
**AN EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAM OF
ANALYSIS AND COMMUNICATION ON COMMUNITY-BASED
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CBNRM): 1999-2002**

CONDUCTED FEB-MAR 2002

FINAL REPORT

APRIL 5, 2002

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The evaluation team wishes to thank Prof. Ben Cousins, Director, PLAAS, and Dr Phaniel Mugabe, Director, CASS, for their support during this evaluation.

The evaluation team also wishes to thank the PLAAS team for the facilitation of the arrangements for this evaluation, and in particular Mr Webster Whande and Ms Ursula Arends.

1. INTRODUCTION AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) of the University of Zimbabwe and the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS) of the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, have managed a regional programme of analysis and communications on the theme of community based natural resource management (CBNRM) since June 1999. The first phase of the programme is due to end in early 2002 and CASS/PLAAS are preparing funding proposals for a second phase. This evaluation is designed to assess the first phase of the programme and to make recommendations that will assist CASS/PLAAS to prepare their proposals for the second phase.

The purpose of this evaluation is to undertake a comprehensive review of the programme's performance and will focus on the following key issues as set out in the Terms of Reference (see Addendum 3):

- ❑ The true significance of CBNRM as a livelihood and development strategy for Southern Africa, and the effectiveness of the programme in exploring this
- ❑ The quality and impact of the comparative and analytical work of the programme
- ❑ The coverage, quality and effectiveness of the programme's communications component, with particular reference to its attempt to stimulate regional debate on CBNRM
- ❑ The efficiency and effectiveness of the regional collaboration that the programme has attempted to stimulate not only between CASS and PLAAS, but also between the various agencies and individuals involved
- ❑ The role of university-based applied research institutions like CASS and PLAAS in development sectors such as CBNRM, and whether or not the programme has usefully developed this role
- ❑ The evaluation should also make specific recommendations on the future of the programme – should it be continued or not, and if so, what changes, if any, could be made to enhance its effectiveness

The Terms of Reference (TOR) also call for the evaluation to address a number of specific questions relating to the issues set out above. These questions are contained in Addendum 3, which contains the full TOR.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In line with the TOR the evaluation methodology has consisted of interviews with programme staff from CASS and PLAAS, as well as former programme staff from PLAAS (the former programme supervisor and the former coordinator), and interviews with programme participants. These include recipients of writing/research grants, recipients of networking grants, workshop participants, capacity building course participants and some persons who have received the programme news letter, but who have had no other involvement in the programme. The evaluators also interviewed members of the programme Steering Committee. A full list of those interviewed is contained in Addendum 1. A review was carried out of relevant programme documentation including annual and technical reports, research publications, workshop reports and papers, networking reports and the programme newsletter. A full list of documents consulted is contained in Addendum 2.

In carrying out interviews, the evaluators adopted the technique of semi-structured interviews using a checklist of questions supplemented by follow-up questions and providing the flexibility to explore ideas and issues as they emerged during the interview. An important technique used during the interviews and analysis was that of triangulation. Where an evaluation depends upon the subjective views of programme staff or participants, it is particularly important to check specific opinions and statements against those of others in order to assess the validity of the perceptions of individuals.

Once the evaluators had acquired sufficient data to analyse, a feedback session was held for programme staff. The evaluators made a presentation of their preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations, to the Programme Steering Committee and requested comments and discussion of these. Although CASS programme staff had to leave before the end of this meeting, the feedback session proved useful for the evaluators in clarifying certain issues and validating certain findings.

Some constraints were encountered during the evaluation. The evaluators had hoped to hold an initial meeting with programme staff at the start of the evaluation process in order to gain a deeper understanding of the aims and objectives of the evaluation, and particularly what individuals hoped to gain from the evaluation. Due to time constraints, this meeting could not be held.

Due to financial limitations it was not possible to interview a wide spectrum of participants across the whole southern African region. Most participants from Malawi, for example, live outside the main towns. They are difficult to reach by telephone and it would have been too expensive to visit them in the field. Although the programme has specific user and beneficiary target groups (see Chapter 2), it was difficult to divide interviewees into these groups for the purpose of questions that could focus on issues relevant to a specific group. This was partly because the programme itself has not developed specific strategies and actions to reach some of these groups (see later Chapters) and because some of the key outputs aimed at reaching these groups were not reached (e.g. the production of policy briefs for policy and decision-makers).

The efficiency of the interviewing process was limited by the fact that most participants in the programme have been involved in only one event or activity. This meant that a larger number of people needed to be interviewed in order to assess the impact of the various

events and activities. The number of people interviewed during the evaluation reflects a balance between the need to gain a wide coverage across the events and activities of the region, the need to gain a wide regional spread and the resources available to carry out the evaluation.

Despite the constraints mentioned above, the evaluators are satisfied that a good enough sample of participants was reached in order to form an opinion of programme impact. A more serious constraint was encountered in obtaining relevant programme documents. The evaluators were not able to gain access to all the documentation that could have been made available. In particular, we were unable to obtain copies of CASS annual and technical reports to donors and did not obtain sufficient financial information from either CASS or PLAAS in order to assess whether the funds available were appropriate to programme design. We are therefore unable to address one of the specific questions asked in the TOR (see Addendum 3).

1.3 THE EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluators have treated this evaluation as a positive and formative process of helping programme staff to identify key successes and strengths of the programme as well as weaknesses so that forward planning can be done for the next phase. The aim has been to help programme staff to find ways to build on successes and find solutions to problems, once a value judgement had been made on the continuation of the programme as required by the TOR.

2. THE PROGRAM DESIGN

2.1 THE PROGRAMME CONCEPT

The programme concept, as currently conceived, seems quite unique in CBNRM in southern Africa. The combination of programme components coupled to the regional focus is novel; although there are several CBNRM networking initiatives, these are usually implemented in a particular country rather than across the region. The programme has received support from all those interviewed, who regard it as an important initiative in promoting CBNRM on a regional basis. It has the potential to add value to the field by providing relevant CBNRM research and analysis and also has a viable approach to the dissemination of results of the research and lessons learned.

The programme goal and objectives are laudable and relevant to the needs the region (It should however be noted that the objective “Contribute to the regional validation of group based systems...” implies a certain hypothesis or value judgment, which should not be part of one of the programme objectives. This should be reformulated). A few interviewees argued that the programme might be too ambitious in its vision and scope. This might indeed be applicable to the focus on reaching communities directly as one of its primary beneficiary groups; on the other hand the framework did express an understanding of the complexity of this aspect within the present framework, and did offer an approach through which it could be addressed.

After assessing the scope of work and the available resources, the evaluators are of the opinion that the programme implementation could have been carried out successfully within the available financial³ and human resources, and institutional arrangements.

Problems experienced during programme implementation (discussed in Chapter 4) do not mean that the programme concept or components are flawed, but rather that the implementation processes could have been improved.

Interviewees proposed certain changes to the programme concept, for example, that there should be an emphasis on primary (field) research rather than on secondary data analysis and comparative studies. They argue that this would bring the researchers and the community together, provide an opportunity to verify the credibility of results and facilitate the transfer of new insights and experiences.

This would change the programme into a more conventional research approach, and in all likelihood diminish the benefits that good analysis and synthesis of past work coupled to comparative analysis across the region could bring. One of the key components of the programme was that it should bring a sense of “intellectual adventure” to CBNRM thinking in the region. Among others this would require a rigorous application of the research criteria as described in the programme framework. It was to deepen the understanding of the differences and similarities in CBNRM policies and practice, and provide comparative lessons for CBNRM across the different countries.

³ As far as can be determined for financial resources – see sub-section 3.6

The other key component in the programme is its departure from conventional academic processes by the linking of the scholarship described above to the targeted transfer of new insights and knowledge to non-conventional stakeholders, *i.e.* not only to academics and researchers, but also to policy makers, CBNRM practitioners and community representatives. This means that prerequisites for programme success are a sound understanding among its implementers of the effective processes for communication, regional networking, policy influence and the translation of academic concepts for different audiences.

If either of these two key components were to change, it would change the nature of the programme to such an extent that in essence a new programme would have to be designed.

There were several deliberate changes in the programme design since its launch, one of which affected one of the key research components of the programme:

- ❑ Instead of focusing on several themes in parallel, the programme management decided to initiate one theme per year. After the first year, the subsequent theme(s) were in essence sub-themes of that of the first year. This change to the original concept came about through consultative processes during workshops, when participants' views of priorities were solicited, after which the Steering Committee finalised the themes.

While the evaluators do not wish to argue with the decision to narrow the scope of the work in this manner, the implications of the decision should be understood. Fewer researchers would be interested in participating in the programme, especially in the research grant component, if there were not a choice of themes. This might well have played a role in the dearth of researchers interested in applying for research grants.

On the other hand, in theory more depth could have been achieved if all efforts were focused on one theme only. From the work done it is not clear that this benefit was in fact obtained.

- ❑ There was a decision to link the research and networking grants where appropriate. In the cases where this was taken up, it seemed to have yielded good results.
- ❑ There was a decision to shift from the “high-level comparative analysis and synthesis” conducted according to precise criteria (see page 22) in the framework document (CASS/PLAAS 1998), to something that seems less groundbreaking and novel in approach. The main reason given for this decision is the inadequate number of research proposals of the quality necessary to pursue the initial programme vision.

This change has affected the programme deeply, and has substantially diminished the potential value the programme could have added to a deeper understanding of CBNRM across the region.

An ad hoc capacity building component was added to the programme through the training course held in Cape Town. This proved to be very successful and seems to have addressed a real need in this field. The programme should not necessarily be expanded unless more resources are made available. However it will benefit from an *integrated* capacity building component linked to the other programme activities, *i.e.* it can be used as a method to transfer the programme knowledge and experiences to policy makers and other target groups, and vice versa.

Although the programme framework indicates the difficulties in reaching community participants, it is nearly impossible to reach adequate community members within limited resources. It might be necessary to adapt the programme framework in a next phase to focus on NGOs and government officials as a primary target group who can act as intermediaries in discussions on new findings and insights with the communities. At the same time it is unfortunate that such a step will diminish the chances for direct interaction between researchers and communities. This is again discussed in Chapters 5 and 7.

2.2 THE PROGRAMME LOGIC

While most of the programme logic is sound, it has not been completely developed. This gave rise to weaknesses in the programme design. There is a clear link between the programme goal, objectives, activities and “beneficiaries” (although some of the beneficiary groups are not clearly defined). However, although outputs are specified (e.g. the number of publications to be produced or research grants to be awarded), the design has not considered the programme outcomes which focus on more qualitative aspects of what the programme would want to achieve. Thus during programme implementation, key components central to the programme concept were neglected, such as ensuring high quality comparative research and the effective transfer of research results to key beneficiary groups.

It follows that indicators for the measurement of progress and performance linked to a wider monitoring and evaluation system were not developed. This prevented programme staff from determining weaknesses, learning lessons and making adjustments in time during the course of the programme. There was also a need for the development of detailed and focused strategies for achieving the programme objectives; this was not done.

Assumptions were not formulated and potential “killer assumptions” were therefore not identified and considered. Certain implicit assumptions were made during programme planning. Some of the most important (and possibly some of the most questionable) are:

- ❑ The capacity and expertise to conduct secondary data reviews and comparative studies are readily available in the region and individuals would be attracted to the programme.
- ❑ Enough credible and comprehensive information is available on CBNRM in southern Africa to enable high quality secondary data analysis and synthesis.
- ❑ Academic centres understand the intricacies of communicating research findings and networking with various target groups from different environments.
- ❑ A regional partnership for programme management will add value to the programme.

- ❑ Communication methods such as a Website, newsletter, electronic forum and publications, are appropriate tools for the targeted beneficiaries to be reached and inspired to participate in the programme.
- ❑ There are enough common interests in CBNRM among the four beneficiary groups that providing them with similar information and drawing them together in workshops and training courses will bring adequate benefits to all concerned.

The gaps in the programme logic detracted somewhat from what is in essence a commendable programme concept. In spite of this, few adjustments need to be made in the next phase. These are further discussed in Chapter 7.

3. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND PROGRAMME RESOURCES

The institutional arrangements for the programme consist of a management partnership between CASS and PLAAS, with a Steering Committee playing an overseeing and directing role. Each of the partners has a Coordinator responsible for the day-to-day activities of the programme - one mainly responsible for the research component and the other mainly for the communication and networking role. For a period CASS had two part-time Coordinators. The two Directors act as overall supervisors and managers of the programme. For a certain period during programme implementation PLAAS had an additional person in a mentorship type role.

3.1 THE CASS/PLAAS PARTNERSHIP

The CASS/PLAAS partnership was established mainly because of donor interest in regional collaboration and the sharing of expertise between two strong CBNRM centres in the region. There can indeed be several benefits in such partnerships. These include:

- ❑ Complementary expertise and insights
- ❑ Diversity in thought
- ❑ Wider networks in the region
- ❑ The promotion of regional collaboration
- ❑ Division of tasks according to institutional strengths.

Certain conditions should be met before a successful partnership in this programme context can be ensured. These include:

- ❑ A shared vision for the programme
- ❑ Similar policies and approaches
- ❑ A shared commitment to efficiency and success
- ❑ Equitable division of labour
- ❑ Fair allocation of resources
- ❑ Good communication and working relationships between compatible personalities
- ❑ A good information flow
- ❑ “Ownership” of the partnership by both partners
- ❑ Shared accountability through continuous collaboration
- ❑ A single programme direction due to continuous consolidation between the two partners.

The CASS/PLAAS partnership has the potential to add value to the work of each of the institutions and to promote a regional focus for CBNRM research. Each institution has strengths that can contribute to achieving the programme objectives. However, the partnership has not yet reached its potential because of some key implementation problems related to the aspects mentioned in the preceding paragraph:

- ❑ The information and communication flow between the two partners is inadequate. This seems to be especially true for the flow of information from CASS to PLAAS.
- ❑ There does not seem to be a shared programme vision and sense of programme “ownership” between the two partners.
- ❑ A productive spirit of cooperation in the best interests of the programme is lacking. There is little indication of joint systematic planning and sharing of ideas in the interest of the programme, apart from the infrequent Steering Committee meetings, which have their own limitations (see sub-section 3.2).
- ❑ The level of commitment to the programme is perceived as different between the two partners. These perceptions in the external community (*i.e.* the programme participants) were to some extent confirmed by the experience of the evaluation team.
- ❑ Different policies exist, for example in staff appointments and the remuneration of workshop participants.
- ❑ There is no clear line of authority within the programme, with each partner more or less going its own way, with inadequate coordination at Steering Committee level.
- ❑ Separate reporting systems, and a hesitance to counter the formal reporting process through close collaboration and sharing, are leading to fragmented programme accountability and a certain loss in programme direction. Surprisingly, this has not been addressed by either the donors who promoted the separate reporting systems, or by the programme management.

Partnerships are notoriously difficult to manage successfully and the lack of a single, clear line of authority makes programme management even more difficult. On the other hand modern trends highlight the need for equitable partnerships where this will enhance programme execution. Partnerships can add value, but should not become obstacles to effective and efficient programme execution.

It will therefore be imperative in the planning for the next phase to weigh the benefits of a regional partnership against the time and resources it would take to address some of the problems in the relationship between the current partners. At present PLAAS is taking the lead in ensuring effective programme execution. The role of each of the partners, their willingness to address the problems, their true commitment to the programme and the line of authority will have to be carefully assessed before a decision is taken to continue with the partnership in its current form.

Suggestions have been made that a third partner should be brought to the programme. It is the opinion of the evaluation team that this will not add value to the programme and might exacerbate some of the problems in the relationship between the two current partners.

3.2 THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee was constituted to advise on programme policy, to give direction to the programme and to bring regional representation into the programme leadership/management. Its members include two representatives from each of the programme partners, and two representatives from other countries.

This role makes the Steering Committee an important part of the institutional structure of the programme. Its limited size means that although it cannot have representatives from every country in the region, it is nimble enough to be in a position to provide overall leadership. To some extent it has fulfilled this role, and has ensured that key decisions were taken at crucial times, often using inputs from the consultative processes at the annual workshops.

However, its measure and line of authority remain unclear. It does not seem to have the power to ensure that activities are executed as planned; although not clearly spelt out, this power seems to reside in the hands of the two Directors of PLAAS and CASS respectively as overall managers of the programme. For example, in spite of Steering Committee protests, two part-time Coordinators were appointed at CASS instead of one full-time Coordinator as desired by the Steering Committee. It also does not play a strong role in conceptualising the programme directions. It has not effectively fulfilled a monitoring role and often seems unable to consolidate programme directions and events. The dual reporting system contributes to this situation.

The Steering Committee membership has changed several times, with one or two initial members not attending a single meeting of the Steering Committee, and key members often absent. This lack of consistency must detract from its activities. According to some Steering Committee members, there is not enough time allocated to ensure that it can fulfil its role. The Steering Committee meetings “always have to be fitted in” between workshop activities.

A fundamental problem is that the Steering Committee does not have terms of reference. This means that it does not know its exact role and authority. Furthermore, the majority of members are representatives of the two partner organisations. This can result in an inadequate focus on external perspectives. It is good that two of the members are from other countries in the region and represent practitioner and community perspectives that are essential to ensure a clear and integrated focus on the different elements and different target groups in the programme.

3.3 THE PROGRAMME COORDINATORS

Resources were allocated for one Programme Coordinator at each of the two partner organisations. CASS decided to appoint two part-time Coordinators, while PLAAS preferred to appoint one full-time Coordinator. The PLAAS Coordinator took responsibility for most of the communication and networking aspects of the programme, while the CASS Coordinators managed the research elements of the programme. The Coordinators had to devote at least 40% of their time to conducting their own research in CBNRM.

Implementation highlighted several problems. It took a year for the CASS Coordinator to be appointed. This was due to problems in the internal CASS and/or University of Zimbabwe processes and had a detrimental effect on programme progress, as the research component – so important to the success of the programme – in essence started a year later than envisaged. The two CASS Coordinators struggled to coordinate their activities and at least one of the Coordinators had to devote a large part of his time to other responsibilities, such as lecturing and university administration.

The separation of Coordinator tasks between communication/information dissemination and research promotion seems to be appropriate, as each of these requires quite diverse skills seldom found in one person. However, the requirement that each of the Coordinators should also devote a large part of their time to research in CBNRM places an unnecessary burden on the communication/information dissemination specialist.

The two Coordinators have to work closely together to ensure a common programme direction, an equitable workload and shared programme planning and execution. At present the flow of information and communication seems inadequate to be a driving force for the programme and this is detrimental to programme progress. Care should be taken not to burden the Coordinators with other responsibilities. They should be dedicated to this programme only.

It should be noted that the current PLAAS Coordinator has received a lot of praise from participants for his skills as communicator - in person and through mechanisms such as the newsletter - and for his organisation of programme events.

3.4 THE PLAAS SUPERVISOR

Initially PLAAS appointed Dr Stephen Turner as a part-time supervisor/mentor for the PLAAS programme component. He gave direction to their efforts and his input was complimented by the then PLAAS Coordinator. When he left, this position became dormant.

In essence this position seems to replace to a great extent the Director's role in the programme. This might in fact be a useful approach where the Director does not have the necessary time to devote to the programme. It might strengthen the leadership and management of the programme.

3.5 PROMOTING A REGIONAL FOCUS

Regional participation in the programme is still inadequate (refer to Chapter 4), with the bulk of participants coming from Zimbabwe and South Africa. The institutional structure does not have a component that addresses this issue.

As adequate regional representation is essential to programme success, it will be important to determine the viability of a focal or contact point for this programme in each participating country. These should not consist of new structures and full-time appointments, but rather of the appropriate use of an existing structure with suitable networking capabilities to add the promotion of this programme to their activities for a reasonably small fee. The promotion activities could consist only of regularly giving relevant networking information to the Coordinators, and to a limited extent only assisting with activities to promote the programme in a particular country.

The concept of a forum of representatives from each country can also be considered. This forum can meet once a year to monitor progress in terms of regional representation and to advise the Steering Committee on ways to ensure country participation. Such a group will also help bring some consistency in involvement and participation; at present this is absent from the programme.

3.6 PROGRAMME INPUTS

The evaluation team could not adequately analyse the financial resourcing of the programme, as in spite of repeated requests no financial information could be obtained from CASS. However, from comments made by programme staff, and documents made available, it would appear that overall funding for the programme was sufficient in terms of its design. Some reallocation of resources will be necessary if the programme expands its capacity building activities or uses more workshops and meetings as a vehicle for reaching programme objectives (see recommendations under sub-section 7.2.1)

The infrastructure allocated to the programme seems to have been appropriate within the institutional arrangements. Initially severe problems were experienced with the Internet connections of CASS. Although this was resolved in the meantime, it affected communication between the partners during the important initial stages of programme implementation.

The human resources component has largely been discussed earlier in Chapter 3. Adequate provision has been made for programme management and coordination, but in order to stimulate greater regional participation it might be appropriate to make resources available for focal points in each country. Two full-time Coordinators – one a specialist in communication and information dissemination within the scientific and research arena, and the other an experienced researcher - with some administrative support, as well as one part-time programme manager who can act in a supervisory position, will be the ideal human resources component for the programme.

4. PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial statements received from PLAAS for its component of the programme show that there is good and clear tracking of income and expenditure that is kept up to date. Financial statements were not received from CASS.

The financial management systems at both partner organisations are in place. In spite of this, payment of grants and other forms of remuneration by PLAAS seems to take an inordinate amount of time – up to two months. This has resulted in delayed schedules and re-planning of visits, among others by recipients of networking grants.

This situation is probably due to the procedures of the University of the Western Cape's financial department. However, when the University agrees to manage international grants, it should take special care to ensure that it can deliver a good service. In this case, financial policies and procedures are not clear, especially where grants or remuneration have to be paid to people in other southern African countries. There should be no need for foreigners to have to argue about whether tax should be deducted from their remuneration. PLAAS should try to remedy this situation as soon as possible.

The partners should also, within limitations that might exist because of their institutional affiliations, ensure that they have the same policies in terms of payment of presenters at workshops, per diem expenses, etc. This is not the case at present. These policies and procedures should be clarified, recorded and made available to participants to avoid confusion and negative perceptions among external parties.

4.2 INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information management in the programme should be improved. The evaluators were surprised when they could not access any information required from CASS – not even a progress report or list of the recipients of the research grants managed by CASS. The database established at PLAAS is an asset and an indispensable tool for programme networking, but should be managed more efficiently in order to optimise its usefulness.

Among others the information produced for the evaluators was somewhat disorganised and not presented in the best possible way. For example, individuals could not be identified as part of a particular beneficiary group. The partners' information was also not integrated. Information collection, for example for identification of beneficiary groups, has not been very systematic. Methods such as the systematic screening of existing databases (such as PRODDER in South Africa), the literature, organisations specialising in networking (including country CBNRM networks), a networking questionnaire to mobilise others through existing contacts, etc. could have been used to expand the list of potential regional participants and beneficiaries.

4.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In the programme design, neither the expected outcomes nor indicators for the measurement of progress and performance were stipulated. The absence of a monitoring system or mid-term evaluation means that progress was not tracked effectively. Obstacles and problems were therefore not identified in time to make adjustments before the end of the programme. The separate reporting system further diluted opportunities to ensure programme accountability and performance.

4.4 MOBILISING PARTICIPANTS AND BENEFICIARY GROUPS

The effective mobilisation of programme participants and beneficiaries is an important aspect for determining programme success. In the programme framework applied researchers, NGO practitioners, policy and decision makers and CBOs/community representatives are the groups targeted to ensure that they participate or benefit from the various programme activities.

A major effort went into the identification of people in the region relevant to the programme and it was certainly successful in drawing together a range of actors to consider CBNRM matters. An impressive contact database of more than 500 people was developed for the distribution of information. This was instrumental in making people aware of the programme. The database should be managed in a more systematic manner, as noted in paragraph 4.2. Targeted strategies aimed at reaching each of these groups in the most effective way cannot be implemented due to the lack of clarity on who belongs to which target group. The identification processes also did not gather data systematically through mechanisms such as liaison with other networks and screening of existing databases. This means that certain key individuals and organisations might not be included in the list of programme contacts.

The measure of success in stimulating *regional* participation is reflected in the representation from the various SADC countries in processes such as opportunities for grant applications, grant allocations, the contact database, applicants for workshop and course attendance, the constitution of the Steering Committee and electronic forum participation. The PLAAS Coordinator and the Steering Committee tried their best to encourage regional participation. The CASS team was also actively involved in mobilising interest in the programme among potential participants in Mozambique. In spite of this, only half of the SADC countries had any measure of participation in programme activities. While the mobilisation of participants from six countries is an achievement, it is of concern that the vast majority of participants remain concentrated in South Africa and Zimbabwe. It does seem as if the strategy to hold workshops in different countries is yielding results; active participation by Mozambique has been stimulated during the workshop held in Maputo.

In spite of regular communications and encouragement to participate, the programme was unable to achieve a significant increase in the number of applicants for grants and workshops during the course of the three years. The lack of a critical mass of suitable applicants is one of the reasons given for the varying quality of the research contributions and presentations at annual workshops.

It is difficult to determine exactly why the programme was not entirely successful in getting adequate regional representation and increased participation in its activities. It is probably due to a combination of the following factors, some of which are beyond the programme control:

- ❑ Inadequate liaison with and marketing in those SADC countries less familiar to South Africans and Zimbabweans
- ❑ An inadequate focus on implementing the best processes to reach and interest the four beneficiary groups in a dynamic manner
- ❑ A programme profile that is not inspiring enough to attract large audiences or a significant number of the major specialists in CBNRM in the region
- ❑ Its inability to produce timely, concrete outputs such as high quality publications with novel content, or guidelines with new insights for practitioners, that can inspire potential participants.
- ❑ Inadequate time among potential participants to devote their efforts to the programme
- ❑ Insufficient capacity in CBNRM in certain countries in the region.

4.5 EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The main objectives of the external communication activities in the programme are to keep the beneficiary groups informed of programme developments and new insights, and to inspire them to participate in the programme. There are many competing initiatives aimed at attracting the attention of these groups. The key to success is therefore to try to ensure a consistently high profile for the programme among the targeted groups. This means persistent attempts to draw attention to programme activities in order to establish it as a dynamic initiative and key resource in the field of CBNRM in the region.

This approach requires a careful identification of the target groups, an understanding of the best methods of communication with each group, the availability of useful and exciting material relevant to each group and persistence in bringing new developments under their attention.

The programme has been innovative in using a variety of mechanisms with which to communicate with the beneficiary groups, with varying levels of success. Good results were obtained (refer to Chapter 5), yet more can be done to study and understand the best methods through which to communicate with the different target groups.

The following highlights some aspects to consider in the current communication methods with the potential beneficiaries (refer also to Section 5.1.4).

The Website

As one of the first communication tools implemented in the programme, the Website is well designed, high on Internet search engines, well maintained, with good content and interesting links to other relevant sites. There is no mechanism through which to determine the level of use of the Website, as the hits counter excludes regular users (this should be changed). The majority of interviewees have visited the Website – a minority do so fairly regularly. Several acknowledged that they were interested in Websites only if the information is directly relevant to their work. It should also be recognised that many organisations and individuals in the region do not have (easy) access to the Internet and this will deter people from visiting the Website regularly.

Some improvements to the Website can be made and it is suggested that it is managed in a manner that will ensure that it (and the programme) becomes and remains *the* key resource for CBNRM in the region and a resource for CBNRM across the world.

The electronic discussion forum

The electronic discussion forum is a very good idea for effective communication when participants cannot meet regularly, but it is almost entirely dependent on Internet access and the communication culture among potential participants, *i.e.* their level of electronic forum experience and their confidence in participating in discussions with an audience at different levels of expertise and experience.

The evaluators found that in spite of more than 100 official subscribers to the forum and attempts by the Coordinator and others to stimulate discussion, there is little interest in *participation*; the forum has been almost dormant over the past year. This does not necessarily mean that people were not interested in following the conversations, but several factors limited their interest in participation:

- ❑ The technical problems in the beginning, when a message was forwarded to subscribers in a continuous loop, caused many to unsubscribe.
- ❑ The programme has tried very hard to stimulate forum discussions through introducing different topics and encouraging individuals to take the lead in discussions. In spite of this the discussions were found to be too intimidating for relatively inexperienced researchers; even experienced researchers expressed a lack of confidence in their capacity to participate in “high level debates” between CBNRM experts.
- ❑ A lack of easy Internet access also prevented participation - and even just the monitoring of discussions.

It will be difficult to increase participation in the forum unless Internet connections are improved, technical problems are avoided and ways are found to encourage even inexperienced researchers to be confident enough to participate in the forum. However, electronic forums remain modern tools for communication and the CBNRM discussion forum should not be terminated unless all avenues to stimulate greater participation have been exhausted.

The newsletter

The targets for publication of the newsletter have been met and those interviewed from its target audience have experienced the regular publications very favourably. Individuals are invited to make contributions and the PLAAS Coordinator takes responsibility for much of the content. Among those interviewed it is widely read and appreciated, and generally found to contain good information with an attractive layout. It has raised the awareness of CBNRM issues and has helped to expose specialists to other disciplines in the CBNRM field.

Its impact is limited only by the limitations of newsletters in general. They serve to inform in a fairly superficial manner and are often not read unless the information is directly relevant to a particular individual. However, the newsletter remains an important complementary method of communicating programme activities and new developments in CBNRM.

An issue of concern is that the programme events and grants are publicised through the Website and newsletter, and yet do not succeed in attracting a critical mass of potential participants. This might be due to a number of factors, but it could also indicate that both these communication tools do not have the desired impact within the broader target group. The evaluation could not with any certainty make a judgment on this.

Publications

One of the most important communication tools in the programme was to be the various publications flowing from the comparative research studies supported by the research/writing grants, and publications arising from presentations at the workshops.

More details on the envisaged publication targets are given in Section 5.1.1 – journal publications, policy briefs, workshop publications, practitioner guidelines and a book. None of the targets were achieved. This significantly weakened the programme progress and impact – and diminished opportunities to communicate programme highlights to the beneficiary groups.

A number of factors contributed to this situation. The CASS Coordinator for the research component was appointed a year after programme implementation, resulting in severe delays in the implementation of this important component of the programme. The mobilisation of research grants yielded unsatisfactory results. The opportunity was twice publicised in the newsletter and on the Website, with fewer than 10 responses in each case – most of them of very weak quality. CASS eventually solicited applications from its own staff and from the University of Zimbabwe (Several successful applicants came to know about the opportunity from university notice boards). The result was few applications of quality, and none meeting the criteria stipulated in the programme framework. This meant that the research studies could be published (six out of a target of 12 were published), but these did not generate intellectual excitement, possibly because they contained too few significant new insights in the field of CBNRM. They were also not published early enough in the programme to provide a foundation upon which the research component of the programme could build its profile and reputation in this field.

Several programme staff commented that the quality of some of the research was not adequate for publication. This casts a question mark over the review processes, both for the research/writing grant applications and for reports on the eventual findings of the project.

The programme seemed to struggle to find the time and expertise to draw out policy briefs and practitioner guidelines from the published information. This is due partly to the lack of substantive analytical findings from the research, and partly to an apparent lack of capacity in CASS to manage the process in a timely manner. The resignation of one of the part-time CASS Coordinators, uncertainty in the allocation of responsibilities, and possibly over-commitment of the remaining Coordinator, all contributed to the delay.

In spite of this, the policy briefs are about to be published; this is an encouraging development. Late as it is in the programme lifetime, they can still provide a contribution to the programme outputs and hopefully provide a basis for further work in a next phase. The best methods through which to disseminate the information to policy makers and CBNRM practitioners should still be identified and developed in order to maximise the impact that these publications could have on the target groups.

At the three workshops a total of 25 presentations were made. Several of these had to be solicited due to an inadequate number of appropriate submissions for presentation. Although the presentations were summarised in programme reports, no proceedings or other form of official publications were produced. The presentations varied in quality, yet it should still be possible to publish most as part of the total research and analytical contributions by the programme during the past three years.

4.6 NETWORKING

4.6.1 Networking grants

The full complement of networking grants was allocated using a process of screening by the Coordinator and Steering Committee. Although the direct impact of such grants is difficult to evaluate within a short timeframe (the effects of such exposure usually become apparent later), it has been proven that exposure to other situations challenge and stimulate people into positive action. In general the grantholders found that the visits gave them new insights into CBNRM in the region, allowed them to introduce their own ideas and experiences into another country and helped them to establish new contacts for future collaboration. In at least one case a visit has prompted efforts to collaborate across countries. The visits stimulated an exchange of ideas and experiences and increased sensitivity to the different CBNRM issues in the region. In the few cases where networking grants were linked to research/writing grants, the grantholders felt that the opportunity to travel added to their understanding of their work.

Although based on subjective views, it seems apparent that the networking grants contribute to the programme objectives and should be continued.

The networking grant component was efficiently managed by the PLAAS Coordinator. Using the Steering Committee as a screening body for this grant category might be an efficient use of resources; it depends on how the role of the Steering Committee is developed in future. Should they need to be a policy making and direction-giving body, it might not be appropriate to use them as a screening body for grants. A technical committee made up of regional representatives can be appointed for this purpose, but this has the disadvantage that they would not be able to meet for discussion of the applications, except possibly through a phone conference.

The evaluators noticed that certain criteria for applications were not made available to applicants before proposal submission, for example the decision not to allocate grants to applicants “from organisations that have a lot of money and can afford to send staff members themselves”, or to focus on southern African applicants only. It is important to inform potential applicants upfront of all the criteria upon which they will be judged.

Grantholders felt that the amount allocated was not enough to allow them to conduct their planned visits comfortably, as travelling costs in Africa are high. The evaluators tended to agree and the programme should investigate whether it might be prudent to increase the grant amount in this category in order to facilitate productive visits.

While grant allocation procedures were found to be efficient, the release of funding by the University of the Western Cape was slow. In some cases this resulted in visits having to be postponed.

The evaluators found the grant reports to be inconsistent in terms of content and in some cases inadequate to judge whether any real value has been added through such a visit.

4.6.2 Networking meetings

The annual networking meetings were received with enthusiasm by participants, tempered by some mixed feelings about their contribution in advancing the field of CBNRM in the region. Some interviewees felt that the workshops did not succeed in bridging the conceptual gaps between academics and practitioners. Presentations were also perceived to be of varying quality (this is discussed in Chapter 5). However, all agreed that the opportunities to network were extremely useful and helped to create more awareness of CBNRM concepts, stimulated debate and provided a forum for communicating ideas and information. There is great support for these initiatives to continue.

Various implementation issues influence the perceptions around such meetings. Among others the participants, the selection of presenters, the topics for presentation and discussion, the logistics, the programme and the facilitation all play a role.

The organisers decided to extend an open invitation for participation in the workshops rather than to identify specific participants as suggested in the programme framework. In spite of advertisements in the newsletter and on its Website, the programme did not succeed in one of the events in attracting a critical mass of interested potential participants from which to choose the best contributions. Very few participants attended more than one meeting. Some selection by the organisers was done to ensure better regional representation – even if in some cases this meant sacrificing some of the quality of the presentations.

In view of the problems around quality presentations, the organisers might consider returning to an approach where more targeted invitations are extended to appropriate specialists in the region, bringing together a more select group – or a mixture of the two approaches might be used. This might mean a dynamic search for contributions that would add value to the themes under discussion or address some of the issues raised through the analytical and research work of other aspects of the programme.

The evaluators recommend that the objectives for each workshop should be determined as part of its planning, and that participants evaluate each event on the basis of these objectives.

Participants felt that with the exception of the Maputo meeting, the logistical arrangements for the meetings were good. The logistical arrangements for Maputo created great resentment among participants. The programme cannot afford to have such negative perceptions created around it; this detracts from the high profile that the programme is trying to develop in the region. For the same reason programme policies on issues such as per diem payments, remuneration for presentations, etc. should not differ between the two partners. This causes unnecessary resentment and confusion.

Apart from summary reports, the workshop outputs (presentations and discussions) have not been used or integrated with other programme outputs. They could be used as a resource by either publishing them as proceedings or by integrating them with other analytical work in the programme and synthesising programme findings in CBNRM from all these inputs.

The workshops have also been used as consultative meetings about the programme directions for the next year. This is a good idea and provides a forum for inputs from external parties. However, as many of the participants might not be adequately informed of the whole programme framework, care should be taken not to allow these consultations to steer the programme. They should be regarded as inputs into the programme planning processes of the Steering Committee.

4.7 CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Although not initially part of the programme, capacity development in CBNRM became part of the programme through a week-long course held in Cape Town in Sept 2001. Funding became available and a decision was taken to address what has by then already been perceived as a need in the CBNRM environment. After some confusion about the availability of funding, IUCN-ROSA also contributed financially to ensure that the course could take place.

In general the course received praise for its logistical arrangements as well as for its format and content. With few exceptions the participants were very satisfied with the content and training methodology. The course achieved a balance between theory and practice, and between different training modes. Day to day course evaluations confirmed the positive experiences of the participants. It certainly addressed a need and contributed to the programme objective of promoting a better understanding of CBNRM in the region.

Refinements can be made to what was already a successful event. Different audiences will have different training needs, for example policy makers might require a greater emphasis on legislative frameworks than practitioners, and might require a more conceptual approach to CBNRM in the national interest - investigating the “bigger picture” and seeking synthesis and consolidation of inputs. Sector interests also play a role. Representatives from the water arena might require an emphasis on their field and less on forestry, for example. On the other hand one of the benefits for participants of such a course is the exposure to issues and discourses in other areas in CBNRM, and the exposure of for example policy makers to practitioners and vice versa. Attempts should also be made to ensure that

Should capacity building become a regular feature in the next programme phase (this is recommended if resources allow), such courses could become an important method through which to transfer programme results and new insights to specific target audiences.

4.8 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

Many aspects of the programme have been well managed and significant progress towards some of the objectives has been made during the past three years (refer to Chapter 5). However, weak programme management has also been directly responsible for many problems experienced during programme implementation.

Key issues in this respect are:

- ❑ The lack of management systems that direct communication, information distribution, monitoring and evaluation, organisational learning, enable evidence-based decision-making, etc.
- ❑ The lack of a steady direction towards the achievement of the programme objectives
- ❑ Vague terms of reference and lines of authority
- ❑ Unresolved partner tensions, especially at management level
- ❑ The need to spend more time on strategic, evidence-based planning, the monitoring of results and adjusting strategies to improve overall programme performance.

The two Directors of PLAAS and CASS should allocate enough time to do joint planning, develop strategies in conjunction with their Coordinators, and to ensure good implementation, taking cognisance of the issues noted above.

5. PROGRAM OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

5.1 OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS BY PROGRAMME OBJECTIVE

5.1.1. Objective 1

Enhance regional understanding of the opportunities and constraints of CBNRM through in depth analysis, comparison, synthesis, theoretical development and operational recommendations

The programme aimed to achieve this objective through a number of activities:

- I. A regional workshop would be held at the start of the programme in order to agree on the analytical agenda to be pursued by programme researchers and addressed in the programmes networks.
- II. The programme coordinators at CASS and PLAAS would tackle one principle research theme per year and report on it at the end of each year
- III. CASS would administer an applied research fund that would make grants totalling not more than six person months per year. The research funded would focus on the agreed themes from the programmes analytical agenda.
- IV. Other researchers who interact with the programme through one of its networks would be encouraged to address themes relevant to the programme whenever possible, and to disseminate their work in progress and their ultimate findings through these networks

The programme envisaged that the research would focus on comparative work across the SADC region and across different natural resource management (NRM) sectors, through the analysis and synthesis of secondary material rather than primary data collection. In addition the research was expected to be:

- ❑ Critical with regard to conventional and emerging paradigms in NRM and related fields
- ❑ Rigorous in testing CBNRM and related theory and hypotheses against reported reality
- ❑ Innovative in its development of new analytical frameworks that enhance our understanding of CBNRM and its context
- ❑ Inclusive with regard to endogenous and exogenous knowledge, management, social and economic systems, as well as the natural and the social sciences
- ❑ Proactive with regard to progressive policy that aims to help the rural poor to benefit from enhanced CBNRM

- ❑ Applied and useful in generating comparative lessons that can make a difference to CBNRM practice in southern Africa

In terms of specific outputs the research component of the programme was expected to produce 12 research papers (four per year: one by each of the programme coordinators and at least two by research grantees); an unspecified number of papers to be presented at the annual regional meetings; and in programme year three a book on CBNRM that would present a synthesis of the comparative analysis and operational recommendations that have emerged from the analytical and networking activities of the programme.

It is difficult to find evidence of progress towards meeting this objective *through the means envisaged*. With regard to the outputs, six research papers have been produced in the Commons Southern Africa Occasional Paper Series, including one that was specifically developed for the eighth biennial conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, in the USA in June 2000. A total of 25 papers were presented during the three annual regional workshops, although not all of these papers are available in a final version for public dissemination. The papers presented at the initial workshop were aimed at stimulating debate and discussion around the programme's analytical agenda, the papers from the second workshop focused on the theme of the legal aspects of governance in CBNRM, while the theme of the contributions to the third workshop was traditional leadership and CBNRM.

Programme staff and participants agree that the research papers and the papers from the second and third workshops vary in quality and depth of analysis. Few of the papers meet the criteria set out under the bullet points above, in particular the need to be comparative across the region and to be critical with regard to conventional and emerging paradigms in NRM and related fields. Overall, the research and analysis has not been able to lead to synthesis, theoretical development or the production of operational recommendations.

A number of reasons can be advanced to explain why the programme has not been able to meet these key components of Objective 1. The programme has found it difficult to attract through its grants component, experienced researchers who are comfortable with compiling secondary data and analysing and synthesising it from a comparative perspective. Several of the grantees interviewed found it difficult accessing existing material and in some cases were unaware of similar work being done by others in their own country. Several were uncomfortable working with secondary data only and felt a need to carry out some field validation.

There was a general lack of strong proposals for grants to the extent that the programme had to relax some of its criteria for awarding the grants, particularly the important one that the work should be comparative across two or more countries in the region. One suggestion for the lack of good proposals has been that the amount for the grant is too small. However, the evaluators believe that if the intention is for the grant to be used for the analysis of secondary material, then the expenses incurred in carrying out the research should be relatively small. To a large extent the grant is a payment for time, rather than expenses. From this perspective, the amount of R12 000 should be a reasonable incentive to apply for the grant. However, if this is the case, it is difficult to determine why there has been a lack of proposals from experienced researchers. It could be due to inadequate efforts to publicise the programme in the region (most of the marketing was done in Zimbabwe) and to inspire experienced researchers about the "intellectual adventure" that the programme wished to promote in the CBNRM field. It might also be – although the evaluators deem this unlikely – that there is a dearth of researchers of quality in this field in the region.

Another factor affecting the research component has been the lack of a person with the specific task of providing the intellectual leadership to drive the research agenda. To some extent, this role was filled by Dr Stephen Turner, who for a short time was the programme supervisor at PLAAS. Dr Turner had been strongly involved in developing the original project proposal and in developing the original research themes. He has a good overview of CBNRM issues in the region, having carried out research in a number of southern African countries, and having had links with a number of southern African research institutions. Although he was not working full time on the CASS/PLAAS programme, staff at PLAAS report that he provided good leadership and support when required. When Dr Turner left, PLAAS intended to replace him with another senior researcher, but this was never implemented. The research component of the programme has required someone with the time and the experience to ensure the hoped for quality, rigour, analysis and synthesis would actually take place. There has been a need for someone with time to play a mentoring role with some of the junior researchers, pointing out issues and lines of inquiry, and helping in the development of analysis and conclusions, rather in the mould of a postgraduate degree supervisor. There has also been a need for someone who can evaluate and analyse the research material produced by the programme, and combine the results with material from other sources to provide a useful synthesis that could contribute more to achieving Objective 1. It has been difficult for anyone to play such a role given the other demands made upon project staff.

Despite the above conclusions, there are some discernible impacts from the research component. The grants have encouraged young researchers who have completed a first degree to gain valuable experience in developing research proposals and in writing research papers. They have benefitted from comments from the programme Steering Committee and staff on their proposals and from peer review of their papers. The grants have encouraged research on governance issues in different sectors, including water, forestry, and rangelands, which is important for broadening the regional understanding of CBNRM away from a tendency to focus on wildlife and tourism. The grants, have to some extent encouraged researchers to step out of their own disciplines to consider human and social aspects of resource management that are often overlooked by some of the environmental scientists. For example, researchers from an animal science background compared the governance of community based woodlands and wetlands projects with grazing schemes in Zimbabwe (Hamudikuwanda *et al.* 2001). In another example, a student with a background in land and geographical information systems carried out research on legal aspects of transboundary natural resources management (paper not available at the time of writing this report).

The grants and the annual regional workshops have produced some useful stand-alone papers that have addressed issues relevant to the programme's research agenda. Some of these have provided some comparative analysis or could provide material for synthesis papers. There is probably sufficient data within these papers for some comparative work and synthesis to be carried out by an experienced researcher who could also draw on material from other sources around the region (PLAAS itself has promoted research on governance issues in CBNRM southern Africa in collaboration with some Scandinavian Universities). This synthesis work could focus on the work that has emerged through the programme on legal aspects of governance in CBNRM and on the role of traditional authorities.

Although the programme has not yet produced research that has been “critical with regard to conventional and emerging paradigms in NRM and related fields”, the third regional workshop was interesting for a paper that attempted to rehabilitate the image of traditional authorities in terms of accountability and local level governance. The positive role of traditional authorities presented in the paper by Chinoyi and Mamimine (not available at the time of writing this report) seems to contrast with experience in other countries such as South Africa. This debate would seem to provide the foundation for some useful follow up research, or some synthesis of experience around the region.

The programme has managed to enhance understanding of opportunities and constraints of CBNRM through an exchange of ideas that has taken place through the contacts promoted by the networking grants, particularly where they were linked to writing/research grants. The capacity building course on governance in CBNRM held in September 2001 also contributed to enhancing understanding of CBNRM. Although the course was not designed to disseminate research findings from the programme, presentations were built on existing research findings in CBNRM and on existing theoretical frameworks. The use of case studies helped to ground the course in practice and the course also stimulated considerable debate. Programme staff and participants agree that the course was successful as a medium for capacity building and the approach could be adapted to meet different needs, including the transfer of research findings to specific target groups.

5.1.2 Objective 2

Draw out lessons for CBNRM policy and practice through analysis of cross-regional and cross-sectoral commonalities and differences

The programme has not made much progress towards reaching this objective largely because of the lack of comparative work and in depth analysis discussed above. This has made it difficult to draw out clear lessons for policy and practice. The main outputs associated with this objective are the practice and policy briefs. The programme intended to develop short practical guideline papers that would summarise key findings and recommendations for field practice, drawn from the programme’s analysis and debate. The aim was to produce and disseminate three such papers during the three-year life of the programme. The programme also aimed to develop short policy guideline papers to summarise key policy points in specified CBNRM sectors and areas for decision makers in CBOs, NGOs, parastatals and government agencies. It was planned to produce and disseminate three such papers during the life of the programme. At the time of the evaluation no practical guidelines had been produced, and three policy briefs were being drafted.

Although the programme has not achieved the desired level of comparative analysis and synthesis, opportunities still exist for developing policy briefs and practical guidelines. Some lessons are there in the body of work produced by the programme, but have yet to be drawn out. It should be possible to derive some policy guidelines for example, from some of the work carried out on water decentralisation legislation. A key lesson here appears to be lack of capacity building for community and other institutions to implement the powers and responsibilities being devolved to them through policy and legislation. The work carried out on traditional leadership and CBNRM governance should yield some findings that could be offered to practitioners and policy makers alike. However, given the lack of in-depth analysis in the programme so far, the development of practical guidelines and policy briefs requires someone with existing knowledge of the issues and research experience in the region.

In terms of impact, it is likely that participants in the workshops and the capacity building course have drawn their own policy and practice lessons and conclusions. Practitioners interviewed who attended the course said they had learnt from the course and could apply this knowledge in their work.

5.1.3 Objective 3

Contribute to improvements in the practice of CBNRM

This objective implies that the research findings need to reach practitioners. However, beyond specifying the production and dissemination of practical guideline papers, the programme proposal does not say much about how practitioners will be reached. There are also no indicators for measuring how the programme will in fact contribute to improvements in the practice of CBNRM. This is a design issue that is considered in more detail elsewhere in the report (Chapter 2). Even if practical guidelines had been developed, the programme framework does not suggest how the *impact* of these guidelines could be assessed. The programme has reached some practitioners in the annual workshops and in the capacity building course. Some of these practitioners say they are using the results in their work.

It is recommended that the envisaged practical guidelines are in fact developed and that in the next phase of the programme, more attention be given to specifically targeting practitioners. One method of doing this could be through a tailor-made workshop or course that presents practitioners with key programme findings and results and stimulates debate around these results from a practical perspective.

5.1.4 Objective 4

Make a range of actors and agencies in southern Africa more aware of CBNRM concepts, activities, methods, opportunities and constraints by stimulating debate and by communicating ideas and information

This is the main networking objective within the programme framework. The main activities associated with this objective are the regional meetings, allocation of grants for networking visits (up to four per year), development of an open access web site and a limited access moderated e-mail discussion forum. The various publications of the programme, particularly the newsletter, also relate to the networking objective, although the research publications can also be viewed as a direct output of the research component.

The programme has succeeded in reaching a range of actors and agencies. It has managed to move beyond its own roots in academic institutions and attract members of NGOs, government agencies and parastatals, as well as independent consultants to its meetings and events. Although the e-mail discussion forum has tended to attract academics or former academics, the website has attracted individuals from a broader range of institutions. The newsletter also reaches a broad spectrum of agencies and individuals.

Participants in the programme agree that the networking activities, including the annual workshops, as well as the capacity building course have helped to create more awareness of CBNRM concepts and have stimulated debate. They have also succeeded in communicating ideas and information.

In many respects, the capacity building course, though an *ad hoc* “add on” to the programme, has contributed to several of the programme objectives. The first part of the course focused particularly on key concepts of CBNRM such as common property theory, tenure and governance.

There have also been some problems in the networking and communication processes that have limited impact to some extent. These include some early technical problems with the e-mail discussion forum, what some participants called the “intimidating” level and style of the e-mail debates and the tendency of many internet users to be “specific grazers” (i.e. they visit a website for specific information related to a specific task) rather than “opportunistic browsers” (i.e. web surfers who dip into a number of different sites to see what’s there). The use of English as the language medium for the programme is a problem for reaching a broad range of CBNRM practitioners in Mozambique. Most people at academic institutions and staff of NGOs based in the capital, Maputo, can read, write and converse in English, but participants in the programme from Mozambique said that outside the capital the use of English is much more limited. In Mozambique and some other countries in the region the quality of telecommunications is not always high enough to support quick, regular, uninterrupted e-mail access. A further constraint is that while some of the major institutions such as universities and NGOs have Internet access, it is often only through one computer terminal and there is competition for access. Individual home access to the Internet is not so widespread in several SADC countries as it is in South Africa. With regard to the newsletter, some participants said they did not see it because it was sent to an institution where it could lie on someone’s desk and not be disseminated further. They suggested that it be distributed directly to individuals.

5.1.5 Objective 5

Contribute to the regional validation of group based systems of resource tenure and management as viable modern frameworks for sustainable development and as economically, environmentally and socially legitimate alternatives to individualised, freehold based systems

The programme has not yet produced the level of research and analysis required to reach this objective, although some useful material could be pulled out of the body of research papers produced for the annual workshops and from the writing/research grants. Most of the research papers and workshops papers, however, tend to focus on problems and constraints, perhaps pointing towards a conclusion that group based systems are too complicated and problem-fraught to be viable in the modern context. Yet there are examples of approaches that work and some of these are mentioned in one of the contributions to the e-mail discussion forum made by Prof. Ben Cousins of PLAAS. Indeed it might be a useful focus of the programme to give specific attention to some of these examples and examine the factors behind the successes that have been achieved. This could provide the basis for some of the comparative analysis and synthesis that the programme initially hoped to carry out.

Another focus could be to examine more closely why certain approaches do not work. For example, it has been well demonstrated that “aborted devolution” is taking place within the wildlife sector in the region. But do we fully understand the reasons why this is happening? Is this a factor in other sectors, and if not, why not? Is aborted devolution a “fatal flaw” or are there strategies that can be used to counter it?

5.2 OUTCOMES AND IMPACT BY TARGET GROUP

The programme has four main categories of target groups or what the project proposal (CASS/PLAAS 1998) calls “users and beneficiaries”. The impact of the programme on these categories is considered below.

5.2.1 Policy and decision makers

The impact of the programme on policy and decision-makers is difficult to measure in the context of the programme. This is because the programme has not developed a specific strategy to reach policy and decision makers with its findings. The project proposal (CASS/PLAAS 1998: 11) refers only to “ensuring that these individuals have access to programme networks and publications, either in person or through the offices and agencies within which they work”. Nothing is said about *how* this access will be ensured. The programme appears to be relying on a ‘shotgun’ approach of producing materials that are distributed to individuals and institutions with the hope that the material they receive will influence them in their policy work and decision-making. Such an approach makes it difficult to measure whether the involvement of these individuals in the programme network and the receipt of publications do in fact influence decisions and policy. This could be done by targeting specific policy and decision-makers and then tracking policy and decisions that they take in a number of ways. However, there is likely to be a time lag between the involvement of these individuals in the programme and any results that might occur.

The programme intends to use policy briefs as one of the main ways of reaching policy and decision-makers. However, at the time of writing this report, no policy briefs had been produced. It can be inferred from this that so far, impact on this target group is likely to be small. Some policy and decision-makers have attended programme workshops and the capacity building course. Some of these participants have said they would use the information they received for policy formulation, but this would need to be tracked over time to validate such statements. Some of the NGO and other participants in the workshops and course are in a position to lobby and influence policy and decision-makers.

The programme needs to be more focused and perhaps more strategic in its approach to reaching policy and decision-makers. The programme could consider using specific methods for reaching this group, such as workshops for Permanent Secretaries or Directors focussing on specific issues identified as being important for CBNRM. Policy and decision-makers in a particular sector could be targeted for receiving information and policy suggestions on issues relevant to that sector. Specific events such as public consultations could be targeted at for providing input on specific issues. PLAAS has apparently been successful in adopting some of these approaches in relation to land reform in South Africa. It is acknowledged that such approaches will be more difficult to coordinate at a regional level, where the programme operates, but network members could be encouraged to use programme material when operating at their own national levels. The programme could also explore the possibility of a focused link to SADC level policy formulation through the various sectoral technical coordination units and at higher levels. The former USAID-funded SADC Natural Resources Management Project had some successes in this regard and there could be some lessons drawn from the project’s experience.

In considering this target group, the evaluators have assumed that “policy and decision-makers” refers mainly to mid to high level government officials and possibly senior NGO officials. We are aware however that a number of other groups could fall within this category, depending on the scope of definition. Some interpretations might include as decision-makers the leaders of CBOs concerned with natural resource management or even natural resource users at household level. However, we would suggest that given the resources available to the programme and constraints in reaching community or household level, the programme should maintain a fairly narrow definition of this target group. A narrow definition would certainly help in terms of trying to monitor impact on this group. If the definition is broadened to include the community or household levels, this implies that some measures are taken to assess impact at these levels, which will require time and funding that the programme does not have.

5.2.2 Those responsible for group management of natural resources at the local level

According to the project proposal (CASS/PLAAS 1998: 11), the programme will “make special efforts to ensure that it consults and represents female and male ‘voices from the commons’ and that it feeds useable analysis and communications to at least a sample of community representatives in different parts of southern Africa”.

Again, the project proposal says little about the detail of how the voices from the commons will be consulted and how useable analysis will be fed to community representatives. To reach such a group would, for example, imply that results from research and analysis would need to be ‘packaged’ in a suitable way for them to be accessible and useable at community level. It is interesting that among programme participants there is a consensus that the best way to ensure that results reach resource managers at the local level, is to involve these resource users in the research. Forms of participatory ‘action’ research where community members involved in the research can also feed it back to community members appear to be the most appropriate approaches. Yet this has not been possible because of the focus of the programme on secondary research.

The programme implementers have realised that, given the available time and resources, it is not possible to reach directly this target group and have not attempted to reach this group in a major way. One or two community representatives have attended programme events such as the capacity building course, but largely the programme has relied on reaching the local level indirectly through NGOs and government officials who work with community members and leaders. The evaluators suggest that it is too ambitious for the programme to try to reach the local level directly without a significant increase of resources. It should be made explicit in the next phase that the programme will only expect to reach local level natural resource managers indirectly through NGOs and others that work at this level. The programme could try to develop stronger links with national level CBNRM associations, particularly those such as the Botswana Community Based Organisation Network (BOCOBONET), the CAMPFIRE Association in Zimbabwe and the Namibian Association of Community-based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations (NACSO). These organisations can be used to feed information and material to the local level in their respective countries.

5.2.3 NGOs and CBOs

The project proposal (CASS/PLAAS 1998:11) states that this group will be reached by “ensuring that they are represented in programme networks and are invited to participate in programme sponsored debate and analysis”. The programme has succeeded in involving a number of NGO representatives in the network and in the specific programme events. NGO participants interviewed for the evaluation said they had benefitted from their involvement and would use what they had learnt in their work. As with the situation with policy makers, only time will tell whether this is in fact the case. In order to be able to better monitor impact on NGO participants, the programme should develop some method of tracking this. One method could be to contact participants during the next phase with a series of focused questions to assess whether they have in fact used information or lessons provided by the programme. The monitoring of impact on all target groups would be helped by the adjusting of the current participants’ data base to group participants by target group. Such an adjustment would also help in developing a more focused approach to reaching the target groups. The programme could indeed be more focused in its targetting of NGOs by also holding specific workshops for NGOs and by identifying key NGOs working in specific sectors and targetting them for programme activities and inputs.

CBOs (community based organisations) are likely in nearly all cases to fit into the category above of “those responsible for group management of natural resources at the local level”. In most CBNRM programmes in the region, it is a CBO that is formed to represent the “community” and take decisions on its behalf. This group should be dropped from this category and included in the preceding category.

5.2.4 Applied research

The project proposal (CASS/PLAAS 1998) envisaged that the main benefits for applied research would accrue to CASS and to PLAAS, although many other research agencies and scholars were also expected to benefit through participation in programme networks and in programme sponsored research and publications.

Certainly CASS and PLAAS have been the main beneficiaries of the applied research activities of the programme. Researchers affiliated to their own institutions or Universities have been among the main beneficiaries of writing/research grants and the programme workshops. CASS in the past has been a leader in the field of common property and CBNRM research, although some of the main scholars in these fields have left the institution in recent years. The programme has impacted CASS through keeping CBNRM research high on the institution’s agenda and exposing a number of younger scholars to key CBNRM issues. Within PLAAS, the programme has helped the institution to broaden its research agenda and to make crucial links between CBNRM and one of its other main foci of attention, land reform. Although one of the main beneficiaries within PLAAS, Najma Mohammed, has left the programme, she still carries out occasional work for PLAAS and is still involved in the natural resources management field. The loss of someone who receives training and/or gains experience is always a risk in such a programme, but is still a good investment if that person’s new skills and experience are retained in the same field.

Other individual researchers and academics have been participants in the programme and have been exposed to issues and ideas concerning CBNRM. Importantly a number of participants have been those who move between a research or analytical focus and implementation in the field or other CBNRM arenas. These include senior government officials, members of NGOs and independent consultants. This helps to provide a link between research and policy/decision-making and implementers.

The programme has not had much impact on other research agencies. It has not developed any formal links with other agencies and this could again be a focus in the next phase. There is potential, for example, to develop links to institutions such as the Social Science Division of the Multidisciplinary Research Centre of the University of Namibia, which has a CBNRM research agenda. A number of programme participants have links to the Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique, and have an interest in land reform issues. It is not suggested that such institutions should become formal partners in the programme, but that more specific links could be made that could facilitate achieving programme objectives. Regular participation in programme workshops and writing of papers for these workshops could be a way of fostering such links.

6. THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY-BASED APPLIED RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

During the past two decades universities have undergone a transition in terms of the role they play in society. For centuries academic staff used to interact almost exclusively with peers, focusing their energies on enhancing scholarship in research and teaching - their surrounding communities often far away in thought and in action. In the recent past social and political pressure has brought a new emphasis on engagement at community level. The conventional tasks of universities have been complemented by new approaches, new objectives and new roles. Universities have become part of “the community”, focusing on relevance in research and teaching and linking community work to scholarship. In many disciplines their approaches, while still critical and objective, have shifted towards application and problem solving.

This new role, if well executed, has benefits for all concerned. As scholarship is being brought closer to implementation, universities bring rigor to analysis and provide evidence for decisions, strategies and development approaches. They stimulate debate and discussion, and establish relationships that promote the continuous exchange of ideas.

Partnerships and collaboration with NGOs and other intermediaries, or with local communities are formed to strengthen programmes on the ground. If successful, such partnerships strengthen all involved, among others in areas such as advocacy and influencing policy. Universities bring access to research and rigorous scientific work to NGOs, government, communities and other partners who are normally too involved in process. These partners bring different insights to universities, such as an understanding of community dynamics, or the best way to translate research into policy briefs or community action. They help to broaden the research agenda of universities. They often have extended networks that benefit university work. Close collaboration with them enables the exposure of students – the next generation of practitioners, decision and policy makers, and others - to realities on the ground.

Applied research units are often the university vehicles for these approaches. Collaboration works better if it is narrowed down to two units with the same (disciplinary) interests, or to several units with *complementary* disciplinary expertise and interests. This has given rise to a strong growth in partnerships between such university units - within the same university, or between units in different universities in the same country or across the world. In southern Africa, as in other parts of the world, these partnerships are often aimed specifically at promoting regional collaboration and the sharing of expertise that can benefit the region as a whole. Partnerships are formed between two or more academic units, and are often linked to other NGO or CBO partners.

There are certain barriers that must be overcome before these relationships can work. One of the greatest challenges is that universities have to learn to communicate with different target groups (and vice versa). They have to learn to understand the dynamics in organisations and communities quite different from their own. They have to shift their approaches to focus on *integrated* problem solving and application. Their work has to be accepted in organisational and community cultures often different to their own.

They also need to manage programmes in a consultative and collaborative style – often alien to an academic environment. Many such relationships do not survive these challenges.

It is within the paradigm described above that the CASS/PLAAS programme finds itself. CASS and PLAAS are two of the strongest players in their field in the region. Both have extensive experience in liaising and collaborating with communities, CBOs and NGOs in South Africa and Zimbabwe. While there will always be a competitive element between two strong units, their experience, expertise and networks could also complement and support each other for the benefit of the region. This was an important rationale behind their selection as partners in this initiative.

As noted in Chapter 5, CASS and PLAAS themselves have been two of the main beneficiaries of the applied research activities of the programme. Their researchers (or those of their institutions) have been among the main beneficiaries of writing/research grants and the programme workshops. In CASS, the programme kept CBNRM research high on the institution's agenda and in PLAAS it has helped the institution to broaden its research agenda and to make crucial links between CBNRM one of its other main foci of attention, land reform. Individual researchers and academics from other institutions were exposed to issues and ideas concerning CBNRM. As the impact analysis in Chapter 5 indicates, although some weaknesses need to be addressed, the programme did promote networking and interaction with other researchers and academic institutions across the region – albeit not through formal partnerships.

The programme by its very essence contains a challenge in the need to bridge the communication gap that usually exists between academic centres, policy makers, communities and practitioners. As indicated in Chapters 4 and 5, this challenge was not always met with equal success, in spite of the fact that both CASS and PLAAS have good track records in this regard. The problems in drawing the target groups to a much greater extent into the programme activities might be related to implementation issues discussed in Chapter 4. However the experience gained through the attempts to reach these audiences will stand the programme in good stead in a next phase. This is exactly why programmes such as this one are important in helping the institutions overcome the challenges noted above.

As noted earlier, a number of participants have indeed been those who move between a research or analytical focus and implementation in the field or other CBNRM arenas, such as senior government officials, members of NGOs and independent consultants. The programme activities have helped to provide a link between research and policy/decision-making and implementers. This is an important role for academic centres and one that the programme concept promotes in all its activities.

One weakness pointed out in Chapter 5 is that the programme has not developed any close links with other agencies. There is potential in the next phase for example to foster links with organisations such as IUCN-ROSA for the compilation of guidelines and the distribution of material to their networks, or the various country networks such as BOCOBONET in Botswana. These do not need to be formal partnerships, but rather linkages that support the programme towards reaching its objectives. The complementary expertise that these institutions can bring to the programme should be used in the best possible way.

Universities have become important players in the development sector. The CASS/PLAAS programme illustrates very effectively the crucial role that such development initiatives play in promoting the type of partnerships and relationships that bring universities to the forefront of development. The exchange of ideas, the rigorous work based in daily realities and the need to cross divides in communication and information exchange can contribute greatly to development in the region.

The partners in the CASS/PLAAS programme are doing important work in this arena. Although mistakes were made, lessons were learnt. The next phase of the programme should enable them to strengthen their expertise and consolidate their experiences for the benefit of the beneficiary groups in the region.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 Programme concept and design

The programme concept is good and meets a real need in trying to better understand CBNRM, which has become a major conservation and development paradigm in southern Africa. The programme, as currently conceived, has the potential to make a difference in terms of providing relevant CBNRM research and analysis. It also has a viable approach to the dissemination of results of the research and lessons learned. In general the programme objectives are relevant and aim to fill existing gaps in CBNRM in the region. Problems experienced within the programme have been due to issues concerning implementation rather than the programme concept.

The programme design provides a clear link between goal, objectives, and activities although the links to certain target groups were not so well developed. The design has some weaknesses, which would have been addressed through a more methodical and comprehensive strategic planning approach. Although outputs are specified (e.g. the number of publications to be produced or research grants to be awarded), the design has not considered programme outcomes, which focus on more qualitative aspects of what the programme would want to achieve. Key assumptions that affect the programme have not been formulated and stated and there is a lack of indicators for measurement of progress and performance. There is a need for the development of detailed and focused strategies for achieving the objectives, which incorporate consideration of key assumptions and a monitoring and evaluation component.

Changes in the programme design can be made, for example more careful targeting of beneficiary groups and the incorporation of a capacity building element. However, the linking of the two key programme components (high quality comparative research and networking across the region) gives the programme its unique role in the region. These components should not be changed without careful consideration of the consequences. At least one of the design changes during programme execution – the move away from “high-level comparative analysis and synthesis” - had a significantly negative effect on progress towards the achievement of the programme objectives.

7.1.2 Organisational structure

In general the organisational structure is reasonably appropriate for the programme design. Weaknesses are mostly due to inadequate or flawed implementation processes rather than to the organisational structure.

Certain changes could be considered. Regional representation is not promoted through the existing structures. The Steering Committee, although already adding value to the programme, is not empowered to fulfil its role effectively. The inclusion of research in both Coordinators' responsibilities has been a problem; this is not necessary if roles are divided strictly into communication and networking, and research promotion. Of greater importance is the level of expertise they bring to the programme in their respective fields, and the respect and recognition that they can get from the target groups.

The CASS/PLAAS partnership has the potential to add value to the work of each of the institutions and to promote a regional focus for CBNRM research. Each institution has strengths that can contribute to achieving the programme objectives. However, the partnership has not yet reached its potential because of some key implementation problems. Some of these, such as an inadequate communication and information flow, can be dealt with if the partners are sufficiently committed to this. However, there are other problems that are more serious. The perceptions of varying levels of commitment of the two partners is an issue that needs to be addressed at management level in an open manner. The fragmented programme reporting and responsibility of the partners to the donors does not promote a partnership approach. It also needs to be addressed at this level.

7.1.3 Programme implementation and management

There have been some potentially serious problems in programme implementation that need addressing. Many of these implementation issues relate to the role of the programme Coordinators in each institution and the allocation of their tasks. The PLAAS Coordinator at the time of writing was carrying out the roles of researcher, communicator, administrator and networker. Some of the problems relate to the need to optimise the potential of the partnership. Ultimately the implementation problems can be dealt with through stronger management and leadership within the programme. There is a need for more joint management responsibility to be taken and for the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee to be clarified and strengthened. In future there should be a greater focus on the design of effective implementation strategies and the monitoring of processes to ensure that they stay on track.

7.1.4 Programme impact

The programme has made a start towards achieving its objectives and should continue into a second phase. Although impact has been difficult to measure, a good foundation has been laid. A project of this nature *will* take time to produce results, and a number of factors led to delays at the start.

In some areas the programme has been slow in making progress: it has not reached its targets in terms of research products, policy briefs or practical guidelines. The main reasons for this have been the slow start in implementation by CASS, the current lack of a technical/analytical driving force, time constraints for the CASS/PLAAS Coordinators and the need to develop more specific strategies for achieving some objectives and reaching some target groups. However, research has been carried out, debate stimulated, the network has been established, multidisciplinary research has been promoted, young researchers encouraged, information disseminated and capacity built.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.2.1 Programme concept and design

- ❑ The design of the programme should be adjusted through joint planning between the two partner institutions. Time and resources should be set aside for a planning session or sessions that carefully reconsider the programme framework.
- ❑ The adjusted design should include a revision of the objectives so that they are achievable and measurable within the scope of the programme particularly in view of available human and financial resources.
- ❑ Specifically the programme should decide whether it should retain the more ambitious elements of objective 1 such as the aim to carry out in depth analysis, synthesis and theoretical development. This should be done in the light of the change in focus of the research/writing grants from comparative research and synthesis. If the level of the work resulting from the grants cannot be improved, and appropriate people cannot be found to provide the necessary leadership and supervision for the research and analytical agenda, then this objective should be revised. In these circumstances the research aims should be more modest.
- ❑ It might also be prudent to reconsider objective 3, “Contribute to improvement in the practice of CBNRM”. In order to achieve this objective, there need to be more focused attempts to reach practitioners and methods need to be devised to measure progress and impact. Improved practice is not something that a research and information programme really has control over unless it is involved in practice itself. The programme is relying on other people whom it has no control over to ensure that this objective is reached. Depending on the resources obtained for the next phase, this objective could be dropped. Objective 2 would still commit the programme to deriving lessons for CBNRM practice and the communications and networking components would still aim to disseminate these lessons.
- ❑ Capacity building should be added as an objective (depending upon resources being made available), building on the success of the capacity building course, and the usefulness of such courses in meeting a number of other programme objectives. Specific links to the other objectives should be formulated. (If resources are not available for adding capacity building as an objective, the use of short courses and workshops for specific target groups should be considered under the existing objectives).
- ❑ The target groups should also be reconsidered and in particular it should be made clear that the programme will not try to reach local natural resource managers directly.
- ❑ The programme should develop more detailed strategies for achieving each objective, spelling out HOW these strategies will be implemented.

- ❑ A monitoring and evaluation component should be built into the design. This component should include indicators for measuring success and should indicate the means of verification. Responsibility should be assigned to programme staff for day-to-day data collection and for processing of this data. As part of this process, key assumptions (see sub-section 2.2) should be built into the programme framework and their validity monitored over the duration of the programme.
- ❑ The programme should investigate the use of appropriate planning and design methodologies for revising the programme framework. Several frameworks exist, some more elaborate than others (e.g. Logical Framework, Results Based Monitoring, Objective Trees etc.). The programme should adopt a methodology that assists in logical planning that links implementation clearly and simply to monitoring and evaluation. The methodology should also be appropriate for developing qualitative outcomes and enabling the programme to be flexible in its implementation. The programme should be guided by, not driven by its framework, and this framework should be adjusted if necessary to reflect the realities of implementation.

7.2.2 Organisational structure

- ❑ The programme should separate the technical and administrative functions ensuring that Coordinators are able to concentrate on their core functions. Similarly there should be a specific position for communication and information dissemination and specific positions for research and part-time administration. Ideally the research position should be taken up by an experienced and committed researcher who commands respect in the field, who can give intellectual leadership and can devote a good proportion of his/her time to own research in the field. This means that the programme resources should be attractive enough to bring this type of expertise and commitment to the programme.
- ❑ Even if a specific position for communications and information dissemination is not created, the programme should still seek the input of a communications/media expert to advise on developing specific tools and methods to reach specific target groups and the communications aspects of web design.
- ❑ The role of each of the partners, their willingness to address the implementation problems, their commitment to the programme and their line of authority have to be carefully assessed before a decision is taken to continue with the partnership in its current form. Should the programme not be managed through an institutional partnership, both Coordinators can be seconded to work in the same unit. It will be more cost-efficient if one organisation gives institutional support to two people driving the communication/information dissemination and research components of the programme.
- ❑ If the partnership continues, the programme should strengthen joint accountability and responsibility for achieving of objectives e.g. through consolidated reporting, a strengthened mandate for the Steering Committee and joint planning and monitoring.

- ❑ For more dynamic regional involvement, the organisational structure might need to include a focal/contact point for the programme in each participating country. These should not be new structures and full-time appointments, but rather existing structures with suitable networking capabilities to add the promotion of this programme to their activities for a reasonably small fee. The concept of a forum of representatives from each country can also be considered. This forum can meet once a year to monitor progress in terms of regional representation and to advise the Steering Committee on ways to ensure country participation.

7.2.3 Programme implementation and management

- ❑ The programme should have a more focused approach that develops specific strategies, methods and tools to achieve each objective and to reach each target group, and monitors progress with respect to the implementation strategies.
- ❑ A comprehensive information management system for the programme will facilitate programme management, ease the workload of the Coordinators and ensure readily available information for marketing, liaison, reporting, monitoring and evaluation and other purposes.
- ❑ A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system should be developed for the next programme phase, based on clearly defined programme outcomes (unless a more flexible “learn as we go along” approach is followed, in which case effective institutional learning systems should be implemented). Should the current institutional structure be retained, it would be important to consolidate reporting processes at Steering Committee level before final submission to the donors.
- ❑ Financial policies and procedures for the programme should be clarified and their efficiency improved, especially at PLAAS.
- ❑ The programme should aim to develop more continuity of participants in order to ensure there is a core group of networkers and researchers who are aware of the programme objectives and activities and can contribute on a more regular basis. (In suggesting this, the evaluators are aware of the need also to achieve a good enough spread of participants across the region and to involve as many people in the programme as possible. We are also aware of the problem of getting participation from specific individuals who are involved in a number of other activities in their own countries and around the region. A balance is required between continuity and diversity of participants from target groups and countries in the region.)
- ❑ More formal links should be developed with other research agencies and national CBNRM associations in order to broaden the range of individuals and organisations involved in CBNRM research and to assist in the dissemination of information and lessons learned. The programme should not seek to engage a third partner, as this is likely to exacerbate existing communication and coordination problems.
- ❑ The programme should strengthen its overall coordination and management. There is a need for stronger leadership in order to drive the research and analytical agenda, and supervise the research outputs. The programme should try to fill the vacant programme supervisor position at PLAAS in order to help provide this leadership. Management should provide stronger supervision in terms of monitoring programme

progress and making adjustments where necessary. The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee should be clarified and strengthened in this regard.

- ❑ More can be done to study, understand and implement the best methods through which to communicate with the different target groups. As for existing methods:

The Website is essential to position the programme as a key regional and worldwide resource in CBNRM. Possible improvements include more relevant links to other sources of information, more persistent emails to the list of programme contacts to inform them of new developments on the Website, and more user-friendly material on CBNRM policies and practice aimed at bridging the information transfer gap between the various practitioner groups. The electronic forum should not be terminated as yet; instead, the programme should at least for a limited period try to contribute to creating a culture in southern Africa in which participants communicate with peers in the region and elsewhere in the world. In a new phase, innovative efforts to make this an effective communication tool should be continued for another year before a final decision is taken. Efforts can be made to include international participants (especially from other developing regions), moderate content to exclude aggression and personal attacks, try to stimulate debate at a practical level where practitioners can also participate, and invite a spectrum of people, such as a group of young researchers, to start discussions on relevant and practical topics. The newsletter should continue. The content might focus more on brief summaries of analyses, syntheses and comparative work across the region. More short, “catchy” articles to stimulate the interest of different beneficiary groups could be included. Attention should be drawn to the newsletter through regular email releases. Newsletters should be mailed in person to all the people on the contact database, and as soon as a networking or research grant is allocated, it should be sent to the recipient. Occasional evaluative feedback on content and impact can be requested.

- ❑ Key processes of application solicitation and review of grant applications and final reports should be re-conceptualised and implemented to ensure that research quality is promoted throughout the programme. Policy briefs and practitioner guidelines should be written by policy experts who also know how to translate research findings into user-friendly information for specific target groups.
- ❑ There should be a greater focus on the integration and synthesis of programme experiences and analytical work throughout the program lifetime. For example, a useful contribution to the publications might be an analytical review to determine the programme contributions to CBNRM thinking through a synthesis of all its publications and other intellectual contributions during the past three years, including the networking grant experiences, workshop presentations, etc.
- ❑ The applicants and recipients of networking grants should be kept to specific application and reporting formats that are both informative and evaluative. The reports should focus on accountability and draw out lessons that can inform the programme. These can be used as a programme resource. Grantholders should also be given the opportunity to report on their experiences at the next annual programme workshop (funding for this can be included in the grant). An investigation should be conducted to determine whether the grant amount should be increased.
- ❑ In order to facilitate programme management, systems for communication, monitoring and evaluation, information management, organisational learning and for evidence-based decision-making should be put in place at the start of programme. In a next phase the programme management should spend more time on strategic,

evidence-based planning, the monitoring of results and the adjustment of strategies to ensure effective implementation and to improve the overall programme performance.

Addendum 1: List of persons consulted

Simon Anstey	D.Phil. Student, CASS, Zimbabwe
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Claudious Chikozho	Research Fellow, CASS, Zimbabwe
Champion Chinoyi	Executive Director, Zimbabwe Trust
Aninka Claasens	Consultant, People's Dialogue on Land and Shelter, South Africa
Ben Cousins	Director, PLAAS, South Africa
Rick de Satge	Facilitator, CASS/PLAAS Course, South Africa
H Hamudikuwanda	Lecturer, Animal Science Department, University of Zimbabwe
Mafaniso Hara	PLAAS, South Africa
Ed Humphrey	Senior Facilitator: Tourism Development, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation, Namibia
Undine Kayser	Researcher, Centre for Conflict Resolution, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Krasposy Kujinga	M.Phil. Student, Sociology Department, University of Zimbabwe
Alberto Macucule	Department of Forestry, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique
Wilson Magaya	Research Assistant, CASS, Zimbabwe
Patrick Maminine	Lecturer, Social Science Faculty, University of Zimbabwe and CASS/PLAAS CBNRM Programme Coordinator of research grants
Steven Mandivengerei	Research Assistant, CASS, Zimbabwe
Patrick Matakala	Project leader and liaison scientist, ICRAF, Mozambique
Carmel Mbizvo	Coordinator, Regional Policy Programme, IUCN-ROSA
Carlos Moambo	Technoserve, Mozambique
Najma Mohammed	Former Networking Coordinator, CASS/PLAAS CBNRM Programme, South Africa

Letla Mosenene	Namibia/Finland Forestry Programme, Namibia and CASS/PLAAS CBNRM Programme Steering Committee member
Shamiso Mtisi	Environmental Law Intern, IUCN-ROSA Policy Department
Phanuel Mugabe	Director, CASS
Prisca H Mugabe	Lecturer, Animal Science Department, University of Zimbabwe
Simon Munthali	Chief Technical Adviser, GEF Mozambique Transfrontier Conservation Area Project
Marshall Murphree	Chairman, CASS Trust, Zimbabwe
Victor Mushango	Lecturer, Department of Geography, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique
Laurel Neme	Team leader, FRAME Project, USA
Phinda Ndabula	Research Fellow, PLAAS, South Africa
Isilda Nhantumbo	Country Programme Coordinator, IUCN Mozambique
Lungisile Ntsebeza	Senior Researcher, PLAAS, South Africa
Kara Page	Project Manager FRAME Project, USA
Joao Pereira	Junior Lecturer, Department of Political Studies and Public Administration, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique
Henrique Massango	Coordinator: Gaza Transfrontier Conservation Area Project Coordinator, IUCN, Mozambique
Aah Sekhesa	Environmental Evaluation Unit, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Lovemore Simwanda	Zambia National Farmers' Union and CASS/PLAAS CBNRM Programme Steering Committee member
Merle Sowman	Director, Environmental Evaluation Unit, University of Cape Town
Steven Turner	Vrije Universiteit van Amsterdam (former PLAAS CBNRM programme supervisor), Netherlands
Gcobani Vika	Deputy Director, Department of Environment and Tourism, Western Cape
Webster Whande	Networking coordinator, CASS/PLAAS CBNRM Programme, South Africa

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Addendum 3: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference: Programme Evaluation

An evaluation of the regional programme of analysis and communication on community based natural resource management (CBNRM) in southern Africa, hosted by the Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe, and the Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape.

1. Overview

1.1 Purpose

To undertake a comprehensive review of the programme's performance and impact, to recommend whether or not to continue the programme, and, should continuation be recommended, to suggest possible adjustments to the programme.

1.2 Timing and duration

January/February 2002, for a total of 32-42 person days

1.3 Evaluation team composition

Two consultants with relevant background and experience, at least one being from the CBNRM sector in the region.

2. Background

CASS and PLAAS have managed a regional programme of analysis and communications on the theme of community based natural resource management (CBNRM) since June 1999. The first phase of the programme is due to end in June 2002. An evaluation of the programme will take place in early 2002, to evaluate impact and to make recommendations which will assist CASS and PLAAS to prepare funding proposals for a second phase, to begin in July 2002.

The general objective of the programme is to contribute to the sustainable enhancement of rural livelihoods in southern Africa by promoting a broader and deeper understanding of how natural resources can be used and managed sustainably through group based institutions and decision making.

In order to achieve its general objective, the programme aims to:

- ❑ enhance regional understanding of the opportunities and constraints of CBNRM through in depth analysis, comparison, synthesis, theoretical development and operational recommendations;
- ❑ draw out lessons for CBNRM policy and practice through the analysis of cross-regional and cross-sectoral commonalities and differences;
- ❑ contribute to improvements in the practice of CBNRM;
- ❑ make a range of actors and agencies in southern Africa more aware of CBNRM concepts, activities, methods, opportunities and constraints by stimulating debate and by communicating ideas and information;

- ❑ contribute to the regional validation of group based systems of resource tenure and management as viable modern frameworks for sustainable development and as economically, environmentally and socially legitimate alternatives to individualised, freehold based systems.

Four categories of user and beneficiary were identified for this programme:

- ❑ policy and decision makers
- ❑ those responsible for group management of natural resources at the local level
- ❑ NGOs and CBOs
- ❑ applied researchers

Specific activities have comprised a website, an email discussion forum, a biannual newsletter, networking visits within the region, applied research and writing grants, publication of research reports, and an annual regional meeting.

3. Purpose and focus of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to undertake a comprehensive review of the programme's performance. The evaluation will focus on the following key issues:

- ❑ The true significance of CBNRM as a livelihood and development strategy for Southern Africa, and the effectiveness of the programme in exploring this
- ❑ The quality and impact of the comparative and analytical work of the programme
- ❑ The coverage, quality and effectiveness of the programme's communications component, with particular reference to its attempt to stimulate regional debate on CBNRM
- ❑ The efficiency and effectiveness of the regional collaboration that the programme has attempted to stimulate not only between CASS and PLAAS, but also between the various agencies and individuals involved
- ❑ The role of university-based applied research institutions like CASS and PLAAS in development sectors such as CBNRM, and whether or not the programme has usefully developed this role.
- ❑ The evaluation should also make specific recommendations on the future of the programme – should it be continued or not, and if so, what changes, if any, could be made to enhance its effectiveness

Specific questions that the evaluation will address include the following:

- ❑ Was the design of the programme (ie. its activities, methods and expected outputs) appropriate to its purpose and goals?
- ❑ Were the institutional arrangements for programme implementation (the funds made available, divisions of labour between institutions, allocation of time, expertise of staff hired, etc) appropriate to programme design?
- ❑ How efficiently and effectively was the programme implemented?
- ❑ Were programme objectives in relation to quantity and quality of specific activities and outputs (publications, workshops, newsletters, website and email forum, writing/research grants, networking visits) achieved?

- ❑ What levels of participation in the programme were secured from key target groups within the region ?
- ❑ What impact has the programme made on the understanding and actions of the target groups (policy makers, practitioners, resource users and managers, and scholars)?
- ❑ What are the major lessons to be drawn from the experience of the programme, for this or similar programmes?
- ❑ What adjustments need to be made (in purpose, goals, activities, outputs, institutional arrangements) if the programme is to redesigned for a possible Phase 2?

4. Time frames and resources

The evaluation will be undertaken between mid-January and mid-March 2002, and a final report must be submitted by the 16th March 2002.

A two-person team will be appointed, for a total of 38 consultant days. Funds are available for airfares for evaluators to each make visits within the region (eg to Mozambique and Botswana), in addition to visits to CASS in Zimbabwe and PLAAS in South Africa. A Daily Subsistence Allowance will be paid.

5. Documentation to be made available

- ❑ All original project documentation, including annual reports to donors
- ❑ Copies of all programme outputs (publications, research reports, reports on networking visits etc)
- ❑ Minutes of all Steering Committee meetings
- ❑ Evaluation forms from training course participants

6. Methods

- ❑ Interviews with programme staff
- ❑ Review of relevant documentation
- ❑ Interviews with programme participants

7. Contact persons for more information

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