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The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission
Comissão Permanente das Águas da Bacia Hidrográfica do Rio Okavango



OKACOM INTERVENTION OKACOM Activities on climate change Adaptation 13th Meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate Geneva, Switzerland 17th October 2022

1. Introduction

The Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) is implementing its 20-Year Strategic Action Programme through support from various International Cooperating Partners (ICPs). These included the

- ✓ the UNDP-GEF provided support through a Project entitled "Support to the Cubango-Okavango River Basin Strategic Action Programme Implementation", which was implemented from November 2017 to July 2022. The project objective was to strengthen the joint management and cooperative decision-making capacity of the CORB states on the optimal utilization of natural resources in the basin, with the aim to support the socio-economic development of the basin communities while sustaining the health of the basin ecosystems.
- ✓ The European Union (EU) supported the CORB-SAP implementation through the EU Programme on Transboundary Water Resources Management of the Cubango-Okavango River Basin. The programme was implemented from April 2018 to June 2022. The overall objective of the EU-OKACOM Programme was to strengthen governance and promote sustainable management of water and land resources in the CORB.
- ✓ Key thematic and result areas covered by the two Project in support of the overall Basin Development Management Framework included.
 - i. UNDP Project Component 2: Environmental conscious livelihoods and socio-economic development demonstration projects. Focusing on Environmentally sound socio-economic development demonstrated in the basin.
 - ii. EU Project Component 3: To improve land management in the Cubango Okavango River Basin, through improved land use planning, reduction of environmental degradation and improved livelihood.
- ✓ These Components are anchored around demonstration projects with Communities through climate smart activities.

2. Climate Smart Activities

2.1. Enhancing climate change resilience through alternative agricultural practices - Conservation Agriculture (CA) in Calai, Angola

- ✓ The core principle of Conservation Agriculture soil management. The principle is to facilitate minimal tillage of soil.
- ✓ Fundamental to CA is the preparation of the basin. This are supposed to be prepared in the dry periods after the harvest.
- ✓ Its also practice that can allow for conservation of the environment as one can produce a lot in a small piece of land.



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In Angola, local administration was identified with two sites in Kafue and Candandela. Two community fields were identified to demonstrate CA for community uptake into their individual farmers.

- ✓ In partnership with OKACOM- EU Project thirty (30) farmers were identified to demonstrate CA. Half a hectare from each farm was fenced. The fenced area was to demonstrate CA while the other half was to practice the traditional way. The intention was to compare the output from CA approach and the traditional farming methods.
- ✓ The farmers were provided with farming equipment and materials such as wheel burrows, fencing materials, and fertilizers. Training on CA and use of the procured ploughs was undertaken for the farmers.
- ✓ There were number of challenges including poor soil quality, farms are scattered with long distances between them in a very bad terrain, limited availability of materials within project area
- ✓ Albeit many challenges, positive outputs and lessons were realized. The communities displayed a lot of zeal in learning the process and those who were able to use the methodology realized better yields. The Communities learnt that CA is labour intensive as one needs to work on the fields to prepare the ground hence dictates that they work together to pull on the labour; CA yields better results than the traditional agriculture. In general, farmers are happy to engage further on CA.

2.2. In Botswana, the demonstration projects were anchored on **Horticulture produce in Maun and Shakawe through climate smart practices and linking horticultural production with the up-market tourism value chain and other local markets.**

- ✓ The Botswana demonstration focused on enhancing horticultural produce in Maun and Shakawe through climate-smart practices. Nineteen (19) farmers (11 males and 8 females) participated. The farmers were equipped with knowledge on climate smart agriculture. They were also provided with farming implements such as shade netting, water tanks, seeds, and fertilizers. An on -site mentor was assigned and was instrumental in mentoring the farmers.
- ✓ Impressive results were achieved as most of the farmers had very good yields. The farmers have learnt good practices such as the use of hybrid seeds that yielded better quality crops and that climate-smart horticulture farming practices improved profitability as it enhances production. Furthermore, farmers acquired management skills that included development of cropping plans, problem identification and crop selection as well as technical skills such as record keeping, marketing and negotiation skills, pest management skills, soil fertility management, maintaining and troubleshooting the irrigation system.
- ✓ Some of the key observation and lesson learnt is that mentorship is crucial in supporting farmers; there was significant uptake of climate smart agricultural by farmers; strong institutional arrangements play a very important role. The Ministry of Agriculture and NCONGO played their role



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diligently and that was very much instrumental to the success noted in implementing the demonstration projects. Government ownership and meaningful engagement at the initial stages of the project is critical as it set the parameters of how the project will be implemented.

2.3. Improving conservation and sustainable use of the shared fish resources through the co-management approaches in Angola and Namibia (Candendele, Massaka ,Seregany and Joseph Mbambangandu)

- ✓ The Communities in Namibia and Angola were introduced to sustainable fish management. The basis of this demonstration was that Communities in these areas are highly dependent on fish resources. Over the years due to climate change and other reasons, there has been an observed decrease in fish stocks.
- ✓ The communities were consulted on what their needs were to improve the fish management and they identified their needs and challenges as follows.
 - i. Illegal fishing and need for equipment for patrolling- the project procured three boats one for each community to patrol.
 - ii. Limited fishing equipment - the current ones were not appropriate hence contributing to the decline fish stocks.
- ✓ The communities were provided with equipment which included canoes, boats , fish nets and other small equipment.
- ✓ Three fish **Management Cooperatives** were established in Angola which are in the process of being registered for them to operate legally. In addition, the following initiatives were implemented by the Communities
 - i. Establishment of Community Fish Guards, Fish Monitors for patrolling the fishing areas.
 - ii. Communities identified lagoons that were for monitoring and enhancement which supported the recuperating time for fish breeding
 - iii. Established Fishing Calendar which allowed for breeding time and fishing time. Fishing is allowed for three months June-August 15th. The rest of the year it's a breeding time for fish recuperation.
 - iv. Communities were able to reduce incidences of illegal fishing through implementing their established fishing regulations.
 - v. Organized fishing and selling process that contributed to the community fund. The Communities noted that, their fish sale cash amount have improved/increased. The money was used to support families in need, five (5) families have been assisted in this regard
 - vi. although a comprehensive baseline of the fisheries stock was not conducted in the area, the communities have somehow noticed an increase in fish stocks and more species are found in the area.

2.4. Improving Conservation tourism through strengthened partnerships In Namibia with aim to ;

- i. To empower local communities to address losses resulting from human wildlife conflicts; poaching; illegal harvesting of resources and maximize socio-economic benefits derived from natural resources.
- ii. To strengthen tourism within the basin; by expanding on tourism routes and creating new tourist attractions (e.g. cultural tourism, local crafts,



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guided walks) that rely on local knowledge and understanding of the challenges in protected area networks.

- iii. To promote tourism in areas away from, but connected to, the more environmentally sensitive areas of the basin (e.g. riparian fringe).
 - iv. To enhance partnerships – between parks, conservancies and neighbouring communities and the private sector
- ✓ A tented tourism facility with 8 rooms and serviced camping was built
 - ✓ Joint Venture Partnership established between Community and private investor. Some of the benefits to be accrued by Communities under this joint venture include but not limited to;
 - i. Payments – Guaranteed N\$42,000, 8% per annum, to be increased 12% if an additional facility is secured (Tsonafontein)
 - ii. Employment - Key positions to be deputized by community members
 - iii. Resources – Vehicle, clinic

3. Upscaling and replication

- ✓ OKACOM is on a drive to resource mobilize for replicating and upscaling of the demonstration projects implemented. The OKACOM-GIZ Project as such is a product of this drive. The Project is implemented by OKACOM through a grant mechanism.
- ✓ OKACOM in partnership with GIZ is implementing a 24-month project aimed at supporting communities to adapt to the changing climatic conditions through climate smart agriculture. The project started on 1st June 2022.
- ✓ OKACOM need support to strengthen capacity to increase funding for basin-wide climate change adaptation measures. Facilitating access to climate funds and building related capacity hence becomes key.
- ✓ In summary, the Projects provided good introduction to CA and certainly there is need to further engage the communities and provide opportunities to implement the acquired knowledge.