in transboundary areas are linked through cultural and kinship ties, however trade and flow of information is restricted by borders. In the Four Corners Area, each country has had its own experience with CBRNM but communities have not been able to meet and share lessons learned with each other
- Conflicts over shared natural resources can create tension between governments, resources users, and communities, thereby endangering peace and stability. We have seen in other parts of Africa where conflicts over water and other shared resources have fuelled ethnic tension and instability.

CONASA's component three attempts to address these needs through five interlinked strategies:

- increase economic linkages and business transactions between communities in the three GMAs and regional markets (including Livingstone)

- review national and international policies and protocols relating to natural resource management and resource based enterprises
- provide legal services to CBOs, including development of natural resource bylaws
- facilitate opportunities for face-to-face interactions between Zambian communities and communities in the neighbouring countries also engaged in CBNRM
- collect and disseminate knowledge on the ecological linkages between Kafue National Park and the Four Corners area.

To implement activities based on these strategies, CONASA set up a satellite Conservation Service Centre (CSC) office in Livingstone which was staffed by AWF (see Appendix 6 – *Organisational chart*, page 359). This office has the primary responsibility for activities under results 9-11, however in practice there was a good bit of overlap with enterprise development activities in component one, and policy analysis and sensitisation activities in component two. Some component three activities were also implemented jointly with the Four Corners Project office in Victoria Falls.

8.2. Achievements

It is difficult to isolate the achievements of component three as there has been a lot of overlap with components one and two. This section summarises the main achievements of component three that have an explicit transboundary element to them. Other achievements of the CONASA CSC are mentioned below, but described in other sections of this report, particularly the section on policy.

8.2.1. Collecting information on ecological connectivity

Of the many arguments for a transboundary approach to resource management, the factor that carries the greatest weight in selecting sites is the need to maintain ecological connectivity within ecoregions. Research from the field of conservation biology, which has had the greatest role in shaping the principles of TBRNM, emphasizes that in order for natural systems to persist they require connectivity for the flow of populations and genes. This is especially true for larger mammals, but also applies to birds, insects, fish and plants. Maintaining the connectivity between protected areas is therefore of paramount importance if natural systems are to persist into the next century.

While there are many protected and semi-protected areas in the Four Corners TBNRMA, the landscape between them is largely fragmented, divided by fences and roads, and non-conducive to wildlife movement. CONASA's primary strategy for improving ecological connectivity between Kafue NP and the Zambezi was to collect information that could eventually be used to develop habitat management plans for a corridor. Although many species use corridors for seasonal migration or occasional dispersal, the species which is most often used for assessing habitat connectivity is the elephant. Elephants are a good choice for a management focus because they are important species in the ecosystem, affecting vegetation directly and indirectly, and they also serve as an 'umbrella' species in the sense that if you protect an elephant you also protect dozens of smaller species as well.

To assess habitat connectivity, CONASA conducted four activities under component three:

1. **Scoping visit**. A initial scoping visit was made by the Landscape Advisor in March 2002, to get a general overview of the distribution of biological resources and threats.

2. **Science workshop**. In August 2002, a science workshop was held, bringing together five scientists, 11 community members, and several CONASA staff. Although the report from this workshop is still pending, participants discussed

conservation targets and ranked threats in southern KNP and the surrounding GMAs.

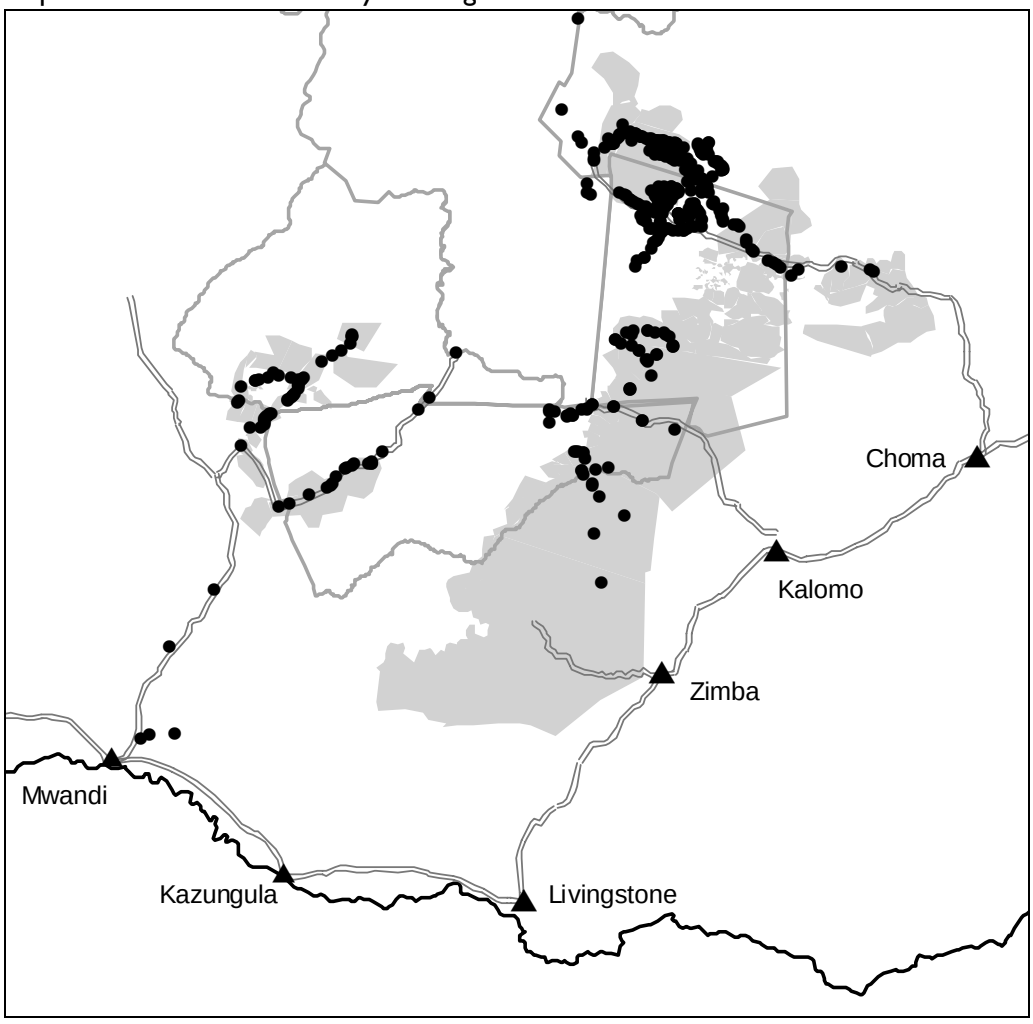
3. **Wildlife corridor mapping exercise**. In early 2003, CONASA conducted fieldwork to map out the current patterns of wildlife movement outside KNP. The methodology included interviews with local residents and recording the locations of physical signs of wildlife (e.g., footprints, dung) with GPS. The result of this exercise was a map showing the areas of wildlife movement (see Map 13, page 346).

Lesson Learned

An efficient method for mapping ecological connectivity is to first survey the area at a coarse scale, and then conduct follow-up surveys at increasingly finer resolutions.

4. **Wildlife conflicts mapping exercise**. In July and September of 2003, a second mapping exercise was conducted to document the distribution of conflicts between people and wildlife. The primary method used was household surveys, and the output of this exercise was another map showing the locations surveyed (see Map 4).

Map 4. Wildlife conflicts survey coverage



8.2.2. Creating inter-community links with Botswana and Namibia

CONASA organized three exchange visits to allow CBO leaders and traditional authorities share experiences with their counterparts in Botswana and Namibia. In October 2001, four chiefs and five CONASA staff travelled to the Chobe Enclave Community Trust (CECT) and learned about the history, structure, and development outcomes from the CECT, one of the more successful examples of

CBNRM in the region (see also case study *Livelihood-conservation linkages: Chobe Enclave vs. CONASA*, page 196). This was followed in 2002 with a second visit to Chobe, this time for CRB members.

In September 2003, CONASA conducted a third exchange visit to Caprivi for selected representatives from the MUSIBI CRB Association and the five chiefdoms in the open area. In Namibia, the visitors saw how conservancies operate and visited several income generating activities including a community campsite and crafts centre.

While it is difficult to quantify the value of exchange visits, feedback from the participants was uniformly positive. By speaking to other rural people at some of the more successful examples of CBNRM in the region, the visitors from Zambia saw the importance of managing a resource, how opportunities to benefit from natural resources can be realised, and the real possibility of self-empowerment. Although the economic and political contexts of Botswana and Namibia are far different than Zambia, and it is hard to imagine CBNRM in Zambia reaching the level it has in Chobe, this does not detract from the very real gain of seeing the possibilities. Creating a sense that 'we can do this too' is of critical importance, particularly in the early phases of CBNRM where tangible benefits appear to be far off.

"The visitors from Zambia saw the importance of managing a resource, how opportunities to benefit from natural resources can be realised, and the real possibility of self-empowerment."

The exchange visits were also valuable for CONASA's staff, particularly in seeing examples of mutually beneficial private-sector community partnerships, of which there are few examples in Zambia. The exchange visits led to directly to some tangible examples of sharing lessons learned, some of which are summarized in Table 30 below.

Table 30. Activities implemented from regional lessons learned

CRB	Activity
Chikanta	Crop farm, fish farm & institutional development
Siachitema	Dundumwezi camp site (the gist of a tourism joint-venture business approach)
Mukuni	Conservation & craft marketing
Musokotwane	Conservation & craft marketing
Sekute	Conservation & craft marketing

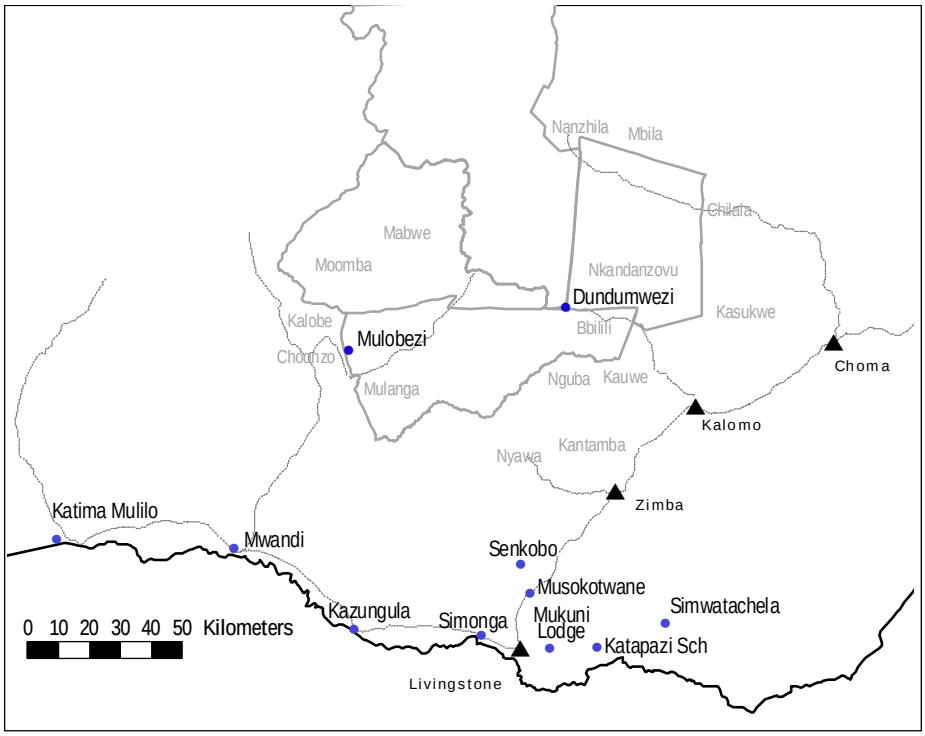
While the exchange visited undoubtedly had an eye-opening effect on the chiefs and CRB leaders who participated, the one disappointment is that more people could not have benefited. CONASA did hire a film crew to join the first visit to Chobe, but the footage was relatively poor and the video that was produced was more of a promotional piece for CONASA instead of an educational piece for community members (see *8.2.7 – Video production*, page 162).

8.2.3. Enterprise support

The main focus of CONASA's activities under results 10 and 11 has been providing services to emerging enterprises and community groups engaged in conservation business ventures. Conservation business ventures are environmentally friendly businesses that create linkages between the business activity and incentives to

conserve resources. The CONASA CSC supports these activities by providing a full suite of services, including marketing, product development, legal and policy advice, community sensitisation and mobilisation, and institutional and technical skills development. Between 2001 and 2003, the CONASA CSC used this capacity to help support several business projects, depicted in Map 5 and described below.

Map 5. CONASA CSC activity sites



Legend:

Dundumwezi – campsite
Katapazi – school
Katima Mulilo – pit-sawing and furniture construction
Kazungula – trucking centre and abattoir
Mukuni – lodge
Mulobezi – guesthouse/campsite
Musokotwane – registered as CDT
Mwandi – abattoir, milk collection centre, fishing lodge
Simonga – abattoir
Simwatachela - exchange visit to Mazabuka, poultry (planned)

8.2.3.1. DUNDUMWEZI CAMPSITE

The enterprise has which received the greatest amount of attention and progressed the farthest in the TBNRM component has been the Dundumwezi campsite. This project grew out of an opportunity that arose when ZAWA advertised tenders for concessions for tourism infrastructure in selected GMAs. The Siachatema CRB approached the CONASA CSC and asked for assistance in submitting a bid. CONASA responded by helping the CRB prepare and submit the tender, which they subsequently won. But the role of CONASA went much further. They visited the site on several occasions, identified a contractor for the structures, identified vendors who could supply campsite equipment, sourced training for campsite staff, made a pledge for K90 million in start-up capital (~$20,000 USD), developed marketing materials, set up booths at the Ndola International Trade Fair and Lusaka Agricultural and Commercial Show, registered the campsite with the Registrar of Business Names, registered with the Zambia National Tourist Board, and conducted bird and wildlife surveys around the camp. On their side, the CRB appointed a project committee,

contributed their own funds toward the project, and mobilized labour and building materials for the construction of the camp.

While the project is slowly moving forward, the campsite has suffered delays, caused primarily by the slow release of funds from CONASA. Despite advertising that the campsite would be ready by August 2003, construction still had not yet started by December 2003. This has generated a considerable amount of frustration with the CRB and project committee. Once construction is complete, it appears that there is a ready market for the campsite and hopes are high that it will start generating revenue in 2004.

8.2.3.2. MULOBEZI GUESTHOUSE

In the second quarter of 2002, CONASA received a joint request from residents of Chief Moomba and Chief Inyambo to facilitate a meeting for the organisation of a Mulobezi Community Development Trust with a view toward setting up and running a guesthouse in Mulobezi. CONASA responded with a meeting and helped the community form the Mulobezi Joint Business Venture Committee (MJBVC) to oversee the project. CONASA also provided business management training, drafted a memorandum of understanding between the MJBVC and the National Heritage Conservation Commission, helped develop of a constitution for the trust, and registered the trust with the Registrar of Societies.

Lesson Learned

It is important to consult all traditional leaders in the area when planning joint venture enterprises, because even minor intra-community conflicts can derail progress.

Soon after, the project ran into snags. In the third quarter of 2002, Senior Chief Inyambo's Kuta (traditional court council) refused to endorse the joint venture, due to an unresolved dispute over Zambezi Sawmill assets (including the primary structure for the proposed guesthouse). Senior Chief Inyambo then met with CONASA, which eventually led to a recommendation that each chiefdom have its own separate ventures. A meeting with the Barotse Royal Establishment also endorsed separate ventures, and the constitution of the Mulobezi CDT was subsequently modified to only involve activities in Chief Inyambo's area (Western Province). Subsequently, the Moomba CRB declared its intention to develop its own safari lodge and campsite, while the Mulobezi CDT has decided to pursue a campsite instead of a lodge. The next steps for the CONASA CSC will be to develop business plans for these ventures, provide training, and seek investors or other sources of funding.

8.2.3.3. MABWE WOMEN'S BASKET CLUB

In the third quarter of 2002, a basket making commodity group was formed in Mabwe after crafts was identified as having economic potential by CONASA's partner SAFIRE. This group was sent for two trainings, along with a similar group from Bbilili, first in Livingstone and then in Choma. In 2003, the CONASA CSC brokered an order for 60 baskets, but due to delays in production and poor quality only 18 baskets were purchased.

8.2.3.4. ENTERPRISES IN THE PRELIMINARY STAGES

- **Mwandi abattoir, milk collection centre, fishing lodge**. The Barotse Royal Establishment at Mwandi requested CONASA to provide assistance to the Mulobezi CDT to set up an abattoir, milk collection centre, and fishing lodge in Mwandi. The next step will be to development business plans and then seek investors.

- **Katima Timber Suppliers**. In 2003, KTS, a group of pit-sawers who currently rent their equipment from the same South African company to

whom they sell planks, approached the CONASA CSC seeking assistance to buy their own equipment. The CSC Enterprise Officer advised them to go into partnership with a local carpenter who produces furniture. Since that time, the CONASA CSC has been searching for an investor to help the pit-sawyers buy their own equipment, but to no avail as of yet.

- **Kazungula abattoir and trucking centre**. The Sekute CDT requested assistance from CONASA to set up an abattoir and a truckers' centre near the pontoon crossing in Kazungula. In June 2003, CONASA assisted the trust to apply for identified land from the council. Since then, CONASA has been trying to find a partner for the projects and develop business plans.

- **Katapazi**. CONASA in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Livingstone and the Mukuni CDT will assist with the logistics of building a new school financed by contributions from a charity in the USA.

- **Mukuni**. The Mukuni CDT has asked for CONASA's assistance in building a lodge. No concrete actions have been taken.

8.2.4. Formation of Community Development Trusts

The 1998 Wildlife Act, which establishes the legal basis for CRBs under the authority of ZAWA, applies to GMAs only. However the majority of people in the TBNRMA live in the open areas. To foster a community-based approach for conservation and development activities in these areas, an important part of CONASA's TBNRM strategy has been the establishment of community development trusts. CDTs are similar to CRBs in the sense that they generally correspond to a chiefdom, are guided by a constitution, have elected members, can develop bylaws that can be made into law through the council, and can enter into legal and financially binding contracts with registered businesses. However CDTs differ from CRBs in that they register with the Registrar of Societies and not ZAWA, do not have to share their revenues with government, and are not under the administrative supervision of ZAWA. CONASA has been working to establish trusts in primarily five chiefdoms in the open area, as shown in Table 31 below. Establishment of a CDT involves community meetings, training in organisational skills, development of a constitution, and assistance in registering with the Society of Registrars.

Table 31. Registration status of community development trusts

Trust	Registration Status
Sekute Community Development Trust	registered
Mukuni Community Development Trust	registered
Musokotwane Community Development Trust	application pending at the Registrar of Societies
Simwatachela Community Development Trust	application pending at the Kalomo District council
Inyambo Community Development Trust	waiting approval from the chief

8.2.5. Policy analysis, training, and development of bylaws

The CSC played a central role in analysing Zambia's legal and policy framework for NRM, and designing and implementing a series of workshops on the policy framework. The CSC also organised and funded workshops to develop resource management plans and bylaws to back them up. These achievements are described further in section *6.2.5 – Policy Training* (page 126) as they essentially deal with policy issues.

8.2.6. ZAZIBONA TBNRM Forum

One of the last major activities of the CSC was hosting the first meeting of the ZAZIBONA TBNRM forum in December 2003 in Livingstone. The development of this forum had been underway for some time, coordinated by AWF's Four Corners project. The first meeting of ZAZIBONA was attended by roughly 50 CBO leaders and chiefs from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, and Botswana. The focus of the first meeting was building consensus on the role and structure of the forum. This was possibly the largest international gathering of community members discussing resource management issues in the region, and while the first meeting did not accomplish much in terms of implementation, the enthusiasm among the participants for the forum and its objectives was palpable.

> "This was possibly the largest international gathering of community members discussing resource management issues in the region."

Zambia is represented in ZAZIBONA through the Zambian Community TBNRM Forum, a forum composing of the MUSIBI association (see *6.2.4 – Formation of a CRB Association*, page 126) and five chiefdoms in the open area. The Zambian Community TBNRM Forum was registered with the Registrar of Societies in July 2003, so it can legally manage its own accounts and activities. Currently neither the Zambia Community TBNMR forum nor ZAZIBONA have a secure source of funding, so the effectiveness of these forums in the near future will depend in large part on their ability to raise funds.

8.2.7. Lawyers working group

Component three was instrumental in forming an international lawyers working group to provide legal support in natural resource policies. The group is comprised of lawyers from the four countries, and is initially analysing national laws and international instruments as they relate to NRM and TBNRM. The group is also conducting an audit of institutional roles in each of the four countries. Long-term financial support for the group has yet to be raised.

8.2.8. Video production

Component three contracted M-Films, a video production company based in Lusaka, to produce two short video pieces to highlight its work. The first video, "The Chief's CBNRMP Exchange Visit" (13 minutes, M-Films, 2002) focused primarily on the exchange visit to Botswana, but was of marginal quality due in part to limited footage and limited familiarity of the producer with the project. The second video, "CONASA At Work" (23 minutes, M-Films, 2003) presents a better and broader picture of CONASA's activities, but only focuses on the early phases of several enterprise activities in component III. A third video is scheduled for completion in 2004.

8.3. Discussion

8.3.1. Achievements

The activities in component three can be broken down into three categories that correspond to the structure of expected results expressed in the original RFA: ecological, socio-economic, and policy. The overall achievements in these areas are discussed below.

8.3.1.1. ECOLOGICAL

As described in *8.1 – Rationale and strategy* (page 155), the driving force behind adopting TBNRM (at least in the donor and conservation community) is to protect and restore ecological connectivity in large ecosystems that traverse national borders. This objective is of considerable importance in southern Zambia for both ecological and economic reasons.

From a biological perspective, it is fairly well established that elephants and other large mammals have historically traversed between the current-day Kafue National Park and what is now northern Zimbabwe, Botswana, the Caprivi strip, and Sioma Ngwezi NP. Wildlife populations travel long distances for several reasons: 1) in order to create a "relief valve" when populations exceed the fluctuating carrying capacity of the habitat (as we are currently seeing in Chobe NP), 2) to repopulate areas that have stricken with drought, disease or other disturbances, 3) to find alternative resources during drought years, and 4) to transfer genes between populations to prevent inbreeding. Thus if these wildlife populations are going to persist in the long term, there is a need to allow these long-range movements to continue, or artificially perform the same services through expensive management options such as culling, translocation, building artificial water holes, etc.

From an economic standpoint, the tourism industry in each of the four countries stands to loose if wildlife populations can not be maintained in a healthy state. At the community level, at the present time rural communities benefit very little from tourism, and the direct costs of wildlife damage and opportunity costs of alternative land uses almost always exceed the benefits from tourism. However in the future, wildlife resources will become much more valuable as they become more and more scarce globally (e.g., the high value of mountain gorilla tourism in Uganda), and there is an encouraging trend of more tourism benefits flowing to the community level. Thus while wildlife may not be economically important in the short term, if wildlife populations or the tourism industry suffers a fatal blow, the long-term possibilities for community-based wildlife enterprises will be forever gone.

Another economic argument for the importance of corridors begins by noting that the southern Kafue GMAs are currently under-stocked, if not depleted. If safari hunting is ever to generate the levels of revenue it seen in the 1990s, the GMAs will need to be restocked, and the fastest way to restock an area is to support movement from nearby populations through natural corridors.

CONASA has made a good start in documenting the approximate locations of corridors and distribution of wildlife conflicts. The preliminary reconnaissance survey, science workshop, and two field mapping exercises yielded important data that could be used to take the exercise to the next step and begin to discuss options for development and management of a corridor. However the outputs from these activities have yet to be finalized. A nice report was developed from the scoping visit, but the reports from the 2002 science workshop, and two mapping expeditions in 2003 are still outstanding, and there has only been a one presentation of preliminary results at one of the forums. Hence the first thing CONASA should do is to compile the work that has already been done and present it at an appropriate forum including ZAWA, Four-Corners, tourism operators, and the Sekute CDT which is supporting the emerging Kafue-Zambezi conservancy.

Recommendation 35: CONASA should compile the preliminary work done in assessing the Kafue-Zambezi corridor, and present the entire set of findings to a meeting of appropriate stakeholders.

The fieldwork mapping exercises conducted in phase one were a good initial effort for planning, but fall short of what will be needed to create management plans or seek support for further development. The mapping was conducted at a fairly coarse scale and not enough data was collected to determine whether animals are using the identified corridors for foraging purposes, to escape temporary poaching pressure, to follow seasonal water sources, etc. An important outcome from the preliminary work done to date should be a plan for additional research and data collection needed. This may include:

- a socio-economic and land-use survey of the communities in an around the identified corridors
- an assessment of habitat condition and fragmentation in the corridor area
- rates of settlement and land use change over the last ten years (which will most likely require satellite image analysis)
- economic analysis of the costs from wildlife, including direct costs (e.g., crop damage), indirect costs, opportunity costs, and start-up costs for introducing management activities
- ranked threats assessment with spatial analysis
- land and resource tenure mapping for the entire corridor area
- finer scale mapping of topography, water points, settlements, foraging resources, etc. (which may necessitate acquiring finer-scale GIS base layers)
- a list species which use the corridor, frequency and duration of use, reasons for using, etc.

Only after a considerable amount of additional information is collected will CONASA or a conservation organisation be able to come up with a concrete "road map" or set of management options to discuss. In light of the enormous amount of work remaining, it can also be concluded that if CONASA wishes to continue to pursue stabilising the corridor that feeds Kafue NP, considerably more resources will be needed than were brought to bear during phase one.

"Any organisation interested in stabilising a habitat corridor between KNP and the Zambezi should also have a realistic analysis of the economics involved."

Any organisation interested in stabilising a habitat corridor between Kafue and the Zambezi should also have a realistic analysis of the economics involved. Currently, wildlife industries in Mulobezi and Sichifulo GMAs do not appear to be economically self-sustaining in terms of recovering management costs, much less finance broad based poverty reduction and economic growth. If these areas, which are relatively rich in wildlife and habitat, can not generate enough revenue to support themselves, the prospects for income generation in corridors in the open area—which are only used intermittently by wildlife—are dim. Thus if there is any chance that a non-coercive form of CBNRM can be established in the open area between Kafue NP and the Zambezi, it will most likely require sizable medium to long-term subsidies, or revenue closed production systems such as game ranches or crocodile farms. Donors have not shown a willingness to support medium to long-term conservation subsidies, hence a more likely source of support will be from a conservation organisation with deep pockets.

To move forward on improving connectivity between protected areas, the challenge for CONASA, Four Corners, communities, and ZAWA therefore will be to develop a realistic vision for corridor protection and management, to come up with an operational plan for introducing management, and to estimate the short and long-term subsidies for the operation. While this task may seem daunting, there are several reasons to be hopeful. First, the preliminary data collection work done under phase one is a good start and points to future directions. Second, CONASA has established a strong network of CBOs in both the GMAs and open areas, and strengthened dialogue with ZAWA, which will be central in planning and implementing any form of corridor development. Third, the Sekute CDT has already expressed interest in creating a Zambezi-Kafue Conservancy, and in fact asked ZAWA to ban hunting in the area to build wildlife stocks. Fourth, the plan for upcoming World Bank sponsored Support for Economic Expansion and Diversification project makes implicit references to restoring ecological connectivity between KNP and the Zambezi, and has explicit plans for habitat assessment in the open area and unspecified forms of support to CRBs (see *0 – CONASA is currently entering* a phase where it has to either phase-out or renew itself for another cycle of programming. This section discusses a few considerations for managing this transition period, including changes in the context, a planning process for phase two, the need to move from top-down to stakeholder driven, some specific programming elements for consideration, and the requirements of a phase-out strategy.

Changes in the context, page 305). Fifth, while the ultimate challenge of securing long-term financing appears the most formidable, conservation organisations and donors are beginning to recognise that it is not always realistic to expect conservation to pay for itself, and direct payment schemes in support of "ecosystem services" are starting to take root. The challenge and opportunity for CONASA, Four Corners, and the Sekute CDT is to stimulate the convergence of these auspicious processes and develop a plan that will achieve conservation and development objectives, but not create perverse incentives or price distortions.

Another area that bodes well for the future is in ecological monitoring. CONASA's contributions toward ecological monitoring in the TBNMRA include the fieldwork to map the extent of a possible corridor, the 2001 satellite image analysis, and assessments of forests and forest products. The Four Corners project has contracted The Zambezi Society and The Biodiversity Foundation for Africa to compile and synthesise ecological datasets from the four countries. CONASA can add value to its monitoring work by ensuring that data from Zambia is fully represented in the growing database of ecological information for the TBNMRA. CONASA can also play a role in facilitating a process to articulate where the remaining information gaps are, and working with its partners in government, MUSIBI, and ZAZIBONA to prioritise a research agenda for the Zambian side of the TBNRMA.

8.3.1.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC

The second set of transboundary linkages that CONASA has been working to build include socio-economic connections – providing opportunities for dialogue between communities on different sides of the Zambezi, and integration of Zambian CBOs with regional markets.

"Compared to pre-CONASA, there is now considerable more community level awareness of CBNRM programmes across the Zambezi."

The exchange visits and formation of the Zambian TBNRM Forum to represent Zambia in ZAZIBONA have gone a long way towards sharing lessons learned and improving the levels of communication between communities. Compared to pre-CONASA, there is now considerable more awareness at the community level of CBNRM programmes across the river. The two biggest challenges for maintaining these social connections are how to expand learning opportunities beyond the very top tier of the CBO structure, and how to maintain communication channels without the direct facilitation of CONASA or Four Corners.

CONASA has been less successful in terms of creating economic linkages across the Zambezi. Regional markets for trade and investment capital never materialised at the level which had been hoped. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, but may include some combination of 1) a lack of viable business opportunities in the GMAs, 2) lack of trade and investment partners south of the Zambezi, 3) transaction costs (primarily transport and communication) which make trade between the GMAs and the Zambezi unprofitable, 4) insufficient time, 5) insufficient or ineffective efforts in marketing opportunities for trade and investment.

Lesson Learned

When local or national markets exist, it is often easier for emerging businesses to tap into them first before "going international".

Although not a lot of progress was made toward regional market integration, CONASA did learn quite a bit from its experiences in enterprise. They learned the difficulty of starting small-scale rural businesses, for any kind of market, when there is nothing conducive about the context. Lack of infrastructure and distances in particular were found to be critical constraints. The project has also learned that opportunities in local and national markets 1) exist, and 2) are often easier to enter especially for new businesses.

There are other reasons to be hopeful about future prospects for increased levels of regional trade and investment. Communities are now aware of the opportunities they have, and are actively seeking trading and investment partners. Thus while the first phase of CONASA was characterised by the project trying to identify trade and investment partners, the second phase is more likely to be driven by CBO leaders and individual entrepreneurs exploring the market on their own. A third reason to be hopeful is infrastructure improvements that have taken place between Livingstone and Kazungula – a new road, new bridge, and an upgraded powerline. These improvements may open up additional opportunities for regional trade, hopefully in high value products and not simply raw materials.

8.3.1.3. POLICY

It is somewhat ironic that the longest-lasting impact of component three has relatively little to do with transboundary processes: the development of local resource management policies. The policy sensitisation workshops organised by the CONASA CSC, development of local natural resource bylaws, natural resource management plans, and constitutions for joint venture committees, represent nothing short of a breakthrough for CBNRM in southern province. Never before has a CBNRM project in Zambia had the legal and policy expertise to facilitate these types of instruments. They provide an entirely new set of tools

to help communities manage their institutions and resources. However there is still a long way to go before these tools will have a measurable impact – education, implementation, enforcement, and monitoring are all needed before the expected benefits will be realised. Gains in policy must also be protected from forces that threaten to overwhelm them, such as threats originating from outside the GMAs.

> "The development of NRM plans, local natural resource bylaws, and constitutions for joint venture committees represent a breakthrough for CBNRM in southern Zambia."

The second area of policy work that had been envisioned in the project design focused on facilitating community input into resource management discussions between countries. This work never really got off the ground because the Four Corners project found it extremely challenging to get policy makers from all four countries together for the purposes of harmonising resource management policies. However toward the end CONASA did facilitate the formation of the Zambia TBRNM Forum and ZAZIBONA, so if and when policy discussions call for community input, these structures can be called on.

8.3.2. Defining and operationalising transboundary linkages

As the first TBNRM project on the Zambian side of the 'Four Corners' area, CONASA has been given the challenge to define specifically what it means to be "effectively linked" to a transboundary area. The RFA and project document provided some general ideas about transboundary linkages, for example that linkages could be ecological, economic, political, and social. A closer examination of the founding documents reveals that ecological linkages appeared to centre around visions of elephants and perhaps fish moving back and forth across the Zambezi; economic linkages were envisioned as flows of tourists and tourism products between the GMAs and Livingstone/Vic Falls; social linkages were seen as face-to-face meetings between community leaders from the four countries; and political linkages would be symbolized by some form of community input into the formation of transboundary resource policies.

Beyond these broad categories and general examples, CONASA did not have a lot of guidance on specifically what or who was to be linked together, and how those linkages would be created. More importantly, quantitative analyses were sorely lacking. It was implied that CBOs could set up tourist facilities or provide goods and services to tourist facilities, but without any analysis of the required production volume, transport costs, occupancy rates, marginal rate of return, competition, etc. Likewise ecological connectivity was a key objective but without any information about the size of the corridor area, direct and indirect costs, human population density, rates of migration, rates of deforestation, etc. It was left for CONASA to fill in these details, develop an approach to operationalize transboundary linkages, and finally find ways to create linkages across the linkages (e.g., transboundary enterprise linkages supporting transboundary ecological linkages).

"It was left for CONASA to fill in the details and develop an approach to operationalize transboundary linkages."

CONASA rose to the challenge through a process of information gathering and experimentation, and has tested a number of potential linkages in all four arenas. Several eco-friendly enterprises with regional markets have been explored, preliminary data has been collected on ecological connectivity, and three exchange visits and a transboundary forum have created opportunities for community-community linkages as well as input into political processes. Through these efforts CONASA has gained valuable experience into what types of transboundary linkages are possible, what types are meaningful, and what types are not.

Where additional work is still needed lies in documenting the lessons learned in operationalizing transboundary linkages. Even though many of the efforts to strengthen transboundary linkages achieved limited results, particularly in regard to enterprise and ecological connectivity, CONASA can still gain quite a bit of value by documenting why particular linkages succeeded or failed. There are many questions that have not yet been thoroughly discussed, at least not in written form, that would be of great value for future TBRNM projects both in Zambia and elsewhere. Some of the unexplored questions are discussed below:

- **Enterprise linkages**. Only a fraction of the products that were initially identified as having potential for regional enterprises blossomed into emerging enterprises. Future work would be streamlined if CONASA performed an "autopsy" on the products that never got off the ground. For example, what ever happened to the idea of harvesting mopane worms? Herbal tea? Timber production? Paprika? Were the problems related to market demand? Production volume? Start-up capital? Transaction costs? Quality control? Pricing? Distance? Answers to these questions could help current and future projects (and donors) better understand the potentials and limitations of transboundary enterprises, and come up with realistic expectations in project designs.

> **Recommendation 36**. CONASA should conduct an "autopsy" of all the products and services that were explored for transboundary enterprises, whether successful or not, to document the lessons learned in forging transboundary business linkages.

- **Ecological linkages**. The primary type of ecological linkage CONASA has been focused on is habitat connectivity for wildlife movements. There is a large body of research describing how corridors benefit wildlife populations, and an assumption that a habitat corridor would be a good thing for everyone. However it is less clear whether and how a habitat corridor would impact communities living in the three GMAs, and whether the impacts would be positive, negative, or both. Issues such as how a corridor would affect frequency of crop damage, opportunity costs for keeping the land out of agricultural production, impacts on restocking rates and safari revenue, transmission of disease and fire, habitat management costs, and simultaneous uses of the corridor areas, have yet to be analysed. Although it may still be early to answer (or even ask) some of these questions, CONASA would do well to document its experiences regarding what ecological connectivity is good for, and what issues need to be considered for strengthening this form of transboundary linkage.

- **Social linkages**. CONASA has explored two mechanisms to support transboundary social linkages: exchange visits and the transboundary forum. These activities certainly appeared to be valuable for the two-dozen or so participants who were able to participate, however in what sense are the communities now "linked"? What does it mean to say that the "communities are now talking to each other"? Are they still in contact with each other or are they waiting for CONASA or the Four Corners project to organize the next field trip? Were the benefits of these meetings primarily inspirational, or is there the possibility for transboundary CBO-CBO ventures (such as a community-based cultural tourism circuit)? Have the ideas and inspiration expanded to CBO leaders who weren't able to travel? Are exchange visits and forum meetings a cost-effective way of putting people in touch with each other? These are just a few of the questions that can be clarified from CONASA's experiences and would further the methodology of TBNRM.

- **Linking the linkages**. The rationale for simultaneously supporting transboundary linkages in the economic, ecological, social, and political realms is similar to the rationale for any other type of holistic approach: one expects that linkages in one domain would strengthen linkages in another. Thus advocates of TBNRM would predict, for example, that strengthening economic linkages between tourists and communities would create incentives that would lead to stronger conservation and ecological linkages, or strengthening information on ecological connectivity would stimulate political dialogue for a regional approach to resource management. CONASA has not yet achieved much linkage-linking, and it is probably too early to expect to see these types of synergies between connections. Nevertheless, CONASA should be aware of the benefits of cross-linkage synergy, and try to understand the conditions under which this is possible.

8.3.3. Targeting

The targeting of activities in the TBNRM component (i.e., the selection of commodity groups, enterprises, and CBOs for support) reflected in large part the degree to which each type of linkage was well-defined. For example, the stream of activities designed to strengthen social and political transboundary linkages centered around very concrete ideas of what dialogue should be about (NRM), the level at which dialogue should take place (community), and how dialogue should be facilitated (through exchange visits and forums). Thus these activities were generally well targeted, although one could debate whether sufficient saturation was achieved. Similarly, the policy sensitisation and advocacy trainings generally hit the nail on the head, reaching out to those CBO leaders from the GMAs and open areas whose positions are likely to require them to be engaged with policy and legal issues.

On the other hand, the enterprise support activities were guided by much broader and most untested ideas of market linkages. Thus targeting was more opportunistic, dispersed, and to some degree experimental. Similarly, activities focused on strengthening ecological connectivity were based on what is arguably the least well understood form of transboundary linkage, and therefore these activities were relatively thin and isolated.

Lesson Learned

The stronger and more complete a conceptual framework is about cause and effect, the easier it is to develop focused targeting strategies for interventions.

CONASA has also struggled to develop a targeting strategy that will create connections across TBRNM goals. This can be seen in the spatial distribution of CONASA CSC supported activities (see Map 5, page 159), which reveals a widely dispersed set of activities. It is difficult to see, for example, how a campsite in Dundumwezi will strengthen ecological connectivity within the

TBNRMA, or how a variety of small-scale enterprises along the river would attract business investment for the communities in the GMAs. In other words, while the activities supported by the CONASA CSC have been valuable on their own terms, it isn't always apparent if and how they fit together other than falling within extremely general spatial and programmatic criteria.

"While the activities supported by the CONASA CSC have been valuable on their own terms, it isn't always apparent if and how they fit together other than falling within extremely general spatial and programmatic criteria."

The lack of focused targeting may be due to two reasons. One, as argued above, our understanding of different types of transboundary linkages and how they support each other has only been broadly sketched, and not supported by much empirical or quantitative assessments that would help guide if, when, and where transboundary linkages are actually feasible and worthwhile. Second, the push to achieve results, in an overall context which is not very conducive for either business growth nor conservation, may have led to a tendency to target opportunistically irregardless of other transboundary processes. If, speaking hypothetically, the project had a longer lifespan, and the results framework was more oriented to supporting the conditions under which transboundary processes could flourish (e.g., strong local institutions, availability of business development services, strong connections between government and enterprises, information systems), then CONASA could have prioritised its activities more strategically and come up with a targeting and sequencing approach that was more coherent.

8.3.4. M&E for TBNRM

While M&E in CONASA is well above-average overall, M&E has been weakest in component three. There has been quite a bit of process documentation (reports from exchange visit, field reports, workshop summaries, etc), which are generally of high quality. However other than the basic data required for evaluating performance indicators, little monitoring data was collected for the TBNRM activities as a whole. In particular, very little spatial data exists for the trusts, chiefdoms, and enterprises supported by the CONASA CSC, there have been no special studies on transboundary processes, no evaluations of the CSC'S training activities, no resource monitoring or assessments of ecological connectivity, little or no data on human populations in the open areas, and no databases set up for CONASA CSC supported CBOs.

The relative weakness of M&E in the TBNRM component compared to components one and two is related to the fact that there is no M&E officer stationed at the CONASA CSC. Although it might have been envisioned in the beginning that monitoring at the CONASA CSC would be supported from the Lusaka and Kalomo offices, in practice this was not strong except perhaps in cases where activities were implemented jointly (e.g., Dundumwezi campsite). It is also possible that more M&E work was done in the CONASA CSC than has actually been acknowledged, however gaps in information sharing or inadequate "packaging" of results into distributable products may have prevented this work from being shared outside the CONASA CSC. M&E may also have suffered because the TBNRM Technical Advisor

is not stationed in Livingstone and is therefore unable to provide technical backstopping to that office.

Whatever the reason(s), low levels of M&E output from component three might have been a missed opportunity for CONASA. Particularly because the concepts underlying TBNRM are so new, and implementation of TBNRM so untested, there are still many unanswered questions at both the theoretical and applied levels that the experiences of CONASA could illuminate. The CONASA CSC was also central to some pioneering training in policy sensitisation and legal support to CBOs, the implications of which may be far reaching.

Although the component three is officially ended, and opportunities for new data collection and analysis are limited, there may still be a chance to synthesize the main achievements of the TBNRM component. Some of the issues that are particularly worthy of additional documentation include:

- **Comparison of CRBs and CDTs**. The CONASA CSC primarily supported Community Development Trusts in the open areas, which are similar in structure to CRBs but with some notable differences (see *8.2.4 – Formation of Community Development Trusts*, page 161). The CSC Legal Officer observed that capacity and pace of learning of CDTs was generally higher than CRBs, possibly because they tend to form around smaller administrative areas, have a different legal status less dependent on ZAWA, have more flexibility to negotiate with the private sector, and have initiated some very interesting efforts in both conservation and development. Because CONASA is one of the main promoters of the CRB structure in Zambia, and is one of the few projects to work with both CRBs and CDTs, it is uniquely positioned to describe and critique the relative advantages and disadvantages of these two structures.

- **Ecological connectivity**. CONASA has made a good start in collecting information about ecological connectivity in the TBNRMA, however there is a need to compile and synthesize the information (see *8.3.1.1 – Ecological*, page 163).

- **Transboundary enterprises – what works and what doesn't**. CONASA has invested a lot of resources into exploring potential products and markets for enterprise development. While a few of these products went beyond the exploratory stage, many did not. It would be very helpful for future efforts to document why some products were not pursued, and distil lessons learned for what types of products have potential (see *8.3.1.2 – Socio-economic*, page 165).

- **Project mode TBNRM**. CONASA has been designed and implemented as a project which carries both advantages and disadvantages. Many have suggested that while project-mode implementation is needed to support some transboundary processes, such as CBO capacity building, the liabilities associated with project mode development make them poorly equipped to support other transboundary processes, such as getting government buy-in for harmonizing resource management policies. CONASA has forayed into community work, enterprise work, and policy work, and has a good idea of the strengths and limitations of project mode development for supporting transboundary processes. It would be useful to summarize these experiences to help guide the design of future TBNRM support projects/programmes.

Recommendation 37. CONASA/AWF should convene a workshop or taskforce to discuss and document the lessons learned from the TBNRM component.

8.3.5. Sustainability

Strategies which have helped to increase the sustainability of achievements in TBRNM include use of the policy and legal instruments (which are backed by endearing government structures), building the capacity of local CBOs, and strengthening technical skills at an individual level. Achievements in these areas may be redirected or transformed, but are unlikely to be completely eroded.

Achievements which are more in danger of disappearing are those where CONASA has continued to play a critical role without a clear exit strategy such as building capacity in more permanent structures. Areas of concern include:

- **Legal support**. CONASA was fortunate to have a lawyer on staff at the CSC, who could provide services in policy analysis, training, contract advice, and registering trusts and CBOs. While some of these services will no longer be needed (e.g., registering CDTs with the Society of Registrars), many other will. Particularly as CRBs get more involved in joint ventures and advocacy campaigns, there will be a need for continued legal support. In part because it had the luxury of its very own lawyer, CONASA has not developed any strategies for providing legal support to CBOs in the future, and hiring lawyers for short term work can be very expensive. We have already seen one case where lack of legal support has affected resource management, when the Nyawa community wanted to withdraw the lawsuit that was preventing safari hunting in their area, but was unable to do so because they owed money to their lawyer.

"Particularly as CRBs get more involved in joint ventures and advocacy campaigns, there will be a need for continued legal support."

  A second structure whose sustainability is in question is the lawyers working group. The source of funding, management, and focus of this group is uncertain.

- **Enterprise**. CONASA has played a large role in supporting several enterprises, particularly in the areas of communication, transport, training, and marketing. Whether many of these enterprises will be able survive without subsidized support is questionable. See *5.3.2 – Findings of the special study on enterprise*, page 105, for more details.

- **Forums**. The mandate of the ZAZIBONA forum was made relevant by the Four Corners Project – to provide input into international resource policies through processes that were also being facilitated by Four Corners. If the Four Corners project or another body can continue to facilitate dialogue among international policy makers, then ZAZIBONA will continue to have relevance, although it will still need to raise funds for its activities. However if donor support for TBNRM should wane, or government interest in transboundary policy discussions fail to pick up, then ZAZIBONA will have a double-problem: redefining its purpose and also securing funds.

  Similarly, the Zambia TBNRM forum has to stay relevant and identify a source for financial support in order to be sustainable. It ability to endure will depend in large part on how successful ZAZIBONA and the NCRF are in adapting to a post-CONASA world.

- **Bylaws**. As described previously, the development of local level bylaws and resource management plans represent one of the most innovative contributions of CONASA. However whether they will join the ranks of "rules that only exist on paper" or become effective tools for resource management depends on the ability of CRBs to educated, implement, and enforce. *See 9.5.6 – NRM plans and bylaws* (page 202) for additional discussion of bylaws.

8.3.6. Consortium approach

While it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess lessons learned about the consortium approach, it was noted that implementing CONASA through an NGO consortium was most challenging in component three. Issues about the disbursement of funds, lines of authority, reporting, and NGO identify vs. project identify, were all manifest in component three, at times to the detriment of programming. One of the reasons these issues may have been more pronounced in component three than the other two components may be because there was less mixing of NGO staff in the CONASA CSC, whereas the other two offices staff from CARE and WCS worked side by side.

8.4. TBNRM lessons learned

Unlike components one and two, CONASA's component three was funded through the USAID RCSA office for a period of three years, ending in February 2004. This section has reviewed the strategy, achievements and special issues in TBRNM, but it is unclear as of this writing whether the activities under the TBNRM component will be continued, folded into components one and two, or carried on by AWF under the Four Corners Project. While this evaluation came at the official end of component three, time did not allow for a comprehensive review of the TBNRM activities to justify this a definitive final evaluation of component three. In particular, additional work needs to be done to distil the lessons learned from CONASA's experience with transboundary processes to add to ongoing debates of TBNRM within the region. The remainder of this section discusses some general lessons learned from CONASA in regard to the theory and practice of TBNRM.

8.4.1. Importance of the context

One of the explicit objectives of TBNRM is to harmonize resource management policies in ecoregions that traverse national borders. One of the lessons that CONASA and other TBNRM projects have learned is that differences in resource management policies are just the tip of the iceberg—and probably one of the lesser important differences in context. The social, political, and economic contexts of neighbouring countries can be highly varied and play an important role in shaping the possibilities for TBNRM.

In the case of the Four Corners TBNRMA, we see tremendous differences in national contexts. As described in section *1.4 – Context* (page 3), the Zambian side of the TBNRMA is characterized by a stagnant economy, high levels of inflation, high population density, poor infrastructure, and chronic food insecurity. Botswana, on the other side, has a strong economy, stable currency, little or no food insecurity, a steady influx of tourism, low population density, and a relatively huge donor investment in CBNRM. This context has helped CBNRM take root in Botswana, but it is highly unlikely that the strategies for CBNRM would work equally well in Zambia. Zimbabwe, on the other hand, has a plummeting economy but a safari hunting industry that remains relatively strong, and a long history of CBNRM which

Lesson Learned

Differences between the national social, economic, and political contexts are equally—if not more—important than resource management policies and ecological characteristics in defining the possibilities for TBNRM.

has been at least partially successful. Namibia has low population density, a fairly strong economy, heavy investment in the CBNRM programmes, and a tourism industry which is not based on safari hunting. Likewise there are large differences in the political processes and dynamics in each country, infrastructure, land tenure, commercialisation of agriculture and tourism, and history.

These differences in context are profoundly important because they shape the possibilities for TBNRM, whether one is trying to strengthen economic, ecological, social, or political linkages. In terms of economic integration, CONASA has so far found the greatest degree of success in tapping into Livingstone markets. Markets in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia still offer potentials for trade and investment, but there are additional transaction costs, a steep learning curve, and an even less level playing field when dealing with foreign markets that might put CONASA communities at a disadvantage. This is not to say that opportunities don't exist (see for example the case study of The Kasukwe Sunflower Oil Extractor, page 104), however CONASA has learned that before one can strategise how best to integrate communities economically and socially it is important to understand differences in local and national contexts.

8.4.2. Timing

Lesson Learned

TBNRM processes take time to develop; donors and NGOs should therefore be prepared to make a commitment beyond the typical 3-5 year lifespan of a project.

A second lesson regarding TBNRM is that fostering transboundary processes takes time. This is by no means surprising considering that the building blocks of a TBNRM approach themselves require periods on the order of 5-15 years to stand on their own: strengthening local institutions, establishing and strengthening eco-friendly enterprises, developing investment portfolios, supporting mechanisms for broad based input into policy making, strengthening or introducing resource management to improve ecological connectivity, allowing stocks of natural resources to naturally regenerate, etc.

A corollary of this realisation is that to effectively strengthen TBNRM linkages, donors and NGOs that support TBNRM must be prepared to make a commitment beyond the typical 3-5 year lifespan of a project. Without an adequate commitment, a few individuals may benefit and short-term gains may be achieved, but the systems and institutions required to maintain such gains are unlikely to take root. One could further argue that because the time scale of TBNRM exceeds the usual lifespan of a project, that TBNRM may not be fully compatible with project mode development.

8.4.3. Engineering versus enabling TBNRM processes

Lesson Learned

Transboundary areas are complex systems, with dozens of interacting stakeholders and processes. This makes engineering TBNRM processes rather unpredictable, and suggests an enabling approach is likely to have more impact.

CONASA has learned that there are a vast number of factors that influence transboundary processes, foremost among them the differences in political and economic contexts, but also policy frameworks, distance, infrastructure, language, population density, and environmental characteristics. Consequently, the development of transboundary processes tends to be non-linear, and can not be predicted or constructed the same way an engineer can build a bridge. CONASA may have had visions of commodity groups producing thatching grass, curios, and vegetables for tourist lodges in Livingstone and Victoria Falls, but these expectations have generally not materialised. Instead what we have seen is local entrepreneurs travelling on their own to source inputs from regional markets, CRB members contacting investors on their own to explore the possibility of constructing a

crocodile ranch, and individual craftsmen using the training they were given by CONASA to produce curios for tourist centres.

These are not exactly the outcomes CONASA had predicted, but they are regional connections and they illustrate that while you can take a cow to pasture, you can't tell it where to eat. The lesson for CONASA is that while you can sometimes engineer transboundary linkages, it is not uncommon for these efforts to be inefficient or even worse ineffective. To maximize the likelihood that transboundary processes will actually form, projects like CONASA should therefore employ a mix of 'engineering' linkages as well as support the conditions which enable other linkages to develop through the creative energies of CBOs and entrepreneurs.

8.4.4. Focus and targeting

While TBNRMAs tend to be large almost by definition, the Four Corners TBNRMA is extremely large and diverse in terms of population structure, land use, tenure, resource endowments, etc. Unlike other TBNRMAs in the region, which are essentially defined by two national parks on opposite sides of a border, the Four Corners area is highly heterogeneous and does not lend itself to simple ideas or simple implementation strategies to create "linkages".

> "The Four Corners TBNRMA is highly heterogeneous and does not lend itself to simple ideas or simple implementation strategies to create 'linkages'."

CONASA has learned the importance of focus in targeting activities to strengthen TBNRM linkages. It isn't possible to strengthen every possible linkage, and it isn't enough to target opportunistically whenever an enterprise or CBO initiative meets the broad criteria of TBNRM. To achieve meaningful impact that is self-perpetuating and strengthens interactions among the multiple forms of transboundary linkage, projects like CONASA need to develop criteria for strategic targeting based on ecological importance, analysis of economic viability, spatial relationships, level of threats, and the strength of local institutions.

8.5. Empowerment, disempowerment & TBNRM

One of the main arguments of TBNRM critics states that despite a lot of rhetoric that TBNRM is concerned with community welfare and builds upon the foundations of CBNRM, when it comes down to practice TBNRM projects tend to disempower rather the empower rural communities (e.g., Katerere and Mohamed-Katerere, 2002). To illustrate these concerns, critics cite examples from the region where communities in TBNRMAs have lost access to resources, received minimal benefits from joint ventures with much more powerful private sector "partners", have had their mobility restricted while that of foreign tourists increased, or have been side-lined in discussions of policies over protected areas and shared resources.

Because the balance of power (e.g., access to capital, information, skills, policy makers) in rural areas tends to be so lopsided *against* communities, it is important for CONASA to be aware of these concerns and monitor any signs of community disempowerment. This is not only because it is unethical to achieve conservation and/or enterprise gains at the expense of local communities, but also because we know from past experience that communities yield the ultimate 'veto power' when it comes resource management. Experience tells us that although it may be possible to achieve conservation goals or

increase regional investment by sidelining community interests, these gains will be short-lived and highly reversible. CONASA has therefore taken the stance that community empowerment is central to development and conservation goals. However this outcome can never be taken for granted especially when the playing field is so inherently unlevel.

There is no evidence to suggest that communities on the Zambian side of the TBNRMA have been disempowered by CONASA's TBNRM activities. While CONASA can pat itself on the back for protecting community interests, congratulations may be premature because activities are still in the early phases. As of yet, no new land has been put under conservation status, no joint venture agreements have been signed, bylaws have not been implemented, and little reduction in access to resources has taken place. In certain VAGs, there has been a reduction in access to wildlife as a result of increased anti-poaching campaigns, however so far the impacts of these campaigns appear to be small. Crop-damage without any compensation could also be seen to be a form of community disempowerment, which is why this issue should remain near the top of the policy agenda.

"There is no evidence to suggest that communities on the Zambian side of the TBNRMA have been disempowered by CONASA's TBNRM activities, however congratulations may be premature because activities are still in the early phases."

A more relevant question for CONASA is whether its approach to TBNRM is moving in the right direction with regard to protecting community interests. Here again the news is positive, but preliminary. The approach CONASA has taken to foster transboundary processes simultaneously strengthens the foundation of community empowerment: supporting the establishment of local institutions, building capacity in policy awareness, legal assistance, and facilitating horizontal and vertical CBO-CBO linkages. The proof of the pudding however will be seen after the first joint venture contracts are signed, resource management policies are revised, conflicts with government and private sector companies are resolved, etc.

Strengthening local institutions and providing training in policy and legal matters should serve to protect the interests of the community as a whole, but attention still needs to be given to ensure that the interests of sub-groups are also protected. Theoretically, if the CRBs and CDTs are truly representative and democratic, the interests of all groups, including women, traditional resource users, farmers suffering from wildlife conflicts, etc., will be considered in collective decisions. However we also know from past experiences that in practice there is always a possibility that local elites will capture the bulk of benefits. TBNRM support organisations like CONASA and Four Corners therefore have an ethical responsibility to be aware of the possibilities of disempowerment and disproportionate allocation of benefits, and expose inequities if they should occur.

8.6. Summary and the way forward

TBNRM represents one of the newest approaches in conservation that is less than ten years old and still relatively untested. CONASA is one of the first projects in the region to explicitly implement a TBNRM approach, and together with the Four Corners project sought out to create transboundary social, economic, ecological, and political linkages.

CONASA's efforts to strengthen transboundary processes faced a number of constraints from the beginning. First, a lot of the homework that should have been done before this approach was even selected was apparently not done. CONASA inherited an extremely general set of ideas about various "linkages", but little analysis had been done on specific needs and opportunities (e.g., where market demand was going unmet, policy gaps, excess production capacities, transport costs, capital markets, tourism growth areas, etc.) In hindsight, CONASA and Four Corners might have better off spending most of their first year conducting feasibility studies rather than immediately jumping into the work of facilitating linkages, but the pressure to achieve results precluded a more incremental approach.

CONASA's efforts to create a critical mass of transboundary processes have also suffered from poorly defined boundaries of the TBNRMA. Because the Four Corners TBNRMA area does not feature two national parks sharing a common border, as do other TBNRM "Peace Parks", there is no well-defined natural geographic focus for activities, and no core enterprise like tourism to build from. Consequently, CONASA tried to create linkages in an area larger than the UK, with less than five staff. The result has been a diffuse set of support activities with little hopes of synergy. The proposed corridor could have been a natural spatial focus for targeting activities, however CONASA ironically seemed to have lost sight of that objective even though the need for greater ecological connectivity provided the genesis of TBNRM.

Despite these constraints, CONASA dove in and scored a number of achievements in TBNRM. The three exchange visits to Chobe and Caprivi were very inspirational and opened the eyes of the Zambian visitors to new possibilities. Similarly, the formation of the Zambia TBNRM Forum provides an opportunity for CRBs to discuss issues with their counterparts from the open areas, and gives Zambia a voice in ZAZIBONA, the regional TBNRM forum. The TBNRM component also provided a wealth of legal assistance in setting up Community Development Trusts, Joint Venture Committees, and Chikanta CRB.

The project also made a good start in sketching out the boundaries of a possible wildlife corridor, laying the groundwork for a more intensive set of follow-up studies on management options and impact. CONASA also supported several small-scale businesses that have the potential of reaching international markets, the flagship enterprise being a community-owned and operated campsite at Dundumwezi gate. Overall the results of the enterprise support activities were rather disappointing, however, causing the team to think more about the market context and not just product development. The top five constraints to enterprise are probably distance, infrastructure, production capacity, lack of good sites for photo-tourism, and lack of capital markets. CONASA has made a dent in some of these constraints, but others are just as limiting as they were when the project started. CONASA learned however that local and domestic markets are often much easier for new businesses to enter than regional markets, and has back-tracked its marketing strategy for products like honey and crafts.

Somewhat ironically, what is probably the greatest achievement of component three did not have much of a transboundary element at all, but pushed CBNRM in Southern Province up to a new level. Staff from the CONASA CSC were instrumental in providing introductory training on Zambia's natural resource policy framework, which then led to the development of several local natural resource management plans and supporting bylaws. While these plans will have little value until they are actually implemented, the development of local use regulations for natural resource is one of the indispensable requirements for conservation in settled areas.

CONASA's experiences with TBNRM have generated several valuable lessons learned about the practice of TBNRM. First and foremost, TBNRM must be based on genuine

connections. The possibility of connections with the GMAs were relatively weak, especially in enterprise, suggesting that a TBNRM model which had been developed for the management of Peace Parks was 'air-dropped' onto Victoria Falls without much attention to the details of the context. CONASA and Four Corners have also learned that facilitating transboundary processes is maddeningly slow, particularly getting government resource agencies to sit together and work through the details of harmonising policy and management practices. The length of time needed and centrality of government participation further suggests that at least this aspect of TBNRM might not be fully compatible with project-mode development. A 'low-heat' sector support programme, possibly through SADC, might be needed to supplement the 'high-heat' project mode work with communities and businesses.

To move forward, Four Corners and CONASA should first and foremost synthesize results and lessons learned thus far. Many of the lessons are in danger of being lost if someone doesn't document them soon. If there will be any additional programming for TBRNM, there is also a need to rearticulate the rationale and goals of TBNRM for this specific context, rather than pursue any activity that meets the broad criteria of TBNRM simply for being TBRNM. This will hopefully lead to a tighter approach, featuring a more focused targeting strategy geographically, and narrower set of support activities.

There is a need to rearticulate the rationale and goals of TBNRM for this specific context.

This evaluation recommends that any future TBNRM programming in livelihoods and enterprise should put a stronger focus on the corridor area, and continue to support the Sekute CDT which has expressed interest in establishing a Zambezi-Kafue Conservancy. There is also a need to stay engaged with the other four Community Development Trusts, whose support will be essential for 1) advocacy, 2) threat reduction, and 3) piloting alternative models of resource production. CONASA should also continue to support the enterprises that were serviced by the CONASA CSC, in particular the honey and mungongo enterprises which are the most promising from a market perspective. CONASA can also play a useful role by sharing its experiences and contacts with community structures with the upcoming World Bank SEED project (Small Economic Expansion and Diversification), which has a vested interest in promoting sound resource management practices outside the parks and has a modest amount of funds allocated for activities in the GMAs and open areas.

9.0 CONSERVATION

9.1. Introduction

One of CONASA's twin goals is improved sustainable resource management. Although sound environmental management is a component of all rural development projects, conservation[17] in CONASA has been elevated to an explicit objective due in large part to the location of the project area in three GMAs in Southern Province. The three GMAs where CONASA is working have conservation value in their own right due to 1) the presence of wildlife (in particular classic African mega-fauna) and wildlife habitat which is becoming scarcer nationally and globally, 2) the role of the GMAs as protective buffer zones to the Kafue NP, and 3) the role (or potential role) of the GMAs in connecting remaining habitat in a larger transboundary ecoregion.

Conservation exists as one of the highest level goals of CONASA not only because of the intrinsic biological value of the natural resources in the area[18], but also because of the role that natural resources play, or could play, in rural livelihoods. In addition to direct utilisation of forest and wildlife products, which are particularly important during times of stress, natural resources also provide opportunities for community-wide enterprises (e.g., tourism) and ecosystem goods (e.g., fuelwood) and services (e.g., regeneration of soil fertility). Finally, a third reason why conservation is an explicit goal is because the primary CBO the project engages with is the CRB, and CRBs get their legitimacy from ZAWA, and ZAWA's mandate is conservation. In other words, if CONASA wants to work with CRBs, then it needs to have programs that address conservation issues.

9.2. Context

CONASA's ability to strengthen resource management in the area is heavily shaped by the ecological, economic, and historical context. While it is beyond the scope of this report to provide much detail on the context, a summary is given in section *1.4 – Context*, page 3. One can also refer to the reference maps in *Appendix 4*, page 339. A few highlights of the context include:

Ecological characteristics

- The three GMAs are mostly savannah woodland, and were gazetted to serve as a buffer zone to KNP.
- Parts of Sichifulo and Muobezi GMAs might also be an important wildlife corridor for elephants and other large mammals, connecting KNP with protected areas in Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe.
- Mulobezi has had rich hardwood timber resources in the past, most of which have already been harvested.
- Mulobezi and Sichifulo used to harbour large populations of wildlife, generating hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue from safari hunting in the 1990s. Their status today is not well known, but populations are believed to be severely depleted.
- Bbilili GMA is largely depleted of large wildlife, in part because of the high levels of settlement.
- Frequent bush fires are reported to be a problem and have reduced regeneration rates of trees.
- Dry season water points are in short supply, and competition for water is one of the main mechanisms by which people drive out wildlife.

[17] the terms *conservation*, *sustainable resource management*, and *resource production* are used more-or-less interchangeably in this report, as they are in most of CONASA's literature, however more precise language is used when specific management schemes and issues are discussed

[18] some would argue that the *intrinsic* value of a resource is simply the value ascribed to it by national and global audiences

Socio-economic context

- Human population density is relatively high in eastern Sichifulo and Bbilili GMAs, and relatively low in Mulobezi.
- Rapid social change (population growth, in-migration) is taking place in the more heavily populated areas in the east.
- Harvesting forest products and bushmeat are important as coping strategies during periods of drought, but otherwise are not central to most household livelihoods.
- A strong demand for bushmeat in urban areas has created an underground economy in bushmeat trade.

Community-State relations

- Relations between ZAWA and communities have been contentious in the past, but have improved with the facilitation of CONASA.
- ZAWA had little presence in the GMAs for 2-3 years during its restructuring, but has since resumed field operations and activities with the communities.
- Previous efforts to implement CBNRM under the ADMADE program generally protected resources through better law enforcement but resulted in little or no tangible benefits for most households.
- All safari hunting was stopped by order of the President for two years.
- Some of the human migration has been fuelled, or justified, by claims to land stemming from historical forced displacements from 1) parts of Sichifulo and Bbilili GMAs, and 2) the Gwembe Valley.
- Enforcement of forest management is relatively weak, although the Forestry Department is moving toward joint forest management.

9.3. Strategy

To strengthen the management of natural resources, CONASA has invoked conservation both a cross-cutting theme, as well as the primary objective for a number of direct interventions. Some of the main elements of the multi-pronged strategy for conservation include:

> "CONASA has invoked conservation both a cross-cutting theme as well as the primary objective for a number of activities."

Strengthening the local institutional context for conservation

- building the capacity of CRBs and VAGs to promote the goals of conservation and support sustainable resource management practices in the communities
- training CBOs in resource assessment, quota setting, fire management, and other resource management techniques
- facilitating the formation of a CRB association to raise funds and implement activities for conservation

Provide alternatives to natural resource exploitation

- increasing agriculture and livestock production to strengthen food security
- supporting livelihood training for reformed poachers
- establishing woodlots to reduce the harvesting of trees

Creating incentives for conservation

- promoting sustainable resource-based enterprises to create economic incentives to conserve wildlife and forests

Strengthening the policy environment

- identifying constraints in the policy framework governing natural resources
- promoting dialogue between stakeholders and government in forums

- training communities to understand policy environment and develop local natural resource bylaws

Support for ZAWA
- supporting ZAWA in training for village scouts, quota setting, and developing their internal policies and procedures (but not in law enforcement)
- facilitating communication between ZAWA, the CRBs, and safari operators

Conservation planning
- assessing the movements of wildlife and their use of the GMAs as a "corridor" to the Zambezi
- facilitating the development of local natural resource and land use plans
- monitoring and special studies

9.4. Achievements

Because conservation is both a cross-cutting theme as well as the main focus of some specific activities, many of the achievements in conservation have been already been described in other sections of this report. This section will therefore summarise all achievements, but only describe those accomplishments not discussed elsewhere.

9.4.1. Eco-friendly enterprises

CONASA has supported a number of environmentally friendly enterprises, also known as conservation business ventures, as a way of both increasing income and creating incentives to manage resources sustainably. 24 commodity groups were formed in 2002 for enterprises in bee keeping, carpentry, basketry, timber cutting, and basketry. Enterprises that have received the most attention include:

- **Dundumwezi campsite**. CONASA played a big role in helping Siachitema CRB set up a tourist campsite outside the Dundumwezi gate going into Kafue NP. CONASA helped the CRB apply for the concession, provided K90 million in start-up financing, sourced construction materials and a contractor, arranged training, and took CRB representatives to the national Agricultural Fair and Trade Show for marketing purposes. The campsite is expected to be completed in 2004. See *8.2.3.1 – Dundumwezi campsite*, page 159, for more details.

  In addition to the Dundumwezi campsite, CONASA has also helped the Mulobezi community plan a campsite near Mulobezi town. CONASA provided support in facilitating community meetings on the proposed campsite, selecting a site, developing a business plan, marketing, and has been prepared to assist with financing. See also *8.2.3.2 – Mulobezi guesthouse*, page 160, for more background.

- **Bee keeping**. Prior to CONASA, the most common technique for collecting honey was most accurately called 'honey hunting', because collectors would seek natural hives in the forest and then cut the tree down to harvest the honey, destroying the hive in the process. To reduce this destructive practice, CONASA formed a number of bee keeping commodity groups, provided training in constructing and managing apiaries (70 beekeepers including 3 women trained in 2002), and provided raw materials for the construction of over 200 hives. CONASA also assisted the groups in finding markets for their honey, creating maps of the area, developing a database of honey producers, and applying for organic certification from the Organic Producers Association of Zambia (OPAZ). Despite a lot of effort, the enterprise

Lesson Learned

For enterprises involved in harvesting non-timber forest products, it is better to ramp up production and gain experience in local markets before going after international markets.

has been constrained by a lack of bees however, and as of the end of 2003 only 8 litres of honey had been produced.

- **Crafts**. CONASA facilitated the formation of four commodity groups for the production of handicrafts in Moomba and Bbilili VAGs. In addition to helping form the groups, CONASA organised and funded a familiarisation visit to Livingstone for eight individuals, followed by two trainings at the Choma Museum for a total of 22 individuals. At the training the groups learned quality control measures and financial management practices. CONASA also put the groups in touch with the Choma museum which purchases crafts for their curios shop, and brokered an order for 60 baskets from another buyer. Overall success of the crafts enterprise has been limited, although a handful of individuals are reported to be doing well. See *8.2.3.3 – Mabwe Women's Basket Club*, page 160, for more info.

- **Mungongo nut harvesting**. In 2001, based on input from SAFIRE, wild Mongongo nuts were identified as having commercial potential for their oil which is used in upper-mwamba skin care products. Subsequently CONASA produced several reports on the subject, mobilised three commodity groups for collection, and sent samples to SANPROTA and the US for analysis. Results of the analysis tests were promising. In 2003, CONASA decided to pilot test the production of mungongo nut oil. Concerns have been expressed that there many not be enough nuts and/or collectors to make the enterprise viable.

9.4.2. Smoothing relationships between ZAWA and communities

During the 2001 PRA exercises, it was learned that there had been a lot of tension between ZAWA scouts and the communities in all three GMAs. To operate in this context, CONASA first had to clarify that it was neither a part of ZAWA, nor was there to replace ZAWA. CONASA then set out to smooth relationships between the communities and ZAWA wherever possible, mainly by facilitating meetings, both in the field and at the regional level. For example, in June 2002, CONASA facilitated a meeting between ZAWA and CRBs, at which a lot of agreements were reached on topics including co-management, concessions, stakeholder roles, and revenue sharing. In 2003, CONASA facilitated other meetings between the communities, ZAWA, and safari operators (see *6.2.6.3 – Pre-season safari hunting meetings*, page 132). Representatives from both ZAWA and CRBs have stated that these and other facilitated meetings has resulted in a smoother working relationship between ZAWA and the communities.

9.4.3. Reductions in local poaching

9.4.3.1. COMMUNITY SENSITISATION CAMPAIGNS

To help reduce the illegal off take of wildlife so that more profitable forms of wildlife utilization can be re-established, CONASA provided sensitisation training as part of its CBO capacity building package. Several CRBs and VAGs subsequently promoted these messages at locally organised community meetings, leading in some cases directly to the voluntary surrendering of firearms, renewed interest in the reformed poachers program, and better relations with ZAWA (see below).

Conservation messages have also been promoted through other community events. Resource management was one of the topics taught to Local Facilitators during their initial training, and several have held community meetings on sustainable management of resources (see for example *Figure 16 – Gender representation at community-organised trainings*, page 225). On another occasion, over 300 people watched a drama on conservation at an agricultural field day in Nkandanzovu in early 2003.

Building grassroots support for conservation: The case of Nkandanzovu

CONASA conducted PRAs prior to the project start in five Chiefdoms that constitute the project area. It was recorded that wildlife numbers were in decline affecting all key animal species (kudu, sable, elephant, roan, wild beast, zebra, buffalo, hartebeest and others). This information complimented animal surveys conducted in the year 2001 on the Kafue National Park and the surrounding GMAs. CONASA since then embarked on various interventions aimed at improving natural resources management and agricultural production to alleviate food and income insecurity as well as rampant poaching through integrated and community participatory approaches.

One of the worst areas in terms of ZAWA-community relations was Nkandanzovu VAG in Chief Chikanta's area. Relations were so bad it was reported that ZAWA scouts avoided patrolling in Nkandanzovu for fear of violent confrontations with the community. However the leadership of Nkandanzovu quickly caught on to the possibilities of a better use of wildlife, and spurred on by the hopes of a game ranch, safari hunting, or other type of income generating enterprise, they initiated a series of community meetings to spread the message.

One of the main outcomes of this campaign was the voluntary surrendering of more than 100 illegally owned firearms. This mostly took place between November 2002 and March 2003. Among the 34 people that surrendered guns, six of these were dangerous immigrant poachers from Kaoma who had links with traders from urban centres along the line of rail to supply game meat to large markets, especially Lusaka. After surrendering their guns, the immigrant poachers from Kaoma left Nkandanzovu, and the temporary shelters they had constructed were taken down. Through linkages made by CONASA, ZAWA was able to visit the area four times in 2003 alone. A second outcome from this campaign was better management of local trees, in particular species that have medicinal properties that were being over-utilised.

The challenge now for ZAWA and CONASA is to bring income generating activities into existence, so the goodwill that has been built for conservation is not lost. There are also increasing conflicts with wildlife that have to be dealt with. According to VAG chairman Silas Mwanankopa, lions killed 6 goats and 9 cattle (worth about 10.8 million) in 2003. Crop damage has been increasing as well, the worst culprits are reported to be kudu, wild pig, spring hare, and elephants during the rainy season. There is no provision for compensation at the present time.

In previous times Nkandanzovu was a very hostile area, which made it difficult for ZAWA to conduct surveillance operations in the area. Today the atmosphere and attitude of the general populace is quite conducive, and the open door policy for outside poachers has been closed. However whether or not this door will stay closed depends on the ability of the Chikanta CRB, ZAWA, and CONASA to give real value to wildlife.

Source: Goodwin Kabumbwe

9.4.3.2. VOLUNTARY SURRENDERING OF FIREARMS

The community sensitisation campaigns have led to a number of community members voluntarily surrendering over 300 firearms (Table 32). This has been most pronounced in Nkandanzovu and Nyawa. While 300 may not seem like a huge number of guns, if one considers the number of animals that a single

Lesson Learned

Community sensitisation campaigns can result in conservation gains by leveraging nothing but community goodwill, however these gains will only be maintained if tangible benefits are produced.

firearm can kill per year, this translates into literally thousands of saved animals. Furthermore, unlike snares that mostly take smaller antelope, firearms are the greatest threat to large species, including buffalo and elephant. The ability of CRBs to remove over 300 weapons, based on nothing other than conservation communication, speaks volumes about on the potential of leverage social capital to reorient large numbers of people towards sustainable use of resources.

Table 32. Partial list of voluntarily surrendered firearms 2001-2003

Type of gun	2001	2002	2003
Chikanta			
AK47	7	6	0
MLG	8	4	7
MMS*	0	13	7
Ammo			2
Kalomo			
AK47			2
Rifles			1
12 bore			1
semi			2
Nyawa			
AK47			18
MMS			149

*MMS is a type of home made shotgun

9.4.3.3. REFORMED POACHER PROGRAM

Research from WCS in the Luangwa Valley suggests that a very small number of traditional hunters are responsible for a large amount of illegal off take. This has led to the development of a training program at the ACCBNRM aimed specifically at poachers who are willing to lay down their arms in exchange for livelihood training and start-up support for agriculture and small livestock production. The course covers a variety of topics including leather craft, vegetable gardening, animal tracking, skinning, guiding tourists, bee keeping, and poultry production. The program has been quite successful to date, and has demonstrated that the vast majority of local hunters will gladly exchange an inherently dangerous livelihood if offered viable alternatives. The program is a good example of how focused targeting of an HLS activity can produce benefits for conservation.

CONASA facilitated the participation of nine local hunters in the Reformed Poacher Livelihood program at ACCBNRM in 2001. In addition to footing some of the bill, CONASA worked with local CBOs to identify suitable candidates, and provided follow-up support to the participants once they returned. A year after the course, all of the participants were reported to have been successfully engaged in alternative livelihood strategies, and three went on to become village scouts.

From killing to tilling:
Profile of a reformed poacher

Davie is 57 years old with a family size of 13 and lives in Himbayi village in Nkandanzovu VAG of Chikanta CRB. His home is about 18 km away from the Kafue National Park boundary and he has lived in this area for 12 years after being resettled from the Kariba Valley, and was involved in illegal hunting since then. He estimates his total hunt at about 55 wild animals. He was identified to go for training at Nyamaluma by his VAG between September and October 2001. He underwent skills training which has helped him achieve food security. He has been working with CONASA for two years. During the 2002/2003 farming season, he received some cowpea seed from CONASA for seed multiplication and is a member of the commercial maize production Commodity Group. On 22nd January 2003 due to his involvement in CONASA activities he surrendered an illegally possessed gun (MLG) while his two brothers Allen and Abram surrendered their guns as a result of his persuasion.

Source: Goodwin Kabumbwe

9.4.4. NRM training

A key principle of CBNRM is that local communities should be able to play a role in managing their natural resources. The Wildlife Act gives CRBs the legal authority to co-manage resources, which in practice has translated into having an input into hunting quotas, developing local natural resource management plans and bylaws, providing input into ZAWA's law enforcement operations, and spearheading local initiatives such as fire management, communication campaigns, and monitoring.

To better enable CRBs to fulfil their roles in managing resources, CONASA has provided a number of training programs, mostly in-situ. NRM trainings are sometimes conducted by officers from ZAWA or Forestry, with CONASA facilitating logistics and paying the bill. Topics covered include quota setting, habitat management, problem animal control, anti-poaching strategies, and law enforcement monitoring. A partial list of NRM trainings is provided in Table 33 below.

Table 33. Partial list of NRM trainings

Date	Audience	Topics
August 2002	CRBs (39 participants)	participatory resource assessment and management planning
March 2003	Siachitema CRB (5 participants)	habitat management, problem animals, anti-poaching, quota setting
2nd qrtr 2003	Moomba & Siachitema CRB	habitat management, problem animals, quota setting, law enforcement review
October 2003	Nyawa, Chikanta, Shezongo	quota setting (conducted by ZAWA)

In 2001, CONASA also facilitated the training of 59 village scouts, 2 RMC members, and 3 bookkeepers. CONASA assisted CRBs in identifying candidates, and supporting their course at the ACCBNRM.

9.4.5. Data collection and monitoring

9.4.5.1. RESOURCE INVENTORIES

In 2001, CONASA contracted professional botanist Mike Bingham to conduct a vegetation study of Mulobezi and Sichifulo GMAs. The team visited two areas to document vegetation cover, assess the potential for natural resource enterprises, and collect GPS data for a land cover study using remote sensing.

Following the fieldwork, a remote sensing workshop was conducted at ACCBNRM by a landscape ecologist from the New York headquarters of WCS. The outcome of the workshop was a ground cover classification from a satellite image of Mulobezi and Sichifulo GMAs showing major land cover categories and the extent of agricultural settlements.

In 2002, forest assessments were completed in Moomba Central, Mabwe, Choonzo, and Mulanga VAGs in Mulobezi, and Nanzhila VAG in Bbilili. The purpose of the assessments were to explore the viability of timber harvesting and make recommendations for harvesting guidelines, fire management, and group structures. The inventories were conducted with CONASA's partner SAFIRE. A follow-up visit was made to Moomba CRB in June 2003, collecting additional information about resources in the CRB, threats, and recommendations for management.

9.4.5.2. LAW ENFORCEMENT MONITORING

One of the mandates of CRBs is to work with ZAWA to oversee law enforcement activities of scouts. Early meetings revealed that although ZAWA scouts and village scouts maintain records of their field patrol activities, CRBs had no way to access or analyse this information. CONASA responded by assisting the CRBs to design a system to collect summary data from field patrols, which they can then use to assess the levels of poaching in their area, and provide feedback to ZAWA.

Subsequently in 2003 CONASA provided training to RMC members, community coordinators, and a handful of local facilitators in summarising field patrol data forms. As a result of this training, CRBs in Mulobezi and Sichifulo now get regular updates on law enforcement effort and indicators of poaching pressure (e.g., number of poachers arrested, guns confiscated, poacher camps found).

9.4.5.3. CORRIDOR MAPPING

Staff from CONASA's component three conducted a series of field studies to map out the extent of wildlife "corridors", which animals use to move between habitats. The largest corridor surveyed lies between KNP and the Zambezi, and is believe to be used by elephants moving between protected areas in Zambia, Botswana, and Namibia. The first field exercise conducted mapped out the general boundaries of the corridors, while the second survey documented patterns in people-wildlife conflicts on the edges of the corridors. The outcome was a map showing the extent of a possible wildlife corridor, and the spatial distribution of people-wildlife conflicts. For more information, see *8.2.1 – Collecting information on ecological connectivity*, page 156.

9.4.5.4. SPECIAL STUDIES

In addition to the ecological assessments described above and some product development studies, CONASA has conducted special studies on conservation topics. In late 2002, the M&E section conducted a study on the illegal bush meat trade. The survey interviewed 79 respondents in 54 villages in Mulobezi and Sichifulo GMAs. Key findings from the study included:

- A large quantity of bush meat is traded locally or supplied directly to external markets from the two GMAs, with smaller sources in the open areas and KNP itself.
- The meat destinations include distant places such as Livingstone, Lusaka, Kitwe, Ndola, Lwampa, Sesheke, Sichili, Caprivi Strip, and Choma.

- There seems to be no effective patrols against poachers in the bush or checks against meat traffickers (e.g. on the Mulobezi train) to control the situation.

In 2004, CONASA also contracted a special study on the linkages between livelihood security and conservation. Results from that study are summarized in *9.5.3 – Linkages between HLS and conservation*, page 195.

9.4.6. Development of resource management plans and bylaws

CONASA has been instrumental in facilitating a process to develop local resource management plans and bylaws. This is described in more detail in section *6.2.5.3 – Bylaws and resource management plans*, page 128.

9.4.7. Strengthening policy implementation

CONASA helped Moomba CRB force contract compliance from two companies that were failing to live up to the terms of their concession agreements to manage a sawmill and produce timber sustainbly. This victory was made possible by initiatives in Parliament and the Forestry Department to increase public input into the policy process. For more details, see *6.2.6.1 – Moomba CRB presentation in parliament*, page 130.

9.4.8. Policy analysis, advocacy training, and forums

CONASA supported a stream of activities to analyse strengths and weaknesses in Zambia's natural resources policy framework, establish a multi-tiered forum to facilitate policy discussions between stakeholders and provide input into government, and provide training in advocacy. Put together, these three achievements lay a strong foundation for removing gaps in policy that hinder the success of bottom-up approaches to resource management. For more information see *6.2 – Achievements*, page 122.

9.4.9. Community woodlots

To promote the sustainable harvesting of natural resources, CONASA is pilot-testing the formation of community woodlots and fruit orchards in Siachitema CRB. CONASA facilitated meetings to mobilise community interest, provided training in fruit tree production, identified appropriate species (both fuelwood and fruit trees), and bought seedlings to get the project started. Approximately 100 households are expected to be involved in 2004, and 7.5 ha of land converted to woodlots and nurseries.

9.4.10. Facilitation of intra-community conflicts

CONASA has attempted to facilitate the resolution of intra-community conflicts. Conflict resolution facilitation is an important service that is needed for a healthy CBO structure, and CONASA's stance as a basically neutral party makes it well-positioned to help communities resolve their internal issues so that the business of development and resource management can move forward.

"CONASA's stance as a basically neutral party makes it well-positioned to help communities resolve their internal issues so that the business of development and resource management can move forward."

The most severe and longest-standing conflict has been in Nyawa, where the community is still split as to which of two contenders will succeed Chief Nyawa III who died in 1997. This conflict is serious for at least three reasons: 1) it has disrupted safari hunting causing the communities to lose large amounts of revenue, 2) it has almost completely paralysed CONASA as well as any other NGO or private sector business that wants to support development in the area, and 3) the dispute has accelerated the establishment of new settlements deep in the GMA, as these settlers are part of the power-plays between the two contenders.

CONASA has wisely taken a back-seat role in the dispute, but has played a supportive role as the community tries to work out the conflict. CONASA is also a member of the Katanda Forest Settlement Task Force, a multi-stakeholder committee convened to resolve the issue of new settlements in prime safari hunting habitat – an issue related to the conflict over the chieftaincy. Progress has been slow on both fronts, despite intervention from government and the courts. As of the end of 2003, dialogue was continuing but there was no resolution in sight.

CONASA had more success facilitating a community dispute in Nanzhila VAG in Shezongo CRB. Following complaints from VMCs and HHGs about lack of information flow and financial transparency, CONASA facilitated a meeting between the CRB, VAGs, and others. The outcome of this meeting was agreement on an action plan that would resolve identified problems, many of which can be traced to poor communication.

9.4.11. Environmental impact assessment

In compliance with USAID regulations, CONASA sent the Deputy Chief of Party to a workshop on environmental impact assessment. After the training, the DCOP facilitated an internal EIA, which concluded that CONASA is not causing damage to the environment or human health. The chief concern for a project like CONASA would be the environmental impacts of pesticides or herbicides, however the project is not promoting nor financing either of these technologies. A second possible concern would be small-scale timber harvesting, but CONASA has not financed any timber production commodity groups, although it has assessed the feasibility of sustainable timber production. The EIA stressed that on the contrary CONASA is promoting sustainable resource management practices which are likely to lead to better environmental quality and human health. The EIA report has been reviewed by both USAID and this evaluation, and found to be acceptable.

9.5. Discussion

9.5.1. Conservation strategy

CONASA had a great deal of flexibility in developing its conservation strategy, as the RFA which gave birth to CONASA provided little guidance in the way of an approach or even expected result for conservation. The result crafted by the consortium, *Increased sustainable agricultural and natural resource production,* is broad enough to cover a wide range of strategies, provided that they remain compatible with the overall principles of CBNRM, HLS, and market driven development.

Although CONASA's flexibility to choose an approach for conservation has been wide open, its resources for conservation are not. In part because USAID's RFA did not contain an expected result for sustainable resource management, funding for conservation activities is relatively scarce. The elimination of a planned satellite office in Itezhi-tezhi, due to the budget cut in year one (see *2.3 – Impact of the budget cut*, page 21), further reduced funding for conservation. CONASA's response has been to incorporate conservation as a cross-cutting theme in all sections of the project, and support a limited number of activities that have resource management as the

primary objective. Currently the project has two field officers, one in wildlife and one in forestry, whose primary focus is NRM.

A third factor which has shaped CONASA's conservation is the locus of authority for resource management. More specifically, CONASA does not have a mandate to manage resources, and therefore all of its activities to strengthen resource management must go through the legally empowered institutions: ZAWA and CRBs. It is important to remember this fact when reviewing CONASA's impact on natural resources: It has never been within CONASA's ability or mandate to manage natural resources; the most it can expect to achieve is improving the context for more sustainable NRM.

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While the description of CONASA's conservation strategy is very holistic in the project document, with a little bit of everything, its limited mandate and resources have resulted in emphasis on the following elements:

- using the CBO structure to spread a message about the goals and rationale of conservation
- supporting food production and income generation as a means to reduce subsistence poaching
- establishing eco-friendly enterprises (conservation business ventures)
- strengthening the policy context through analysis and better dialogue among stakeholders
- providing small forms of support to ZAWA to help it achieve its goal of implementing the principles of CBNRM
- supporting the ability of CRBs to develop resource management plans and bylaws

9.5.1.1. STRENGTHS

The strength of CONASA's conservation strategy, as it has manifested itself in practice, begins with the focus on livelihoods. An HLS focus is entirely appropriate given the socio-economic context of the area, with high levels of food insecurity and human population density, particularly in the east. Addressing conservation issues without being attentive to the social needs of the area has been tried in the past and is simply not feasible. The focus on building local capacity is also well-placed, as everything we know from recent experience suggests that strong local institutions are a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for conservation to succeed in settled areas.

The focus on strengthening the ability of ZAWA to implement the principles of devolution is another strength, and gives a boost to this essential institution which has struggled in the past to implement reforms to support CBNRM. It is still too early to say for certain whether CBNRM will lead to effective wildlife conservation in the three GMAs, but if conservation is to have any chance at all it will certainly be through the hands of a strong ZAWA working as co-managers with communities.

A third strength of CONASA's conservation strategy is the focus on building a capacity to strengthen the policy framework. Rather than just analyse gaps in the policy framework, which has been done before, CONASA has nurtured

participatory structures to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders and build consensus on key issues. Although CONASA may not exist long enough to see the fruits of its efforts, the process is heading in the right direction. Equally if not more important is the clever use of provisions within the Local Government Act to enable communities to develop resource management plans and the bylaws to back them.

A fourth strength of CONASA's conservation strategy is its efforts to customize the mix of interventions to the ecological and socioeconomic characteristics of each area. Thus for example we have seen in heavily populated areas a greater focus on agricultural intensification and proposals for more intensive forms of wildlife management such as game ranches. While in sparsely populated areas there has been greater focus on building enterprises which provide incentives for the management of large tracts of habitat (e.g., bee keeping, timber harvesting, mungongo nut harvesting).

Lastly, perhaps the most important strength of all is that CONASA views its conservation strategy as a work in progress, and has constantly tried to strengthen it. The project has learned from both its successes and failures in conservation, and sought outside consultation to help it analyse its data and distil lessons learned. A small but significant example of this pattern is the increasing level of integration of conservation goals in agriculture, enterprise, and CBO capacity building. Whereas in year one conservation was largely seen as a separate stream of activities, in years two and three conservation issues have become a standard lens through which all activities are viewed. In year four, it appears that the project is ripe for another breakthrough in its thinking about conservation, and is better equipped to deal with the "nuts and bolts" of resource management.

9.5.1.2. WEAKNESSES

While CONASA's approach to conservation features a number of strengths, from a conservation standpoint the strategy also has several shortcomings. First and foremost, as mentioned previously nearly all of the interventions the project is using are indirect – improving the context for conservation but not getting involved with resource management directly. Interventions to achieve conservation can be categorized as direct (restocking, supplemental feeding or water, law enforcement, fire management, etc.), or indirect (creating incentives, improving the institutional environment, improving livelihoods, etc.).

The rationale behind an indirect approach is clear – CONASA does not have the mandate nor the capacity to get directly involved in resource management. However it is important to remember this fact when reviewing CONASA's impact on conservation. The way it is designed, CONASA has never been so much of a "conservation project" as it is a "conservation-enabling" project.

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A second possible weak link in CONASA's conservation strategy is that it relies upon a number of assumptions, many of which are untested. Untested assumptions are the norm in conservation, and not necessarily a source of weakness if they are thought of as working hypotheses in a broader framework

of institutional learning (see *13.0 – CONASA as a Learning* , 261). However danger arises when assumptions are taken as fact, or not even articulated. The success of CONASA's conservation strategy will only be as effective in as much as its assumptions are valid, which are tenuous in some cases.

Perhaps the biggest assumption in CONASA's conservation strategy is that there are strong linkages between livelihood security and resource pressure. The recent special study on HLS-conservation linkages found that these linkages are in fact quite weak in CONASA, as they tend to be in most conservation projects (see *9.5.3 – Linkages between HLS and conservation*, page 195).

A second critical assumption that has yet to be validated is that conservation and eco-friendly enterprises are economically viable, able to generate enough revenue to cover not only the costs of management but also additional bounty for community development. This assumption has not been properly examined for any of CONASA's supported enterprises, and some preliminary evidence points in the opposite direction. The result is that some conservation gains (e.g., the voluntary surrendering of firearms) have been achieved through vague promises and possibly unrealistic expectations. After the expected enterprises failed to materialise, the project and CRBs now have to deal with the expected backlash: "Give us back our guns" was the comment of one community member at a recent review meeting.

Another assumption which remains to be validated is that CBOs will naturally choose conservation as the preferred form of land use. True devolution is inherently risky with outcomes that are difficult to predict. This uncertainty may underlie the reluctance of government and NGOs to fully devolve ownership of natural resources to community structures.

A third possible weakness in CONASA's conservation strategy is that it generally fails to acknowledge that there are often trade-offs between environmental protection and economic development, and therefore has not developed mechanisms to deal with difficult decisions inherent in conservation planning. The inclusion of conservation as one of the "twin" goals of CONASA has also been interpreted to mean that its two goals are fundamentally compatible.

Thus nearly all of CONASA's conservation work has been on a quest for win-win solutions: agriculture that is compatible with conservation, threat reduction that is compatible with livelihoods, enterprise that is compatible with conservation, investment which is simultaneously good for conservation and livelihoods, etc. While this outlook is optimistic, it might be naïve in face of the lessons of many conservation projects in Zambia and the region that suggest that win-win solutions are more often the exception than the norm.

"CONASA's conservation strategy generally fails to acknowledge that there are often trade-offs between environmental protection and economic development, and therefore has not developed mechanisms to deal with difficult decisions inherent in conservation planning."

Experience from developed and developing countries alike suggests that effective conservation frequently requires not expansion but containment of livelihoods, restrictions on resource use, and strong institutions that can both plan and enforce regulations. Livelihood security is an important part of the context, which determines whether or not resource use regulations will work, but livelihood security itself will usually not make resource management sustainable.

CONASA's strong focus on identifying win-win solutions has consumed nearly all of its program resources, leaving little room for the development of structures and processes to articulate social and ecological goals, negotiate trade offs, and explore regulatory options.

9.5.2. Developing conservation action plans

The adaptation of generic conservation strategies to a specific site results in an action plan. CONASA's action plan for conservation began with fairly general ideas about the importance of wildlife and forest resources, and the nature of threats facing those resources. CONASA's conservation strategy has evolved as the project has acquired more experience and knowledge of the area, but the clarity of its approach to conservation still lags behind the frameworks for HLS or policy. Many of the pieces are there, but have not always been put together in a coherent package. As CONASA continues to support the development of VAG-level resource management plans (rules about resource use), land-use plans (zoning), and bylaws (lists of enforceable rules and penalties), it will be important that the approach it takes doesn't leave any critical pieces out.

The body of literature on community-based conservation is less developed than HLS or enterprise, and proven strategies for conservation often do not travel well from one project to another. Nevertheless, there is general consensus on a good approach for developing a community-based conservation strategy, and some principles which have proven useful in a number of experiences.

9.5.2.1. ARTICULATE GOALS

All effective conservation strategies start with a consensus on goals. CONASA's (and presumably the CRB's) goals are currently at the level of "we want to protect natural resources and improve household livelihood security." This is a good start, but, as the project has seen, goals that are as vague as this provide little guidance for implementation. "Natural resources" consists of hundreds of species, dozens of ecosystem types, environmental services, ecological processes, etc., all operating at different spatial and temporal scales. The current set of conservation goals, as they are expressed in conversation and in literature, are deficient by not clearly specifying:

- the spatial area of interest
- a ranking of conservation priorities (in the likely event that not all resources can be given equal protection)
- a clear rationale for why each type of natural resource or process is worth protecting
- a time frame

9.5.2.2. COMPILE AN ECOLOGICAL PROFILE

A second element of an effective conservation strategy is a reasonably complete ecological profile of the area. Ideally environmental information will be collected for the entire project area, but the appropriate level of compiling ecological profiles is probably the VAG because it is at this level that resource management plans are usually developed.

CONASA has used both participatory and "scientific" methods to develop an ecological profile of the project area. During the 2001 PRA exercises, hand-drawn maps showing the location of resource endowments were made by community members. Similar exercises were conducted by RMC members during workshops facilitated by the CONASA CSC to develop resource management plans.

CONASA has also conducted or contracted several ecological assessments of the area. These started in 2001 with a contracted assessment of vegetation in Sichifulo and Mulobezi GMAs, followed a land-cover classification using Landsat satellite images. CONASA also contracted at least two assessments of specific forest stands in or near Mulobezi, with the support of its partner SAFIRE. These assessments included ground transects to estimate the density and regeneration rates of specific timber species. CONASA has also conducted at least two large field surveys on migratory wildlife corridors. In addition, the TBNRM component facilitated a science meeting to compile all existing information on biological resources in the three GMAs, although it isn't clear what was produced at this meeting.

While a lot of ground work has been done to collect ecological information in the project area, the spatial area targeted for conservation is not well defined, and we have not seen a proper ranking or prioritisation of resources/critical habitat. CONASA therefore needs to compile, analyse, and synthesise ecological information into a useful format. This type of product will also be useful in land use planning.

9.5.2.3. THREAT ASSESSMENT

The third characteristic of an effective conservation strategy is an assessment of threats. At a minimum this should include a development of a cause-effect map (conceptual framework), characterisation of threats (e.g., local vs. external, long-term vs. short term, permanence of change, spatial extent), followed by ranking, and mapping exercises. There are also methodologies to quantify the severity of threats (e.g., Salafsky and Margoluis 1999).

> "CONASA and the CRBs have a good understanding of the threats facing resources, however they have yet to go through the process of listing, ranking, mapping, and quantifying threats in order to develop effective counter-measures."

CONASA and the CRBs have a good understanding of the threats facing resources, including poaching by locals (for meat or trade), poaching by outsiders, fires, habitat clearing, competition for surface water, over-harvesting of forest and forest products, and disease transmission. However they have yet to go through the process of listing, ranking, mapping, and quantifying threats in order to develop effective counter-measures. Consequently it is entirely possible that the interventions put into place are addressing relatively minor problems while the core threats go unchecked.

9.5.2.4. DEVELOP INTERVENTIONS

The next step in developing an effective conservation strategy is to develop interventions. This usually requires a mix of three categories of activities:

- **improving the context** – institution building, poverty reduction, strengthening policies, awareness building
- **"carrot" tactics** – creating incentives for conservation through resource dependent enterprises, rewards, etc.
- **"stick" tactics** – law enforcement, imposing penalties

Nearly all CONASA's conservation interventions are focused on improving the context, with a couple of "carrot" interventions thrown in. This mix of activities serves a needed role but is not likely to achieve conservation without additional enforcement and regulation.

9.5.2.5. MONITOR AND ADAPT

Recognizing that conservation strategies are imperfect and constantly evolving, the last element of an effective strategy is monitoring and adaptation. It is just as important to test the underlying assumptions as well as whether activities are producing the desired outcomes.

CONASA's M&E activities in conservation have focused on activity reporting and what it calls "threat reduction" – the voluntary or forced surrendering of firearms and snares, and poacher arrests. These are a good start, but what might be missing are measures of the intermediate results that link project activities with the final desired result, which have not always been clearly articulated (see *9.5.10 – M&E*, page 204 for more discussion of M&E in conservation).

9.5.2.6. SUMMARY

CONASA's understanding of conversation has evolved from general ideas about cause-effect, and which resources are important and why, to more specific strategies and objectives. However goals and strategies are still quite general, and it has not always been clear that the supported activities are going to ultimately achieve the desired conservation outcomes.

CONASA is currently leading a process of developing resource management plans, land use plans, and bylaws, so it is therefore important that it becomes the foremost "expert" in conservation planning. With three years of experience working with communities and ZAWA, CONASA is currently poised for a breakthrough in refining its conservation strategy. This will at a minimum enable the project to be much more compelling job when explaining its conservation approach, and will more than likely improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its interventions.

> "CONASA is currently poised for a breakthrough in refining its conservation strategy."

Much of the data needed to develop VAG-level conservation plans, such as ecological inventories, has already been collected and just needs to be put together. Other pieces – such as a threats assessment – have yet to be developed. CONASA should therefore continue to work toward facilitating the

development of conservation strategies, resource management plans, and land use plans, so that all stakeholders are on the same wavelength and CRBs are equipped to take advantage of opportunities in policy or funding if and when they arise.

Recommendation 38. Now that CONASA has several years of experience working with the communities, it should refine its conservation strategy by more clearly articulating conservation goals, compiling resource inventory data that's been collected into ecological profiles, conducting threat assessments, and revisiting the set of interventions and approach to M&E.

9.5.3. Linkages between HLS and conservation

A good portion of CONASA's conservation approach relies on linkages between household livelihood security and conservation. Although the conceptualisation of these linkages was not clearly articulated in the project design, the general premise is that people over-harvest resources because they're hungry, so if you improve their food security there will be less pressure on resources. There are of course several assumptions underlying this hypothesis, including that local people are the biggest threat to resources (as opposed to urban based threats), and that local people poach primarily because of livelihood insecurity.

In 2004, CONASA contracted Martin Whiteside to conduct a special study on the linkages between HLS and conservation. The study examined four mechanisms which had been hypothesized as the basis of a linkage between HLS and conservation. The main findings are summarized in Table 34 below.

Table 34. Main findings of study on the linkages between HLS and conservation

Hypothesis	Findings
Hypothesis 1. Conservation farming, promotion of hybrid seed, and other techniques that increase agricultural productivity will reduce the amount of new land cleared for agriculture.	The agricultural activities of CONASA, primarily improved seed and artificial fertiliser, seem to be having a positive short term crop production impact, but were not found to be leading to a reduction in new land being cleared for agriculture.
Hypothesis 2. Improving household food security will result in lower levels of unsustainable resource exploitation, in particular poaching.	The reported contribution of illegal hunting to food security is however very low, although it might be important for specific households. Any impact of increased food security on reducing poaching is considered quite marginal. The reported reduction in illegal hunting by local people was found to be mainly due to increased enforcement, awareness raising, provision of livelihood alternatives for some poachers and expectations of community benefits from legal hunting.
Hypothesis 3. The organisational capacity building that has been developed to support livelihood activities can be used for resource management purposes as well.	The institutional capacity built primarily for livelihood activities in commodity groups was not generally being used for NRM, except in specific instances related to a specific livelihood activity. On the contrary, there is a danger of the livelihood commitments of Community Resource boards (CRBs) and Village Area Groups (VAGs) detracting from their NRM activities.

Hypothesis	Findings
Hypothesis 4. Livelihood activities being promoted by CONASA will result in improved trust, goodwill, attitudes for the need for resource management and greater environmental knowledge – thereby facilitating conservation activities.	NRM actions need to make sense in their own right to communities – and CONASA has been successful with this direct approach. If NRM doesn't make sense to the community, then trust built in CONASA from livelihood activities is unlikely to be successful or sustainable in promoting NRM.

Overall, the direct linkages between CONASA's livelihood activities and natural resource production were found to be quite weak for a number of reasons:

- The importance of wildlife and gathered products to household livelihoods and even coping strategies is quite low in comparison to agriculture.
- Most of CONASA's positive impact on natural resources has been directly through raising awareness, rather than indirectly from changing livelihoods.
- Opportunities of linking livelihood to improved NRM through improved governance, natural resource planning, promoting sustainable agriculture and increasing the numbers affected by livelihood activities are still at a relatively early stage.

Lesson Learned

There are few direct, short-term benefits for household livelihood security from more sustainable resource management practices.

The main lesson of this study for CONASA therefore is that in general there are probably few direct relationships between livelihood security and conservation, however improved livelihoods can provide a more conducive context for conservation. This finding concurs with lessons from other projects (see Chobe example below). Thus in the best case scenario, the linkages between conservation and livelihoods are a weak form of synergy, whereby stronger livelihoods helps to improve the context for conservation, but in no way substitutes for or guarantees conservation outcomes. However the study also noted it is also quite possible that increased livelihood security will accelerate environmental degradation; indeed this has been the dominant pattern in most parts of the world. Whether or not livelihood security increases or decreases environmental degradation depends a lot on the institutional and policy framework.

Do conservation-livelihood linkages work?
The Chobe Enclave vs. CONASA

Sometimes the relationship between two variables can be best seen by comparing case studies that are similar in many ways but differ in a few key aspects. To understand if and how livelihood security and conservation are linked, we can look at the case studies of CONASA and the Chobe Enclave.

The Chobe Enclave is often touted as one of the most successful CBNRM programs in the region, and is one of the most-often visited CBNRM sites. The conservation achievements of the Chobe Enclave are indeed impressive: wildlife populations have been maintained, poaching is down, and habitat has been protected (Jones and Murphree 2004). On the people side, the local communities have established a community trust which represents their interests in negotiations with government and the private sector, the community is able to reinvest profits in the community development projects, and jobs have been created for local people.

However one can not separate the success of the Chobe Enclave from its context, which was characterized by livelihood security even before the CBNRM project started. Thanks in large part to a stable economy, and good

governance in Botswana, residents of the Chobe Enclave have never really had to worry about hunger, even during bad years, because the government offers food-for-work programs. Social services, including health and education, are also generally available. Furthermore, because the Pula currency is stable and inflation is low, CBOs are also able to bank their revenues without losing value, and therefore implement development projects that require larger amounts of capital. And because the entire population of enclave is only 5 villages, it is feasible to design development projects which benefit almost everyone. In summary, the strength of livelihoods in the Chobe Enclave provided a *conducive context* which gave the communities an *opportunity* to develop the capacity of local institutions to achieve conservation objectives.

Now contrast that picture with the context in the CONASA project area. Livelihoods of rural households in Southern Zambia are generally not secure, as can be seen by the number of emergency relief operations in the last ten years. A growing rural population needs first and foremost to eat, and for 9 out of 10 households this means farming. Due to events in the political arena, which spilled over into the wildlife sector, the benefits from wildlife have been declining and erratic. Even if the good years return, the direct impacts on household livelihood security will be marginal after the communities' 45% share of safari hunting revenue 'trickles-down' to 100,000 people in more than 500 villages. In this context, conservation can still be possible, but the insecurity of livelihoods *intensifies* the competition for land, water, and meat, and *reduces* the opportunities to find win-win solutions for conservation.

9.5.4. Impacts and efficiency

It seems somewhat paradoxical that CONASA's greatest achievements in conservation – voluntary reductions in local poaching, development of resource management plans, bylaws, and smoothing relations with ZAWA – came from the smallest investments. The group of activities that have taken up the greatest amount of project resources – in terms of staff time and money – are the eco-friendly enterprises. In addition to the four enterprises that have achieved a modicum of success (*9.4.1 – Eco-friendly enterprises*, page 181), there have been several other enterprises that never got off the ground. These include:

- **Game ranches**. In the early stages of the project, CONASA was asked by Chiefs Siachitema and Chikanta for assistance in setting up community-owned game ranches. CONASA responded by facilitating community meetings to build consensus on the projects, supporting field surveys, and hiring a consultant to outline the requirements of a game ranch and develop an action plan. During the planning process, it was found that ZAWA objected to the plans GMA, stating game ranches were prohibited under the Wildlife Act.

- **Bird sanctuary**. One of the early suggestions for an eco-friendly exercise explored in years one and two was a bird sanctuary that could potentially raise money through tourism. This proposal generated a great deal of excitement as it would generate benefits in the short term, unlike a game ranch which could take years to turn a profit. Unfortunately no suitable areas for a bird sanctuary could be identified – all potential sites were either too degraded or already protected within the borders of a GMA.

- **Fish farming**. One of the activities requested during the PRA exercises was fish farming. CONASA's NRM coordinator made a visit to the fisheries department in Choma and documented the requirements for setting up a fish farm. This was followed by field visit to Bbilili and Nkandanzovu VAGs accompanied by an

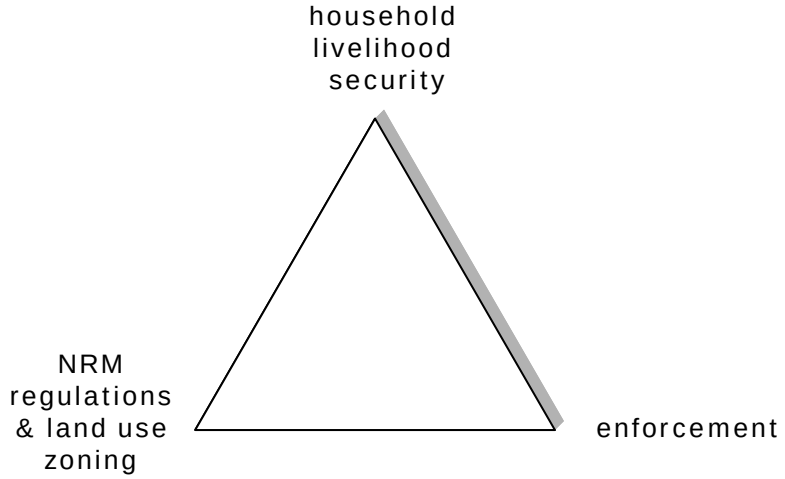
experienced Peace Corps volunteer to assess the potential for fish farming. After visiting four sites, it was concluded the area was not appropriate for fish farming due to its soils, topography, and scarcity of permanent water sources.

- **Timber production**. Timber production was explored as a possible income generating activities, particularly in the Mulobezi area which has a number of forest areas. Together with its partner SAFIRE, CONASA conducted at least two ecological assessments and development management recommendations for small scale timber production. Timber production is constrained however by a lack of large trees (most of which have already been harvested), the isolation of forest patches, and frequent fires which reduce regeneration rates. As of the end of 2003, no revenue had been reported by timber production groups.

CONASA's experiences with eco-friendly enterprises suggest that while they are good in theory and have great symbolic value, in practice eco-friendly enterprises give very little "bang for the buck". CONASA has invested a huge amount of resources into developing these enterprises, but even the few "successful" ones are operating at a huge loss if you factor in the start-up capital. Most resource-based enterprises also benefit tiny numbers of people, so even if they are successful in creating economic incentives for conservation, it is dubious as to whether those incentives will be deep and wide enough to ward off threats and alternative land uses. This is particularly true in heavily populated areas, where population growth and movement create huge pressures on the land that are unlikely to be stopped by a trickle of income going to a few bee keepers or basket makers.

The lesson for CONASA is not that eco-friendly enterprises are undesirable, however they are no substitute for the "golden triangle" of conservation: livelihood security – zoning and regulations – enforcement (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Golden triangle of conservation in populated areas



According to this framework, eco-friendly enterprises are good for conservation in as much as they contribute to HLS and enforceable regulations on land and resource use. Tourism investments, like a campsite, tend to be valuable for conservation not because of their contribution to HLS, which reaches only a tiny number of households, but because they provide a rationale for stronger resource management policies, zoning, and to some extent better enforcement. However when eco-friendly enterprises consume a huge portion of project resources with little or no return, they represent an inefficient form of investment.

CONASA's efforts to build resource-based enterprises was not unreasonable, however in hindsight, given the context of the project area, CONASA may have

been able to achieve a greater conservation impact if it had spent less resources on exploring eco-friendly enterprises—either by cutting some off sooner or using a less intensive approach—and allocated more resources to core HLS strategies (agriculture and livestock) and the implementation of resource management plans, and possibly village scout support. It has been argued elsewhere that efficiency analysis is not one of CONASA's strong points (e.g., see *12.3.1 – Financial and administrative information systems*, page 238) and the experiences with enterprise development and conservation highlight one area where CONASA can improve performance by mainstreaming efficiency analysis.

> "The experiences of pouring resources into low yield eco-friendly enterprises highlights one area where CONASA could improve performance by mainstreaming efficiency analysis."

9.5.5. Linkages with other sections

CONASA has made considerable progress in "mainstreaming" conservation issues across the project. In year one, program staff tended to focus on their individual section results, and there was even resistance when they were asked to think "outside the box" and highlight the connections between their work and conservation issues. However by the end of year three, all staff were comfortable highlighting connections with conservation at the annual performance review meeting, and the descriptions of linkages showed an increasing sophistication in the level of understanding of processes that affect natural resources. Today, conservation is very much "on the radar scope" in all sections.

While awareness of conservation has permeated across all sections, CONASA continues to struggle to operationalise linkages between conservation and other activities (as most conservation projects do). Much of the conceptualising also seems come after-the-fact rather, rather than in the planning stages. This section briefly reviews some of the main issues in linkages with conservation, based largely upon the findings of the recent special study on conservation-livelihoods.

9.5.5.1. CBO CAPACITY BUILDING AND CONSERVATION

Much of the capacity building training has been directed at CRBs, which has the greatest role to play in resource management. Much of this training has been focused on NRM, with a heavy emphasis on understanding policies governing NRM. CONASA has also facilitated a number of trainings on the "nuts and bolts" of resource management, such as quota setting, resource assessment, fire management, etc.

Thus the connections between CBO capacity building and conservation are fairly strong. The livelihoods-conservation study cautioned however that there is a danger that the CRBs are being overburdened with livelihood activities that are consuming their energies away from their conservation responsibilities, and possibly stretching their mandate. There is also a concern that the lower level structures are being overlooked in resource management training. While some management actions, such as quota setting, are best made at the GMA level, other practices, such as fire management and threat assessments, are more effective at a VAG level. VAGs and CRBs need to sit down and review the

optimal division of responsibilities for resource management (see also Recommendation 11, page 68).

9.5.5.2. AGRICULTURE AND CONSERVATION

CONASA's agriculture strategy paper outlines two connections to conservation: 1) reducing poaching through increased food security, and 2) reducing the rate of new land clearing by promoting long-term land investments such as orchards and gardens.

The study on livelihoods-conservation explored the first connection and concluded that "any impact of increased food security on reducing poaching is considered quite marginal." Reasons for the weak connections include the number of other variables that affect one's decision to poach (including risk, effort, reward), and the influence of outside poachers (which are believed to be driving most of the illegal hunting). The study went on to note however that food security provides a more conducive context which enables more direct management options (e.g., law enforcement, sensitisation campaigns) to take effect.

The special study also examined the second connection – less clearing of new land – and found trends in both directions with no net impact overall. Factors weakening the connection include relatively little effort spent on long-term land investments, easy access to new land, successful farmers increasing their production assets, and the short-term impacts of seed and fertiliser loans.

A third connection that has not been explicitly part of CONASA's conservation strategy but may be having an impact is the displacement of "bad" crops with environmentally friendly crops. In Nkandanzovu, for example, CONASA's promotion of cowpeas has reportedly reduced the number of farmers who grow cotton. Cotton is considered environmentally unfriendly because of rapid nutrient depletion in the soil (which drives new land clearing), high levels of water consumption, and heavy pesticide and herbicide use. Cotton farmers also use the insecticides supplied by Lonrho to poison fish, which in turn kills wildlife also. The other "bad" crop is tobacco, which requires a lot of firewood for curing.

"A third connection that has not been explicitly part of CONASA's conservation strategy but may be having an impact is the displacement of 'bad' crops with environmentally friendly crops."

Going in the other direction, the PRA exercises documented that natural resources are important for household livelihoods particularly as coping strategies. CONASA has not tried to conduct inventories or develop management guidelines for harvesting wild fruits, roots, firewood, etc., however we have seen in some areas local initiatives to manage tree cutting. In some areas, negative impacts on livelihoods in the form of crop damage is a major problem.

While the connections between agriculture and conservation appear weak overall, it should be noted that all of the assessments of this linkage have been rather speculative, and very little empirical data exists to measure the strength of multiple causal linkages in each direction. The special study on livelihoods-conservation did a good job in listing the various mechanisms by which agriculture affects resource use, however the strength of these connections, and the factors that mediate them, are still not well known.

9.5.5.3. ENTERPRISE AND CONSERVATION

Linkages between enterprise development and conservation have been discussed in *9.5.4 – Impacts and efficiency*, page 197. Some of the major lessons learned include:

Lesson Learned

The conservation value of an enterprise depends on whether the incentives created by the enterprise to conserve the resource (= profits x people) are stronger than the incentives to exploit the resource.

- eco-friendly enterprises have been difficult to develop due to a number of constraints with production, infrastructure, and marketing
- CONASA has found it difficult to locate investors for joint business ventures
- eco-friendly enterprises tend to benefit small numbers of people
- the conservation value of eco-friendly enterprises has not been well established, however it most likely comes not from benefits to livelihoods but from incentives to introduce conservation policies and/or enforcement
- natural resources are still a competitive advantage of the area, but it has been difficult so far for communities to capitalise on them
- more work needs to be done studying the economics conservation compared to alternative forms of land use

9.5.5.4. POLICY AND CONSERVATION

The focus of CONASA's policy work has been on natural resource policies, thus there is a fairly tight linkage between policy and conservation. This connection is largely indirect however, as policy is part of the bigger context which enables or disables more direct forms of resource management.

> "There have been some direct linkages between policy and conservation, most notably improvements in policy implementation."

There have been some direct linkages however, most notably improvements in policy implementation. Good examples of this are the various meetings CONASA has facilitated to help ZAWA implement bottom-up policy reforms, and CONASA's facilitation of the Moomba CRB's presentation in Parliament. The development of resource management plans and bylaws also stands to benefit conservation, although this will largely depend on the effectiveness of implementation.

Through the policy analyses and participatory processes supported by CONASA, consensus has been reached on a number of "hot topic" policy issues (see Table 25, page 123). The three most pressing issues for conservation that

are still pending concern the ban on game ranches (a policy issue), compensation for crop damage (also a policy issue) and transparent accounting of hunting revenue (a policy implementation issue).

9.5.5.5. CONSERVATION TARGETING

CONASA has made great improvement in articulating the connections between activities during analysis, but has made less progress in incorporating conservation into the design and implementation of activities. One of the ways CONASA can strengthen the connections between HLS activities and conservation is through more strategic targeting.

> "One of the ways CONASA can strengthen the connections between HLS activities and conservation is through more strategic targeting."

CONASA's targeting strategy is not entirely clear and has not been well documented, but appears to be driven by a mix of wanting to get an even distribution of activities across the project area, "shotgun" approaches (aim wide and see what you hit), and a certain amount of opportunism. To achieve greater conservation impact, CONASA should try to target HLS and capacity building activities where they will have the greatest impact on threat reduction. This will involve a combination of "spatial targeting" (e.g., introducing input schemes closer to the park, corridors, and water points) and "profile targeting" (e.g., inviting households that are livelihood insecure or known to be involved with unsustainable resource use).

To be more strategic in HLS targeting, CONASA needs to make better use of the information it has on each area. This includes resource threats, the ecological profile of each area, and a typology of households. Much of this information has already been collected from resource inventories, threat reduction assessments, and the CSM. Development of a targeting strategy for HLS support should one of the explicit outputs of a land use planning process.

Recommendation 39. CONASA should focus the targeting of its HLS interventions to leverage more benefits for conservation; this will involve 1) conducting threat assessments for each area, 2) compiling existing data into an ecological profile and typology of households, 3) testing a mix of targeting strategies based on spatial and household attributes.

9.5.6. NRM plans and bylaws

This "highest form" of conservation planning that has been conducted to date is represented in the VAG-level NRM plans, bylaws, and the beginnings of land use plans. These planning approaches are holistic in nature, addressing the full suite of resources and not just wildlife, and should in theory have both popular backing (having been developed in a participatory process) and be legally enforceable (by virtue of the Local Government Act). Thus they represent the most promising new "tool" CONASA has introduced into the area for conservation.

As challenging as it has been to hold workshops to develop the NRM plans and bylaws, implementing these plans will be an even greater challenge that will require continued support for the CRBs. The first need is to educate and inform the general public about the resource management plans and bylaws, as they will not be effective and will not be supported if local people are not aware of and understand the rationale for the rules. The special study on livelihoods-conservation tentatively concluded that the level of community knowledge and participation in by-laws formation was limited at the VAG level, and almost non-existent among ordinary community members. We can presume that CRBs will take the lead in spearheading a communication campaign, but CONASA should be ready to assist as needed in developing printed materials (e.g., posters, brochures), providing opportunities for CRB members to explain the plans bylaws at community meetings organised by CONASA, and possibly helping CRBs tap into other communication media such as radio.

A second set of implementation needs focuses on monitoring and evaluation. It is unlikely that the first draft of NRM plans/bylaws are in the most optimal form, both from an ecological and social perspective. Environmental quality is a moving target, and the status of vegetation, soil erosion, and other resources fluctuates depending on a variety of ecological factors and amount of use. It is inevitable that protection for certain resources will need to be increased or decreased, based on how the status of conservation targets changes over time. The special study on livelihoods-conservation also noted that some of the provisions within bylaws were problematic, and required further refinement for specific sites. CONASA has provided training in participatory resource assessment to begin to build this capability in the RMCs, but additional work and support from ZAWA and the forestry department will almost certainly be needed.

> "It is unlikely that the first draft of NRM plans and bylaws are in their most optimal form, as environmental quality is a moving target."

Another set of M&E questions centres on the effects that NRM plans and bylaws will have on local social dynamics. Will locals consider them to be just and fair? Will they be administered without favouritism? Will CRBs use the ability to levy fines as tool for conservation or source of revenue (the way some municipalities become over zealous in setting up speed traps not for public safety but to make up for budget shortfalls)? Will there be resistance to the new plans and bylaws, and if so will it be expressed in the open or through subversive behaviour? Do the new bylaws have a disproportionate impact on certain sub-groups in the communities? Will the Chiefs and Councils be cooperative in enforcing bylaws, and how will penalties be levied?

The success of NRM plans, bylaws, and land use plans depends on whether they provide adequate protection for resources and are socially acceptable. CRBs will need assistance in assessing whether these new instruments are achieving their environmental goals, whether they are generating any kind of backlash, and whether they are having any other kind of unanticipated consequence. CONASA is a more neutral player than CRBs when it comes to monitoring compliance, and has the technical resources to provided the necessary M&E support. Another role CONASA can and should play is in documenting the lessons learned in implementing bylaws and NRM plans, both for other CRBs and the conservation community in general.

The special study on livelihood-conservation also stressed that more work is needed to implement land use plans, but cautioned CONASA to consider the requirements of this activity before committing itself as "*the financial and staffing implications of doing it 'properly' are large*" (Livelihood-conservation study).

9.5.7. Transboundary conservation issues

CONASA's activities in TBNRM were mainly focused on supporting eco-friendly enterprises, strengthening inter-community dialogue in the region, and policy (see *8.2 – Achievements*, page 156). There were also some activities with a more direct conservation focus, most notably the mapping exercises to sketch the boundaries of a wildlife corridor. These studies have laid the foundation for what may eventually become a major conservation achievement in restoring the connectivity between protected areas, however they only represent the first few steps in what will undoubtedly be an extremely long journey. A tremendous amount of work still needs to be done before establishment of a corridor can even be said to be feasible. The next step will be finer-grain studies on animal movements, management options, and the social impacts of corridor conservation. See *8.3.1.1 – Ecological,* page 163, for additional details.

9.5.8. ZAWA

ZAWA represents one of the cornerstones of an effective conservation strategy for GMAs, and a strong relationship with ZAWA will continue to have a positive impact on conservation. CONASA has worked with ZAWA at many levels, most of which have been quite successful. A few unresolved issues remain however, the most pressing of which is a need for more transparent accounting of hunting revenue. Other topics that frequently appear on the agenda at meetings concern policy issues, for example the status of village scouts, the restrictions on game ranches, and restoration strategies for depleted areas. See *7.4 – Pending issues*, page 151, for more discussion about these issues.

9.5.9. Village scouts

Village scouts are one of the unresolved issues for CRBs and ZAWA to work out. At issue is both their roles and responsibilities, and who should support them. The current system appears not to be working very well, and change may be needed. See *7.4.2 – Village Scouts*, page 152, for more discussion.

9.5.10. M&E

CONASA's M&E activities in conservation have focused on monitoring process (e.g., participation in trainings), voluntary surrendering of weapons, and the results of law enforcement patrols. CONASA has three performance indicators to measure progress in resource management (Table 35) and several additional indicators measuring progress in the policy context and devolution in ZAWA (*Table 37 – Performance indicators*, page 230), all of which are indirect measures of resource production.

Table 35. Performance indicators for conservation

Performance indicator	Progress thru 2003
5.5 Number of CBOs implementing resource management plans by type	Most CRBs have developed NRM plans but none have reached implementation stage
5.6 Number of strategies initiated to reduce unlicensed wildlife hunting activities	Above target
5.7 Number of poachers encountered/arrested.	No data available. This PI is also problematic because the variable measures more than

	one process (poaching and law enforcement effort) and reflects an activity CONASA has no involvement in.

The project recognizes that it doesn't have a good way to measure changes in natural resources directly. The standard tools of the trade—aerial and ground transects, vegetation plots, image analysis—are technically challenging, logistically demanding and expensive. These techniques therefore have been largely beyond the reach of the project. CONASA is by no means alone in this predicament, but the unfortunate consequence of this information gap is that there is little empirical evidence for gains or losses in conservation.

Although direct measurement of natural resource stocks may not be feasible in the near future, there may be room for improvement in community-based methods and better use of triangulation[19]. For example, the CSM books record qualitative information about resource trends, which could potentially be aggregated if a data analysis system for CSM books existed. The participatory resource assessment methods taught by the CONASA CSC could also play a role in vegetation monitoring, and presumably the supported commodity groups in timber and honey production would have an incentive to monitor their resources. WCS has also pilot-tested a methodology in Eastern Zambia of measuring resource trends using structured interviews with individuals who spend a lot of time in the bush.

A lot of observational information from ZAWA patrols, both anti-poaching and escort patrols, is also available, which could be used to extract for example spatial patterns in wildlife, trends in wildlife observations normalized for effort (e.g., number of observations per hour or per kilometre), and habitat disturbances. Generating these summarises would be easiest if ZAWA used the software that was developed for field patrol monitoring, but manual methods exist as well. ZAWA has so far been generous in providing access to field patrol and safari hunting data.

Other processes that could benefit from stronger monitoring include cattle movements (see *4.3.3 – Livestock*, page 90), bush meat flow, rate and distribution of new settlements, fire, and the prevalence of "environmentally unfriendly" crops – cotton[20] and tobacco[21]. However the process which is probably most in need of stronger monitoring is crop damage. Monitoring crop damage is important for at least three reasons:

- crop damage is an indicator of wildlife abundance
- crop damage negatively affects livelihood security
- crop damage is a potential advocacy issue

Recommendation 40. CONASA should consider supporting the introduction of a system for monitoring crop damage, due to the importance of this process for both conservation and livelihood security.

In summary, CONASA is in a difficult position when it comes to monitoring natural resources, for the needs are large and could easily consume the project's entire set of M&E resources. CONASA should therefore think creatively as to how it can get more information about the state of natural resources at minimal cost. In some cases like crop damage, community based methods may be feasible. In other cases,

[19] measuring a variable using more than one source of data
[20] due to soil fertility depletion and intensive pesticide and herbicide requirements
[21] due to the need for large amount of firewood for curing

someone else may already be involved in data collection and in still other cases, a special study might suffice.

CONASA's current M&E focus on threat abatement and law enforcement is a good start, but doesn't provide much clarity on resource trends. Field patrols provide one source of data, but are difficult to interpret in isolation. CONASA therefore should continue to develop resource monitoring systems, and try to develop at least one more data stream on natural resources when it reviews its overall conservation strategy and assessments of threats.

Recommendation 41. CONASA should continue to strengthen its resource monitoring systems and try to develop at least one more data stream on natural resources, based upon opportunities, its overall conservation strategy, and threat assessments.

9.5.11. Long-term issues

Many of CONASA's more visible achievements in resource management have focused on short-term processes, such as curbing illegal wildlife use and basket making. In addition there are several activities in the early stages designed to improve the long-term context for conservation. These include the work on policy, natural resource management plans, forums, and CBO capacity building.

> "CONASA is better than most projects in setting up structures and processes to improve the long-term outlook for conservation".

However the long-term outlook of conservation in the GMAs is still very much unknown. The future of the area in 10 or 20 years depends on a number of long-term processes that most conservation projects view as part of the "backdrop" but make little effort to address. CONASA is better than most projects in setting up structures and processes to improve the long-term outlook for conservation, however the details and mechanisms by which long-term processes affect natural resources have often not been clearly articulated, and hence strategies to deal with these trends have not been developed. Some of the long-term processes that need to be dealt with are described below.

9.5.11.1. HABITAT TRANSFORMATION

Habitat transformation is perhaps the greatest long-term threat facing wildlife populations for two reasons: 1) it tends to be irreversible, and 2) it tends to be self-accelerating. The satellite image analysis conducted by WCS in 2001 highlighted the extent of the most common form of habitat transformation – savannah woodland to agriculture. These findings were supported by another remote sensing study that looked at land cover changes between 1989 and 2000 (Lyons, 2002).

Two interlinked processes are believed to be driving the observed patterns in habitat transformation: changing demographics (discussed in the next section) and agricultural practices. CONASA has made some progress in changing agriculture practices that accelerate soil depletion. Through its standard "inputs

and training" support package, CONASA has promoted farming methods including crop rotations, inter-cropping, and cover crops that should prolong the lifespan of fields. There are also anecdotal reports that some of the crops being promoted by CONASA have done so well that they are displacing tobacco and cotton, two cash crops that encourage deforestation through large fuelwood requirements and soil depletion. However the livelihoods-conservation study found no evidence to suggest that these practices are slowing down the rate of land clearing, due in part to the relatively small percentage of farmers trained, the lack of agro-forestry promotion, and lack of spatial targeting in frontier zones. In fact, the opposite trend may be occurring in some areas, for as households rebuild their stocks of inputs and cattle they may choose to clear new fields.

A second type of habitat transformation is driven by frequent fires in the dry season. Too many fires tend to kill off seedlings, slow regeneration of trees, and can ultimately result in the conversion of woodland areas into lesser productive ecosystems dominated by grasses and shrubs. Excessive fires were reported by communities as one of the threats in the area during the 2001 PRA exercises. Fires were also diagnosed as a problem during the 2002 forest assessments in Mulobezi and Bbilili GMAs. The extent and frequencies of fires is not being monitored although scouts record fires in the areas where they patrol.

A third type of habitat transformation can occur by over-grazing from cattle. The risk of damage from overgrazing is particularly high around water points, but as of yet there have not any reports of over grazed areas. Another land use practice that is a concern is charcoal production, which tends to be extremely destructive as nearly everything is cut down for the kilns. Charcoal production has decimated other areas in Zambia, particularly near the line of rail, however has not been reported to be a widespread problem in the GMAs. There have been a few reports of charcoal production around Mulobezi (where it can be cheaply shipped out by train), and at least one resource management plan developed by CRBs has banned the production of charcoal.

In summary, habitat conversion remains a serious threat to the long-term survival of both wildlife and woodland ecosystems. To date little has been done to manage the long-term processes that are driving habitat transformation. The CBOs, resource management plans, and bylaws provide some hope that these processes can be managed, but a lot of work needs to be done to first understand and then contain the transformation.

"To date little has been done to manage the long-term processes that are driving habitat transformation, but the CBOs, resource management plans, and bylaws provide some hope that these processes can be managed."

9.5.11.2. CHANGING SETTLEMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

One of the processes driving habitat transformation is the pattern of demographics and settlement. The problem is not as much that the population is growing and people are coming to the area, which can produce either positive or negative impacts on resource use. The real problem is that there is little in the way of coordinated planning or management of the growing population.

CONASA has yet to conduct or obtain a study on human population trends in the three GMAs, but Zambia's population as a whole is growing at over 3% per annum. Bbilili GMA and the eastern side of Sichifulo are also experiencing a net influx of migrants, including people coming from other rural areas, retirees, and retrenched workers from town. Conflicts between new migrants, established residents, and conservation interests are most visible in the Katanda area, but the same process is occurring throughout much of the project area.

Providing for a growing population is a challenge in most rural areas, but is a particular challenge in the GMAs because so much is at stake. The work CONASA has done in building the capacity of CRBs, VAGs, and MUSIBI, offers hope that regional planning initiatives can be undertaken to develop a growth strategy that serves the needs of people while also managing the remaining wildlife resources to preserve an important stream of community revenue.

9.5.11.3. GOVERNANCE

Another factor that will shape the long-term outlook for resource management are patterns in governance. Solutions to the challenges outlined above will require support from more than one level of government, and more than one sector. If there are tensions or conflicts between units of government, or between CBOs and government, little progress on the difficult issues will be possible.

Lesson Learned

Building consensus among CBOs and government on resource management issues goes much faster when a neutral party like an NGO is available to facilitate.

CONASA for its part has invested heavily in supporting ZAWA's reorientation to a bottom-up approach in resource management. It has also brought on board various other ministries, District Councils, etc., especially in discussions dealing with policy issues. This participatory approach bodes well for the possibility of developing multi-sector responses to the many challenges facing the area. However work will continue to be needed in building consensus and supporting a bottom-up approach in other ministries, as personnel turnover is common in all agencies and elected offices, and the dynamics within and between government units are complex and constantly changing. CONASA has shown that building consensus among CBOs and government on resource management issues is greatly accelerated when a neutral party like an NGO is available to facilitate.

9.5.11.4. ECONOMICS OF CONSERVATION

Despite almost two decades of experience with CBNRM in Zambia, questions about whether conservation is economically viable are still being debated due in large part to one set of questions that have not been well-studied: the economics of conservation. CONASA has made huge efforts into building resource-based enterprises that are sustainable yet still profitable. It has also tried to improve income generation of rural households through agriculture, and is working with ZAWA to bring back the 'golden egg' of conservation, safari hunting. However everyone wants to know – it is enough? Can we predict the future from what we know today?

A great deal is still not well known about the economics of conservation in Zambia. These include the economic returns to one hectare of land under a variety of management scenarios: rainfed agriculture, irrigated agriculture, agriculture + livestock, safari hunting, photo tourism, forestry, etc. Many CBNRM programs have assumed that safari hunting and/or photo tourism generate the greatest economic returns, but these analyses are generally lacking

in Zambia. Other key economic variables that are have not been studied are the direct costs of living with wildlife (e.g., from crop damage), the opportunity costs, and the start-up costs for establishing local institutions.

While details of the economics of conservation are not well known, the principles are fairly well established. We know that economic considerations frequently—but not always—determine the dominant land use in the long run. NGOs can provide temporary subsidies, and CBOs and government institutions can try to regulate land use toward a certain direction, but in the long-run economics tend to drive land use dynamics. We also know, from other CBNRM projects in Zambia, that even if safari revenues are distributed evenly with no overhead (which has never happened), the per-capita revenues from safari hunting almost always are a small fraction of households' annual requirements. In other words, the opportunity costs of keeping land of out agricultural production will almost always exceed by a large amount the per capita revenue possible from tourism.

If these hypotheses are true for CONASA's area, it suggests that the greatest hope for conservation in GMAs will be found when livelihood strategies 1) do not rely on wildlife production, 2) do not suffer from coexistence with wildlife, and 3) are supported by public goods generated through wildlife use. Carrying the logic further, three conclusions are relevant for CONASA:

- CBNRM will probably not work in the long run unless people have secure livelihoods through agriculture, livestock, and/or enterprise. (i.e., the work CONASA is doing in HLS is in the right direction).
- CBRNM will probably not work in the long run unless wildlife doesn't restrict people's livelihoods (i.e., mechanisms to compensate, and/or prevent, conflicts with wildlife are needed).
- CBNRM will probably not work in the long run unless the public goods generated by wildlife use support livelihoods *directly* (i.e., CRBs should ideally be spending hunting revenues on input schemes, marketing support, water projects, etc., preferably in areas with more wildlife, and making sure that people are made aware of the connection).

> "The greatest hope for conservation in GMAs will be found when livelihood strategies 1) are secure but do not rely on wildlife harvesting, 2) do not suffer from coexistence with wildlife, and 3) are supported by public goods generated through communal wildlife use."

9.5.11.5. DEPLETED GMAS

Most of Bbilili GMA is basically depleted of large wildlife, and portions of Sichifulo are in danger of becoming permanently depleted if the settler issue is not resolved relatively soon. In these and other areas of Zambia, there is a need to develop viable approaches for conservation that is appropriate for the context of a depleted GMA.

In depleted areas that don't have extensive settlements, or can resettle recent immigrants, restocking of large animals may be an option. New animals can be introduced either from an adjacent protected area or through artificial

restocking. Law enforcement protection will be needed during the restoration period, and supplementary watering and feeding may also be appropriate depending on the condition of the habitat. All of these management options will require external funding for at least five years before significant revenue from safari hunting or tourism can be expected.

However, if the permanent presence of settlements means that large "umbrella species" are no longer viable in depleted areas, then conservation and management goals should switch to the maintenance of ecosystem services (e.g., forest products, water quality), and the biodiversity of lower level taxa (e.g., birds, plants, small mammals). In terms of economics, if safari hunting will no longer fuel resource management and development, then alternative enterprises need to be studied and pilot-tested (including game ranches and other closed production systems). To prevent out-migration into non-depleted areas, HLS support should focus on intensified forms of agriculture, and long-term maintenance of soil fertility.

No one wants to admit that their GMA is depleted, but doing so is the first step to developing a conservation plan that works for the context. CONASA supports both depleted and non-depleted GMAs, and is therefore in a unique position to test approaches and document lessons learned. Ecosystem restoration is an information intensive exercise, and requires extensive support in facilitation and negotiation. CONASA's conservation strategy would be fuller and have greater value if it documented the special needs of depleted areas and helped facilitate an appropriate response. Managing the remaining resources in depleted areas is, unfortunately, a growing field.

9.5.12. Broader CBNRM debates

CONASA emerged from a specific set of experiences with CBNRM in Zambia. Behind this history lies a much larger backdrop of debates and experiences. While it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a comprehensive review of trends in CBNRM, below are short descriptions of some of the major currents in conservation.

- **Backlash against CBNRM**. A growing community of critics, coming mostly from the biological sciences, have become more vocal in their criticisms of CBNRM for failing to protect biodiversity. These critics point to the continuing decline in species diversity and habitat, and the lack of evidence that CBNRM program have conserved species or ecosystems. This "backlash" against CBNRM has caught the ear of some donors, NGOs, and governments, and we have started to see some return to the "fences and fines" approach toward resource management.

  Although Zambia has not featured prominently in the backlash against CBNRM, the ongoing debate about the effectiveness of "people-friendly" approaches to conservation will have an enormous influence on how millions of dollars of conservation funding get channelled, and therefore has profound implications for projects like CONASA. CONASA for its part does not have a lot of evidence either to show that CBNRM is the best way to conserve resources, but there are some promising processes which bode well for the future.

  To play a more active role in these debates, CONASA and the CRBs need to make more of an effort to tell their stories, and make more of an effort to reach larger audiences outside Zambia. To remain silent is effectively providing more ammunition to the opponents of CBNRM. If CONASA and other CBNRM support organisations cannot demonstrate a solid foundation for community-

centered management, the next GMA support project may follow a privatisation model as has been seen in Western Province with the African Parks Management And Finance Company, Ltd.

- **Corporitization of conservation**. One of the responses of the backlash against process-heavy CBNRM projects has been the adoption of corporate management models in conservation. Activities are now 'investments', conservation areas are 'portfolios', and every office has a log-frame on the wall and an M&E officer in the corner. CONASA has done fairly well in adopting to this relatively new mode of planning and reporting, however its ability to articulate a conservation strategy could be more compelling. To be competitive for conservation funding, CRBs will also need to understand the corporate tools and models for conservation management.

- **Eco-regional planning**. Conservation biologists and landscape ecologists have drawn attention for years to the fact that boundaries of protected areas rarely make sense from an ecological standpoint. Thus more and more conservation plans focus on natural ecosystem boundaries, frequently a watershed, and aim to improve landscape connectivity through the establishment of habitat corridors.

  The addition of a TBNRM component in CONASA is one reflection of the bigger trend toward eco-regional planning as it was picked up and adopted by USAID. Some argue that TBNRM has become so popular because it marries an eco-regional approach, that is supported by conservation planners, as well as a regional approach, which is popular with donor agencies that are increasingly channelling money through regional offices and therefore need to "regionalize" their strategies.

  Through the TBNRM component, CONASA nominally already has an ecoregional focus. However in practice, CONASA has given little or no attention to resource management in the open areas between the GMAs and the Zambezi, and the need to "harmonise" wildlife management with the neighbouring countries has yet to be explained clearly.

  CONASA's conservation approach should also reflect an understanding and strategy for managing resources across the GMAs, in coordination with management plans within the park. A conservation strategy which focuses on only one GMA but ignores the others, or focuses on just the GMAs but ignores processes in the park and the open areas, would be incomplete. CONASA is well-positioned to facilitate a process of regional conservation planning for southern province, but it isn't there yet.

- **Biodiversity hotspots**. The accelerating loss of biodiversity globally has resulted in increased attention on saving 'hot spots', or areas of high species diversity. Thus conservation money is pouring in to tropical regions and areas with high levels of species endemism such as Madagascar. For example, Intel cofounder Gordon Moore recently donated $250 million USD to buy or protect as many hotspots as possible.

  The international focus on hotspots does not do a lot for Zambia, as Zambia does not have a typography that lends itself to producing pockets of high species diversity. The Four Corners Project has made progress on compiling species lists and identifying biodiversity centres in the Four Corners TBNRMA, however none of them are in Zambia (Zambezi Society, 2004). Zambia does however have some of the largest remaining intact savannah ecosystems and populations of large mammals. The three GMAs south of KNP in particular have populations of wild dog, which is the most endangered carnivore on the continent.

CONASA and the CRBs would have a better chance in attracting conservation funding if they put more effort into promoting the biological significance of their area, and attracting research to document what is left.

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- **Alternative paradigms – direct payments**. A fourth trend in conservation is the increasing acceptance of the idea that biodiversity may not be able fully pay for itself, and maybe national and global audiences should make direct payments to local communities for maintenance of ecosystem services (Ferraro and Kiss, 2002). This approach, which is rather radical for the conservation community, is currently being pilot-tested in a few places rich in biodiversity. For example, the Amboseli Community Wildlife Tourism Project in Kenya pays communities a 'land holding rental' as soon as a village agrees to dedicate an area of land for wildlife tourism. It is far too early to say whether the direct payment approach will catch on, or whether it will ever come to Zambia, but the CONASA communities could be well-positioned to attract such a direct payment scheme or long-term subsidy. The key is to demonstrate that strong local institutions can contain the threats to natural resources, and that external forms of assistance to support social services and market institutions can result in broad based economic growth without increasing environmental degradation.

9.6. Summary and way forward

Conservation in CONASA has been implemented both as a cross-cutting theme and as the primary focus of a small set of activities aimed at improving resource management. Beyond the general principles of CBNRM, CONASA's results framework does not articulate a specific approach to conservation, so the project has been able to test both direct and indirect strategies. However CONASA does not have the mandate nor capacity to manage resources directly, so it is more a conservation-enabling project than a conservation project.

The main achievements in conservation include building local support for conservation, which was a direct outcome of sensitisation efforts. This has led in one area to the voluntary surrendering of over 300 firearms, and the community chasing away outside poachers. Other areas where the project has made progress are in increasing resource management skills, smoothing the relationship between ZAWA and the communities, establishing forums to improve dialogue among conservation stakeholders, and developing resource management plans and bylaws through a participatory process. CONASA also collected information that will be useful to plan future work, including a special study on bush meat trade, a wildlife corridor mapping exercise, and summaries of the results of ZAWA's law enforcement activities.

Much of the progress in reducing threats has been achieved through implicit promises that development assistance would be forthcoming, which has not happened at a sufficient scale in many cases. Hence we are seeing in some areas early signs of a backlash, with cries to "give us back our guns". CONASA and the CRBs should heed this early warning and strive to accelerate HLS activities in areas that have initiated their

own resource management schemes, and be careful not to create unrealistic expectations in the future.

CONASA has been less successful in improving resource management through indirect means. A special study contracted by CONASA found that the impact on natural resource from activities to strengthen HLS was relatively weak. In some cases this was due to the fact that many processes are still in the early stages, and in other cases is was due to weak cause-effect relationships. CONASA also made a large investment in developing eco-friendly enterprises such as a community owned campsite, basket making, and honey production. In a few cases, enterprises are starting to earn revenue, but overall the results of these investments has been disappointing both in terms of livelihood impact and conservation.

Although much work needs to be done to strengthen the linkages between HLS and conservation activities, the good news is that conservation is firmly on the agenda in all sections of the project. In everything from micro-finance to community self-monitoring, staff are constantly on the look-out for connections to conservation. This increased awareness of conservation, combined with the recent reviews of HLS-conservation linkages, makes the project poised for progress on its conservation strategy. Methods that may help achieve tighter linkages include more strategic targeting of HLS interventions, intensification of programming to enable synergistic interactions, and integrating an HLS strategy into local land use plans. CONASA staff and CRB members might also benefit from an exchange visit to conservation programs in the Luangwa Valley, which have a longer history of CBNRM and more explicit strategies for linking conservation and HLS.

The local resource management plans and bylaws that have been developed in phase one present a great opportunity to strengthen local conservation, but also a tremendous challenge for implementation. CRBs will need assistance in educating the local public about the plans, developing mechanisms for enforcement, and monitoring of both resources and compliance. CONASA can play a useful role in facilitating this process, testing strategies to incorporate HLS interventions into conservation plans, and monitoring responses to ensure that new local regulations don't produce unintended consequences.

Several long-term processes continue to threaten the viability of conservation in the long-run. Habitat transformation is continuing at a rapid pace, fuelled by unmanaged expansion of settlements and soil fertility loss. The economics of land use have not been well studied in the GMAs, but do not appear to favour conservation as a form of land use. However it is also not clear how much conservation could earn under a more optimal set of market conditions and subsidised support for HLS. CONASA has not addressed these issues head-on, preferring to focus more on short-term processes, but the CRBs are approaching the point where long-term regional planning may be possible.

CONASA also needs to take the work on corridor mapping to the next level. This includes finer-scale studies to better understand both the ecological value of the corridor, and the impacts that corridor management would mean for people. CONASA should also stay engaged with the Sekute CDT which has expressed an interest in establishing a Kafue-Zambezi conservancy. CONASA can play a useful role in facilitating discussion among stakeholders, supporting ecological and socioeconomic surveys, projecting costs for management and HLS support, and helping to source finance.

Other challenges left over from phase one include various policy activities. In order for the investments in policy analysis, forums, and advocacy training to produce benefits for conservation, the focus needs to shift from building structures and processes to specific issues. CONASA needs to decide how much it wants to get involved in promoting specific issues, which might mean giving up some of the neutrality it has enjoyed to date.

CONASA's engagement with ZAWA has been fruitful, however new thinking is needed on how best to support the implementation of policy reforms in the authority.

10.0 HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

10.1. Introduction

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is an important feature of the context within which CONASA operates. While the epidemic does not appear to have had the intensely devastating impact it has had in many urban areas, its effects are visible in specific households. HIV/AIDS is also an issue CONASA has to deal with as an organisation, as everyone in Zambia has been affected by the epidemic directly or indirectly.

CONASA does not have a specific result for HIV/AIDS prevention or mitigation, however it has been incorporated as a cross-cutting theme as it affects livelihoods and conservation in a number of ways. A recent study by the Farming Systems Association of Zambia explored the linkages between HIV/AIDS, agriculture, and food security in Southern Province. The study found that HIV/AIDS was a primary factor in 31% of the sampled households which were burdened by one or more orphans or foster children, and that female headed households were disproportionately likely to be burdened. Burdened households had lower incomes, less access to labour, reduced food production and nutrition, more illness, and more dependence on natural resources (FASAZ, 2003).

10.2. Strategy and Achievements

CONASA's HIV/AIDS strategy aims to incorporate sensitisation and prevention education across all programming sections, as well as internally for project staff. A second element is the identification of 'hotspots' in the project area, where the epidemic is worse than usual. These areas may include market or trading centres, and are currently being identified with the assistance of health clinics. Once hotspots are identified, the project will then work with CBOs to identify appropriate community level responses in these areas, such as identifying organisational partners to provide counselling and testing services, disease prevention awareness, and mitigation for affected households. The third leg of the strategy is developing linkages with other health organisations. Achievements in the HIV/AIDS strategy include:

- two-day training provided for staff
- HIV/AIDS sensitisation and education incorporated into a training-for-trainers for 39 local facilitators
- HIV/AIDS was discussed at three community sensitisation meetings led by local facilitators in Nkandanzovu, reaching 91 people
- CONASA facilitated presentations by DAPP/VCT at an agricultural field day in Nkandanzovu on World AIDS Day
- 466 pupils at Chiili mid-basic school in Nyawa were given HIV/AIDS awareness presentation
- CONASA became a member of the Kalomo District HIV/AIDS task force for care and support, and gets invited to meetings on HIV/AIDS issues
- the CONASA CSC office in Livingstone reached a collaborative agreement with the Society for Family Health, resulting in presentations on HIV/AIDS at CONASA workshops and distribution of condoms

10.3. Discussion

10.3.1. Doing more with less

CONASA's incorporation of HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting theme is an appropriate strategy given the pervasiveness of epidemic across all sectors and levels of society, the low to moderate levels of infection in the project area, and the need for the project to educate and build the capacity of its own staff to deal with HIV/AIDS issues. Although the project lacks a specific result and budget allocation for

HIV/AIDS programming, it has done an admirable job including HIV/AIDS into training activities and building linkages with other service organisations both within the consortium and outside. These activities have enabled the project to add value to the existing structures and activity streams without incurring any significant additional costs, and have helped project staff to better understand the scope and nature of the epidemic and explore ways to address it.

10.3.2. Partnership formation

CONASA's strategy of building relationships with government and non-governmental health organisations is intelligent and should be encouraged. While CONASA does not have the human or financial resources to implement HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation strategies on its own, by building working relationships with other organisations it can, with very little additional resources, link the communities it works with service providers. If or when CONASA becomes more directly engaged in HIV/AIDS programming, these relationships can also serve as the foundation of more formal relationships.

10.3.3. Geographic Targeting

It appears that most of the HIV/AIDS activities that CONASA has facilitated are in Bbilili GMA or Kalomo town. As the project moves toward identifying hotspots, it will be important that it also considers the situation in Moomba CRB. While the bulk of the population lives in Bbilili and eastern Sichifulo, the rail link between Mulobezi and Livingstone raises a flag that this area may also have higher than average infection rates. The Mulobezi side, with its less dense human population, is arguably a more important area for conservation as well, and as such could serve as a laboratory for understanding the linkages between HIV/AIDS and resource pressure.

10.3.4. Looking forward and action research

In the remaining time CONASA has under its current funding, given that there is no result and no budget line for HIV/AIDS programming, the best thing the project can do is to continue to infuse HIV/AIDS training wherever possible, collect information and conduct research on the magnitude and effects of the epidemic, and explore partnerships with health organisations.

The HLS framework provides a strong foundation for understanding the effects of HIV/AIDS on rural households. The FASAZ study articulated a number of hypotheses and mechanisms by which household livelihoods and natural resources are impacted by HIV/AIDS. CONASA can build upon these findings to design its own case studies and pilot-test various responses. One of the most frightening impacts suggested by the FASAZ report and other studies in the field is that certain households can become so overwhelmed with HIV/AIDS-induced burdens that the extended family system breaks down. The extended family system is the cornerstone of social security in rural Africa, and its disintegration removes the last breath of hope for vulnerable individuals on the brink of extreme depredation. This possibility is unfortunately all too real, as evident in the growing numbers of homeless children in urban areas, and takes poverty to a new, and much more intractable, level.

CONASA is well equipped to study how households cope with, and sometimes break down, under the weight of HIV/AIDS, and how this can be best avoided. There is currently a debate taking place within and among NGOs whether it is appropriate to provide direct food or cash subsidies to affected households, or whether this would undermine or distort traditional mechanisms and structures for coping. This debate reflects the relative newness of HIV/AIDS programming in rural areas, and the lack of documented experiences in mitigation and livelihood

protection. CONASA, with its strong resources in M&E, CBO capacity building, and working in a rural context, is somewhat uniquely positioned to add to this ongoing debate.

The project has already indicated that it intends to explore ways to identify and support affected households based on the HLS framework and within the existing structure of CBOs. There is a strong rationale for dealing with HIV/AIDS in rural areas where extended family systems tend to be stronger and represent an important asset that, if lost, can greatly increase the costs to society in terms of lost human capital, and managing a 'lost generation'.

> "CONASA could add value to its planned mitigation activities if it conducts the exercise as an action research project."

CONASA could add value to its planned mitigation activities if it conducts the exercise as an action research project (i.e., documenting the context, making predictions, monitoring, incorporating feedback, etc.). The end result of this would be not only assistance to a handful of affected households, but a methodology which could potentially form the basis for wider community based health programming, and potentially a proposal to attract support from some of the significant pools of HIV/AIDS funding. The outcome of the action research should provide new clarity on the following types of questions:

- How should HIV/AIDS affected households be identified and categorized?
- What suites of support services are needed to prevent burdened households from falling into extreme destitution?
- Can CBOs improve the efficiency, reduce the costs, and minimize distorting effects of HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation strategies?
- How does the cost of livelihood provision and protection in rural areas compare with the social costs of managing the epidemic in urban areas?

Recommendation 42. CONASA should consider conducting action research to test and refine a methodology for developing participatory community-based support systems for rural households burdened by HIV/AIDS.

A second front where CONASA can play a role is in clarifying the linkages between HIV/AIDS and resource degradation. Burdened households are known to have less access to labour and money for agriculture, and tend to rely more heavily on the collection of wild foods and harvesting of fuelwood and other natural resources for income. These coping mechanisms may potentially pose a threat to resources, but can also offer opportunities if CBOs are in place to manage forest resources for periods of shock. A second way that HIV/AIDS has affected conservation is the heavy toll it takes on civil servants in general, and ZAWA scouts in particular. CONASA can help preserve the skilled labour pool, needed for both economic development and conservation, by incorporating these categories of people into training and community support programmes.

Finally, HIV/AIDS education programs are an opportunity to address, or at least raise, a variety of women's issues related to reproductive health, including empowerment and family planning. Progress in these areas is also relevant to conservation objectives because population growth and density is one of the contributing factors to unsustainable resource pressure.

11.0 GENDER

Like HIV/AIDS, CONASA does not have a specific result for gender but implements it as a cross cutting theme in all sections. Accordingly all project activities, from agriculture to policy, have been designed with a gender perspective in mind, and steps taken wherever possible to ensure that the special needs and opportunities for women are addressed. The approach of explicitly considering the needs of women in project design and evaluation is in accordance with best practices in rural development. This approach evolved out a long history with development projects that revealed that:

- men in rural areas tend to dominate decision making and hold positions of power at both the household and village levels
- division of labour and access to income generation activities are heavily influenced by gender in rural areas
- the use of, and impact on, natural resources has a strong gender dimension
- rural development projects have a tendency to sideline women unless explicit efforts are made to include them
- women are central to making improvements in child health and education
- empowering women is the single most effective means of reducing poverty

11.1. Strategy

CONASA did not have an explicit gender strategy at the onset of the project, however in year two the project added an activity to the workplan to develop a strategy for mainstreaming gender. To develop the gender strategy, the project held a mini-workshop for staff and administered a survey to assess the level of knowledge on gender and gather views on the main gender issues in the communities. Based on these exercises, the issues facing women were classified in five clusters:

- male perceptions of dominance and attitudes toward women
- suspicion among men and women
- apathy among women
- unequal distribution and access to benefits and resources
- lower levels of education and literacy among women

To address these needs without creating a new result in the log frame or a new stream of gender-specific activities, CONASA responded with a multi-pronged approach:

- include gender sensitisation as an explicit topic in all capacity building training
- encourage participation of women in leadership positions
- promote gender awareness and training for staff
- actively promote women's clubs in CONASA's ongoing activities to strengthen agriculture and enterprise
- monitor gender patterns in 1) access to CONASA's services, and 2) distribution of benefits

11.2. Achievements

Without a specific result on gender in the results framework, CONASA does not have gender-specific activities or performance indicators to capture progress in gender. Nevertheless qualitative assessments can be made of the efforts to infuse gender objectives in other sections of the project.

11.2.1. Sensitisation and training

CONASA has incorporated gender as an explicit topic in its leadership training for CBOs. The goal of this part of the training is to improve general awareness of the special needs, limitations, and contributions of women in development. The CBO

capacity building section also encourages VAGs, VMCs, and CRBs to think about gender representation in their leadership structure, with the result that some CBOs have indicated gender targets for leadership positions explicitly into their constitution. While these efforts have by no means levelled the playing field for women, they have put gender firmly and permanently on the agenda of CBOs. Concepts about gender, and why it is important in development processes, have been delivered and understood, even by those who still resist giving more autonomy to women.

A small, but significant, example of this shift can be seen in the community discussions on the Draft Land Policy Review, facilitated by the Land Alliance (see *6.2.6.2 – Land policy review process*, page 131). When discussing a proposition in the draft land policy that says that 30% of land should be reserved for women and other vulnerable groups, there was nearly unanimous consensus that women need better access to land, and broad support for the proposed change in the land policy. The little opposition expressed about the new proposition centred on whether married women should have access to land directly or through their husbands.

Some areas are more progressive than others in respect to recognizing and responding to gender issues. For example some CRBs have in place a requirement that each VAG send a woman and man to compete for positions in the governance structure. Other CRBs have embarked on the formation of women groups. In Bbilili GMA, Hon. Chief Chikanta took a group of 15 women and 15 men to visit Chief Nalubamba's area to see women taking lead roles in development work. While some of these initiatives might be the result of persuasion by CONASA, or represent shallow efforts to curry favour from CONASA, field staff seem to believe that most are genuine.

In addition to the leadership training, CONASA also teaches gender issues in its training for local facilitators. This is important as facilitators form the backbone of the community-based extension network, which is increasingly becoming the vehicle of choice for providing training in business planning and production skills. There is also a higher proportion of women working as facilitators (13 of 39) than any other position at the VAG or CRB level.

Gender awareness has also been instilled in staff. In addition to the mini-workshop that was held specifically on gender issues, discussions about gender issues are commonplace at performance review and planning meetings. All sections of the project, including wildlife, forestry, agriculture, and enterprise, have gender elements in their strategic planning. We see this, for example, in the 2003 Annual Workplan, where one of the activities in the NRM section reads: *facilitate implementation of NRM plans including gender*.

11.2.2. Formation of women's groups

A second major element of CONASA's gender strategy is the promotion of women's groups for enterprise and agriculture. Although a comprehensive list of women's clubs has not been seen, a partial list includes:

- two unnamed women's clubs from Chikanta CRB, formed in 2003 to grow mushrooms
- the Kakuse Women's Groups and Vulnerable Women's Club (consisting of windows) in Siachitema
- Mabwe Atuba Women's Club, Habulungu Women's Club, Kabula Women's Club in Nkandanzovu

It is not known how successful these women's clubs are, what problems they face, or the amount of support they have received from CONASA. However CONASA

helped the two women's groups in Siachitema apply for micro-funding from the German embassy.

11.2.3. Data collection and M&E

CONASA has incorporated gender into the collection of gender data from day one. Virtually all of CONASA's activity reporting, from workshop attendance to input provision, to enterprise support, is disaggregated by gender. This base of information provides a good foundation for evaluating gender issues in programming, at least at a cursory level.

The MER section has also focused on gender in special studies. The best example of this was a 2003 study which explicitly examined the gender dimensions of CONASA's programming (see *11.3.2 – Analysis of gender in programming*, page 223). Other studies, such as the 2003 CBO Assessment, 2003 Food Production and Technology Adoption study, and CSM reviews, have also taken note of gender issues. Data collected in the 2001 PRA exercises and household survey also recorded gender as part of demographic profile, although this variable has not always featured prominently in analysis.

11.3. Discussion

11.3.1. Strategy

The practice of incorporating gender as a cross-cutting theme, as opposed a separate stream of activities, concurs with current thinking about how best to address the needs of women. Gender clearly permeates nearly every aspect of rural livelihoods, and therefore every strategy designed to strengthen livelihoods needs to think about the needs, constraints, and opportunities for women.

A thorough assessment of whether CONASA's strategy is meeting the needs of women is beyond the scope of this exercise. However such a review would almost certainly start with an assessment of the needs and constraints facing women. Most of the underlying challenges facing women are almost certainly rooted in deep cultural norms and values which have been internalised by most men and women alike. CONASA's response to this has been to promote gender awareness and sensitisation in training programs, and promote women in positions of leadership.

Sensitisation training and formally incorporating gender targets into CBO constitutions appears to have produced gains for women in some areas, but not others. One of the lessons learned from the LFSP project is that reducing gender inequities in rural Zambia is a delicate, long-term process, and achieving more equal numerical gender balance in CBO leadership positions does not necessarily lead to any fundamental shifts in gender relations (Lyons 2000). CONASA should therefore continue to do with what its doing in gender sensitisation and awareness building, but recognize that this work will at best create a more conducive environment for women, but will not in and of itself necessarily improve the livelihoods of women. That can only come by directly chipping away at the underlying constraints facing women.

> "Improving representation in leadership positions can help created a more conducive context for women, but improving livelihoods of women can only come by directly chipping away at the underlying constraints facing women."

The proximate causes of women's disempowered status include unequal access to land, capital, income generation, technology, education, information, and health services. CONASA unfortunately does not have strategic results or activity lines for two of the more important challenges facing women – literacy and reproductive health. The lack of these activities prevents CONASA from labelling itself as a "gender project", but it still qualifies as a "gender-friendly project".

Within its current suite of development activities, CONASA is doing what it can to reduce barriers facing women, including unequal access to capital, technology, income generation activities, and information. The focus on women's groups is appropriate, and concurs with one of the lessons of the LFSP project which found that one way to help women is by promoting enterprises and crops that are traditionally women's practices (Lyons 2000). Women's groups can also help to build confidence and solidarity among women which can lead to additional livelihood gains.

CONASA's strategy of monitoring gender issues is also appropriate, as the impact of project interventions on gender relations is complex, and unequal access to project services could even result in women being even more marginalized. Even when everything goes according to plan, development projects can inadvertently result in the opposite outcome of what was intended (see text box below).

How development projects can affect gender relations
A case study from West Africa

A classic study in the field of political ecology documented how a rural development project in The Gambia, West Africa, empowered women's groups and raised incomes through the promotion of vegetable gardening. However after the gardening project ended, a new rice and agroforestry project came along. Jealous men used the structures and rhetoric of the second project to backlash against the women's gardens, planting trees which shaded out the gardens and forcing women to work in the rice fields. The net result of both projects was that women were worse off than before they started!

Source: Schroeder 1999

The dynamics around gender in rural areas are delicate and emotionally charged, as many men feel their identify and way of life is being threatened when women have great autonomy and access to resources. These issues are present in Southern Province, as can be seen in the following quote from a CONASA study:

> *"An informal discussion with some men and women revealed that most women shun elections out of fear of men whom they believe are natural leaders, while other women indicated that there is victimisation by husbands who suspect their women of having other interests"*[22]

CONASA should be therefore cautioned against being too assertive in promoting a gender agenda, and continue to allow CBO leaders dictate the pace of change. One strategy which has not been fully utilised is taking men and women from weaker CBOs on field trips to stronger, more progressive areas. This could improve performance in adopting a gender-friendly approach to development, as well as strengthen other institutional roles such as providing support for facilitators, services for commodity groups, land use planning, etc.

[22] Source: *Streamlining gender in CONASA: An analysis of the integration of gender activities and issues in programming*. October 2003

Recommendation 43. To encourage a gender-friendly approach to development in CBOs, but minimise the risks of backlash, CONASA should facilitate exchanges between weak and strong areas and be careful not to be too assertive in pushing mechanisms for gender inclusion.

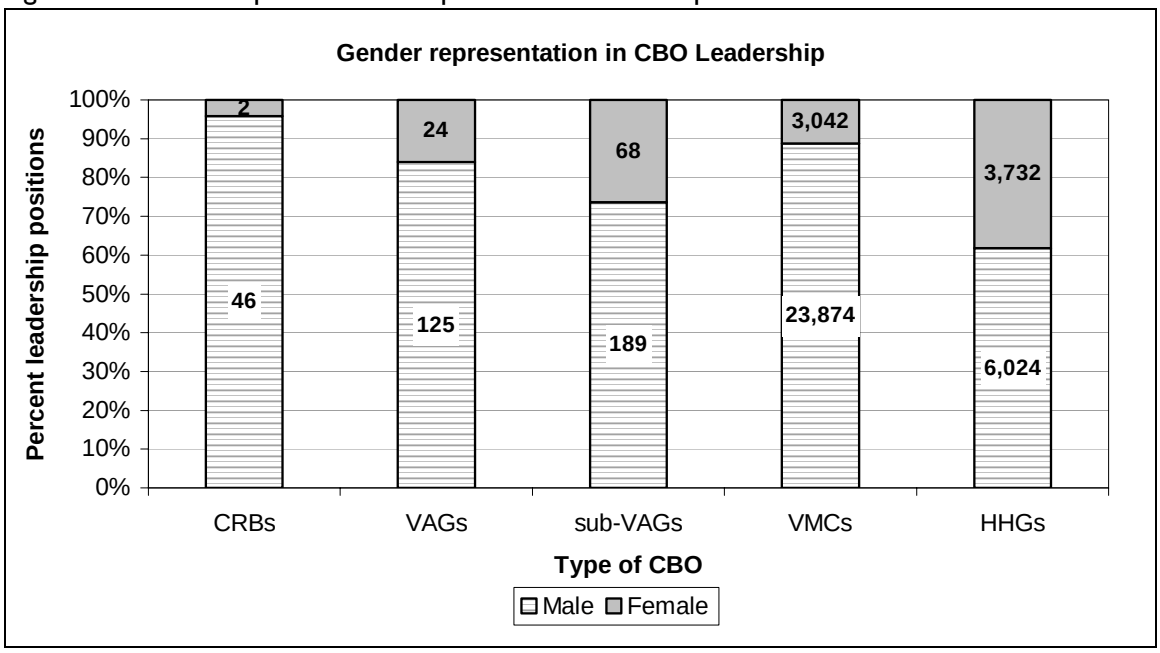
11.3.2. Analysis of gender in programming

To assess how its activities are affecting women, in 2003 the MER unit conducted a special study entitled "Gender in CONASA Programming". This section summarises some of the main findings of that study.

11.3.2.1. GENDER PATTERNS IN CBO LEADERSHIP

The gender study found that more women tend to hold positions of leadership in lower-level CBO structures, with nearly 40% of VMC positions held by women. However the representation of women declines as one moves up the ladder, with only 2 of 48 CRB positions (4%) held by women (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Gender representation in positions of leadership



Reasons suggested for this gender gradient in leadership roles fell into three categories:

- Women are less likely to win elections if they stand. Women don't automatically vote for other women.
- Women don't get involved in elections because they fear victimisation from their husbands and other men.
- Men work to dominate senior leadership roles because these positions come with financial benefits.

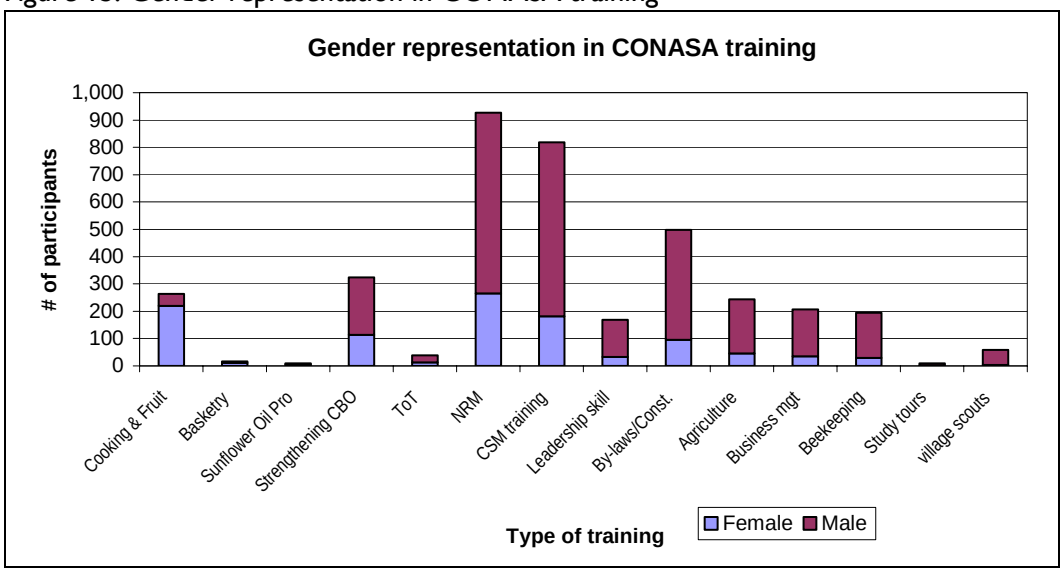
The 2003 CBO assessment also noted that some CRBs had gender representation ratios written into their constitution, but these were not always adhered to.

"The study found that more women tend to hold positions of leadership in lower-level CBO structures, but representation declines as one moves up the CBO ladder."

11.3.2.2. ACCESS TO TRAINING

The study also looked at gender representation in CONASA's training activities (Figure 15). One the whole, 27% of all of CONASA's training has been received by women, however strong gender patterns exist in specific types of training. The two types of training were women outnumber men were basketry and cooking. In business management and agriculture training, two of the more preferred types of training because they lead to increased incomes and food production, women represented less than 19% of all trainees. Women had the lowest levels of participation in training areas that are traditionally male dominated, such as bee-keeping and village scouts.

Figure 15. Gender representation in CONASA training

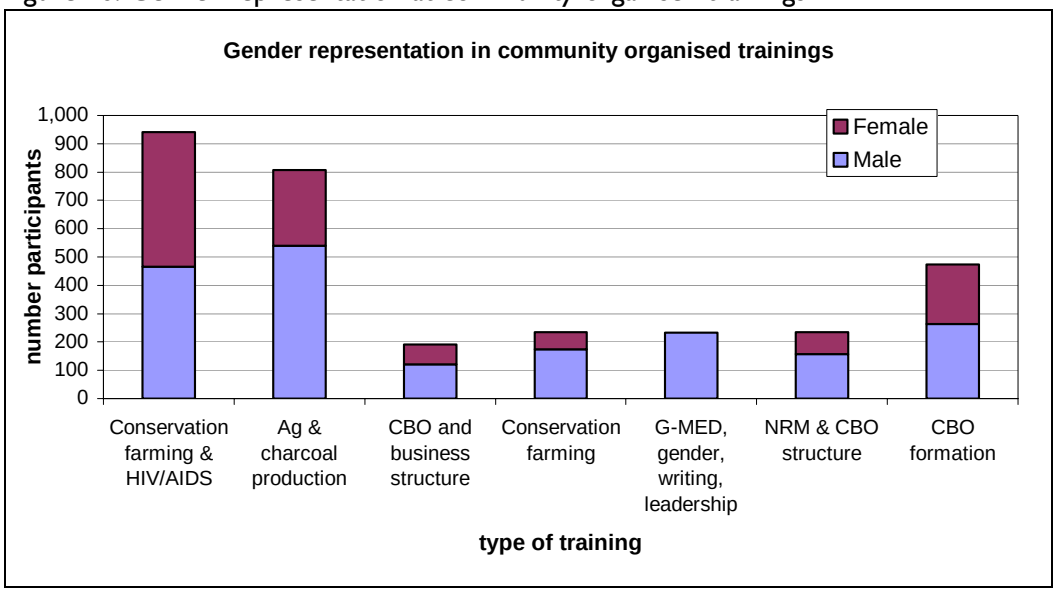


Lesson Learned

Women are most likely to attend in-situ trainings organised by local community facilitators.

The study also looked at women's attendance at in-situ trainings organised by local facilitators (Figure 16). Although these data reflect the work of just seven facilitators, and are therefore not representative of the entire project, they suggest that attendance by women is higher at in-situ trainings, with 37% participation overall, 10% higher than CONASA's trainings. Reasons for a greater level of participation by women might include more relevant topics, easier logistics, and greater effort to involve women because more facilitators are women (see *11.3.2.4 – Community-based trainers*, page 226).

Figure 16. Gender representation at community-organised trainings



The barriers to greater participation by women in training include the selection process, literacy, and possibly the topic of discussion. These results also suggest that two ways to increase the participation of women in training.

Recommendation 44. To strengthen the participation of women in training, CONASA should 1) increase the involvement of lower level CBO structures (which have more women in leadership roles) in the selection process of trainees and topics, and 2) encourage and support more in-situ level training by local facilitators.

11.3.2.3. ACCESS TO MICROFINANCE

The gender study also looked at access to loans, although it examined this indirectly by looking at 1) gender representation in different types of commodity groups, and 2) funding patterns for different types of commodity groups. The results are shown in Figure 17 and Figure 18 respectively.

Figure 17. Gender representation in commodity groups

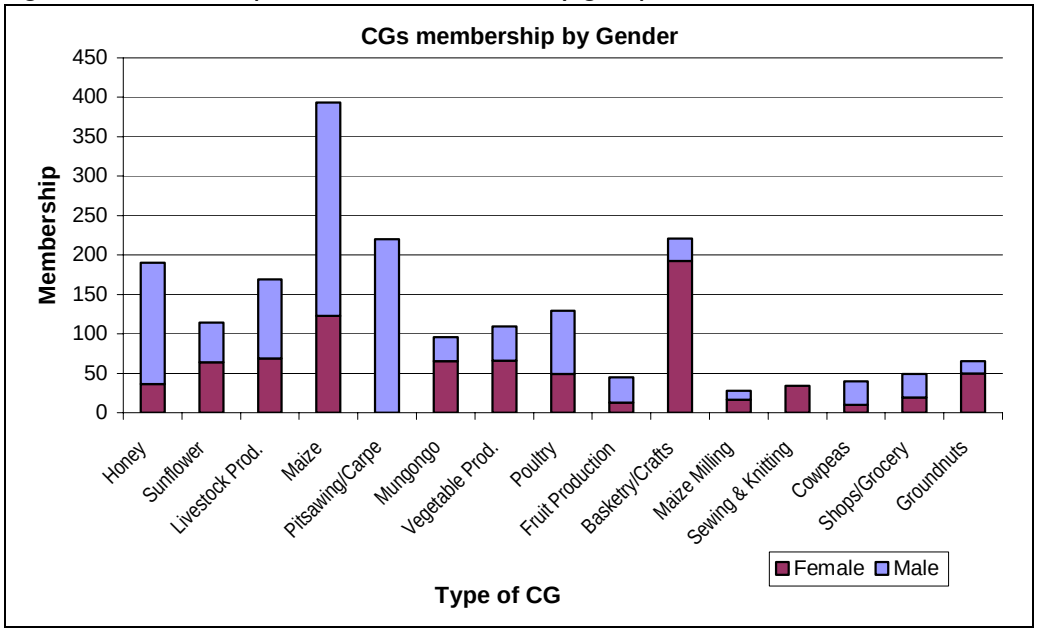
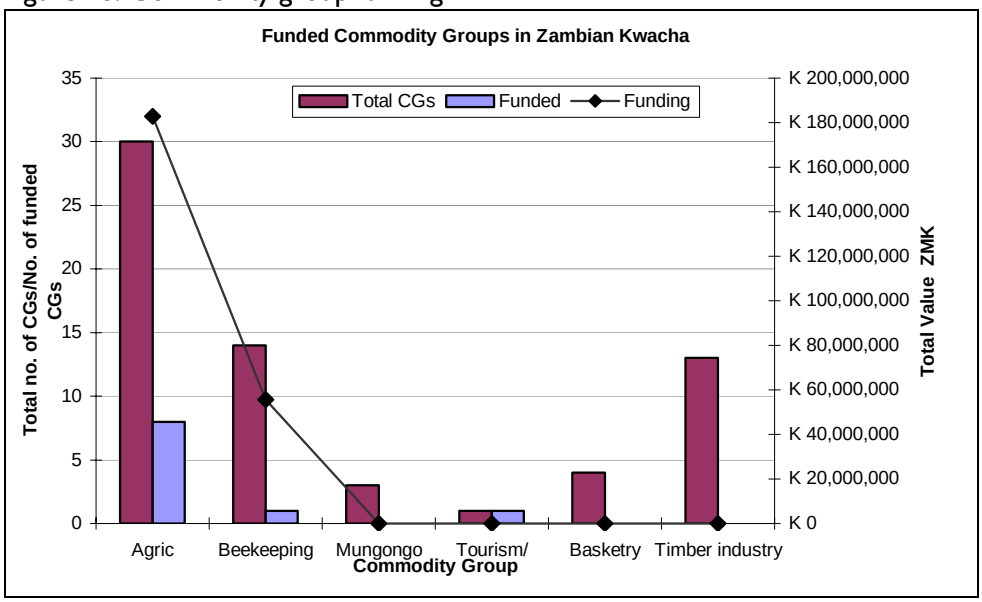


Figure 18. Commodity group funding



Lesson Learned

Promoting crops and enterprises traditionally practiced by women is an effective strategy for increasing women's incomes.

While inefficient data management prevented the gender study from directly calculating the total amount of CONASA grants that go to women, the results depicted in Figure 17 and Figure 18 highlight a couple of patterns. First, CONASA's microfinance has been almost entirely targeted for agriculture, with beekeeping a distant second. Thus the gender representation of funded agriculture groups has largely determined the level of access to microfinance for women (although this will change as microfinance begins to be distributed by CRBs under G-MED). The gender study estimated that representation of women in maize, sunflower, poultry, and vegetable groups combined at about 47%. A separate analysis of 28 funded commodity groups revealed that 31% of the membership of funded groups were women, but this dataset was also incomplete.

A cursory review of commodity group records reveals that the commodity groups with the greatest proportion of women are those in basketry, mungongo nut collection, vegetable gardens, and poultry production. One of the lessons of the LFSP project was that one way to help women is by promoting enterprises and crops that are traditionally done by women (Lyons 2000). This suggests a way forward for improving access to microfinance for women.

Recommendation 45. CONASA can improve access to microfinance by women by promoting enterprises and crops that traditionally have a high level of participation by women.

11.3.2.4. COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINERS

The gender study also noted gender representation in community-based trainers. CONASA supports two types of community-based trainers: Community Coordinators who work at the CRB level, and Local Facilitators who operate at a VAG level. Of the five Community Coordinators, one is female and four are male. Of the 39 Local Facilitators, the gender study reports that 13 are female and 26 are male. This conflicts however with a report on the training of Local Facilitators, which stated that 3 are female and 36 were male.

Gender sensitisation was taught as one of the topics at the Local Facilitator training, and at least one facilitator in Nkandanzovu led a discussion on gender at a community meeting.

11.3.3. Gender in policy and advocacy training

While component one has maintained a respectable gender ratio in most of its training, component two and three trainings in policy and advocacy have been heavily male dominated, threatening to downplay the importance of gender in the policy agenda. This is described further in *6.3.2 – Gender*, page 137.

11.3.4. M&E

While CONASA has done well in recording gender representation in almost every activity, the difficulty in analysing gender patterns in training and micro-finance reveals weaknesses in the project's information systems. Currently information about activities is recorded for posterity in dozens of reports, while training and financing records are stored in numerous spreadsheets. CONASA outgrew these formats long ago and needs to upgrade its information systems in order to be able to synthesise overall impact and detect gender bias in activities.

In the future, it will be quite important to continue to monitor gender patterns in the distribution of benefits from CONASA and CBO activities, particularly loans distributed through the G-MED facility. CONASA should also continue to monitor qualitative changes in gender relations to better understand the cause-effect relationships between women's livelihoods, gender sensitisation, and HLS interventions, as well as look for signs of male backlash and other unanticipated outcomes.

Recommendation 46. CONASA should continue to monitor gender patterns in the distribution of project services and benefits, particularly in terms of access to G-MED loans, and qualitative changes in the social relations between men and women.

11.3.5. Summary and way forward

Gender is an extremely important consideration for HLS and CBNRM projects as nearly every aspect of rural livelihoods is patterned by gender: access to land, access to capital, use of natural resources, labour, opportunities for income generation, child rearing, etc. Following what is generally regarded as best practice in development work, CONASA has incorporated gender not as a separate stream of activities but as a cross-cutting theme in all sections of the project. In practice, this has mainly translated into incorporating gender topics into leadership training, promoting women's groups in agriculture and enterprise, and mainstreaming gender in data collection.

In 2003, CONASA conducted an internal study to look at the impacts of its activities on women. The study revealed a respectable number of women holding leadership positions at the lower level CBOs, but as one goes up the structure fewer and fewer women are found. This suggests that there are still significant barriers to women holding elected office, including but not limited to problems with literary, lack of self-confidence, lack of solidarity among women, and the mentality of many but not all men. However there have been several less dramatic examples of CBOs genuinely internalising and implementing development activities directed at improving the livelihoods of women. These positive signs are not ubiquitous however, and it is

recommended that CONASA facilitate more interaction between the CRB and VAG leaders that "get it", and those that don't.

For its part, the study revealed that CONASA's activities have directly benefited a respectable number of women, with 1/5 to 1/3 of most forms of training and funding going to women. However there is still room for improvement, especially in the policy component where a lack of participation from women threatens to sideline gender issues in the emerging policy agenda. Steps CONASA can take to increase the benefits to women include more involvement of lower level structures (where more women hold leadership positions) in activity planning and targeting, encouraging and supporting in-situ training through local facilitators, and promoting enterprises and crops traditionally practiced by women. CONASA also needs to strengthen its information systems to be better able to analyse gender patterns in process and impact.

In the future, CONASA should continue to increase the benefits that flow to women through more focussed targeting and promotion of women-friendly crops and enterprises. The project should also continue its gender sensitisation efforts, but let CBOs control the pace of change as gender is still a sensitive issue and the risk of a male backlash will increase if the project is too assertive. CONASA may also want to think about introducing additional programming to address underlying needs of women that are currently not met by the current results framework, in particular the need for girls' education and reproductive health. CONASA has a strong enough foothold in the communities to take on activities in these areas if financial support can be found.

12.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

12.1. Introduction

CONASA has a dedicated monitoring and evaluation unit, which consists of a full time M&E officer in Lusaka, a full time M&E Coordinator in Kalomo, and an M&E officer (see organisational chart, Appendix 6, page 359). The unit also gets support from the GIS/database specialist and program staff

The primary mission of the M&E section is to oversee the performance monitoring system as defined in the Performance Monitoring Plan (see 12.2, page 229), provide support to field staff in M&E issues, and conduct special studies. In practice, the M&E officers in CONASA, (like M&E officers everywhere) serve a wide variety of functions, including planning and conducting various meetings and workshops, providing information to visitors, representing CONASA at various institutional functions, and acting as a "help desk" to all sections of the project for a variety of technical needs.

The work of the M&E section has been discussed in almost every section of this report, but this section will specifically examine issues concerning performance monitoring, information management, the use of spatial data, special studies, and other special issues in M&E.

12.2. Performance monitoring

12.2.1. Benchmarks and performance indicators

In line with 'best practices' and reporting expectations from USAID, CONASA has a system for monitoring performance. The system acknowledges the difference between *process* and *impact*, and has developed separate sets of indicators and reporting channels for each, as described below and summarised in Table 36.

Table 36. Performance monitoring tools

	Process monitoring	Impact monitoring
CONASA's mechanism	benchmarks	performance indicators
Grouped by	activities	results 1–11
Developed by	individual program staff	entire project
Developed when	annual workplan meeting	performance monitoring workshop (2001)
Updated	annually	once (2002)
Data compiled by	individual program staff	M&E unit
Reviewed at	workplan and performance review meetings	performance review meetings
Reporting frequency	quarterly reports	annual performance reports
Number of measures	dozens	39
Purpose	Project management: Are activities being implemented timely and effectively?	Project assessment: Is the project having impact?

Process indicators, called *benchmarks* in CONASA terminology, measure the completion of activities and immediate outcomes such as numbers of people trained. Benchmarks are developed by individual program staff in the course of developing their annual workplans, and therefore change constantly depending on the activity. Benchmarks and their targets are reviewed by component heads and the entire project staff at performance review meetings, and are reported in quarterly reports.

Their main purpose of benchmarks is to facilitate project management by keeping track of whether individual activities are being implemented on time and in an effective manner. Staff make presentations on their activities at each workplan meeting, and have to explain if there have been deviations from their targets.

Performance indicators, on the other hand, are designed to measure impact on the ground based on the expected results in the results framework. An initial set of 33 performance indicators was developed during a project workshop in 2001. For each indicator, a precise definition including units of analysis was developed and compiled into a master performance monitoring plan. For some impacts, such as 'effectiveness of forums', no simple quantitative variable could do a good job at measuring progress, so an index or qualitative assessment template was constructed.

At the annual review in 2002, some of the indicators were reworded based on experiences from the first year, and an additional 6 performance indicators were added for a total of 39 (Table 37). Data for performance indicators are collected by program staff and then compiled once or twice annually by the M&E Unit.

Table 37. Performance indicators

Result 1: Community institutional structures enable broad-based participation in development planning and management
1.1. Number of established CBOs **1.2.** Number of households represented in CBO structure **1.3.** Number of households participating in activities of selected non-commercial CBOs **1.4.** Number of selected non-commercial CBOs initiating and managing projects
Result 2: Technical skills for livelihood strategies developed
2.1. Number of farmers in selected CBOs adopting new enterprise and institutional skills **2.2.** Number of community members conducting training activities
Result 3: Diverse market opportunities for agriculture and natural resource products identified and developed
3.1. Number of business linkages established between selected CBOs and the private sector **3.2.** Number of marketing materials produced **3.3.** Value of products and services marketed by selected CBOs **3.4.** Total value of loans received by members of selected CBOs **3.5.** Number of households benefiting from contractual agreements between selected CBOs and the private sector **3.6.** Average household income of selected CBOs
Result 4: Community information systems developed for CBNRM and household livelihood security monitoring and evaluation
4.1. Number of selected CBOs collecting information for community self-monitoring **4.2.** Number of CBOs utilizing information for decision-making
Result 5: Increased sustainable agriculture and natural resource production
5.1. Number of farmers adopting improved production technologies **5.2.** Land productivity of major crops and natural resources **5.3.** Number of months with self-produced food **5.4.** Average number of key domestic animals per household for members of selected CBOs **5.5.** Number of CBOs implementing resource management plans by type **5.6.** Number of strategies initiated to reduce unlicensed wildlife hunting activities **5.7.** Number of poachers encountered /arrested
Result 6: Capacity for policy advocacy enhanced in local and national civil

society institutions
6.1. Number of advocacy activities of selected civil society institutions **6.2.** Effectiveness of forums involved in advocacy for stronger CBNRM policies **6.3.** Number of policies reviewed contributing to the success of CBNRM.
Result 7: ZAWA's Reorientation To Bottom-Up Resource Management Institutionalised
7.1. ZAWA's level of co-management enhanced **7.2.** Financial flows between ZAWA and the community improved **7.3.** Measure of the communication between ZAWA and the communities **7.4.** Measure of devolution of power from ZAWA to the communities
Result 8: Civil society and NGO support for CBNRM increased
8.1. Number of civil society institutions actively engaged with selected CBOs **8.2.** Effectiveness of CBNRM forums for increasing civil society trade and support for selected CBOs **8.3.** Value of grants and non-commercial civil society support for selected CBOs
Result 9: Kafue Area communities participating effectively in policy and economic forums related to the Four Corners TBNRMA
9.1. Number of sector laws reviewed **9.2.** Number of CBOs familiarized with reviewed laws **9.3.** Number of selected CBOs adopting regional lessons learned **9.4.** Information on ecological linkages and connectivity in the Greater Kafue Area established and disseminated to stakeholders
Result 10: Increased regional business investment in Zambia and the Kafue Area
10.1. Value of signed contracts between selected CBOs and regional markets **10.2.** Value of non-traditional exports from selected GMAs
Result 11: Increased rural incomes from regional markets
11.1. Value of products and services marketed by selected CBOs for regional markets

12.2.2. Assessment of performance monitoring

To assess the performance monitoring system, four questions were asked:

- Are the indicators valid measures of process/impact?
- Is the system effectively capturing impact?
- Are data available to evaluate the indicators in a timely manner?
- Is the system useful?

12.2.2.1. ARE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS VALID MEASURES OF IMPACT?

Measuring changes in complex social and ecological systems is never easy or straightforward, but CONASA has put a good deal of project-wide thought and discussion into the development of their performance monitoring system (certainly more than is typical) and come up with a set of indicators that do a reasonably good job at measuring impact. There are of course problems in defining terms (e.g., what constitutes 'participation' in decision making?), and some indicators (e.g., 5.7) seem more like measures of intermediate results as opposed to end results. However overall the performance indicators as they have been defined are valid measures of the expected results.

A second, more difficult, issue is the question of causality. This is an area that CONASA, like most development and conservation projects, does not have a strong ability to detect. In other words, many of the indicators (e.g., conservation outcomes) can be affected by a number of processes and changes in the context, of which CONASA is just a small part. Thus when change is

observed (or not observed), it usually isn't possible to determine what caused the change.

The inability of performance indicators to determine causality is an example of the difficulties of project monitoring rather than a reflection of something that CONASA is doing wrong. Theoretically, the project could also monitor similar indicators in non-project "control" communities, however the added value from this work would unlikely warrant the investment in M&E resources, which are already stretched thin.

A more reasonable approach to the causality challenge, which CONASA has already adopted to some degree, is to triangulate the information from performance indicators with other sources of information. The project already triangulates performance indicators with its own benchmarks (e.g., look for change in areas where the project has already had some involvement) as well as qualitative assessment. These are reasonable steps to try to understand why change is or is not observed, and uses performance indicators as they should be used: as a tool for project monitoring, but not the final say.

Two other techniques CONASA could use more of to get more information about causation out of its performance monitoring system are 1) triangulating observations with external sources of data, and 2) comparing monitoring results and methods with the experiences from similar projects. These issues are described briefly below.

There are not many alternative sources of data available that CONASA can use to help understand the changing context (and therefore possible causes for observed changes), however there are some that may be worth exploring. The Central Statistics Office conducts a variety of nationwide surveys on demographic, health, and livelihood measures. Recent surveys include the 2000 Census, 2001 DHS+ survey, and LCMS (1996, 1998, and 2002). All of these CSO surveys are georeferenced and some have the raw data available. FAO recently funded a study of the impact of HIV/AIDS on rural agriculture in Southern Province (see FASAZ, 2003), and FEWS constantly monitors weather, maize prices, and crop harvests. The Department of Forestry is currently conducting an assessment of forest cover in Southern Province using Landsat images, and there is current an American research team conducting an anthropological study in Bbilili GMA on the interactions between migration, land tenure, and environmental degradation. ZAWA scouts collect a variety of information from law enforcement, a portion of which is summarized for CONASA by community coordinators but by no means all. These are just the data sources known to the author, there are undoubtedly others as well including other studies/surveys conducted by the consortium NGOs.

While none of these data sources focus exactly on the specific variables CONASA is concerned with, they paint the backdrop within which the project is working, and against which the project should be compared. For example an observed decline in the number of months with self-produced food says very little about whether CONASA is having an impact unless compared against the background trend. CONASA does indeed sometimes make reference to external data sources in its performance reporting, but not systematically.

Another practice that might be useful would be if the M&E unit makes summary presentations of the major findings of external studies/surveys to program staff at performance review meetings, or even better if guest speakers can be invited to make presentations of the main findings. Presentations of the main findings of external studies/surveys would also be a useful exercise for the four forums

CONASA is engaged with by 1) informing participants about changes and processes in the larger context, and 2) raising awareness of the possibilities of research as a tool for advocacy.

A second approach CONASA could employ to a greater degree to enhance the value of its performance monitoring system would be to compare its methods and results to those of similar HLS/CBNRM projects. There are several similar projects currently under way in Zambia, most notably the WCS Community Trading Centre project in Lundazi, SLAMU, and NORAD funded CBNRM support project in Mumbwa. In some ways, these other projects are a more appropriate benchmark for CONASA to compare itself against, rather than its own targets, because they represent similar approaches in similar contexts. Comparing monitoring methods and results would help CONASA and the other CBNRM support projects in Zambia to 1) identify common constraints and opportunities, 2) develop a range of performance standards in regard to impact, timing, and efficiency of approaches, 3) allow projects like CONASA to assess where they fall relative to "what's possible" in the Zambian context.

The suggestion to bring Zambian CBNRM/HLS projects together to discuss monitoring strategies and impacts is certainly not new, however this type of exercise has been difficult to achieve due in part to the relationship between support projects which has varied between "healthy competition" during good years to "mutual distrust" during bad years. However the advent of a new forum for CBNRM Support Organisations offers new hope that inter-project comparisons can take place and produce a range of performance standards for impact, timing, and efficiency, which projects like CONASA can then use to 'push the envelope' in various directions.

Recommendation 47. CONASA should work toward strengthening the interpretation of its performance monitoring by 1) using external data sources to strengthen the description of the context, and 2) comparing its impacts and efficiencies to those of other CBNRM/HLS projects in Zambia

12.2.2.2. IS THE SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY CAPTURING IMPACT?

Impact can missed in a performance monitoring system in two ways: 1) there may not be indicators for all types of impact, and 2) there might be good indicators but no effective way of collecting data on impact. CONASA definitely misses capturing some impact from the second problem (lack of data), and to a lesser extent may be missing some impact due to the first problem (lack of indicators).

Time did not allow this evaluation to do a detailed assessment of if, where, and why impact is not being captured. Although some observations were made and some staff had comments about where the project is failing to capture impact (see Table 39 below), a thorough assessment can only be made by the project itself. One methodology of such an assessment might look as follows:

Table 38. Methodology for an assessment of uncaptured impact

Phase I. Activity review
1. Review each the activities in each section
2. Make a list of the impacts produced/expected
3. Determine if there is at least one indicator that captures the impact(s)
4. Determine if data is being collected
5. Adjust indicators or data collection systems as needed

Phase II. Indicator review
6. Review each indicator 7. Make a list of activities that contribute to the indicator 8. Determine if data is being collected 9. Adjust indicators or data collection systems as needed

Table 39. Invisible impacts

Impacts being missed because of inadequate indicators	Impacts being missed because of inadequate data
▪ sense of empowerment and self-confidence ▪ synergistic effects ▪ reduction in the non-income dimensions of poverty	▪ income generated by commodity groups ▪ value of gains in agricultural production ▪ income generated by individual entrepreneurs ▪ production gains through technology diffusion ▪ income generated by G-MED assisted enterprises

In addition to missing impact, performance indicators can also be a misrepresentation of performance when they over-capture impact. CONASA certainly has the potential for over-lapping performance indicators

12.2.2.3. ARE DATA AVAILABLE TO EVALUATE INDICATORS?

A well-defined indicator can only be useful if there are data available to detect changes. Data collection for CONASA's performance monitoring system varies from indicator to indicator. Data from some indicators (e.g., number of established CBOs) can be obtained from project records and is therefore relatively easy to collect and compile. Other indicators require data from community sources (e.g., average number of key domestic animals per household for members of selected CBOs), and as expected is more difficult to obtain. Still other indicators, such as *Effectiveness of CBNRM forums for increasing civil society trade and support for selected CBOs,* are multi-dimensional and require a separate exercise by project staff to fill out a pre-constructed index.

Although the M&E unit has the responsibility of compiling performance indicators at least annually, it relies on program staff to compile and submit indicator data. To get a rough idea of how many indicators suffer from data collection issues, this evaluation reviewed the 2003 Annual Performance Report. In an ideal world, by the end of each calendar year the project should have up to date information on all its performance indicators in preparation for an annual performance report that is supposed to be submitted to USAID in January or February. In the 2003 annual review, as of late February 2004 the M&E unit had compiled indicator data for about 2/3 of 39 the indicators. Of the indicators which did not have data attached to them, about 1/3 required special studies scheduled for 2004, and about 2/3 were related to data collection and compilation issues. Thus approximately ¼ of the indicators have problems with data collection.

Although data collection for performance indicators has improved, it still remains a weak-link for at least some indicators. There is no magic bullet solution for data collection, as the needs will depend on the specific indicator and the specific sources of data. The M&E unit has tried to develop reporting templates for program staff, collect data at performance review meetings, and

extract indicator data from field reports. Lessons from other projects suggests that data collection works best when it is built into routine tasks. Developing section level modules for the project database may also help provided they are used by program staff and are designed in such a way that performance indicators can be extracted.

12.2.2.4. IS THE PERFORMANCE MONITORING SYSTEM USEFUL?

Because performance indicators and benchmarks themselves do not put food in people's bellies nor money in people's pocket, the central question for consideration is "Is our performance monitoring system helping us to achieve results?" Assuming the answer is affirmative, a natural second question is, "Are the benefits from performance monitoring in line with inputs?"

When program staff were asked what they thought about performance indicators, virtually all felt they were useful in providing focus to their work. This is indeed a good sign because that's exactly what performance indicators are designed to do. The practice of developing benchmarks and targets for specific activities, and holding staff accountable to their targets during performance review and workplan meetings was also given high marks as a project management tool.

As long as staff feel that performance indicators are helping them to stay focused on their work, then the current system is serving a purpose. When performance indicators become an end in themselves, instead of a means to an end, then their purpose has become blurred. From the perspective of project monitoring and donor reporting, 39 result-level indicators is probably more than necessary. Most projects have one or two indicators per result, while CONASA has over three on average and as many as seven! Granted that CONASA is more diverse than most projects, with several streams of activities being implemented simultaneously, but it still needs to reflect on the value gained from each indicator.

One way CONASA can makes its performance indicators more coherent and less daunting is to articulate within the results framework intermediate results, and 'demote' some of the performance indicators to intermediate result indicators. This is in fact what already exists. For example, of the seven performance indicators under result 5, only three (5.2, 5.3, 5.4) are actually measures of the final result. The remaining four are measures of intermediate results, which is not clearly stated. CONASA could articulate its achievements, to both itself as well as outside audiences, more clearly and compellingly if it distinguished what is an end, what is a means to an end, and how it measures both.

A second challenge for CONASA has been in selecting targets for performance indicators. In an optimal case, CONASA would be able to define performance indicators at the start of the project, select targets for each year, and evaluate the indicators on a yearly basis. This is the model taught in project monitoring textbooks, but it assumes that the end state can be predicted in the beginning, and that enough is known about the system to select meaningful but realistic targets. These assumptions are not completely valid in CONASA's case, because while the project has general ideas of results, many of the activities are exploratory in nature, data about the communities is incomplete, and predictions are based on imperfect or incomplete information. It has therefore taken the pragmatic step of making most targets one or two years in advance. Even still, some of the targets appear in hindsight to be unrealistic, suggesting a need to review target setting methods. However before the method for setting

targets can be reviewed, it must be documented. Currently there is no record of how targets were chosen.

> **Recommendation 48**. CONASA should include in the PMP a description of how targets for performance indicators are selected, so the methodology can be improved as additional experience is gathered.

In addition to keeping individual staff and the project as a whole focused on the results, there is a second purpose to performance indicators which is to allow the project to grow from its experiences by feeding into a process of institutional learning. This requires that performance indicators be tied into a conceptual framework where the context is well documented and monitored. CONASA is learning from its experiences and the performance indicators facilitate this learning, however this function is a distant second to that of reporting and project management. See section 13.2, page 262, for more details.

A third function that performance monitoring can play is in making analyses of efficiency. For this to be possible, results have to be tied to measures of project resource use, including human, financial, and material resources. It has been argued elsewhere that efficiency analysis is relatively weak in CONASA, in part because the information systems for performance monitoring and project management are disconnected. To strengthen the ability to analyse efficiency, CONASA would need to first build a linkage between its financial and HR information systems and activity implementation, and then use that linkage to define relationships with performance results or groups of performance results.

12.2.3. Capturing process

Although impact is arguably the best measure of a project's net value, it is also important to document process for several reasons. First, impact can not always be easily measured, or may only be noticeable at a larger time or spatial scale. In these cases, capturing process may be the best or only measure of a project's achievements. Secondly, while impact represents the ultimate goal of the project, documenting the process by which impact was achieved is needed to a) assign causality, b) evaluate efficiency, c) detect unintended consequences, and d) improve specific strategies.

CONASA's primary mechanism for documenting process for the project as a whole are the quarterly reports. These reports follow the structure of the annual workplan, and individual program staff report progress against their own benchmarks. The thoroughness of activity reporting and the quality of the narration in quarterly reports varies across reports and sections of the project, but the overall trend has been better reporting and a more uniform structure as time goes on. In addition to quarterly reports, individual program staff describe their activities in monthly reports, and a variety of activity/training reports.

While the quarterly reports and various activity reports do a reasonably good job in describing processes, the sequential narrative format makes it difficult to see the big picture, or the cumulative evolution of activities over time. To get an overview of any set of activities or the work that's been done in any given area, one must flip through numerous past reports, as if browsing through old newspapers. All three of the most recent special studies (the enterprise study, conservation and livelihoods, and this evaluation) found the current system of capturing process difficult to use.

A better system would allow users to pull out needed information about development processes for any given activity or area. At the simplest level, this

could simply involve strengthening the filing system, with separate folders for each activity or area, or maintaining a report index that summarizes the contents of each quarterly report. This kind of indexing could also be built in to the project's data manager (see *12.3.3.2 – CONASA Data Manager*, page 242), or tools such as Adobe Acrobat Catalogue used to set up searchable digital libraries. Further along the technological spectrum, activity reporting could become completely integrated into the project database, with built-in cross-referencing by keyword, geographic area, commodity, etc. While there would be some initial costs for enhancing the database to capture activity-reporting, this improvement would enable the project to analyse its performance in providing comprehensive training, the level of activity saturation for a given area, collect performance indicator data, and ultimately prepare quarterly reports faster and more accurately.

Recommendation 49. CONASA should strengthen its ability to synthesize process documentation by exploring methods such as an activity or area-based filing system, electronic indexing, or preferably incorporating systematic activity reporting into the project's database.

12.2.4. Performance monitoring conclusion and recommendations

CONASA has paid serious attention to performance monitoring and it shows in the quality of project management and reporting. Although the project has sometimes struggled with its targeting and sequencing of activities, it has never lost focus on the goal. The use of benchmarks and performance indicators is, and has been, universal throughout the project since the beginning, and is acknowledged by project staff as useful for keeping focus. The project has achieved a good balance in using the tools of performance monitoring as a guide for implementation and strategizing, but has not 'blindly' followed indicators nor made them an end to themselves.

There remain some challenges in performance monitoring. Data collection is in some case constipated, and in other cases data processing and storage is a weak link. The current practice of reporting activities in dozens of separate reports does not allow syntheses of overall impact. The project's information system is an under-utilized resource that could strengthen performance monitoring, as well as help the project utilize impact data for efficiency analyses. In the future, CONASA should consider trimming down its indicators, and/or put them into a hierarchy of strategic and intermediate results. At the end of the day, performance monitoring is a tool to improve effectiveness. Many of the methods of performance monitoring were developed for relatively simple projects doing relatively simple things. To maximize the value from performance monitoring, CONASA should (as it has) explore how to adopt the tools of performance monitoring to its own needs and context.

12.3. Information management

Strong information management is important for any development or conservation project, but particularly so for CONASA due to a couple of characteristics of the project. CONASA's programming approach is characterized by several innovative and experimental elements, including a marriage of conservation and development activities, leveraging multiplier effects through strengthening the capacity of community based organisations, and improving livelihood security through increasing the capacity of community level organisations to advocate for a more conducive policy environment. These innovative elements are based on various assumptions about synergistic benefits and the importance of local democratic governance, which seem plausible but have not been well tested in Zambia or elsewhere. As a pioneer in numerous aspects of approaches to rural development and conservation, CONASA's success or failure will largely depend on how well it can implement, assess, and improve its approach, and how well it can tell that story to community institutions, government, NGOs, and donors.

Strong information management is not only important for CONASA for evaluating and refining its strategies, but also for standard operational purposes. CONASA is a large and somewhat dispersed project, with over 40 staff, in three offices, carrying out three distinct but partially overlapping streams of activities. Information sharing is the primary and possibly only tool that the project can use to coordinate its activities, and be able to present "one face" to community members, partners in government, and the civil society groups it works with. CONASA also has performance reporting requirements to USAID, and to a lesser extent to the primary consortium NGOs. Collecting, managing, and disseminating information is therefore not an optional academic exercise, but an essential element of CONASA's overall performance, and ultimately its survival.

12.3.1. Financial and administrative information systems

CONASA uses a variety of mechanisms to manage information about programming, administration, and impact monitoring. The financial and administrative officers have their own systems for managing information about budgets, inventory, personnel, travel, etc. This information is tracked through a combination of customized software applications provided by CARE, Excel spreadsheets, Access databases, and paper records. In addition, WCS and AWF have their own systems for managing accounts, personnel, and property.

The administrative and financial information systems were not under review for this mid-term evaluation, so little will be said about them other than noting the important fact that they do not appear to be integrated in any way with the information systems for programming. There appears to be an almost complete divorce between programming information and financial and human resource use at both the reporting and strategic planning stages. This lack of integration makes it difficult for the project to monitor or assess the efficiency of the various project activities. For example, a very simple question like "how many people on average are being trained per staff trip into the field, and how has this changed over time, across areas, and through different training strategies?" would require a considerable amount of data processing and analysis, and may not be answerable at all.

Because CONASA is stretched thin operationally and has limited (and probably inadequate) human and financial resources for the scope of activities and size of the project area, being strategic and efficient in programming is not simply needed to 'fine-tune' the approach, but is absolutely essential for the project to have meaningful impact. The December 2003 special study on enterprise development also found the lack of a system for tracking staff time to be an impediment to identifying the most efficient approach for the project to stimulate enterprise activity, and in some sense diminishes the amount of institutional learning that is possible. These observations support the following recommendation:

> **Recommendation 50**. CONASA should work towards integrating its information systems for administration and programming, in order to be able to evaluate and improve efficiency.

Strategies for integrating administrative and programming information could take a number forms. One option would be to encourage program staff to include a section on 'resources consumed' for each activity report, information which is currently almost completely absent. Thus whether the activity is a tree planting, workshop, extension visit, special study, the officer in charge would be asked to include in the activity report the amount of materials used, vehicle kilometres, staff time, per diems, etc. This at a minimum would promote resource use as an integral component of activity planning and reporting. A more quantitative approach might

be to code specific programming benchmarks against various expenditures, trips recorded in the vehicle log, days allocated on the workplan, etc.

When considering possible strategies for integrating administrative and programming information systems, project management should take precautions that integration of programming and administrative systems leads to higher efficiency of resources, and not perverse and undesirable incentives. Principles for achieving this might include developing a strategy for efficiency analysis through a completely participatory process, decentralizing the integration so program staff don't feel like they're being 'watched' from above (positive incentives almost always work better than negative incentives in a decentralized organisation), and possibly making efficiency analysis an optional component of reporting.

12.3.2. Information for programming and M&E

Developing tools to manage information about activities and impact monitoring is never easy because the processes are complex, and there are no standard 'templates' that one can turn to the way an accountant could turn to standard a accounting sheet. CONASA records information about its program activities and impacts in a variety of formats, which range from the very unstructured to the very structured.

Little or no structure	Individual staff field notes, diaries
	Trip reports
	Monthly activity reports
	Bi-weekly workplans
⇓	Newsletter
	Internal reports (including meeting minutes, proceedings, etc.)
	Quarterly reports
Highly structured	Annual performance reviews
	Database system

In terms of specific datasets, Table 40 below offers a qualitative assessment of the adequacy of the collection and organization of programming information.

Table 40. Assessment of the collection and organization of specific datasets

Dataset	Collection	Organization and Dissemination
CBO lists	**Good.** Membership lists exist for most CBOs, often including members' position, gender, and age.	**Fair.** Lists are mostly maintained by section heads, dissemination and sharing is ad-hoc, aggregation statistics are calculated manually.
training records	**Fair.** Attendance lists exist for most if not all training activities, including those conducted by community facilitators. Impact of `training is generally not collected.	**Improvement needed.** No standard format or databases exists for recording participation in training. In particular, the ability to track participation in training at individual level does not exist, so the project can not control for 'double-counting' number of individuals benefiting from training, nor assess whether specific individuals have received all required training.

Dataset	Collection	Organization and Dissemination
reports & documents	**Good**. A substantial number of reports and other documents are produced and catalogued.	**Good**. Digital copies of most documents are stored in the database, and maintenance of libraries at each office has been reasonably effective in keeping track of what documents have been produced. However improvements can still be made (see below).
commodity group activity	**Fair**. Although the project recognizes the importance of collecting information about the activities of commodity groups for performance monitoring, the system of collecting information is rather ad-hoc and incomplete. Most staff recognize that a lot of 'impact' might not be being captured. The fact that most enterprise-focused commodity groups have not been very active may explain why a systematic system of collecting information has not been developed.	**Improvement needed**. Although a local consultant was recruited and paid to develop a MS Access database to enter and analyse information about commodity group sales, membership, etc. the system is not being used by CONASA. Revenue information is compiled on an ad-hoc basis, usually at performance reviews, and is widely suspected to be incomplete.
spatial data	**Fair**. Project staff have recorded spatial data (GPS points) on many project activities and some landscape features. However there is still room for improvement (see below).	**Good**. The project has a GIS specialist and trained staff in the field office who know how to use GPS hardware and software and manage points. The database has a built-in 'waypoints manager' which has done a reasonably good job in managing GPS data.
performance indicators	**Fair**. The project has over 30 well-defined performance indicators (see 12.2.1, page 229), however performance monitoring data is collected and compiled on an ad-hoc basis.	**Fair**. M&E staff developed a facility in the database to manage performance indicator data, but the system has not been used nor updated as performance indicators have evolved. Summaries are in written reports.
natural resources	**Fair**. Project staff and/or community coordinators and facilitators visit ZAWA offices and make summaries of secondary monitoring data from field patrols. The project does not have a real resource monitoring component itself.	**Fair**. Summaries are made in reports, but little analysis is presented and linkages to project activities could be strengthened.
budget performance	**Good**. Although not reviewed for this evaluation, the project does have and use a system for tracking its budget performance.	**Fair**. Field staff reported ignorance of budget resources, suggesting lack of timely updates on budget performance.

Dataset	Collection	Organization and Dissemination
HR efficiency	**Fair**. Basic information about the use of human resources is recorded, mostly in individual workplans, travel records, monthly reports, pay records, and annual individual performance reviews.	**Improvement needed**. The organization of HR data is designed for personnel management but not suited for analysing HR efficiency and effectiveness.

12.3.3. Special issues in information management

12.3.3.1. REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

As noted elsewhere in this report, the quantity and quality of reports that have been produced by CONASA is generally impressive. Project staff devote a substantial amount of time toward documenting their work, and component heads and senior staff encourage reporting. Over 350 documents that relate to programming have been produced by CONASA staff or contracted consultants, a partial list of which can be found in Appendix 5.

CONASA disseminates reports by sharing soft copies between offices of most documents and hard copies for the bigger documents. This seems to be a good strategy as photocopying is somewhat expensive (particularly in the field offices), and sharing electronic copies provides the flexibility for staff to decide which documents to read.

It would be challenging for any project or business to make efficient use of such a large number of documents being produced. Where CONASA's system for dissemination falters is at the stage of making users (management and program staff) aware of what has been written. In the Lusaka office, the vast majority of documents are stored on the main server and are catalogued in the project database. However it isn't clear how many people use this system, and one program staff person in Lusaka wasn't even aware that documents were available electronically. The Kalomo and CONASA CSC office do not have a central server and so sharing documents is more ad-hoc. Other constraints which hinder the project from capturing the full value of these reports include:

- **Timely dissemination**. In order for reports to have a beneficial role in program planning, they need to be disseminated on a timely basis. This has not always occurred. Although sharing digital copies of documents has proven an effective way of disseminating reports between offices, some program staff in the Lusaka office were not even aware that digital copies of most reports were available on the server. Library managers may wish to send out a periodic 'new additions to the library' for internal distribution.

- **Integration with planning**. CONASA can improve its ability to incorporate the knowledge gained from experience back into program planning by explicitly articulating lessons learned and recommendations in reporting. Many project documents do provide recommendations sprinkled through the document, but it would be helpful to encourage staff to present a summary of recommendations and key lessons in a separate section.

- **Incorporating lower level documents**. Although nearly all of the larger reports and studies are disseminated between sections and offices, a review found that numerous "lower" level documents such as trip reports, smaller workshop summaries, and meeting minutes are not disseminated. The

project should work toward improving the dissemination of these smaller documents which often contain more detail than larger documents.

- **Cataloguing information**. Approximately half of the reports do not have a date nor author listed on the cover page. This may be the legacy of the institutional culture of previous employers, but CONASA officially does and should continue to encourage staff to take credit for their work.

- **Searching and organization**. The project's database is equipped with a facility to keep track of both documents in both digital and hardcopy format, however the facility needs stronger searching and categorization abilities. Documents should at a minimum be classified using keywords or categories according to geographic area, commodity, etc. This need been incorporated into the terms of reference for a consulting contract but the work is outstanding. Short summaries would also be useful.

- **Management of hard copies**. Although each office has its own library, printed copies have been known to disappear suggesting that a better system of checking out documents is needed.

Recommendation 51. CONASA should work toward i) strengthening the timely dissemination of project reports and documents, ii) improve integration of reporting and planning by articulating lessons learned and recommendations in project reports, iii) disseminate more of the 'lower level' documents such as trip reports and meeting minutes, iv) ensure that every document has the name of an author and date, v) improve the cataloguing and searching ability of the library database, and vi) review the management of hard copies of reports.

12.3.3.2. CONASA DATA MANAGER

CONASA has a relatively sophisticated database system which is commonly referred to as the 'Data Manager'. The system evolved from the former 'ADMADE Data Manager,' which was developed for ZAWA by WCS, but has been periodically enhanced by both CONASA's database specialist and a consultant. The system is built around MS Access, but has many additional features including a user friendly menu system, integrated object filtering and documentation, data logging, user friendly data import and export wizards, support for managing and visualizing GIS and GPS data, interactive charts, customisable graphic layouts, and document management. Currently the main uses of the database include:

- management of GPS data, including importing, categorization, and exporting into standard GIS formats
- cataloguing documents in the project libraries and indexing digital copies when available
- entering and analysing data from specific surveys, including the NGO survey (see *6.2.1 – Civil Society Database*, page 122), and the 2001 baseline household survey
- entering membership lists for some household groups, although it is not entirely clear what this is used for
- sharing data between offices, primarily GPS points and documents

Databases have also been set up to manage performance indicator data and commodity group activity, but these databases are not currently being used.

While the data manager is serving several useful functions, particularly in facilitating the sharing of data across offices, CONASA's use of its database resources is somewhat analogous to using a top of the line Mercedes Benz to drive across the street and buy tomatoes. It is mainly being used as a high-tech card catalogue, a tool for exchanging GPS data, and occasionally for entering survey data with minimal analysis. There is a lot more that could be done with the database that would both improve the quality of data analysis and presentation, and capture the full value of the investments that have been made in its development. For example, CONASA is struggling to document achievements and capture impact in a number of activity streams, in particular commodity group income generation, training, and resource production. CONASA is also challenged to demonstrate linkages across its activities, in particular between conservation and livelihood security, between CBO institutional capacity and household level livelihood security, and between advocacy/policy support and livelihood conservation. While a database is certainly no panacea for capturing impact and demonstrating linkages, it can provide an important tool to help manage information and see patterns.

Some of the constraints (which are inter-related) that have hindered making better use of CONASA's database include:

- a general unfamiliarity, and in some cases anxiety, about database use among project staff at all levels
- the database is generally not set up to meet the day-to-day data management needs of program staff
- the information retrieval interface is relatively weak and not oriented to planning or management
- limited support for development or expansion of the database, particularly in the Kalomo and Livingstone offices
- limited integration between spatial data and data on achievement/impact
- limited access to the database in the field offices

Some general principles that might be helpful for making better use of the database include:

- program staff will be more likely to use a database system for entering data if its set up to meet their day-to-day information needs (which largely focus on planning and reporting)
- development of the system should be centered on the outputs required by specific staff, including tabular summaries and standardized maps needed for planning and reporting
- more people will be likely to use the data manager for planning purposes if the data retrieval interface is oriented for planning and reporting needs
- M&E staff will have better access to data if they in turn help program staff develop tools to manage their data systematically
- if existing systems for recording datasets (e.g., spreadsheets, paper records, etc.) are working fine, then the initial focus of integration efforts should be on developing ways to periodically import those data into the data manager, as opposed to creating a new data entry and processing system

More specific suggestions for enhancing the use of the data manager include integrating datasets for training, CBO membership lists, commodity group activity, and some measure of natural resource production or threat reduction. Any new datasets that are incorporated into the data manager should be set up according to the guidelines in the users manual, which enable support of features such as data logging, object filtering, and the data sharing tools.

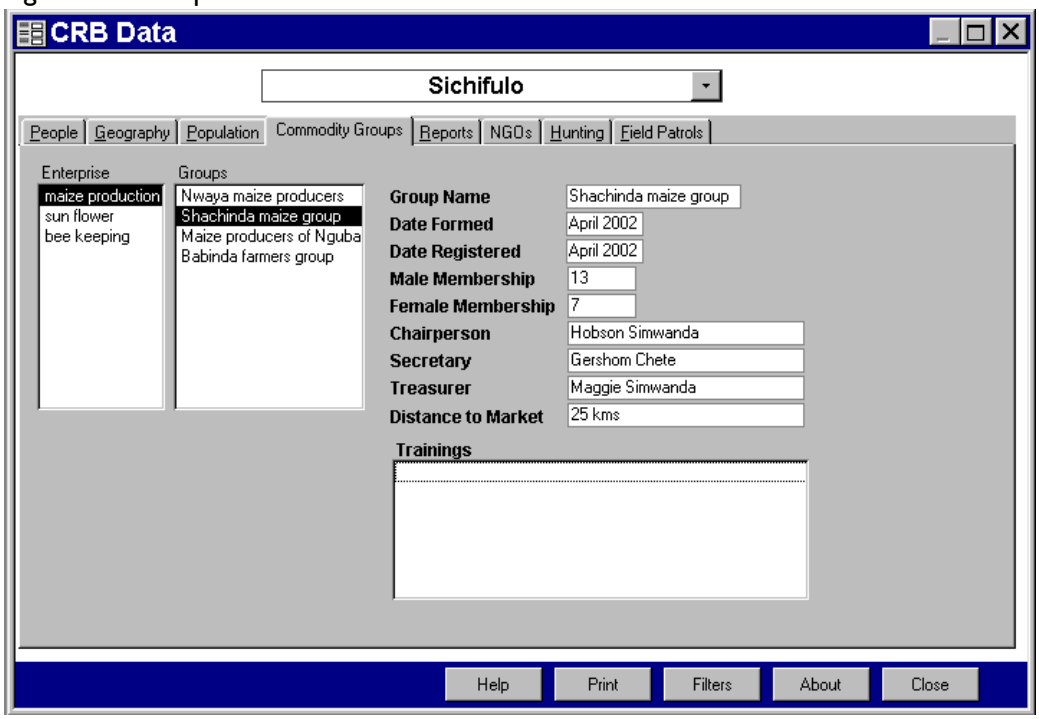
Another form of data that could benefit from better organisation is CONASA's extensive collection of digital photographs. The project has several hundred

digital photos, either scanned or taken from a digital camera, which are currently scattered across computers in all offices. These images tell an important part of CONASA's story, but most of them are undocumented, uncatalogued, and unshared. The project could make better use of these images if they were organised digitally.

There are many ways one can organise images, including specialised 'photo album' software. CONASA could also catalogue its photo collection with the data manager, much in the same way it has catalogued reports and documents. The advantage of cataloguing digital images within the data manager is that it would allow the images to be cross-linked to other data, and could take advantage of the data manager's semi-automated features for data sharing and synchronisation between offices. The data manager could also be equipped to design and output 'digital slideshows' in HTML format for either the project web page or presentations. WCS has already developed a preliminary 'picture manager' module for the data manager that is a good start and would not be difficult to integrate.

A second area of improvement needed is the interface for retrieving data. Currently quite a bit of information is available in the database but retrieving that information is not straightforward, particularly for a non-specialist. An improved interface similar to the 'Unit Profiles' form of the ADMADE Data Manager would allow users to view documents, maps, membership lists, and other forms of monitoring data based on the name of a geographic area, commodity, time period, etc.

Figure 19. Example of a new data retrieval interface



Recommendation 52. CONASA should work toward re-orienting the data manager system to the needs of program staff by i) incorporating datasets that are maintained by program staff on a regular basis, ii) designing outputs needed for common planning and reporting purposes, and iii) developing a better interface for retrieving data based on a planning process

12.4. Use of spatial data

The importance of spatial data for project planning and M&E is recognized in CONASA's planning document, and reflected in the creation of a dedicated position for a GIS and database specialist. There is a strong spatial dimension to resource management in particular, but also enterprise support and identification of appropriate agricultural interventions tailored to specific agroecological zones. Spatial data can also play an important role in project communication and coordination, two tools of management which are particularly important in a project as large and dispersed as CONASA.

12.4.1. Resources for spatial data management

CONASA was fortunate that one of the consortium partners, WCS, had experience in spatial data analysis and brought to the consortium skilled manpower and a relatively complete set of spatial base layers digitised under the ADMADE program. Within weeks after starting activities in 2001, CONASA ordered GPS equipment so that the locations of natural resources, social infrastructure, households, and other important landmarks could be recorded in the upcoming PRA exercises and the baseline household survey. Unfortunately constipation in CARE's centralized procurement system prevented the units from arriving on time, and no spatial information was recorded during the exercises, missing a valuable opportunity. Nevertheless, the investment in procuring the necessary hardware enabled the project to continue to collect spatial subsequently.

In addition to the 12 GPS units, CONASA also procured a large format plotter and the necessary software for a fully functional GIS unit. In addition to dedicated GIS software, the project's data manager (see 12.3.3.2, page 242) has built-in support for visualizing spatial data. In 2002, a consultant was contracted to develop a "Waypoints Manager" for the project database, which is now being used to import, sort, share, and link spatial data to other tabular data. The consultant also produced a technical guide for all aspects of spatial data management, from naming conventions, instructions on using the hardware, to the basics of using several different software packages.

A summary of the number of waypoints stored in data manager, by category, appears in Table 41 below. However not all GPS data are stored in the database, many are stored in regular GIS files.

Table 41. GPS waypoints stored in the project database, December 2003.

Category	# points	Category	# points	Category	# points
agricultural camp	1	health centre	10	road-stream crossing	1
air strip	1	hhd wrt beekeeping	25	safari camp	2
beehive	174	hill	4	school	38
bill board site	2	hospital	1	settlement	3
borehole	11	hot spring	3	shop	12
boundary	1	household	109	small town	9
bridge	15	nutritional centre	1	sports field	2
campsite	6	office	1	spring	1
church	6	oil expeller site	1	stock fence-road crossing	1
community local court	2	palace	4	stream	10
confluence	1	pan	1	sweet potato field	1
crop shed	4	plain	13	town	14
dam	3	pond	20	unsettled	3
dead spring	1	potential ranch area	1	vag	28
farm	1	poultry farmer	10	vegetation	17
field	212	proposed healthy post site	2	village	212
fish camp	1	proposed sch. site	1	water hole	1
fld wrt bees	49	rail-road crossing	7	well	2
flycamp	1	river	11	wildlife camp	10
game ranch point	2	road	57	wildlife migratory corridor	20
gardens	2	road junction	23	wildlife related sightings	2
grinding mill	1	road point near field	6	wildlife sighting	6
guest house	1	road point near garden	9		
headman	1	road thru/near village	8		

CONASA has used its resources for spatial data management for several purposes, including:

- reference maps have been produced for various presentations and reports (including quarterly reports) to illustrate the locations of project activities and CBO structures
- with additional support from WCS, project staff collected vegetation data to perform a ground cover image classification of the project area using Landsat satellite imagery
- a map showing the location of project supported beehives and a 5 km buffer zone was produced for an application for organic honey certification
- a map showing the locations of suspected wildlife corridors was produced, based on data collected during field surveys
- a map of all enterprise activities was produced
- the point locations of 110 households, and the perimeters of their agricultural fields, was collected as part of a follow-up to the baseline household survey
- a map to accompany a land-use plan for Shezongo is currently under development

A number of sample reference maps of the project area are presented in Appendix 4 (page 339).

12.4.2. Accuracy and organization of spatial data

Maps can be incredibly powerful tools for communication and planning. They can also be incredibly misleading. Whether or not spatial data is used effectively to make maps depends in part on its spatial accuracy, documentation (or meta-data), and completeness.

CONASA inherited a collection of digital "map layers" (GMA boundaries, rivers, roads, etc.) from ZAWA, who produced them with support from WCS under the

ADMADE program. These base layers were digitised from 1:250,000 scale maps in the early 1990s, and are perhaps best characterized as having 'medium' level accuracy. This level of accuracy is adequate for making general reference maps, but is probably not accurate enough for more detailed uses such as ecological inventories or demarcating resource management zones. In 2003 CONASA reviewed whether it would be a good investment to produce higher resolution spatial data from 1:50,000 topographical maps, but it was concluded that programming needs at the time, which only used maps for reference purposes, did not require a higher level of spatial accuracy. This evaluation agrees with that assessment, but if CONASA starts to play a greater role in compiling spatial data for resource management planning (see Recommendation 57), it may want to review the need for more accurate spatial data.

A second source of spatial data is the project's GPS units. These units record locations to an accuracy of 5-10 meters, which is more than accurate enough for any purpose the project is likely to encounter. A third source of spatial data is the Landsat satellite images that were acquired by the project in year 1, but have hardly been used at all.

A second issue which influences how effective spatial data is for a project is how it is documented and organized. CONASA maintains its GPS data in two formats: in the project database (see 12.3.3.2, page 242) and as GIS files. In both cases, improvements are needed in recording the "attribute" data that goes along with each waypoint. Naming conventions are inconsistently used, and often the name of the feature is either omitted or recorded elsewhere. Too much information about the features being mapped is left in the memory of the individual who collected the point, where it become vulnerable to being forgotten and inaccessible to others. Both the "waypoints" facility in the data manager and the file format of GIS data have multiple ways of documenting information about a point, such as the name, date, person who recorded it, notes, etc. The data manager has the added benefit of being able to link spatial data to other information in the database (such as commodity group activity, disbursement of inputs, etc).

Recommendation 53. Project staff should be more diligent about noting and recording attribute information of GPS points so that what they represent becomes self-evident.

12.4.3. Future directions

CONASA has invested a considerable amount of resources into acquiring all of the requisite hardware, software, and human resources for a fully functional in-house GIS unit. This is somewhat unique among development projects, and constitutes an important strategic advantage of the project. However CONASA is still using spatial data primarily to make general reference maps, representing a vast under-utilization of its capability. The use of GPS equipment is more widespread today than it was during the initial phase, but is still seen largely as the domain of a couple of M&E officers, as is the production of maps.

Collecting spatial data and making maps has yet to be mainstreamed in the work of most of the program staff, nor has it been widely used as a tool for community planning. The technical resources are all in place, what remains to be done is a "decentralization of the technology", which has not occurred due to either a lack of effort or a lack of interest. Some of the areas where map-making could be utilized more fully include:

- **Maps of project activities**. While the locations of many of the project's interventions have been recorded, the collection of spatial data on project activities can be best described as ad-hoc. The recent special study on enterprise development managed to collect the spatial locations of the majority of enterprise commodity groups, however no such comprehensive maps exist for activities in agricultural production, forestry, or CBO capacity building. These maps would be extraordinarily useful for project planning and coordination, M&E, and communicating results.

- **Performance reviews and developing workplans**. During the annual workplan and performance review meetings in December 2003, it was noticeable that not a single map was presented to demonstrate the distribution of activities or CBOs. Although field staff have a generally good knowledge of the project area, and many have a general idea of where their colleagues are working, maps can reveal patterns in project implementation not easily detected by mere discussion. For example maps can reveal when activities are falling at the peripheries or even outside the project area, activities that are geographically isolated from other sets of activities (which may be a sign of an inefficient use of resources and/or limited potential for synergy), spatial targeting which may or may not be likely to lead to improved conservation, duplications in effort, etc.

> **Recommendation 54**. Program staff should be encouraged to present maps of their activities during planning and performance review meetings. Section-specific maps should be produced at the same scale so that they can be overlaid, either digitally or physically using transparencies, to see opportunities for synergy, presence or absence of spatial targeting for conservation, efficient use of project resources, etc.

- **Ecological corridors**. The geographic proximity of the project area to the protected areas in the neighbouring countries is the entire basis for including component three in the project, and will undoubtedly continue to play an important role in the design of future programming. CONASA has made preliminary steps in mapping out the general extent of habitat "corridors" connecting Kafue National Park and the Zambezi (see Map 13, page 346), however the maps produced to date are at a coarse scale and contain very little information about important landscape features such as the quality of the habitat, distribution of human population centres in and around the corridors, frequency of use, and rates of land cover change. The project has a valuable opportunity to collect additional socio-economic and ecological data around these corridors, and develop a long-range vision for maintaining as much habitat connectivity as possible in ways that also support the livelihood security.

- **Study of transportation networks**. We know that transportation is a major constraint in the project area due to poor roads and spread out communities. But we also know that people do move in and out of these areas on foot, bicycle, private vehicles, commercial vehicles, and some government vehicles. We also know that private traders (including bushmeat traders) have a network of transportation routes, and some areas have mini-buses that go in and out when the roads are passable. A more detailed mapping exercise of these transportation networks might help CONASA and the CRBs think of ways to take advantage of existing transport for disseminating market information, be more strategic in identifying areas to for bulking schemes, plan outgrower schemes, etc.

- **Mapping human population distribution**. CONASA collected a lot of information about the distribution of people in the project area during the PRA exercises in 2000 and 2001. In 2003, additional population figures were compiled for most areas by community facilitators using village records maintained by traditional headmen. However although a lot of population data has been collected, most of this information has yet to be integrated into the project's GIS or database. Having a complete or near-complete picture of the population of each village in the project areas would be extraordinarily useful for CONASA. For example the spatial distribution of population information could help tell CONASA and the CRBs:
    - whether their activities are reaching enough people to make real impact or are a 'drop in the bucket'
    - whether activities design to reduce threats and improve resource management are targeting the appropriate areas
    - identify population 'hot spots' that would be suitable areas for intensified programming in enterprise, agriculture, or HIV/AIDS prevention
    - estimate the magnitude of 'multiplier effects'
    - communicate their work more effectively to other organisations

> **Recommendation 55**. CONASA should work toward integrating the data it has collected on human population, in and around the project area, into its GIS. This can begin with higher-level geographic units, such as VAGs and sub-VAGs, and work down to the village level.

- **Mapping natural resources**. CONASA has compiled a good deal of information on natural resources through the PRA exercises, field visits, corridor mapping and wildlife conflict surveys, site conservation plan and science meetings, and satellite image analysis. This information exists in various formats, but has yet to be compiled into a single ecological profile of the project area. The lack of an ecological baseline has hindered CONASA's efforts to be strategic in its efforts to increase sustainable resource production. CONASA staff certainly have a general idea of what the important resources are, and a general idea of the threats facing resources, but there is little evidence to suggest that the project has developed a conservation strategy which ranks or prioritises specific areas or resources (such as dry season water points), has developed a very detailed cause-effect framework of resource depletion, developed typology of threats, or thought about how to weigh different management options. Compiling a ecological baseline of the project area is an important step for developing a more coherent conservation strategy and building consensus among all the stakeholders.

> **Recommendation 56**. CONASA should work toward compiling the spatial information it has collected on natural resources to develop a more complete ecological profile of the project area and begin to develop a more comprehensive conservation strategy.

- **Land use planning**. Although CONASA may be able to play a direct role in helping to reduce short-term threats to forest and wildlife resources (particularly over-harvesting and fire management), its lasting contribution is more likely to be helping to develop the capacity of the CRBs to address the long-term threats from unplanned and unmanaged conversion of habitat. The most effective mechanism for addressing long-term threats is the development of multi-stakeholder resource management or land use plans.

Effective land use or resource management planning requires, 1) an institutional capacity at the local level, 2) a rather lengthy process of discussion, negotiation, and consensus building with multiple stakeholders, and 3) reliable and accurate social and ecological data upon which to base decisions and communicate plans. CONASA has made significant headway in the addressing the first requirement in its efforts to strengthen the capacity of CRBs and lower level CBOs. It has also started to pilot test (in Shezongo) a strategy to help facilitate discussions for the development of resource management plans. However it has not gone very far in taking the leadership or providing support for the last requirement, the collection, compilation, and synthesis of ecological and socio-economic data. The experiences from the land use plan development process in Shezongo CRB demonstrate the importance of having socio-economic and ecological spatial data, for planning, consensus building, and monitoring the implementation of resource management plans. CONASA should build upon these experiences and develop a vision and strategy for collecting required information for land use planning in the other CRBs.

Recommendation 57. Based on the lessons learned from the resource management planning exercises to date, CONASA should articulate a strategy for collecting and synthesizing information required for land use planning, and make steps to collect the appropriate socio-economic and ecological data for the other areas.

- **CBO Structures**. CONASA has worked closely with a variety of CBO structures, and collected a significant good amount of information about CBO membership, activities, and training. However the "spatial picture" of CBOs in the project area is still far from complete. There is no complete map showing the locations of VMCs or active CGs, although some efforts are underway to collect these. It would also be extraordinarily useful to CONASA staff and visitors to have a more complete spatial picture of the extent and distribution of CBOs.

  There is also no mapping of the boundaries of VAGs. Mapping boundaries of emergent structures of governance is of course an extremely sensitive issue, and CONASA's role can and should only be limited to technical support. However there are many reasons why it would be helpful to know VAG boundaries, or at least the villages that fall within each VAG. CRB and VAG elections are coming up soon, which will require a consensus on which villages fall in which VAGs. The allocation of CRB revenue is also based on VAG, and other activities (such as facilitating the distribution of relief) and resource management plans may also be based on VAG or sub-VAG divisions. If the CRBs and VAGs want to be accepted by other units of government and appear on the political landscape, it would be useful to also have represented on the physical landscape. CONASA can by no means drive this effort, but they are somewhat uniquely positioned both in terms of technical resources and as a relatively neutral party to help facilitate these exercises.

12.5. Special studies

An important function of the M&E section is the design and implementation of special studies. The goals of doing special studies include:

- measuring impact that can not be easily captured with simple indicators
- exploring processes that affect how project activities are received
- gathering more in-depth information about the project context
- documenting lessons learned

Special studies can be big or small, but generally originate with a problem or question that surfaces during a performance review or workplan meeting. The other common genesis of special studies is the PMP (see 12.2) which outlines several special study topics as part of a bigger performance monitoring framework. Special studies conducted between 2001 and 2003 include:

- PRA reports (12)
- baseline household survey
- bushmeat trade study
- food security and technology adoption
- gender analysis in CONASA activities
- CBO training assessment
- CSM assessment
- several market studies *
- resource appraisals *
- several enterprise development studies *

* = contracted out

12.5.1. Special study needs

Below are outlines of a few topics which might be useful to the project to investigate as special studies.

12.5.1.1. CATTLE, LIVELIHOODS, AND CONSERVATION

The impacts of cattle on livelihoods and natural resources. Cattle represent an important asset for the predominantly Tonga people in the project area. They and are valued culturally, economically (a "walking bank account"), provide a source of milk and protein, and are an important production asset. Past experience from LFSP has shown that people in the project area tend to invest their increased earnings into cattle.

However the linkage between cattle and livelihood security are complex. While it is true that cattle are vital to livelihoods, cattle are also prone to disease and drought, making livelihood gains through cattle vulnerable to shocks. Investing income gain exclusively into cattle may also preclude other forms of increasing livelihood security, such as education and agricultural implements and inputs. The effects of cattle on livelihood security is also mediated by gender relations. Women and children may not have many livelihood gains if they don't own or have access to cattle, and there were concerns expressed by women under LFSP that men who had to be away from their families for long periods of time to tend cattle were at greater risk of bringing home HIV.

The relation between cattle and conservation is equally complex, and also goes in both directions. There are direct negative impacts of cattle on the environment, such as soil erosion around water points and the potential for over-grazing. There are also indirect impacts, such as disease transmission and crowding out wildlife. There are also positive and negative connections of cattle to the environment through livelihoods. For example it has been reported that the rapid increase in cattle deaths caused by corridor disease forced some individuals to turn to poaching to generate revenue, but the trafficking of bushmeat may increase the spread of disease. Cattle herders may also be directly involved in poaching, and overgrazing by livestock may result is less forage for wildlife.

Clearly the connection between cattle, livelihoods, and conservation is complex and the relationships are both positive and negative. And clearly interventions to

improve livestock health, strengthen the marketing of livestock. and incorporate cattle into land use planning, have been and will continue to play an important role for CONASA. It would therefore be extraordinarily useful for CONASA to have a better understanding of the relationships between cattle, livelihoods, and conservation – which connections are strong, which are weak, which are positive and which are negative – so that its activities around cattle have the maximum benefit and minimal risk for livelihoods and conservation.

12.5.1.2. TRAVEL AND TRADING NETWORKS

The 2001 PRA exercises and many subsequent field visits revealed that although the project area does not have a good road network, there are still movements of people in and out of the area, and there are private traders and businesses that conduct low levels of business in many of the areas. For example Dunivant has a network of community based distributors for cotton inputs and outputs, local traders come in and buy maize (often at what is perceived to be a very unfair price), some individuals have vehicles or mini-vans which they operate for private or commercial use, the Mulobezi area is serviced by a weekly train, civil servants and others come to town to pick up salary and buy supplies, bushmeat traders come to buy bushmeat, etc.

It would be useful for CONASA to have a better understanding (or just to document its understanding) of these travel and trading networks, because although they may not be reliable, they are probably fairly cost-efficient and, more importantly, likely to be sustainable. CONASA knows that information flow and transport are two constraints that limit the growth of enterprise in particular, and that it will be difficult for the project to make any real headway into enterprise development without tackling these constraints. Tapping into existing flows of people and materials may be a realistic option for some parts of the project area, and would almost certainly be more cost-effective and sustainable than any system CONASA could introduce on its own. The first step however is to better understand the existing flows through interviews, observation, and mapping.

12.5.1.3. CONNECTION BETWEEN CBO CAPACITY AND HOUSEHOLDS

CONASA's strong focus on building the capacity of CBOs is predicated on the assumption that this will somehow improve the livelihood security of households, and that working through CBOs increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the project making an impact at the household level. However the strength of this connection, and the conditions under which it will or will not occur, are not well known and have not been studied.

Key questions a special study on the connections between local CBO capacity building activities and household livelihood should attempt to clarify include which households benefit from CBO capacity building, the nature of the benefit (direct or indirect), the time scale, and the characteristics of the households. The goal should be to develop a typology of mechanisms through which households are affected by CBOs, and an estimate of the number or proportion of the total households in the project area connected by each type of mechanism.

A study with this focus can approach the relationship from two directions. First the study could review a series of capacity building activities, and conduct an assessment of which households were affected by these activities, and how. Secondly, the study could interview selected households which have seen a change in their livelihood security, and look for a correlation between the direction of that change and its interactions with CBOs. To study livelihood

changes on a long-term basis, CONASA needs to identify ways to track changes in HLS on a more continuous and systematic basis, perhaps by making better use of CSM data (see 3.3.4.4, page 59).

12.5.1.4. HOUSEHOLD ECONOMIES

The 2001 household survey asked several questions about household income that in turn raises additional questions. Among the issues still unclear is the role of gender in household economic decisions, the role of remittances, local employers and money lenders, how economic risk is managed, the efficiency of savings instruments, etc.

12.5.1.5. MIGRATION

Migration is a prominent social process in the project area, especially on the eastern side. The last 20 years has witnessed a rapid influx of people expanding settlements into the GMAs. Some of the factors which have been suggested as fuelling this migration include land pressure and environmental degradation from other rural areas, retirees setting up or returning to farms, traditional rulers seeking to expand their base of power and influence, the attraction of natural resources including game and timber, a perception that the GMAs and park have better rainfall and richer soils, a regulatory vacuum caused by ZAWA's restructuring, weak forms of communal land tenure and enforcement, high population growth, and second generation effects of the displacement of the Gwembe Tonga.

Experience from other projects and countries suggests that high levels of migration make it much more difficult, if not impossible, to establish or maintain communal forms of sustainable resource management. Newcomers have both direct impacts on the environment, as well as complicate the process of establishing and maintaining community level institutions and regulations. Newcomers often come with knowledge, capital, and links to external markets, which can be an economic boost to local development, but also accelerate the commercial exploitation of resources. Migrants can also bring important leadership and technical skills that can be an asset for meeting local challenges. Ironically, a successful rural development project can actually increase rates of migration to the area, as people become attracted to new opportunities.

Although both CONSASA and community leaders recognize the scale of migration in the project area, many unanswered questions exist about the rates of migration, the characteristics of the migrants, and their social and ecological impacts. There also seems to be a division between people who view newcomers as inherently good and a sign of progress, and those who see migrants as the greatest threat to conservation and sustainable development. The truth is undoubtedly somewhere in between. What can not be denied is that migration has been and will continue to be an important social process, especially in Bbilili and Sichifulo GMAs, and that the development and conservation goals of CONASA, the CRBs, and ZAWA can not be realized without dealing with the migrant issue. A special study on migrants would be a useful way to begin to stimulate dialogue on the issue.

12.6. M&E Issues

12.6.1. Compartmentalization of M&E

The M&E unit has done a good job in making itself relevant to day-to-day program implementation, and has a strong working relationships with program staff. As a result, the work of M&E is still seen as a separate, specialized section of the project and has not yet been fully mainstreamed in programming. This compartmentalization

of M&E can be clearly seen at planning meetings, where program staff will frequently make remarks such as "we need M&E to come in and conduct a study on this", as opposed to "we want to ask M&E how we should study this". The compartmentalization is also evident in the never-ending task of extracting performance monitoring indicators, a function that should interest and concern everyone from COP to office staff, but ultimately requires M&E staff to take the initiative to "chase impact" (often at the last minute).

The strong emphasis of the M&E unit on "doing" M&E work as opposed to playing the role of facilitators and resource people is by no means unusual, and probably has its roots with both M&E staff and program staff. M&E staff like to take charge of M&E work, because this is what they are good at and are ultimately held accountable for. This willingness to take the lead in M&E activities reinforces a perception among program staff that M&E falls under someone else's job description, and their responsibility is to provide information when requested.

The current balance between "doing" M&E activities and acting as facilitators and resource people has not been particularly harmful and is meeting most of the needs of the project, in particular the reporting requirements. However it may be contributing to the gap in integrating feedback into strategic planning (see 13.2.6, page 265) and incomplete coverage of the project (see 12.6.2 below). The challenge for the M&E unit is to find ways to get program staff more at the front and centre of M&E activities. There is no magic bullet solution for this objective, it will undoubtedly entail a mixture of reviewing the incentive structures of both M&E and program staff, increasing levels of technical support for M&E work (e.g., editing, data analysis, and map making) at the field level, and supporting opportunities for discussion and institutional learning.

12.6.2. Component one bias

In the first three years of the project, there has been a noticeable emphasis of the M&E unit on component one. This is reflected in the focus of special studies, volume of performance monitoring data, and levels of technical support to program staff. As a consequence, the project has a better picture of the achievements, constraints, and direction of the suite of activities to increase household livelihood security, while the stories of components two and three have been illuminated less intensely.

The focus on component one is due to multiple factors. Component one lends itself to measurable change more readily than the other components, whose activities are more likely to show measurable change in years as opposed to months. Most of the program staff also fall under component one, and generate the most data. Also the backgrounds of the M&E staff are more aligned to "traditional" household level interventions, as opposed enterprise development, policy analysis, or advocacy. Also M&E staff are physically based in Lusaka and Kalomo providing greatest support to these offices (see organisational chart, Appendix 6).

Component two activities on policy analysis, advocacy, and participation in governance, generate primarily qualitative data, which component two staff have done an excellent job in documenting. However there are at least two ways in which increased M&E support for component two might improve the performance of the project as a whole. First, there is an increasing need to capture the 'big picture' and document the lessons learned from component two activities. There is ample documentation coming out of component two describing the *processes* of policy analysis, sensitisation, and advocacy training, however the project has yet to produce a concise and easy-to-digest summary of the impacts and lessons learned of its experiences. Component two is arguably the most innovative program strategy CONASA is engaged with, and the project would do well to understand and capture these impacts.

Second, there is as of yet no strong connection between the work on policy analysis and promotion of devolution at the national level, and activities in the communities. M&E offers one of the strongest natural linkages between these two domains of development because information is one of the essential tools for the development and assessment of policy options, communication campaigns, and focusing dialogue. The project has taken note that it needs to continue to "bring policy down" to the community level, a task easier said than done but one in which M&E can play a guiding role.

The activities and strategies under Component three represent another experimental approach within CONASA, which have only partially been examined by M&E. After three years of implementation experience, and a consortium partner engaged in a dedicated TBRNM project (i.e., the Four Corners project), CONASA should be in a position to easily write a concise ten-page paper called something like "Does TBNRM Work? Experiences from CONASA." However currently that paper would not be easy to prepare, in part because there is little M&E material to draw upon. There is a raging debate going on within the development and conservation communities on the merits and demerits of the TBNRM approach, however most of that debate is focused on the implementation of TBNRM in other parts of the region. CONASA is well-equipped to participate in that discussion and would be well thought of if it could provide evidence to critique and improve the philosophy and methods of TBNRM.

12.6.3. Highlighting success vs. understanding failure

There is also a tendency for M&E to focus most heavily on the areas and sections of the project that are having the greatest impact. While this tendency is entirely natural, it has the effect that the least performing sections of the project are also the least well understood. In particular, the project has had difficulty demonstrating impact in enterprise development and to a certain extent conservation. This correlation between under-performance and under-studied may not be entirely coincidental. One of the roles that M&E can and should play is to facilitate an examination of the assumptions and strategies of each section, and provide guidance whenever possible. In particular, M&E should focus its efforts and energies not only on the well-performing sections of the project, but also those where impact remains elusive.

> **Recommendation 58**. In addition to capturing impact, the M&E section should focus its lens on under-performing activity streams to help the project make decisions to improve or abandon these strategies.

12.6.4. Distribution of technical support

The above sections have argued that CONASA has a strong but compartmentalised M&E unit, and that some of the gaps in the project's ability to institutionalise learning would be improved if program staff played a more central role in M&E. One of the constraints that might be limiting the ability of program staff to be more engaged in performance monitoring and special studies might be the availability of technical support. While all program staff seem to have an excellent grasp of their fields of specialization, most need some technical support in areas such as technical writing, articulating hypotheses and questions, designing surveys, sampling, data processing and analysis, interpretation of results, map making, graphic design, and presentation skills.

Whilst the project does have a considerable amount of technical resources, the distribution of these resources might be characterized as "top heavy". In other

words, the component heads and senior M&E officers are almost all based in the national office, whilst the greatest need for technical support lies in the two field offices. This unbalanced distribution of resources and needs is hardly unique to CONASA, and is typical of large-scale projects for specific reasons. However the project needs to be cognizant of the continued needs for technical support in the field offices and take whatever steps possible to service those needs. This might include more frequent drawing upon the technical resources of the national offices of the primary consortium NGOs, or supplementing internal resources with those from volunteer organisations like GDS and Peace Corps, student interns, the private sector, etc.

12.6.5. Data processing and analysis

Of the five stages of monitoring/research (defining the question, designing a methodology, data collection, data processing/analysis, and interpretation/ dissemination), CONASA struggles the most with data processing and analysis. Project staff are quite adept at defining questions, developing a methodology, and data collection, but several studies have gotten bogged down in data processing and analysis of results. This constraint can be seen in the following examples:

- **2001 household baseline survey**. This study surveyed over 900 households to get a picture of livelihood strategies, constraints, and opportunities. After a lengthy and expensive exercise to collect data in the field, data entry took far longer than expected and ultimately only a fraction of the collected data was entered into the database. The resulting summary report was descriptive but provided little cross-variable analysis and no spatial analysis.

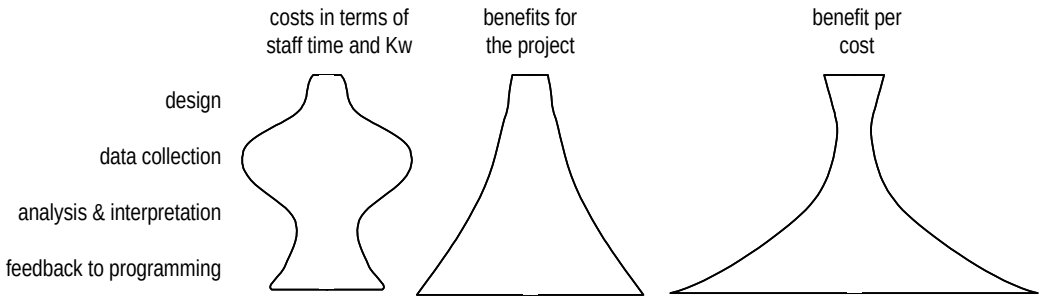
- **Special study of food security and technology adoption**. This study re-visited over 100 household from the 2001 survey to look for changes in production trends and technology adoption. After facilitators were contracted to enumerate the survey, the team struggled to input the relational data into a format conducive for analysis. The first draft of the resulting report presented a number descriptive statistics, but was weak on cross-variable relationships, interpretation of results, and spatial analysis.

- **2003 CBO Capacity Training Assessment**. This study examined how CBOs were using the skills they learned through CONASA trainings. Staff spent a considerable amount of time in the field collecting data, but the report languished for months and was still not complete as of early2004.

- **Corridor Mapping Exercise**. In this study, CONASA staff made three week-long field visits to collect data on a) wildlife use and movement at the periphery of the park and GMAs, and b) wildlife-people conflicts. While a draft map from the exercises was produced fairly quickly, analysis and interpretation of the data had yet to be completed as of early 2004.

It should be noted that CONASA is far from unique in this constraint. The majority of development organisations, NGOs, and even government agencies collect far more data than they are able to analyse. Nevertheless, weak data processing and analysis diminishes the value of monitoring/research, and makes it more difficult to feed results back into programming. As illustrated in Figure 20 below, data processing and analysis consume relatively few resources in terms of time and money, however generate the greatest returns for the project.

Figure 20. Costs-benefit relationship of special studies from design thru feedback



Reasons for the low performance in data processing/analysis, relative to the other stages of monitoring/research, might include 1) insufficient time allocated for data analysis, 2) unevenly distributed technical capacity for data processing/analysis, 3) excessive data collection, 4) inefficient data entry systems, or 4) insufficient skills in a relatively few critical areas (e.g., statistical analysis, database design).

To strengthen data processing and analysis and get the full value of lengthy data collection exercises, the project could allocate more resources (in particular staff time) to the data analysis stage of monitoring, draw more on external technical support during key phases of monitoring/research, and make data entry more efficient. There is a range of information technologies that can help streamline or even eliminate the data entry phase of monitoring, which some development projects are starting to explore. These include 'paperless' surveys using inexpensive handheld portable digital assistance (PDA) devices (e.g., Palm Pilot), or semi-automated data entry using Optimal Mark Recognition (OMR) software. For example, CONASA could get inexpensive (<$100) PDAs with and train facilitators to use them when conducting household surveys, recording field patrol summaries, or entering CSM data in the field.

12.6.6. Capturing and communicating the big picture

Although performance monitoring and activity planning necessarily require a lot of attention to detail, an important function of the M&E unit is to capture and translate the "big picture". Audiences outside the project, including busy bureaucrats in USAID and government, require a concise, synthesized, and credible summary of the results, successes, and failures of the project. In other words, the trees must become a forest, and disconnected snapshots must be mosaiced into a fluid and coherent painting.

Capturing the big picture in a project as complex as CONASA is inherently challenging. 350 project documents, 39 performance indicators, a dozen or so special studies, and hundreds of discussions about 10 activity lines must be pulled together in a form that can be told to a person of average intelligence in five minutes or less. Any effort to summarize is also challenged by the fact that the project is relatively young, and the big picture is still evolving and constantly changing.

In general the task of capturing the big picture requires two steps: 1) developing an understanding of the overall achievements and processes, and 2) packaging that story into digestible forms. Under the guidance and support of the M&E section and management, CONASA has made considerable strides on the first step. The twice-annual performance review and workplan meetings, and the pre-planning meetings that precede those meetings, have provided ample opportunities for discussion and probing into the bigger trends and future directions. Almost anyone who comes out of those reviews, from field-based extension officers to the COP, could give a fairly lucid although perhaps disjointed summary of the achievements, constraints, and directions of the project. These project-wide exercises come at a cost to be sure,

however management recognizes the importance of keeping everyone on board and providing opportunities for cross-disciplinary learning.

While many people within the project have a reasonably articulate understanding of the overall picture, the project has not fully achieved the second critical step, translating that picture into digestible forms. This evaluation represents one effort in that direction. The newsletter could have provided an outlet, however the newsletter format that has emerged is characterized by more traditional news-bits and to a certain extent self-promotion. One option that the project may wish to consider is developing a 'special issue' of the newsletter centered around a short (3-5 page) article on a critical analysis of 'The Big Picture'.

Video is another medium which is well suited for presenting the overall achievements of the project in a compelling form. Two short videos have been commissioned by component three (see *8.2.8 – Video production*, page 162), however the focus of these videos has been limited to component three activities and none of the videos had of yet been broadcast or distributed on a wide basis. To be more effective in conveying CONASA's overall achievements and lessons, video productions need to encapsulate all of the activities of the project, have greater amount of direction from someone within the project, and be distributed to a wider audience via all appropriate channels (e.g., local television, VHS, CD and/or DVD, webcast).

Recommendation 59. The M&E unit and project management should take the lead in articulating for a general audience the 'big picture' of CONASA's achievements and lessons learned, and present it in an appropriate medium such as a special issue of the newsletter, video, or short article for a development journal.

12.6.7. Connections with institutions of higher learning

Other CBNRM projects in the region, most notably in Zimbabwe and South Africa, have developed strong connections to universities for both implementation and research. CBNRM in Zambia originated with government and NGOs, and hence this connection with universities never developed. Nevertheless, there are potentially numerous gains to be realized for linking NGOs and institutions of higher learning, with potential benefits for NGOs, academics, and the Zambian development community in general.

Connections with institutions of higher learning can take many forms. At the highest level, a formal connection can be made with an academic unit such as UNZA's Technology Development & Advisory Unit, or a unit within the Department of Agriculture. CONASA was clearly not set up this way, but it would not be unreasonable to consider these types of partnerships in the future. Less formal relationships can be built between individual faculty and CONASA through short-term consulting contracts. Local faculty often are preferable to foreign consultants because they are usually more familiar with the local and national context, have language skills, and are available for follow-up. Finally, the project can work with individual students, many of whom are required to do attachments or independent projects, on specific activities. Foreign students can also potentially play a useful role, particularly in research.

Hosting students for short-term projects can often be beneficial, particularly when there is more work than staff can handle. But there are also risks and costs associated with student attachments. Students can be logistically demanding, and their research might turn out to be of low quality or irrelevant to the needs of the

project. Nevertheless, other CBNRM projects in Zambia have successfully worked with Zambian university students and found them very useful, particularly for administering questionnaires on knowledge and attitudes in the communities. For this type of exercise, the perceived neutral status of student offers some advantages over project staff or community members supported by the project.

CONASA has received many enquiries from UNZA students, but none have yet materialized into projects. In order to maximize the likelihood that student attachments will generate more benefits than costs, CONASA can at a minimum proactively take steps to design 'ready-made' projects in anticipation of enquires from interested local and foreign students. It could also passively or actively recruit students. Developing research projects in preparation for enquiries would involve:

- defining topics that are of practical interest to the project and proposing specific methodologies that would be feasible for a short-term project
- defining small and specific tasks a student could contribute to in the context of a larger study, tasks might include questionnaire administration, data entry, and statistical analysis

12.6.8. CONASA web site

Another small but important activity of the M&E section is maintaining the project's web site (http://www.geocities.com/conasa_zm). Use of the web was not a central element of CONASA design, as the primary audiences for the project's activities are all in Zambia where internet connectivity is not strong, particularly outside of Lusaka. The initial web site was set up by a short-term consultant using a free web server, and contained little more than a short summary of the project and USAID's RFA. Over time, the M&E officer took on the project and the site has grown with more content.

Currently CONASA's web site contains general information about the project, an organisational chart, a selection of photos, open job positions, and approximately 20 of the key reports, studies, meeting proceedings, and newsletters. CONASA is to be commended for maintaining a web site using virtually no project resources except a bit of the M&E section's time. On a minor technical note, all of the downloadable documents on the web site are currently saved as WinZip archives; this is generally unnecessary for documents that have already been converted to PDF, a format which is already compressed and easily handled by web servers and browsers alike.

A web site can add value to a project in two ways – programming and publicity. In terms of value to programming, CONASA's current use of the web as a "side-project" seems appropriate for its current focus. The primary audience for component one activities are the communities, which have no access to the internet, and the primary audience for components two and three are NGOs, businesses, and units of government, with whom the project maintains enough contact through meetings and hard copy distribution of reports. There are however a few ways in which the web site could add additional programming value to the project's activities.

- **Advertise investment opportunities**. CONASA has made several efforts to identify potential investors for a number of joint-venture proposals but without success (see for example *8.2.3.4 – Enterprises in the preliminary stages*, page 160). One way the project could use its web site to help identify potential investors would be by advertising joint venture opportunities. This would require putting more work into describing investment opportunities, including an economic and social analysis, but would be virtually cost-free. As an added bonus, most investors will be more interested in a joint venture opportunity knowing that an NGO like CONASA is available to help mobilise the community and facilitate the start-up process.

- **Follow developments in policy**. CONASA has played a pivotal role in building a consensus on policy needs, however it needs to go the next step to keep the ball rolling. Using the web as a communication tool would be an appropriate technology for this work as most NGOs, businesses, and government units with interests in policy formation have access to the internet. CONASA could use the web as an information clearinghouse for policy analyses, position papers, policy research results, discussion boards, frequently asked questions, drafted policy changes, etc.

- **Announce research opportunities**. It has been suggested elsewhere that CONASA has more research needs than it can actually handle (see for example *3.3.5.1 – Monitoring organisational processes and community dynamics*, page 61; and *12.5.1 – Special study needs*, page 251). Some of these research needs may be appropriate for student projects, for either Zambian or foreign students. CONASA can increase the contacts with potential students, and make it more likely that a research study will result in a useful product for the project, if it proactively defines a research agenda. The web would be an excellent medium to advertise these needs as it is easily accessible for most students.

The second way in which a web site can serve a project is in terms of publicity. Publicity has been a relatively low priority for CONASA, and the project has not invested a lot of resources into PR or sharing results and lessons learned outside the consortium. However if institutional incentives change, the web would be an appropriate tool to use for stronger visibility in the fields of conservation and development. Much of the content for publicity material already exists within the project, and may just need to be 'repackaged' for online delivery. In addition to text and documents, publicity content can include photos, online presentations, and streaming video.

13.0 CONASA AS A LEARNING ORGANISATION

13.1. Introduction

Institutional learning is of course important for any organisation in today's fast changing world, regardless of whether the organisation is an NGO, private business, or unit of government. However learning from its experiences is particularly important for CONASA for several reasons:

- Rural development and conservation strategies are far from perfect in general. CONASA in particular is testing several approaches that are either new (at least in Zambia) or being implemented in new combinations. Institutional learning is needed to establish whether these approaches work or don't work, and under what conditions.
- Learning adds value to other results. In other words, regardless of whether activities are completely successful or not, CONASA and the communities it serves are guaranteed to get some value out of the exercise if it can learn something from the process.
- Conservation and development work are difficult across the board. False starts and failure are the norm rather than the exception, and results frequently fall short of expectations. CONASA is no different in this regard. To ensure that it is not just going in circles nor wasting donor money, CONASA needs to demonstrate that it is constantly improving its approach based on institutional learning.
- As much as CONASA has to learn, the communities it works with also needs to learn how best to increase livelihood security and improve natural resource management. The long term success or failure of CONASA's strategies will largely be shaped by the degree to which community leadership has also institutionalised the learning process.

> "The long term success or failure of CONASA's strategies will be shaped by the degree to which community leadership has also institutionalised the learning process."

Like most characteristics in development work, institutional learning is not like a light bulb, which is either on or off. Instead, it is either bright, dim, or more likely somewhere in between. Most people are good at learning from experience, so as long as there are people in an organisation learning will take place. However institutional learning goes beyond that. Institutional learning is *a process or approach which maximizes the likelihood that lessons will be picked up and internalised by the organisation as a whole by incorporating learning processes into activities in a systematic way*. This often involves viewing activities as little experiments (action research), and being very mindful of the local context.

The primary NGOs in the CONASA consortium are quite aware of the importance of learning as a best practice in conservation and development work, and have adopted learning in their respective country programmes. CARE International has recently set up a separate unit dedicated to 'Reflective Practice' in their country program, and have formalised a set of activities and indicators for institutional learning in their long-range strategic plan. WCS has a long history of testing new approaches in its CBNRM support activities in eastern Zambia, and has invested heavily in monitoring, data collection, and community training. AWF has also formalised learning processes into its CSC program, and has a dedicated team of social and biological scientists to conduct action research and document lessons learned. These NGOs drew upon their experiences and expertise

in institutional learning when designing CONASA, thus we see many of the key characteristics of a learning institution integrated into the project structure.

13.2. Characteristics of a learning organisation

An organisation is more likely to learn something if it sets out to do that. There are several characteristics[23] that make it more likely that an institution will learn from its experiences. These are listed below, together with a few qualitative comments on how CONASA performs in these areas.

13.2.1. Grounded in a conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a roadmap for a project, and explains how its activities are going to achieve the desired goal. Just as it is difficult to know where you are in the bush without a map, a project needs a framework to know where it is standing and where it is going. Conceptual frameworks may be written or unwritten. When written, they may be presented as a cause-effect map, or a list of steps, phases or benchmarks of progress, and is often accompanied by pages of descriptive text. NGOs often define themselves by their conceptual framework. CONASA actually relies on five overlapping conceptual frameworks as its guides for the design and sequencing of its activities: household livelihood security, policy and advocacy, conservation, enterprise development, and TBNRM.

"CONASA actually relies on five overlapping conceptual frameworks to guide the design and sequencing of activities: HLS, policy formation and advocacy, conservation, enterprise development, and TBNRM."

The core framework which articulates how all other activities affect individuals is the household livelihood security framework (HLS). The HLS framework is well developed theoretically, is well articulated in the project document, and has a long history of use particularly by CARE. The framework is holistic and describes the ways in which a variety of social processes and relationships affect individuals in households. Although the framework can be rather complex and somewhat academic, even the freshest staff in CONASA have an intuitive understanding of its core elements. For example, no one in CONASA would question the value of combining CBO capacity building activities with a seed supply activity, or conservation sensitisation with microcredit. The HLS framework emphasises that households pursue a variety of activities to make a livelihood, and that these strategies are affected by a variety of social factors as well as shocks. Everyone at CONASA seems to understand these basic concepts.

A second framework used by CONASA concerns policy and advocacy. The team understands that policy is important because it affects conservation and development efforts in a variety of ways. They also know that to improve policy you need to understand its weaknesses, that discussion between stakeholders is important, and that having contact with policy makers is important. The interplay of these forces, as they are understood by CONASA, is depicted in *Figure 10 – CONASA's de facto conceptual framework of policy change process*, page 134.

[23] these are also the elements of what is also called 'action research' or 'adaptive management'

Below this general level, the framework or policy "roadmap" starts to get a bit fuzzy. For example, it has not fully emerged how policy reform in the natural resource sector is, or could be, linked to political processes in other sectors or at local and international levels. It is also not fully clear (or not fully articulated) what the key messages for policy reform should be, who are the important audiences outside of the immediate group of stakeholders, the role of research and analysis in advocacy, how to build a capacity for developing and analysing policy options, and the types of advocacy tactics that are appropriate and likely to be effective in Zambia's political economy. Nevertheless the broad sketches of a conceptual framework for policy and advocacy are in place, and as the project and CBOs gain more experience we can expect understanding of the details to fill in.

The three remaining conceptual frameworks, conservation, enterprise development, and TBNRM, are probably the least developed in CONASA. As described elsewhere (see *9.5.1 – Conservation strategy*, page 188), there is little evidence in the project literature or staff discussions that there is consensus in CONASA on a 'conservation blueprint'. There are some general ideas about a connection between livelihood security and resource pressure, about the importance of 'threat reduction', but there are huge assumptions behind these ideas that have never been well-articulated much less tested, and the project's conservation goals are equally fuzzy.

The special study on enterprise development also found that the conceptual framework guiding enterprise development is also missing some important pieces, including a solid understand of how markets work and the institutions that support them (see *5.3.4 – Understanding market and market development*, page 107). Finally, TBNRM represents the youngest set of ideas about conservation and development at an eco-regional level, but has yet to congeal into a clarifying picture what this means and how to get there. The fuzziness of the TBNRM framework has made it difficult for CONASA to develop a coherent and strategic targeting strategy beyond opportunistic support activities, and there isn't a clear picture of how economic connectivity, social connectivity, and ecological connectivity can or should fit together.

The good news is that all of CONASA's core conceptual frameworks are undergoing evolution and refinement. The connections between livelihood and conservation are being discussed and reviewed in greater detail, and were the focus of a special study in 2004. The enterprise section has also revisited its approach to small business development in light of a recent special study on enterprise support, and is more cognizant of the constraints and opportunities at each stage of the commodity chain from production through marketing. Finally, the TBNRM component has become aware of where it is and is not possible to create 'linkages' across borders, and realised that there is a lot of groundwork to be done on both sides before a bridge can be made. There is still a lot of work to be done in developing and critiquing these all of the conceptual frameworks, but the project is largely moving in the right direction.

"All of CONASA's core conceptual frameworks are undergoing evolution and refinement."

13.2.2. Uses innovative approaches

A second characteristic of institutionalised learning is an innovative approach to program strategy. The opposite of this characteristic is a habit of repeating the same old activities regardless of their results or effectiveness.

CONASA gets high marks in this category, as there is a strong tendency in the programming sections to explore different ways of achieving goals. This willingness to innovate is to some extent to be expected in the newest components, such as policy and TBNRM, where there is essentially no precedent to follow. However even in the "tried and true" sections such as agricultural production and CBO capacity building, there have been efforts to identify and pilot test new techniques, technologies and structures. Innovation is one of the benefits that results when management gives flexibility to project staff who are experienced, intelligent, and creative.

"Innovation is one of the benefits that results when management gives flexibility to project staff who are experienced, intelligent, and creative."

13.2.3. Makes predictions about outcomes

A third characteristic of a learning institution is the practice of making predictions about the outcomes of activities. Whether or not such predictions come true does not diminish the learning value that comes from thinking about what might result from a set of activities and reflecting why this did or did not occur.

Making predictions about the immediate and long-term results of development activities is inherently difficult. Nevertheless, at a minimum CONASA staff systematically make predictions about the results of their activities in the form of benchmarks (process indicators) and performance targets (impact indicators). However there doesn't appear to be any standard methodology for making these predictions, and many are based on scant analysis and turn out to be grossly over-optimistic. Furthermore the amount of effort that goes into making predictions is be no means uniform across all sections. Targets and benchmarks also tend to be limited to simple quantitative measures, with little attention to qualitative changes. Thus while CONASA performance in thinking about what activities will achieve in concrete terms is "above-average", making predictions and setting targets remains an area where improvements can be made.

13.2.4. Invests in monitoring and research

A fourth characteristic of a learning institution is willingness to make investments in monitoring and research in order to assess the outcomes and impacts of its activities. As described elsewhere in this report (see *12.0 – Monitoring and Evaluation*, page 229), CONASA shines in this area. and although there is still room for improvement the project takes performance monitoring seriously and has invested sufficient resources into monitoring.

13.2.5. Research and analysis cuts across sections

While CONASA has a highly capably M&E section, a common theme from this evaluation is that M&E has not been thoroughly "mainstreamed" in CONASA (*12.6.1 – Compartmentalization of M&E*, page 253). This is not to say that program staff are not open to M&E, or are not engaged in parts of the performance monitoring system and special studies, for indeed they are and particularly within their own activity streams. However as a whole research and analysis is seen as the domain of the M&E officers and program staff are less likely to formulate questions, collect and analyse data, and make recommendations on their own.

13.2.6. Feeds results lessons learned back into planning

Innovation, making predictions, and watching the results will all be for naught if the results and lessons learned are not fed back into planning. Without a process for collectively discussing, critiquing, and interpreting the results of monitoring and research, the hard work will be more of an academic exercise than a planning tool.

CONASA has most of the requisite pieces of a system for feeding results of monitoring and research back into planning. Activities are planned and discussed, outcomes and impacts are more-or-less predicted, research and monitoring activities do take place, and there is a systematic process for reviewing progress and planning a way forward in face-to-face meetings. If there is one area that needs to be strengthened in CONASA, it is making more systematic the interpretation of monitoring and research, and answering the "so-what" for programming.

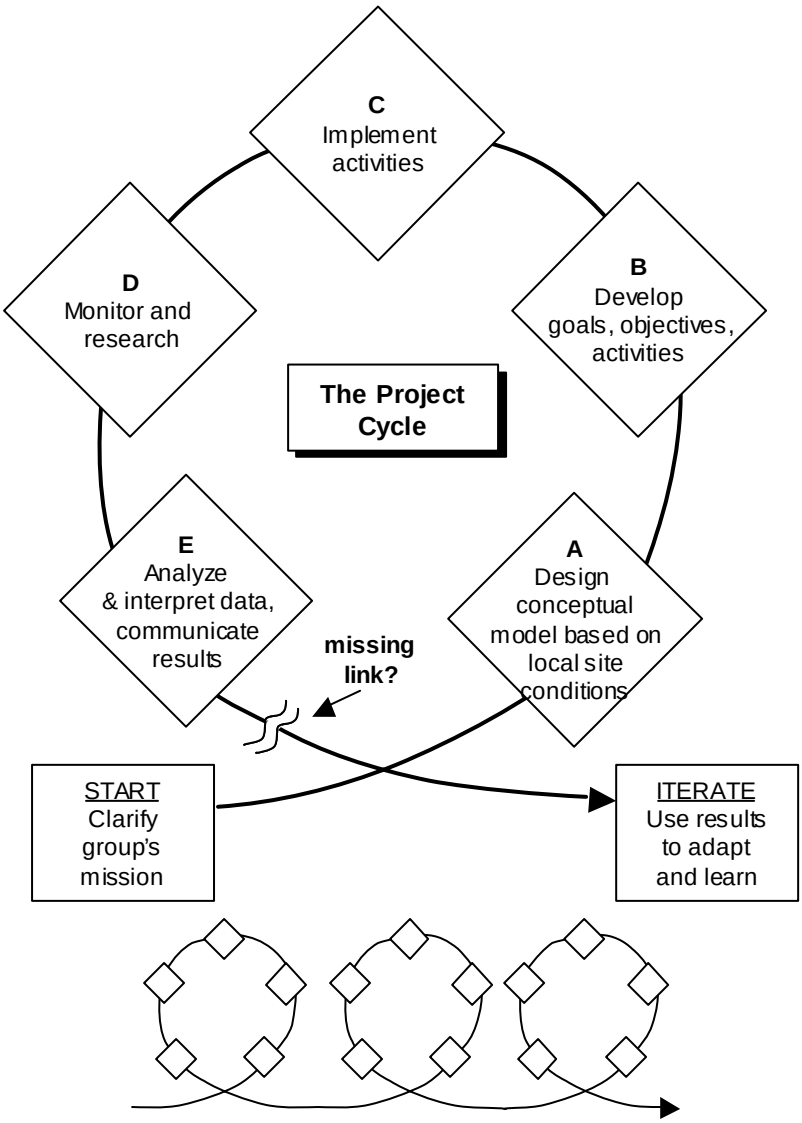
This is not to state that feedback does not occur, for clearly it does and there have been some very bold changes in strategy based on lessons learned (e.g., the shift in focus from NGOs to CBOs in the strategy to build advocacy capacity). However there are several pieces of evidence that suggest that there is a "missing link" in how the project feeds monitoring and research back into programming. For example:

- the "recommendations" section of many field reports, special studies, and other program reports is most often absent or vague
- some special studies (e.g, bushmeat trafficking study) are not presented and discussed to the program staff as a whole, and literally become 'shelf reports'
- discussions of the findings and conclusions from monitoring and research do not feature prominently at workplan and performance review meetings
- some non-working strategies that have little or no impact continue for a long time before the strategy is adjusted

The slow or limited mechanisms for feeding monitoring and research results into program planning can be thought of as a "missing link" in the project cycle (Figure 21), and limits the ability, or at least pace, at which the project institutionalises lessons learned. However it would not be difficult for CONASA to strengthen its ability to feed M&E results back into programming, as all of the essential pieces are already in place: intelligent and experienced program and M&E staff, resources dedicated to M&E, in-house technical capacity for analysing and presenting data, and ample opportunities for face-to-face discussions. The remaining challenge is to strengthen the mechanisms for bringing these resources together and integrate lessons learned into the planning process.

Recommendation 60. CONASA should strengthen its mechanisms for incorporating the findings of monitoring and research into program planning by 1) ensuring that all special study and program reports have a section titled 'Recommendations for CONASA', 2) the results of special studies are presented to the program staff, discussed, and revised as needed, and 3) time is allocated at the beginning of planning and review meetings to review the all findings and recommendations made during the previous period.

Figure 21. The project cycle



Source: adapted from Margoluis, R., & Salafsky, N. (1998b). Measures of success: Designing, managing, and monitoring conservation and development projects. Island Press., Washington, DC.

13.2.7. Shares learning with others

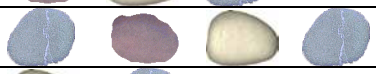
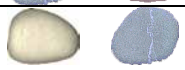
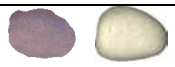
Another characteristic of an organisation which has truly internalised a learning approach is sharing and exchanging lessons learned with others in the field. CONASA has done some of this through the newsletter, distribution of its quarterly reports, web site, and presentation at various meetings. However in the relative scheme of things, disseminating achievements and lessons learned has clearly not been a top priority for the project. This is understandable as the project is still relatively new, its strategies are still evolving, and the top priorities are clearly implementation, reporting for the consortium members, and reporting for USAID. However CONASA has learned quite a bit and could contribute to ongoing debates in development and conservation. This would further the fields of development and conservation as a whole, and benefit CONASA in particular by getting feedback from other perspectives, ideas for specific activities and technical issues, and by helping the project build a reputation or develop its 'brand' (see *15.0 – Defining the CONASA Approach*, page 281).

Methods that can be used to strengthen the dissemination of achievements and experiences with broader audiences have been described elsewhere in the report, but include making better use of the website (see *12.6.8 – CONASA web site*, page 259), publishing "special issues" of the newsletter (see *12.6.6 – Capturing and communicating the big picture*, page 257), and publishing articles in NGO periodicals and professional journals.

13.2.8. Summary

CONASA is above average when it comes to institutionalised learning, but there is room for improvement, as shown in the report card in Table 42. The good news is that CONASA has everything it needs to make any needed improvements in all areas.

Table 42. Institutional learning report card

Characteristic	CONASA's Grade*
Grounded in a conceptual framework	
Uses innovative approaches	
Makes predictions about outcomes	
Invests in monitoring and research	
Research and analysis cuts across sections	
Feeds results lessons learned back into planning	
Shares learning with others	

* maximum score is four stones

13.3. Special Issues

13.3.1. Assessing efficiency

One of the goals of a "learning-by-doing" approach is to achieve the greatest impact for the given resources. It has been argued above that CONASA has done a reasonably good job in determining whether its strategies are effective, but it does not seem to have a equally good grasp on whether its strategies are efficient in terms of time, money, or staff hours.

The immediate reason behind the limited ability of the project to assess and improve its efficiency is that little information about use of project resources is maintained, and what information is collected is oriented toward financial and HR management and not program efficiency analysis. Records on finances and vehicle use appear to be thoroughly and systematically maintained by the four accountants and four administrative officers throughout the project, however these records are not linked to measures of program outputs (benchmarks) or impacts (performance indicators). Records for staff time and travel also exist, although these are at a somewhat coarser scale and are not compiled a format that would make it easy to summarize or link to activities. It has been suggested elsewhere that one way the project can improve upon its ability to assess and improve the efficiency of its strategies, without having to introduce new systems, would be to link its current administrative and programming databases (see *12.3.1 – Financial and administrative information systems*, page 238).

A deeper reason why a capacity for efficiency analysis is not well-developed in the project may be because efficiency does not appear to be "on the radar scope" for most staff. This is not unusual in NGOs or government, but still unfortunate because all organisations, regardless of their mission, can be more effective if they can also assess and improve their use of resources. The amount of importance attributed to efficiency in a project is most visible in the workplan development process. CONASA has a workplan planning process which is designed to build consensus and optimise impact, but does not appear to take resource use or availability into account until after a schedule of activities has already been drawn. Table 43 below illustrates in a very simplified way a more efficiency-focused planning process compared with the process used by CONASA.

Table 43. Workplan development with and without efficiency

Planning process to optimise efficiency and effectiveness	CONASA's planning process
1. What did we do last year/quarter? 2. What financial/human/material resources were used? 3. What outputs/impacts were achieved? 4. What strategies/activities were most/least efficient? 5. Where do we need to go from here? 6. What resources do we have for the next quarter/year? 7. How can we best use those resources to achieve our goals? 8. Plan activities.	1. What did we do last year/quarter? 2. What worked, what didn't? 3. Where do we need to go from here? 4. Plan activities. 5. Allocate resources as we go. Cut or adjust activities as needed.

As noted in section 1.3 (page 2), the objectives of this evaluation did not include a cost-benefit analysis of CONASA's strategies, efficiency assessment, etc. However there are multiple streams of evidence, including staff comments, findings from other outside reviews, and observation, that suggest that even though the mission of CONASA is centered on service provision and not profit, the project would benefit if efficiency and resource use were mainstreamed in the planning and review processes. This is by no means easy, because it potentially can mean a shift in the organisational culture, expectations, accountability, evaluation criteria, etc. However component heads and program staff alike should recognize that neglecting issues of resource efficiency will constrain the ability of the project to achieve its goals, and therefore make a plan to incrementally improve the ability of CONASA to conduct cost-benefit analyses in-house.

Recommendation 61. Management and program staff should develop a plan to strengthen the capacity to conduct cost-benefit analyses of project interventions in-house, and infuse this analysis into the workplan planning process.

13.3.2. Monitoring the context

A learning-by-doing approach also requires close and continuous attention to changes in the local context, as there is a tight and inseparable connection between the outcomes/impacts of interventions and local context. CONASA's suite of strategies and activities were specifically designed to address the opportunities and constraints in the project area, based on a fairly robust understanding of the local context developed from prior experiences and numerous PRA exercises both during the project design phase and year one of operation. Three years later, the project has come to realize that in many ways its understanding of the context was quite accurate when strategies were designed, but in other ways understanding was incomplete or overly optimistic, and in still other ways the context has changed significantly since the inception of the project.

CONASA staff tend to be keenly aware in changes of the local context, spending most of their time living and working in the area, reading newspapers, communicating with other informed persons, etc. They therefore appreciate and understand the short and long-term effects of recent droughts, trends in availability and prices of inputs and commodities, the presence of other NGOs and ZAWA, alliances and power struggles among traditional authorities and between traditional authorities and emerging CBOs, impacts of HIV/AIDS, legislative initiatives, patterns in human migration, settlement, wildlife poaching, gender roles, etc. The project has also been largely successful in adapting its activities to changes in local needs and opportunities. While not veering from its core results, CONASA has helped to facilitate or been involved in discussions regarding food relief, district level HIV/AIDS strategies, KNP management, regional planning, activities of other NGOs, etc. CONASA also reports certain changes in the local context in its performance reporting. These are generally listed under "assumptions", and often reported to explain shortfalls in performance indicators.

It will continue to be important for CONASA to be well informed about the local context, and respond to emerging needs and opportunities at the activity level. However it will also be important for CONASA to review "the big picture" of its strategies in light of changes in the local context. For example, at the time when CONASA was thinking about how it should support CBOs and commodity groups, it was thought that there was still a rich resource base and safari hunting was a viable enterprise. This understanding of the local context has since come under question, so the project needs to think about what this means for its strategies, expectations, time frame, geographic focus, etc.

A second reason why CONASA needs to continue to be attentive to changes in the local context is to better understand any unexpected outcomes from the presence of CONASA itself. CONASA has a fairly effective monitoring system to capture the outcomes and direct impacts of its activities, however the project has had other unanticipated effects, both positive and negative, in the communities it serves. For example, it would be worth asking whether the distribution of wealth in the communities has changed directly or indirectly after three years of intervention, whether there are any signs of "backlash" against the groups which have progressed the most, whether there has been increased migration into or out of the area, whether private input suppliers or local money lenders have increased or decreased, whether local trading networks have expanded or contracted, whether non-supported CBOs have been inspired or demoralized by the work of CONASA, whether the work of other NGOs has been affected by the 'new kid on the block', etc.

While CONASA staff have a fairly good understanding of changes in the local context, and have adapted to and reported on changes in the context at the activity level, the project as a whole would benefit from a more comprehensive assessment of the local context, either on a regular or as-needed basis. This assessment would update the data collected during the PRA exercises in 2000 and 2001, and should be focused around a set of topics identified by knowledgeable persons, including project staff and a cross-section of community members, who have seen or suspect changes in the local context. Topics for consideration include changes in demography (population levels and spatial distribution), the resource base, local cohesion and rivalry, ratio of wealthy/vulnerable households, flows of information and goods with the outside, availability of draft power, degree of representation and participation in local governance, etc. Much of this information already exists and has already been captured in various reports and discussions, but needs to be condensed, synthesized, and interpreted, preferably with strong forms of community input. This type of exercise will be particularly important for CONASA as the project begins to plan about what it wants to do and which strategies to use under a new results framework.

Recommendation 62. CONASA should consider preparing a paper on "Changes in the local context since 2001", to 1) help assess and improve its overall strategy, 2) plan for future programming, and 3) understand intended and unintended consequences of project activities.

13.3.3. External feedback

While there is no substitute for a strong evaluation capacity in-house, feedback from external observers can also be extremely helpful. CONASA receives input from external parties through three channels. First, it has technical advisors from each of the core NGOs who attend planning and review meetings and give feedback and suggestions. The technical advisors from WCS and AWF hold official positions in the project structure (see organisational chart Appendix 6, page 359), while several senior technical staff from CARE/Zambia, including CARE's head of M&E, provide feedback on a regular basis. These advisors, while not totally outside the project, are removed enough from the day-to-day activities to be in a position to see the bigger picture and provide feedback.

Secondly, CONASA regularly invites representatives from ZAWA, CRBs, USAID, GDS, and other development partners to attend its planning and review meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to both to receive feedback and input into project strategies, as well as inform partners of the project's goals, strategies, challenges, and achievements. It has been suggested elsewhere that activity planning meetings would have increased value if more time was spent on reviewing lessons learned, monitoring and research results, synergies, changes in the local context, spatial patterns, etc. (see for example *13.2.6 – Feeds results lessons learned back into planning*, page 265). Strengthening this aspect would also add value by increasing the quality of feedback from external observers.

Finally, CONASA receives external feedback when it contracts consultants to review progress or conduct studies on specific sections of the project. For example in late 2003 and early 2004, relatively major studies were contracted to review the project's strategies in enterprise development and conservation. External reviews like these tend not to provide completely new insights or observations, but further institutional learning by validating hunches, articulating issues more clearly, and suggesting new directions possibly not considered.

The external input CONASA has received has been generally useful and the existing channels for feedback should be continued. The project should also take advantage of other opportunities for input as they arise. It has been suggested elsewhere that the project might benefit from building connections with academic institutions, and that there are proactive steps the project can take to make these connections relevant to its needs (see *12.6.7 – Connections with institutions of higher learning*, page 258). A more formal form of technical input might be possible in the form of a technical steering committee.

13.3.4. Reviewing assumptions

The ultimate sign that an organisation has adopted learning processes into its programming is the ability to review and improve its underlying conceptual or strategic framework. This often begins by re-examining the assumptions behind the results framework. *Appendix 7 – Review of assumptions*, page 361, presents a summary of many of the key assumptions in the project design and whether they have been validated or not based upon three years of implementation.

14.0 SYNERGY AND LINKAGES

14.1. Introduction

While "synergy" tends to be a buzzword with only vague reference to actual implementation, the concept is quite central to CONASA. The only rationale for housing three components under one project structure is based on the expectation (or hope) that synergy can achieved both in terms of programming effectiveness as well as efficiency of resources. This evaluation explored when and where synergy is occurring programmatically, however did not review synergy in the consortium approach which will be on the terms of reference of a second evaluation exercise on management and administration (see 1.3, page 2).

Without getting into too much theory, the basic idea of synergy is that the overall impact of a set of activities can be greater than the sum of the individual activities themselves. A few points about this concept are worth noting:

- Synergy is created not by the activities themselves, but by the *relationships* between activities.
- The exact form of synergy is shaped by the local context and unforeseen opportunities, and is therefore usually unpredictable.
- Synergy can be achieved either accidentally or by intent, but it is more likely to be achieved when activities are *designed* to complement each other.
- Synergy in rural development requires a minimal amount of spatial and temporal proximity or density. In other words, you generally need a *critical mass* of activities within a given time and area to see synergy.
- Synergy can occur when activities complement each other *directly* (mutual support) or *indirectly* (one activity improving the context for another).
- Synergy is not like a light bulb, either on or off. It is better thought of as a continuum, ranging from strong and direct forms of interaction, to little or no connection between activities.

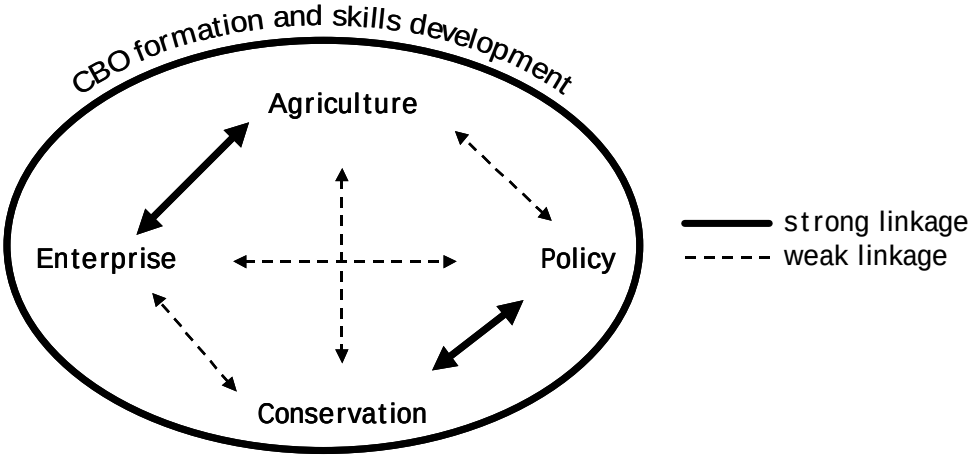
14.2. Linkages in practice

The conceptual underpinnings of CONASA, notably the livelihood framework and CBNRM, are grounded on the concept of synergy. The core activity streams (sections) within components were designed to *directly* support each other in expectation of strong forms of synergy, while programming across components was designed to achieve indirect forms of synergy (e.g., improving the context).

In practice, it is of course extremely difficult to systematically measure synergy, and almost impossible to quantify. Without a considerable amount of effort and fore-thought into research design, about the best one can do is to look at the "weight of anecdotes" and triangulate conclusions from multiple lines of evidence. In CONASA, the topic of synergy is frequently discussed in review and planning meetings. In the most recent review meeting the presentation format required program staff to explicitly articulate the connections between their section and three broad goals of the project. Hence there is general consensus on the relative strengths and weaknesses of linkages across sections. Figure 22 below graphically illustrates the levels of synergy across sections by using the thickness of arrows to represent the strength of linkages.

"The conceptual underpinnings of CONASA, notably the livelihood framework and CBNRM, are grounded on the concept of synergy."

Figure 22. Strength of linkages across major sections



As illustrated by the thick circle above, activities for the formation and strengthening of CBOs have relatively strong and direct linkages to all programming sections. This is because all of the rural development and conservation strategies used by CONASA (with a few possible exceptions in enterprise) are focused on the group model. CRBs, which have received the greatest level of support from CONASA, are central in planning and implementing conservation initiatives and grassroots policy discussions. Commodity groups are the primary vehicle for improving agricultural production and small business support, although this is being relaxed particularly in the case of enterprise development (see *5.3.3 – Groups vs. individuals*, page 106).

The linkage between agriculture and enterprise is also one of the more robust connections, largely because of the strong inter-dependency between the two activities. Increasing agricultural and livestock production requires a reliable mechanism for procuring inputs via cash or credit, and converting increased production into usable assets via marketing. Improved livelihoods in turn can give households enough breathing room to take the risks associated with enterprise. CONASA has tried to marry production schemes (e.g., cowpeas, sunflower, maize, poultry) with better marketing, although in practice the project has on several occasions been caught off-guard on the marketing side resulting in last minute efforts to identify markets for inputs and outputs. Still, the connection between agricultural production and enterprise development is probably the strongest and most direct form of synergy in the project, and offers enormous opportunity for additional livelihood gains.

"The connection between agricultural production and enterprise development is probably the strongest and most direct form of synergy in CONASA, and offers enormous opportunity for additional livelihood gains."

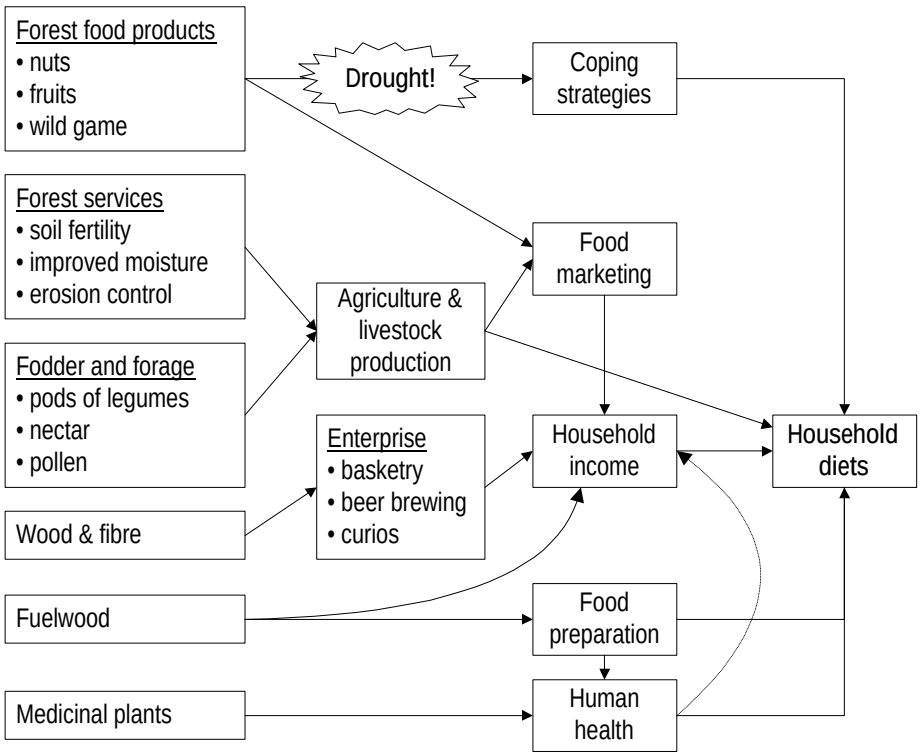
A second strong linkage is between the activities in policy analysis, advocacy, and conservation. Although all of these activities fall into the 'large-scale" and "long-term' category of development work, there have already been several examples where training activities to sensitise communities on policy issues have resulted in small but significant conservation gains on the ground (e.g., see *6.2.6.1 – Moomba CRB presentation in parliament*, page 130; and *6.2.6.3 – Pre-season safari hunting meetings*, page 132). The activities in natural resource policy analysis and sensitisation have also moved CBRNM in Zambia further down the road toward improving the policy context for conservation,

and while the benefits from this work will take years to fully materialize, the potential benefits for conservation are enormous.

The remaining linkages between the core sections of the project are still relatively weak. For example, little has been done so far to analyse the policy context vis-a-vie agriculture and enterprise, although there is tremendous potential in this area as there are several well-known policy issues constraining the viability of small-scale agriculture and rural businesses in Zambia. The project has recently gone through a review of the linkages between conservation and livelihoods, which will involve teasing apart the relationships between conservation, agriculture, and enterprise. It is realistic to hope that linkages between HLS and conservation will be the next to 'blossom' into stronger forms of synergy, as many of the pieces are in already in place (e.g., CBO capacity, conservation awareness, a stronger wildlife authority). A recent document produced by the MER team in Kalomo illustrates that connections between livelihood security and conservation are increasingly on the radar screen, and the conceptualisation of these linkages is becoming increasingly sophisticated and holistic (see below).

Conceptualising the link between forestry and food security
Summary of main points

Forests provide a variety of goods and services that support household food production, and the means for maintaining that production, directly and indirectly. These goods and services are particularly important during periods of stress, such as drought and disease outbreaks. The specific forest products and services that enhance food security include wild foods, soil fertility enhancement and protection, fodder, raw materials for income generating activities, fuelwood, and medicinal plants. These relationships are illustrated in the graphic below.



Source: Friday Mwaba, *Conceptualising the link between forestry and food security*

14.3. Geographic targeting

As noted in section *14.1 – Introduction* (page 273), achieving an impact which is greater than the sum of the individual interventions requires attaining a critical density of activities in time and space. In other words, in order for synergy to occur, there must be enough complementary activities in a given area and within a given amount of time for interactions to occur. For example, training CBO leaders to plan and administer projects and finances will achieve little or nothing if there are no finances or projects for them to plan and administer. Similarly, implementing a set of activities to boost livestock production in one area, but supporting marketing in another area, is not likely to achieve synergistic effects.

In general, CONASA staff try to deliver activities as a "package" to maximize positive interactions. This is particularly true with the CBO capacity building activities, which is seen as the 'foundation' for implementing other activities. However it is not clear if the targeting process is systematic, as there are several cases where activities appear to be targeted opportunistically. In other cases, it appears that targeting has been designed to achieve a good "spread" across the project area, which might help reach benchmarks or generate broader support, but can result in diffuse, isolated "pockets" of activity, which is the enemy of synergy. The transboundary component in particular, which has the added burden of a huge and poorly defined area of operation, seems to suffer the most from diffuse spatial targeting. Diffusion of activities is the enemy of synergy.

> "Diffusion of activities is the enemy of synergy."

14.4. Synergy matrix

Observations at planning and review meetings suggest that the density of activities in a given area is not a focus of monitoring, at least not in any systematic manner. This evaluation introduces the "synergy matrix", derived from the 2003 Component I Mid-Year Review Report, as a tool for monitoring when and where a full suite of complimentary activities are in place in a given area. This type of summary can also be used to highlight or 'yellow flag' isolated pockets of activity that are unlikely to be sustainable on their own. The prototype synergy matrix presented in Table 44 below is incomplete, but is provided as a template that can be used in an internal exercise. Improvements to the synergy matrix could include listing activities according to sub-VAG, replacing check marks with numbers of active commodity groups, including businesses supported by G-MED, and presenting it in map form.

Table 44. Synergy matrix

VAG	HHG	VMC	CSM	Local faciltr	Bill boards	Veg-etables	Maize	Sun-flower	Pa-prika	Seed scheme	Seed gardens	Poultry	Bee keeping	Crafts	Yellow flag*
Bbilili GMA															
Chikanta CRB															
Chilala	51	21	✓	✓	✓		✓								⚑
Habulile															
Kasukwe	90	28	✓	✓				✓							⚑
Mabombo															
Nkandanzovu	50	21	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				
Shezongo CRB															
Kakuse	75	17	✓	✓											⚑
Mbila	153	28	✓	✓											⚑
Nanzhila	60	30	✓	✓		✓				✓					
Mulobezi GMA															
Moomba CRB															
Choonzo	14	5	✓	✓	✓					✓					⚑

VAG	HHG	VMC	CSM	Local faciltr	Bill boards	Veg-etables	Maize	Sun-flower	Pa-prika	Seed scheme	Seed gardens	Poultry	Bee keeping	Crafts	Yellow flag*
Kalobe	19	16	✓	✓						✓					⚐
Mabwe	5	3	✓							✓				✓	
Moomba Central	33	21	✓	✓						✓					⚐
Mulanga	5	5	✓	✓						✓		✓			
Sichifulo GMA															
Nyawa CRB															
Chooma			✓	✓											⚐
Kantamba	41	21	✓	✓											⚐
Kauwe	119	39	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓				
Nguba	75	19	✓	✓											⚐
Nyawa Central	60	40	✓	✓										✓	⚐
Siachitema CRB															
Bbilili	113	34	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	
Chifusa			✓	✓											⚐
Naluja			✓	✓											⚐
Siachitema			✓	✓											⚐
Simwanda			✓	✓											⚐

* yellow flag symbol ⚐ indicates concern that there may not be an adequate density of activities to achieve of any kind of synergy

Source: Component 1 Mid-Year Review Report, August 2003

14.5. Special issues

14.5.1. Making a connection with TBNRM

Where is the synergy with TBNRM? This question needs to be approached from a somewhat different angle because TBNRM does not represent a fundamentally different set of strategies or activities than the ones in Figure 22 (at least not in CONASA's implementation TBNRM), but a combination of these same strategies with a broader different geographic focus and in different configurations. Thus the approach of looking for complementary sets of activities that directly reinforce each other, or indirectly improve the context for each other, is still valid when looking at connections with TBNRM, but more importantly we must also consider whether the TBNRM component has created "spatial synergy". In other words, has CONASA created or supported cross-border connections that support or enhance the effectiveness of livelihood and conservation activities in Zambia?

> "TBNRM does not represent a fundamentally different set of activities than CBNRM or HLS, but a combination of these same strategies with a broader geographic focus designed to create 'spatial synergy'."

As described elsewhere (see *8.1 – Rationale and strategy*, page 155), some of the activities of the TBNRM component have focused on improving the policy context for CBNRM in Zambia (e.g., regional policy forum). These efforts are moving in the right direction, but have not matured sufficiently to have on-the-ground impact to create spatial synergy. TBNRM activities in enterprise have also struggled to create cross-border connections, and the expected benefits from regional markets have in general not materialised as expected. Activities leading toward the eventual restoration of habitat connectivity between protected areas have the potential to generate tremendous amount of spatial synergy for conservation (e.g., depleted areas in Zambia could benefit from Botswana's over-abundance of elephants), however these efforts are also still in the early stages.

The one set of TBNRM activities that appear to have created some spatial synergy has been the exchange visits. Although only a tiny percentage of the communities were able to participate in exchange visits, the inspiration, ideas, and contacts made on these visit have already resulted in some new initiatives (see *8.2.2 – Creating inter-community links with Botswana and Namibia*, page 157).

14.5.2. Component compartmentalization

As noted elsewhere, the compartmentalization of CONASA into separate components and sections has helped the project maintain focus, but has come at a cost: a reduction in opportunities and incentives to achieve synergy. This is not to say that program staff within and between components do not work together and implement joint activities, because clearly they do. However the emphasis of the project's approach for planning, reporting, and evaluation of staff performance is clearly on individual section lines. This might explain some of the targeting of activities based on site-specific advantages, but without complete regard to the full CONASA "package".

An alternative approach to a section-focused structure, which need not be mutually exclusive, would be to allocate project staff to oversee specific geographic areas. This approach is partially present in the recent deployment of project extension staff in specific VAGs, although these field staff also have a relatively narrow operational focus. Ideally CRBs and VAGs will eventually be able to oversee and coordinate a complete set of activities in each area, however it may be a long time before CBO leaders will be fully able to understand and guide implementation of CONASA's complete suite of services.

Under the current results framework and structure of the project, it may not be feasible to base planning, implementation, and reporting using a geography-based approach. However one interim measure which would be helpful and could be easily incorporated into the current planning process would be to incorporate CRB and VAG-level reviews into planning and review meetings. These reviews, which should of course include CBO representatives from each area, should discuss all activities in a given area to identify unrealised opportunities for synergy across and within components, and highlight isolated activities that are unlikely to be sustainable or effective on their own.

Recommendation 63. Project planning and performance review meetings and reports should include area-by-area reviews, using tools like the synergy matrix, to identify unrealised opportunities for synergy and bring attention to disconnected and isolated activities.

14.5.3. Targeting

The discussion above has argued that to achieve synergy CONASA must 1) design a suite of activities that reinforce each other either directly or indirectly (which has largely been done), and 2) achieve an adequate amount spatial and temporal saturation so that a "critical mass" of ideas, capital, community mobilization, trade, technology, etc. can interact with each other to produce synergistic effects (which has largely not been achieved).

"An important requirement for ensuring that activities complement each other is getting the targeting right."

An important requirement for ensuring that activities complement each other is getting the targeting right. In other words, how people get selected for a seed scheme, micro-credit support, advocacy training, etc., will have a profound effect on whether other development processes will benefit as well. For example, it has been suggested elsewhere (see *9.5.5.5 – Conservation* targeting, page 202) that livelihood interventions (such as loan schemes for agricultural inputs) are more likely to create benefits for resource management if the individuals targeted for the livelihood intervention are those whose livelihood profile or spatial location are more likely to impact forest and wildlife resources. A system of targeting for synergy also highlights the importance of incorporating gender into activity planning. It is very difficult to achieve synergistic benefits for health and education without explicitly targeting women.

> "Gender is one of the most important criteria for targeting to achieve synergy."

The importance of targeting for achieving synergy is well known to CONASA, however targeting strategies are rarely discussed in review meetings nor reported in documentation. The who-when-where details of activity planning are generally left to program staff, and the specific criteria and thought process that goes into targeting are not entirely clear.

14.5.4. CBO – CBO Linkages

Another form of synergy implicit in the design of CONASA stems from the real or potential interactions between the 'representative' CBOs (e.g., CRBs and VAGs) and 'enterprise focused' CBOs (commodity groups). As illustrated in Figure 3 (page 34), it was expected or hoped that CRBs and VAGs would support small scale enterprises by helping them gain access to capital, training, technology, marketing, enter into contracts, and dispute resolution. In the other direction, it was hoped that commodity groups would support the work of the CRBs and VAGs by bringing income into the area, disseminating information, and providing 'arms' to mobilize community resources for development projects. It was believed that these mutually supportive interactions, if they were to occur, would create synergistic benefits and spin-offs for local development as a whole.

So the question is, do the two-way arrows in Figure 3 actually exist, or was this a naïve effort at utopian social engineering? While the project has not conducted any systematic assessment of the interactions between representative CBOs and commodity groups (perhaps because few commodity groups are very active), early indications are that there have been mutually supportive interactions (see *3.3.2 – CBO–CBO relationships*, page 45).

Two things are worth noting about the examples of mutually supportive interactions between CRBs and commodity groups. First, each one is unique and shaped by local needs and opportunities. Second, they all emerged with little or no direct involvement from CONASA. These are the hallmark characteristics of a synergistic benefit, and illustrate how CONASA's activities to facilitate the formation of CBOs, teach generic leadership, technical, and business skills, and introduce small scale technology can come together in unforeseeable ways to open opportunities for local development.

Lesson Learned

Strong horizontal linkages between CBOs increase the likelihood that complementary interventions will produce synergistic effects.

The examples of horizontal linkages should also not taken as representative of the project area as a whole, indeed they seem to be the exception rather than the norm. But they demonstrate that the parallel structure of "representative" and "enterprise" focused CBOs is not unreasonable, that it can result in mutually supportive interactions, and that synergy can occur when a critical mass of training, technology, and capital find fertile ground in local contexts. Put another way, they illustrate that social capital is real and can be harnessed to stimulate local growth.

"The examples of horizontal CBO linkages illustrate that social capital is real and can be harnessed to stimulate local growth."

14.6. Conclusion

Synergy is a fundamental feature of CONASA's approach to rural development and conservation, and may be the only rationale for housing so many activities streams under a single project structure. CONASA should therefore strive to understand the conditions under which synergy can occur, and explicitly try to create those conditions rather than engage in business as usual and hope for occasional intersections across various activities. This section has argued that synergy requires 1) development of activities that are complementary in both design and targeting, and 2) implementation in sufficient temporal and spatial density that a critical mass of processes can stimulate new impacts.

We have seen some evidence for direct forms of synergy, for example where agricultural production and marketing support each other. However there is so far little or no evidence for the weaker forms of synergy, whereby one set of activities improves the context for another set. However not much effort has been made into creating these linkages and it is probably too early in any case because improving the political, social, or ecological context operates at large spatial and temporal scales.

The examples of synergy between activities, and the emergence of unforeseen but mutually beneficial interactions between representative and enterprise focused CBOs, demonstrate that CONASA's suite of activities is complementary in nature. Where improvements, or at least clarification, is needed is in planning and monitoring the density of activities in specific geographic areas, and the strategy used for targeting within specific areas. We have yet to assess whether the multi-NGO consortium approach to a project like CONASA is synergistic or not, however this will addressed in a separate evaluation exercise.

15.0 DEFINING THE CONASA APPROACH

15.1. Introduction

As CONASA evolves from a young project to a mature, experienced project made wise from years of practice, there is a periodic need to reflect upon its approach and re-articulate its "identity". The project's identity, which may also be thought of as its reputation, approach, or "brand", should describe in a brief and coherent statement two essential elements:

- what the project is trying to achieve
- how it is achieving its goals

The task of defining a project identity may seem superfluous or unimportant compared to implementing activities on the ground, but it can be extremely helpful for several reasons. First and foremost, CONASA staff need to be able describe what they are all about, succinctly and coherently, to implementation partners including the communities, ZAWA, other units of government, NGOs, and other civil society organisations. Articulating identity is important not only so implementation partners know what CONASA does, but also what it does not do. A clear sense of identity will help reduce the amount of time and effort that has been spent trying to "fend off" requests for support or engagement that are incompatible with CONASA's goals or approach.

A second reason why articulating a coherent approach is important is to help CONASA continue to attract financial support. The "business" of conservation and development is becoming increasingly competitive, with many of the large NGOs adopting the language of investment banking and strategic planning models of corporations. Donors of all types are increasingly demanding to see strategic thinking and impact measures, and are not satisfied with weak, diffuse, and process-oriented descriptions of project achievements. This trend is particularly dominant among conservation NGOs, where long-range strategic planning, quantitative performance measures, and the development of investment portfolios are the order of the day. A good example of effective conservation 'branding' can be seen in AWF. Everyone in AWF, from field staff to the CEO, can tell you in about two minutes that AWF is all about *saving wildlife in large Heartland ecoregions through the brokering of conservation business ventures at conservation service centres*. The goal and approach together form an integrated "package" that is easy to understand, and easy to sell.

> "CONASA is not in a very enviable position when it comes to articulating its approach due 1) its relative newness, and 2) the diversity of its goals and approaches."

15.2. Nested approaches

CONASA is not in a very enviable position when it comes to articulating its approach due 1) its relative newness, and 2) the diversity of its goals and approaches. Some projects are able to define themselves based purely on their primary activity (e.g., "we do boreholes" or "we do credit"). However that strategy obviously wouldn't work very well for CONASA because the project does so many things. Other projects define themselves based on their primary conceptual frameworks (e.g., "we do CBNRM" or "we do HLS"). Unfortunately that also doesn't work terribly well for CONASA because again the project is employing at least five frameworks: HLS, CBNRM, TBRNM, policy/advocacy, and market development. To pick one and say "we do HLS" or "we do CBNRM" depending on the audience would be partially correct, but focusing on only

one of the frameworks would sideline a good portion of the goals and methods, and deny the significance of interactions. To say "we do HLS *and* CBNRM *and* policy *and* TBNRM *and* enterprise" would be the most technically accurate, but could also create a perception of project schizophrenia because this statement fails to articulate how these various frameworks are linked or unified.

Moving down from the project as whole, CONASA is better equipped at the section level to describe what, why, where, and how it is trying to make a difference. All of the sections in component one have strategy papers written (i.e., the how), and the HLS framework does a good job explaining the "what" and "why". Some activity streams however seem to be based on strategies that are not well-defined (e.g., conservation), while others do not appear to be very effective under further scrutiny (e.g., enterprise). It has been argued elsewhere that the "where" element (e.g., targeting) of component one also needs to be more explicitly described in writing, and the scattered distribution of activities (see Map 10, page 343) suggests that the balance between coverage and saturation may need to be revisited. The good news however is that these issues are well known to the project and progress continues to be made in conceptualising the approach.

"CONASA is better equipped at the section level to describe what, why, where, and how it is trying to make a difference."

In component two, CONASA has come a long way in defining its approach for strengthening the policy context. Whereas in 2001 policy constraints were only roughly understood, in 2003 the project has helped CRBs identify specific policy issues that are constraining the progress of CBNRM in Zambia (see *Table 25 – "Hot topic" policy issues*, page 123). Progress has also been made in creating opportunities for CBO-CBO and CBO-government dialogue through forums (see *6.2.3 – Forums*, page 124). However now that these two steps have been largely accomplished, there is a need for component two to redefine its purpose and articulate a vision for its future role. In other words, it needs to articulate an approach which spells out a vision for "what's next" in policy and advocacy, and how CONASA is going to be involved. Policies will not change by themselves, and not every issue can be resolved by dialogue along. CONASA needs to articulate how it sees environmental advocacy taking shape in the Zambian context, and how (or perhaps if) it will bridge the gap between communities and national level policy processes.

The TBNRM component was based upon a strong set of ideas about the importance of transboundary processes for both economic development and conservation. These claims (some might say ideology) formed the foundation of an approach that CONASA has largely adhered to. However after three years of effort CONASA has learned that the devil often lies in the details, and that not all transboundary linkages are created equal. CONASA's ability to articulate its approach toward TBNRM would be clearer and stronger if it were based on a more robust understanding of transboundary linkages. This awareness was reflected in the statement of one staff person who jokingly referred to the CSC as the "confused service centre". If transboundary programming is to be included in future phases, CONASA might be more effective if it focused on just one or two types of transboundary linkage (e.g., social, ecological, economic, or political) as opposed to the whole lot.

The closest thing CONASA has come to branding itself as a whole is encapsulated in a statement often made by the Chief of Party: *We do HLS using the tools of CBNRM*. This is

technically accurate and a pretty good description of what the project is trying to achieve and how it is going about it, however it suffers however from being somewhat general and somewhat academic, particularly for those not familiar with the background of HLS and CBNRM. It also fails to articulate a clear connection with the activities in policy analysis, advocacy, and TBNRM.

It's possible that CONASA may never be able to come up with a fully satisfactory, unified sense of 'identity', particularly if it continues to be as programmatically diverse as it has been in the first three years. It may have to continue feeling a bit schizophrenic or fuzzy around the edges, and that might be ok as long as the project's staff and it partners have a sense of, and are comfortable with, what the project is trying to achieve and how it is going about achieving it. However the project is also in a much better position now than it was three years ago to refine and articulate its approach. The exercise in building a sense of project identity or branding has two elements: focusing the approach and packaging.

> "The development of a project identity is partly an exercise in packaging, and partly an exercise in focusing the approach."

15.3. Focusing the approach

While the incentive for focusing the approach should be first and foremost to maximize program effectiveness, an outcome of this exercise will be a stronger ability to articulate what CONASA is trying to achieve and how. It has been suggested elsewhere that CONASA may have spread itself too thinly in phase one, with the result that opportunities for synergy were limited (see *14.3 – Geographic targeting*, page 276). It has also been suggested that the suite of activities in CONASA was largely dictated by the RFA, and the current configuration of activities may not be the most strategic combination due to disconnects in scale and possibly focus (see *2.4.5 – Spatial and temporal scales*, page 31).

Reflecting upon these questions, and thinking about whether the project needs to narrow its focus either spatially or programmatically, would be a useful exercise for CONASA to undertake as it nears the end of its current funding cycle. Discussions about focusing the approach should be based on:

- remembering what CONASA does best (see *18.2.1 – Remembering CONASA's strengths*, page 307)
- identifying combinations of activities that are most likely to be self-supporting,
- examining whether the assumptions or required conditions for activities to be effective are met
- noting the strengths and limitations of fostering development and conservation in a project mode as opposed to a sector programme
- reviewing the theories, experiences and lessons learned of other development and conservation projects
- considering which strategies yield the greatest "bang for the buck"

One asset that would help CONASA make decisions about its strategy, but is generally lacking, is information about efficiency. The project does not have a great deal of information about how much impact is being leveraged for each Kwacha or person-hour, even at a very aggregate level. It has been suggested elsewhere that this may be due to unlinked financial and programmatic information systems (see *12.3.1 – Financial and administrative information systems*, page 238) and possibly an institutional culture that does

not place a high value on monitoring operational efficiency (see *13.3.1 – Assessing efficiency*, page 267). However it is not too late to make some assessments about where the project has been most efficient, and this would certainly improve the discussions about strategy.

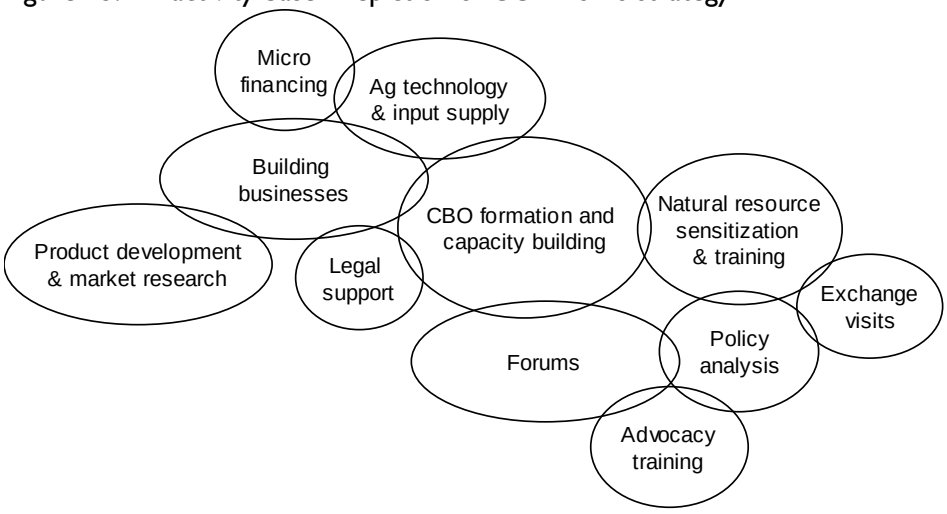
15.4. Packaging

A second element CONASA needs to tackle to better define and articulate its approach involves "packaging" (or perhaps "re-packaging") its ideas and experiences into a form that is clear, relevant, and understandable to stakeholders who may not necessarily be intimately familiar with the project context or development frameworks. In other words, CONASA ultimately needs to be able to describe what it is trying to achieve, and how it is achieving it, using terminology and concepts that don't require a lot of knowledge of the specific context of the project.

"CONASA ultimately needs to be able to describe what it is trying to achieve, and how it is achieving it, using terminology and concepts that don't require a lot of knowledge of development frameworks or the specific context of the project."

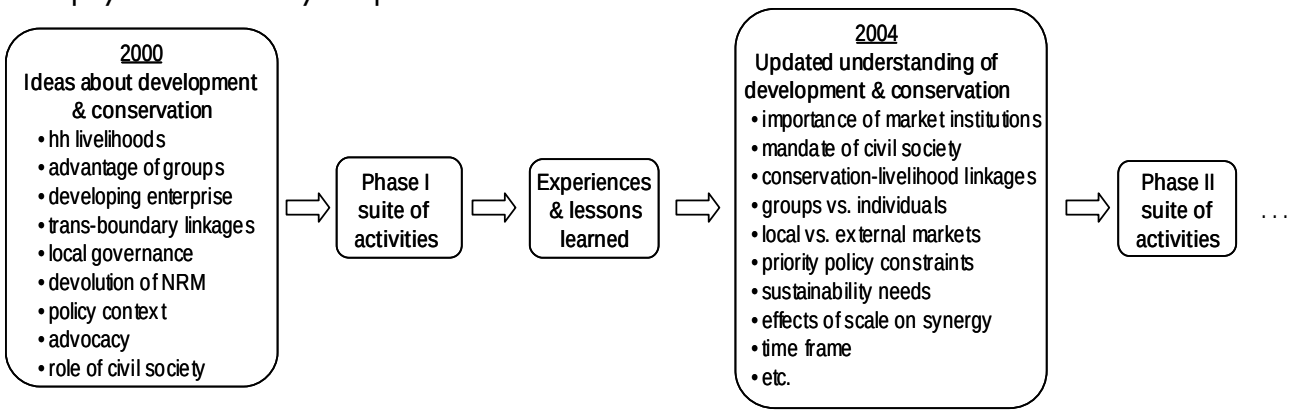
An activity-based description of CONASA's approach has the advantage of being concrete and understandable, however by itself it doesn't do a good job in illuminating the rationale behind this particular suite of activities. An activity-based representation of CONASA's multi-pronged approach could be depicted by a Venn diagram like the one in Figure 23 below. As depicted in this diagram, a variety of activities have been implemented, with some overlap between individual activities but not a lot of overlap as a whole. It also reveals, at least in the current configuration of activities, the unclear linkages between many of the activities, although as the project evolves and learns to become more focused and effective, we would expect to see greater overlap between both individual activities and components as a whole.

Figure 23. An activity-based depiction of CONASA's strategy



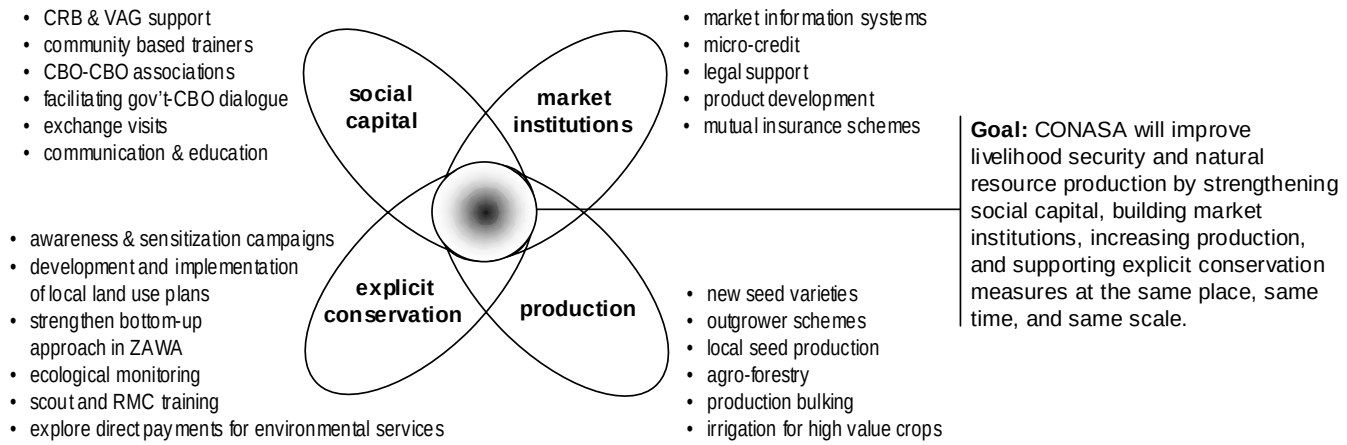
Articulating an approach in more general terms requires drawing upon broader theories of development and conservation. CONASA's suite of activities have been based upon a fairly rich set of ideas and concepts well laid out in the RFA and the initial project document. However just as activities on the ground are always evolving, development concepts are never fixed or static, and are constantly being reviewed, critiqued, and revised based on new experiences. Thus there is a never ending back-and-forth between theory and practice, as depicted in Figure 24 below.

Figure 24. Interplay between theory and practice



CONASA is now at a point where it needs to reflect upon the ideas and concepts upon which it was based, and re-express its conceptual foundation for phase two. This will most likely involve keeping the core pieces of the HLS and CBNRM frameworks with some refinement around the edges and filling in the fuzzy areas with lessons learned, such as the how and why of enterprise development and livelihood-conservation linkages. This process of reflection will also undoubtedly require a 'reality-check' on many of the assumptions upon which these frameworks are based (see Appendix 7, page 361, for a sample). It may also require situating CONASA's approach relative to recent research and debates in conservation and development, with particular attention to the conceptual frameworks adopted by USAID and the consortium partners (see *15.7 – Knowing where the boat is headed*, page 287). Although this exercise in "packaging" can only be done after the project has built consensus on how best to focus its approach (see above), one example of what a more conceptualised approach might look like is shown in Figure 25 below.

Figure 25. Example of articulating a strategy using development concepts



15.5. Common threads

Defining and articulating CONASA's overall approach will be invariably easier and stronger if the project can identify one or more conceptual 'common threads' that binds that various activities and components together. A few examples are illustrated below:

- **Local institutions**. Local institutions form the core of nearly all of CONASA's activities, both in design and implementation, and would therefore make a natural 'common-thread' that is central to CONASA's approach for both conservation and development goals. Although there have been some concerns expressed that CONASA may be trying to build local institutions too quickly and with sufficient attention to sustainability, the focus on building local institutions is in accord with a wide body of development theory and research. Federated alliances of local institutions play an important role in making markets works in rural areas, effective development planning, and pushing rural issues into the political arena. It would not be a stretch for CONASA to define its approach as "we build strong and resilient local institutions to increase private sector growth, strengthen livelihood security, manage natural resources, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of development efforts."

- **Rights**. Another cross-cutting element CONASA could invoke as the centrepiece of its approach is the concept of rights. One of the appealing characteristics of the rights-based approach is its inclusiveness of "traditional" development frameworks such as HLS and CBNRM, with an additional emphasis on governance and political economy (see *16.1 – Elements of a RBA*, page 291). Although the language and concepts of human rights have not featured prominently in CONASA's development approach, and has not be picked up by USAID or most NGOs other than CARE, the concepts of rights could conceivably be the tie that binds together the multi-pronged approach CONASA has taken.

- **Social capital**. Social capital, broadly defined as the collective assets and strength of civil society networks at the local level, is another concept that describes much of what CONASA is trying to achieve. Social capital is a phenomenon that has been widely studied, particularly by the World Bank, because it captures a set of processes and relationships which can greatly facilitate the pace and breadth of local development. Like the concepts of rights, CONASA has not really invoked the ideas of social capital except perhaps as an element in the household livelihood framework, but it represents a road map that CONASA could draw upon to guide and explain its approach.

15.6. An alternative: Separate but parallel

An alternative to articulating a grand strategy or framework that encompasses all of CONASA's thinking and activities may be to simply develop separate but parallel streams of activities, each justified but its own set of values and ideas about cause-effect. In this approach, CONASA could continue to host a multi-pronged suite of activities for administrative efficiency and weak forms of synergy, but keep the activities conceptually separate and not be too concerned with linkages. There are at least three reasons why it may be advantageous to pursue a separate-but-parallel strategy in defining the CONASA approach.

- **Donor focus**. Donors often have their own ideology of development, and funding is often tied to sector specific goals. Although CONASA genuinely believes in holistic approaches to development and conservation, as do some donors, funds are often allocated for specific outcomes in water, health, advocacy, etc. It may therefore be easier to take advantage of these opportunities with well-developed separate-but-parallel streams of activities.

- **Weak connections between sections**. The linkages between sections may prove to be too weak programmatically to justify capturing them under one framework. The best response when linkages are weak would be to adjust the focus, intensity, or targeting of activities to strengthen linkages, but if that isn't possible the next best approach might be to define the activities as separate-but-parallel. For example, *if* it were to turn out that despite the best efforts to reduce transaction costs it just isn't feasible for farmers in some areas to get a good price in urban markets, the next-best strategy might be to divorce production enhancing activities from marketing, product development, and market information systems in those areas, and instead just work on increasing production for improved food security and health. In this scenario, production and marketing would be essentially separate-but-parallel activities, at least in certain areas.

- **Disconnect in scales**. A third situation which might favour a separate-but-parallel approach is when activities are operating at different spatial or temporal scales. An example of this situation might be the work in national level policy analysis, which operates at a large temporal and spatial scale, and community development activities which are locally focused and require short turnaround times to be successful. When activities operate at different scales, any attempt to justify them together in a unified framework will be inherently weak. The next best strategy is either to adjust the scale of one to the other (e.g., bring advocacy to the village), adjust the scale of the project (e.g., increase the lifespan and/or operational area), or justify them as separate-but-parallel.

15.7. Knowing where the boat is headed

Another factor that will shape how CONASA identifies and presents itself to its constituents is the overall direction of the field. In other words, development and conservation strategies are never fixed and static, and the accepted norms of today can very quickly be seen as the mistakes of yesterday. Although "new" approaches in development and conservation are often old wine in a new bottle, CONASA needs to be attentive to the directions and shifts in the paradigms and language used by donors, government, and NGOs (see also *9.5.12 – Broader CBNRM debates*, page 210).

Among the key organisations CONASA must answer to, the following summary tries to present a "weather forecast" of short to medium-term policy directions.

- **USAID**. Like much of the donor community, USAID/Zambia continues to look toward market-led solutions for development. As articulated in their country strategic plan for 2004–2010, USAID is very much focused on strengthening export earnings particularly in the agriculture and tourism sectors (USAID/Zambia, 2004). USAID has maintained a commitment to its previous investments to support small-scale holders and natural resource management, but under their current paradigm these investments have value only in as much as they stimulate or reflect private sector growth. USAID is a strong believer in the trickle-down and expanding-pie theories of poverty alleviation. The other areas where USAID has made major investments in Zambia are HIV/AIDS mitigation, girls education, and promoting good governance at the national level.

- **GRZ.** The policy directions of the Government of Zambia are in general alignment with the economic and social strategies espoused by the donor community and multi-lateral lending institutions. As encapsulated by the 2002 PRSP, the government has prioritised attracting large-scale foreign investment in the agriculture and tourism sectors as a means of increasing export earnings. GRZ also believes in poverty alleviation through job growth (i.e., trickle-down theory) and sees its untapped land and natural resources as the keys to future growth. GRZ has also continued a policy of decentralization of social services and in some cases devolution of authority. However within government, and especially semi-autonomous

authorities like ZAWA, there are deviations in the amount of commitment to these policies due to specific constraints, incentive structures, and the invisible hand of politics.

- **CARE**. CARE/Zambia has also recently adopted a long-range strategic plan, which reflects their wide and diverse portfolio of projects focused on poverty alleviation and health. CARE continues to adopt a livelihood approach toward poverty alleviation in both urban and rural settings, with a strong focus on building local institutions. Other CARE projects are more focused on relief. The CARE/Zambia LRSP follows the lead of other CARE programs by including a rights based approach as a strategic thrust in its country programming, although it remains to be seen how this will be implemented.

- **WCS**. WCS/Zambia continues to hold conservation as its primary goal, with enterprise development and livelihood provision seen as means to this end. WCS's stronghold in Zambia continues to be the Luangwa Valley where it is piloting an innovative market-led strategy to create a conducive context for long-term conservation. Under its trading centre program, WCS is trying to correct market failures in rural areas by building or supplying market institutions (e.g., information systems, legal services), increasing production (e.g., bulking schemes and appropriate technology), and reduce transaction costs (e.g., subsidized transport, negotiation support). These market driven initiatives are coupled to explicit conservation measures based on site-specific conditions and opportunities, and a robust understanding of the threats facing natural resources. WCS is also very much engaged with policy analysis and facilitating dialogue within the wildlife sector at the national level.

- **AWF**. AWF remains committed to an eco-regional approach to conservation through its *Heartlands* program. Like WCS, AWF and its backers view conservation as the ultimate goal and conservation business ventures as the means to that goal. Although funding for the Four Corners project is coming to an end, AWF also remains committed to supporting transboundary processes at both the local and political levels.

15.8. Summary and conclusions

The fields of conservation and development are becoming increasing competitive and results-oriented, and it is important that projects like CONASA have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve and how, so they can communicate this focus to their development partners. It is not enough to simply demonstrate a need or urgency, but to give shape to that urgency and articulate a plan for moving forward. CONASA defines itself as an *HLS project that uses the tools of CBNRM*. This type of definition is technically accurate and has served the project well during its first three years, but the project needs to consider whether it should update its institutional identity based upon the lessons learned to date and plans for a possible phase two.

> "The basis of CONASA's overall identity is a solid foundation of strong component identities."

The basis of CONASA's overall identity is a solid foundation of strong component identities. The components in CONASA are fairly well grounded on their own, and all staff are able to articulate what they are doing and why. However two areas that do not seem to be guided by a well laid out approach are the activities around conservation and

enterprise, although progress has being made in making these strategies more robust. Component two has in some sense worked itself out of a job by largely accomplishing its first set of goals, and needs to rearticulate its relevance and role in future programming. The TBNRM component was based on a rich set of claims about the centrality of transboundary processes in development and conservation, however after three years of effort with only limited results there is a need to revisit these claims and ground any future transboundary work on a more realistic understanding of linkages.

Articulating the overall approach of the project will not be an easy task for CONASA because it is implementing so many types of activities, some of which are operating at different time and spatial scales. It seems that the focus on local institutions is a common thread among most of the sections, and might be well suited to serve as the centrepiece for the project's institutional identity. However for this to occur, the project will need to demonstrate stronger linkages between CBO capacity building and the core results in food production, small business growth, and conservation. Other binding principles that might help the project articulate its approach are those of social capital or rights.

CONASA has struggled to develop an approach that builds linkages across all components, however that might not be possible given the disconnect in scales, but it may also not be necessary. A separate-but-parallel approach in which the components are more like pieces of a portfolio, rather than an integrated whole, might be a more viable option. However if the rationale for hosting multiple components under one project framework is no longer programmatic synergy, then the project will need to rejustify this structure in terms of administrative efficiency and/or institutional learning. CONASA currently has a limited capacity to assess its programmatic efficiency, which constrains its ability to make such strategic decisions.

16.0 RIGHTS BASED PROGRAMMING

16.1. Elements of a RBA

The Rights Based Approach (RBA) is an approach to designing development programs that centres around the concepts of human rights and responsibilities. CARE International has been exploring an RBA in many of its country programs across the globe for about five years, in an explicit effort to study the benefits and dangers of rights based programming and identify best practices at all stages of the program cycle. CARE's interest in the RBA reflects a growing recognition among many development organisations over the last decade that there are strong relationships between poverty, governance, and the policy context. The RBA approach seeks to rectify some of the 'structural' barriers to development by invoking the concepts and tools of human rights, good governance, and advocacy. The RBA is not limited to a specific sector, but is an approach that can be applied to programs in health, education, rural development, emergency assistance, etc.

The RBA draws upon concepts of human rights as articulated in national and international conventions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), to redefine certain human development 'needs' as 'denied rights'. Thus for example the need for community-based organizations could be recast as the *denial of freedom to participate in decision-making*, and the goal of greater food security might be expressed as a desire to achieve *freedom from malnutrition*. Promoters of the RBA argue that expressing development goals in the language of human rights results in stronger, more assertive, and ultimately more effective programming because concepts of rights trigger duties, responsibilities, and objective standards, whereas defining issues as needs does not.

"Promoters of the RBA argue that expressing development goals in the language of human rights results in stronger, more assertive, and ultimately more effective programming because concepts of rights trigger duties, responsibilities, and objective standards, whereas defining issues as needs does not."

However the concepts and jargon of human rights can be somewhat confusing for development workers more familiar with the concepts of the livelihood framework or CBNRM. CARE's literature on RBA is peppered with terminology such as *duty bearer*, *rights deprived*, and *social justice*, and makes references to new tools such as *Benefits-Harms assessment* and *analysis of power relations*. This repackaging of traditional development objectives in new jargon might give the false impression that the RBA is either disconnected from past approaches, or even worse old wine in a new bottle. However the RBA is actually founded upon the experiences of many development approaches, including the HLS framework, and does add some substantive new forms of thinking, analysis, and tools. It might thus be useful for practioners of the HLS framework to think of the RBA as a an approach to project design which incorporates all of the best elements of the household livelihood framework, with some additional emphasis on empowerment, accountability, advocacy, and a deeper analysis of the underlying causes of poverty.

Characteristics of the Rights Based Approach[24]
o The RBA requires understanding, exposing, and addressing the root causes of poverty. This includes a deeper holistic analysis of the context in which relief and development agencies work. o At the assessment stage, integration of RBA has more to do with attitude, persistent probing, and a different level of analysis than it has to do with tools. Persistently asking why is key to discovering the underlying causes of poverty. o In the RBA, systematic and structural constraints such as political systems and social attitudes are not considered to be fixed assumptions, but factors which can potentially be addressed through programming. o A rights-based analysis focuses more on power relations in and between households, communities, local and national government institutions, and private sector organisations. o RBA requires us to place much greater emphasis on identifying rights and responsibilities of individuals, empowerment, and holding others accountable. o Implementation of a RBA requires activities which move away from treating the symptoms of poverty to addressing the underlying causes of poverty. o In the strong or explicit form of rights based programming, an implementing NGO (e.g., CARE) views itself as a 'duty bearer' and is actively (although not necessarily directly or at the forefront) involved in promoting the rights of poor people. o Establishing meaningful partnerships with local organisations is essential for an effective RBA. NGOs engaged in promoting rights must open themselves to being accountable to stakeholders other than donors.

Although Zambia suffers from high levels of corruption and poverty, in many regards the country offers a fruitful garden for rights based programming. There is a long history of freedom of the press, lack of ethnic conflict, recognition for the rule of law, an independent judiciary, and a number of civil society groups engaged in vigorous political debates (e.g., the 2002 debate on a presidential third term). However with the notable exception of women's issues, rights-based programming has not become mainstream in rural development, nor picked up as a theme by many NGOs. In the 1990s, CBNRM support projects under WCS and NORAD were perhaps the most aligned with a rights-based approach, however most observers would argue that the achievements of CBNRM in Zambia feel far short of the vision of true devolution and local empowerment.

16.2. CONASA and the Rights Based Approach

Before reflecting on whether CONASA is practicing, or could benefit from, a rights-based approach, it is worth noting that the RBA is not a label that simply does or does not apply to an individual project. Like other holistic development frameworks such as CBNRM and HLS, a RBA reflects a number of interrelated strategies and characteristics which may or may not all be present in a specific project. There is no single blueprint for rights based programming, but rather a set of principles and ideas that become adapted for specific contexts. Thus the most useful questions to ask is not "*Is CONASA a rights*

[24] Sources: Rand, J. 2002. CARE's experience with adoption of a right's based approach: Five case studies. June 2002. http://www.careinternational.org.uk/resource_centre/livelihoods/final_case_studies_merged_june_24_02.pdf.
CARE. 2002. Defining characteristics of a rights-based approach. Promoting Rights and Responsibilities. February 2002. pp. 9-10.
CARE. 2002. Frequently asked questions about adoption of a rights-based approach. April 2002 Draft.

based project?" but, "*To what degree does CONASA have the characteristics of a RBA*?" and, "*What does the RBA have to offer CONASA?"*

CONASA has never called or thought of itself as a rights-based project. In fact in the entire technical proposal, which is well over 100 pages, there are only has six occurrences of the word 'rights', and no references to rights-based programming. Furthermore with the exception of some senior CARE staff at CONASA, the concepts and language of the RBA are not very familiar to the project. Nevertheless, CARE/Zambia has listed rights-based programming as one of its strategic thrusts in its recently adopted Long Range Strategic Plan.

Despite a lack of explicit references to an RBA, one can immediately see that CONASA has many of the characteristics of a rights-based programme. The foundation of the RBA is the same as the foundation of the HLS approach – understanding and exposing the underlying causes of poverty. Through the initial set of PRA exercises and many subsequent visits and discussions, CONASA staff and the community members they work with have developed a fairly good understanding of the underlying causes of poverty, including environmental, economic, social, and political factors. They also have a fairly good understanding of the power relationships that affect communities, including intra-household dynamics, the complicated relations between traditional authorities and the emerging CBO structures, relationships between the community resource boards and government units, and relationships with private businesses.

In addition to the close ties between HLS and RBA, rights are also a fundamental aspect of CBNRM. CBNRM, which is perhaps best thought of as a set of principles and toolbox of methods, is at the core concerned about the devolution of ownership or at least authority to manage natural resources. You can't get any more rights-centred than this. However in practice, few CBNRM programs in the region have made much headway in achieving a full devolution of rights (and have been much criticized for this shortcoming). CONASA, as a "second generation" CBNRM program, is one of the stronger, if not the strongest, CBNRM program in the region with regard to an explicit focus on rights (however there are also some very explicit rights based resource management initiatives in South Africa).

"As a 'second generation' CBNRM program, CONASA is one of the stronger, if not the strongest, CBNRM program in the region with regard to an explicit focus on rights."

Another important characteristic of the RBA that can be seen in CONASA is the stream of activities to sensitise community leaders on the importance of policy issues and identify policy constraints. The policy constraints that have been examined by CONASA in contracted studies and community trainings focus on both policy gaps and inadequate implementation of policy, both of which can lead to a denial of rights. Due to the work of CONASA, there is today much greater awareness within the communities of their rights enshrined in national legislation, why those rights are important, and the options available to address gaps in rights.

CONASA has also strengthened the opportunities to address inadequate recognition of rights. At the community level, CONASA trainings address culturally-based forms of discrimination, and sensitise community members on the importance of understanding and addressing the needs of women and vulnerable households. The project also encourages adequate representation of women in decision-making positions in CBOs, a

strategy which has had greater impact at the lower level structures. CONASA has also provided advocacy training for CRB leaders, supported some preliminary work to address violations of community rights through testimonies in parliament (see *6.2.6.1 – Moomba CRB presentation in parliament*, page 130), and facilitated numerous meetings with district councillors, safari operators, traditional authorities, MPs, and officials from ZAWA.

At the national level, CONASA has been instrumental in creating long-term mechanisms for policy dialogue through their support of the Natural Resources Consultative Forum, Kafue National Park Stakeholders Forum, Association of CBNRM Support Organisations, and TBNRM Forum (see *6.2.3 – Forums*, page 124). The participatory approach used to establish these forums has resulted in general buy-in from most if not all of the important stakeholders, including government. Although the forums have been largely focused on administrative issues and have yet to make headway on the 'hard' issues, they have already provided an opportunity for the expression of community interests. As a result we have seen more examples of communities approaching government, as opposed to government approaching communities, which is one of the hallmarks of a successful rights-based programme.

16.3. To RBA or not to RBA, that is the question

It would appear that CONASA's design has many of the hallmarks of a RBA, although it hasn't adopted the language or methodological tools of CARE's rights-based programming. We might thus consider it a 'soft' form of the RBA, or an approach which addresses rights issues implicitly if not explicitly. The next question to ask then is whether it would be beneficial for CONASA to venture into stronger forms of the RBA, by for example adopting the language, tools, and more focused activities to identify and address rights issues.

In terms of the overall project design, there isn't a lot more CONASA can do to adopt a stronger RBA approach without changing its results framework. However changing the results framework or adopting a rights-based strategy more explicitly seems unnecessary, and/or impractical, for four fundamental reasons.

First, rights-based programming, in the form developed by CARE, is not part of USAID/Zambia's country strategy or results framework, although elements of the RBA certainly fall within USAID's interests in supporting good governance and making private sector businesses in Zambia more competitive. Thus it would be difficult for CONASA to win the needed support to infuse strong forms of explicit rights-based activities into its current suite of activities without soliciting additional support from other donors.

Second, rights-based programming requires a considerable amount of time to show impact at the household level. CONASA is already struggling to demonstrate impact under its current time frame, which is arguably unrealistically short (see *2.4.5 – Spatial and temporal scales*, page 31), and to focus more on rights programming would only lengthen the amount of realize desired impacts. Unless CONASA can secure long-term support, or transform itself into a long-term self-sustaining support organization, it would not likely see the benefits from a more intensive form of rights-based programming.

Thirdly, adopting a more explicit rights based approach could be confusing, and possibly disruptive, to the gains already made by CONASA staff and communities. The language of strong forms of human rights are not widely familiar in rural Zambia or with CONASA's field staff, and could be misunderstood or misinterpreted. CONASA has spent considerable effort its first three years trying to identify and articulate its role with the communities, as well as define its relationship to ZAWA, CRBs, and the private sector. To get more directly involved in rights promotion could endanger these delicate relationships and erode CONASA's perception as a neutral player, which is arguably one

of its greatest strengths. CONASA also does not currently have the skilled manpower, at least at the field level, to get more heavily involved in human rights issues beyond what they are currently doing. One of the key findings from CARE's Human Rights Initiative is that it is often better to introduce the concept of human rights within existing national culture and policies, and create the conditions that support change, as opposed to trying to force change.

Finally, a stronger form of rights programming might erode some of the gains made in building channels of communication with government. These channels have already led to some positive changes through largely peaceful, constructive dialogue between community leaders and policy makers. And while there are definitely some issues that will not be so easy to resolve, there are still a lot of gains to made through this 'easy' form of dialogue, particularly regarding issues of policy implementation (see *6.3.1.2 – Starting with the easy fruit*, page 133). The Zambian government has a history of branding any external support of grassroots advocacy as 'meddling by foreign NGOs', and already CONASA's support of discussing the ban on game ranches in GMAs as a policy constraint has ruffled some feathers in ZAWA. Such conflicts are not necessarily all bad, and in fact can be interpreted as a positive sign of change, however CONASA needs to be heedful of these relationships with government, recognize that there are vested interests in the status quo, and be strategic in identifying which battles to enter.

"This evaluation believes that it isn't necessary or even desirable for CONASA to reorient its overall strategy, adopt a new set of RBA jargon, or embrace a more explicit or stronger form of rights based programming."

16.4. Discussion and recommendations

Many of the essential elements of a RBA are already in place in CONASA, and this 'soft' form of rights based programming seems appropriate for the project context and CONASA's current set of human resources. Hence this assessment argues that it isn't necessary or even desirable for CONASA to reorient its overall strategy, adopt a new set of jargon, or embrace a more explicit or stronger form of rights based programming. However that being said, there are steps that CONASA can take to incorporate lessons from the application of an RBA in other countries and achieve greater and longer lasting impact with what has already been started.

16.4.1. 1. Monitoring social relations at the local level

Although the poverty in CONASA's project area is certainly connected to its biophysical characteristics, there are also social relations that exacerbate hardship for certain groups in the population. CONASA has developed a fairly good understanding of the social dimensions of poverty, and has described these factors in the baseline PRA reports, the project gender strategy, and other reports. The project has also started to see some examples of emerging conflicts over authority and allocation between CRBs and VAGs.

Because intra-household and intra-community relationships can be both a direct cause of livelihood insecurity and also a hindrance to project interventions addressing other causes of poverty (such as production), it is in CONASA's interest to be aware of the these processes, describe, and monitor them. This work has already been done to a large degree, in development of the gender policy, sensitisation workshops, and trainings provided to CBO leaders. What remains to

be done is to monitor changes in how rights are recognized within households and between CBOs, and document lessons learned. This might include looking whether systems for transparency and accountability exist and are effective in CRBs and VAGs, the representation of women in decision making roles, and access of women and vulnerable households to community grants, training, impact of natural resource management plans and bylaws, and other types of development activities administered at the local level. See also *3.3.5.1 – Monitoring organisational processes and community dynamics*, page 61.

Recommendation 64. CONASA should continue to document and begin to monitor intra-household and intra-community relationships that affect livelihood security for certain sub-groups of the population.

16.4.2. 1. Strengthening the links between component one and two

The activities in component one are very much focused on addressing livelihood needs at the household level, while the policy and advocacy activities in component two are focused on exposing and addressing policy gaps and constraints mostly at the national level and mostly around natural resources. The easiest and perhaps most direct way CONASA can ensure that the rights-related causes of poverty are being exposed and addressed at the household level is to marry the strengths of these two components and bring the work in advocacy and policy analysis down to the community.

"The same set of skills in policy analysis and advocacy that CRB members have been given to lobby parliament for more effective implementation of forestry policy are also needed by VAG committees and CG members to identify and address local policy constraints."

The same set of skills in policy analysis and advocacy that CRB members have been given to help lobby parliament for more effective implementation of forestry policy are also needed by VAG committees and CG members to identify and address policy related constraints to livelihoods. This includes culturally based forms of discrimination and constraints that originate within the GMA, including within CBOs themselves. CONASA's training programs can have a pivotal role in strengthening the capacity of lower level CBO structures to recognize and address constraints related to local governance and policy, thereby providing a strong foundation for the CRB structure from the grassroots up. The elections that are expected for most of the CRBs in 2004 might provide a good opportunity to infuse some policy and governance sensitisation through communication campaigns. Once CONASA effectively integrates its activities in policy analysis, advocacy, and HLS, it can fully claim to be practicing a RBA.

Recommendation 65. The skills in policy sensitisation and advocacy developed in component two should be adapted and made available for the lower level CBO structures. This could be infused into election-year communication and education programmes.

16.4.3. 2. Strengthen mechanisms for conflict resolution

Secondly, CONASA should recognize that difficult issues of rights, power, and governance are going to arise in the project area, and that it's not a matter of if, but when. The policy ban on game ranches in GMAs is but one example, but by no mean the only, of a policy issue where there are vested interests on each side and no easy answer that will satisfy everyone. At the community level, we have heard concerns being expressed about who is benefiting from resource use in general, and who is benefiting from CONASA's support activities in particular. These issues are likely to resurface in the next round of CRB elections which are already overdue but may occur in 2004. If and when safari hunting revenue starts flowing again, we should also expect to see conflicts around fund allocation, financial management, and transparency.

In at least two CRBs, there have also been conflicts between traditional authorities, or between traditional authorities and the emerging CBOs that CONASA is so actively supporting. For example, in Nyawa CRB a long-running dispute between two traditional authorities has all but halted all development activities in that area, including CONASA, and accelerated a process of politically motivated encroachment which is causing devastating long-term damage to the resource base. And "the mother of all issues" – who ultimately should own and control wildlife – is not likely to be settled by a congenial dialogue over tea and biscuits.

These types of conflicts, which in many areas are either just under the surface or just around the corner, are fundamentally about how people make claims to rights, how those rights are negotiated, and how conflicting claims are settled. The work that CONASA has started in establishing CBOs and creating mechanisms for dialogue between stakeholders will be invaluable when it comes to dealing with the 'hard' issues ahead, but CONASA can and should continue to prepare the communities in the project area to deal with difficult issues.

Conflict resolution is one of the important skills CRBs will need for managing difficult issues head. The ability to hear and resolve grievances within the community structures is also an important element of social capital that can be used as a "selling point" to attract private sector partners to the area. Successful conflict resolution requires both a mutually recognized authority and set of procedures to resolve grievances, and skills development for the parties involved. CONASA's capacity building section teaches conflict resolution skills in the second of a three-phase training "package" for CBOs (see *3.1.3.2 – Leadership* skills training, page 35), and CONASA has already played an important role in facilitating meetings between community members and ZAWA and safari operators. It is no exaggeration to say that these facilitated meetings were "breakthrough" events that paved the way for smoother relations between the parties involved, but it is less clear whether these meetings could not have been possible without CONASA's intervention, and whether adequate procedures, bodies, and skills are in place to deal with other forms of conflict.

Recommendation 66. CONASA's capacity building unit should ensure that institutional structures, procedures, and skills exist to resolve conflicts in all VAGs, CRBs, and CRB associations. Capacity to resolve conflict should be one of the criteria used in CBO assessments.

17.0 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is one of the cross-cutting themes that, along with gender, HIV/AIDS, and conservation, is a concern for all staff in all sections. Issues of sustainability at the section level have already been discussed in various other parts of this report, including CBO capacity building (*3.3.7 – Sustainability of the CBO structure*, page 66), agriculture and livestock (*4.3.5 – Sustainable agriculture*, page 93), enterprise (*5.3.2 – Findings of the special study on enterprise*, page 105), policy (*6.3.5 – Sustainability*, page 141), TBNRM (*8.3.5 – Sustainability*, page 172), and conservation (*9.5.11 – Long-term issues*, page 206). This section will not repeat a discussion of section-level sustainability, but addresses sustainability issues at the project level, including the built-in incentives and disincentives for achieving sustainable outcomes, incorporating sustainability into project design, the challenges of achieving sustainable impacts, and finally a more realistic conceptualisation of sustainable development for the project context.

17.1. Incentives and disincentives

As CONASA moves into its fourth and possibly final year of programming, the question of sustainability is extremely relevant and frequently raised. The desire to make gains in livelihood and conservation sustainable—however one defines the term—is widely considered to be one of the best-practices in development. For projects like CONASA, that essentially 'drop-in' on communities and stay for a finite period of time, sustainability is nothing short of a moral imperative. Unsustainable structures and processes not only fail to show results once the project pulls out, but they can often make things worse in the long-term because local cooperation, self-confidence, and willingness to take risks can all be reduced when project activities build expectations and then fail to deliver.

Unfortunately in practice, the incentives for achieving sustainability are often far less than the incentives for achieving immediate impact, particularly when donor funding is tied to results oriented reporting. The reality is that performance evaluations take place while the project is still active, and not after, and when funding runs out the project staff will be able to look for new jobs or seek new contracts based on what they have "achieved", while the people living the project area will continue to be faced with their challenges. A project time scale tends to create incentives that favour short-term benefits, even if they come at the expense of longer-term gains.

This focus on the short-term is one of the well-known liabilities of doing development in the "project mode", and has been cited as a factor in the disappointing track record of development projects in general. A project's focus on short-term gains is compounded by the fact that the beneficiaries are almost all poor, and poor people also have short time horizons and demand to see immediate benefits with much less focus on longer-term gains.

> "Achieving sustainability in project-mode development is a constant uphill battle, because all the organisational incentives are for short-term impact."

The tension between doing development in the project mode and achieving sustainability is not meant to be a criticism of CONASA nor to discourage it from its current set of activities, but to draw attention to the point that achieving sustainability in project mode development is a constant uphill battle, even when intentions are good, because

organisational incentives tend to push in the opposite direction. The best response projects like CONASA can take to maximize the likelihood of sustainable results is to 1) have a clear understanding of what sustainability means, and 2) make sustainability an explicit objective in the results framework.

17.2. Incorporating sustainability into project design

CONASA has largely achieved the second step by developing a results framework that is designed to achieve long-term improvements in livelihoods and resource management. It does this in three ways. First, the conceptual cornerstone of the HLS framework is the concept of security. CONASA's goal is not to provide increased levels of food and income to poor households, but to increase their ability to meet their own livelihood requirements, keeping in mind that there are always shocks around the corner. The framework therefore explicitly acknowledges that local conditions change over time, and that the goal of the project is to improve the capacity of households to meet their needs in diverse circumstances. Most of the strategies used by CONASA therefore are have a high probability of persisting in the medium-term (Table 45).

Table 45. Making gains in rural livelihood security sustainable

Strategy	Probability the benefits will still exist in five years
provision of inputs	low
skills development and improved technologies	high
extending and strengthening social networks	high
market information systems	high
building production assets	medium
policy improvements	high

Secondly, an important piece of CONASA's strategy to increase livelihood security is strengthening local CBOs. CBOs have the potential to act as important resources for households by providing services or information not easily obtained by individuals. While the specific CBOs structures that CONASA is supporting may not persist in their present form without the project's ongoing support and prodding, the skills and experiences in forming group structures can not be taken away and will allow new group structures to evolve and needs and opportunities arise.

"CBOs have the potential to act as important resources for households by providing services or information not easily obtained by individuals."

Finally, CONASA's activities in component two to improve the policy context and build the capacity of CBOs to advocate for policy issues is very much designed to improve the long-term context for resource management. These activities will almost certainly yield their greatest fruit after CONASA has gone, but the skills and policy analyses facilitated by component two can not be taken away, any more than one can take back fertiliser after its already been absorbed by the soil.

Thus we see in CONASA something of a pulling of opposites in terms of its ability to produce sustainable results. On the one hand, CONASA's activities by and large are designed to equip communities with the skills and structures to deal with changes

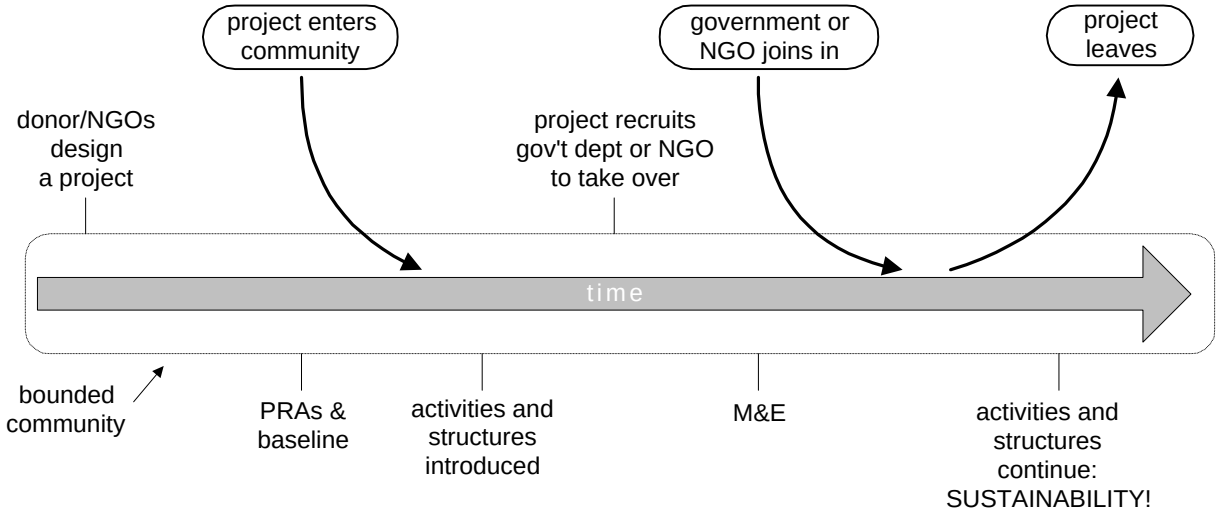
context well beyond the expected lifespan of the project. On the other hand, there is no escaping the fact that CONASA is a project in the fullest sense, with a relatively short lifespan, a fixed set of pre-determined results, performance indicators that are the primary measure of success or failure, and beneficiaries who want and expect to see immediate benefits.

17.3. Alternative views of sustainability

17.3.1. Traditional view of sustainability

Before CONASA can develop and implement a phase out strategy, whether for its 2004 or another five years, it needs to first articulate what it is working toward in terms of post-project outcomes. There is a conventional wisdom of sustainability is that is often associated with project-mode development. This view assumes that a the outcome of a project can be designed in the beginning, that activities and structures can be implemented to produce this outcome, and once the outcome is achieved the project can leave and these outcomes will persist, perhaps with continued support from government or other NGOs. This conventional view of sustainability is depicted in Figure 26 below.

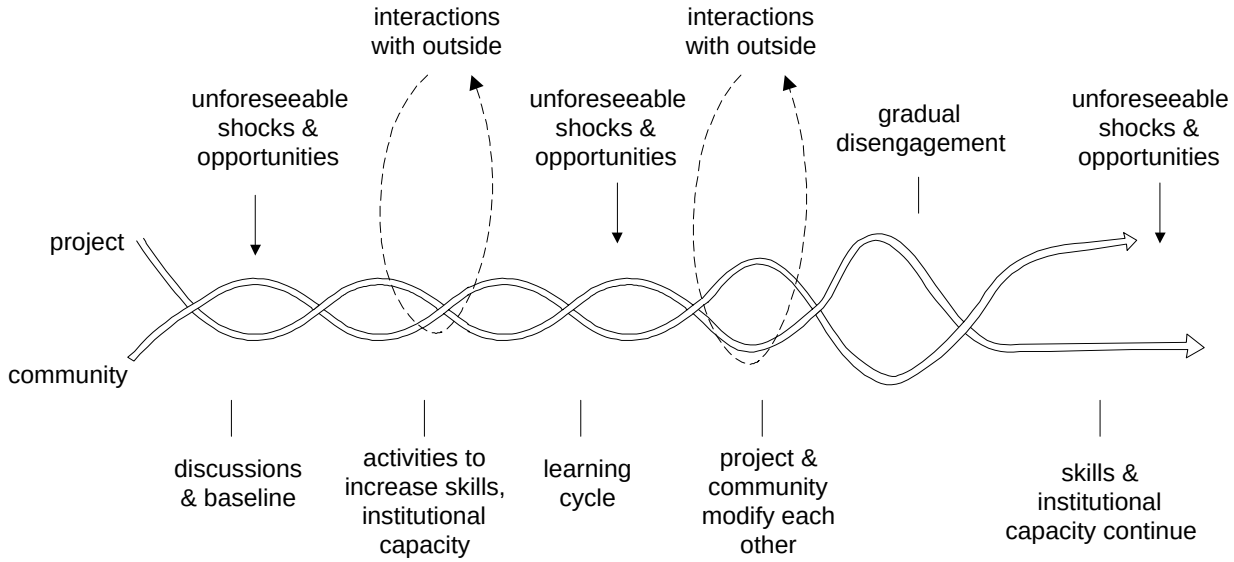
Figure 26. Conventional wisdom of project-mode sustainability



17.3.2. Non-linear view of sustainability

While the conventional view of sustainability depicted above is still quite common, most NGOs and development professionals recognize its limitations and poor track history. A second, more sophisticated, view of sustainability recognizes that there are faulty assumptions in the first model, in particular that outcomes can not be realistically determined at the onset of a project, that the interaction between project and community in practice is much more interactive and dynamic, that there are constant interactions with "outside" people and processes, and the only thing that is predictable from the beginning is that conditions will change in unpredictable ways. This alternative view stresses building individual skills, resilient institutions, the importance of learning, and predictability of unpredictable outcomes. This perspective is depicted in Figure 27 below.

Figure 27. Non-linear view of sustainability



Although CONASA has yet to clearly articulate its vision of sustainability and how it intends to get there, we see elements of both traditional and non-linear views of sustainability. On the one hand, the project has focused on improving individual skills, building production assets, and strengthening institutional capacity in recognition that these gains are more likely to be useful and help households and communities deal with unforeseeable challenges and opportunities. On the other hand, most of CONASA's discussions about phase out centre on "graduating" CRBs and identifying "partners" like MAFF to take over the extension work once CONASA pulls out. Questions about who will organize and pay for services such as facilitators, marketing, inputs, training, etc., are either not asked or it is implicitly assumed that "the CRBs will sort it out". These discussions suggest that CONASA has also adopted some of the mentality of the first view of sustainability, in other words: "We came, we developed, we went."

"CONASA appears to have elements of both traditional and non-linear views of sustainability."

17.4. Developing a realistic vision of sustainability

In order for CONASA to develop a realistic vision for sustainability, it first needs to assess what can realistically be expected of the CBOs. Although everyone hopes that the CRBs, facilitators, commodity groups, will be able to apply their skills and continue the development activities that were started under CONASA on their own, this may not be realistic. It has been argued elsewhere that CRBs may not have the economic resources to fulfil their mandate (*3.3.7.2 – Administrative, technical, and financial capacity*, page 70, that they will chronically need long-term support such as training, election facilitation, legal services, auditing, and technical support (*3.3.7.3 – Links to external institutions*, page 72), and that facilitators and CRB members will not willingly work for free forever (*3.3.6 – Over-reliance on volunteerism*, page 65). Furthermore, it quite possible that these limitations are not short-term, but that CRBs may never be able to obtain the resources required for the current suite of activities on their own, based on their current income sources and expectations.

If one accepts that there may be a chronic shortfall in the capacity of the CBO structure and the duties they've been asked to fulfil, then four options are possible:

1. Continue to build CBOs through training and activity support, and hope that additional money will come from somewhere after CONASA leaves.
2. Scale back the roles and responsibilities of CRBs and VAGs, and reduce the number of activities.
3. Try to develop new revenue streams.
4. Identify and pilot test a medium to long-term support package to CRBs and VAGs.

CONASA appears to be pursuing the first option, which is also the riskiest since it relies completely on the availability of future assistance which has not been pledged. This option also perpetuates a high level of dependency on outside agencies, linking the success or failure of the CRBs to the shifting interests of donors, NGOs, and government.

"The goal of a long-term support package for CRBs would be not to create totally self-sufficient CBOs, but support a CBO structure which can facilitate development and conservation processes."

This evaluation argues that more attention is needed on the remaining options, in particular the last option. The goal of a long-term support package is not to create totally self-sufficient CBOs, but support a CBO structure which can facilitate development and conservation processes. Characteristics of a support package might include:

- financial support for core administrative positions and expenses, so that community revenues can be channelled into HLS and conservation
- subsidies for market institutions, including communication and information systems, transportation networks, and possibly insurance schemes
- support for continued engagement between CBOs and outside agencies, including the forums and CRB association
- support for research, monitoring, and diffusion of appropriate technologies

The proposal for a support package for CRBs might sound like a radical socialist experiment, but the concept is actually well-grounded in the principles of market driven development. In this perspective, CBO can be seen as public goods which make markets work better, improve the efficiency of providing social services (including emergency relief), reduce the costs of resource management, and increase production without producing distortionary incentives. Among the donors that would consider such a package are conservation NGOs, food relief agencies, and donors seeking to improve the productivity and competitiveness of smallholder agriculture. The challenge for CONASA and the CRBs is to demonstrate that the CBO structure can achieve these goals, and design a support package that doesn't create perverse incentives, doesn't distort market prices, and is performance based.

17.5. Summary

In regard to the sustainability of project outcomes, two forces are at work in CONASA, pulling in opposite directions. On the one hand, CONASA has been designed with sustainability in mind, guided by the HLS and CBNRM frameworks which stress the importance of strong CBOs, skills development, dialogue, and building linkages. These processes and assets are sustainable as they can be self-maintained and adapted to a variety of circumstances. On the other hand, pressure from both the donor and communities to achieve immediate impact drives staff toward an implementation approach that favours short-term impact at the expense of long-term capacity. Thus we see a lot of direct implementation by program staff, and structures like facilitators and the CSM which are flawed by imbalanced incentive structures that will likely defeat them once CONASA has left.

CONASA's conceptualisation of sustainability also has multiple layers to it. On the one hand, the heavy focus on CBO formation and skills development reveals an understanding that CBOs need to be able to adapt to emerging needs and opportunities that are inevitable in a changing context. On the other hand, the project seems to be moving forward toward "graduating" CBOs, suggesting that the project thinks it has done its job and is ready to move on. CONASA's conceptualisation of sustainability is profoundly important as the project moves toward developing a phase out strategy.

This evaluation recommends that CONASA should articulate its vision for sustainability more clearly, based on an analysis of future earnings and trends in the socioeconomic context. This evaluation also recommends that CONASA should consider more concrete steps toward addressing sustainability concerns. These might include scaling back CBO roles, developing other streams of revenue (including user fees), and/or designing a medium-term CRB support package for funding. The primary goal of a CRB support package would be to cover core administrative costs and facilitate external linkages so that 100% of community revenues can be reinvested into development and conservation initiatives. This type of support would appeal to donors in conservation and development, provided that CONASA and the CRBs can demonstrate positive linkages to HLS and conservation.

18.0 LOOKING FORWARD

CONASA is currently entering a phase where it has to either phase-out or renew itself for another cycle of programming. This section discusses a few considerations for managing this transition period, including changes in the context, a planning process for phase two, the need to move from top-down to stakeholder driven, some specific programming elements for consideration, and the requirements of a phase-out strategy.

18.1. Changes in the context

CONASA's current design was based on the local and national context in 2000. As the project looks into the future and considers various options, it is important to take note of changes in the context that have or will soon take place. Some of the changes on the horizon include:

- **Continued climatic instability**. Droughts and in-season dry spells appear to be on the increase in the project area. This could be a cycle or aberration, but is more likely to be part of a longer-term pattern of the area becoming more arid. Climate change models suggest that global warming will most likely increase climatic instability in this part of Africa.

- **Contact with investors**. Zambia has largely adopted a neoliberal strategy of raising capital through foreign investment. This trend is also evident in the project area, and several CRBs have been approached by or initiated contact with potential investors. We should therefore expect that contact with external businessmen will continue, and some may even evolve into joint venture projects. Outside investors bring much needed capital and skills, but also risks. A strong network of CBOs will be critical to attract investors in the first place, as well as ensure that joint ventures generate benefits for the community.

- **Support for Economic Expansion and Diversification (SEED) project**. The World Bank is sponsoring an economic stimulation package for Southern Province, which will include a biodiversity component. Sub-components in this project will focus on infrastructure investment and operational support for Mosi O'tunya and Kafue National Parks. Activities planned for the GMAs and open areas will include ecological monitoring, land use planning, unspecified forms of support to CRBs, and development of investment portfolios. The five-year project as been under development for several years but may start operating in 2004 or 2005. The budget for the entire project is $US 27.5 million over 2004–2008, with $US 4.8 million earmarked for support to CRBs (although $US 3.2 million of that is for consultants).

- **Regional projects with Namibia**. A bridge at Kazungula is nearing completion and is scheduled to open in 2004. This should improve access to regional markets including tourism, particularly for the Mulobezi side, but it could also accelerate the flow of natural resource products such as raw timber and wildlife products out of Zambia. Namibia and Zambia have also recently announced a project to upgrade the power line from Victoria Falls to Katima Mulilo, and a cross-border joint agriculture project that would involve about 10,000 ha of farmland and rely on energy from the new power line. Along with the new bridge, these initiatives may increase the market for agricultural products and services such as processing, input supply, and outgrower schemes.

- **Review of the protected area system**. UNDP and GEF are in the early stages of supporting a review of Zambia's protected area system, which has had little updating since the 1960s. Although the review will likely take years, this could ultimately lead to degazetting some "paper" parks and GMAs, supporting management in new areas, or changing how protected areas are managed. The degree to which community

interests are served or marginalized in a review of the protected area system will hinge in large part on the success of CBNRM and the input of CBO associations and projects like CONASA.

- **Uncertain future for safari hunting**. When CONASA was designed in 2000, safari hunting revenue was seen as the 'golden egg' that was going to fuel development and community-initiated resource management in the project area. Today, its future is much less certain. In 2003, only one of the three GMAs (Mulobezi) attracted foreign safari hunters, which generate the greatest profits, and the hunting results were quite disappointing. Anecdotal reports from Sichifulo suggest that new settlements and rampant poaching between 2000-2002 have heavily depleted wildlife populations, and Bbilili GMA remains mostly depleted. Although it is entirely possible that wildlife revenues can increase through natural restocking or alternative forms of wildlife production such as game ranches, these efforts will be much more difficult given the current depleted state of the area, the accelerating loss of habitat, and the number of CRBs sharing the limited amount of revenue. At least for the foreseeable future, the golden egg seems to have been reduced to a golden pebble.

- **Stronger wildlife authority and CBNRM community.** When CONASA was being developed in 2000, ZAWA was still in the early stages of restructuring, senior positions were vacant, field operations were weak, and there were no official policies for CBNRM or CRB registration. Similarly NGOs and private organisations supporting CBNRM in Zambia were fragmented and competitive. Today, thanks in part to CONASA's work, ZAWA is a much stronger institution, although still badly in need of financial support, and the community of CBNRM support organisations is talking to each other. These changes, as well as shifts in the donor community's interest in CBNRM, may warrant changes in how CONASA defines its geographic and programmatic focus, how it engages ZAWA, and how it interacts with other CBNRM support projects.

- **Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper**. In 2002, the Government of Zambia completed a poverty reduction paper developed through participatory collaborations with civil society organisations (Republic of Zambia, 2002). The PRSP outlines in broad strokes the government's commitment and strategy for reducing poverty in Zambia, and nominally has the blessing of the donor community. Although macro-level plans do not always translate into implementation, the PRSP articulates a number of strategies that potentially have important consequences, both positive and negative, for CBNRM and HLS support projects like CONASA.

  Strategies outlined in the PRSP include the increased promotion of cash crops for export, expansion of outgrower schemes, permanent conversion of large tracks of communal land into leasehold farming blocks, incentives for large-scale commercial agriculture, and promotion of the Livingstone area for tourism investment. In short, the government has continued to embrace, at least on paper, an agricultural and tourism strategy that has as its centre new ways attracting foreign investors, continued dependence on donors for financial and technical support, converting communal land into private leasehold land for commercial agriculture, increased production of cash crops for export, and a reliance on trickle-down effects such as agricultural labour to reduce poverty among small holders. Although we don't know how these strategies will be implemented by government and donors, these bigger patterns will shape the context that communities and development projects face for at least the next decade.

18.2. Planning for phase two

USAID/Zambia has indicated a willingness to continue to support its investments in rural agriculture and NRM in southern province and is expected to float a competitive RFA in 2004. It is not known at this point whether there will be one or multiple RFAs, whether the programmatic or geographic focus will shift based on USAID/Zambia's new five-year strategic plan, and whether the expected results will be as numerous and as specific as they were in phase one. In addition to the expected RFA(s) from the SO5 agriculture and NRM office at USAID/Zambia, there may be other potential funding sources that CONASA could apply for, including DFID and other SO teams within USAID.

Regardless of whether additional support becomes available from USAID or any other source or sources, one thing is certain and that is that CONASA's primary source of funding will end on January 31, 2005. The project therefore needs to begin to think critically about what it has achieved, what is has learned, what the remaining needs are, and whether it can sustain results with or without an additional phase. In the remaining time under its current contract, CONASA needs to build consensus around a vision for the future of the project area, articulate lessons learned, and review it strategies and options, so that if and when additional funding is available, the project is ready to respond with a coherent, empirically grounded strategy that can match any level of support.

This section discusses some general issues regarding the planning for a future phase, including a review of CONASA's core strengths, developing a participatory planning process, and key challenges and questions.

18.2.1. Remembering CONASA's strengths

CONASA's multi-layered multi-sectored approach to development and conservation is both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, it has enabled the project to develop a holistic suite of interventions that, if implemented with sufficient density, should go a long way to addressing livelihood security and to a certain extent natural resource production. On the other hand, it has also required the project to build capacity in a number of areas, such enterprise support and policy analysis, that were at the outer edge of the consortium's core capabilities, and possibly resulted in the project being spread "too thin". There is also a constant temptation that the interdisciplinary nature of the challenges could lure the project even further into unfamiliar waters.

As CONASA looks back on phase one and begins to think about a possible phase two, it will be important for it to remember what its core strengths and capabilities are. Following a holistic framework such as HLS or CBNRM does not mean that the project should, or even needs to, implement activities in every sector. As long as activities complement each other and are aligned with what we know about rural livelihoods, it is better to implement two or three streams of activities well than five or six that are only partially effective.

"Following a holistic framework such as HLS or CBNRM does not mean that the project should, or even needs to, implement activities in every sector."

While CONASA staff are in the best position to know their own strengths and limitations, Table 46 lists a few of the obvious strengths.

Table 46. CONASA's core strengths

CONASA's Core Strengths
o holistic rural appraisals
o field staff that are highly experienced, technically competent, culturally sensitive, and industrious
o bringing together and facilitating dialogue among a variety of stakeholders
o assessing the capacity of CBOs and responding with appropriate training
o research, information management and GIS/GPS
o documentation and reporting
o policy analysis
o product development and testing
o identifying, testing, and promoting improved production technologies
o willingness and ability to be creative and innovative
o access to national-level information on policy
o access to technical resources

Early in the phase two planning process, this table of strengths should be discussed and refined, and then posted for all to see. Any proposed changes for phase two should be compared against this list of strengths, and any proposed activity gauged to outside of CONASA's core competencies should redesigned, contracted out, or shelved.

18.2.2. Designing a participatory planning process for phase two

The development of a project proposal is somewhat analogous to creating a painting. When CARE, WCS, and AWF set out to develop CONASA's phase one proposal, the broad strokes were already on the canvass, painted by USAID and articulated in the RFA. Next, a series of PRA exercises was conducted around the Kafue basin and interpreted by program staff to fill in some of the colours and general forms of the activities. Lastly, the details were filled in by a relatively small group of technocrats with assistance from outside consultants.

When developing a strategic plan, whether its for a project, NGO, CRB, municipality, etc, following a process that begins with broad strokes, then focuses on outlining general forms before finally filling in the details, is generally good practice. CONASA would do well to follow such a process, however the development of a phase two proposal should differ from development of the phase one proposal in at least two ways.

First, there should be more genuine forms of input into the design of phase two from community leaders. While not all community leaders have fully grasped the development frameworks that CONASA embraces, there are a handful that have, and could play valuable roles in project design. Ideally, any proposal for future activities in the current project area should be accompanied by support letters from the five CRBs, endorsing the design in writing and indicating the level of involvement they have had in the planning process.

"CONASA staff are experienced and knowledgeable enough to design a project themselves, and have the best understanding of what is operationally feasible."

Second, project staff should be the primary driving force and inspiration behind the design of a phase two. CONASA staff are experienced and knowledgeable enough to design a project themselves, and have the best understanding of what is operationally feasible. The need for technocrats and consultants can not be eliminated completely, but their role should be limited to that of interpreting the RFA, writing and editing, and technical support in areas such as budgeting and framing the context.

However there is also a danger in any planning process that goes from general to specifics. The danger is that the final product may loose the essence of the original intents. Therefore, it will be important that phase two planning allow enough time at the end for feedback. This is depicted in Figure 28 below.

Figure 28. Outline of a planning process for phase two

18.2.3. Difficult questions for phase two planning

A dozen or so questions on various aspects of how CONASA is, or should be, operating have repeatedly risen during planning and review meetings over the first three years of implementation (see sample list below). Some of these questions have been addressed in this and other reports, however none have been decidedly resolved. During the planning process for phase two, these questions will resurface again, and this time answers will have to provided. Without a crystal ball, many of these questions have no easy answers. However in preparation for a phase two proposal, the project would do well to prioritise which questions will be most crucial for the planning process, which can be answered with current information, and which require additional information to make an informed decision. CONASA should then set out to address the most crucial questions by whatever means are appropriate, such as setting up task forces, preparing papers on cost-benefit analysis, setting aside time for group discussion, collecting additional data, interviewing additional stakeholders, etc. By doing as much homework as possible ahead of time, making these difficult decisions will be much easier when it comes time to respond to, or initiate, an opportunity to solicit program support. Some of the difficult but unavoidable questions include:

- **Geographic area**. It has been suggested by people both within CONASA and outside observers that the geographic area may be too big for the project, or that it is non-conducive for certain activities that are being implemented anyway. Along these lines, some have suggested that CONASA should reduce the size of its operational area, however others say there is a need for CONASA to expand to either additional areas that are under threat (e.g., Namwala, Kaoma). Still

others argue that CONASA needs to intensify and consolidate its present activities before considering an expansion. This particular debate has largely been characterized by personal viewpoints, with few numbers or analysis to make an informed decision. Although CONASA may or may not have a lot of control over geographic area in future programming, it would certainly be in a better position to assess its options and support its position if it had a solid methodology for assessing the relationship between geographic area, human population, and threshold of the density of activities/support needed for program effectiveness.

- **ZAWA**. CONASA's relationship with ZAWA has had its bright spots but by all accounts has not lived up to its potential. What is the appropriate role of an NGO in supporting devolutionary policy reforms in government? Some believe that CONASA should have more direct support for ZAWA (this is certainly ZAWA's position), while others might argue that support for ZAWA has yielded few returns, and should instead be channelled to CRBs. Is there enough room for a middle ground, and how should the relationship be operationalised?

- **Councils**. To date, the District Councils have been only nominally involved in the work CONASA is supporting. This does not appear to have caused problems, but there may be opportunities or brewing challenges the project is not fully aware of. As the unit of local government closest to CRBs, Councils can have a large impact on the effectiveness of CRBs. Councils play important functions in business support (including infrastructure development and taxation), land allocation, enactment of bylaws, development planning, dispute resolution, and information flow. As CONASA seeks to build support systems for CRBs and CGs, are there roles that councils and council projects can play? Are there dangers for conflict? Is CONASA engaging the Councils at enough levels to be aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities?

- **Capital and credit**. A lack of access to capital continues to be a barrier to economic growth and agricultural production. CONASA had a small grants program, some of which has been used by CRBs to capitalise a revolving loan fund, and many of the agricultural inputs provided by CONASA have been repaid as loans. But the project for the most part has stayed away from credit. Without some form of capital or credit, opportunities in agricultural and enterprise development will be limited, particularly for vulnerable households. What have been the lessons of the micro-grant turned into micro-credit? Have CRBs come up with an effective way to administer micro-credit, and if so can this be built upon to expand access to credit/capital?

- **How to cross scales**. It has been argued elsewhere (see *2.4.5 – Spatial and temporal scales*, page 31) that some of CONASA's activities are working at difference scales, which therefore makes it difficult to see meaningful connections. For example, the policy and advocacy work have mostly been at the national level and will take a long time to yield results, whereas the livelihood and enterprise development has been focused at a local scale and short time frames. How can CONASA bridge scales to achieve the benefits of synergy, or should it instead bring all its activities to the same level?

- **Water**. During the PRA exercises, the communities stated over and over that access to water is one of their main constraints to livelihood security. CONASA has promoted drought tolerant and early maturing seed varieties on a small scale, but otherwise has not addressed water issues. Competition for water is also an important mechanism by which people and their cattle are pushing out wildlife in some areas, and could play a role in influencing patterns of settlement and land use planning. Is there anything CONASA can do, either directly or as a

facilitator, to be more engaged in water issues which are so critical to both livelihood security and resource management?

- **Research**. It has been suggested that one of the things that NGOs do best, and CONASA in particular does well, is research, documentation, and M&E. In phase one, research and M&E have mostly been focused on performance monitoring and impact assessment. It has been suggested that research can be used more directly for development and resource management, for example in documenting cases for advocacy campaigns, market and product development, business viability analysis, threat assessments, resource inventories, technology trials, etc. It has also been suggested that research and M&E are important and appropriate roles for CRBs to fill, but currently the capacity is not there. What sort of role should research play in future programming? How might this affect staffing needs or selection of project partners?

"What sort of role should research play in future programming, and how might this affect staffing needs or selection of project partners?"

- **Policy and advocacy**. CONASA has played an important role in initiating policy studies and establishing forums, but what is the next step for policy and advocacy? Is there a role for international NGOs in policy debates and advocacy campaigns, and if so what is it? What are the policy issues at the local level, and how can CONASA help CRBs and VAGs engage in policy formation?

- **Conservation strategy**. It has been suggested that CONASA's conservation strategy is not well articulated and based on a number of questionable assumptions (see *9.5.1 – Conservation strategy*, page 188). What have been the bright spots in CONASA's conservation program, and how can this be strengthened in phase two? Is additional information required to develop a coherent conservation plan? Should the project expand to new areas where threats are not well controlled? Should it "give up" in areas where human population density is just too high and channel resources where the context is more conducive? What role should CONASA play in extremely unpopular but important issues of law enforcement and resettlement?

- **Targeting**. CONASA has mostly used an outreach approach to identify groups for its trainings and support activities. While this appears to work well for some types of activities, such as agricultural production, and may be the only approach that would work for certain conservation strategies, for other types of activities such as enterprise support the outreach approach may be inefficient and/or ineffective. The question then is whether alternatives forms of targeting may be more appropriate for certain types of activities, including methods where self-selection is involved (e.g., drop-in service centre methods, competitive targeting) or spatial targeting.

- **One project with three components, or three projects with one objective?** CONASA has been implemented as one project with three components sharing resources. Does it make sense to continue this structure in a phase two (assuming that each were to continue in some form)? Has the project as a whole been more efficient and effective from this arrangement? Have the interactions across been components been strong enough to warrant

calling it a single project, or has it been more like three projects with a single name?

- **Selection of partners**. Selecting potential partners to work with is a complicated task. In the first phase, CONASA's philosophy of identifying partners appeared to be "more is better", however of the nine collaborating resource organisations and technical assistance providers enlisted for phase one, only three (SAFIRE, GDS, Peace Corps) developed into long-term working relationships. Factors affecting whether "partnerships" on paper evolve into operational relationships include the complementarity of needs and resources, the financial resources and other commitments of each organisation, and compatible personalities. The partners enlisted for phase one were almost exclusively development NGOs. CONASA may wish to also consider working with private sector firms, NGOs with experience in providing business development services, NGOs with a background in lobbying and advocacy, and academic units with strong skills in research.

18.2.4. Moving from top-down to stakeholder driven

When USAID issued the RFA for CONASA, the primary NGOs in the consortium had an opportunity to interpret the expected results and recast them into specific strategies and streams of activities, provided that they stayed within the general bounds of what was expected. Similarly, when the leadership of the CBOs formally met with CONASA program staff for the first time during the PRA exercises, they had some opportunity to provide input into and negotiate a specific suite set of activities, but once again within the bounds of the results framework that CONASA had already committed itself to achieving with the donor. In other words, at each level of program design, from the architects of the RFA in USAID/Washington, down to the farmer in Mulobezi, there is always some opportunity to interpret and shape project interventions, however the core areas of focus are always inherited from above and remain largely intact throughout all levels.

This type of 'top-down' results-oriented approach to project planning is by no means unique to CONASA. In fact the core strategies of the vast majority of conservation and development projects are still designed by program officers based in central offices far away from the project area. Top-down results-oriented project design provides a sufficient level of accountability and comfort to make it possible for donor agencies to make resources available for programming, while still allowing for some flexibility in the finer details of project design. Realistically, this model of project implementation might be the only way many projects could be initiated. For example it is hard to conceive of how the communities in CONASA's project area could have spontaneously organized, developed a conceptual framework and set of goals, and then approached a bilateral donor for required support.

> "One only has to look at the direction of reporting and accountability to see the mechanisms by which top-down programming affects on-the-ground impact."

While the top-down results-oriented approach to project design is the norm in development, and offers many advantages, projects like CONASA and their funders need to also be cognizant of the disadvantages of top-down planning. There is a wide body of research, including many project evaluations like this one, documenting

cases where top-down planning results in project structures and activities which may not relevant, effective, and/or efficient. Projects planned in a top-down manner are also notorious for failing to harness the required local 'buy-in' to be sustainable. One only has to look at the direction of reporting and accountability to see the mechanisms by which top-down programming affects the impact of project interventions. For example in CONASA we see that while the project is nominally accountable to both the donor and the communities, its reporting and accountability is far more oriented to the needs of USAID and the consortium NGOs than the communities.

The challenge for CARE/WCS/AWF therefore is not to question the top-down origins of CONASA, but i) to be sensitive to the possibility that there are disadvantages of top-down project planning, and ii) to gradually move toward a more equal-partner approach. Particularly with regard to the later challenge, there is ample reason to be optimistic. When CONASA started in 2001, the communities in the project area were by no means sufficiently organized to provide meaningful input into the design of the project, other than the expression of physical needs. However today the communities are much better equipped to understand development approaches and speak with a common voice, thanks in large part to the capacity building efforts of CONASA and the establishment of forums and representative structures such as the MUSIBI association. There is a still a lot of work that needs to be done in educating community leadership on the broader development frameworks used by CONASA and USAID, and building structural mechanisms to allow community input into project design or reviews, but a strong foundation has been laid.

> "Today the communities are much better equipped to understand development approaches and speak with a common voice, opening possibilities for more genuine forms of community participation in the project."

There are many structural options for incorporating more genuine forms of community participation in the project. Relatively simple ones might include formalizing a 'state of the republic' type of address by senior management for CRB leadership, MUSIBI Association, etc., and making tapes or transcripts of these events available for broader dissemination in the project area. Another relatively simple option would be increasing the attendance of community members at performance reviews and workplan meetings. Another option slightly further along the spectrum of devolution would be the inclusion of community members on a project steering committee, technical advisory committee, or evaluation teams. An example of an almost complete form of project devolution can be seen in one of the projects supported by WCS, whereby the Lundazi Conservation Trading Centre is set up as a shareholder company and over a five year period WCS is reducing its ownership in the company (and votes on the board) to be eventually less than 50%.

There is of course a cost to incorporating more genuine forms of community participation in project design and implementation. As noted earlier, efforts to increase community voice in the direction of the project direction will only be fruitful if community leadership is sensitised to the ideas and strategies of development used by USAID and CONASA. Otherwise discussions will inevitably run the risk of degenerating into debates about needs for 'stuff' and workshop per diem, versus the benefits of 'capacity' and facilitation. Indeed many of the

interactions with CBO leaders at project planning meetings have been characterized by debates over inputs and per diems. There is a cost to building the understanding of CRB leadership, as well as the structures that support more genuine forms of project devolution. As such USAID would need to at a minimum approve and hopefully take leadership in encouraging moves in this direction. However CONASA's relevance and credibility in the development world depend heavily on its ability to demonstrate a grass-roots approach, and it would be disappointing to come back in another three years and see that no more progress has been made in developing a more genuine form of community input.

Recommendation 67. CONASA should articulate a vision of more significant and genuine form of community input into the design and implementation of the project, and work toward building the leadership capacity and project structures to achieve that vision.

18.2.5. Programming elements for consideration in phase two

18.2.5.1. AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Agricultural and livestock production will continue to form the centre of rural livelihoods in the foreseeable future. There is a continuing to rebuild the production assets of farmers through input supply, seed multiplication schemes, and marketing. If possible, CONASA should look for service providers rather than doing so much of the work itself. CONASA can help make connections with service providers work better by 1) temporarily subsidising transaction costs (e.g., group formation, support information flow, training), and 2) ultimately reducing transaction costs permanently through establishment of information systems, producer groups, mutual insurance schemes). More support for livestock might be needed than was available in phase one.

18.2.5.2. SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS

The greatest hope for CONASA having a lasting legacy in the project area lies in the CBO structure. Effective CBOs can reduce costs and increase efficiency in a number of activities, including agricultural and livestock schemes, small business growth, and conservation.

However community structures and activities that have been implemented by, or heavily dependent upon, CONASA are unlikely to be sustainable after the project pulls out. The focus of phase two should therefore be on developing *sustainable* and *resilient* local institutions.

"The focus of phase two should be on developing *sustainable* and *resilient* local institutions."

Revenue is an important element of CBO sustainability that has not been given enough recognition in the current phase. CONASA has trained CRB and VAG leaders, but these CBOs have had little to do with their capacity because they have no capital other than small amounts from CONASA that will disappear when CONASA leaves. The greatest stream of revenue for CRBs and VAGs has

been and will continue to be resource-based (e.g., safari hunting and potentially tourism ventures). By allowing these revenues to go to development projects, and not be eaten by CBO overhead costs, CONASA can help create linkages between resource management and livelihood that are currently weak or absent. If these linkages can be shown effective in producing conservation outcomes, it could be use to attract long-term conservation financing.

In the remainder of the current phase, as well as phase two, CONASA may wish to consider:

- conducting a study on the financial viability of CRBs and VAGs
- assist CRBs and VAGs in developing new streams of revenue, including service provision to commodity groups
- pilot-test ways to subsidize CRBs and VAGs (through support services, information systems, and possibly some core administrative costs) so that they can use their limited revenues for development and conservation. Support services should not distort prices nor create perverse incentives, and should be limited so that they could realistically be supported by government or long-term donor or philanthropic financing
- strengthen the linkages between CBOs and HLS (see *3.3.1.4 – Impacts on households*, page 44), and conservation and HLS (see *9.5.3 – Linkages between HLS and conservation*, page 195)

18.2.5.3. INFORMATION PROGRAMMING

Another area where CONASA has already made some headway but could do more is in information programming. Putting more focus on information services makes sense for several reasons:

- better information itself can not drive development, but better decisions can help communities take advantage of opportunities made possible by changes in the market or policy
- establishing information systems is something NGOs can do well and is relatively inexpensive compared to direct service provision
- there is currently a gap in information flow within the GMAs that threatens the grassroots support for CRBs and VAGs and therefore their viability
- information about market activity is still lacking in the GMAs, making it difficult for farmers to make decisions about when to buy or sell, select a crop mix, production investments, etc.
- information gathering and dissemination are important elements of advocacy, which is the next logical step for the CBOs to take based upon the policy analyses and forums supported under phase one
- natural resource bylaws will require a massive public education campaign to implement effectively
- information about natural resources is generally lacking and/or poorly organised, but is needed for land use planning, assessing options for a transboundary resource management approach, attracting investment, and supporting the work of ZAWA
- a stronger information infrastructure would produce broad benefits for other sectors as well, such as health and education, with the potential to attract other funding sources as well

CONASA has already made some progress in supporting up information collection and exchange, including the CSM, community billboards, and compilation of field patrol summaries. However, out of all the information activities, only the CSM (see *3.2.5 – Community self-monitoring*, page 40) and the project's own database (see *12.3.3.2 – CONASA Data Manager*, page 242) could be described as somewhat systematic. Other information flows, including market

information, agricultural technology, and resource monitoring, are still very ad-hoc, and/or heavily dependent on CONASA.

> "The greatest enhancement needed in the current strategy of information programming is taking more of a systems approach."

The greatest enhancement needed in the current strategy of information programming is taking more of a systems approach. Additional elements that could be draw upon for a more integrated approach to building information systems include:

- expanding and enhancing the current billboard system by strengthening the collection and posting of market information
- setting up information service centres at transportation nodes or CRB offices, as a dissemination point for information about production, market prices, transport
- documenting existing transport networks (e.g., private vehicles, mini-buses) into and out of the GMAs, and providing additional support to enable these networks to carry information
- supporting radio programming by developing new content for existing stations (on market conditions, agricultural technologies, bylaws, health & education, etc.) and/or new transmission capabilities
- developing tools for aggregation, analysis, and dissemination of CSM data

While better provision of information usually fosters empowerment and makes markets work better, CONASA should also be aware of potential dangers. If information gets concentrated into the hands of an elite few, it can result a less level playing field and greater concentration of wealth and power. Similarly, information about natural resources needs to be shared cautiously as it can result in circumvention of environmental regulations, or over-exploitation of remaining resources.

18.2.6. CONASA, Ltd.

Another option that CONASA might want to consider is supporting the establishment of a market-driven CBNRM support organisation. In other words, CONASA would essentially be trying to develop a privatised version of itself. The main goals behind this approach would be to 1) develop a long term capacity in Zambia to provide services needed by CRBs (see *3.3.7.3 – Links to external institutions*, page 72), 2) increase the efficiency of service provision to CBOs, and 3) reconfigure the decision making process about service provision from supply-driven down to demand-driven.

There would be many similarities between a market-driven CBNRM-SO and an NGO-driven CBNRM-SO, but also some key differences:

- The geographic focus of a market-driven CBNRM-SO may have to be regional or national to reach economies of scale.
- The programmatic focus of a market-driven CBNRM-SO would probably have to be narrower, at least to start with.
- Funding for a CBNRM-SO would have to include an element of competition (e.g., competing with other service providers) to provide incentives for efficiency. Core costs would probably need to be subsidised, at least at first

18.3. Phase out strategy

Whether or not CONASA gets support for an additional cycle of programming, eventually CONASA will need to phase itself out. Currently CONASA has not discussed a phase out strategy, although there are indications it plans on adopting the "graduation criteria" used in LFSP. Under the graduation criteria approach, once a CBO exhibits a certain number of characteristics (e.g., frequency of meetings, ability to initiate its own activities), it is said to be 'graduated'. Once graduated, CONASA staff reduce the level of support to the CBO until funding for the project completely ends.

While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to plan a phase out strategy, a few points are worth noting.

- **Timing**. An adequate amount of time should be allowed for phasing out. The time should be measured in number of activity cycles. For most CBOs engaged in agricultural or NRM, the activity cycle corresponds to a year. Phasing out should take place over at least two activity cycles and as many as four.
- **Phasing down before phasing out**. The project should maintain enough of a presence that essential support services are available during a 'phase down' period. The first period of a phase down period may involve changing the targeting strategy from out-reach to drop-in.
- **Long-term support needs**. Although many project services are not needed forever, CBOs require long-term links to external organisations to be viable. A list of these long-term needs is discussed in *3.3.7.3 – Links to external institutions*, page 72.
- **Monitoring**. The best measure of the sustainability of a project's impact is whether the capacity or process facilitated by the project continues after it leaves. Phase out strategies should therefore include "check-ups" during the phase-down period to try to unexpected constraints needs as much as possible, and a follow-up evaluation one or two years after the project has completely left.

19.0 ADDITIONAL EVALUATION ISSUES

The enormity of CONASA and number of issues on the TOR were not proportional to the amount of time and resources made available for this evaluation, hence some issues could not be discussed adequately. Issues that have not been covered—or have not been covered well—in this evaluation, due to lack of data and time, include:

- **Context**. Migration is an important process in parts of the project area and has not been adequately documented. Background rates of migration can be extracted from the 1998 Living Conditions Monitory Survey. HIV/AIDS testing was also done in the project area as part of the Demographic Health Survey in 2001, and although prevalence rates were not reported at the sub-district level, these estimates and other household characteristics for specific chiefdoms can be derived from the raw data (available online).

- **Perceptions from local government.** Time allocated for this evaluation was too short to conduct interviews to gather the perceptions and attitudes regarding CONASA from the perspective of local government (e.g., Councils and District Administrators) and traditional authorities (chiefs and headmen). These relationships are critical however to the future of the project.

- **Community perceptions and awareness**. Although the evaluation team met with several CBO structures, time did not allow surveys with the average "man on the street" to find out what local people know and think about CONASA and the CBO structure.

- **Community Development Trusts**. Time did not allow visits to the five Community Development Trusts that have been supported by the CONASA CSC, however there are some interesting questions about the structure and activities of CDTs, particularly in comparison with the CRBs.

- **Livelihood framework revisited**. The PowerPoint presentation for this evaluation reviews CONASA's programming in light of a simplified version of the livelihood framework. See *Appendix 9*, page 373.

- **Consortium approach**. This evaluation did not thoroughly explore the advantages and disadvantages for programming of the consortium approach, compared to a single NGO approach. Similarly, there is a need to summarise and analyse the roles of the secondary partners, including GDS, Peace Corps, SAFIRE, and TechnoServ, and document lessons learned. The consortium approach should be reviewed both from the perspective of programming and administration, with special emphasis on efficiency issues.

- **Baseline survey**. CONASA conducted a huge baseline survey in 2001 including PRA exercises and a household questionnaire for almost 1,000 households. This survey was followed by a period of "negotiations" with communities to develop action plans. This evaluation did not have time to summarise the results of the baseline survey, critique how it was conducted and analysed, and discuss the activity planning process that followed.

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Appendix 2. Terms of Reference

CONASA Internal Mid-term Evaluation
Terms of Reference

Introduction

CONASA is a rural development project in Southern Province, Zambia, with the twin goals of improved livelihood security for residents in the project area and increased production of natural resources. The Project is being implemented by a consortium of NGOs composed of CARE, WCS and AWF. It has been operating for 2½ years and has another 18 months of funding under its current agreement with USAID/Zambia.

The Project's proposal calls for both internal and external mid-term evaluations to be conducted in year three. This Terms of Reference outlines the requirements for the Project's internal mid-term evaluation, which is currently scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2003, with submission of the completed evaluation by the end of November. The timing has an added advantage in that the information presented within the evaluation will feed into the CONASA 2004 annual workplan to be developed in early December 2003.

Scope of the evaluation

The internal mid-term evaluation will in many ways serve as a "rehearsal" for the external evaluation, allowing the Project an opportunity to articulate key issues, test its monitoring systems, and get its records in order. It will also serve as an opportunity to examine in more detail some key issues, problem-solve particular activity areas, explore future directions, and build capacity within the Project for planning and analysis.

Evaluations are an important and integral component of any project. They are a tool intended to assist in the improvement of the accountability and performance of a project. To assist in the development of Terms of Reference a set of key issues have been identified presented under five themes: efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevance, and sustainability. These cross-cutting themes are described in greater detail below, and are reflected in the specific evaluation questions presented in the next two sections.

Efficiency
Efficiency relates to measuring the outputs of the project in relation to the inputs. Does the CONASA approach offer a comparative advantage in terms of achieving the project's goals: increased incomes and sustainable natural resource management. The CONASA approach can be defined in terms of the "what" and the "how". The "what" relates to the Livelihoods-CBNRM approach developed and applied by the CONASA project.

An assessment of efficiency usually requires comparison with alternative approaches that are directed towards the same or similar goals. Within Zambia it is difficult to identify projects that have exactly the same goals within the development and environment sector. However, examples of projects currently being implemented

within Zambia, which attempt to link development and conservation, include the following.

- The CBNRM component of the South Luangwa Area Management Unit (SLAMU) project (a ZAWA project funded by NORAD)
- The Mumbwa Project (implemented by DSI and funded by DANIDA)
- The Mwanchingwala Conservancy project based in Mazabuka (WWF International)
- CBNRM project in Western Province (IUCN funded by the Netherlands)
- The Lundazi Project the Luangwa Valley (Wildlife Conservation Society, implemented by Dr. D. Lewis based at the Africa College for CBNRM at Nyamaluma).

The "how" relates to both the use of a participatory model, based on the maximum involvement of the project's beneficiaries, and the collaborative approach enshrined within the CONASA consortium of NGOs. An examination of efficiency could assess to what extent the consortium arrangement offers a comparative advantage in terms of the achievement of goals and objectives, and should also review whether the Project is getting more efficient over time.

Effectiveness
Effectiveness relates to the extent to which activities achieves their purposes. CONASA is based upon an eleven-result framework. Effectiveness will measure to what extent activities have been implemented in a timely and systematically in accordance with the project's result framework and goals. CONASA is managed and implemented through a division of the project into three core components: household livelihood security, policy and advocacy and transboundary natural resource management and enterprise. To what extent has CONASA been able to implement activities that are integrated and complimentary? An example is the extent to which the project has been able to raise the issues and constraints faced by households within the project area through a policy and advocacy support.

Impact
Impact examines the wider effects of the project, which include social, economic, technical, and environmental, on individuals, households, gender and age groups, communities, and institutions. Impacts can be immediate and long-range, intended and unintended, positive and negative, macro (sector) and micro (household). Impact should address to what extent have the activities implemented through the CONASA project made a real difference measured at a household level.

A major measure of impact within CONASA is likely to be related to the extent to which improved community capacity has led to increased incomes at the household level. During the design phase of CONASA it was identified that although previous livelihood and CBNRM projects in Zambia and the southern African region had recorded progress in terms of community capacity building, the conversion of newly acquired capacity into tangible economic benefits at a household level were more difficult to identify. Similarly, the CARE Livingstone Food Security Project (LFSP) is generally recognised as a pioneer in the implementation of a practical livelihoods approach to improving the asset status of households in a number of districts within southern Province. Evaluations of the LFSP have been less clear in terms of

identifying the extent to which improved community capacity has led to increased incomes at the household level.

CONASA has extended the community capacity model used by LFSP to other districts within southern Province. Community development has in addition been combined with a focus on enterprise development aimed at expanding household livelihood strategies not least based upon improved natural resource management. The evaluation could assess to what extent the CONASA project has been successful in converting improved community capacity to tangible economic benefits measured at the household level.

Relevance
Relevance is concerned with assessing whether the project is in line with local needs and priorities as well as donor expectations. With CONASA, due to its consortium nature, a third element to relevance could be added, which would be to what extent the project is in accordance and relevant to the aspirations of the individual NGOs constituting CONASA.

The CONASA project was based upon a series of participatory rural appraisals (PRA). These PRAs were an attempt to both establishes the project as a bottom-up initiative, to gain acceptance from the primary beneficiaries, and to ensure their concerns and priorities were addressed. To what extent has the CONASA project been able to adhere to these identified priorities of communities and address the goals and objectives articulated within the results framework established by USAID?

Sustainability
Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether an activity or an impact is likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn and possible represents the biggest challenge faced by the CONASA project. The current level of donor investment is partially based upon an assumption related to multiplier effects: that investments made in for example capacity building will lead to increased incomes in the long-term. CONASA has elected to develop the concept of improved natural resource management being a viable alternative and complimentary activity for households and communities to pursue. Timeframes within natural resource management are much longer in comparison to agriculture. With agriculture productivity can be measured within an annual or even inter-annual timeframe. With most natural resources the timeframes are measured in years. For example, wildlife regeneration, multiplication, and returns to investment are on timeframes of a minimum of five to ten years. To what and how have CONSA project address these additional issues of sustainability given the twin goals of the project?

OPERATIONALIZING THE STUDY

Narrowing the TOR
The outline of evaluation questions presented below represents a “first cut” in defining key issues. There are almost certainly important areas, which have been omitted, and the TOR is definitely over-ambitious relative to the amount resources that will be available for the evaluation. To implement the evaluation, Project management should first prioritize which issues are most pressing, and reduce the

TOR to a scope which is actually feasible given the amount of time, manpower, and money.

Defining the role of a consultant
This evaluation is meant to be internal, meaning that the Project is developing the TOR based on its own interests and programming needs, and Project staff play a major role the implementation of the study. However it is also expected that an external consultant will be contracted to lead the evaluation in order to 1) provide a more objective third-party assessment of identified issues, 2) ensure that adequate human resources are available for the study.

As part of the TOR, the Project must define the role of the consultant given the amount of time available and the final set of issues to be covered in the evaluation. In many evaluations, consultants don't spend a lot of time collecting new data, which is often time consuming, but focus on compiling, analyzing, and synthesizing existing information. In other cases, evaluation consultants are asked to collect and report on new information about impacts, perceptions, new directions, problematic issues, etc.

For this TOR, it is recommended that the hired consultant produces the required outputs but focuses on the role of an evaluation coordinator, working closely with individual Project staff to articulate and analyze specific issues and questions. This role is appropriate for an internal evaluation, which compared to an external evaluation often has a stronger focus on building capacity for analysis and problem solving within the Project. Defining the primary role of the consultant as one of coordination, compilation, synthesis, and analysis will also allow the evaluation exercise to focus on a larger set of issues for the same set of resources. More specifically, it is proposed that the role of the consultant be advertised as:

- to work with selected Project staff to articulate specific evaluation issues, and develop a methodology for specific questions including identification of existing data sources, collection of new data if needed, and methods of analysis
- to monitor and guide the evaluation activities of selected Project staff
- to provide technical support as needed in data processing, analysis, presentation, and interpretation
- to provide editorial support as needed
- to take the lead on selected evaluation questions where manpower or needed skills are lacking within the Project
- to synthesize the results of individual evaluation questions to see the bigger picture and make recommendations

Stakeholders
Prior to the commencement of the evaluation is the requirement to achieve maximum involvement of stakeholders. A list of essential stakeholders include:

- Discussions with beneficiaries of the CONASA project as represented by community structures in particular Community Resource Boards.
- Discussions with individuals as representatives from the NGOs constituting CONASA.

- Discussions with the primary government partner the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA).
- Discussions with other stakeholders including local council representatives, CBOs and NGOs, government departments, representatives from the private sector.

Qualifications of the Consultant
The qualifications of the consultant contracted to conduct the mid-term evaluation should include:

- demonstrated experience in conducting project evaluations
- ability to coach and supervise mid-level staff to design and implement mini-studies in specific areas
- familiarity with the livelihood framework, the principles of CBNRM, and advocacy
- demonstrated skills in data analysis, presentation, and technical writing
- experience with rural development and conservation projects within the region
- demonstrated ability to articulate, clarify, and illuminate specific issues on the ground by making reference to broader theories and frameworks of rural development and conservation
- MSc or 5 years of relevant experience

REQUIRED OUTPUTS: CORE ISSUES

1.0 Results Framework

1.1. Alterations
What is the Project's results framework? Has the results framework altered since the start of the Project, and if so how?

1.2. Coherence
Is the Project's results framework coherent and well-structured? What are the assumptions that the results framework is based on, and have any of those assumptions been found to be questionable during the period of the Project?

1.3. Adherence
Has the Project adhered to the results framework in its programming and reporting? Are there any significant activity areas that fall outside of the results framework?

1.4. Relevance
Is the results framework still relevant for the needs of the beneficiary communities and context the Project is working within? Does the results framework constrain the ability of the Project to take advantage of special opportunities, adapt to a changing environment, or otherwise achieve its twin goals of improved livelihood security and sustainable resource management?

2.0 Performance Monitoring

2.1. Performance indicator definitions
What are the Project's performance indicators? Do the performance indicators do a reasonable job in measuring impact (as opposed to process) in the core result areas?

2.2. Performance targets

Do the targets for the performance indicators reflect the highest level of performance reasonably possible given the Project's resources and operational context (i.e., are they ambitious enough)? Are the targets achievable? Have the assumptions the performance targets based upon been made explicit? Does the Project have an effective system for setting performance targets, and if not how could it be improved?

2.3. Results

For each performance indicator, report the most current monitoring data. For indicators which are substantially below or above target, provide some explanation for the deviation.

2.4. Performance monitoring system

How effective and efficient is the Project's performance monitoring system overall? Is data collected frequently and accurately enough to be useful for performance monitoring? Where are the bottlenecks in data collection, processing, analysis, and reporting? Is performance monitoring integrated into field operations, or is it viewed and practiced as a separate, external exercise primarily around reporting time? Are there quality control mechanisms built in to data collection? Are confidence limits stated when appropriate?

2.5. Use of spatial data

Does the performance monitoring system incorporate the spatial dimensions of development and resource management? Has the Project made good use of its investment in GPS and GIS technologies?

2.6. Monitoring feedback for programming

How does the Project incorporate performance monitoring back into program planning? How can this feedback loop be strengthened?

2.7. M&E Resources

What percentage of the budget is devoted to M&E? What percentage of staff time is devoted to M&E? How does this investment in M&E compare with similar projects? Are USAID and the consortium partners satisfied with the Project's performance monitoring system? Is the Project doing more work than required?

2.8. Monitoring gaps

What results are not being captured by the performance indicators (e.g., synergies, unexpected consequences)? Does the Project have a mechanism for capturing these other results? Prepare a list of special studies conducted by the Project.

2.9. Reporting

Has the Project completed the required quarterly and annual reports in a timely manner? Are reports disseminated to the appropriate parties? Has the Project been effective in building a reputation, outside the consortium, for achieving results and innovation?

3.0 Impact

3.1. Relevance

Are the goods and services being delivered by the Project demand driven? Are they relevant to the needs of beneficiaries as expressed during the PRA and other surveys conducted in 2000 and 2001? Are they still relevant given the changing

context of the project area (e.g., after-effects of drought, developments in ZAWA)? How do the intended beneficiaries (including future generations who are the stakeholders most concerned with sustainable resource management) perceive the impact of the Project? Is the Project trying to make change too fast, or too slow?

3.2. Context

How has the context the Project is working in changed since the Project was conceptualized in mid-2000? For each of the major sections of the results framework, what enabling conditions are required for Project activities to succeed? Do these enabling conditions exist on the ground? What *disabling* conditions, including historical events, have worked against the Project's activities? How has the Project adapted to changing context (e.g., drought, hunting ban)?

3.3. Sustainability

In each of the major activity areas in all three components, how dependent is the success of activity on the Project? For each activity area, describe in detail how beneficiaries are dependent on the Project for sustained impact (e.g., provision of capital, training, communication with urban centers, legal advice, conflict resolution, etc.). For each of these types of dependency, describe whether the beneficiaries are becoming more, less or equally dependent on the Project over time. Does the Project have a plan for reducing dependency on itself? If so, what is it? Which of the activity areas are going to be most difficult to sustain after the Project withdraws? What has the Project learned from the graduation strategies used by LFSP? How effective has the Project been in building partnerships between CBOs and private sector / government units which will be around after the end of the Project? Are sustainability issues integrated into program planning, or is there too much focus on achieving "impact"? Make recommendations as needed.

3.4. Leveraging and multiplier effects

In each VAG/GMA, estimate the percentage of the total population benefits from Project interventions. In which activity areas and which geographic areas is the Project having an impact that matters at a broader level, and where is it not?

Are Project interventions catalyzing or facilitating the mobilization of other processes and resources for development? Provide examples where this is and is not happening. What other external processes (e.g., decentralization, tourism development grants) and institutional resources (e.g. manpower) are available that the Project could try to leverage to achieve its twin goals? If possible, estimate multiplier effects of specific Project activities (e.g., seed scheme). Does the Project have a good understanding (i.e., conceptual framework) of external processes and resources that it can draw upon to strategically leverage results and ensure sustainability?

3.5. Impact Monitoring

Does the Project monitor impact as well as processes? If so, describe the impact monitoring system and summarize the major findings to date. Are the impact measures used by the Project direct or indirect, and how well are they monitored? How does the Project triangulate its findings? Where are the gaps in the Project's impact monitoring system? Where are the blockages in the data collection system for impact data?

3.6. Synergies across components

Do the activities in the three components reinforce each other, or are they essentially non-related? Give examples where there is and is not connections across

components. Do Project program staff have an understanding of the other components' goals and strategies? Is cross-component synergies integrated into program planning? Make recommendations as needed.

3.7. Gender and vulnerable groups

Which social groups benefit the most from project activities? Which benefit the least? How are women, the young, the elderly, widows, orphans and other vulnerable groups included or excluded from project activities? What steps has the Project taken to mainstream gender issues in programming?

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

4.0 Consortium Approach [omitted]

4.1. Relationships with partner organizations

The CONASA project proposal lists three "first tier" technical assistance providers (SAFIRE, TechnoServe, and IUCN) and six "second tier" collaborating resource organizations (US Peace Corps, German Development Service, Conservation Farming Unit, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia, Wildlife Producers Association of Zambia, and ZATAC), with specific activities proposed for year one. Which of these proposed partnerships flourished into operational relationships, and what were the primary factors which enabled this? Which did not, and what were the constraints to operationalizing partnerships (e.g., differences in mission, budget cut, poorly matched resources/areas of expertise, poor communication, administrative structures)? Was the number of proposed partnerships in the Project proposal feasible, and what are the lessons learned for future programming?

4.2. Input from technical advisors

The Project proposal and operating budget calls for 50% effort from the WCS Country Director (to be decreased by 5% each year) and 20% effort from the AWF Landscape Advisor. Have the levels of input effort from the consortium partners exceeded, matched, or failed to reach these targets? Why or why not? What has been the lesson learned for Project management?

4.3. Steering committee

The Project proposal (section 4.5.5) calls for the establishment of a Project steering committee. What were the constraints that prevented the establishment of a steering committee? What role(s) could, or should have, a steering committee played, and is there still a need for some type of external advisory panel?

4.4. Coordination of Consortium HR Policies

What are the major differences in human resource policies among the primary consortium members (e.g., salary scales, transport and housing, medical benefits, per diem rates)? Do the HR policies of the primary consortium partners create different incentives structures for staff, or cause any operational difficulties for programming? Do these differences have any undesired effects on the working relationship among staff, or adversely affect staff morale?

4.5. Lessons learned in consortium management

What have been the lessons learned for the Project in terms of implementation through a consortium approach? What have been the lessons for management of a consortium?

5.0 Learning through Adaptive Management

5.1. CONASA as a Learning Institution

This section focuses on whether CONASA is a good example of a learning institution. In other words, does it have a systematic approach to learn more about rural livelihoods, policy and advocacy, transboundary NRM, and the connections between all three? Does it know when something is working and when it isn't, and does it learn from its own experiences and the experiences of others?

5.2. Conceptual framework

Is the Project based on coherent conceptual frameworks (i.e., cause-effect diagrams)? If so, describe the conceptual framework(s) for strengthening livelihood security and improving sustainable natural resource management. How are advocacy and transboundary NRM supposed to contribute to the twin goals of the Project? Do Project staff understand and are they able to explain the conceptual frameworks? Are the Project's activities in line with its conceptual framework(s)? Which parts of the conceptual framework are most developed, and which are least well-known or contingent on unknown factors?

5.3. Hypothesis formulation and testing

Does the Project make predictions about the impact of its interventions? Does the Project use its activities to systematically learn more about those parts of its conceptual framework which are least well-known?

5.4. Monitoring Impact

Does the Project have a system for monitoring the predicted impacts of its activities? Does the monitoring system incorporate other variables that might affect the target conditions? Does monitoring assess the efficiency and sustainability of Project strategies?

5.5. Feedback into programming

What are the information needs of the Project to conduct effective programming? Does the Project have an effective system of using monitoring results to feedback into programming? Are monitoring results available in a timely manner? Does the Project know if its strategies are working, and if so how long does it take for the Project to see if it is moving in the right direction? Does the Project learn from its mistakes? Does the Project modify or abandon activities which are ineffective or inefficient? Does the Project learn from the mistakes of other projects?

6.0 Impact on Natural Resources

6.1. Goals and targets

What are the specific natural resources have been targeted by the Project for increased production? Has the Project described the needs of these resources in terms of ecological requirements, critical habitat, dispersal corridors, etc.? Has the Project developed specific conservation or management goals which are founded on the ecological needs of targeted resources?

6.2. Threats assessment

Has the Project conducted a threats assessment on targeted resources? If so, what are the main threats, where are they most severe, what are the proximate and distant causes, which social groups are having the greatest negative impact, and at what time scales are the threats a concern?

6.3. Conservation Strategy

What is the Project's strategy for ensuring sustainable resource use? Are conservation objectives integrated into planning livelihood activities, and if so how? How are the activities under the policy and advocacy component predicted to have a beneficial impact on natural resources in the Project area? Are the conservation targets and threats assessment integrated in to program planning in component two, and if so how?

6.4. Resource monitoring

Does the Project monitor resource levels, threats, conservation attitudes, land clearing, law enforcement success, price distortions, resource population levels, harvest levels, or other measures of conservation impact? If so, what are the findings? What other sources of data might be available regarding threats to resources and population trends (e.g., safari hunting records, field patrol observations, law enforcement records)? Make recommendations as needed.

6.5. Conservation Impact

What are the predicted impacts of specific Project activities on natural resources? Is there any evidence of an impact from Project activities? Is there any possibility or evidence that the Project may be having some unintended *negative* impacts on natural resource production?

7.0 Impact of Training

7.1. Investments in Training

Summarize the amount of resources (staff time, money) that has been devoted to training since the start of the Project, express investments as a percentage of the total programming resources. Present a breakdown of training activities over time, across components, and in-situ vs. ex-situ. How much training has been "capacity building", and how much technical? How many beneficiaries participated in training activities, and what topics were covered? What is the average number of trainings per participant? How does the Project's level of investment in training compare with that o similar projects?

7.2. Coordination & Planning

Does the Project have a syllabus it is using to guide training activities? If so, what is it? Is training demand-driven, activity based, or theoretical? For each activity area, what are the goals of the training activities, and how do those goals relate to other activities in the Project and the results framework? Is training across activity areas coordinated, and if so how? Are there any overlaps in terms of content, participants, or scheduling?

7.3. Monitoring Training

How does the Project monitor training both in terms of process and impact? Is training a means or an end? What predictions or hypotheses have been made about the impacts of training? What assumptions are needed for training to lead to the desired outcomes presented in the results framework? Have these assumptions been tested? What efforts have been made to evaluate impact of training, and what are the findings? What efforts have been made to do a cost-benefit analysis of training activities? What system does the Project have to track individual performance in training? What system does the Project use to assess training needs, and where are the gaps?

7.4. In-situ vs. ex-situ

Describe the breakdown of in-situ (i.e., field visits) versus ex-situ (i.e., workshops in town) training, in terms of costs, amount of activity, and number of participants. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

8.0 Enterprise

8.1. Enterprise Strategy

What is the Project's strategy for establishing and strengthening CBO enterprises? What is the Project's conceptual framework or understanding of the enabling conditions for a successful enterprise? Are the Project's activities to promote enterprises grounded in this understanding? Has the Project conducted an assessment of enterprise constraints? If so, what were the findings? How has the Project strived to overcome constraints? Is the Project's enterprise strategy production-driven or demand-driven (i.e., push or pull), and how has this affected the success rates of specific enterprises?

8.2. Impact

Describe the Project's impact in establishing and strengthening CBO enterprises using indicators such as income raised, volume of trade, spatial distribution of enterprise groups, number of participants, etc. Give examples of efforts that have succeeded, and efforts that failed. Characterize the costs to the Project in supporting enterprises in terms of type and amount. Perform a cost-benefit analysis of different strategies used to stimulate enterprise. Which strategies have been more efficient in terms of achieving maximum impact per unit of investment? Which types of enterprises has the Project been least successful in supporting, and why?

8.3. Sustainability

What is the time scale for different types of enterprises to take off? What are the long-term constraints to specific enterprises? How is the Project working to overcome common enterprise constraints such as access to market information, transaction costs, volume of production, credit, production technology, over-exploitation, subsidies for competing products, etc.? Which of these constraints is the Project trying to overcome through direct intervention, and which of these constraints is the Project trying to overcome by building institutions or creating linkages to private sector firms? Which, if any, of these constraints is the Project missing? What is the Project's plan for graduating commodity groups in specific enterprises? Which specific enterprises are more likely to be indefinitely dependent on NGO or government support to overcome enterprise constraints, and what is the Project doing to ensure such support is available after the Project withdraws?

8.4. Lessons Learned

What lessons has the Project learned in supporting CBO enterprises? How do the strategies of by the Project and their impacts compare to that of similar projects? How might the Project be more effective in learning from its own experiences in supporting enterprises, and the experiences of other projects (e.g., exchange programs)? Make recommendations as needed.

9.0 Rights-Based Approach

9.1. Assessment of awareness of rights

What is the level of awareness of individual and collective rights and responsibilities in the Project area? Is this fruitful ground for employing elements of a rights-based approach to programming? What are the potential benefits and

dangers of developing programming around the concept of rights? How might the achievements of the policy and advocacy component benefit from, or expedite, a rights-based approach to programming at the grassroots level?

10.0 Project Relationship with Government Units

10.1. ZAWA

Characterize the past and current relationship between the Project and ZAWA. How has the Project's relationship with ZAWA been mediated by the Project's interactions with the CRBs and communities? What are the perceptions of key persons in each organization regarding the other? Are these perceptions accurate? Where have the two organizations effectively worked together, and where are there still unfulfilled opportunities? What have been the constraints in strengthening the relationship? Which constraints are "personal" and which are "institutional"? Characterize any institutional differences between the two organizations in terms of norms of activity levels, missions, expectations, entitlement, etc., that may adversely affect the relationship. How does the Project's relationship with ZAWA compare to ZAWA's relationship with other CBNRM programs in Zambia (e.g., Mumbwa CBNRM project, WCS, NORAD/SLAMU, North Luangwa Development Program, Conservation Lower Zambezi)? What areas of opportunity are most promising for further building the relationship, and what strategy should the Project use in dealing with ZAWA?

10.2. Councils

Currently the district councils have little involvement in the Project, either as beneficiaries, implementing partners, or program planning, and even less involvement with the communities or ZAWA. Evaluate the possible causes of this non-relationship, including historical events, political economy, legislative mandates, and institutional capacity. Discuss the possible risks and benefits of continuing to passively ignore councils, as well as the risks and benefits of putting more effort into involving them in Project activities.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

CARE, WCS, and AWF. 2000. INSAKA: A Project Proposal in response to USAID Request for Applications 690-00-007 and Amendments 1-4. October 11, 2000. CARE International in Zambia, Lusaka.

Clarke, J. 2000. Evaluation of Wildlife Conservation Society's Administrative Management Design Project. USAID/Zambia, Lusaka. (soft copy in CONASA library)

CONASA 2001-2003. Quarterly Reports to USAID.

CONASA. 2002. Summary of 2002 progress, constraints and issues

Lyons, A. 2000. Common ground: Lessons learned from USAID/Zambia investments in agriculture and natural resource management. USAID/Zambia, Lusaka. (soft copy in CONASA library)

Lyons, A., A. Johnson, G. Mwila, and A. Muyaba. 2000. Charting a course to food security for Southern Province: Mid-term evaluation of the Care Livingstone Food Security Project. USAID/Zambia, Lusaka. (soft copy in CONASA library)

Margoluis, R. and N. Salafsky. 2001. Adaptive management: A tool for conservation practioners.
Biodiversity Support Program, Washington, DC. (in CONASA library)

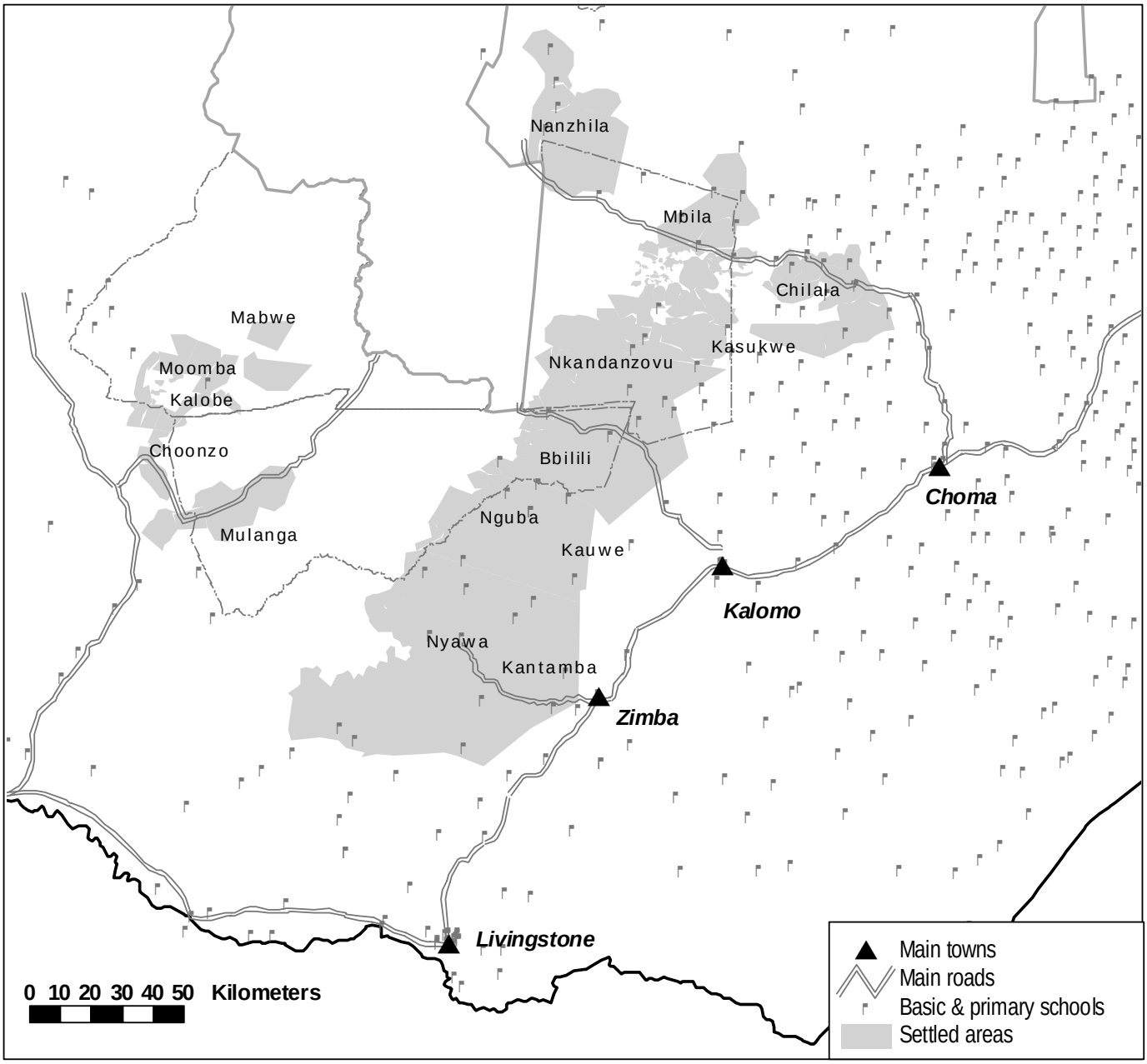
Neubert, D., and D. Sarda. 2000. Cooperative League of the USA Rural Group Business Program Evaluation. USAID/Zambia, Lusaka. (soft copy in CONASA library)

Appendix 3. Fieldwork schedule of the consultant

November 22	arrival in Zambia
November 24 – 27	Component one Preplanning Workshop, Choma
December 1 – 4	Annual Workplan Planning workshop, Siavonga
December 8	travel back to Kalomo
December 9	visit to Nyawa CRB
December 10	visit to Kasukwe, Nkandanzovu
December 11	visit to Livingstone CSC
December 12	return to Lusaka
December 18	travel to Kalomo for exit presentation #1, return to Lusaka
December 19	exit presentation #2, Lusaka
December 20	departure

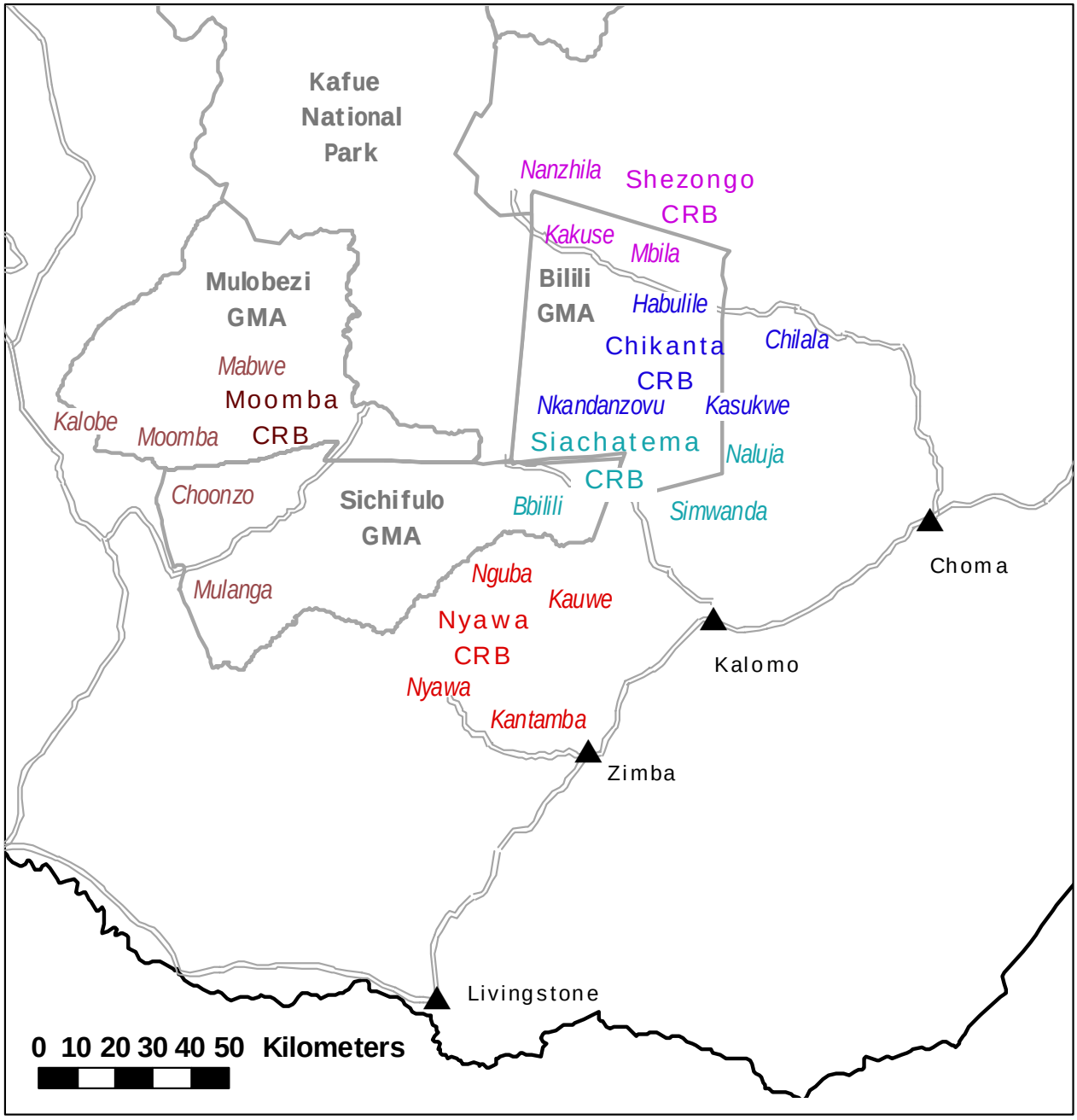
Appendix 4. Reference maps

Map 6. Human settlements in the project area

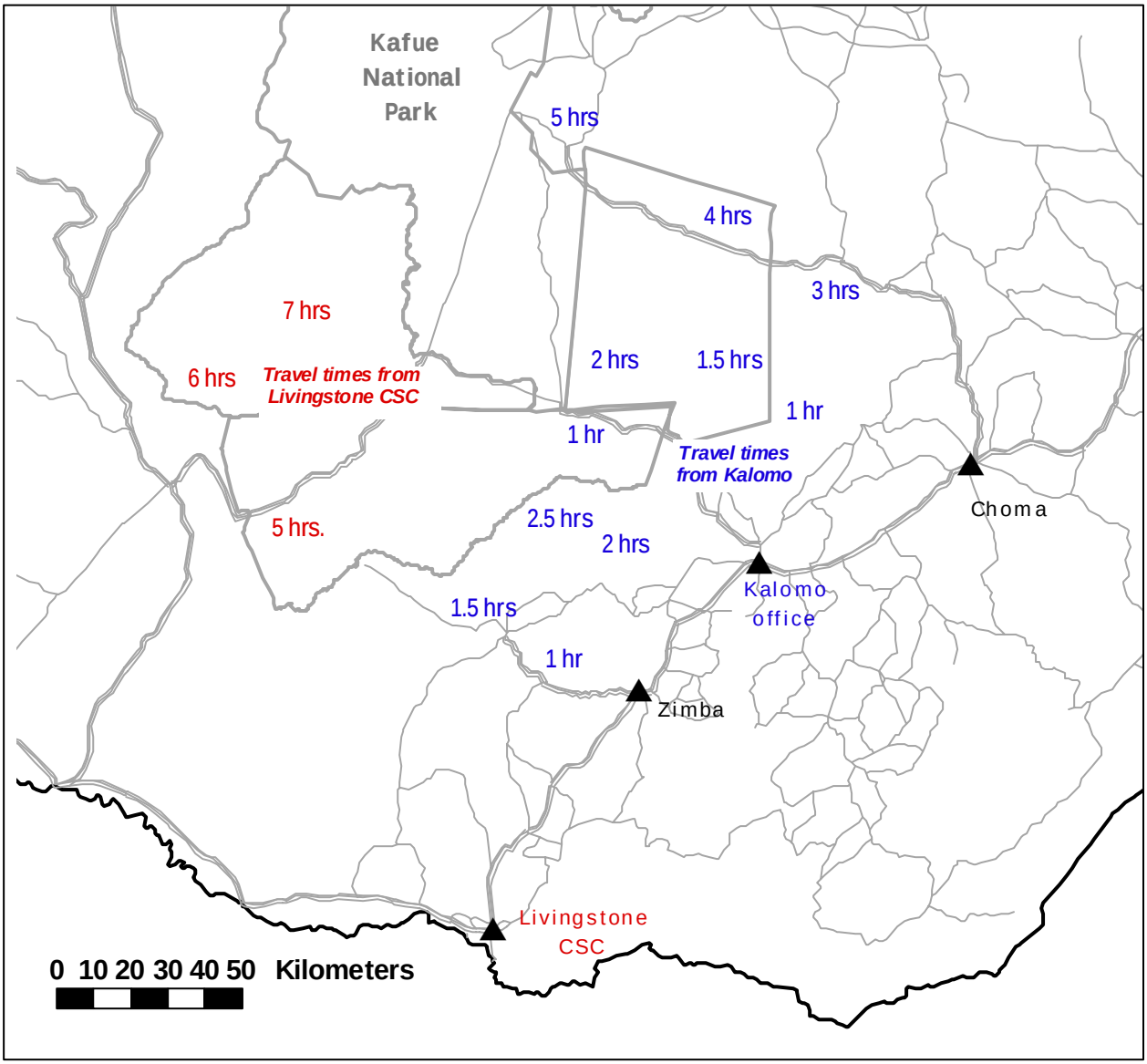


Source: estimated from satellite images and schools

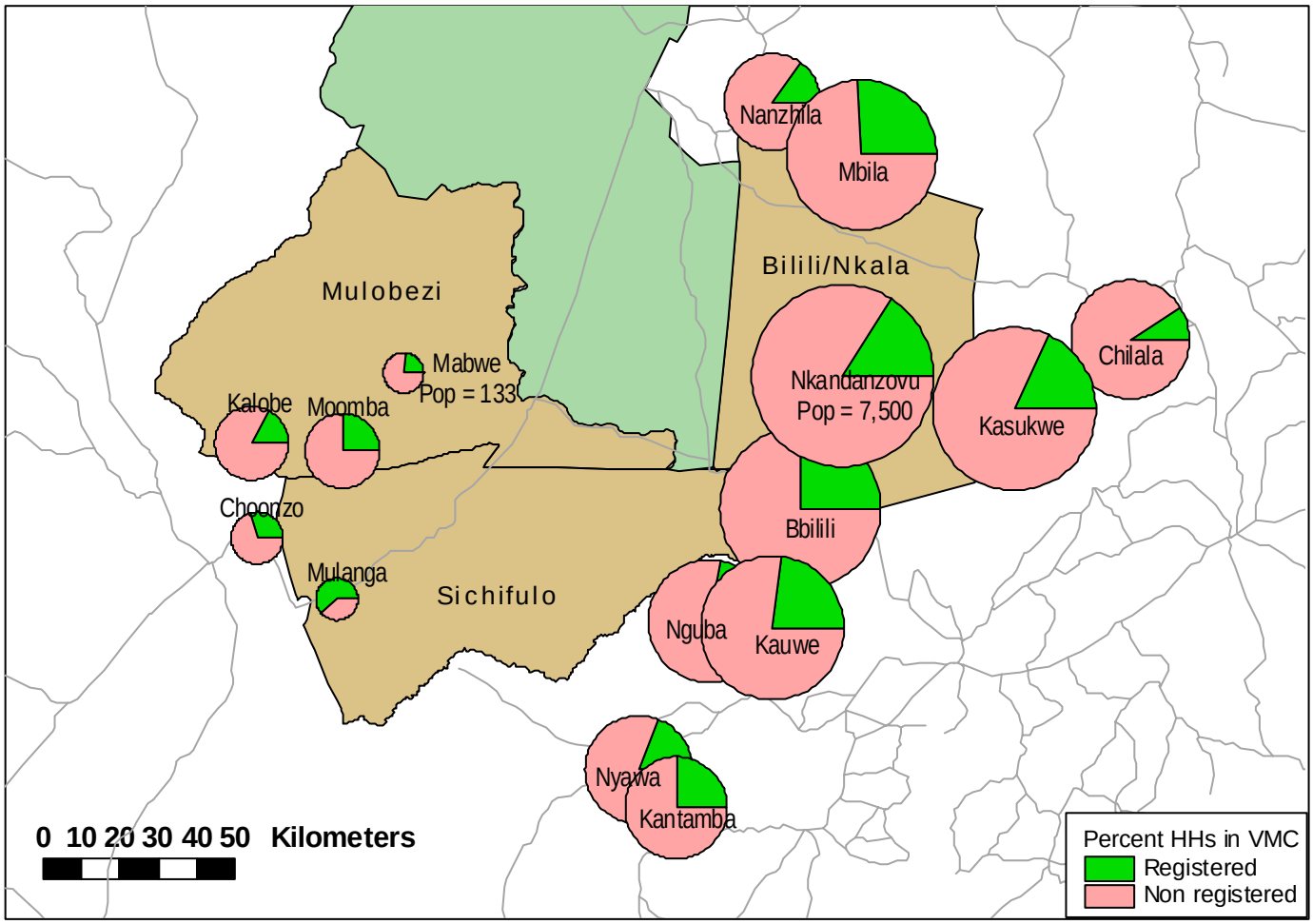
Map 7. CONASA supported CRBs and VAGs



Map 8. Approximate travel times

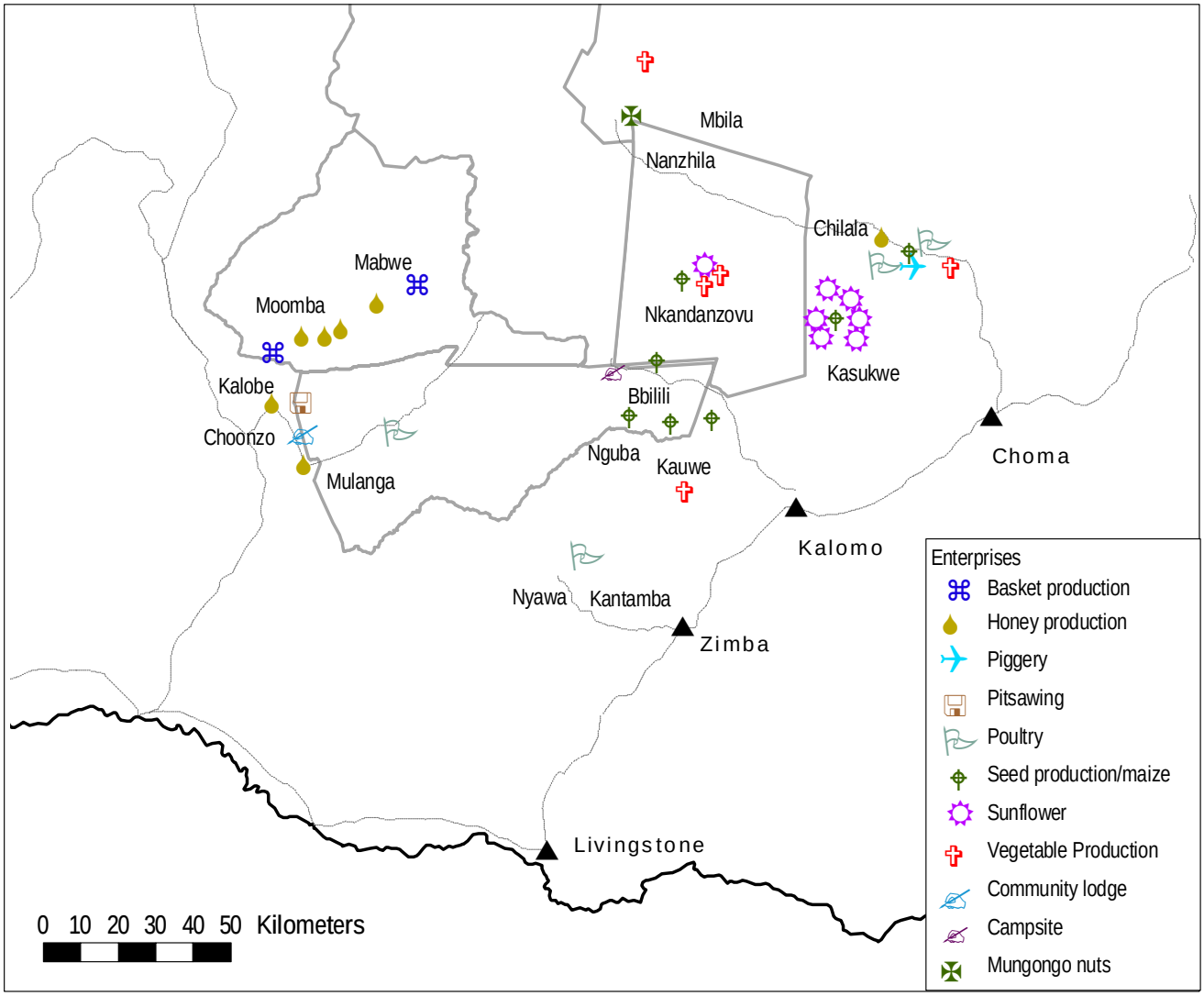


Map 9. Percentage of adult population registered in household groups

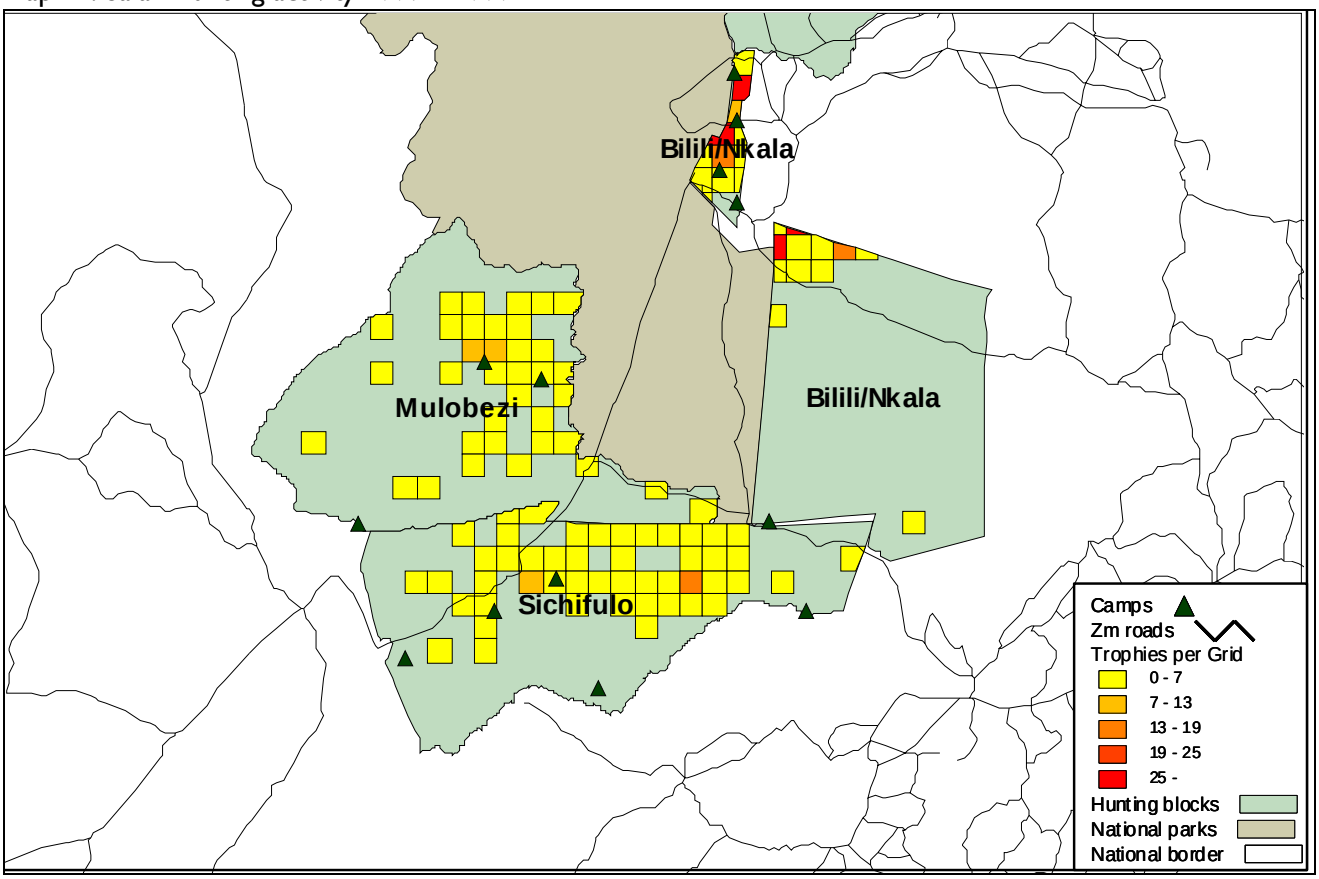


Note: size of each pie chart represents population size of VAG, ranging from the smallest (Mabwe, population = 133 persons) to the largest (Nkandanzovu, population = 7,500)

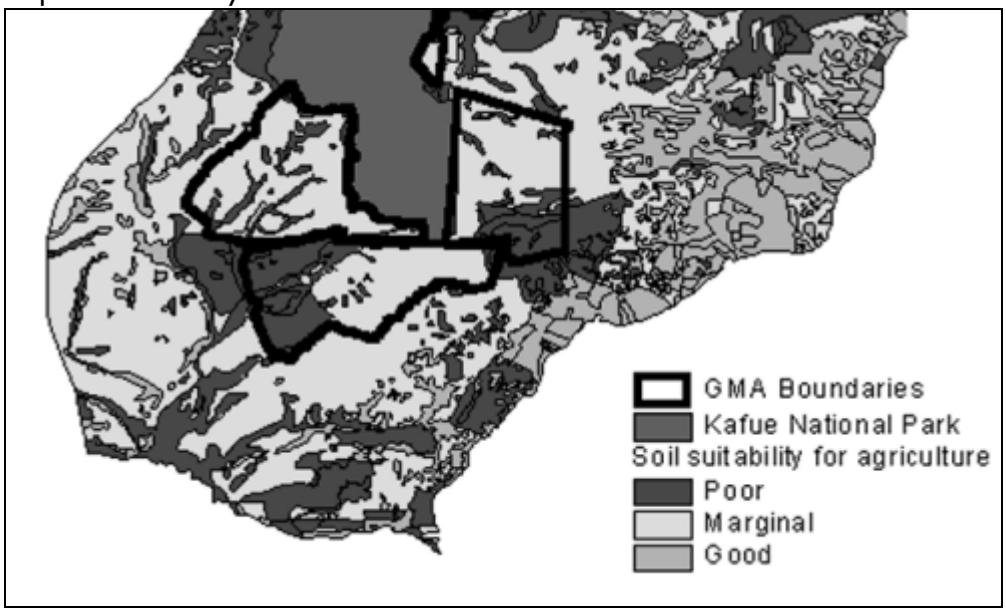
Map 10. CONASA supported enterprises



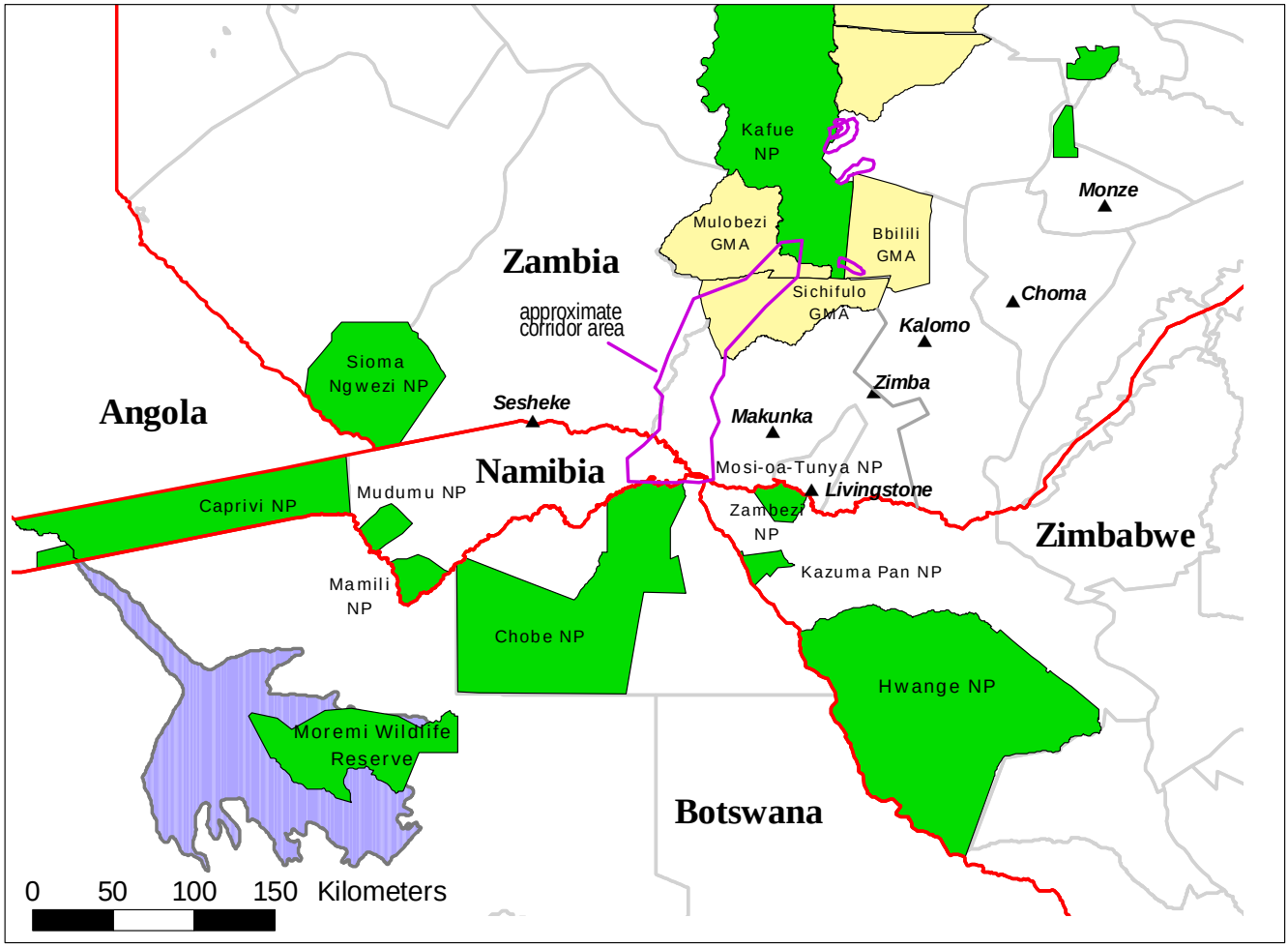
Map 11. Safari hunting activity 1997 – 1999



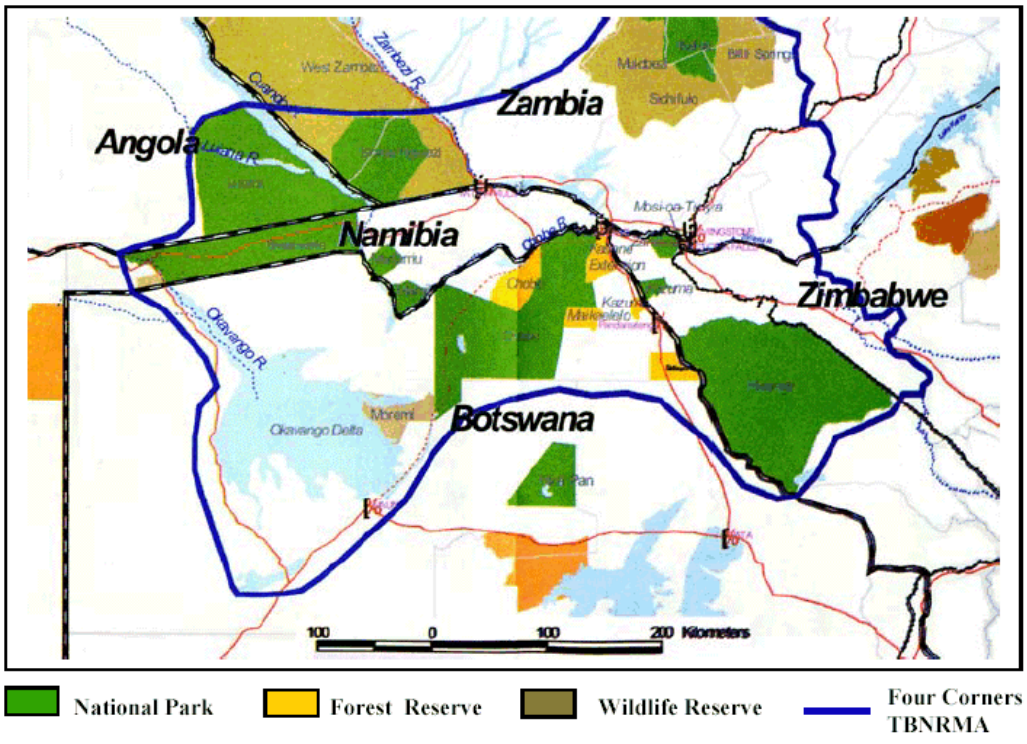
Map 12. Soil fertility



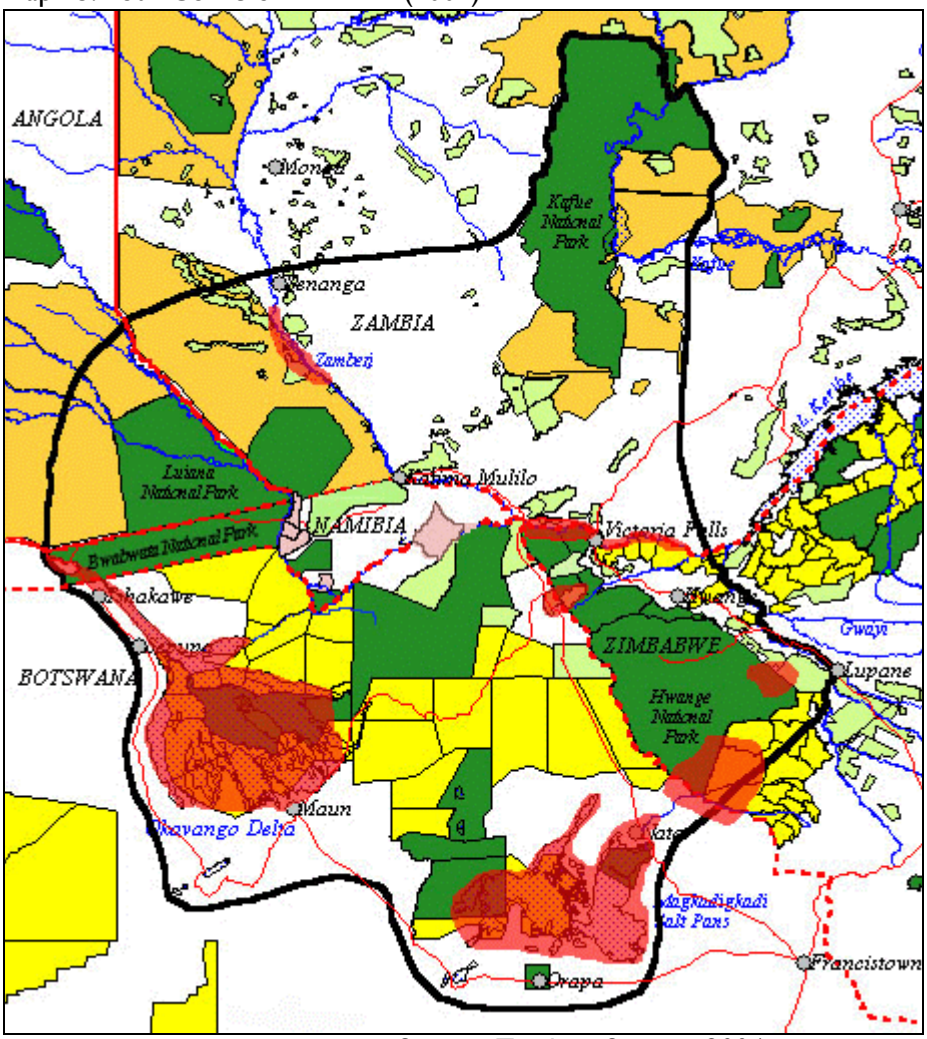
Map 13. Regional conservation areas



Map 14. Four corners TBNRMA (2002)



Map 15. Four Corners TBNRMA (2004)



Source: Zambezi Society, 2004

Appendix 5. List of CONASA reports and documents

The table below lists the majority of documents and reports produced by CONASA that were catalogued in CONASA's database in mid-December 2003. Excluded are documents that only exist in hard copy format or were still being processed.

Title	Author	Date
Evaluation/Review		
Technical review meeting minutes for Oct 2001	Liberty Habeenzu	10/15/01
Minutes of the programme support meeting	Dennis Mbewe	11/18/01
Technical Review Meeting Minutes - Dec 2001	Florence Munatamba	12/3/01
Technical Review Meeting Minutes for Jan 2002	Highland Hamududu	1/31/02
CONASA APPROACHES/STRATEGY and VISION Workshop	Susan Matambo	2/28/02
Technical review meeting minutes - 11/03/02.	Liberty Habeenzu	3/11/02
Technical review meeting minutes-26 mar 2002	Mwangala Mukamba	3/28/02
Mid-Year Technical Review Meeting for the Livelihood Security Component (Proceedings)	Ian Membe	7/2/02
Strengthen The Advocacy Capacity Of Local And National-Level Civil Society Institutions : Result 6.2	Nancy Mukumbuta	7/8/02
TECHNICAL REVIEW MEETING August 02	Musumali Emment	11/21/02
Technical Review Meeting - March 2003	Mwangala Mukamba	3/29/03
Report on the Technical Review of the Household Livelihood Security Component	Ian Membe	5/21/03
Field/trip Report		
Trip report on Peace corps placement	Florence Munatamba	4/30/01
TechnoServe Market Linkages Support	Steve Harris	7/31/01
Chilala Negotiations Report	Dennis Mbewe, Liberty Habbenzu and Flo M.	8/1/01
Nanzhila negotiations	Highland Hamududu and Charles Akashambatwa	8/3/01
Nyamaluma Trip report	Florence Munatamba	8/12/01
Mulanga VAG CBO group formation	M. Mukamba, H. Hamududu, C. Chiboola.	8/18/01
CBO PROCESS FORMATION (Moomba Central , Choonzo, Mabwe)	Mwangala Mukanga, Charles Chiboola	8/18/01
Germany trip Report	Florence Munatamba	8/19/01
Handover Report	Dennis Mbewe	8/20/01
Report on SAFFIRE's visit to Kalomo.	Highland Hamududu.	8/29/01
Illegal Hunters' trip report	Florence Munatamba	9/6/01
Illegal hunter Identification	Chiboola J Charles	9/17/01
Trip report to Nanzhila	Chiboola J Charles	9/17/01
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT REPROT 1	Chiboola J Charles	9/18/01
REPORT ON THE SECOND FIELD VISIT TO THE PROJECT AREA	Charles Akashambatwa	9/19/01
Saffire'visit to the project areas	Highland Hamududu and Chiboola J Charles.	9/21/01
GIS SATELLITE IMAGERY ORIENTATION BRIEFING REPORT	Phillip Ngulube	10/1/01
CBO leaders training list 08 to 13 October 2001	Mwangala Mukamba, Florence Munatamba	11/16/01
CBO training list for the period 15 to 20 October 2001.	Mwangala Mukamba, Florence Munatamba	11/16/01
Options assessment Mulanga	Mukamba Mwangala	11/16/01
Assessmsnt of the CSM ,a trip report.	Mwangala Mukamba	11/16/01
CBO TRAINING LIST FOR THE PERIOD 25/09/01 TO 28/09/01	Mwangala Mukamba ,Florence Munatamba	11/16/01

Title	Author	Date
CBO training list for the period 01 to 06 in Mulobezi GMA.	mwangala Mukamba, Florence Munatamba	11/16/01
Moomba options assessment final copy	Mwangala Mukamba	11/17/01
Options assessment for Chilala	Dennis Mbewe	11/17/01
Mulanga Vag negotiations	Mwangala Mukamba,Highland Hamududu	11/17/01
Options assessment for Nkandazuvo	Charles Chiboola	11/17/01
Options assessement for Nyawa Vag	Florence Munatamba	11/17/01
Nyawa Central VAG Negotiaions	Charles Chiboola,Dennis Mbewe	11/17/01
Kaobe VAG negotiations	Highland Hamududu	11/17/01
Options assessment for Nanzhila	Mwangala Mukamba	11/17/01
Nkandazovu Negotiations	Charles Chaboola	11/17/01
Nguba Options assessement	Highland Hamududu	11/17/01
Chilala vag Negotiations	Liberty Habeenzu	11/17/01
Options assessement Kalobe	Highland Hamududu	11/17/01
Nanzhila VAG negotiations	Charles Akashabatwa	11/17/01
Bilili Negotiations process	Dennis Mbewe,Florence Munatamba	11/17/01
Nguba Negotiations	Dennis Mbewe	11/17/01
Trip Report On Filling Up Of Gaps For CBO Data Collected In Mulobezi GMA	Mwangala Mukamba	1/25/02
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRODUCT CALENDER FOR MULOBEZI AND BBILILI GMAs	Charles Chiboola	1/28/02
Report on series of leadership skills trainings	Florence Munatamba	2/9/02
SURRENDERED GUNS IN SICHIFULO GMA.	Chiboola Charles	2/10/02
TRIP REPORT TO CHOMA	Chiboola Charles	2/10/02
LAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN IN MULOBEZI GMA	Chiboola Charles J	2/10/02
GAPS IN CBO DATA COMPILATION	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Guidelines to filling in CBO data	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Community Self Monitoring System series trainings	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Chobe Exchange visit	CSC office	2/20/02
Site Conservation Planning Report	Dora Kamweneshe	3/31/02
MER training report from April to May 02	Mwangala	8/18/02
Mulobezi trip	Highland Hamududu	8/18/02
Mulobezi Trip second report 06_16_02	Highland Hamududu	8/18/02
Supplementary data on bushmeat Trade	Mwangala	8/19/02
Mwandi Trip Report	Highland Hamududu	11/21/02
Commondity Groups In The Agric Section	Liberty Habeenzu	11/21/02
Report on the Second Exchange Visit by CBO Representatives to Chobe District, Botswana	C. Akashambatwa	1/30/03
SummaryOfPRABaselineSurveyFindingsAnd Recommendations_02	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
ShezongoTwatuma Ndubululwa Enterprise Board	Chiboola Junza	2/21/03
Forestry Assessment In Mulobezi	Emment Musumali	2/21/03
Katanda Settlers Fact Finding Meeting	Chiboola Charles	2/21/03
ListOfBeekeepingCGMembersInMulobeziGMA-FourVAGs	Mwangala Mukamba	3/29/03
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CONASA budget 2003 justications	Florence Chawelwa	4/30/03
Workshop On The National beekeepers Association June 2003	Highland Hamududu	10/17/03
Possible Tourist Linkages	Highland Hamududu	10/17/03
Manketti Production And Processing Assessment Report	SaffireTeam,Emment	10/17/03

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Trip Report To Livingstone On Market Survey	Anja Held	10/17/03
WWF Monitoring System Report	Friday Mwaba	10/20/03
Finance/Admin Documents		
TERMS OF REFERENCE for Research Assistants	Mwangala	8/18/02
Minutes		
Briefing with regard to meeting held at USAID Friday 13 June 2003	Peter Tilley	6/13/03
Community Fund Facility Review Meeting Minutes 25th April 2003	Anja Held	10/17/03
Monitoring Documents		
Performance Monitoring System (June 2001 Version 1)	Andy Lyons	6/30/01
Assessment of the CSM system checklist	Mwangala Mukamba	11/16/01
CSM trianing hand out	Mwangala Mukamba	11/16/01
CSM specifics and planning	Mwangala Mukamba	11/16/01
Community self Monitoring system	Mwangala Mukamba and Ian Membe	11/16/01
GENERAL MER STRATEGY	Ian S. Membe	12/20/01
Performace Indicators Definitions and Targets Jan 2002	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Component one indicator refining	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Performance Monitoring System (March 2002 - Version 2)	Andy Lyons, Updated by Ian Membe	3/31/02
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CSM data collection monitoring in Bbilil VAG	Mwangala Mukamba	7/31/02
Trainings in data collection,stroage and utilisation using the CSM system.	Mwangala Mukamba	7/31/02
CSM_DataMonitoringInNyawaAndKantamba	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
CSMdataReviewIn Nanzhila	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
MERworkingGroupMeeting_Dec_02	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
CSMDataMonitoringInNguba	Mwangala Mukamba	3/29/03
CSMDataMonitoringInChilala	Mwangala Mukamba	3/29/03
The Community-Self Monitoring System in CONASA: What Is It?	Ian S. Membe	6/13/03
Other		
CBO FORMATION NOTES	Mwangala Mukamba	9/19/01
Seed Distribution repayment book	Liberty Habenzu	10/26/01
CSM training manual	Mwangala Mukamba,Ian Membe	11/16/01
Encroachment assessment proposal	Mwangala Mukamba and Dennis Mbewe	11/17/01
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILTIES OF OUTLINED CBOs	Florence Munatamba	2/1/02
NR bussiness and product pontentials	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Opportunities of possible Ventures to take up in the KNP GMAs	Chiboola Charles J	2/9/02
Proposed commodity Group guidelines	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Sub-Grant guidelines	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Commercial maize production	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
THE SEED SCHEME PROPOSAL	Liberty Habeenzu	2/10/02
REQUIREMENTS TO SETTING UP A GAME RANCH	Chiboola Charles	2/10/02
Commercial crop production	Liberty Habeenzu	2/10/02
Natural resource management sensitisation programme notes	Chiboola Charles.	2/10/02
Agric Secheme justifications	Liberty Habeenzu, Mwangala Mukamba	2/10/02
Mulobezi beekeeping project	Charles Chiboola	2/18/02

Title	Author	Date
Report on the ZAWA meeting to Mobilise Support for its Application to CITES	Ernest Mwape	5/20/02
Community Fund Facility Manual	Godfrey Mitti	5/31/02
PROPOSAL REPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MULOBEZI SAFARI LODGE-JUNE 2002	Mulobezi Safari Lodge Committee	7/31/02
Conasa Strategy	Florence Munatamba	8/18/02
Marketing Option	Highland Hamududu	8/18/02
BeeKeepingNotes	Don	2/21/03
AssistingCGsInGroupDynamics .	Florence Munatamba	2/21/03
Bush Camps And Bird Ranches	Charles J Chiboola	2/21/03
IndividualOperationPlanCBU_03	Florence Munatamba	2/21/03
TIMBER FELLING AND EXTERNALIZATION FROM ZAMBIA AND IN PARTICULAR THE MULOBEZI AREA	Nancy Mukumbuta	8/8/03
Paper		
A Concept Design for Stakeholder Resource Management Policy	Dale Lewis	5/1/01
Civil Society Advocacy And Support For CBNRM In Zambia- The Wildlife Sector	Susan Matambo	9/8/01
A description of the civil societies inventory	Phillip Ngulube	11/8/01
To Run Is Not To Arrive. What hope for Transboundary Natural resource Management in Southern Africa?	Yemi Katerere, Jennifer Clare Mohamed-Katerere	1/31/02
LAND-USE (Agricultural) : POLICIES AND LEGISLATION	Ernest Mwape	2/24/02
The Agricultural Strategy	Liberty Habeenzu	3/10/02
Community/Private Sector Joint Business Ventures - Legal And Policy Issues	Patricia Jere	4/29/02
A Discription Of The Conasa HQ Library Organisation	Phillip N. Ngulube	5/3/02
Market information Dissemination Boards	Mwangala Mukamba	7/31/02
Market Dissemination Boards	Mwangala	8/18/02
Strengthening analytical writing in CONASA (Adding Value to reporting)	Andy Lyons	8/31/02
GPS start up instructions	Mwangala Mukamba	11/21/02
A Description of the Data Manager	P. Ngulube And F. Hamusonde	12/16/02
TheDepartmentOfForestryPaperPresentation	I N Makumba	2/21/03
GPS_StartupInstructionsOnLandmarkRecording	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
GPS_StartupInstructionsOnLandmarkRecordingModule	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
Comments On the best Practices for CBNRM, Instituions, Government and Capacity	Mwangala AndGoodwin	3/29/03
Papers and other Works, for CONASA	Dale Lewis	3/31/03
Concept paper on proposed land-use/natural resources management plans approach harmonisation meeting	Simbotwe Mwiya	5/19/03
Pilot Plan For Enterprise Development Of Manketti Nut	ROBERT MANGOYANA	10/17/03
Business Skill Training Proposal	Highland Humududu	10/17/03
Progress/Planning Documents		
CONASA ANNUAL PLANNING WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS	Kelly + Kelly	1/27/01
CONASA 2001 Annual Workplan	Andy Lyons	6/30/01
Monthly Report for July and August 2001	Florence Munatamba	8/28/01
Community Action planning	Mwangala Mukamba	9/13/01
October 2001 Agricultural Report	Liberty Habeenzu	10/30/01
Streamlining of the interventions	Carthy Pongolani, Mwangala Mukamba	11/17/01
Planning for community Action plan	Mwangala Mukamba, Florence Munatamba	11/17/01

Title	Author	Date
Preplannig achievements for 2001	Ian Membe, Mwangala Mukamba	11/17/01
Planning for the introduction of CSM	Mwangala Mukamba	11/17/01
CANASA Component 1 Plan	Kelly + Kelly	11/23/01
CANASA Component 4 Plan	Kelly + Kelly	11/27/01
CONASA CONSOLIDATED ACTIVITY PLAN for QUARTER 3	Kelly + Kelly	11/27/01
CANASA Component 2 Plan	Kelly + Kelly	11/27/01
CANASA Component 3 Plan	Kelly + Kelly	11/27/01
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (NRM) MONTHLY REPORT	Chiboola J Charles	11/27/01
CONASA CONSOLIDATED ACTIVITY PLAN for QUARTER 1	Kelly + Kelly	11/27/01
CONASA CONSOLIDATED ACTIVITY PLAN for QUARTER 4	Kelly + Kelly	11/27/01
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Agricultural report for Nov 2001	Liberty Habeenzu	11/30/01
Agricultural Repor for Jan 2002	Liberty Habeenzu	1/30/02
CONASA 2002 Annual Workplan	Ian S. Membe	1/31/02
MONTHLY REPORT FOR THE MONTHS DEC TO JAN 2001-2002.	Florence Munatamba	2/1/02
Monthly report October and November 2001	Florence Munatamba	2/1/02
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FOR BBILILI	Mwangala Mukamba	2/7/02
ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION DURING THE CBNRM FORUM	Chiboola Charles	2/9/02
Monthly report for November 2001	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Monthly report of the month November 2001	Liberty Habeenzu	2/9/02
Monthly Report for the Months of Oct and Nov 2001	Chiboola Charles J	2/10/02
Planning for CAP (COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN) 2002 document.	Mukamba Mwangala	2/10/02
NRM work plan for the months Oct to Dec 2001	Charles Chiboola	2/10/02
MONTHLY REPORT FOR THE MONTHS OCT TO NOV	Liberty Habeenzu	2/10/02
Strategic planning Workshop held on 23rd November 2001-WCS.	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Monthly report for the October -November 2001-MER	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
Monthly report for December and January 2001-2002	Mwangala Mukamba	2/11/02
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2002 - NGUBA VAG	Mukamba Mwangala	2/11/02
COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2002 -NYAWA VAG	Mwangala Mukamba	2/15/02
Progress Monthly report for February 2002 -MER Officer	Mwangala Mukamba	2/24/02
February 2002 Agric report.	Liberty Habeenzu	2/28/02
CBO Co-ordinator Monthly report for Feb 2002	Florence Munatamba	3/6/02
Nanzhila Community Action Plan (CAP)	Florence Munatamba	3/25/02
Progress monthly report for March 2002-MER Officer	Mukamba Mwangala	3/26/02
CBO Co-ordinator Monthly report for Mar 2002	Florence Munatamba	3/27/02
NRM Report for Feb 2002	Charles Chibbola	3/27/02
Natural Resource Management Report - Dec 01-Feb 02	Chiboola Charles	3/27/02
MER Monthly report for march 02	Mukamba Mwangala	3/27/02
Agric progress report for the month of May 02	Liberty Habeenzu	7/31/02
Agric Monthly schedule for July 02	Liberty Habeenzu	7/31/02
Agric report progress for June 2002	Liberty Habeenzu	7/31/02
NRM June 02 progress report	Chiboola Charles J	7/31/02
NRM QUARTERLY REPORT	Charles J Chiboola	7/31/02
SEAP April Monthly Report 02	Highland Hamundundu	8/18/02
MER monthly report June July 02	Mwanagla	8/18/02
MER May report 02	Mwangala	8/18/02
Caledar for activites SEAP July 02	Highland Hamududu	8/18/02
SEAP July 02 Report	Highland Hamududu	8/18/02
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NRM July 02report	Charles C J	8/19/02
Agric February Report 02	Liberty Habeenzu	8/19/02
Internal Memo on SEAP	Highland Humundudu	8/19/02
SEAP Progress monthly Report Sept 02	Highland Hamududu	11/21/02
Agriculture Coordinator. Agric September 02 Progress Monthly Report	Liberty Habeenzu	11/21/02
CBUSeptemberMonthlyReport02	Florence Munatamba	11/21/02
MER Monthly Progress Report for September-October 02	Mwangala Mukamba	11/21/02
CONASA 2003 Annual Workplan	Misael Kokwe And Ian Membe	12/24/02
MERProgressReport_Dec_03	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
AgricProgressReportForDecember2002	Liberty Habeezu	2/21/03
AnnualWorkPlansForCRBsFY2003	Florence Munatamba	2/21/03
IndividualOperationPlanMER_2003_Kalomo	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
IndividualOperationPlanAgric_2003	Liberty Habeezu	2/21/03
IndividualOperationPlanWildlife_2003	G Kabumbwe	2/21/03
CBOProgressReportJan2003	Florence Munatamba	2/21/03
MERSectionOutputsYear2002	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
IndividualOperationPlanSEAP_2003	Highland Hamududu	2/21/03
IndividualOperationPlanForestry_2003	Emment Musumali	2/21/03
MERProgressReport_Jan_03	Mwangala Mukamba	2/21/03
ForestryProgressReportJan2003	Emment Musumali	2/21/03
AnnualWorkplansForCRBs2003	Florence Munatamba	3/29/03
ReportToTheDDCCFirstQuater03	Cathy Pongolani	3/29/03
ForestrySectionFeb03Report	Emment Musumali	3/29/03
AgricSectionFeb03Report	Libery Habeezu	3/29/03
SEEPFeb03MonthlyReport	Highland Hamududu	3/29/03
SEEPMothlyReportJan03	Highland Hamududu	3/29/03
MERFeb03MonthlyReport	Mwangala Mukamba	3/29/03
WildlifeSectionProgressReport	Kabumbwe Goodwin	3/29/03
AgricSectionMonthlyReportFeb03	Liberty Habeezu	3/29/03
CBU Presentation To Internal Review Consulant_Drinkwater_03	Florence Munatamba	9/16/03
Agric Presentation To Internal Review Consulant_Drinkwater_03	Liberty Habeenzu	9/16/03
SEEP section Presentation To Internal Review Consulant_Drinkwater_03	Highland Hamududu,Anja Held	9/16/03
MER Presentation To Internal Review Consulant_Drinkwater_03	Mwangala Mukamba	9/17/03
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SEEP Monthly Progress Aug To Sept 03	Highland Hamududu	10/17/03
CBU September Monthly Report	Florence Munatamba	10/17/03
MER Monthly Progress Aug 03	Mwangala Mukamba	10/17/03
Component One Quaterly Report July To Sept 2003	Liberty Habeenzu	10/17/03
Wildlife Monthly Report Aug 2003	Goodwin Kabumbwe	10/17/03
Wildlife Ext Office Progress Report	Fair Mufwafwi	10/17/03
Forestry August 2003 Monthly Progress Report	Emment Musumali	10/17/03
CBO July Aug 2003 Monthly Progress Report	Florence Munatamba	10/17/03
Wildlife Section Presentation To Internal Review Consulant_Drinkwater_03_Details	Goodwin Kabumbwe	10/19/03
Project Document		
CONASA Brochure	A Lyons, Updated by Ian	3/31/01
CONASA 10 Page Summary	Andy Lyons, Revised by Peter Tilley	6/30/01
INSAKA (CONASA) Stakeholders Workshop REPORT	R F Ward	3/10/02

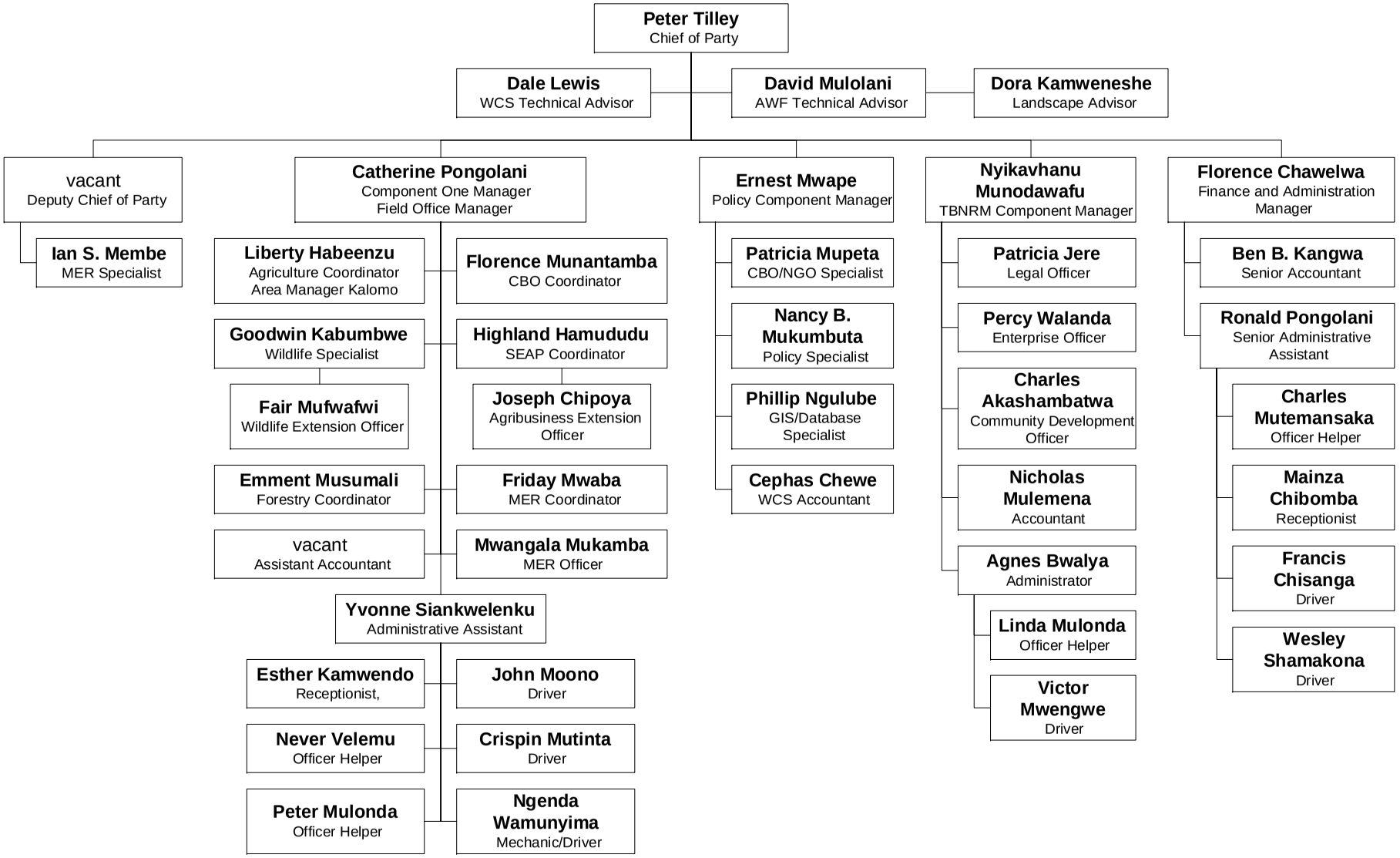
Title	Author	Date
Record Form For the 2002 to 2003 Production Season	Highland Hamududu, Anja Held	10/17/03
Food Production and Adoption of Agro Tech Survey Proposal	Andy Lyons, Mwangala Mukamba, Liberty Habeenzu	10/17/03
Bee Keeping Project Outline For Oppaz June 2003	Highland Hamudud, Anja Held	10/17/03
Conasa Activties and Benefiaries By Gender	Friday Mwaba	10/20/03
Project Donor Reports/Documents		
CONASA Quarterly Report No. 1 - Feb 1 to April 30,2001	Peter Tilley	5/10/01
CONASA Quarterly Report Nos 2 & 3 - May to Sept 2001	Peter Tilley	10/12/01
CONASA Quarterly Report No. 4a - Oct to Dec 2001	Peter Tilley	1/31/02
CONASA Quarterly Report No. 4b - Jan to Mar 2002	Peter Tilley	5/15/02
CONASA Quarterly Report No. 5 - Apr to Jun 2002	Peter Tilley	7/7/02
CONASA Quarterly Report No.6 - July to Sept 2002	Peter Tilley	10/18/02
CONASA Quarterly report no. 7 - Oct to Dec 2002	Peter Tilley	1/10/03
CONASA Quarterly Report No.8 - Jan to Mar 2003	Peter Tilley	4/15/03
Environmental Screening/Report Form - Progress Report 2002	Godfrey Mitti	6/13/03
CONASA Quarterly Report No.5 - Apr to June 2003	Peter Tilley	7/15/03
Publication		
Trichilia emetica and Ziziphus Mucronata	Linda Kabaira	2/9/02
The Four Corners TBNRM Initiative News - Vol 1, Issue 2	Four Corners/AWF	12/31/02
CONASA Newsletter, Vol 1, Issue 1	Conasa Staff	3/31/03
Survey/Questionnaire/Study Report		
Sampling Methodology for CONASA survey	Ian Membe?	5/15/01
REPORT ON FIELDWORK TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR INSAKA (CONASA) BASELINE SURVEY INSAKA BASELINE SURVEY	Nancy Bwalya-Mukumbuta	5/21/01
Phase 1- An inventory of NGOs and private sector with CBNRM and Agricultural interest	Susan Matambo	5/30/01
Kalobe baseline PRA report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Chilala baseline PRA report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Nanzhila baseline PRA report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Mulanga baseline PRA report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Nguba baseline PRA report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Nyawa baseline PRA report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Moomba baseline PRA Report.	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Bbilili Baseline Pra Report	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Nkandanzovu Baseline PRA report	Ian Membe	5/31/01
Chilala Wildlife Report	Dennis	7/17/01
Summary of PRA Survey Findings and Recommendations	Iam Membe	7/30/01
Illegal bush meat trade monitoring	C. Chiboola, M. Mukamba, D. Mbewe.	7/31/01
Preliminary Land Use / Land cover classification for southern Kafue NP and adjoining GMAs - Documentation of analysis methods	Eric Sanderson	8/18/01
Mulobezi, Sichifulo GMA Survey : Part 3 report	M.G. Bingham	8/31/01
Mulobezi, Sichifulo GMA Survey : Part 2 report	M.G. Bingham	8/31/01
Mulobezi, Sichifulo GMA Survey : Part 1 report	M.G. Bingham	8/31/01
CONASA Household Baseline Survey Report	Ian Membe and Phillip Ngulube	9/29/01
Institutional strengths and potentials of selected civil socities	Ngawo Namukonde, Kabengele Siame and Ziwase Valema	11/9/01

Title	Author	Date
Review Of Zambia's Natural Resource Policy Documents	Ernest Mwape	11/30/01
Steve'report update	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Vegetable Market Analysis	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Sunflower marketing	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Technoserve Market Analsis	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Investingating Local market	Highland Hamududu	2/9/02
Policy And Legislation Review of the Fisheries, Forestry, Wildlife And Water Sectors (vis-à-vis CBNRM)	HURID	6/14/02
Report On The Potential Community Capacity Building Opportunities In The South GKNP's GMAS	Charles Akashambatwa	6/30/02
Illegal Bushmeat Trade monitoring	Mwangala	8/19/02
Market Analysis for the Dubululwa (Mungongo Nut) Producer Group	N. Kurebgaseka, H. Hamududu & D. Mulolani	8/20/02
A community Approach to Wildlife Conservation and Management - The ADMADE programme	Aaron Phiri	11/6/02
Illegal Bush meat trade Assessment in Nkandazovu	Mwangala and GK	11/21/02
Market Analysis Craft Producer Groups(Baskets & Woodcavings)	Highland Hamududu	11/21/02
Illegal Bush meat trade Analysis Report in Bbilili	Mwangala and GK	11/21/02
Challeges Of Being A Leader	Charles Chiboola	11/21/02
Illegal Bush Meat Trade Report - Mulobezi GMA	Mwangal Mukamba and Godwin Kabumbwe	2/14/03
Assessement of CBNRM Capacity and Activities of Selected Civil Society Institutions	Nancy Mukumbuta	2/19/03
IllegalBushMeatTradeInMulobeziReport	Mwangala and G Kabumbwe	2/21/03
Mulobezi Ecological Survey - Jul 02	Charles J and P Sola	2/21/03
Economic Analysis Of The Busmeat Trade	Goodwin Kabumbwe	3/29/03
Template(Form, Questionnaire etc)		
BASELINE QUESTIONNAIRE	Susan Matambo	4/1/01
ENCROACHMENT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE	C. Chiboola, M. Mukamba, D. Mbewe	8/1/01
Natural resource Commodity form	C. Chiboola, Mwangala Mukamba.	8/31/01
CROP MONITORING MONTHLY REPORT CODE DECIPHER	LIBERTY HABEENZU	10/10/01
Bushmeat trade assessment	Mwangala Mukamba,Dennis Mbewe	11/15/01
Community Co-ordinator interview questions	Mwangala Mukamba,dennis Mbewe	11/16/01
Enroachment questinnaire final copy	Dennis Mbewe and Charles chiboola	11/18/01
Market survey for urban traders	Highland Hamududu,Ian Membe	2/9/02
Seed Scheme Summary Forms	Liberty Habeenzu	2/10/02
Crop monitoring Form	Liberty Habeenzu	2/10/02
Seed Secheme Application Form	LIBERTY HABEENZU	2/10/02
The Community Self-Monitoring (CSM) Book format	Ian Membe and Mwangala Mukamba	3/26/02
Proposed format of the billbords	Mwangala	8/18/02
Questionnaire on the illegal bushmeat Trade.	Mwangala,Dennis,Chiboola	8/19/02
Illegal Bush meat trade Assessment Questionnaire Final	Mwangala Mukamba	11/21/02
PoacherTransformationQuestionnaire	Goodwin and Mwangala	2/21/03
Workshop Proceeding		
Proceedings Of CBNRM Stakeholders Forum	Susan Matambo	6/6/01

Title	Author	Date
Proceedings of Wildlife sector stakeholders forum	Susan Matambo	9/12/01
Advocacy Workshop for NGO leaders in Kabwe.	Dennis Mbewe	2/10/02
PROCEEDINGS OF NRM STAKEHOLDERS FORUM	Susan Matambo	2/12/02
NGO LEADERS' CBNRM ADVOCACY WORKSHOP REPORT	Ms. Nalukui Milapo	2/28/02
MONITORING AND EVALUTION TRAINING WORKSHOP	Mwangala Mukamba	3/15/02
Proceedings Of CBNRM Wokshop	Patricia Jere	3/30/02
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FORUMS - EXPERIENCES THUS FAR	Susan Matambo	4/16/02
Enhancing the role of local communities in natural resource management	CSC	4/30/02
CRB workshop held in Choma at southern Lodge from 27th to 31st May 02	Mwangala Mukamba	6/25/02
Proceedings of The Kafue National Park Stakeholders' Meeting	Nancy Mukumbuta	7/4/02
Natural Resource Legislation and Policy Training Workshop	Patricia Jere	7/11/02
FIRST CRB LEADERSHIP SKILLS BUILDING WORKSHOP	Florence Munatamba	8/15/02
Report of the ICD Network Workshop	Phil Franks	10/18/02
The Preplanning Workshop In Livingstone Rainbow Lodge 02	Mwangala Mukamba	11/21/02
MUSIBI Vision and Planning Workshop	Charles Akashambatwa	11/30/02
MUSIBI Strategic Planning - Meeting Proceedings	Patricia Mupeta	4/14/03
Proceeedings Of The Land Policy Review Workshop For Lusaka Province	Ernest Mwape	5/19/03
Proceedings of the Kalomo District KNP stakeholders' meeting	Nancy Bwalya-Mukumbuta	6/5/03
REPORT ON THE FORUM ON NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND LEGISLATION	Nancy Mukumbuta	8/8/03
Oppaz Honey Workshop	Highland Hamududu,Anja Held	10/17/03

Appendix 6. Organisational chart

CONASA Organisational Chart
December 2003



Appendix 7. Review of assumptions

Although CONASA is still relatively young and its activities and strategies are still developing, the project has already learned a lot regarding several key assumptions that underlie the project design. The list below summarizes these lessons learned based on a "reality check" made at the three year point.

Assumption 1. **CRBs would have significant flows of hunting revenue and need help managing it.**

Reality check: **False**. Due to a two-year presidential ban on hunting, a court injunction affecting one GMA for a third year, and general wildlife depletion in all areas during the ZAWA restructuring process, significant streams of safari hunting revenue did not materialize, and are not likely to materialize anytime soon.

Assumption 2. **Communities in GMAs have unique and valuable enterprise opportunities.**

Reality check: **Mostly false**. While there are a few "niche" opportunities other than safari hunting that are possible by virtue of being in a GMA (e.g., campsites), in general communities in GMAs are at a disadvantage for enterprise development due in part to restrictions on land use options (e.g., game ranching) and geographic isolation.

Assumption 3. **Building the capacity of local CBOs improves the reach and relevance of development activities.**

Reality check: **True**. CONASA has found that a nested hierarchy of CBOs has been effective in reaching a broad spectrum of the local households, although more study is required to determine the differential impact of project activities on vulnerable households.

Assumption 4. **Communities can collect and manage their own data for development planning and assessment.**

Reality check: **Mostly true**. Although many CBOs still see the community self-monitoring tools promoted by CONASA as project-driven and serving the project's information needs, there are at least a couple of cases where the local leadership has appear to truly appreciate the value of information for local development planning and used the tools in new and innovative ways.

Assumption 5. **Agricultural production can be increased through appropriate technology.**

Reality check: **True**. Although CONASA has yet to see widespread gains in production throughout the project area, there have been several successful trials of new seed varieties, seed multiplication schemes, cultivation methods, and irrigation technology.

Assumption 6. **Group structures offer competitive advantages for business activity.**

Reality check: **Both true and false**. While there have been some examples where a group approach appears to be inherently advantageous (e.g., marketing, NTFP harvesting), the project has also learned that some types of enterprises (e.g., services, equipment intensive processing) and some phases of a business (e.g., production) that are more efficiently or effectively performed by individuals.

Assumption 7. **CBOs bring a lot to the negotiating table for enterprise development.**

Reality check: **Mostly false**. While CBOs represent the defacto land holders and can use this as a form of "veto power" in negotiations with the private sector, they

don't have many other strengths and have difficulty leveraging natural resources to attract investment due to GMA land-use restrictions and communal tenure.

Assumption 8. **Communities in Southern Kafue GMAs can benefit a lot from regional markets.**

Reality check: **Mostly false**. Although there is still the potential for benefiting from regional tourism markets, the reality is that transaction costs for doing business with the Livingstone/Victorial Falls area are still quite high, CBOs have relatively little to offer regional markets other than their land, and investment from regional markets has not materialized.

Assumption 9. **Zambian NGOs will support CBNRM if given awareness building and skills training.**

Reality check: **False**. CONASA learned that although sensitisation and training can help build an appreciation of CBNRM, few Zambian NGOs actually have a mission statement or financial resources oriented toward promoting the goals of CBNRM.

Assumption 10. **Communities can grasp policy issues and analyses.**

Reality check: **True**. The trainings in policy sensitisation and analysis have helped many CBO leaders to become well versed in policy issues and articulate in the language of policy analysis, and furthermore there are preliminary signs that this new capacity is being used to pursue advocacy.

Assumption 11. **Facilitating dialogue is an effective way to address policy constraints.**

Reality check: **Mostly true**. While some policy issues will be more difficult to resolve, progress has already been made, particularly in terms of improving policy implementation, by merely bringing CBO members and policy makers to the table and facilitating a process of dialogue.

Assumption 12. **Communities can effectively advocate for a more conducive policy environment.**

Reality check: **Remains to be seen**. We have yet to see a concerted advocacy campaign against one of the more difficult policy issues, although the foundation for this capacity has been laid.

Assumption 13. **Improved livelihood security will (by itself) lead to improved resource management**.

Reality check: **False**. Although livelihood insecurity is certainly one of the causes of resource depletion, it is by no means the only cause and there is so far no evidence to suggest that improving livelihood security will by itself lead to increased conservation.

Assumption 14. **Community good will and cohesion (e.g., social capital) can be harnessed to promote sustainable NRM.**

Reality check: **True**. CONASA has seen several examples where CBOs have been successful in mobilizing a broad cross-section of the community to take concrete steps to reduce threats to natural resources, based almost entirely on sensitisation and appeals to the collective interests. It remains to be seen however how long such gains can be maintained without tangible benefits accruing from the resource.

Assumption 15. **Other government units will accept the legitimacy of CRBs.**

Reality check: **True**. Although there hasn't been a tremendous amount of interaction between CRBs and units of government other than ZAWA, the interactions

that have taken place with District Councils, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Tourism, and Parliament, suggest that government as a whole does respect the legitimacy and legal status of CRBs.

Assumption 16. **Small-scale holders in rural areas can take advantage of market opportunities made possible by economic liberalization**.

Reality check: **False**. While economic liberalization did reduce some of the barriers facing small-scale farm holders in Southern Province trying to enter the market, significant barriers still remain and there is no evidence that people living in the project area have benefited from market opportunities..

Assumption 17. **CONASA can achieve impact in four years**.

Reality check: **True**. There is little doubt that CONASA has improved the livelihood security of a number of households in the project area, and has laid a strong foundation for grass-roots development.

Assumption 18. **CONASA can achieve sustainable impact in 4 years**.

Reality check: **Both true and false**. Although the gains made in skills development will continue to generate benefits for many years to come, other activities and enterprises remain heavily dependent on CONASA casting doubt on their sustainability.

Appendix 8. Summary of recommendations

Recommendation	Page
2.0 Results Framework	
Recommendation 1. Future programming should centre around a set of results which are specific, overlap as little as possible, articulate intermediate results, and provide clarity and focus to project planning.	30
Recommendation 2. CONASA's conservation goals and strategy should be more clearly articulated, preferably through more specific wording of results and intermediate results.	31
3.0 CBO Capacity Building	
Recommendation 3. To strengthen the connections between CBO capacity building and household livelihood security, CONASA should increase training and support at the VAG and VMC levels, which has a greater role in supporting agricultural schemes, livestock health, and SMEs.	45
Recommendation 4. CONASA should strengthen linkages between leadership training and actual activity implementation so that more leadership training is provided on an "as needed" basis.	49
Recommendation 5. CONASA should test different selection mechanisms for workshops that place more focus on demonstrated participant interest, and less on financial incentives.	50
Recommendation 6. CONASA should strengthen its monitoring of training by developing an information system that can track individual progress and generate summaries according to topic, VAG, gender, and cost.	51
Recommendation 7. CONASA should work with CRBs to develop a more realistic strategy for balancing the workload and performance incentives for local facilitators.	54
Recommendation 8. To move the CSM beyond data collection and into the realm of analysis and application, CONASA should 1) reconceptualise how the CSM fits into CONASA's entire suite of activities and CBO structure, 2) develop tools for data aggregation and analysis, 3) strengthen integration with other sections, 4) focus in areas with activities, 5) recognize costs and realign incentives for maintaining the CSM, 6) document innovation and new applications, and 7) integrate the CSM within a broader set of activities in information programming.	61
Recommendation 9. CONASA should work toward conducting an assessment of the impact of its capacity building activities on community dynamics, coalitions, power structures, and relations with the State, preferably using outside evaluators.	64
Recommendation 10. Because the CBO structures and capacity building structures used by CONASA are quite similar to those of the former Livingstone Food Security Program, CONASA/CARE should conduct a follow up study of former LFSP AMCs and VMCs to assess sustainability of those structures and identify lessons learned.	65
Recommendation 11. Sometime in the next year or two, CONASA should work with the CRBs and VAGs to conduct a review of the last two years of activity, and perform an assessment of CBO strengths, weaknesses, and strategic roles.	68

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Recommendation 12. CONASA should conduct or facilitate an economic viability analysis of all CBO activities that are expected to generate revenue, including loan schemes, campsites, and guesthouses.	69
Recommendation 13: CONASA should conduct or contract a study of the economic viability of CRBs over the next 5-10 years, with the goal of forecasting revenue and costs under poor, fair, and favourable scenarios of hunting revenue, loan repayment, joint venture investment, etc.	72
4.0 Agriculture and Livestock	
Recommendation 14. CONASA should continue to work on creating a sustainable source of inputs by 1) using the CBO structure to strengthen linkages to commercial input providers, and 2) promoting local seed production schemes as a for-profit enterprise.	86
Recommendation 15. CONASA should increase the amount of resources devoted to activities in livestock production, health, and market development, to better reflect the importance of livestock in household production, savings, and conservation.	92
Recommendation 16. CONASA needs to analyse its role in supporting agriculture and livestock from a market development perspective, and plan a course of action to build institutions to fill the roles the project currently plays, or take additional transactions out of the formal marketplace.	93
Recommendation 17. To improve the longevity of livelihood gains, CONASA should gradually shift from promoting short-term to long-term agricultural production strategies in areas where 1) the short-term risks of hunger have been brought under control, and 2) internal migration is high.	94
Recommendation 18. CONASA needs to strengthen process monitoring of agricultural interventions such as training and input provision. The system should be able to generate tabular summaries of outcomes, cross-indexed by commodity, VAG, gender, and time.	96
Recommendation 19. CONASA should work toward collecting spatial data on all agricultural interventions.	98
5.0 Enterprise	
Recommendation 20. CONASA should monitor the effects of its enterprise development activities on equity and group cohesion by 1) reporting the distribution of income and not just total amount of income from supported enterprises, and 2) estimating the economic value of spin-off benefits for all supported enterprises.	109
Recommendation 21. Now that some businesses are making money, CONASA should re-examine the need for savings and investment instruments, and identify an appropriate strategy for each category of enterprise.	115
Recommendation 22. In preparation for development of joint ventures with outside investors, CONASA should 1) ensure that CRBs and chiefs have been properly sensitised and trained in contract negotiation techniques, 2) develop marketing guides for the entire area so CRBs are able to attract the widest spectrum of investment offers, and 3) build linkages with training institutions to support employment skills development	117

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Recommendation 23. CONASA should provide the necessary support to CRBs to ensure that information about the outcomes of G-MED loans is collected in a timely and organised manner in order to i) capture impact, and ii) document lessons learned in supporting micro-enterprise.	119
6.0 Policy and Advocacy	
Recommendation 24. As part of the planning process for future programming, CONASA should review it experiences in policy formation and update its "road map" or conceptual framework for policy formation and advocacy.	134
Recommendation 25. CONASA should develop a strategy to strengthen the representation of women in policy processes.	138
Recommendation 26. CONASA needs to document through a special study or contracted research the impacts of its sizable investments in policy sensitisation and training.	139
Recommendation 27. CONASA should identify more policy issues that have a direct bearing on HLS as potential topics for advocacy.	140
Recommendation 28. CONASA should continue to explore the potential for the forums to support CBNRM through facilitating trade and investment opportunities.	141
Recommendation 29. CONASA should develop a strategy to ensure that policy analyses are available from public sources other than CONASA, and are kept up to date as the policy context evolves.	141
Recommendation 30. CONASA should continue to help MUSIBI develop a strategic plan which is financially viable, focuses on its sustainability as an institution as opposed to development of the board, develops a capacity to account for resources, and is connected to service providers with greater longevity than CONASA.	142
Recommendation 31. CONASA should take the following steps to help it define its future role in advocacy: 1) develop a conceptual framework for advocacy that incorporates a more holistic understanding of policy formation, 2) review the concepts of an RBA and clearly articulate how much it wants to become directly engaged in policy, 3) review what it is best-positioned to contribute, such as research and facilitation services, and 4) identify strategies that will strengthen the linkages between advocacy and HLS.	145
7.0 Support to ZAWA	
Recommendation 32. CONASA should continue to view communication with ZAWA as a top priority, and work toward strengthening lines of communication at all levels, in particular senior management.	151
Recommendation 33. CONASA's efforts to support a bottom-up approach in ZAWA should include support for the development of stronger accounting systems for financial management, and communication systems which improve dialogue between ZAWA and CRBs.	152

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Recommendation 34. CONASA should continue to keep the issue of village scouts on the "front burner", and work with CRBs to 1) make a realistic projection on the amount funding available for village scouts, 2) realign the number of scouts with the resources available, 3) review whether the current roles and responsibilities of village scouts are taking advantage of their unique advantages.	153
8.0 TBNRM	
Recommendation 35: CONASA should compile the preliminary work done in assessing the Kafue-Zambezi corridor, and present the entire set of findings to a meeting of appropriate stakeholders.	164
Recommendation 36. CONASA should conduct an "autopsy" of all the products and services that were explored for transboundary enterprises, whether successful or not, to document the lessons learned in forging transboundary business linkages.	168
Recommendation 37. CONASA/AWF should convene a workshop or taskforce to discuss and document the lessons learned from the TBNRM component.	171
9.0 Conservation	
Recommendation 38. Now that CONASA has several years of experience working with the communities, it should refine its conservation strategy by more clearly articulating conservation goals, compiling resource inventory data that's been collected into ecological profiles, conducting threat assessments, and revisiting the set of interventions and approach to M&E.	195
Recommendation 39. CONASA should focus the targeting of its HLS interventions to leverage more benefits for conservation; this will involve 1) conducting threat assessments for each area, 2) compiling existing data into an ecological profile and typology of households, 3) testing a mix of targeting strategies based on spatial and household attributes.	202
Recommendation 40. CONASA should consider supporting the introduction of a system for monitoring crop damage, due to the importance of this process for both conservation and livelihood security.	205
Recommendation 41. CONASA should continue to strengthen its resource monitoring systems and try to develop at least one more data stream on natural resources, based upon opportunities, its overall conservation strategy, and threat assessments.	206
10.0 HIV/AIDS Strategy	
Recommendation 42. CONASA should consider conducting action research to test and refine a methodology for developing participatory community-based support systems for rural households burdened by HIV/AIDS.	217
11.0 Gender	
Recommendation 43. To encourage a gender-friendly approach to development in CBOs, but minimise the risks of backlash, CONASA should facilitate exchanges between weak and strong areas and be careful not to be too assertive in pushing mechanisms for gender inclusion.	223

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Recommendation 44. To strengthen the participation of women in training, CONASA should 1) increase the involvement of lower level CBO structures (which have more women in leadership roles) in the selection process of trainees and topics, and 2) encourage and support more in-situ level training by local facilitators.	225
Recommendation 45. CONASA can improve access to microfinance by women by promoting enterprises and crops that traditionally have a high level of participation by women.	226
Recommendation 46. CONASA should continue to monitor gender patterns in the distribution of project services and benefits, particularly in terms of access to G-MED loans, and qualitative changes in the social relations between men and women.	227
12.0 Monitoring and Evaluation	
Recommendation 47. CONASA should work toward strengthening the interpretation of its performance monitoring by 1) using external data sources to strengthen the description of the context, and 2) comparing its impacts and efficiencies to those of other CBNRM/HLS projects in Zambia	233
Recommendation 48. CONASA should include in the PMP a description of how targets for performance indicators are selected, so the methodology can be improved as additional experience is gathered.	236
Recommendation 49. CONASA should strengthen its ability to synthesize process documentation by exploring methods such as an activity or area-based filing system, electronic indexing, or preferably incorporating systematic activity reporting into the project's database.	237
Recommendation 50. CONASA should work towards integrating its information systems for administration and programming, in order to be able to evaluate and improve efficiency.	238
Recommendation 51. CONASA should work toward i) strengthening the timely dissemination of project reports and documents, ii) improve integration of reporting and planning by articulating lessons learned and recommendations in project reports, iii) disseminate more of the 'lower level' documents such as trip reports and meeting minutes, iv) ensure that every document has the name of an author and date, v) improve the cataloguing and searching ability of the library database, and vi) review the management of hard copies of reports.	242
Recommendation 52. CONASA should work toward re-orienting the data manager system to the needs of program staff by i) incorporating datasets that are maintained by program staff on a regular basis, ii) designing outputs needed for common planning and reporting purposes, and iii) developing a better interface for retrieving data based on a planning process	244
Recommendation 53. Project staff should be more diligent about noting and recording attribute information of GPS points so that what they represent becomes self-evident.	247
Recommendation 54. Program staff should be encouraged to present maps of their activities during planning and performance review meetings. Section-specific maps should be produced at the same scale so that they can be overlaid, either digitally or physically using transparencies, to see opportunities for synergy, presence or absence of spatial targeting for conservation, efficient use of project resources, etc.	248

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Recommendation 55. CONASA should work toward integrating the data it has collected on human population, in and around the project area, into its GIS. This can begin with higher-level geographic units, such as VAGs and sub-VAGs, and work down to the village level.	249
Recommendation 56. CONASA should work toward compiling the spatial information it has collected on natural resources to develop a more complete ecological profile of the project area and begin to develop a more comprehensive conservation strategy.	249
Recommendation 57. Based on the lessons learned from the resource management planning exercises to date, CONASA should articulate a strategy for collecting and synthesizing information required for land use planning, and make steps to collect the appropriate socio-economic and ecological data for the other areas.	250
Recommendation 58. In addition to capturing impact, the M&E section should focus its lens on under-performing activity streams to help the project make decisions to improve or abandon these strategies.	255
Recommendation 59. The M&E unit and project management should take the lead in articulating for a general audience the 'big picture' of CONASA's achievements and lessons learned, and present it in an appropriate medium such as a special issue of the newsletter, video, or short article for a development journal.	258
13.0 CONASA as a Learning Organisation	
Recommendation 60. CONASA should strengthen its mechanisms for incorporating the findings of monitoring and research into program planning by 1) ensuring that all special study and program reports have a section titled 'Recommendations for CONASA', 2) the results of special studies are presented to the program staff, discussed, and revised as needed, and 3) time is allocated at the beginning of planning and review meetings to review the all findings and recommendations made during the previous period.	265
Recommendation 61. Management and program staff should develop a plan to strengthen the capacity to conduct cost-benefit analyses of project interventions in-house, and infuse this analysis into the workplan planning process.	268
Recommendation 62. CONASA should consider preparing a paper on "Changes in the local context since 2001", to 1) help assess and improve its overall strategy, 2) plan for future programming, and 3) understand intended and unintended consequences of project activities.	270
14.0 Synergy and Linkages	
Recommendation 63. Project planning and performance review meetings and reports should include area-by-area reviews, using tools like the synergy matrix, to identify unrealised opportunities for synergy and bring attention to disconnected and isolated activities.	278
16.0 Rights Based Programming	
Recommendation 64. CONASA should continue to document and begin to monitor intra-household and intra-community relationships that affect livelihood security for certain sub-groups of the population.	296

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Recommendation 65. The skills in policy sensitisation and advocacy developed in component two should be adapted and made available for the lower level CBO structures. This could be infused into election-year communication and education programmes.	296
Recommendation 66. CONASA's capacity building unit should ensure that institutional structures, procedures, and skills exist to resolve conflicts in all VAGs, CRBs, and CRB associations. Capacity to resolve conflict should be one of the criteria used in CBO assessments.	297
18.0 Looking forward	
Recommendation 67. CONASA should articulate a vision of more significant and genuine form of community input into the design and implementation of the project, and work toward building the leadership capacity and project structures to achieve that vision.	314

Appendix 9. Digital copy of exit presentation and report

The CD below contains a digital copy of this evaluation report, as well as a copy of the exit presentation made by the consultant at the Kalomo field office on 18 December, 2003. The presentation (in PowerPoint format) is linked to six hours of recorded narration by the presenter, which can be heard as the presentation is watched (headphones or speakers required).

TAPE CD ENVELOPE HERE