

# Botswana Community & Conservation Initiative



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## Summary

In recognition of the Traditional Authorities of Northern Botswana, the Botswana Community and Conservation Initiative (BCCI) acknowledges the critical importance of incorporating traditional governance and knowledge into community-based land-use practices. This initiative recognizes that Northern Botswana's ecological viability and its communities' well-being are inextricably linked. The vision of the BCCI is to provide for regional conservation and support for rural communities to develop sustainable land-use practices that promote conservation-based economic opportunities, facilitate landscape-scale wildlife movements, and provide for climate change resilience.

The cornerstone of this initiative is the Botswana Community and Conservation Fund (BCCF). The BCCF, a community, tourism, and international philanthropy cooperative, establishes a perpetual means for communities to maintain and expand sustainable land-use practices, further tourism relations and cooperative economic developments while also providing for wildlife population movements and growth.

The initiative collaborators came together out of a recognition that changing climatic conditions and stresses on natural resources are impacting the ecological health of Northern Botswana, including the Okavango Delta and extending into neighboring countries. These environmental stressors are resulting in decreasing primary productivity, declining wildlife abundance and distribution, increasing poverty, and deteriorating food security among the people most dependent on this region's natural resources.

Statistically, Northern Botswana is among Botswana's most poverty-stricken populations, where the majority currently live at or below the poverty line. These communities face stress due to multiple factors, including drought, rangeland degradation, and human-wildlife conflict. These factors result in growing antagonism toward wildlife and frustration with the government over mandated land-use and livestock management approaches that are contrary and damaging to rural people's lives and livelihoods. Furthermore, Botswana's internationally acclaimed low-volume / high-value international wildlife tourism is in question. Despite its successes, most communities have not benefitted from this development and its associated economic benefits, with the companies' social contract being damaged and viewed as more concerned with exportable profits than community wellbeing and conservation of the region.

On September 3 – 5, 2018, the [Charting Connections: The Makgadikgadi/Nxai Pans Conservation Initiative Workshop](#) was convened. This workshop brought together government agency representatives, scientists, community leaders, and tourism operators to discuss and address shared challenges and opportunities. Themes expressed throughout this workshop included supporting improved land-use planning and practices, creating sustainable livelihoods, increasing landscape connectivity, expanding conservation-based economic opportunities, and seeking ways to attract additional support for more coordinated actions at the regional scale required. To address these challenges facing Northern Botswana participants have continued to express their general support for the establishment of a fund and an organizational mechanism to advance conservation and support sustainable livelihoods in the region. Natural Selection Conservation Trust provided support for these first activities, with additional institutional support from the participating conservation organizations, Wild Entrust and Round River Conservation Studies. The Botswana Ministry of Environment Natural Resource Conservation and Tourism, and its Department of Wildlife and National Parks also provided essential guidance.

## *Long-Term Benefits of the Botswana Community and Conservation Initiative*

### Community and Social Inclusion

1. Governance structures empowering community land-use with government, company, and non-profit organization support.
2. Increased social wellbeing achieved across communities extending to companies and government.
3. Implemented best practices for land-use and contractual agreements informed by traditional authorities, community members, tourism companies, and other targeted land-use decision-makers.
4. Preferred opportunities identified and provided to community members seeking employment.
5. Community employment training provided targeting women, marginalized groups, and youth.

### Sustainable Land-Use

1. Ongoing regional conservation assessments based on ecological science and traditional knowledge identifying: a) local perceptions and tolerances towards wildlife and community livelihoods b) essential areas for wildlife including cores and corridors, community values and tourism opportunities; c) sustainable livestock stocking levels and associated range management practices; d) key climate and human-use drivers underlying recent and potential future land-use and landscape change and conditions.
2. Assistance provided to reestablish regional connectivity and large wildlife migrations.
3. Developed human-wildlife coexistence strategies implemented that include local and landscape drivers to benefit wildlife, livestock, and agricultural production areas.
4. Developed community-based land-use plans informed by regional assessments, traditional authorities, and community processes implemented through binding conservation agreements with management guidelines to promote human-wildlife coexistence and maximize long-term sustainability of available lands for human and wildlife use.
5. Assistance provided to blend other national, Community-based Resource Management, and international conservation, i.e., the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.
6. Capacity built for a decision-support tool to incorporate changing climate, social and ecological factors, and local wildlife tolerance levels to best inform mechanisms to facilitate wildlife movements.

### Economic Incentives

1. A community conservation fund (BCCF) established and supported by the tourism industry and international conservation donors.
2. Maximized long-term wildlife conservation providing for economic growth within the tourism industry.
3. Organizational governance structure and fund management established for the BCCF that includes community, donor, government, and non-government representatives.
4. Implemented co-developed land-use conservation agreements between the BCCF, traditional authorities, land boards, and communities for land-use and human-wildlife coexistence.
5. Markets for 'Wildlife-Friendly' (WF) Beef established that directly support rural community agriculture.
6. Operations of the BCCF supported through annual tourism company donations and international granting mechanisms ever expanding to include additional communities and conservation planning.
7. Long-term research and monitoring programs established with local employment to evaluate on-going programs, including effectiveness of the planning, land-use compliance, and wildlife populations.

# Botswana Community and Conservation Initiative

## The Relevance of the BCCI

Changing climatic conditions and stresses on natural resources are negatively impacting the ecological health of the Greater Okavango Delta. These impacts include decreasing primary productivity, declining wildlife abundance and distribution, increasing poverty, and deteriorating food security among the people most dependent on this region's natural resources. Local communities are also facing stresses, including drought, rangeland degradation, and human-wildlife conflict. These factors result in antagonism toward wildlife and frustration with the government over mandated land-use and livestock management approaches that are contrary and damaging to the lives and livelihoods of rural people.

Before the COVID pandemic, Botswana's internationally acclaimed wildlife tourism's social impacts were already in question as the companies' social contracts are often viewed as more concerned with exportable profits than community well-being and conservation within the region. Despite the economic successes, the people and communities of Northern Botswana have primarily been left out of this development, with the majority currently living below the poverty line. While many tourism companies have supported local community development within the communities associated with their concession leases, these are of little economic benefit more broadly in the region nor of region-wide conservation consequence. However, tourism and wildlife-related industries compatible with traditional livelihoods represent the most viable opportunity for this region's economic growth. Intertwined with building the tourism industry to benefit local economies is the need to elevate the existing tourism companies' social contracts, improve the communities' understanding and acceptance of wildlife's value, and implement land-use planning to sustain and build wildlife populations.

The BCCI adopts a region-wide approach to support efforts to address systemic land-use challenges to sustainability and more targeted high priority issues, to achieve economies of scale benefitting multiple communities. Among these is a growing understanding that long-term philanthropic funding deployed strategically and in a manner that complements existing community development programs can play a vital role in providing consistent support for both development and conservation.

To date, there has been a lack of local community inclusion in land management decisions in this region. Additionally, there has been no significant investment in economic incentives to diversify local economies, reward sustainable natural resource utilization, or implement wildlife-friendly practices. Apart from subsistence agriculture, wildlife and wilderness tourism remains the principal business activity and represents the most viable economic growth opportunity. However, the viability of growing the tourism industry to the benefit of local economies is intertwined with improving local communities' understanding of land-use planning, ecosystem health, and sustainability in the face of climate change and promoting land-use activities compatible with increasing wildlife populations.

This initiative addresses specific objectives to strengthen capacity in developing and implementing Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) principles more widely among Northern Botswana communities historically excluded from benefiting from the region's rich wildlife. The proposed activities facilitate community land-use decision-making capacity to effectively engage tribal land boards to acknowledge traditional authority over community lands and their natural resources. As such, this initiative seeks to deepen civil society's engagement in development and governance while empowering and elevating land-use decision-making capacity to foster sustainable livelihoods by expanding more inclusive community participation in ecotourism opportunities and natural resource management. The proposed actions equip communities with capabilities to enable best practices for establishing economic partnerships coupled with conservation-based land-use plans and long-term support mechanisms.

These actions support effective land-use policies and sustainable natural resource management at a broader level. Our objective for community and social inclusion is to improve governance by building the decision-making capacity of principal decision-makers, traditional authorities, and tribal land boards while also strengthening the involvement of marginalized groups, women, and youth. Therefore, the BCCI recognizes the importance of accounting for cultural gender divisions of labor, its impact on employment opportunities, and the access to development resources.

The initiative activities further focus on developing an understanding the sociological and ecological factors that affect land-use decisions. Such experience further improves governance capacity to make more informed sustainable land-use decisions. The resulting land-use plans informed by community-based decision-making will elevate ownership and stewardship, opportunities for human/wildlife coexistence, connected and sustainable wildlife populations, and community-based climate adaptations. Expanded tourism enterprises may also then foster greater social wellbeing and food security through the additional opportunities associated with economic diversification. The initial focal areas for the BCCI, the communities of Ngamiland and the Boteti River, endure some of Botswana's highest poverty levels. Within and surrounding these areas are communities and individuals with various cultures, the majority of whom rely on subsistence livestock and agriculture. The Makgadikgadi-Nxai Pans National Park in the Boteti sub-district is an important Wildlife Dispersal Area (WDA) linking north-central Botswana with Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe, and Chobe National Park, with the Okavango Delta, and the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. This WDA is experiencing increasing wildlife populations and amplified human/wildlife conflicts. Similarly, Ngamiland, once supporting more significant wildlife numbers and seasonal movements, is also experiencing amplified human/wildlife conflicts and poaching levels.

This work is principally relevant to and supportive of Botswana's CBNRM Strategy & Action Plan 2019-2023 to achieve rural development and biodiversity conservation. The BCCI also aligns with Theme 1 of the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks' Conservation Research Strategic Plan 2016-2020, providing for the implementation of systematic conservation planning processes and falls within the recognized core wildlife dispersal areas within the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA). The BCCI similarly supports sustainable, safe community livelihoods identified as essential objectives in Botswana's National Spatial Plan (Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation Services 2018) and builds on the Makgadikgadi Framework Management Plan.

### **The Vision and Objectives of the BCCI**

The vision of the BCCI is to provide for regional conservation and support for rural communities to develop sustainable land-use practices that promote conservation-based economic opportunities, facilitate landscape-scale wildlife movements, and provide for climate change resilience.

#### Specific objectives:

Community and Social Inclusion – To engage Northern Botswana communities to build decision-making capacity, focusing on traditional authorities, tribal land boards, marginalized groups, youth, and women to best discern and advance tourism economic participation in development and employment opportunities

Sustainable Land-Use – To incorporate social, ecological and climate change factors into Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) sustainable land-use planning to assist Botswana communities to make informed land-use and economic decisions.

Economic Opportunities and Incentives – To increase social well-being through diversified and inclusive community-based eco-tourism enterprises and a community conservation fund that supports healthy communities, landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystem services

#### Outcomes and Results:

1. Traditional authorities, land boards and community members, including women, youth, and other marginalized groups are engaged and informed about alternative land-uses, diversified sources of

community incomes, and improving resilience to environmental and economic shocks resulting in advanced participation in land-use planning, tourism development and employment opportunities.

2. Community informed best practices developed for concession leases, joint ventures, conservation agreements, and community joint tourism ventures and other community benefiting opportunities resulting in a collective advantage to drive negotiations and achieve more equitable and broader outcomes.

3. Community informed land-use plans, and Human-Wildlife Coexistence (HWC) strategies resulting in increasing sustainable resource utilization, providing economic opportunities, and enabling cooperative tourism ventures and expansion.

4. An established Botswana Community & Conservation Fund (BCCF) to benefit communities resulting in elevated economic opportunities and incentives designed to increase social well-being through diversified and inclusive community-based eco-tourism enterprises and a stable funding source that supports healthy communities, landscapes, wildlife, and ecosystem services.

5. Long-term research and monitoring programs established with local employment to evaluate the adaptability of on-going programs, including effectiveness of the planning, land-use compliance, and wildlife populations. A key component resulting in maintaining conservation agreements utilizing economic incentives to ensure adherence to best land-uses, lease agreements, stocking levels, tourism partnerships, and predator-friendly husbandry methods.

The establishment and continuation of community conservation funding from tourism industry and international donors requires similar oversight and positive results. Compliance monitoring frameworks will be developed, incorporating community members as monitors, to verify compliance with the commitments and justify penalties in the event of non-compliance with conservation agreements.

### **Key Activities and Associated Objectives**

Activity 1. Identify community tourism preferences and company best practices

Activity 2. Compile information on traditional and current land-use practices

Activity 3. Complete regional assessments and climate change vulnerability assessments to inform HWC, range, and climate-related strategies for land-use planning

Activity 4. In cooperation with tourism companies, private and international donors, establish the BCCF to support community joint ventures and ownership of tourism enterprises, and land-use conservation agreements

Activity 5. Set up wildlife and community agreement monitoring

Activities 1 and 2 are principal to gain understandings of the social, economic and resource needs of the local communities, informing the communities on economic development possibilities and best design considerations, and developing a knowledge base of community traditional and current land-use practices. Activity 3 builds on the previous activities utilizing traditional knowledge and conservation science to produce regional assessments that include local wildlife community livelihoods, HWC strategies, habitat cores and connecting corridors, sustainable range management practices to produce community-based land-use plans. Activity 4 utilizes the empowerment gained in Activities 1 and 2, to make informed best practices decision-making with Activity 3 (i.e. land-use plans) to create opportunities with tourism companies and international donors to establish the BCCF and joint ventures. Activity 5 perpetuates the previous activities by establishing monitoring regimes to ensure compliance and create mechanisms to facilitate sustainability.

## Objective 1. Community and Social Inclusion

To best establish broad community participation throughout all components of the project specific methods are tailored to each community based upon their preferred or culturally appropriate protocols. We will discuss the work with the traditional leaders through a kgotla (traditional) gathering with the entire community. We will discuss the project's aims and objectives and seek guidance on the best approaches for working with the community. We anticipate that the most productive approaches to working with the communities will be through structured decision-making workshops. We will hold these or other community or individual meetings to discuss livelihood, employment, tourism relations, and training priorities based on gender, economic status, and culture. Each workshop will begin with a semi-structured survey, developed in cooperation with the community, to obtain baseline information. All workshops and interviews will be conducted in Setswana, or the language participants are most comfortable. Confidentiality of respondent's information will be kept through all stages of the project.

### Activity 1. Identify community tourism preferences and company best practices

Employing the procedures described, a series of workshops, interviews, and discussions will be conducted with community leaders and their members to define their desires and expectations for contractual relationship best practices with the tourism industry. Pertinent discussions will follow with companies to ensure their participation in the BCCF.

While this activity is essential to ensure communities enter into equitable contracts with the tourism industry, it is a means for social empowerment and an organizing mechanism to leverage tourism industry participation. Building on the designed best practices, workshops will be designed and conducted with community leaders and the participating companies to negotiate and complete publishable best practice guidelines to guide CBBEs activities.

### Activity 2. Compile information on traditional and current land-use practices

Traditional and current land-use practices will be compiled through available literature and community workshop/interviews. Ground mapping surveys will also produce GIS depictions of land-use and associated infrastructures. Information and other data sources, from land boards and appropriate government agencies, will also be utilized. This activity is essential to establish benchmarks and community involvement to develop community and ecologically informed plans, associated conservation agreements, and CBBEs.

## Objective 2. Sustainable Land-use

### Activity 3. Complete regional assessments and climate change vulnerability assessments to inform HWC, range, and climate-related strategies for land-use planning

To our knowledge, there has not been a rigorous systematic assessment to identify core conservation areas or key biodiversity areas that provide the foundation for ecological robustness. Nor has there been a comprehensive, climate-informed, and systematic ecological assessment within these complexes and across this region. There is a foundational need to understand the habitat requirements of key wildlife species in greater detail, mainly to understand how changing habitat distributions due to shifting climate conditions may affect the productivity, persistence, distribution, and movement patterns of wildlife across this region. Changing conditions will certainly further challenge species requiring landscape connectivity. Understanding existing core and potential future core habitats within the existing conservation complexes is essential to identify species' habitat and connectivity requirements.

There are two components to our approach to identifying opportunities for sustainable land-use planning and decision support. Both rely heavily upon community participation and guidance. A regional ecological and social values assessment provides a spatial evaluation of the opportunities and

requirements for sustainable land-use, including spatial mapping of wildlife habitat requirements and relative risk of human-wildlife conflict. The regional assessment uses local knowledge extensively combined with existing research information and data. The meaningful incorporation of local knowledge collected from community-identified knowledge holders provides essential information for the assessment and creates products that the communities recognize as their own and more readily accept as decision-support for their planning. A series of community engagement events will document the community priorities for land-use and economic diversification. These two components (regional assessment and community-based priorities) ultimately come together through community processes to identify and develop opportunities to meet the community vision for land-use and economic diversification incorporating ecological requirements and risks. Community and special interest group workshops and discussions will focus on land-use priorities, sustainability, challenges, and opportunities, including how climate change is expected to impact land-use opportunities. We anticipate that community-based land-use priorities will include improving range and livestock productivity and reducing conflict with wildlife. Additional discussions will be conducted to explore and develop approaches to improve human-wildlife coexistence to create opportunities for wildlife and wilderness tourism and support these by reducing wildlife movement barriers now and into the future.

The development of community-based land-use priorities and planning that incorporates current and future requirements of wildlife and the communities will have the over-arching goals of fostering sustainable land-use and economic incentives that include valuing wildlife wilderness tourism. Local knowledge of wildlife habitat requirements and habitat or landscape characteristics associated with increased HWC has not been collected rigorously. This information will be collected through a series of surveys targeting different but related information: patterns of seasonal wildlife habitat use and movements, seasonal livestock grazing patterns, and social perceptions and tolerance of wildlife. Knowledge holders and land-users identified by each community will be surveyed about habitat or landscape characteristics associated with selected wildlife species, wildlife movement patterns, which influence the relative risk of HWC. Interviews will document how these relationships between habitat and landscape characteristics change by season and any observed effects of climate change or other long-term trends. Land-user participants will identify where their cattle graze in the dry and wet seasons and where they see wildlife. The habitats and landscape characteristics that create the best land for livestock and where wildlife moves through the region will also be determined. Questions will include topics of changing conditions and long-term trends, including those that participants associate with climate change. Printed maps and interview summaries will be returned for confirmation and for their use.

A significant component of the regional assessment is understanding the drivers, patterns, and risks or opportunities to reduce human-wildlife conflict. Surveys will be completed with community members to collect socio-economic status, wildlife tolerance, livelihoods, household livestock holding, crop yields, and wildlife encounters. Explorations of long-term trends using established baselines for wildlife distributions, including those trends associated with climate change and other key drivers of land-use and wildlife conflict patterns, will also be recorded. Additionally, economic reports, cost of past conflict mitigation strategies, and other socio-economic data of the region and livestock incident reports will be collected.

Survey results will provide local knowledge summaries of habitat and landscape characteristics associated with wildlife use and movements and traditional veldt product distributions and harvest. This information will be combined with available wildlife distributions and habitats research to develop habitat suitability index models in the focal community wildlife and traditional grazing areas. Survey analyses will identify habitat and landscape attributes associated with land-uses, including livestock grazing and frequencies of HWC and tolerance for wildlife. Based on the analyses and the participatory maps, human perceptions will be depicted spatially to reflect areas of negative perceptions and positive perceptions to predict wildlife's relative risk across the study area. This map will be integrated with the wildlife movement and wildlife habitat mapping and modelling to depict areas of the higher potential risk to wildlife and areas of the higher potential impact of wildlife on humans.



A vulnerability assessment will be undertaken on identified community selected wildlife species to understand the potential impacts of climate change on specific land-uses and wildlife species. Details of the vulnerability assessment framework will be developed based on the quality and resolution of data and information acquired. The approach will incorporate an assessment based on the relative exposure of climate change factors, the sensitivity of wildlife's value to the predicted change, and the community/land-use or wildlife species' adaptive capacity. The methodology follows established approaches to provide information on critical challenges faced by communities and wildlife laying for future planning.

The integration of social, wildlife, climate change, and environmental conditions provide the basis for the regional conservation assessment that will identify critical areas for wildlife use and movements, vital community and livestock areas, areas of higher risk to wildlife and land-users now and into the future, and areas with significant tourism opportunities. The assessment will highlight areas, communities, land-uses, and wildlife species within these landscapes that may have a higher vulnerability to climate changes predicted for the area. The spatial mapping will be coupled with recommendations to support sustainable land-uses. Information gathered from local knowledge, systematic research, and government information will be combined to develop these recommendations, including guidance on sustainable livestock stocking levels and improved range management practices based on critical climate and human use drivers underlying current and potential future land-use and landscape change and conditions.

The community informed conservation assessments assist to develop human-wildlife coexistence strategies and community-based land-use plans. The assessments provide decision-support tools that incorporate changing climate and include management guidelines to promote human-wildlife coexistence and maximize the long-term sustainability of lands for human and wildlife use. The land-use plans, wildlife coexistence strategies, and decision-support tools must then be reviewed and approved through the appropriate traditional authorities, community processes, and tribal land boards.

### Objective 3. Economic Incentives

Activity 4. In cooperation with tourism companies, private and international donors, establish the BCCF to support community joint ventures and ownership of tourism enterprises, and land-use conservation agreements

In conjunction with the community workshops, the ecological assessment will assist determining the distribution priorities for the BCCF. Additionally, the community developed approved land-use plans, and the coexistence strategies provide the basis for conservation agreements between traditional authorities, land boards, communities, and funding arrangements for land-use and human-wildlife coexistence. Additionally, these agreements may establish markets with a commitment to a regional Wildlife-Friendly Beef brand and other wildlife friendly agricultural products (fresh produce) with regional tourism operators that directly support rural community agriculture. Similarly, as conditions improve for land-use and human-wildlife coexistence resulting in wildlife expansions and tourism development opportunities.

The purpose of the Botswana Community and Conservation Fund (BCCF) is to provide continued support for elevating land-use planning and practices, sustainable livelihoods for communities, landscape connectivity, wildlife and conservation-based economic opportunities, and climate change resilience for Northern Botswana. While numerous Botswana programs provide development support to rural communities, these rarely focus on sustainable natural capital utilization and conservation. Additionally, several tourism companies support smaller-scale local community development and environmental education projects, typically in communities in or directly associated with their concession areas. However, these initiatives have negligible conservation impact more broadly across the region. To meet a critical need, the BCCF will adopt a region-wide approach to support local efforts to address systemic landscape challenges and more targeted high priority issues at a scale benefitting multiple communities. The BCCF aims to leverage the growing understanding that long-term philanthropic funding can play a

vital role in providing consistent support for both development and conservation when deployed strategically and in a manner that complements existing development policies and programs.

The overriding imperative of the shaping process for the BCCF is that all relevant parties have opportunities to participate in its design and advancement. Design and implementation considerations deriving from the workshops for the BCCF included the following:

- Institutional arrangements designed to be accountable, transparent, efficient, and effective governance for the BCCF and fund oversight and deployment;
- Well clarified permissible uses of BCCF funds including defined synergies with existing government, tourism, NGO, and international programs;
- Well understood and communicated regional priority areas and allocation formula, funding criteria, and other mechanisms to guide an equitable deployment of funding over time utilizing local social and ecological assessments;
- Defined scope and intent of potential conservation financing arrangements with provided examples;
- Determined funding levels required to support annual operations of the BCCF and required endowment fund levels to provide for conservation financing arrangements;
- Incorporated and registered BCCF with well-defined implementation and long-term operations plan;
- Engaged philanthropic sector, business interests, and aid sources to develop and maintain organizational financial support and contributions to the conservation fund.

Regional tourism companies will be requested to designate a determined percentage of their net income or gross guest bed night fees to the community fund to support the trust's operational costs. Requests submitted to international aid providers, foundations, and individual donors indicate willingness contribute to establish a long-term endowment for BCCF that can ensure long term support. Ongoing discussions with both Botswana tourism operators and international conservation donors will continue during the project period. Further planning workshops with tourism and donor segments will be scheduled. It will be imperative to demonstrate to all parties that long-term philanthropic funding can play a vital role in providing consistent support for both development and conservation when deployed strategically and in a manner that complements well-defined development projects.

Community support funding from the BCCF will be facilitated through developed conservation agreements. Constructing conservation agreements utilizing economic incentives to ensure adherence to best land-uses, lease agreements, stocking levels, tourism partnerships, and predator-friendly husbandry methods requires involving multiple parties, including government, communities, producers, markets, and consumers. Similarly, establishing of community conservation funding mechanisms requires the tourism industry and international donor support. Land-use compliance and the monitoring of wildlife numbers and distributions will also be necessary and conducted through communities and local partnerships.

Developing and implementing conservation agreements will involve understanding land-users' resource rights, the legal context for land protection and enforcement, and current supportive and unresponsive policies for implementing conservation agreements. The conservation agreement concept will be presented to all relevant community land-users and other stakeholders to explain what a conservation agreement entails, how it works, and achieve a collective decision to initiate the joint drafting of the agreements' specifics through a Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) process to best establish the full community and stakeholder participation and consultation. The agreements will contain the following components:

- Conservation commitments explicitly define the conservation actions and outcomes
- Opportunities and benefits made available to beneficiaries are well defined and mutually understood.
- Clear definition of the appropriate type, value, mechanism, and frequency of equitable benefits.
- Well understood compliance monitoring framework, community members as monitors to verify compliance with the commitments and justify penalties in the event of non-compliance.
- Established well understood penalties for unsatisfactory compliance with agreements. Just as benefits are conditional on agreement compliance, benefits will be structured to function in direct relation to performance and penalties for non-compliance will be determined in the framework.

The BCCF implementation strategy and long-term operations plan will be developed to identify potential strategic opportunities to ensure the lasting value of the project outcomes through an approach that is feasible in light of political, technical capacity and financial realities. Long-term costs to sustain the agreements must also be determined and tied to the BCCF and community/tourism leasing agreements.

By fostering cooperation between the communities and the regional tourism companies, opportunities will emerge for a sustainable niche locally produce beef industry to contribute to local economic stability while linked to conservation agreements also facilitating increasing wildlife populations and regional connectivity. This Wildlife Friendly Beef sub-activity focuses on providing for a commodity-based meat industry with developed local capacity for beef processing coupled with predator-friendly land-use, conservation agreements and financing. The establishment of land-uses with a commodity-based meat industry provides for sustainable and diversified economic opportunities and allows for discussions on conservation agreements to establish community land-use compliance. A commodity-based beef market has potential to expand through participation and commitment by regional tourism while conjoining this demand to conservation agreements. We propose to reduce the impacts to wildlife habitats and movement and provide communities with a reliable market for their sustainably produced products.

Following these activities, empowered participating communities will opportunistically enter into collaborative negotiations with established tourism companies to restructure lease agreements, establish joint ventures, and develop avenues for shared or wholly owned community tourism enterprises.

#### Activity 5. Set up wildlife and community agreement monitoring

To maintain the developed conservation agreements the BCCF will develop and implement compliance monitoring frameworks incorporating community members as monitors to verify compliance with the commitments and justify penalties in the event of non-compliance. The establishment and continuation of community conservation funding from tourism industry and international donors requires oversight and positive results. Just as benefits are conditional on agreement compliance, the benefits will be structured for increases or decreases as a function of performance. Penalties for non-compliance will be jointly determined in the agreements to ensure that they are appropriate. Items to monitor include compliance with conservation commitments, effectiveness/equity of benefit distributions, level of community satisfaction and achievement of biodiversity targets.

#### **Sustainability of the BCCI**

This initiative provides the traditional subsistence agricultural communities in Northern Botswana with development opportunities linked to conservation agreements through establishment of the BCCF, to support sustainable land-use, equitable tourism enterprises, and commodity-based trade in beef programs. The integration of communities into their land-use planning and resource utilization promotes more meaningful discourse and local accountability and ownership in the region's environmental

sustainability for local livelihoods, wildlife, and the landscape. Long-term community support mechanisms such as community training and education will further support changes in social conduct and livestock management techniques through adherence to conservation agreements.

While numerous Botswana programs provide development support to rural communities, these rarely focus on sustainable natural capital utilization and conservation. This initiative's long-term financial sustainability is achieved by establishing and implementing the BCCF, whose principal purpose is to provide continued financial support for conservation practicing communities. These communities gain additional financial security through improved land-use practices, diversified livelihoods, and added opportunities for conservation-based economies, through best practices agreements in association with the tourism sector. In addition, professional management enables wildlife populations to increase to promote further commercial wildlife enterprises.

The institutions deriving the most enhanced sustainability are the resulting engaged and empowered communities. The proposed actions facilitate community land-use decision-making capacity to effectively engage tribal land boards, the tourism sector and the national government to acknowledge and promote traditional authority over community lands and their natural resources. Secondly, the design of the BCCF encapsulates mechanisms to ensure its own growth and sustainability. Additionally, as the developed conservation land-use measures are witnessed as successful, further donor and tourism industry interest will be gained. Consequently, as the BCCF grows, additional benefits can flow to the communities with additional communities being gained.

Despite the uncertain times for global tourism, the BCCI enables the building of trust in business opportunities with private commercial ventures among the target communities. Interactions with neighboring conservancies will also contribute to best practices for community benefit. This initiative further benefits from the anticipated legislation on CBNRM, under development by the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism. The CBNRM legislation is expected to prescribe incentives for good governance and, where appropriate, impose sanctions for those that do not conform to basic procedures and regulations.

Community informed conservation assessments provide decision-support tools that incorporate changing climate and include management guidelines to promote human-wildlife coexistence and maximize the long-term sustainability of lands for human and wildlife use. Once again, the empowerment of local community decision-making and receipt of monetary support to practice conservation-based land-use greatly perpetuates overall regional ecological sustainability.

At a species level, reducing HWC and developing beneficiation for communities will increase the social carrying capacity toward wildlife. In addition to reducing wildlife conflict, this project will assist in promoting more viable wildlife habitat and recognition of local and transboundary wildlife connectivity. Connectivity is critical to the long-term survival of KAZA's wildlife and is the underlying objective of TFCA's. Finally, this project contributes to implementation of recommendations of several regional and international treaties: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES); SADC's Protocol on Wildlife Conservation and Law Enforcement; Lusaka Agreement on Cooperative Enforcement Operations directed at Illegal Trade in Wild Fauna and Flora; African Nature Convention; Convention on the Conservation of Migratory species (Bonn Convention or CMS); and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In this respect, the project will be contributing to global efforts to conserve global biodiversity.