

NAMIBIA



Namibia PA System Strengthening

Strengthening the Protected Area Network (SPAN)
 Namibia Protected Landscape Conservation Areas Initiative (NAM-PLACE)
 Strengthening the Capacity of the Protected Area System to Address New Management Challenges (PASS)



Protected Areas & Project Sites

Namibia Protected Area System:

Bwabwata-Mudumu-Mamili (BMM) Complex (Etosha), Skeleton Coast Link, Ai-Ais, and Sperrgebiet

Landscape Conservation Areas:

1. Mudumu Landscape
2. Greater Waterberg
3. Windhoek Green Belt
4. Greater Sossusvlei-Namib (Namib Naukluft Park)
5. Greater Fish River Canyon (Ai-Ais Hot Springs Game Park and Naute Recreation Resort)

The Greater Waterberg Complex, Etosha National Park, Skeleton Coast Park, Dorob National Park, Bwabwata, Mudum, Mkasa Rupara, and Khaudum

Donor

[GEF](#)

Dates

Start: 02/01/2006

End: 03/31/2018

Project Status

Completed

Donor Funding Amount

Total Amount (US\$): \$17,150,000

IWT Percentage: >90%

Primary IWT Intervention Type

Protected areas

The Namibia Protected Area case study summarizes three sequential GEF financed projects (total of \$17 million) implemented between 2006 and 2018. The projects collectively aimed to strengthen the Namibian Protected Area (PA) system, its contributions to biodiversity conservation, and social development. The project successfully spurred co-financing and parallel financing from over 12 other donors. GEF complemented existing government, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other donor initiatives by funding the ‘types of interventions and areas’ that had received less funding for specific projects. Project activities contributed to improved PA management effectiveness, stronger PA financing and investment, and more land managed for conservation and community benefits. Lessons learned from these GEF projects in Namibia include the importance of engaging stakeholders across sectors to support the sustainability of the PA system; the need to plan for long lead times when engaging new donors and partners; and effectively sequencing projects to generate large-scale impacts and secure long-term environmental benefits.

Etosha National Park



Photo: UNDP

Project Objective

Strengthen the Namibian protected area system and its contributions to biodiversity conservation and social development. Project-specific objectives included:

- Improve management effectiveness of the national system of protected areas by putting in place national policies and institutional capacity to support an effective protected area system (SPAN)
- Establish Protected Landscape Conservation Areas by promoting biodiversity conservation and community benefits in protected areas, privately-owned farms and community-managed conservancies (NAM-PLACE)
- Strengthen long-term financial sustainability of the protected area system and preparedness to emerging threats, including poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking (PASS)

Activities and Executing Partners

The three GEF Namibia projects supported the government's broader reform towards community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) and PA system benefit sharing by addressing foundational capacity and policy for the Namibian PA system, the engagement of communities in landscape conservation, and the strengthening of systems for financial sustainability and combating wildlife crime. Each of the three projects included three components:

SPAN (GEF-3, 2006–2012):

1. Enhance PA management effectiveness by improve capacity, legal and policy environment, and financial mechanisms;
2. Strengthen institutional capacities for PA management by more effectively using financial and human resources;
3. Improve PA management through use of innovative field management practices.

NAM-PLACE (GEF-4, 2010–2016):

1. Establish Protected Landscape Conservation Areas (LCAs) by introducing a framework to formalize collaborative management arrangements, create best practice guidelines and codes of practice for LCA establishment and management;
2. Develop strategic plans to demonstrate LCA and management/work plans for each individual landholding (e.g. private farms, conservancies), and the operationalize collaborative management committees;
3. Promote incentives and market transformation by developing business plans, assessment and development of tourism opportunities and supply chains for biodiversity-friendly game production.

PASS (GEF-5, 2014–2018):

1. Improve systems to increase PA revenue generation by piloting an automated system for park entry permits in Etosha National Park and supporting a national roll-out, strengthening of fee and licensing system, and investigation of innovative financing mechanisms;
2. Improve wildlife protection by deploying cost-effective law enforcement to address poaching and wildlife crimes, supporting training, information-sharing, anti-poaching operations, and surveillance and monitoring;

- Promote integrated fire management by implementing a fire management strategy for Namibia's PA system, building capacity to manage fire outbreaks and the establishment of fire management forums involving local communities and farmers adjacent to PAs.

KEY EXECUTING PARTNERS INVOLVED

- Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET)—Executing partner
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as GEF Implementing Agency

Donor Coordination

All donors that co-financed this project or related investments:

The Government of Namibia was the key co-financer for all three projects, supported by commitments from UNDP, KfW Development Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Cheetah Conservation Fund and the private sector (e.g. Namib Rand Nature Reserve and Gondwana Collection).

Beyond the co-financing committed during project design, there was active donor coordination during implementation to support integration of activities with co-financers and to identify new co-financing opportunities. Donor coordination was particularly noteworthy for SPAN. Since the outset of SPAN, it was expected that the GEF funding would be used to leverage additional resources for investment in infrastructure and equipment that could not be covered by the GEF grant. Over \$50 million was secured during the first two and a half years of SPAN from donors including the Game Product Trust Fund, the European Union (EU Rural Poverty Reduction Programme), Conservation International, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Peace Parks Foundation, and the Millennium Challenge Account.

Similarly, during the PASS project generated additional funding to combat IWT in response to escalated poaching. Donor coordination included UNDP-organized meetings to discuss poaching issues with diplomatic representatives from US, EU, Japan, China and GIZ. PASS co-hosted a fundraising event with MET, held on World Wildlife Day in 2017 to coordinate fundraising activities of both domestic and external donors/partners. PASS with UNDP established a partnership with the Yahoo Japan Corporation, securing \$43,076 (JPY 5,000,000) to support the construction of a semi-permanent Anti-Poaching Patrol Camp in Etosha National Park. PASS also leveraged commitments of \$80,000 (nearly NZ\$1 million) to support wildlife protection efforts in Namibia. Through PASS, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) funded training and co-financed the construction of kennels for anti-poaching dogs and staff houses for trainers and caretakers that will build on the gains made by PASS.

Key project benefits resulting from donor coordination and areas for improvement:

An example of the excellent coordination with parallel donor-funded activities included efforts between SPAN and the KfW-funded Bwabwata-Mamili-Mudumu (BMM) Complex initiative (e.g. same steering mechanisms, co-located project teams). The KfW-funded NAMPARKS program has been instrumental in advancing the conservation agenda in Namibia. The program has had five phases with an investment of more than EU 37 million. The strong coordination attracted additional EU funding to establish Mangetti Game Camp and support wildlife translocation. Close coordination with the EU also supported achievement of project objectives. For example, the EU-funded Rural Poverty Reduction Program was instrumental to address how local communities benefit from the PA system. The PASS project further strengthened coordination between donors and MET operations, providing opportunities for donors to strengthen synergies and fill critical funding gaps at a time when poaching clearly overwhelmed existing government capacity to manage the threat.

The GEF investment to strengthen the PA system leveraged other complimentary investments, covering both traditional donors (e.g. SPAN) and new private sector investment (e.g. PASS). The full integration of projects within the government's work and clear project effectiveness attracted donors (who in turn provided additional investment that bolstered this success). The GEF project teams ongoing efforts to draft funding proposals and actively searching for funding opportunities also supported donor dialogue.

Results

KEY OUTCOMES

1. Improved PA management effectiveness:

- Improved management effectiveness across 98 percent of the PA network (measured by Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool—METT).
- Strengthen PA planning through preparation of PA management and business plans.
- Significantly reduced elephant and rhino poaching through capacity building. Constructed Wildlife Protection Training Centre at Waterberg Plateau National Park, delivered targeted law enforcement training and established anti-poaching patrols and camps.

2. Strengthened PA financing and investment:

- Supported four-fold MET budget increase for PA management by enabling a 25 percent of park entrance fees through the Game Products Trust Fund (providing an additional \$2 million annually for PA management and infrastructure development). This was achieved in part due to the documentation of a 24 percent rate of return on PA management (economic valuations of the value of the PA system) with the potential to rise to 42 percent within 20 years. This budget increase strengthens the institutional and legal basis for PA management.
- Stimulated the first investment by the U.S. Millennium Challenge Account in PA strengthening through completion of innovative economic valuation.
- Developed a Sustainable Financing Plan for Namibia's PA system with a framework and timeframe to revise fees, licensing structures and development of new revenue mechanisms.
- Implemented an automated PA revenue collection system at Etosha National Park and completed a financial feasibility study for system roll-out across the national PA system.

3. More land managed for conservation and community benefits:

- Proclaimed new PAs to bring national PA coverage to 17 percent of land area and increase protection of under-represented biomes such as Succulent Karoo.
- Created five Landscape Conservation Areas covering some 3.5 million hectares, bringing together public and private land managed for conservation, and supported by agreed collaborative governance arrangements, management plans and revenue generation and benefit-sharing mechanisms.
- Established national policies that support win-win benefits for conservation and community, including the groundbreaking *Tourism and Wildlife Concessions Policy*, providing a best-practice model for engaging communities as custodians and beneficiaries of protected landscapes, and *Human-Wildlife Conflict Management Policy* and *Parks and Neighbours Policy*, which provide guidance on how to deal with human-wildlife interactions.
- Facilitated a paradigm shift toward biodiversity-friendly land use and community benefits derived from maintenance of wildlife populations.

KEY CHALLENGES

While the GEF Namibia projects had impressive results, some challenges faced included:

Escalation of wildlife poaching: The escalation of wildlife poaching during project implementation required regular adaptive management, including adjustment of annual work plans and broadening of activities to prioritize a crisis-level poaching response and the development of new co-financing partnerships to provide additional resources for anti-poaching efforts (e.g. Yahoo Japan funds to establish a semi-permanent Anti-Poaching Patrol Camp in Etosha National Park).

Changing political and social landscapes: Namibia's CBNRM reform deployed a range of ground-breaking policies and incentives for co-management and the sharing of benefits from the PA system. The CBNRM reforms were at times delayed by changes in government and/or legal processes impacting natural resources access, control and benefits. These changes introduced new stakeholders into the process which required additional time to effectively develop joint and collaborative management approaches for PAs and landscapes.

Shifting government resources: The projects took place against a backdrop of shifting government resources. The unpredictable nature of domestic resource flows challenged government's ability to support ongoing implementation of activities following project closure, however MET's strong engagement and alignment of projects to government priorities helped mitigate this.

Lessons Learned

Top lessons learned:

Sustainability of the PA system is underpinned by multi-sector engagement: While the three GEF Namibia projects were highly effective, the long-term sustainability of project outputs will depend upon broader engagement and mainstreaming across government (horizontally and vertically), particularly against a backdrop of declining government resources. This engagement with line Ministries should commence early, ideally during project design/development. These broader relationships across government can be supported by carefully sequenced projects that build on earlier achievements. For example, the economic evaluations of the value of the PA system supported by the SPAN project were invaluable in building broader government support for the PA system and for drawing connections between the PA system and other sectors. SPAN's work on tourism concessions and understanding of the potential for the PA system to benefit community and conservation informed the development of the NAM-PLACE project and was further strengthened by it.

An adaptive approach to donor coordination is needed and often most successful: Projects are not delivered in a static environment and things change between project development and the time of project inception, and over the course of implementation. In Namibia, shifting donor landscapes and changing project priorities required an active, adaptive approach to find new co-financiers and for coordination with evolving parallel activities. For example, the SPAN project leveraged additional co-financing for park infrastructure to better meet government expectations (while GEF funds were used for 'soft infrastructure' such as capacity building and institutional strengthening). The PASS project leveraged additional resources to combat illegal wildlife trade when this threat rapidly escalated after the project had been designed and approved. NAM-PLACE successfully secured private investments in each Landscape Conservation Area, including from the tourism sector, individual freehold farmers and commercial conservancies. These efforts effectively engaged new partners and donors in the projects, irrespective of whether donors were engaged during project design.

Coordinated efforts of project and government staff in drafting funding proposals and identifying and reaching out to new partners were a major foundation for this success.

Engaging new donors and partnerships requires long lead times: While projects were successful at leveraging additional co-financing, including from the private sector, these relationships took time to develop. New partnerships with the private sector can require a long lead time for initial engagement and working through respective budgeting and planning processes and private sector Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. The PASS project achieved commendable results to raise awareness and obtain commitments for further efforts on PA strengthening and combating IWT. This could be further enhanced by regular donor coordination events at a national level to maintain engagement and raise awareness of differing opportunities and initiatives underway by donors—supporting quicker establishment of partnerships and parallel co-financing opportunities in the future.

Sequential projects that build on each other can be an effective way to achieve large-scale results: Namibia is building its conservation agenda for the future, grounded in its Constitution, country Vision 2030, development plans and commitments to Sustainable Development Goals. The examples of GEF-funded SPAN, NAMPLACE and PASS show that projects sequentially aligned to national strategy and commitments can effectively support government achieve long-term reform. For instance, the NAM-PLACE project built on the results of the SPAN project to develop and implement a Landscape Approach to conservation. The new policies on Protected Areas introduced by SPAN were instrumental in NAM-PLACE's success at linking the Protected Area Network institutionally and on the ground. In addition, the PASS project built on the results of the SPAN project to assist in replacing the "Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975" with the "Protected Areas and Wildlife Management Bill." The Bill is currently in cabinet and will allow for better management of wildlife and protected areas. The Landscape Conservation Areas are a new category under the Bill. These achievements all build upon and support national commitments.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES & OTHER INFORMATION

Websites:

GEF Projects: <https://www.thegef.org/project/strengthening-protected-area-network-span>; <https://www.thegef.org/project/namibia-protected-landscape-conservation-areas-initiative-nam-place>

NAM-PLACE Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/NAM-PLACE-Project-180141268800289/>

Landscapes Namibia: <http://www.landscapesnamibia.org/namplace-project>

MET Project Description PASS: <http://www.met.gov.na/services/pass-/239/>

PASS Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/PASS-Project-905474552796775/?fref=ts>

Reports:

Terminal Evaluations:

SPAN: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/2492_3121_Namibia_BD_TE.pdf

NAM-PLACE: https://www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/project_documents/3737%2520TE_1.pdf

PASS: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9408>

UNDP Country Case Study SPAN 2010: <http://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/reports/environment-energy/namibia-protected-area-network.html>

Media:

GEF and UNDP Feature Story: “People for wildlife: conservation unbound in Namibia,” March 2, 2017:

[https://www.thegef.org/news/people-wildlife-conservation-unbound-namibia;](https://www.thegef.org/news/people-wildlife-conservation-unbound-namibia)

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Namibia Economist: “Looking Back on SPAN,” July 20, 2012: <https://economist.com.na/2229/general-news/looking-back-on-span/>

Voices of Impact: Speaking for the Global Commons, “Namibia: sequencing beautifully! Taking Protected areas to new levels” <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/voices-of-impact-undp-gef-25-years.html>

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Special thanks to the German Government for their support of this initiative.



The Global Wildlife Program is a global partnership on wildlife conservation and crime prevention for sustainable development. To learn more, visit the [Global Wildlife Program webpage](#) or contact them at gwp-info@worldbank.org.