

Chapter 1

Introduction



Over the last 17 years Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has proved to be an important mechanism for the Namibian government to pursue its goals of sustainable development. CBNRM is based on the understanding that appropriate incentives to use resources sustainably can be developed if resources have sufficient value to local people, and allow for their exclusive rights of use, benefit and management.

Accordingly, the Ministry of Environment & Tourism (MET) introduced legislation in 1996 to give conditional use rights over wildlife to communities in communal areas that formed a management unit called a conservancy. Since then many local communities have used this legal provision to manage

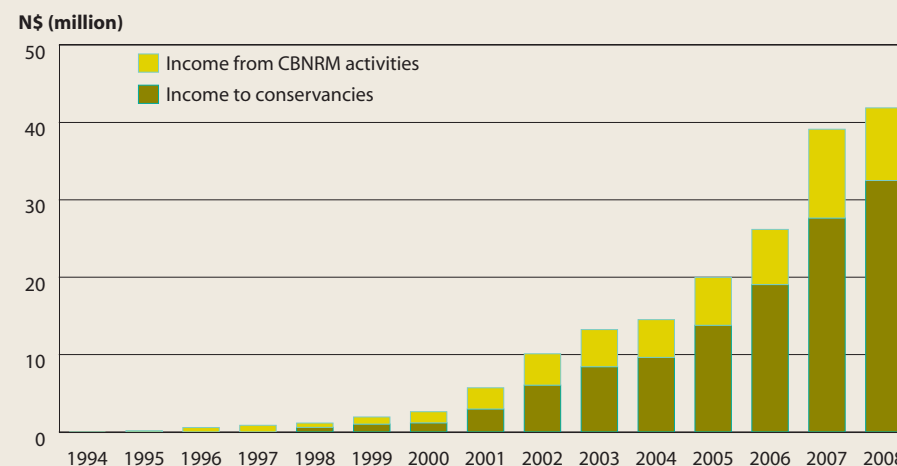
their own wildlife and tourism activities, and communal area conservancies are now found in nearly all regions of the country. The conservancy approach has also proven valuable as a conservation strategy as can be seen by the increase in wildlife in many of our country's communal areas. It has also been effective as a rural development strategy, generating income for local communities, bringing new jobs, and providing new skills and expertise.

This publication demonstrates the impressive results of CBNRM in the wildlife and tourism sector. It forms the sixth in a series of publications on the progress and challenges of Namibia's communal area conservancies. The first book provided a review of information up to 2003, after

which update booklets and full review books were published each alternate year, respectively. This sixth booklet updates information on communal conservancies up to the end of 2008. While the document focuses on the achievements of CBNRM in relation to wildlife and tourism, it also includes information on the 13 registered community forests in Namibia.

This report recognises the support provided by the MET in collaboration with its partners in developing and implementing the conservancy approach in Namibia. These partners include communal conservancies themselves, members of the Namibia Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO), a broad range of donors and private sector tourism partners.

Figure 1. Income from the overall CBNRM programme grew from nothing in 1994 to over N\$41 million in 2008. The incomes are shown in two categories: income to conservancies and income to CBNRM activities outside conservancies.



context
and background