



Community-Based Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Agriculture

Programme Summary

March 2002

Introduction

CONASA is a programme for rural development and community-based natural resources management in southern Zambia. The acronym stands for **CO**mmunity-based **NA**tural resource management and **S**ustainable **A**griculture. This acronym highlights the focus on agriculture and natural resources management as a strategy to improve rural livelihoods and conserve natural resources.

CONASA Goals

- to improve the welfare of people living in the project area
- to ensure the sustainability of natural resources for future generations

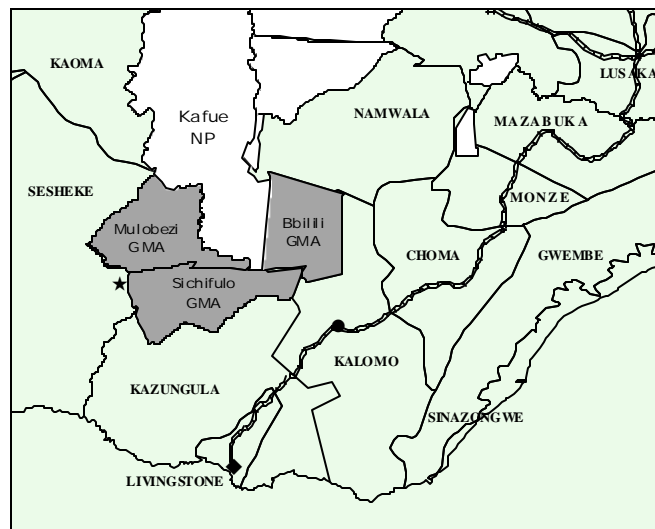
CONASA was formerly known as INSAKA, but the name was changed to CONASA because the word *INSAKA* originates from ethnic groups and languages not common in the project area, has a connotation as a meeting place for men only, and caused confusion with another project in Zambia with a similar name.

The design of CONASA was developed based on feedback from 11 participatory rural appraisals (PRAs) conducted in communities living in adjacent areas of Kafue National Park. CONASA staff continue to work with residents in the project area to define what types of assistance are needed to increase their food security and improve natural resources management, and then respond with appropriate services such as training which is tailored to the conditions of rural Zambia.

Project Area

CONASA's area of operations is three Game Management Areas (GMAs) on the southern border of Kafue National Park: Mulobezi, Sichifulo, and Bbilili. These areas were selected because they have had problems with food security in the past, but also have great potential to increase food production using improved farming methods such as Conservation Farming and use of drought resistant crop varieties. These areas also have many important natural resources including forests and wildlife. CONASA hopes that if these resources can be managed more efficiently and for the greatest economic values, then tourism to these areas will also increase, providing much needed supplemental income and investment.

CONASA Project Area



CONASA, the Consortium

CONASA is being implemented by a consortium of experienced non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This team approach allows CONASA to combine the talents and resources of organizations with experience in diverse areas such as organizational capacity building, rural agriculture, wildlife management, business development, and policy analysis. CONASA adopted this multi-sector approach based on lessons learned from other rural development projects in Zambia, which have found that interdisciplinary programs have the greatest promise for understanding and taking action on the challenges and opportunities which face rural communities.

CARE International in Zambia is the primary NGO in the CONASA consortium and coordinates the various activities. CARE was started in 1946 and has been active in Zambia since 1991 in areas such as food security, health, infrastructure development, emergency relief, and education. They have very experienced field staff with a great deal of experience developing and strengthening farmer groups in Southern Province. The Wildlife Conservation Society of New York (WCS) is the second core NGO, and provides technical assistance for activities in wildlife management, resource monitoring, and policy analysis. WCS has programmes throughout Africa and has been active in Zambia since 1980, providing technical assistance and support services to ZAWA's ADMADE programme. Last but not least, the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) has experience from numerous projects eastern and southern Africa developing tourism and environmentally-friendly enterprises to improve human welfare and conserve natural resources. AWF is leading CONASA's Transboundary Natural Resource Management component which aims to strengthen the linkages between Zambian GMAs and the Victoria Falls tourism circuit. In addition to these three core partners, there are nine collaborating NGOs who are working with CONASA in very specific areas as follows:

Partner NGO	Role
TechnoServe	forming business groups, identifying market niches, linking rural farmers to formal markets
The World Conservation Union (IUCN)	strengthening the advocacy capacity of local, environmental-oriented NGOs
SAFIRE	identifying national and international market opportunities for non-timber products and linking communities to these markets
US Peace Corps	building the capacity of Community Resource Boards to manage natural resources
German Development Service	technical assistance in monitoring, evaluation, organizational capacity building, and computerized mapping
Conservation Farming Unit	adaptation of conservation farming methods to the soils and climate of the project area, and development of appropriate training programmes
Wildlife and Environmental Conservation Society of Zambia	environmental education and advocacy
Wildlife Producers Association of Zambia	assistance in development of community game ranches
Zambia Technical Assistance Centre (ZATAC)	identification of new agriculturally related market opportunities

CONASA and the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA)

Wildlife is one of the most important natural resources for the communities in the project area, and perhaps the resource which currently is most inefficiently utilized. CONASA is working closely with the newly restructured Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA), which has legal authority over all wildlife in Zambia, to support each other in developing participatory methods of managing wildlife in communal areas. CONASA is a separate project from ZAWA's own community-based programme, ADMADE, however many of the strategies and tools used by CONASA are based upon lessons learned from ADMADE and other community-based resource management projects in Zambia such as LIRD and SLAMU. CONASA's staff work closely with the Community Resource Boards, which are enshrined in the 1998 Wildlife Act that established ZAWA. Thus the objectives, resources, and strategies of the two organizations are very complementary. To ensure a close relationship is maintained between the two organizations, CONASA has a full-time liaison officer assigned to work with ZAWA, and ZAWA is represented on the CONASA steering committee.

Through the Liaison office, CONASA has so far given ZAWA support in terms of: (a) a database of field patrol data, safari hunting data, reports, (b) satellite images of the project area, (c) Software- *Image Analyst*, and (d) Training for ZAWA staff in Satellite Imagery Processing. This relationship is hoped to support ZAWA with for improved wildlife management.

Community Groups

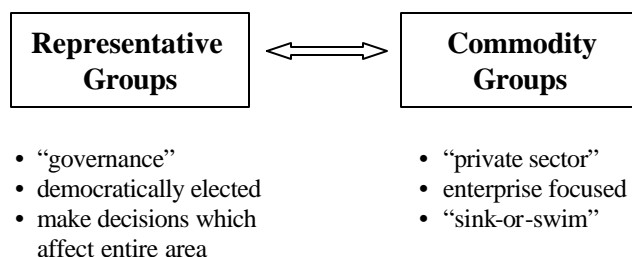
One of the lessons learned from numerous rural development projects in Zambia is the importance of working with community-level groups. Working through community-based organizations makes providing services such as training much more efficient, allowing a single extension officer to work with a far greater number of people. When rural people work together in groups, they can also learn from each other and increase accountability. When groups are formed around a micro-enterprise such as beekeeping or cash crops, business costs such as transportation, communication, and inputs are also reduced. Community organizations are also needed to develop and carry out decisions which affect the entire area, such as land-use zoning, maintenance of water points, or planning infrastructure improvements.

Based on previous experiences and the current presence of community groups in the project area, CONASA is developing two types of community level groups. These two types of groups are similar to what we might consider as “governance” and “private sector”. Governance or representative groups are democratically elected and responsible for making decisions which affect an entire area. The Community Resource Board (CRB) is a good example of a community organization which is democratically elected and takes actions which affect the entire GMA, such as recommending hunting quotas or developing land-use plans together with traditional authorities.

At the same time, rural people often join together to form small businesses such as curios making, beekeeping, or contract farming. CONASA calls these types of groups “commodity groups”. These groups are usually smaller, less formal, and based around friends who have similar skills and interests in income generation. These groups are also in a “sink-or-swim” situation, because if they don’t manage their business properly and produce enough goods, they will lose money and probably stop functioning. On the other hand, commodity groups which work well and make a profit can really benefit the community by increasing household incomes and attracting more private sector trade to the area.

CONASA supports both representative groups and commodity groups by providing services such as technical training, managerial and business skills development, micro-grants, marketing support, and data analysis. However these two types of groups also support each other. Representative groups which have legal authority (e.g., the CRBs) can assist commodity groups through contract negotiations, conflict resolution, and controlling illegal resource use. Commodity groups can also assist representative groups by providing input into decisions which affect natural resources and the local economy.

Two Types of Community Groups



Game Management Areas are large, and it is usually not practical to have only one level of representative group in the GMA. Ultimately it is for the local residents themselves to decide how they want to organize themselves, but based on past experiences and lessons from other community-based programs, there are three or four levels of representative groups being formed in the CONASA GMAs.

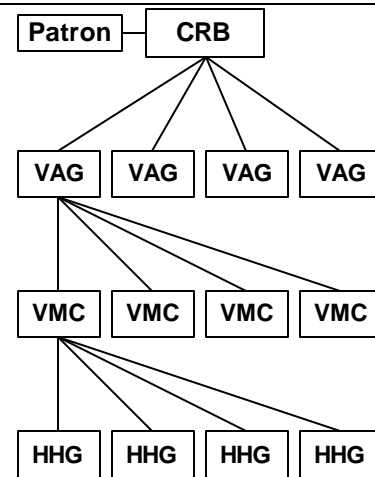
At the bottom, many areas already have in place **Household Groups**, which represent just a few households. Household Groups do activities such as input distribution, maintenance of local seed banks, and organizing training. Household Groups may also elect a representative to sit on the next level, the **Village Management Committee (VMC)**. VMCs are good for organizing activities such as small construction projects (e.g., a well, school renovation), training,

Community Structures Model

¹ VAGs are also known in some areas as Area Management Committees (AMC)

and monitoring food security.

Above the VMCs, CONASA expects most areas to elect representatives to a Village Area Group (VAG)¹. VAGs are needed to help plan and implement larger development projects, such as rehabilitation of feeder roads, bridges, construction of water points, as well as supervision of village-based facilitator-trainers. VAGs will also review proposals and administer any CONASA micro-grants given out to commodity groups for business start-up expenses.



The Household Groups, VMCs, and VAGs are all involved in organizing local activities such as training and development projects. However at the top of the representative group structure, the **Community Resource Board** looks at the big picture and make decisions which affect the entire GMA, such as land-use zoning, law enforcement practices, and regulating resource use such as hunting, fishing, and tree cutting. CRBs are given authority under the 1998 Wildlife Act to be co-managers with government to manage the local natural resources. Together with the traditional authorities, who serve as Patrons on the CRB, these important bodies set policies which are the foundation for all other development and resource management activities in the GMA.

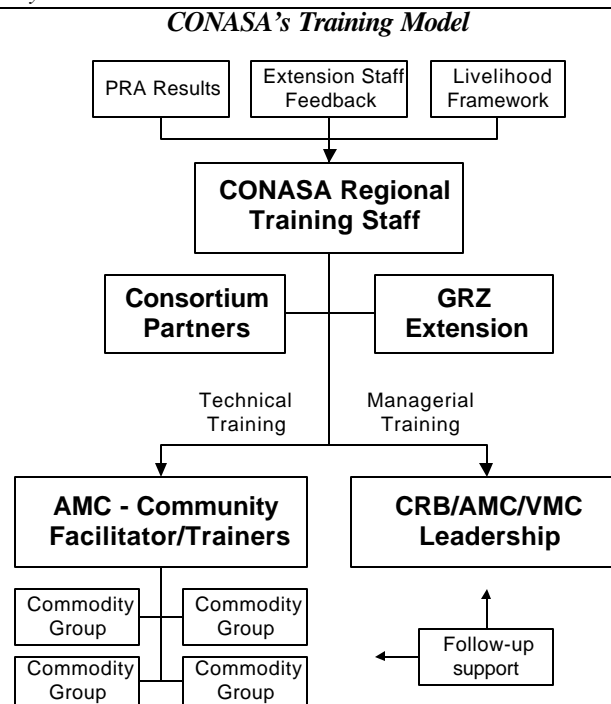
The formation of representative community groups has been one of the core activities of CONASA in the first year of operation. One more CRB has been added bringing the total number to **5**. The other ‘governance’ type CBOs have been formed as follows: Household Groups (**515**), Village Management Committees (**236**) and Village area Groups (**12**).

Training

It should be no surprise that training is an important component of a project like CONASA. Training is the key to making certain that any progress in food security and sustainable resource use will continue once the project funding is finished. The CONASA NGO partners have a wealth of knowledge in designing and implementing training programs, and have learned from experiences in the field what works and what doesn’t. Hence CONASA ensures that training is:

- based on needs expressed by members of the commodity groups and representative CBOs
- delivered in the field through village-based facilitator trainers who are held accountable to their clients
- provided in both technical areas as well as organizational management and business planning
- supported by follow-up visits and backstopping

CONASA’s training system relies heavily on community facilitator-trainers, who are local residents employed by their neighbours to provide technical support and skills development. This model has worked well for other projects such as the Livingstone Food Security Project, and is being embraced by government ministries such as MAFF. The figure below illustrates how CONASA’s training program will operate:



Program Components

To achieve its twin objectives of improving human welfare and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources for future generations, CONASA has three major programme component areas which reinforce each other and provide maximum likelihood that project results will be sustainable:

- Household Livelihood Security
- Policy and Civil Society Education on CBNRM
- Transboundary Natural Resources Management

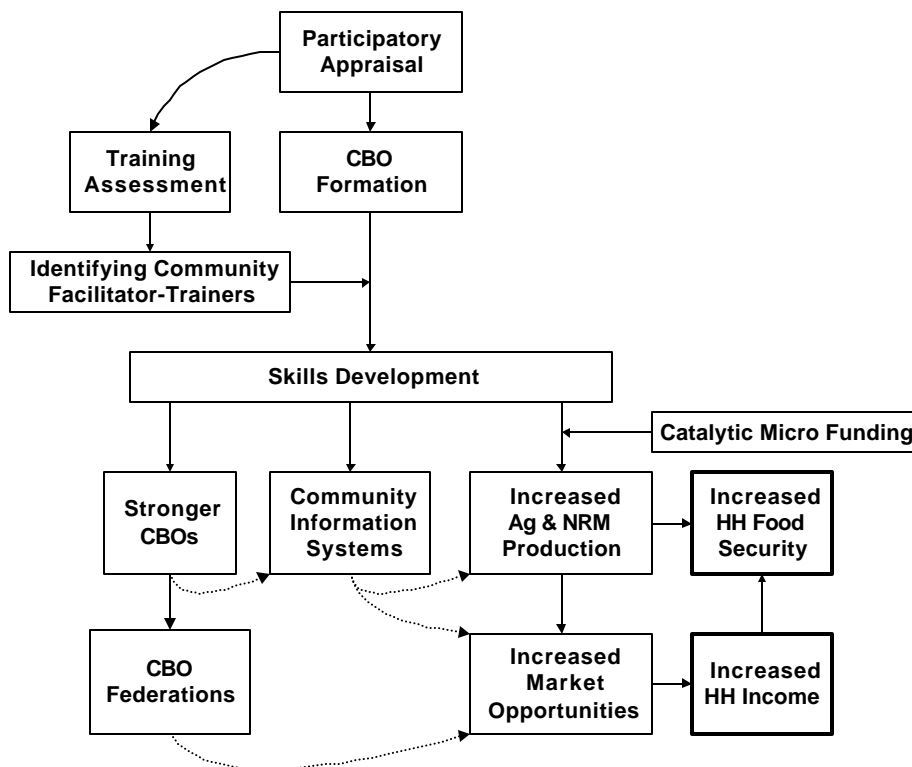
Household Livelihood Security

The purpose of the household livelihood security (HLS) component is to assist people living in the project area to improve their standard of living and reduce their vulnerability to food insecurity. As the name implies, this set of activities focuses on all types of **livelihoods**, as opposed to just farming or just safari hunting. People in rural areas earn a living in many different ways, so CONASA staff discuss with community members during PRA exercises which livelihood activities have the greatest comparative advantage for each area, and which activities have the highest potential for improvement.

When planning activities in the HLS component, CONASA staff also encourage community members to think about the **security** of their livelihoods, and what can be done to reduce risks. There are many events which can threaten a livelihood strategy: drought, plant and animal diseases, a bad economy, unreliable inputs, competition from neighbouring countries, loss of production assets, etc. CONASA's objective in the HLS component is to reduce those risks which are most threatening and most detrimental.

Activities under the HLS component are designed to complement each other and approach the problem from several different angles. The first major activity was a series of PRA exercises in order to better understand the problems and opportunities facing rural communities. These were then prioritised in order to select areas where the project could make a more meaningful impact. This was followed by Community-based Organisation (CBO) capacity building activities such as technical skills training, organizational development, marketing assistance, micro-grants, and strengthening of community information systems.

Household Livelihood Security Activities



Household Livelihood Security Activities

Activity	Comments
participatory rural appraisals	Conducted in the first months of the project
community group formation	CONASA staff will discuss with each community which types of groups are needed, and provide support such as management training, facilitation of elections, CBO monitoring, auditing, assistance with ZAWA certification, etc.
agricultural extension	VAGs will be asked to employ one energetic person from the area to be a community-facilitator, who will then be trained by CONASA’s staff in topics such as conservation farming and agroforestry
enterprise training	topics such as beekeeping, leather craft, sewing, etc.
business skills training	topics such as accounts, business planning, marketing, etc.
marketing outreach	facilitating communication between community groups and private sector organizations
sub-grants	small matching-fund grants to help commodity groups get started
community information systems	identifying the information which community groups need to plan their agricultural strategies, regulate harvesting of natural resources, and prioritise development needs, then finding ways to collect and distribute this information

Sub-Grants

One of the findings from the PRA exercises that were conducted both at the CONASA’s design phase and after project inception was that certain rural enterprises are constrained by a lack of capital or deteriorated infrastructure. For example a bridge may be damaged preventing vehicles from transporting agricultural products to/from an area, a shed or depot may be needed to store produce for transport to market, or a garden site may be restricted due to lack of irrigation. To address these small but significant barriers, CONASA has provision for a sub-grants program for commodity groups, VMCs, and VAGs. These funds are project investments designed to address the small-scale start-up costs for activities that will result in significant increases in food production or rural income. These grants are administered at the VAG level and only available to groups which have demonstrated the institutional capacity to plan and manage a small project.

Groups must also contribute matching funds either from their safari revenue, grants from other rural assistance programmes such as the Presidential Investment Fund, or an in-kind contribution in the form of labour and materials. Sub-grant funds are limited and will be phased in gradually, so VAGs need to be strategic and transparent when evaluating the impact of each proposed project.

Policy and Civil Society Education on Community Based Resource Management

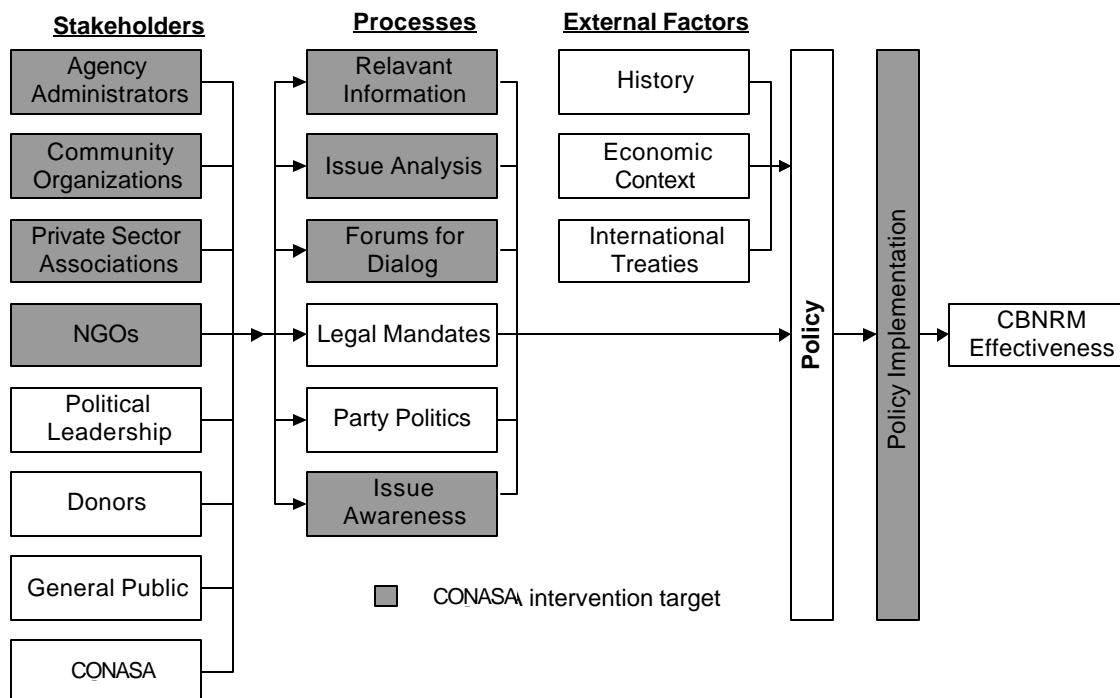
Like many countries in the region, Zambia has made great strides in developing policies that create a positive environment for a community-based approach to rural development and resource management. However there are still areas where the ability of government and rural communities to jointly manage natural resources effectively and efficiently is constrained by policy. Policy in this context includes not only formal legislation, but also administrative procedures, pricing structures, tenure systems, contracting procedures, and even the implementation or enforcement of policy.

Sample Policy Issues Which Affect Resource Management

- procedures for awarding forestry and wildlife concessions
- project and inter-agency coordination
- collaborative management agreements with GRZ
- price controls and land-use subsidies
- revenue management, disbursement, and external auditing
- taxation of hunting revenue
- decision making processes
- information standards and dissemination
- access to hunting licenses, special lic enses
- infrastructure and telecommunications planning
- conflict resolution procedures

To address these issues which have a big impact on day-to-day practices, CONASA has included a policy support component. There are numerous stakeholders, processes, and external factors which contribute to the development of policies. Some of these inputs into the policy process can be strengthened or influenced by a support project like CONASA, but many can not. CONASA has targeted certain areas where its staff and resources can have the most impact for making policies more favourable to sustainable agriculture and community based natural resources management, as shown below:

CONASA Policy Framework



To make improvements in selected policy areas, CONASA staff not do much direct advocacy or lobbying themselves. Instead they mostly study the issues, develop educational materials, and creat opportunities for dialogue between government and civil society institutions with interests in rural development and sustainable resource use. Examples of such organizations include local NGOs, church groups, community organizations, businesses that depend on tourism, private sector associations, and student clubs. CONASA is also helping to form a Kafue Consultative Forum to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders with an interest in the Greater Kafue Area to discuss issues affecting the area. Members of the Forum will include government agencies, representatives from the tourism industry, local NGOs, donors, and community organizations from the surrounding GMAs.

Policy and Civil Society Support for CBNRM Activities

Activity	Comments
studies of policies affecting resource management and rural development	to better understand and prioritise policy needs
development of communication and education programmes	for government agencies and civil society institutions
development of forums for policy dialogue	including workshops, meetings, printed materials, and the Kafue National Park Consultative Forum
formation of a Kafue National Park Consultative Forum	to discuss issues relating to management of Kafue National Park and the surrounding areas

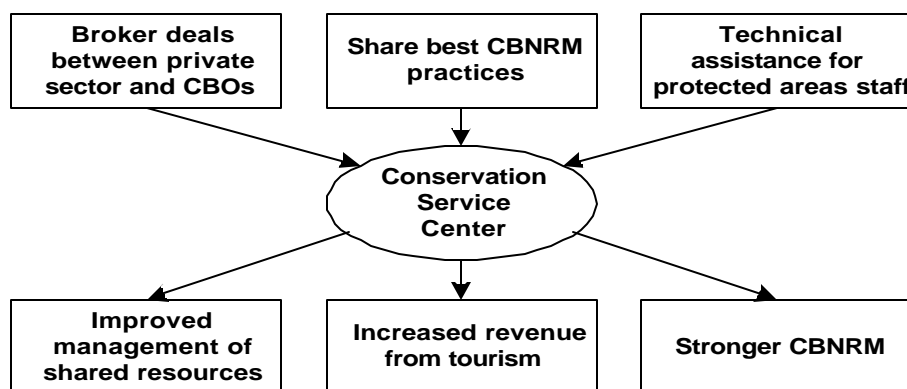
Under this section, three NRM forum meetings were held in 2001. The first was set up to propose a structure for the NRM forum. The other two were dubbed “Hear It From the communities”, and ‘Transboundary Natural Resources Management (TBNRM)- Lessons from the Chobe Enclave’. The forum meetings brought together concerned communities, civil society institutions, NGOs and government to discuss pertinent CBNRM/ NRM issues such as policy gaps and management approaches. The meetings also helped raise the awareness of the participants on NRM and related policy advocacy issues. The forum has also started a process that will lead to the channelling of the national forum to the CONASA project area through development of the Kafue National Park Consultative Forum (KNCF).

Transboundary Natural Resource Management

The Transboundary Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) component is designed to take advantage of economic opportunities presented by the important tourism circuit centred around Livingstone and Victoria Falls. Livingstone is presently undergoing a significant amount of development and foreign investment, and the number of tourists travelling to the Zambian side of the falls is expected to grow substantially in the coming years. Presently, the southern region of Kafue is not well equipped to take full advantage of opportunities presented by the tourism industry, either as a destination or by providing good and services to the tourism businesses in the region. If the communities in the CONASA project area can reduce the level of wasteful wildlife poaching and get better organized in providing agricultural and natural resource products to the tourism sector, a significant and sustainable source of income could be developed.

Activities under the TBNRM component are being organized by the AWF Conservation Service Center (CSC) in Livingstone. Staff at the CSC are equipped to provide services in business planning and management, property and contract law, and community and institutional development. The CSC first matches CONASA community groups with private sector businesses and tourism companies in Zambia and neighbouring countries, and then helps to negotiate a sale or contract. Staff at the CSC also provide follow-up support with the community groups to ensure that the deal goes smoothly and any problems are dealt with early.

TBNRM Activities



Another type of service the Livingstone CSC provides to CONASA community groups are opportunities to learn about community-based resource management projects in neighbouring countries, through exchange visits, workshops, and printed materials. There are many lessons and experiences from these similar projects that can really assist rural development efforts in Zambia. For example, the well-known CAMPFIRE programme in Zimbabwe implements community-based resource management in areas with high human population densities and intense competition from commercial agriculture and livestock, which may represent the future for Zambia if population and land pressures continue to increase. The LIFE programme in Namibia is experimenting with community-owned game ranches, providing a test case for the complete devolution of wildlife ownership to the community level, which may also be an important model for Zambia to consider for its communal areas. The Natural Resource Management Project in Botswana has also spent a lot of time developing and training community organizations, and has achieved greater success in marketing non-wildlife resources.

Transboundary Natural Resource Management Activities

Activity	Comments
brokering deals between tourism companies and community enterprises	e.g., providing vegetables, thatching grass, community policing of wildlife areas, joint-ventures with safari companies
exchange visits	with protected area managers and community based development programs in Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia
developing printed materials and workshops	to exchange lessons in community-based resource management

Monitoring, Evaluation and Response

Monitoring, evaluation and response (MER) is an important element of CONASA’s overall strategy, and crosscuts all activity areas. The purpose of MER is to collect information about activities so we can tell if they are having an impact and make any changes if necessary. CONASA monitors the progress of both individual activities, as well as the overall impact of the project. Examples of important information that is monitored at regular intervals include levels of food security and production, the status of wildlife and other natural resources, changes in how people use the land for both legal and illegal purposes, household income, and effectiveness of community organizations.

Monitoring information serves a variety of purposes at different levels. At the community level, monitoring information helps to ensure that community resources are not being mismanaged, that development activities are distributed fairly, and that community groups are not missing out on important opportunities to achieve more secure livelihoods. At the project level, monitoring information helps identify weak elements of the project, and either strengthen them or eliminate them before they cause too much trouble. The project also relies heavily on monitoring information for conducting analyses of policy issues, as well as reporting progress to the donor USAID. USAID uses monitoring information to compare CONASA with other projects it funds, and spread the lessons learned with similar projects in Zambia and the region.

Information for the MER system is collected at the community, provincial, and project levels. Some information which is intended exclusively for management purposes stays at the community level, while other information is passed on to the provincial and national offices for additional analysis. CONASA staff provide training and support for analysis of data at the community level, such as calculating the average yield

per hectare of improved seed varieties, or detecting trends in wildlife populations based on safari hunting data. When data are recorded the locations of each measurement are also noted, allowing CONASA staff to use space-age computers to summarize data and create colourful maps illustrating the spatial patterns in agriculture, resource use, development, law enforcement, and land-use.

Offices and Staff

To coordinate the activities of the respective partners, CONASA has a head office in Long Acres in Lusaka. This office is home for the Project Manager, CBNRM Component Manager, Policy Component Manager, Enterprise Services Manager, Administrative and Finance Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Local NGO Specialist, Advocacy Specialist, and GIS Specialist. There is also a full-time CBNRM Liaison Officer based in Chilanga. To provide support services in the project areas, there is also a provincial field office in Kalomo, staffed by an Area Project Manager and seven technical specialists and extension officers. A sub-office in Mulobezi will also be established in mid 2002 to provide closer contact to the communities in that GMA. Finally the Conservation Service Centre in Livingstone develops linkages between community groups and private sector businesses, and is staffed by an Environmental Law Officer, Enterprise Development Officer, and Community Development Officer.

To govern the program and ensure that it remains accountable to the intended beneficiaries, CONASA is guided by a steering committee consisting of representatives from the three core NGOs, the Zambia Wildlife Authority, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Project Manager.

Funding and Timetable

CONASA began operations in early 2001. Many of the activities are being phased in gradually, and will progress based on the needs and interests of the rural communities in the project area. CONASA's initial funding is from USAID. This generous support will allow the Household Livelihood Security and Policy Support components to operate for four years, while the Transboundary Natural Resources Management component is scheduled to operate for three years.

Public Involvement with CONASA

Unlike some community based resource management projects of the past, CONASA is being implemented through a team approach, making best use of the comparative advantages of its partner NGOs, government, and private sector groups. Indeed the success or failure of CONASA will largely depend on the talents, commitment, and cooperation of the many partners. Among these partners, perhaps the most critical for sustainability of results are the private sector and civic organizations within Zambia. Accordingly CONASA is actively seeking partners in the following areas:

- **private sector businesses and associations** which may be interested in trading goods or services with the rural communities in the project area
- **tour operators** who would like to explore setting up joint ventures with communities surrounding Kafue National Park
- **Zambian NGOs or interest groups** who want to learn more about community based resource management and policies which affect rural development
- **charitable organizations, churches, trade associations**, etc. who are active in the project area or have similar activities elsewhere in Zambia

To learn more about CONASA or find out how to get involved, please contact the Chief of Party at the address below:

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