

Terms of Reference: Rapid Review of the Kalahari-Namib Project: Enhancing decision-making through interactive environmental learning and action in the Molopo-Nossob River Basin in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa

A Background

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) helps the world find pragmatic solutions to the most pressing environmental and development challenges. The institution's work focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges on climate, food and human development. IUCN supports scientific research, develops and disseminates conservation 'knowledge products', manages field projects demonstrating practical interventions all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, CSOs, the UN and the private sector together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organisation, with more than 1,200 government and NGO members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in the public, NGO and private sectors around the world.

IUCN's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) covers twenty four countries in the Horn of Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Islands.

The Kalahari-Namib Project: Enhancing decision-making through interactive environmental learning and action in the Molopo-Nossob River Basin in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa is implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme and executed by IUCN ESARO in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Wildlife & Tourism (Botswana), Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Namibia), Department of Environmental Affairs and Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in South Africa. The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility.

The overall goal of the Kalahari-Namib project is to support communities and policy makers in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to effectively implement and upscale sustainable land management (SLM) in the Molopo-Nossob basin area and thereby contribute to improved livelihoods and the maintenance of the integrity and functioning of the entire Kalahari-Namib ecosystem.

In order to achieve the overall goal, the project consist of five major components, namely:

- Component 1: Baseline Assessment;
- Component 2: Community-based SLM (including pilot demonstration of best practices) and Transboundary Management of Molopo-Nossob River Basin;
- Component 3: Enhanced Regional Decision-Making and Exchange of Best Practices and Lessons Learnt;
- Component 4: Income Generating Activities Supported by Improved Services;
- Component 5: Monitoring and Evaluation, and
- Component 6: Project Management.

A Mid-term review was not undertaken for the project, following a decision by the Regional Steering Committee based on a review of the progress that had been achieved and priority activities that needed to be delivered at the time the mid-term review should have been implemented. The Project Implementing Agency working closely with the Project Executing Agencies would like to ensure that the project achieves maximum impact in the remaining period of implementation and is therefore commissioning a rapid review of the project.

B Objective and Scope of the Review

The objective of this rapid review is to assess operational aspects, such as project management and implementation of activities and also the level of progress towards the achievement of the objectives. The rapid review will assess project performance and the implementation of planned project activities and planned outputs against actual results. The risks to achievement of project outcomes and objectives will also be assessed. The review will focus on identifying the corrective actions needed for the project to achieve maximum impact within the remaining timeframe. Review findings will feed back into project management processes through specific recommendations to be considered within the remaining project timeframe and 'lessons learned' to date.

The rapid review will focus on the following main questions:

- Did the Kalahari-Namib project supported communities, community based organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local and national governments, including local and regional policy makers in Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa to effectively implement and scale up long term SLM in the Molopo-Nossop basin area?
- Did the project facilitate the sharing of information and knowledge and provide support to decision makers at all levels of natural resource management, including farmers and their institutions, local and national governments, as well as regional bodies such as Southern African Development Community (SADC)?
- Did the project establish capacity to implement and out-scale project outputs and outcomes?
- Did the project work with government at local, national and regional level to help to institutionalize new ways of working that support people-centered natural resource planning and management?
- Did the project address the limited access to appropriate information and technologies, weaknesses in institutional infrastructure and participation, unsustainable land-use practices, conflicts between land-use goals, and weak tenure and resource governance arrangements?
- Did the project conduct a complete baseline assessment using existing literature, local knowledge, and an analysis of the current/baseline scenario which led to determine the information requirements and gaps in order to understand local and regional capacity building and training requirements?
- Did the project identify appropriate SLM strategies for further out scaling and establishing a cross-boundary forum in order to enhance regional cooperation, decision making, and exchange of best practices?
- Did the forum serve to share information, address mutual issues related to socio-economic development, and suggest procedures to harmonize policies?

- Did the project build the strengths of each country and establish long lasting regional development synergies?
- Did the project improve on what local people are already doing for themselves through the promotion of a more diversified and balanced economy that utilize the inherent strengths of the area?
- Did the project assist to elevate local site-specific efforts and strategies to a planned and coordinated longer term regional approach with greater sharing of information within and across borders?
- Did the project support decision makers and other users of natural resources to collectively determine their sustainable development pathway?
- Did the project contribute to improving livelihoods and maintaining the integrity and functioning of the greater Kalahari-Namib ecosystem within the three countries?

The review should conclude with identification of the necessary adjustments, if any, in project design, objectives, strategies and implementation arrangement; as well as recommended changes aimed at maximizing the effectiveness of the project toward supporting communities and policy makers in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa to effectively implement and upscale sustainable land management (SLM) in the Molopo-Nossob basin area and thereby contribute to improved livelihoods and the maintenance of the integrity and functioning of the entire Kalahari-Namib ecosystem

1. The rapid review should also consider the following:

- a. Attainment of objectives and planned results (progress to date):
 - *Effectiveness*: Evaluate how, and to what extent, the stated project objectives have been met, taking into account the “achievement indicators” specified in the project document and logical framework.
 - *Relevance*: In retrospect, were the project’s outcomes consistent with the focal areas/operational program strategies and country priorities?
 - *Efficiency*: Cost-effectiveness assesses the achievement of the environmental and developmental objectives as well as the project’s outputs in relation to the inputs, costs, and implementing time
- b. Assessment of Sustainability (financial, socio-political, institutional, governance and ecological) of project outcomes:
 - Sustainability is understood as the probability of continued long-term project-derived outcomes and impacts after the GEF project funding ends. The review will identify and assess the key conditions or factors that are likely to contribute or undermine the persistence of benefits after the project ends. During this review, identification of any likely barriers to sustaining the intended outcomes of the project is especially important.

Catalytic role

The review will also describe any catalytic or replication effect of the project. What examples are there of replication and catalytic outcomes that suggest increased likelihood of sustainability? Replication approach, in the context of GEF projects, is defined as lessons and experiences coming out of the project that are replicated or scaled up in the design and implementation of other projects. Replication can have two aspects, replication proper (lessons and experiences are replicated in different geographic area) or scaling up (lessons

and experiences are replicated within the same geographic area but funded by other sources). If no effects are identified, the review will describe the catalytic or replication actions that the project carried out. No ratings are requested for the catalytic role.

Achievement of outputs and activities:

- **Delivered outputs:** Assessment of the project's success in producing each of the programmed outputs to date, both in quantity and quality as well as usefulness and timeliness.
- **Assess to what extent the project outputs produced so far have the weight of authority/credibility, necessary to influence policy and decision-makers, particularly at the national or regional levels.**

Assessment of monitoring and review systems:

- **M&E design.** Did the project have a sound M&E plan to monitor results and track progress towards achieving project objectives? The review will assess whether the project met the minimum requirements for project design of M&E and the application of the Project M&E. The review shall include an assessment of the quality, application and effectiveness of project monitoring and review plans and tools, including an assessment of risk management based on the assumptions and risks identified in the project document. The M&E plan should include a baseline (including data, methodology, etc.), SMART indicators and data analysis systems, and review studies at specific times to assess results. The time frame for various M&E activities and standards for outputs should have been specified.
- **M&E plan implementation.** Was an M&E system in place and did it facilitate tracking of results and progress towards projects objectives throughout the project implementation period. Were Annual project reports complete, accurate and with well justified ratings? Was the information provided by the M&E system used during the project to improve project performance and to adapt to changing needs? Did the Projects have an M&E system in place with proper training for parties responsible for M&E activities to ensure data will continue to be collected and used after project closure?
- **Budgeting and Funding for M&E activities.** Were adequate budget provisions made for M&E made and were such resources made available in a timely fashion during implementation?
- **Long-term Monitoring.** Is long-term monitoring envisaged as an outcome of the project? If so, comment specifically on the relevance of such monitoring systems to sustaining project outcomes and how the monitoring effort will be sustained.

Assessment of processes that affected attainment of project results.

The review will consider, but need not be limited to, consideration of the following issues that may have affected project implementation and attainment of project results:

- i. **Preparation and readiness.** Were the project's objectives and components clear, practicable and feasible within its timeframe? Were capacities of the

executing institutions and counterparts properly considered when the project was designed? Were lessons from other relevant projects properly incorporated in design? Were the partnership arrangements properly identified and the roles and responsibilities negotiated prior to implementation? Was availability of counterpart resources (funding, staff, and facilities), passage of enabling legislation, and adequate project management arrangements in place at project entry?

- ii. **Country ownership/Drivenness.** This is the relevance of the project to national development and environmental agendas, recipient country commitment, and regional and international agreements. Examples of possible evaluative questions include: Was the project design in-line with the national sectoral and development priorities and plans? Are project outcomes contributing to national development priorities and plans? Were the relevant country representatives, from government and civil society, involved in the project? Did the recipient government maintain its financial commitment to the project?
- iii. **Stakeholder involvement.** Did the project involve the relevant stakeholders through information sharing, consultation and by seeking their participation in project's design, implementation, and monitoring and review? For example, did the project implement appropriate outreach and public awareness campaigns? Did the project consult and make use of the skills, experience and knowledge of the appropriate government entities, NGOs, community groups, private sector, local governments and academic institutions in the design, implementation and review of project activities? Were perspectives of those that would be affected by decisions, those that could affect the outcomes and those that could contribute information or other resources to the process taken into account while taking decisions? Were the relevant vulnerable groups and the powerful, the supporters and the opponents, of the processes properly involved?
- iv. **Financial planning.** Did the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allowed management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allowed for timely flow of funds.
- v. **UNEP Supervision and backstopping.** Did UNEP Agency staff identify problems in a timely fashion and accurately estimate its seriousness? Did UNEP staff provide quality support and advice to the project, approved modifications in time and restructure the project when needed? Did UNEP Agencies provide the right staffing levels, continuity, skill mix, frequency of field visits?
- vi. **Co-financing and Project Outcomes & Sustainability.** If there was a difference in the level of expected co-financing and actual co-financing, then what were the reasons for this? Did the extent of materialization of co-financing affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability, and if it did affect outcomes and sustainability then in what ways and through what causal linkages?
- vii. **Delays and Project Outcomes & Sustainability.** If there were delays in project implementation and completion, the review will summarise the reasons for them. Did delays affect the project's outcomes and/or sustainability, and if so in what ways and through what causal linkages?

The review report shall be written in English, be of no more than 50 pages (excluding annexes), use numbered paragraphs and include:

- i) An **executive summary** (no more than 3 pages) providing a brief overview of the main conclusions and recommendations of the review;
- ii) **Introduction and background** giving a brief overview of the evaluated project, for example, the objective and status of activities;
- iii) **Scope, objective and methods** presenting the review's purpose, the review criteria used and questions to be addressed;
- iv) **Project Performance and Impact** providing factual evidence relevant to the questions asked by the evaluator and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report and should provide a commentary on all review aspects (A – F above).
- v) **Conclusions and rating** of project implementation success giving the evaluator's concluding assessments and ratings of the project against given review criteria and standards of performance. The conclusions should provide answers to questions about whether the project is considered good or bad, and whether the results are considered positive or negative;
- vi) **Lessons learned** presenting general conclusions from the standpoint of the design and implementation of the project, based on good practices and successes or problems and mistakes. Lessons should have the potential for wider application and use. All lessons should 'stand alone and should:
 - Specify the context from which they are derived
 - State or imply some prescriptive action;
 - Specify the contexts in which they may be applied (if possible who when and where)
- vii) **Recommendations.** High quality recommendations should be *actionable* proposals that are:
 1. Implementable within the timeframe and resources available
 2. Commensurate with the available capacities of project team and partners
 3. Specific in terms of who would do what and when
 4. Contain results-based language (i.e. a measurable performance target)
 5. Include a tradeoff analysis, when its implementation may require utilizing significant resources that would have otherwise been used for other project purposes.
- viii) **Annexes** include Terms of Reference, list of interviewees, documents reviewed, brief summary of the expertise of the evaluator / review team, a summary of co-finance information etc. Dissident views or management responses to the review findings may later be appended in an annex.

C Duration and Time Frame

The entire work is expected to take a total of 20 billable working days spread over a period of approximately 1 month from 5 September 2016 to 10 October 2016. This period includes desk work, field work and reporting. IUCN will providing logistical support to the process.

D Expertise Required

An expert with experience in undertaking mid-term reviews and final evaluations for Global Environment Facility funded projects

E How to apply

Interested individuals are requested to submit:

- an expression of interest,
- detailed Curriculum Vitae,
- proposed timing and/or scheduling for each task, and
- daily rate

to IUCN South Africa Office (iucnsa@iucn.org) with a copy to Cathrine Mutambirwa (cathrine.mutambirwa@iucn.org) by Thursday 31 August 2016