



Assessment and Recommendations for Strengthening the Community Conservation Fund

Final Report

Submitted to:

Department of Wildlife and National Parks, MCI, Government of Botswana
United States Agency for International Development, RCSEA
BIOFOR Task Order 802

Submitted by:

Chemonics International Inc.



Assessment and Recommendations for Strengthening the Community Conservation Fund

Prepared by:

William Kedrock

Submitted to:

Department of Wildlife and National Parks, MCI, Government of Botswana
United States Agency for International Development, RCSA
BIOFOR Task Order 802
Chemonics International Inc., Washington, DC

Submitted by:

Chemonics International Inc.

ACRONYMS

CBO	Community based organisation
CCF	Community Conservation Fund
CLO	Community Liaison Officer
CSD	Community Services Division
DWNP	Department of Wildlife and National Parks
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	i
Executive Summary	iii
A. General Principles of Grant Fund Management	1
B. THE COMMUNITY CONSERVATION FUND	1
B1. Purpose	1
B2. Funding	2
B3. Process	3
C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGING THE CCF	3
C1. Appraisal Committee Composition	4
C2. CCF Manager	5
C3. Eligible Activities	6
C4. Short-listing Service Providers	8
C5. CBO Cost-Sharing Contributions	9
C6. Other Diverse CCF Management Suggestions	10
D. CLO PROPOSAL MANAGEMENT	12
D1. CLO Job Description	12
D2. CLO Training	12
D3. Process Management	13
E. MONITORING AND REPORTING AT DISTRICT AND NATIONAL LEVEL	14
E1. Application Process	14
E2. Implementation	14
E3. Evaluation Process	16
ANNEX A CCF GUIDELINES (REVISED)	A-1
ANNEX B CCF FINANCIAL AGREEMENT (REVISED)	B-1
ANNEX C CCF CATEGORY I APPLICATION (REVISED)	C-1
ANNEX D CCF CATEGORY II APPLICATION (NEW)	D-1
ANNEX E CLO APPLICATION CHECKLIST (NEW)	E-1
ANNEX F PROGRESS REPORT (NEW)	F-1
ANNEX G CLOSEOUT REPORT (NEW)	G-1
ANNEX H INSTALLMENT REQUEST AND RECONCILIATION FORM	H-1

Executive Summary

The Community Conservation Fund (CCF), operated by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks, is a leading initiative by the Government of Botswana to encourage the formation and growth of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that choose to pursue community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) activities. After a year of experience operating the CCF program, it is an opportune time to review the program and processes. This report is not an audit. Rather, it is an assessment of the suitability of the present system undertaken in conjunction with the current CCF manager.

The assessment took place against a backdrop of several “best” principles that underpin many successful funds: transparency, balance, accountability, simplicity, and consistency. The assessment begins with a brief review of the purpose, process, and funding for CCF.

The CCF has two purposes. One is to help a CBO responsibly develop the natural resources under its management and, two, in the process of doing so with CCF assistance, strengthen the CBO as a community organization. It is important to acknowledge the risk involved with CCF. CBOs are not strong as a client group. Thus, CCF’s usefulness stems in part from the lessons learned by a CBO in applying for, securing, managing, and reporting on funds received. This experience is beneficial to the CBO irrespective of the actual outcome of the endeavor funded through CCF.

To date (March 2000), the CCF Appraisal Committee (committee) has approved 10 projects valued at P673,500, disbursing P314,000 against 5 of the 10 projects. Last year, P500,000 was available through CCF. This fiscal year (starting April 1) the amount is P550,000. Due to overcommitment, the actual uncommitted amount going into the fiscal operating year is P326,500. Indications are that additional funds will be made available if necessary during the fiscal year.

The present Appraisal Committee chairperson is contemplating stepping down. If this occurs, we recommend that the head of the Community Services Division step in as a replacement. This is a logical selection given CCF’s focus on communities. At the same time, with the departure of the current chairperson, the committee must maintain its authority to fully commit CCF money and enter agreements without any further review.

To position the fund for growth, the CCF requires a full-time manager. This manager could come from either of two Community Services Divisions: sociology, or community liaison. Given the position’s current responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation, etc., sociology may be a better fit.

We also suggest slightly reshuffling two CCF funding categories: Category I – Community-Based Organization Strengthening, and Category II - CBO Natural Resource Management/Conservation Projects. The first focuses on prerequisites to sound CBO operation, e.g.,

constitution, bookkeeping system, natural resource profile, etc. When a CBO can demonstrate it complies with these prerequisites, it would be eligible for the second category of CCF activities, which focuses on larger, often income-generating activities.

Category I activities lend themselves to prequalifying a short-list of eligible service providers. Such short-listing has several advantages, including quicker turnaround, ability to benchmark, quality control enhancement, ease of CBO selection, etc. For these reasons we recommend that the CCF develop a short-list of preselected Category I service providers.

We suggest that the cost of Category I activities be covered 100 percent by CCF and that the committee fix the cost-sharing percentage for Category II activities at 20 percent. Currently, Category I activities are free of cost-sharing requirements. The difference for Category II is that rather than a floating percentage, which is harder to control and less transparent, the percentage would now be fixed. The idea of cost sharing for Category II activities is sound, but the level need only be sufficient to demonstrate CBO commitment. At 20 percent of total costs, all CBOs will be able to contribute, even if in-kind, toward any activity.

The community liaison officer (CLO) is an important position in the success of the CCF. We recommend establishing clear CLO responsibilities with respect to the fund. To aid the CLO, we offer an application checklist as well as revised CCF guidelines, applications, and financial agreement. We have also included specific outlines for progress and closeout reports, both of which should be vetted by the CLO.

To justify the inherent risk of CCF and the likelihood that some, perhaps many, of the funded CBO activities may fail, it is important that CCF have a solid monitoring and evaluation (M&E) component. A sound M&E component will be able to draw useful lessons from even failed initiatives, mitigating the chances of repetition, and will build on successful initiatives, enhancing replicability across CBOs. The assessment suggests that the sociology unit of the Community Services Division take on a formal role in final evaluation of CCF-funded CBO activities.