



Together for birds and people



A Sida-funded programme at the Swedish Biodiversity Centre

Project Title: *Improving the livelihoods of local communities in Africa by promoting sustainable use of renewable natural resources through increased participation in biodiversity policy making and implementation*

Region or Country: Africa: Botswana, Burkina Faso and Kenya

Donor: Swedish Biodiversity Programme (SwedBio)

Focal Area: Livelihoods Improvement and Policy making through biodiversity conservation

Amount of Financing: Euros 532,758

Collaborators: BirdLife International Africa Partnership Secretariat, BirdLife Botswana, Fondation des Amis de la Nature (NATURAMA), and Nature Kenya

Project Status: On-going

Duration: 4 years (2004 – 2008)

Last Updated: April 2008

Project Description: Building on previous support from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) before the establishment of SwedBio, the project is working within the expanded regional network of national NGOs in Africa established by the BirdLife Partnership, and supported by the Council for the African Partnership (CAP), to build new and enhanced support and capacity for policy dialogue at all levels. The project is working, through Site Support Groups (SSGs), at sites of international significance for biodiversity (Important Bird Areas - IBAs) to establish case studies which illustrate the linkages between poverty reduction and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Overall Goal: Supporting Africa's poor through sustainable use of biodiversity

Specific objectives: Improving the livelihoods of local communities in Africa by promoting sustainable use of renewable natural resources through increased participation in biodiversity policy-making and implementation.

Rationale: The overall and specific objectives, and all the results, are aimed at demonstrating that there is a causal link between the sustainable use of biodiversity and the maintenance and enhancement of livelihoods and reduction of poverty amongst rural people in the developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. The rural poor in Africa, particularly very poor and marginalized groups, depend on natural capital for their livelihoods. Millennium Development Goals have highlighted this plight as well. If well capacitated through awareness and training and support its possible that very poor communities who live adjacent to areas of high biodiversity or IBAs could use the resources sustainably, advocate for their greater conservation which could lead to improved livelihoods. Political will and influence through policy makers is needed to influence policies to start linking these two intricate issues.

Main Activities:

Result 1: To establish pilot projects on the sustainable use of biodiversity that enhances the livelihoods of local communities through

SSGs undertaking pilot sustainable use projects, developing collaboration frameworks with key stakeholders at site level, developing advocacy materials on pilot projects and developing and implementing advocacy plans

Result 2: To empower local communities to participate in biodiversity policy making and implementation at various levels through

BirdLife Partners designating focal points within their organization, assessing and building SSG capacities, undertaking studies on biodiversity, national workshops and exchange visits for SSGs, ensuring participation of SSGs in National Liaison Committees or similar forums, developing national advocacy materials and continuous M&E.

Result 3: To strengthen the capacity of representative national NGOs in Africa (BirdLife partners) to support local participation in biodiversity policy making and implementation through recruiting

Project Coordinator and project management support, analyzing national case studies on pilot projects, organizing regional workshops and ensuring biodiversity is mainstreamed in Partners programmes



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Result 4: To promote the participation of African national NGOs and local community organizations in regional and national policy forums related to biodiversity through

tracking global and regional developments with a view to identifying advocacy opportunities for project, ensure participation and input to regional and global forums including MEAs meetings, organize workshops and Partnerships building

Recent Achievements and Status:

The following are some of the major achievements:

- Start up of sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity conservation projects in 9 SSGs
- 9 SSGs with Baseline information on socio-economics, biodiversity and institutional status
- Capacity development of 9 SSGs and Partners in policy making and implementation through trainings and awareness creation
- Input into national policy development by the three Partners on relevant policies such as on wetlands, Forests, protected areas, biodiversity among others.
- Start up of MEAs national coordination by some Partners
- Advocacy on activities being implemented through over 30 press releases, News alerts, Newsletter and e-bulletin articles and website development, petitions, coalition building among others
- Development of advocacy materials including fact sheets, brochures, fliers, publications, guidelines among others
- Capacity increase in P&A coordination in Africa through recruitment of Regional coordinator and strengthening of Africa Policy and Advocacy working group (APAWG) and national policy and advocacy working groups.
- Engagement with regional political institutions such as AMCEN and submission of input proposal to their work programme.
- Engagement with African Conventions with particular emphasis on the Nairobi convention and submission of an input proposal to the conventions work programme and attendance of the Conventions COP
- Engagement with international MEAs including the CBD, Ramsar, CMS, AEWA among others and contributing to their work programmes and meetings
- Development of a regional policy and advocacy strategy
- Responding to threats facing bird species and the key sites e.g. lake Natron advocacy for more visit:
http://www.birdlife.org/action/campaigns/lake_natron_flamingos/index.html
- Input into national EIAs that affect protected areas and IBAs such as Lake Natron in Tanzania and Tana Delta in Kenya
- Continued monitoring and guidance where relevant of project implementation
- Development of management tools such as reporting templates, monitoring tools, Capacity Assessment tools, SSG guidelines for collaboration etc.
- Enabling Partnership to access funds for scale up of the project from other donors such as the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI)

Lessons Learned:

- Its possible to use renewable resources sustainably with adequate knowledge to improve livelihoods and enhance conservation efforts
- Many SSGs and other stakeholders need lots of capacity building to start understanding policies and how they can influence them at their level
- Need for constant touch with the groups especially those at nascent stage
- Good participatory planning that takes care of stakeholder interests is key to effective project execution.
- Community ownership of the project and the processes involved speeds up project progress and increases chances of success.
- Constant communication and collaboration between SSG and village-based stakeholders is key to project success. Community institutions are set up for a common purpose which is to improve the standards of livelihoods of village members, so when they are in synchrony this objective is achieved.
- Mass media is a powerful tool in advocacy
- Policy and Advocacy working groups are a great asset in generating response to policies, EIAs and strategy documents

Challenges

- Project start up with community based projects takes a long time for mobilization hence project not able to meet some milestones in a timely manner
- Political engagement by communities during electioneering periods at the expense of project work
- All of Partners inputs was not always included in policy
- A myriad of threats face many sites at the same time hence challenge of which ones to address first
- Shortages of inputs for projects like seedlings and saplings due to drought and rainfall variances
- Many expectations that are beyond the project capacity from communities on livelihoods



Botswana



Burkina Faso



Nature Kenya

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