

FINAL REPORT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACILITY SIMALAHA COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY

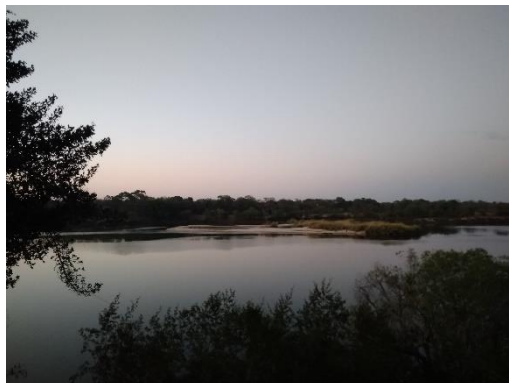
Submitted to:

coffr

Submitted by:



December 2019



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the last year and a half, many important lessons have been learnt by the Simalaha Community Conservancy (SCC) project team, along with Grounded as a central project partner, in terms of scaling up of the Conservation Agriculture (CA) programme and developing Grounded's processing and marketing company. This will enable a more effective and sustainable strategy going forward. As lessons learnt and updated strategy was discussed in the last report in May, this report will not concentrate on these aspects but rather include updates on the general development of the SCC, Conservation Agriculture (CA) training, as well as an explanation on how Peace Parks Foundation's (PPF) partnership with Grounded will move forward in the next year.

PPF is thankful that some the remaining funds from Coffr Foundation (along with the support of COMON Foundation) recently contributed towards the purchase of treadle pumps for farmers. These 350 new treadle pumps are currently being distributed to farmers that have access to water in the SCC, thereby assisting in countering the effects of the continued drought¹. Additionally, some communities have dug small wells for the use of treadle pumps, and boreholes will soon be sunk which will also assist in providing water for irrigation of crops.



Figure 1: A farmer in the Conservancy using water from a treadle pump to irrigate crops

2. GENERAL SIMALAHA UPDATE

In May, funding was received from Neville and Pamela Isdell for the implementation of the first transboundary fish protected area in the Kavango Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA). This project takes place on a section of the Upper Zambezi River which encompasses the SCC. It will also cover the Namibian side of the river as the National Postcode Lottery agreed that a portion of their contribution (awarded in March this year) could be used to co-fund this aspect of the project. The project will be

¹ This support was used to fund the purchase of treadle pumps instead of a reallocation for the Community Development Facility as suggested in the last report.

implemented jointly between PPF and the Namibia Nature Foundation in collaboration with Fisheries Departments from both countries.

A Project Coordinator, Mr Gordon Homer, was appointed in May to assist with the coordination and implementation of PPF projects in the KAZA TFCA. He will initially assist with the development of the SCC, as the project has received significant funding from the COMON Foundation, MAVA Foundation, Dutch Postcode Lottery, and Neville and Pamela Isdell over the last year and capacity had to be increased to ensure effective implementation.

The Village Action Group (VAG) elections took place in June with both kutas agreeing on the selection of 10 VAGs (five per chiefdom). Seven VAGs had been elected eight years ago but needed to be reconstituted, and three new VAGs were created. The elections were overseen by the SCC Trust with support from PPF. Local officials were brought in to ensure a free and fair election. The gender representation on these newly elected VAGs is approximately 40% women. Additionally, a mapping exercise was undertaken to depict the VAG locations in and around the SCC (current and proposed). Subsequently the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) database has been updated with the latest locations.



Figure 2: Voters in queue during Village Action Group elections; **Figure 3:** Counting of votes for elections

PPF is currently engaging all 10 VAGs in order to undertake extensive community asset mapping to ascertain how assets are used (including natural, infrastructural, economic and social assets). For example, the community was tasked with identifying the areas with the greatest need for boreholes and establishing working committees to ensure boreholes are maintained. A hydrological surveyor will soon survey the area with the VAGs, drilling of 10 boreholes will commence, and solar pumps will be installed. The boreholes will not only provide clean drinking water for the community, but also for irrigated agriculture and livestock. A dam scoop has been purchased which will be used to enhance communities' water security through the excavation of natural small fill and spill dams.

In July, the second SCC Trust meeting was held in Livingstone. The active participation and contribution by the newly elected VAG chairpersons, who also serve as Trustees, was impressive. Apart from these 10 VAG trustees, the other 10 trustees are made up of kuta representatives. The Trust was given a good overview of the planned development within the SCC.

The German Development Agency (GIZ)-funded Herding for Health (H4H) pre-feasibility study is being rolled out in the SCC as one of the six sites across Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Two consultants for Conservation International, who are affiliated to the H4H programme, visited the SCC in July to understand the geographical set-up and to communicate the concept of H4H to the SCC.

Various opportunities to develop the tourism aspect in the SCC are being explored. The PPF SCC team is currently corresponding with large scale tourism operators [Wilderness Safaris](#), [Robin Pope Safaris](#), and the

[Gondwana Collection](#) to gauge their interest in potential investment in the SCC, while Chundukwa Eco Safaris (horseback safaris) have submitted a proposal to Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta, Deputy Chief Sekute and PPF management for consideration. Additionally, the two chiefs, the chairman, secretary and treasurer of the SCC Trust have been invited to visit the Gondwana lodges in Namibia to see how the accommodation is structured in order to get a better idea of how the SCC can move forward in this regard. Architects have already been contracted to design the SCC lodge and will begin work on this soon in consultation with the chiefs, the SCC Trust and PPF.

3. LANDSCAPE BUSINESS PLAN

3.1 Rainfed and Irrigated Conservation Agriculture

It is recognised that CA is a tool to boost the livelihoods of rural farming communities, however the severity of the prevailing drought has tested the effectiveness of the rainfed CA programme. Poor rains and sandy soils on the Mwandi side of the SCC failed to produce a meaningful crop compared to the predominately loam soils with better water security in Kazangula. During the last season, 254 Mwandi farmers produced 3,799kg of maize, 591kg of cowpeas, and 67kg of sorghum. By comparison, the 225 farmers in Sekute produced 10,495kg of maize, 1,933kg of cowpeas, and 2,587kg of sorghum. This is negligible for the number of people which had to be fed until the rains come again at the end of the year.

Farmers using treadle pumps were able to survive the effects of the drought. Going forward farmers with access to water will be targeted and provided with treadle pumps so as to enhance food security within the region as well as livelihood development. Since 2014, a total of 140 treadle pumps had been distributed within the SCC. Funds from both Coffr Foundation and the COMON Foundation ensured that a further 350 treadle pumps were ordered and are being distributed. Currently farmers that have access to water, either from rivers and / or wells, are being identified and organised into clusters.

In total almost 640² farmers have been trained in CA to date. Although the initial plan was to train 400 farmers in 2019, the approach was altered to focus on farmers with access to water. Although the effects of climate change affected the success of the CA programme, PPF's adaptation to focus on irrigated fields will ensure a greater chance of success going forward.

In August, the CA team carried out a training workshop for farmers who are using treadle pumps in both chiefdoms (approximately 140 farmers). Guest speakers were from Pannar Zambia (seed supplier) and the bank manager from Atlas Mara from Sesheke. The representative from the seed supplier, who is an agro dealer and trained agronomist, gave a motivational presentation to the farmers. His presentation was inspiring to the farmers as they saw a picture of what they could be earning if they focussed their efforts on improving their agricultural production. The bank manager from Atlas Mara explained the importance of choosing the correct type of savings account and to save money and use profits to improve their farming production.

Refresher CA training was held for approximately 290 farmers whose crops are rainfed and preparatory work for the planting season is in full swing. Currently farmers are digging basins and applying manure and compost to the fields.

3.2 Agri-Business Development

Grounded is in the process of exploring their revised commercial agriculture programme and how it will fit best within the SCC. Additionally, Grounded has employed an expert to undertake an agricultural study to

² Coffr (formerly Kadans) financed the training of 450 farmers from 2013 – 2016. Since then, the number of trained farmers has increased by over 40% which was assisted by the provision of tablets from Hitachi enabling 'training of the trainers' through the viewing of training videos.

ascertain which area within the SCC would be best suited to this purpose. A long-term lease will need to be signed with either Senior Chief Inyambo Yeta or Deputy Chief Sekute depending on which side of the conservancy Grounded decides to base their programme. In the meantime, PPF has made provision under the COMON Foundation beneficiary budget for Grounded's work in this regard.



Figure 4: A farmer in the Conservancy using a treadle pump to irrigate crops

4. FINANCIAL REPORT

COFFR FOUNDATION				
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FACILITY: SIMALAHA COMMUNITY CONSERVANCY				
FINANCIAL REPORT AT 31 DECEMBER 2019				
Ref	Description & Cost Allocation	Budget	Actuals	Total Variance
		2018 & 2019		
		EUR		
1	Community Development Facility			
1.1	Grounded - Operational, capital and marketing costs	80,500	80,500	-
1.2	Grounded - Salaries	38,699	38,699	-
1.3	Incubator Farm	35,000	35,000	-
1.4	Processing and Marketing Company	15,000	15,000	-
1.5	Project Administration	10,000	10,000	-
	Total Community Development Facility	179,199	179,199	-
2	Simalaha Community Conservancy			
2.1	Operational and overhead costs	20,000	20,000	-
	Total Simalaha Community Conservancy	20,000	20,000	-
TOTAL		199,199	199,199	-

5. CONCLUSION

PPF is sincerely grateful for the support from Coffr Foundation. This support enabled milestones central to the development of the Conservancy to be met. Although, the process of scaling up of the CA programme and developing the value chain for CA crops and a processing and marketing company did not go according to plan because of erratic climatic conditions which resulted in a lower rate of take up of CA techniques than envisaged, many important lessons were learnt. Going forward PPF will make use of a more intensive CA programme targeting farmers with access to water, while Grounded's incubator farm will be a commercial initiative which will focus on growing high value crops such as ginger, garlic, etc. The incubator farm initiative will start off small and expand as markets are developed and capacity improves. PPF looks forward to this new stage of development and believes that this will have a positive impact on food security and personal income for local communities in the SCC thereby ensuring a knock-on effect for wildlife conservation in the SCC sanctuary.

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