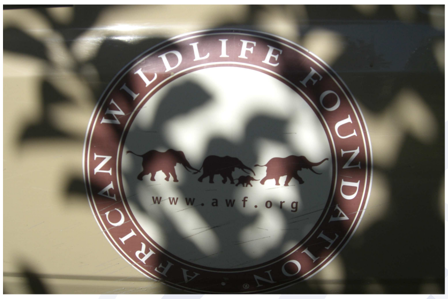
Effective Development Group

WILDLIFE, ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE FOR IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS IN A TRANSBOUNDARY HEARTLAND (WEALTH)

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION

FINAL REPORT MAY 2011

James Medhurst and Simon Milligan



Effective Development Group

A GRM Internationa

Key project data

Project title:	Wildlife, Environment and Agriculture for Improved Livelihoods in a Transboundary Heartland (WEALTH)
Status:	Completed
Aid modality:	Project
Geographical zone:	Multi-country: Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Contracted party:	African Wildlife Foundation (NGO)
Contract start-date:	01 August 2008
Contract end-date:	31 July 2010, extended to 28 February 2011
Responsible SDC office:	Pretoria

Financial data

SDC contract value:	USD 728,934 (initial), increased to USD 848,934 in July 2010
Other funding (donors, government):	USD 960,420
Other funding (AWF):	USD 120,000
Total SDC funds spent:	USD 846,878

Evaluation data

Evaluators:	James Medhurst, Simon Milligan
Date of evaluation:	09-13 May 2011
Draft report date	12 May 2011
Final report date:	May 2011

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
CCV	Chiawa Cultural Village
CF	Conservation Farming
DAO	District Agriculture Office
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation (United Nations)
GART	Golden Valley Agricultural Research Trust
GMA	Game Management Area
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
FHH	Female-headed Households
HWC	Human Wildlife Conflict
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LF	Logical Framework
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MACO	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NFC	Ngwena Fishing Cooperative
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
OPVs	Open Pollinated Varieties
OVIs	Objective Verifiable Indicators
QA	Quality Assurance
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WEALTH	Wildlife, Environment and Agriculture for Improved Livelihoods in a Transboundary Heartland

Project Summary

The long-term goal of the African Wildlife Foundation's Zambezi Heartland Programme is to improve the livelihoods of the local population and conserve the natural resources and biodiversity assets in the Zambezi Heartland. The Heartland covers an area of about 47,000 km2 and is centred on the confluence of the Luangwa and Zambezi rivers, where Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique meet. This transboundary landscape includes important protected areas such as the Mana Pools National Park in Zimbabwe (a World Heritage site) and the Lower Zambezi National Park in Zambia. The area supports a population of around 560,000 people, who largely derive their livelihoods from subsistence farming and artisanal fishing. AWF has been active in this Heartland since 2000.

The 2.5 year, SDC-financed project sought to contribute to the Zambezi Heartlands Programme. The anticipated outcome was: *Food security of the population, including vulnerable groups, increased based on the sustainable use of the natural resources*. The project had four expected outputs:

1. Sustainable community conservation enterprises established.
2. Improved agricultural practices introduced and adopted.
3. Natural resources management planning and legislative framework at transboundary and local level developed and adopted.
4. Human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures implemented.

Whilst the project anticipated the whole population of the Heartland would benefit from the project, AWF sought to focus specific activities on certain geographical areas and therefore expected a smaller number of people to secure direct benefit.

Highlights

1. Activities have been delivered, and a number of output targets have been met or exceeded.
2. Although increasing food security for the population was not achievable within the timeframe of the project, the outputs have made a contribution to the food security situation of target groups. For example the increase in incomes for the beneficiaries of the goat project, the increase in crop yields and productive land protected from elephant raids.
3. There is an exemplary level of partnership and ownership at beneficiary, local government and traditional leadership level. This has been matched by a reoccurring commitment to work with and/or through local institutions, with accompanying measures to support institutional strengthening. Consequently, there is increased chance that several interventions will be sustained.
4. The project has introduced and promoted the use of appropriate, low-cost and practical technologies, such as Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation measures and goat pens. These have low operation and maintenance costs, and excellent opportunity for replication.
5. The project has remained conscious of sustainability in, for example, cost-sharing through materials and labour (e.g. goat pens) and the perception of interventions as entry points, e.g. of beneficiaries becoming resource monitors in time.
6. Training appears to be of good quality and has been well received. There also appears to be an appropriate use of subcontracting and Training of Trainers (ToT) methods.
7. The core AWF team, not least the Heartland Director, has seemingly built and sustained momentum and a number of partnerships, despite insufficient staff numbers, the breadth of activities and the wide geographical distribution of project sites.

8. Several interventions, most notably support to the goat cooperative, appear relevant and gender-sensitive, and have good prospects for scale-up and sustainability.
9. There is evidence of strong participation of women.
10. The project has raised awareness of and dialogue regarding conservation, environmental and livelihoods matters, e.g. Conservation Farming (CF) techniques, unsustainable livelihood strategies (e.g. illegal charcoal production), Natural Resource Management zones, trans-boundary matters between the three focal national governments.
11. Economic analysis of the goat cooperative and chili-fencing interventions would likely show that benefits will outweigh costs.

Weaknesses

1. There is a mismatch between delivery of the outputs and achievement of the project purpose statement, i.e. the four outputs were never going to deliver the project purpose of increased food security for the population within the timeframe of the project. Moreover, the purpose statement probably sits at the wrong level, e.g. it might have been a goal statement. As a consequence, the results chain between outputs and outcome was flawed. A more appropriate purpose statement might have been: "Build capital assets to protect and promote livelihoods of target households and communities, based on the sustainable use of natural resources".
2. The project was too broad, i.e. it contained too many intervention areas and therefore project resources were spread too thinly
3. The project timeframe was too short (which was attested by a number of beneficiaries and support partners, e.g. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives). Consequently, the project lacked the time necessary to cement and secure the early gains apparent within some output areas, e.g. CF. Whilst the project has demonstrated successful engagement with some communities and of innovative technologies, there is a real danger that realistic demand from beneficiaries cannot be satisfied. There is likely to be continued demand for AWF to support communities.
4. With regards to Output 1, the project made some questionable investment decisions, such as the support to the fishers' cooperative, which would likely have failed sustainability criteria and benefit-cost analysis. (Initial revenue targets were evidently too ambitious). Furthermore, the suggestion that goat farming was a (partial) solution to illegal charcoal production was likely flawed, and may have stemmed from insufficient results chain and problem analysis. Further support to the Management Board of the Chiawa Cultural Village will be required. Specifically, the Board would likely benefit from strategic planning, marketing advice, outreach mentorship and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder meetings (e.g. to include lodge management, tour operators, traditional leaders).
5. The premature departure of key project staff (e.g. Senior Conservation Enterprise Officer, Community Conservation Officer) and the decision not to replace these personnel but to provide this key area of expertise through a Senior Enterprise Officer based in Livingstone, likely undermined AWF's momentum in some areas, may have had an impact on the timeliness of some support and may have impaired investment decisions and/or mentorship and capacity building to beneficiaries, perhaps particularly those in Output 1. There was also a noticeable absence of dedicated M&E personnel.
6. The project's M&E framework is broadly well conceived. Whilst there was good consideration of disaggregation by sex, indicators were too numerous, ambitious and ultimately unmanageable. The baseline was conducted after the mid-way point, and pre-dated the revised M&E Framework. Shortcomings may have been compounded by SDC's generic Logframe (LF) format, which gives insufficient attention to disaggregating indicators from baselines, milestones and targets.

Comparator data from neighbouring sites may have better enabled the project to determine attribution and contribution.

Overall assessment

1. Project evaluations are obliged to determine the extent to which a project has achieved its intended objective. In this case, the findings and conclusions are constrained by a flawed output-to-purpose results chain, unrealistic targets at both output and outcome level, and a purpose statement that was too ambitious. As such, when one views the project from the standpoint of its intended purpose, the answer to the question, '*Are we doing the right things*?' is open to question. Whilst several project interventions were either successful or show prospects for success, the extent of project effectiveness was always going to be minimal because the four outputs could not deliver the project purpose of food security.
2. These significant flaws should not detract from the project's relevance or its achievements at field level. Residents of the project area seek to secure positive livelihood outcomes in a fragile and complex environment that is subject to low and variable rainfall, drought, limited diversification options, and the often competing opportunities and challenges posed by the wildlife. Consequently, measures that seek to protect livelihoods and increase households' resilience to shocks and stresses are highly relevant. With a more appropriate purpose statement – "Build capital assets to protect and promote livelihoods of target households and communities, based on the sustainable use of natural resources" – the answer to the question, *Are we doing the right things*?', would have been largely positive.
3. The project has introduced and promoted the use of appropriate, low-cost and practical technologies that have low operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, and excellent opportunity for replication. Specifically, SDC-financed support to the goat cooperative offers good prospects for scale-up and sustainability. Conservation farming, chili-fencing and the Chiawa Cultural Village are relevant and offer reasonable prospects for sustainability but will likely require continued support to reinforce and sustain the early momentum and interest, and specifically would benefit from further mentorship, capacity building, technical advice and partnership facilitation to address uncertainties about financial sustainability. As such, a project of a longer duration and a more narrow thematic and intervention focus would have been advisable and would have increased prospects of lasting benefit.
4. In principle, the changes foreseen within Output 3 are relevant and timely, and offered synergies with other intervention areas, e.g. the support to the Ngwena Fishing Cooperative. Projects that seek to inform and influence policy, legal and regulatory frameworks typically have increased political and technical credibility and legitimacy where they have complementary activities at field-level. As such, WEALTH's strategic outlook was sound. Whilst some of the targets may not have been achieved, AWF's pivotal role in building dialogue between national stakeholders in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe is notable. It is similarly recognized that measures to address illegal charcoal production must be integrated and respond to market drivers, governance failures, and livelihood options.
5. The answer to the question, '*Are we doing things right?* is overwhelmingly positive. There is an exemplary level of partnership and ownership at beneficiary, local government and traditional leadership level. This has been matched with, and likely secured by, a reoccurring commitment to work with and/or through local institutions, with accompanying measures to support institutional strengthening.
6. AWF spent 99.76% of the project budget, broken down by output as follows:
    - Output 1 38.69%

- Output 2 24.81%
- Output 3 10.53%
- Output 4 15.48%

21.69% of the budget was spent on salaries compared to 7.43% spent on operational costs. Other costs amounted to 51.37% and 9% went on consultancies and mainstreaming.

Disclaimers, caveats and points of note

1. The WEALTH project area spans three countries and has supported a geographically disbursed set of interventions. The evaluation team only had three full days for field research and was therefore only able to visit a small sample of project sites. The samples sites were Zambia-based, which therefore undermined the potential to verify and explore the results of interventions in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, the sites were discussed and agreed by AWF and the evaluators prior to mission commencement, and the Zambia focus in the evaluation mission reflects the same bias during project implementation.
2. Whilst the AWF commissioned a socio-economic baseline study, the project logframe was not updated with the results of the study and the logframe was not integrated with the M&E framework. All three appear to be independent of each other and as a result it is has made it difficult to evaluate the project.
3. As a consequence of time pressures, the evaluators have not engaged directly with national stakeholders (e.g. in relation to Output 3) but have instead relied on a literature review, discussions with local government, beneficiaries and AWF staff.
4. An external audit was completed by Ernst & Young for the year ending 31 July 2009. The auditor's opinion was that all funds received and costs incurred for the year were in accordance with terms of the agreements and in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The auditor observed that in a number of cases, AWF were under-spending on budget lines, but this appears to have been rectified during the second year (see paragraph 6 above). A final audit has not yet been completed, so the evaluators cannot verify this.
5. The evaluators would like to place on record their gratitude for the logistical support, openness and professionalism of the AWF team during the evaluation mission. Their positive engagement and critical reflection aid greatly contributed to the positive spirit of the assignment.

Case study 1

Ms Terry Siamatika is a 42-year old married lady. She has six children aged 17 to one year. This is her story:

Before the AWF project I used to sell pastries to get money. I also used to sell fish on the market. I had five traditional, dwarf goats but they never achieved a good price. I was interested in participating in the project after AWF presented their vision. I received two goats – a new breed – in December 2010, and built a new holding pen to house my old goats and the new arrivals. Before then, the goats used to run free. It was often *difficult to tell which ones were mine and if they were becoming diseased. The project taught me how to take better care of my animals and showed me how to vaccinate them every six months.*

In the future I will gain from the improved breed, get a better price when I sell them or their offspring, and be able to pay my children's' school fees.

Case study 2

Ms Mweene Simweemba is a 27-year old married lady who lives in the village of Nabuteezi. She has four children aged 11 to two years old. She is the Secretary of the Simamba Goat Producers and Marketing Cooperative. This is her story:

I work for the Ministry of Health, supporting young women to look after their newborn children. When AWF came to the area they explained what they wanted to do and I decided I wanted to join. I was elected as Secretary of the Cooperative in July 2010. I write minutes of the meetings and keep records for the Cooperative. I will fill this position for three years and I'll then stand for re-election. I have learnt new skills, such as record keeping.

I had six dwarf goats before the project. Now I have the 2 AWF goats and am expecting kids any day. I see a bright future: with the training we have received the goats should expect less disease, we'll be able to spot illness and with the income from the goats we'll be able to pay school fees and medical expenses.

Case study 3

Mr Noah Siamufunde is a 59-year old man and member of the Simamba Goat Producers and Marketing t Cooperative. He is married with 8 children and 7 grandchildren. This is his story:
I make my living from rain-fed farming and vegetable gardening. I grow tomatoes, rape and other crops for sale. I also buy and sell fish at the market. I keep goats and chickens at my homestead. When AWF came their explanation of what they wanted to do interested me. I was keen to take part. I have benefited from 'Goat farming as a business' training and now better understand how to take care of my goats.
I have been really surprised by the benefits. The new 'exotic' breeds fetch a far better price than our traditional goats. They will be like an investment.

Case study 4

Mr Kenny Siamatika is a 37-year old man and Vice-Chair of the Simamba Goat Producers and Marketing Cooperative. He is married.

I grow cereals and vegetables, including pumpkin, cabbage, green beans, and tomatoes. I also grow millet and sorghum but have worried about the bad rainfall we have had this year. Normally I harvest five bags of sorghum. This year I only expect two bags. That will mean our family will only have enough food for two months.

I received two, improved goats from AWF, adding to the chickens and old breed goats I already kept. I learnt how to take care of my animals and how to run my farm as a business. The training I received means that I'll be able to offer my livestock supplementary feeding. My goats are now very clean, and the kids that I expect will be able to help my three young children finish school.