COUNTRY PROGRAMME LANDSCAPE STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT (COMDEKS)

COUNTRY: NAMIBIA

Contents

SUMMARY

The priority area for the "Community Development and Knowledge Management for Satoyama Initiative" (COMDEKS) Project in Namibia is the landscape called Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo Conservancy, located in the northern part of the country. The landscape lies within the Cuvelai-Etosha Basin, stretching over two regional administrative boundaries (i.e., Oshana and Omusati Regions), and at its southern boundary, it borders the Etosha National Park. The area of the territory is 154,800 hectares and has a population of 13,495 people, consisting of approximately 3,000 households. The Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo landscape was officially gazetted by the Namibian Government (Gazette Notice 4947), as a communal conservancy area, on May 15th 2012. This official declaration implies that Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo has a legal and institutional framework, recognized by the Government of the Republic of Namibia, for the management of common property resources (i.e., natural resources and wildlife) within the conservancy area.

The area was selected as a COMDEKS pilot landscape mainly due to its biodiversity, sensitive ecosystem, and tourism potential, due its proximity to the Etosha National Park. Another selection factor is that the priority area ranks amongst the most underdeveloped areas in terms of its social, economic, agricultural and ecological aspects. The selected landscape is also highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. For several years UNDP has provided long-term engagement and systematic support, in terms of community-based climate change adaptation projects. The COMDEKS activities in Namibia are expected to build on the lessons learned and on the networks of partners and stakeholders as well as the strengthened institutions resulting from previous efforts.

In the long-term, the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy for Namibia aims to increase the resilience of natural ecosystems and human production systems through partnership-based community activities which promote eco-system functions and increase landscape diversity. In the priority area, the overall approach of the COMDEKS project will be based on the main perspectives of the Satoyama Initiative, which focuses on ensuring that communities live in harmony with nature. As such, there is a clear emphasis on: resource use within the carrying capacity and resilience of the environment; cyclic use of natural resources; recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures; natural resource management by various participating and cooperating entities; and contributions to local socio-economies. Some of the expected outcomes are:

1. Enhanced provision of ecosystem services within the target landscapes through conservation activities, sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems and biodiversity protection.
2. Improved agricultural productivity in the landscape by promoting sound and sustainable agricultural practices, such as conservation tillage, resulting in increased food security. Promoting the use of indigenous crop varieties and animal breeds in food security projects will be of particular focus.

3. Alternative livelihoods options promoted within the landscape through the creation of market linkages for agricultural commodities and crafts. This will also be achieved by the establishment of a small, but viable tourism industry that supports livelihoods as well as local level small enterprises in the landscape.
4. Strengthened Institutional systems as well as multi-stakeholder participatory decision-making for greater landscape resilience.
5. The emergence of a new paradigm to be shared as a best practice for landscapes or communities to emulate.

1. PRIORITY AREA

The proposed landscape for COMDEKS in Namibia is the Iipumbu-ya-TShilongo Communal Conservancy, which is approximately 154,800 hectares in size and is situated on the north central boundary of Etosha National Park within the Oshana Region. Figure 1 and Table 1 shows the location and GPS coordinates, respectively, of Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo. The Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo was officially declared, as a communal conservancy area, in the Government Gazette on May 15th 2012 (Gazette Notice 4947). This official declaration implies that Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo has a legal and institutional framework, recognized by the Government of the Republic of Namibia, for managing common property resources in the area, with a particular focus on natural resources and wildlife. The landscape has a total resident population of about 13,495 people, with approximately 3,000 households.

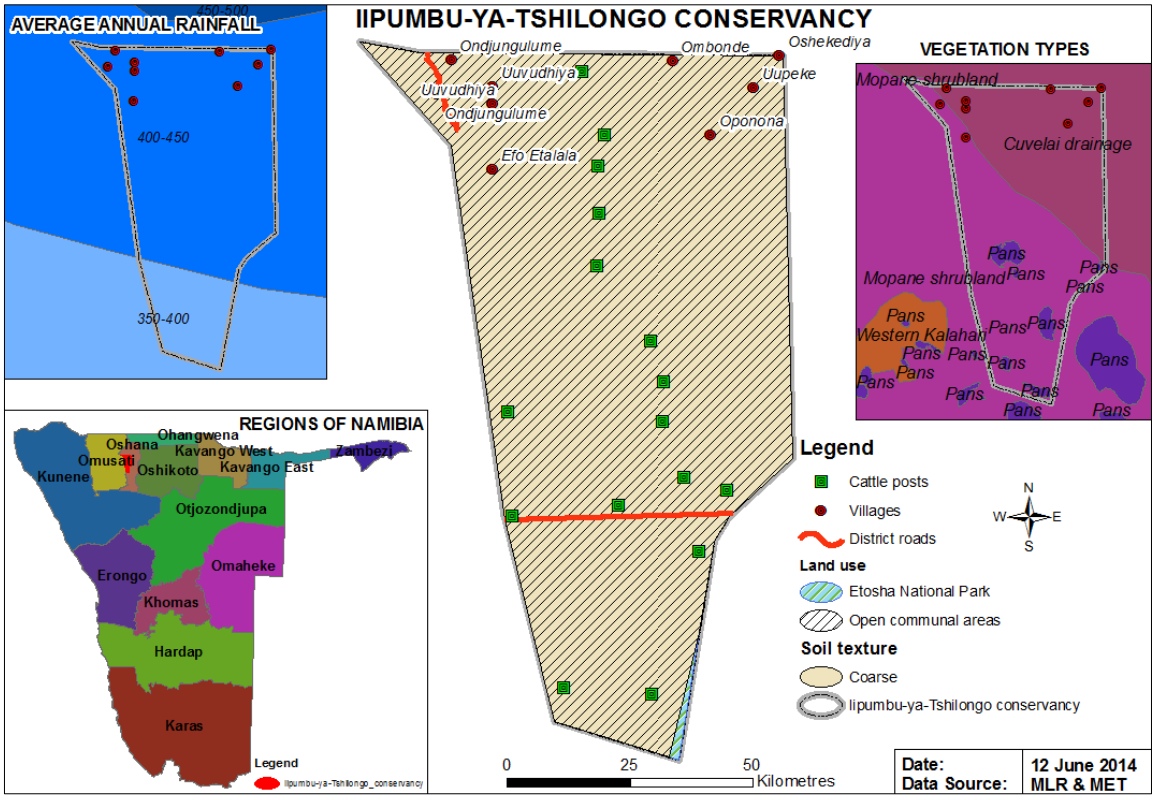

Figure 1: Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo - Location and other geographical information

Table 1: GPS Coordinates for Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo

Point	Name of the place	Coordinates
1	Oluthalweegolo	S -18° 05 44.9 and E 015° 24 45.2
2	Ondjungulume	S -18° 05 12.4 and E 15° 21 40.4
3	Onkani	S -18° 10 21.1 and E 015° 26 20.9
4	Uutembukilo	S -18° 35 30.7 and E 15° 29 33.7
5	Narawandu Gate	S -18° 39 18.1 and E 015° 32 48.6
6	Oshiwalunda	S -18° 40 52.6 and E 015° 37 49.6
7	Ilingane	S -18° 30 02.4 and E 015° 39 47.0
8	Poli	S -18° 28 48.8 and E 015° 40 35.5
9	Okakango Shooting range	S -18° 25 57.4 and E 015° 43 54.9
10	Oshekedhiya	S -18° 06 03.0 and E 015° 43 33.2
11	Oluthalweegolo	S -18° 05 44.9 and E 015° 24 45.2

1.1 Rationale for Selecting the Landscape

The rationale behind the selection of the landscape was that under the Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Program Operation 5 (GEF SGP OP5), UNDP/Namibia has implemented a number of projects in the landscape, with a particular focus on climate change adaptation at community level as well as the management and protection of biodiversity. One of such projects, implemented in the selected landscape, was the Community-Based Adaptation Project. This project piloted the implementation of six coping strategies to reduce the vulnerability of the community, to climate change. With the support of local project partners, the project was implemented through a participatory process involving different sectors of the community. Project activities and interventions have helped or are helping the community to sustain food security and income generation without negatively impacting the surrounding ecosystem or other natural resources.

COMDEKS will also complement and build on other community development activities currently being implemented in the landscape such as the communal conservancy establishment project implemented by the Namibia Development Trust (NDT) and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) through the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programme. Through the CBRNM programme, the MET and NDT have created awareness and an understanding (at the community level) of the principles, practices and virtues that are paramount for communities to live in harmony with the environment. Most of the projects that have been implemented in the landscape, by other institutions such as Namibia Development Trust and Millennium Challenge Account – Namibia, are also in line with the philosophy and principles of Satoyama as envisioned in the COMDEKS project.

Another advantage for choosing this landscape is that COMDEKS will use the already existing networks and structures, at the community level (i.e., built by MET, NASCO and NDT) for project implementation. Therefore, COMDEKS's turnaround time, from initiation and implementation of project activities to impact, will be reduced significantly – and hence lessons learned, from project activities will be generated much quicker.

1.2 Landscape description

In a broader context, the landscape (i.e., Lipumbu-ya-Tshilongo) lies within a trans-boundary wetland[1] called the Cuvelai-Etosha Basin. One of the principle features of the Cuvelai-Etosha Basin is several hundreds of drainage channels (called *iishana*, singular *oshana* – in the local language) that emerge and diverge hundreds of times. Most iishana in the target area are dry for much of the year, and when water flow does

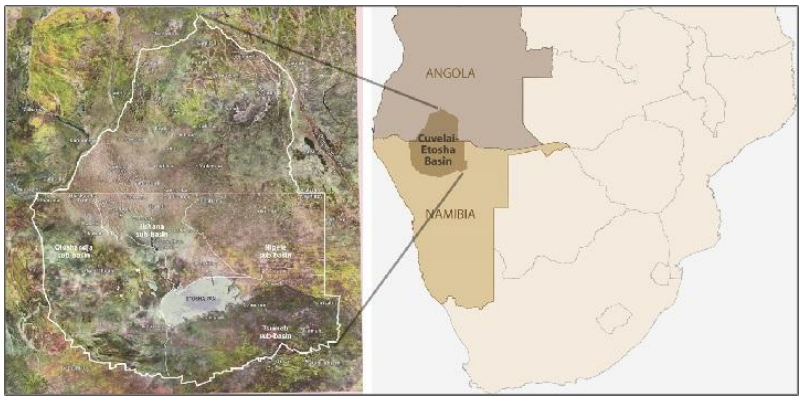

Figure 2: The Cuvelai - Etosha Basin

[1] The wetland is shared almost equally between Angola and Namibia

occurs, it ranges from tiny trickles to broad fronts of flood waters, inundating most parts of the basin. The basin has no sea outlet; however when the northern parts of the basin receive a lot of rainfall, water will usually flow, via the iishana, into the Etosha Pan - thereby creating a spectacular ecosystem that supports a diverse array of bird and other animal wildlife.

1.2.1 Vegetation and Soils

In terms of vegetation and soils, the landscape can be divided into two distinct areas. As shown in Figure 3, vegetation in the southern part of the landscape, towards the direction of Estoha National Park, is predominantly mopane shrubs, while lishanas (or the cuvelai drainage system) predominates in the northern parts. The southern part of the landscape, dominated by mopane shrubs, has a mix of alluvial clay and aeolian sandy soils, which are generally salty as a result of high rates of evaporation. The surface soils are underlain by layers of rock from mineral precipitation (such as calcrete) and as a result, plant roots are unable to reach nutrients and water underneath these layers. Hence, generally, most plants found in this area are stunted – i.e., on average the height of most shrubs is 1 – 3 mitres.

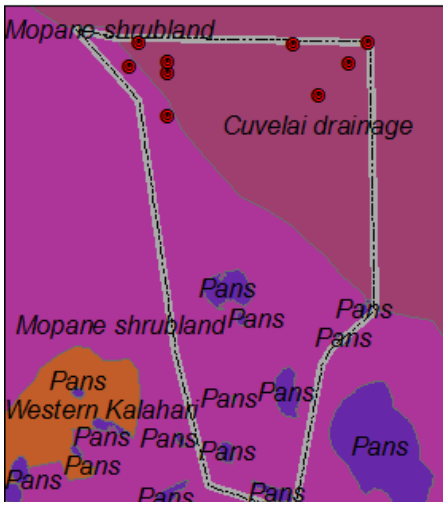

Figure 3: Classification of vegetation in the Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo landscape

The northern part of the landscape is characterised by a combination of deep Kalahari sandy soils on higher ground and water-borne clays in the low-lying channels and plains. The sands and clays are moulded and mixed to form fertile soils, which supports agricultural activities. It is for this reason that a great majority of the people live in this area. However, the primary challenge to agricultural production in this part of the landscape is that most of the surface water is saline, due to the ease of evaporation. In terms of vegetation, the lishana are mostly covered by grass species. Generally, vegetation in the northern part of the landscape is relatively much more degraded, as this is the area where a majority of people live.


Figure 4: Arial shoot of the northern part of the landscape during the raining season

1.2.2 Rainfall and Elevation

The rainfall season is generally from November to April. As illustrated in Figure 1, the landscape stretches over two rainfall zones. The northern part of the landscape receives between 400mm – 450 mm average rainfall per annum, while the southern receives between 350mm – 400mm average rainfall per annum. In terms of elevation, the landscape lies between 1,100 and 1,200 metres above the sea level. Moving in the East – West direction across the landscape, it is extremely flat, with little change in altitude or relief. However, there is a gradual reduction in altitude as one moves north-east across the landscape, towards the Etosha Pans.

1.2.3 Land: it uses and values

The Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo landscape covers some 1,548 square kilometres, with a population of about 13,495 people. Most of these people live in the northern parts of the landscape, and as a result this part is densely populated compared to the southern parts i.e. towards the Etosha National Park, that are sparsely populated. A vast majority of the people live on small farms to which they have customary user rights, but do not have ownership. There are approximately 1,500 of these holdings, most of which cover less than 10 hectares. Land rights in the landscape are administered by the Uukwaludhi Traditional Authority.

1.2.3.1 Land use

Land use in the landscape is divided into three distinctive zones comprising: crop farming, livestock farming and conservation and tourism. About 75% of the land is used for crop and livestock farming. These land use types are predominantly found in the northern parts of the landscape. Of all the crops, pearl millet (locally known as Mahangu) is by far the most common and most widespread. Small areas of sorghum, maize, and vegetables are grown as well, but mahangu is the favoured staple cereal. The vast majority of crops are produced on dry-land or rain-fed fields. Contrary to the expectation that irrigated agriculture would be prevalent in landscape, given that it lies in a wetland, it (irrigated agriculture) is not prevalent due to lack of permanent and sufficient sources of non-saline water. Another important feature of crop production, mainly mahangu production, is that it has evolved over countless generations to be a 'low-input, low-output' system, primarily because the threat of crop loss due to inadequate rainfall or pest damage is high.

Livestock farming is predominantly cattle farming, followed by goat farming. There is seasonal grazing of livestock, where livestock are moved seasonally between the residences of their owners in densely populated areas and distant grazing lands, called cattle posts. Most movements are within the areas of jurisdiction of the cattle owners' traditional authorities. The 2011 census data shows that the population density of cattle is one per square kilometre, and that on average, each homestead (household) owns about ten to fifteen cattle. The majority of the livestock breeds in the landscape are local Ngunis breeds.

1.2.3.2 Natural resources

Households in the landscape traditionally depend directly on natural resources for most of their needs. These include grazing of grasslands for livestock, poles from trees for fencing and home construction, wild fruits for consumption and production of beverages (i.e., marula fruits), grass for thatching and production of baskets, and wood for fuel, fish traps and storage containers and many other uses. Poorer households are still more dependent on natural resources compared to wealthier households; and hence poorer households are at severe disadvantage in areas where community land resources have been diminished.

Unsustainable use of natural resources as well as deforestation is evident in the landscape. Deforestation is primarily driven by people cutting down trees for fencing, home construction, and household energy requirements. However, community forest initiatives and other efforts such as people switching to bricks for

building materials as well as the promotion of alternative energy sources and energy efficient stoves within the landscape are gradually yielding results as woodland areas are slowly increasing in number.

1.2.3.3 People and livelihoods

From the 2011 census, the population density, on average, within the conservancy is about ten to fourteen people per square kilometre. The estimated population within the conservancy is about 13,495 people, of which 55.3% are female and 44.7% are male. Analysis of livelihood composition, using the 2011 census data (the pie chart below shows the composition of livelihoods of households in the landscape), shows that contrary to the widely held assumptions that most rural livelihoods depend predominantly on farming; actually old-age pension (34%) and wages and salaries (16%) account for 50% of the household livelihoods in the landscape..

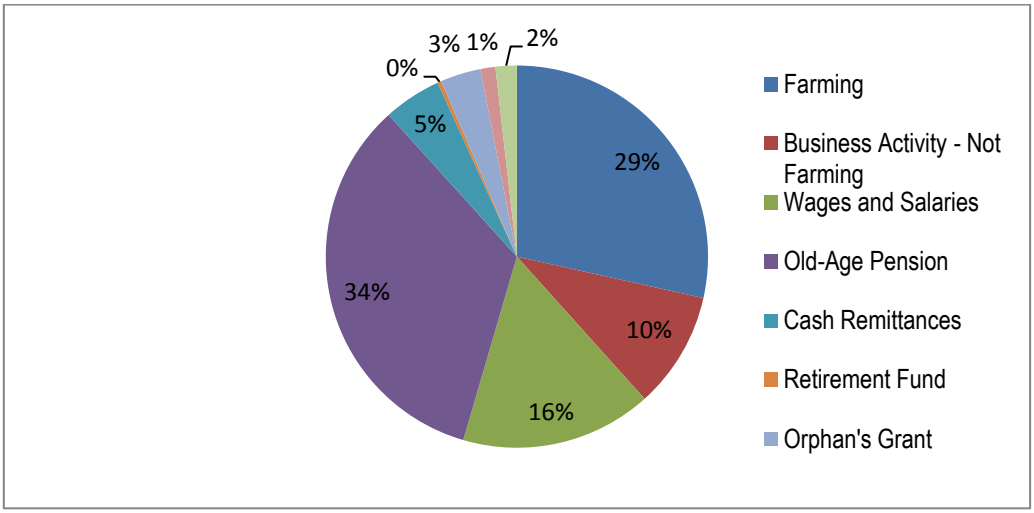

Figure 5: Composition of livelihoods in the landscape

Another important feature is the large disparity in wealth among households in the landscape. Wealth is closely linked to household size, with the largest homes generally having more income, a greater number of incomes sources, and more livestock and larger fields than poor households.

Based on the data from 2009/2010 National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (NHIES, 2009/2010), around 25% - 30% of all households in the landscape are deeply impoverished (i.e., below the poverty datum line). These households are characteristically headed by women, with only two or three family members who are either too old or too young to work, have few livestock and very small fields (less than a hectare, which are in most cases located in flood prone areas), and old-age pension as their only primary source of income.

1.3 Institutions and institutional arrangements in the Landscape

There are four key institutions, operating in the landscape, which will be important for the COMDEKS project. The first key institution is the Conservancy Committee (CC). The declaration, of the Landscape as a Conservancy, gives the CC the legal mandate to oversee all the development and management activities in the

landscape[2]. Among other things, the primary role of the CC is to sensitize the inhabitants of the Conservancy and Community Forest to the protection of wildlife, forests and the environment as a whole and derive benefits from the sustainable management and consumptive and non-consumptive utilization of natural resources. The other roles and responsibilities of the CC are stipulated in the Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo conservancy Constitution. In terms of the internal institutional arrangements, the CC is composed of 15 members representing different stakeholders in the landscape[3].

The second institutions that will be key are the government departments that have on-going activities in the landscape. These are the departments of Agriculture Extension Services and Forest (under the Ministry of Agriculture and Water and Forestry) and department of Nature Conservation (Ministry of Environment and Tourism). The former departments are supporting the communities with respect to climate change adaptation and resilience as well as establishment of the community forest in the landscape. The department of Nature Conservation is building the capacity of community members in the areas of nature conservancy as well as the establishment of an economically viable and sustainable community conservancy.

The Uuukwaludhi Traditional Authority is the third key stakeholder. The stakeholder plays an important role in the administration of land-use-rights in the landscape. These rights also extend to the utilization of natural resources in the landscape. Although the Traditional Authority is represented in the Conservancy Committee, it will be important for COMDEKS to view them as an independent stakeholder, as the success of the COMDEKS Project partly depends on their participation and/or endorsement.

Namibia Development Trust and OIKE are the fourth key institutions. The former has been, in the last three years, implementing a Community Based Natural Resources Management project. One of the key focus areas of this project is building the institutional capacity of the Conservancy Committee in the area of natural resources management. OIKE is a Community Based Organization, which has been supported by the UNDP SGP in the implementation of a Climate Change Community Adaptation project.

[2] The relevant section in the declaration states that the Conservancy shall be managed by the Conservancy Committee as provided for in the sections 24 A of the Nature Conservation, 1975 (No. 4 of 1975) as amended by the Nature Ordinance amendment Act (No. 5 of 1996).
[3] The 15 members in the CC presents the following landscape level institutions: the Uuukwaludhi Traditional Authority; Farmer Association (cooperative); San Community; Ordinary Community Members; Constituency Development Committee; Community Forest Association; and the youth association. A democratic process is used to elect members to the CC, and this process is done every three years, through a General Assembly.

2. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

This strategy was developed through an extensive stakeholder consultative process. After the selection of the landscape by the SGP NSC, a three day visit was made to Iipumbu-ya-Tshilogo, by the DRFN (the grantee awarded with the baseline assessment project), consultations were held with the Conservancy Management Committee, community members, six NGO partners and three Government Departments[4] explaining the intention of COMDEKS Projects. To better understand the ground realities in building the foundation for future COMDEKS efforts, a baseline analysis was conducted as a first step. A three days stakeholder consultative workshop was organized at Oshandira Lodge, in Oshakati, where data was collected as per the "Baseline Assessment Format" received from UNDP SGP. A total of thirty community members (representing different constituencies and areas within the landscape) and six representatives from NGOs/CBOs active in the landscape, attended the stakeholder consultative workshop.

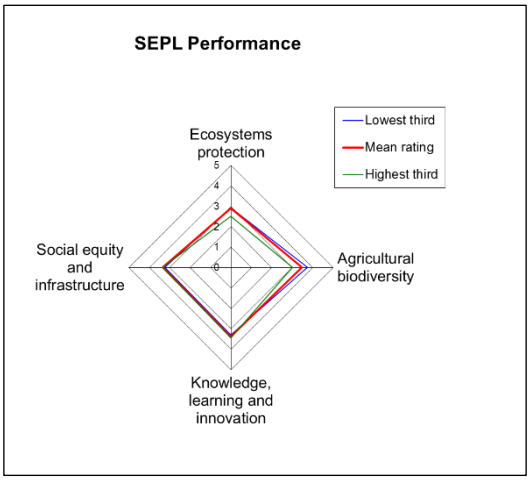

Figure 6: Graphic projection of baseline assessment according to SEPL indicators

The information collected during the initial stakeholder consultation workshop was used as inputs for the development of the landscape strategy. During the workshop, one-to-one discussions were also held with other organizations, working in the landscape, such as NDT, Creative Entrepreneur Services, OIKE and MET. The purpose of these discussions were to incorporate their view-points, lessons and best practices into the strategy. Based on the feedback from the initial stakeholder workshop, a draft landscape strategy was formulated. A final 2 days stakeholder workshop was organized in the landscape, at Engombe Agricultural Centre, where the formulated landscape strategy was presented and endorsed by representative community members. Forty community members and five representatives from NGOs/CBOs participated in the workshop. In all the community engagement activities highlighted above, a combination of adult learning techniques and Focus Group Discussion approach were used to ensure effective participation by the community member.

The major threats with respect to the landscape that were captured during the stakeholder consultative processes include the following: negative impacts of the changing climate on food security at the household level; lack of ecosystem protection; reduction in ecosystem services, especially for livestock farming; loss of agriculture biodiversity; weak institutions for biodiversity and ecosystem protection; limited access to markets; and outward migration (mainly labour) from the landscape. The major opportunities identified through the stakeholder consultative process include the following: tourism potential due to the geographical location of the

[4] Government institutions consulted included Oshana Regional Council, Omusati Regional Council, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forest, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Traditional Authority and Uuvudhiya and Otamanzi constituency offices.)

landscape; positive impacts of the changing climate such as sustainable salt harvesting; and protection of biodiversity through the establishment of a community conservancy in the landscape.

2.1 Threats

The following section describes some of the major threats that were identified during the stakeholder consultative process:

2.1.1 Negative Impacts of climate change

The current climate change projections indicate that the inter-annual climate variability (drought and flooding) will become more frequent and intense. Droughts and floods are not new phenomena in the landscape, but in recent years these two hazards have become more severe – according to community members affected. Climate variability is also affecting the crop production (mainly mahangu) season. Generally, farmers synchronize their planting to coincide with the start of the rainy season in November. However, over the past few years the rains have started later and finished earlier. In addition, increasing levels of soil degradation as a result of climate and non-climate related factors; increasing in surface water runoff as a consequence of decreased soil permeability; and increasing evapotranspiration – are among the major factors negatively affecting food security at the household level, resulting in livestock losses, reduction in milk production (due to reduced glasslands available for foraging) and a reduction in crop production.

2.1.2 Reduction in ecosystem services, especially for livestock farming

According to community members, the landscape was previously covered by savanna, and was used for cattle herding and hunting during the 1960s up to the early 1970s. Land for grazing and surface water was available throughout the year. In the 1980s, the changing climate, population growth, and unsustainable utilization of natural resources greatly disrupted the landscape's ecosystem – mainly a decrease in carrying capacity of the grazing lands and shortage of water for farmers and livestock. These impacts led farmers to move further towards Etosha Pan to look for crucial pasture and water resources for their livestock, and better lands for agriculture. Therefore, there is an observed decreasing trend in the ability and capacity of the landscape's ecosystem to provide services that support livelihoods.

2.1.3 Loss of agricultural biodiversity

Currently local or indigenous mahangu varieties in the landscape are disappearing, partly due to the fact that very few community members are growing local mahangu varieties. According to community members, this shift in varietal preference is partly driven by government food security projects/programmes that promoted the use of improved varieties at the expense of the local varieties. Another drawback to the government food security projects is that the new varieties are not well adapted to the climatic and soil conditions – thus they do not grow as well as local varieties in the landscape. If nothing is urgently done to redress this loss in agricultural biodiversity, indigenous varieties of mahangu may be lost.

2.1.4 Lack of ecosystem protection

Falling respect for the ecosystem in the face of low knowledge or lack of awareness of its significance, as well as the pressing survival needs, further contributes to its degradation, and hence its perceived importance to daily life. For instance, household energy and building needs are currently superseding those for protecting and preserving the forest – as a result the landscape exhibits a gradual but steadily increasing deforestation.

2.1.5 Weak institutions for biodiversity and ecosystem protection

During the consultative process, it was clear that most stakeholders are aware of the national laws that protect ecosystems and biodiversity such as forests. However, enforcement of these laws at the community level is proving to be difficult due to weak institutions for ecosystem protection. This challenge is also compounded by the lack of awareness amongst community members on the importance of protecting the ecosystem.

2.1.6 Limited access to markets for commodities produced in the landscape

Markets are important for agricultural growth and sustainable development. Feedback from stakeholders indicated that there is limited market access for various commodities (such as livestock, crafts and natural plant products) produced in the landscape. The market access challenge is compounded by poor infrastructure and connectivity that results in higher production and transaction costs.

2.1.7 Outward migration of labour

The reduction in the ability and capacity of the landscape ecosystem to support livelihoods is partly driving the need to seek alternative livelihood options, which are usually outside the landscape (thus resulting in an outward migration trend). Migration rates are usually higher among the younger people as compared to older members of the community. This outward migration of labour is negatively affecting household food security.

2.2 Opportunities

The following are the major opportunities that were identified during the stakeholder consultative process.

2.2.1 The potential for Tourism

Tourism has the greatest potential as an alternative livelihood source for communities in the landscape. The close proximity of the landscape to the Etosha National Park, as well as the possibility of the landscape conservancy having wildlife hunting and game-viewing concession in the Etosha National Park, offers immerse future opportunities for small local enterprises, built around the tourism industry, such as crafts, game guiding, cultural and ecotourism, etc. These small local industries could provide alternative livelihood sources.

2.2.2 The potential of sustainable salt harvesting

The changing climate and weather conditions also brings opportunities in sustainable salt harvesting. The landscape has several natural dams, where water collects during the raining season, especially during floods. Due to increasing temperatures and day length, evaporation in these natural dams happens quickly, and salt is the primary residual by-product of this process. Currently much of this residual salt is not harvested, and simply goes to waste. Therefore COMDEKS can tap into this natural resource through the promotion of sustainable salt

harvesting at the community level as well as creating market linkages for the sustainably harvested salt. This would also result in increased livelihood possibilities for community members.

2.2.3 Landscape is a registered communal conservancy

As previously mentioned, Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo was recognized as a communal conservancy. This official registration of the landscape as a conservancy has beneficial impacts on the protection of the ecosystem and biodiversity. Studies done by the CBNRM programme under the Ministry of Environment and Tourism – indicate that the establishment of communal conservancies leads to better utilization and management of natural resources as well as protection of biodiversity and the ecosystem.

2.2.4 Existence of organizational structures at the community level

The landscape has a widely recognized and respected umbrella body called the Conservancy Committee. The Conservancy Committee is composed of 15 members (6 of them are women) representing different constituencies in the landscape – from the Traditional Authority to Community Based Organizations and Youth and Women organizations. Members of the Conservancy Committee are elected through a democratic process, and serve a term of three years (under the current constitution of the conservancy). The Conservancy Committee oversees all the conservancy development activities in the landscape. Therefore, working alongside this well established and widely constituted body, future COMDEKS projects will avoid the project initiation frictional issues associated with community engagement for more effective project implementation.

3. LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

COMDEKS project will promote the maintenance and rebuilding of the Iipumbu-ya-TShilongo Socio-Ecological Production Landscape (SEPLs) where the use of land and other natural resources for inclusive socio-economic development is within the carrying capacity of the landscape; and where the value and importance of local traditions and cultures is recognized.

The overall approach will be based on the main components of the Satoyama Initiative approach, which focus on ensuring that communities live in harmony with nature with a clear emphasis on resource use within the carrying capacity and resilience of the environment, cyclic use of natural resources, recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures, natural resource management by various participating and cooperating entities, and contributions to local socio-economies. Some of the expected outcomes are:

1. Enhanced provision of ecosystem services within the target landscapes through conservation activities, sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystems and biodiversity protection.
2. Improved agricultural productivity in the landscape by promoting sound and sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in increased food security. The promotion of indigenous crop varieties and animal breeds in food security projects will be of particular focus.
3. Alternative livelihoods options promoted within the landscape, through small enterprise development support as well as the creation of market linkages for agricultural commodities and crafts.
4. Institutional systems strengthened at the landscape level by promoting the sharing of knowledge and information on effective use of resources and landscape related issues, and a more participatory decision making process in the target landscapes.
5. The emergence of a new model for landscape management and its promotion as a best practice for other landscapes or communities to emulate.

The COMDEKS program to be piloted through the Country Programme Landscape Strategy and to be implemented as a field initiative in Iipumbu-ya-Shilongo aims to champion the cause of community livelihoods within a sustainable ecosystem framework which also promotes the continuance of the community's traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. For COMDEKS to intervene in an effective manner it will need to give priority to the inputs that were made by community members during the baseline survey. The community projects that COMDEKS will support should also have some backing from the Conservancy Management Committee, Government institutions and departments on the ground. The following issues will be addressed through COMDEKS projects:

1. **Enhance food security by promoting the use of indigenous mahangu varieties and animal breeds**. Food security in the landscape is directly associated with agricultural production yields – i.e., crop and livestock production. In addition to a decline in the use traditional agricultural practices, the declining use of indigenous mahangu varieties and breeds pose a threat to food security. For instance, local or indigenous mahangu (pearl millet) varieties that are more tolerant to drought as well as saline water (compared to the new varieties that are being promoted) are disappearing from the cropping

systems. This issue was highlighted during the baseline survey, and it was mentioned that the lack of access to indigenous mahangu seeds, and lack of inter-generational transfer of traditional practices and knowledge are reasons for the observed decline.

2. **Land Improvement**. During the baseline survey, land degradation was one of the challenges prominently highlighted. Therefore COMDEKS should support community level projects which seek to address land degradation through project intervention activities that improve soil conditions (e.g., promotion of conservation tillage), prevent soil erosion, and improve water efficiency and availability.
3. **Deforestation**. Population growth in the landscape has put stress on the supply of natural resources, especially timber. Wood is primarily used for household energy needs as well as for constructing homesteads and fences. As a result, deforestation in the south-east part of the landscape is increasing. Therefore COMDEKS should support projects which seek to address deforestation as well as projects that seek to reduce the pressure on wood use – such as the use of alternative energy sources or the use of energy efficient stoves at the household level. Focus should also be placed on interventions that seek to enhance the resilience of ecosystems under the changing climate.
4. **Tourism**. At the national level tourism, through the CBNRM framework, is envisioned to be a climate change adaptation option for rural communities. The close proximity of the landscape to Etosha National Park as well as the long-term strategic plans of the conservancy implies that tourism will be a major source of income for local communities. Developing an environmentally conscious tourism industry as an ecosystem sensitive activity will help minimize negative impacts to the landscape as well as increase livelihood options for the poor over the long-term.
5. **Alternative livelihood sources**. The landscape is endowed with natural resources that are inputs in economic activities which support household livelihoods. For instance, the sustainable use of natural resources such as salt pans, marula trees, grass and palm trees, inter alia, for respective economic activities could be additional sources of livelihood. However, access to markets for the products or outputs of these potentially income generating activities such as unprocessed salt, baskets, marula fruits, etc. is a major challenge. Therefore COMDEKS should support community projects which link the outputs of natural resources to profitable end markets.

3.1 Proposed Strategy for Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo

The following points outline a direction for the strategy that will be adopted while initiating the COMDEKS project in the landscape.

1. **Promote respect for biodiversity and ethnic values, helping restore the balance between people and nature.** Before population growth became a stressor on the ecosystem, land was sufficiently available to support everyday needs and forests were accessible on a mutual management basis. This was accompanied by a respect for nature and biodiversity, and the benefits of an integrated farming system approach. The importance of these approaches was recognized as an essential aspect of day-to-day living. The abandonment of such traditional practices has led to a decline of not only biodiversity but also of the

knowledge base of traditional sustainable practices resulting in increased pressure on natural resources. The cultivation of traditional food crops, including the use of traditional practices should be renewed with the aim of providing food security and meeting the nutritional needs of the poorest families.

2. **Address decline of agricultural productivity**. As stated earlier, agricultural activity as one of the primary sources of livelihood for families has become less productive over time. This is due to factors such as: (i) falling yields from soil and water degradation, especially in light of accelerating climate change; (ii) market competitiveness tending to hurt inefficient performers, due to poor infrastructure and resultant input/output delivery inefficiencies, (iii) the national research and extension system that largely focuses on new mahangu seed varieties that are not as tolerant to drought and saline water as the indigenous varieties; and (v) the national research and extension system is largely focusing on livestock breeds that are not suitable in terms of farmer management practices and climatic conditions. It would thus be very important to pursue sustainable agriculture from a livelihood and food security perspective. Given the community's deeper understanding of ecosystems and biodiversity, COMDEKS must seek to rekindle practices and popularize traditional thinking, by emphasizing its importance in enhancing sustainability and ecosystem resilience and showing the practical applications of such approaches.
3. **Tap niche areas for income generation, enterprise development and potential from market access**. The economic growth observed in the tourism sector could provide new potential opportunities for the landscape. These could manifest through activities such as handicrafts, accommodation for tourists, and the supply of horticultural produce to the lodges, among other activities. Each of these hold potential to capture large profit margins for smallholders in the community, if market needs can be understood, logistics organized, and production made a viable activity through a system of aggregated delivery. Such an approach, may also stimulate interest among the youth, exposing them to alternate workspaces, different from the more conventional ones as suggested by their elders during the baseline assessment. As such COMDEKS will address such livelihood pursuits at household levels and establish models that can be adopted in other locations.
4. **Creating a strong knowledge capture and sharing system.** This effort will be key to positioning the entire program to provide inputs to policy makers and landscape management practitioners. It will improve understanding of landscape dynamics, stakeholder livelihoods and needs, and governance requirements through capturing and sharing experiences and learning.
5. **Cross-sectorial institutions in the landscape strengthened to support planning, negotiation, implementation and capacity building needed to sustain the implementation of important activities beyond external support**. The local institutions that should be targeted for this outcome are the Conservancy Management Committee, OIKE community based organization, and the Community Forest Committee.

Given the needs that have emerged from the baseline study, initiatives implemented will use these five cornerstones as the basis for COMDEKS project development.

3.2 Expected Outcomes

The COMDEKS programme in Namibia seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Enhanced provision of ecosystem services within the target landscapes through conservation activities and sustainable use of natural resources.
    - Indicator 1.1: Number of hectares of degraded ecosystems in the landscape brought under sustainable resource management restored or rehabilitated
    - Indicator 1.2: Number of communities demonstrating sustainable land and forest management practices.
2. Improved agricultural productivity in the target landscape by promoting sound and sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in increased food security and income generation.
    - Indicator 2.1: Number of hectares where more sustainable land use practices are implemented by type.
    - Indicator 2.2: Number of farm groups/communities and farmers (disaggregated by gender) participating in adoption of appropriate technologies and systems, including crop diversification, use of local/indigenous varieties, conservation farming, low cost renewable technologies for drying, and energy efficiency technologies, etc.
    - Indicator 2.3: Percentage increase in yields of major crops due to COMDEKS activities
3. Alternative livelihoods options promoted within the landscape to enable access to markets.
    - Indicator 3.1: Number of alternative income sources created through livelihood diversification (i.e. sustainable salt harvesting, handcrafts production and ecotourism).
    - Indicator 3.2: Number of participating community members (gender disaggregated) benefitting by project activities.
    - Indicator 3.3: Percentage increase in household income as a result of supported activities
4. Strengthened Institutional systems as well as multi-stakeholder participatory decision-making for greater landscape resilience.
    - Indicator 4.1: Number of community-based institutions created or strengthened who are engaged in integrated landscape management.
    - Indicator 4.2: Number of policy or plans influenced or created at the national and community levels which reflect decisions negotiated in a participatory manner at the landscape level.
    - Indicator 4.3: Number and type of networks / support mechanisms created
    - Indicator 4.4: Number of community members (gender disaggregated) participating in decision making processes
5. Emergence of a new model for landscape management and its promotion as a best practice for other landscapes or communities to emulate
    - Indicator 5.1: Number of best practices documented in any of the focus area of the COMDEKS project

- Indicator 5.2: Number of COMDEKS lessons learned from the project.

4. TYPOLOGY OF POTENTIAL COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS AND CRITERIA FOR PROJECT SELECTION

In order to achieve the stated objectives and overall goal of COMDEKS, it is important to have a balance in the portfolio projects that will be supported to ensure sustainable Socio-ecological Productive Landscapes, in which the ecosystem is respected and protected, and sustainable livelihoods are achieved. Therefore the activities planned need to be those that can meet local requirements effectively. Examples of projects include:

- Those that contribute to the accomplishment and fulfilment of the vision of the Satoyama Initiative vision fulfilment – i.e., improvement of local communities' livelihoods while promoting biodiversity and landscape resilience.
- Those where the unique attributes of the region can be leveraged – the projects should be replicable in similar natural, economic and social conditions.
- Those where the local activity can sustain itself against the logistical burden of carrying goods in for the common needs of the region, or even those that can build upon the raw material available through value addition activity in which the community can be involved effectively, such as handcrafts, sustainable harvesting and marketing of natural plant products (i.e., marula fruits, mopane worms, etc).
- Those that support needs of conservation based on community led initiatives through field interventions or even those revolving around advocacy, awareness building, and capacity development.
- Those which increase participation by local stakeholders in public affairs administration and management of the target area through activities which will contribute to job creation and more sustainable utilisation of renewable local resources.
- Those projects which are judged feasible to implement and can achieve measurable impact within the life span of the COMDEKS project.

In addition, submitted projects must address more than one landscape outcome. As such they should be: ***Intersectoral*** - their environmental, social and economic benefits have to be clearly defined; ***innovative*** – new and innovative models / traditional methods revival will be assessed; ***sustainable*** – ownership, potential policy influence, institutional strengthening, capacity building, cost-effectiveness need to be demonstrated; and ***replicable*** – project activities must be replicable in similar conditions.

The landscape strategy section highlighted the types of community initiatives which should be implemented in pursuit of the stated objectives COMDEKS. During the stakeholder validation workshop, community

members identified the following plausible activities with respect to each of expected outcomes of the strategy:

1. **Outcome 1: Enhance provision of ecosystem services through conservation activities, sustainable use of natural resources and the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity**.
   Activities under this strategic outcome should focus on the revitalization and the protection of the ecosystem in the landscape. The biophysical stresses and threats on the ecosystem can be addressed through biological stabilization of the physical soil and water conservation. The biological stabilization measures require planting and growing appropriate multiple use species of trees and shrubs. Other potential activities that were identified during the stakeholder validation workshop include: awareness raising about the importance of protecting the landscape's ecosystem; developing and strengthening mechanisms for monitoring natural resource use at the community level; developing and strengthening the mechanisms for enforcing ecosystem protection laws at the community level; stopping deforestation through the establishment of a community forest; promotion of traditional values and norms that protect and respect the ecosystem; and establishing of community seed banks for local varieties of mahangu.

2. **Outcome 2: Improved agricultural productivity and food security, through the promotion of sound and sustainable agricultural practices**.
   The food security situation in the landscape can be enhanced through improved agriculture productivity. When considering production methods, it would be important to prefer well-tested and eco-friendly activities such as conservation agriculture technologies and organic fertilizer. Activities that were identified during the stakeholder validation workshop include:

   - Enhancement and strengthening of food security and nutrition at the household level through sustainable and improved agricultural practices;
   - Protecting and enhancing ecosystem services such as water flow and water quality through restoration of forest patches and soil water retention infrastructure;
   - Sustainable rangeland management through synchronized grazing as well as herd management; promotion of local and indigenous crop varieties and animal breeds;
   - Use of stress-tolerant and fast maturing mahangu varieties; and documentation of environmental friendly and traditional agricultural practices.

3. **Outcome 3: Alternative livelihoods options promoted within the landscape to enable access to markets**
   During the baseline assessment, it was found that agriculture was increasingly unable to support the livelihoods of most community members in the landscape. This situation is exacerbated by climate change, among other things. Therefore it is paramount for COMDEKS projects to promote

alternative livelihood options by supporting the creation of small enterprises at the local level as well as creating market linkages. Examples of community initiatives that could be supported include

- Provide support to the development of the tourism potential in the landscape. This could be done through community driven initiatives (which were also endorsed during the stakeholder validation workshop) such as marketing of the game-viewing and filming concession that the conservancy has in Etosha National Park, and construction of a tourist camping site and lodge in the southern part of the landscape near Etosha National Park. Another area of support is the development of small enterprises, at the local level, such as handicrafts, horticultural produce supply and tour guiding - which will be built around the tourism sector.
- Development of small enterprises to sustainably harvest salt from the three major salt pans that are found in the landscape. This activity provides opportunities not only as an alternative livelihood option, but also for employment among the youth in the landscape. This activity should be complemented by the development of market linkages for the sustainably harvested salt.

4. **Outcome 4: Strengthened Institutional systems as well as multistakeholder participatory decision-making for greater landscape resilience.**

The cooperation between different sectors and stakeholders at the local level in the target landscape, e.g. local authorities, non-profit organizations, government department and private sector individuals, creates good opportunities to better understand the roles and needs of each player in local development. Creation of cooperation networks and support schemes lead to improved access and use of information and knowledge, raises awareness effectively and increases the engagement of people in civic affairs and land use planning. Creating partnerships and supporting participatory processes shall be an overarching aspect of all supported projects. Examples of suitable activities, proposed and endorsed during the stakeholder validation workshop include:

- Creating networks to share knowledge and lessons learned from project implementation, improve the consultative processes and support participatory processes in policy and legislation development both at the local and national levels;
- Involving marginalized and vulnerable groups in the project preparation, implementation and monitoring, thus creating enabling environments for their social inclusion at the local level; mobilizing and engaging different groups of local stakeholders to become agent for change for sustainable development;
- Creating equal opportunities for both genders to participate in the process of project preparation, implementation and monitoring;

- Improving knowledge and building capacities through awareness raising, training and workshops.

4.1 Selection Criteria for CBOs and NGOs

In addition to examining their history to effective implement a project of this nature and previous records such as audited balance sheets for the past two years, the criteria for selection of CBOs and the NGOs as partners in the program will have the following considerations:

1. Endorsement of the proposed project activities by any stakeholder constituency in the landscape. The project proposal and activities should demonstrate extensive involvement and participation of community members.
2. Long term commitment to the cause of environment through community led initiatives.
3. Qualitative ability to understand differential aspects of the COMDEKS project from other routinely funded projects.
4. Contribution to the vision of the Satoyama initiative and that of COMDEKS Namibia CPLS, which is enhancing resilience of the Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo socio-ecological production landscape.
5. Clarity and a higher commitment to achieve the objectively verifiable indicators, in the strategy.
6. The final list of projects constituting the overall basket of pilot project situations will be selected following the GEF/UNDP SGP Guidelines. This will serve the needs of COMDEKS globally considering the examples it hopes to generate for up scaling and replication of future projects across the globe.
7. Allocation within the budget line to share the results of the COMDEKS project with a wider group of policy makers and civil society to continue the Satoyama philosophy.
8. Mainstreaming of gender in the intervention activities of the project.

The project needs to ensure that the principles of the Satoyama Initiative are respected while the objectives outlined under COMDEKS are met. It is also suggested that all projects include the name of landscape within the project title and a tag line added along the lines of "*A Satoyama Initiative under the Global COMDEKS Program"*. This will help give an identity to the project unique to the effort, yet integrating it into the larger planned global effort.

4.2 GEF/ UNDP SGP National Steering Committee meetings for COMDEKS

The COMDEKS project will be governed through the National Steering Committee (NSC) formed under the GEF OP 05 SGP programme. It (COMDEKS) will be a separate agenda in every National Steering Committee meeting happening under the UNDP GEF/SGP in Namibia. The NSC and the projects will be approved in line with the GEF SGP Global Guidelines using the COMDEKS programme templates.

At the local level, Conservancy Management Committee, a landscape umbrella body, supported by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Government of Namibia, will be closely involved with COMDEKS

activities. Links will also be established with a range of government and non-Government departments and institutions to leverage resources, knowledge and skills. The SGP National Coordinator has ensured that a qualified person is engaged to support the COMDEKS project.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

Once the projects have been approved through a process and due diligence, there will be need for creating efforts for convergence, synergy and sharing of experiences. Regular monitoring and documentation will be done in accordance with the monitoring plan that will be incorporated in the individual project document.

Each prospective NGO partner will be guided on the outcome-based approach to be adopted under the project. The projects will follow the COMDEKS and SGP guidelines of submission of quarterly and annual progress reports and each project will be subject to mid-term and final evaluations. Six-monthly exposure visits will be organized amongst the stakeholders for experience sharing and learning, allowing for corrections at different stages of the project outcomes. A dedicated project person will be engaged to guide and monitor through regular visits and bring in linkages with government departments and other stakeholders.

5.1 Minimum standards for monitoring and evaluation of individual grants

Country Programme Landscape Level Indicators: SEPL Indicators measured during the baseline assessment will be monitored on an annual basis. A final assessment of SEPL indicators will take place at a workshop financed by grant funding. This will serve as a final evaluation of the Country Programme Landscape Strategy.

Project Level Indicators: Each project will identify the specific landscape strategy outcome to which it is contributing and will monitor the corresponding indicators (Projects are encouraged to address more than one outcome at the landscape level and track relevant indicators). Progress towards the outcome will be updated using the grantees' progress reports. Additionally, the individual project will have an indicator system aligned with GEF SGP's OP5 system of indicators.

Individual grant M&E: The following minimum standards shall be applied for individual project grants:

- ***Ex-ante Visits***: The project team should undertake ex-ante visits on a risk basis to grant-requesting organizations, upon grant approval by the NSC and prior to the signature of the MOA between the Implementing Partner and the grantee.
- ***Field monitoring visits***: Every project should be visited at least twice in its lifetime, upon receipt of the first progress report from beneficiary organizations and during the following year. NSC members with relevant expertise in project-related technical areas may join the NC during these visits as appropriate.
- ***Progress reports***: Beneficiary organizations should submit half-yearly progress reports to the NC along with a financial report. A forecast of resources needed in the following period should be submitted by the grantee to the NC as a requirement for disbursement of the next instalment.

- ***Final project evaluation report***: Beneficiary organizations should submit a final report summarizing global benefits and other results achieved, outputs produced, and lessons learned. The final report should also include a final financial statement.

6. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Knowledge management, exchange of gained experience[5] as well as replication of technical and managerial approaches and stressing of cultural, behavioural and motivational reasons/aspects of interest groups all represent important aspects of COMDEKS CPLS. Each grantee is expected to contribute to the generation and documentation of best practices and lessons learned. It is therefore required that each project allocates a portion of its budget to produce specific knowledge products that will summarise the lessons learned and best practices.

It has been a practice with GEF/SGP to regularly develop knowledge management materials e.g. case studies, generate brochures, short photo stories, films and focused success stories of each project. The partners are also encouraged to share their experiences through regular and thematic-area-wise workshops organized nationally and internationally; through the civil society and government network that has been created. This similar approach will be followed under COMDEKS initiatives.

Knowledge management plan involves generation of experience through interim reports, during site visits and in the course of informal discussions with applicants, civic organisations, government representatives and other important stakeholders; followed by their continuous sharing with other programme beneficiaries in order for the application and utilisation of these to be secured. Also, if necessary, such experience and knowledge can be improved further to serve similar or other purposes. Intended knowledge management beneficiaries include: grantees, project teams, programme partners, government, donors, research and educational institutions, NGOs, CBOs, experts and interested members of public.

Once the COMDEKS Strategy is approved, a brochure will be developed on the approach to be followed which will be shared with different partners for replication in other parts of the country.

Intended knowledge management beneficiaries include: grantees, project teams, programme partners, government, donors, research and educational institutions, NGOs, CBOs, experts and interested members of the public. The methods addressing knowledge management and transfer of knowledge and experience within the COMDEKS CPLS framework, similar to those defined for GEF SGP Namibia, will be:

- Steering Committee meetings
- GEF SGP Namibia Republic Web site with links to individual applicants
- Information transfer through existing networks and portals – environmental NGOs, Ministry of Environment SR Enviroportal or other public and private websites
- Regular GEF SGP database updating

[5] Including successful and unsuccessful examples

- Exchanges among and visiting of individual projects aimed at experience exchange in the field of similar problem solving initiatives, to mobilize support for key issue areas and apply lessons learned to the implementation of future efforts and other initiatives.
- Compiling a database of experts and suppliers among GEF SGP programme implementers, which can be used if needed
- Organisation of Info-days aimed at replicating or extending initiatives
- Annual Info meetings or joint project visits for donors, government departments, NGOs, academia, private sector representatives, media, etc.
- Contribution to the Namibia sub-pagr in the COMDEKS website, www.comdeksproject.com

Informing and affecting policy (lobbying) is a long-term process which can take place directly within the scope of individual projects or through coordination meetings (Info-days) with project implementers, where lobbying potential would be discussed. It could also be done via involvement in various advisory bodies of national or regional institutions.