

NAMIBIAN BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY

CONCEPT NOTE

July 2018

WHAT IS THE BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY

The biodiversity economy of Namibia encompasses the business and economic activities that either depend directly on biodiversity for their core business or that contribute to conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services through their activities and takes companies and sectors into account that have a significant impact on biodiversity. This biodiversity economy concept is based on the green economy approach with a focus on biodiversity-based sectors. It follows a cluster¹ methodology by concentrating on national parks at its core, the adjacent communal conservancies and private reserves in a landscape approach.

“A ‘landscape’ is a socio-ecological system that consists of a mosaic of natural and/or human-modified ecosystems, with a characteristic configuration of topography, vegetation, land use, and settlements that is influenced by the ecological, historical, economic and cultural processes and activities of the area.” Eco-agriculture Policy Focus No 10, Oct 2013

Similar to biosphere reserves the biodiversity economy emphasizes the reconciliation of strict protection and the sustainable use of the biodiversity.

Biosphere reserves combine different types of land-uses:

“The core areas comprise a strictly protected ecosystem that contributes to the conservation of landscapes, ecosystems, species and genetic variation. The buffer zone surrounds or adjoins the core areas, and is used for activities compatible with sound ecological practices. The transition area is the part of the reserve where the greatest activity is allowed, fostering economic and human development that is socio-culturally and ecologically sustainable.” UNESCO 2017

The biodiversity economy in selected landscapes in Namibia follows the biosphere reserves approach. Namibia’s national parks constitute the core of the landscape approach. Adjacent communal conservancies play a crucial role in Namibia’s system of conservation areas. They often surround national parks provide important wildlife corridors for the migration of animals but as well allow the communities to sustainably use the wildlife. The settlements in the landscape are home of local businesses providing services such as transportation, restaurants etc. Private land owners in the landscape offer hospitality services including game drives, accommodation etc. and often use the “brand” of the national parks for marketing purposes.

Starting situation

70% of Namibians depend on biodiversity and natural resources for their livelihood. The community based natural resources management (CBNRM) program with its conservancies are seen internationally as a prime example of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. Largely due to the CBNRM program the conservation areas and wildlife populations have increased considerably in the last years.

However, biodiversity and conservation areas are increasing under pressure through population growth, unsustainable farming practices, climate change and human-wildlife conflicts.

¹ “Clusters are geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers and service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (e.g. universities, standards agencies, and trade associations) in particular fields that compete but also cooperate” (Porter 2000, S. 253).

Conservation areas such as national parks, communal conservancies and private conservation areas (covering more than 40% of Namibia's land area) are generally fragmented, lack coordination with the adjacent conservation partners, are poorly resourced and are not formally recognized as economic drivers. The latter results in little formal recognition being given to biodiversity as the basis of Namibia's key economic sectors. Sustainable use of biodiversity in the landscapes including the conservancies is often limited to very few value chains and poorly diversified.

In light of this, the management of the MET has decided to develop and implement a biodiversity economy flagship programme. This has been captured in the fifth National Development Plan (NDP5), which i.a. seeks to "enhance value addition and the sustainable utilization of biodiversity".

VISION

The Namibia constitution describes in Article 95(1) that the state shall actively promote and maintain the welfare of the people by adopting policies which support "the maintenance of ecosystems, essential ecological processes and biological diversity in Namibia and utilisation of living natural resources on a sustainable basis for the benefit of all Namibians...".

The vision described in the constitution entails a strong focus on improving the equitable benefits from the sustainable use of biodiversity, ecosystems and their services.

Namibia's Second National Biodiversity and Action Plan (2013-2022) envisions a biodiversity that is healthy and resilient to threats and the conservation and sustainable use are key drivers of poverty alleviation and equitable economic growth particular in rural areas.

The Harambee Prosperity Plan aims at increasing the competitiveness by harnessing the extractive and intrinsic value of biodiversity through wildlife-based enterprises as part of developing a climate smart economy.

The latest NDP5 puts furthermore a very strong emphasis on the sustainable use of its biodiversity and contains very strong linkages to the concept of a biodiversity economy:

- The development of specific biodiversity-based value chains
- A focus on rural economic development targets to grow markets for rural products, developing community and social enterprises and developing structures to add value to natural resources.
- A strong focus on tourism development
- Useful cross linkages with, agriculture, energy and water

Therefore the vision of the biodiversity economy is:

Namibia has a vibrant biodiversity economy in which people benefit from ecosystems and their services on an equitable basis through the sustainable use of biodiversity around specific landscapes and value chains.

Target groups

- 1.) Rural communities, living in the landscapes will benefit from increased and diversified income, job generation, job opportunities and improved ecosystem services flows.
- 2.) Companies active in the landscapes will benefit from greened value chains, improved market access and better orientation with regard to biodiversity-friendly practices through sector guidelines.
- 3.) Managers of all forms and all levels of protected areas (parks, conservancies, reserves, farms) in the landscape through better coordination, support and oversight.
- 4.) Wider civil society including, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) been active in these landscapes or dealing with relevant topics

OUTCOMES

The development of a biodiversity economy in Namibia will transform its fragmented existing system of conservation areas into an effectively coordinated and well financed landscape system. It will contribute to increase the area under conservation management and improve the connectivity of landscapes. Further, a biodiversity economy will promote the development of economic activities based on the conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity in the selected landscapes of focus and increase the benefits derived from these landscapes' ecosystem services.

At a landscape level a biodiversity economy will facilitate the institutionalization of conservation and sustainable use and local greening of relevant value-chains and sectors with key players in the landscapes cooperating towards joint conservation and development objectives.

At national level, the development of a biodiversity economy will mainstream the approach, capacitate key players, mobilize financial resources and upscale the concept by including more value-chains, link with other sector approaches (ex. blue economy).

OUTPUTS

1. **Landscape institutionalization**

Landscape associations are established and cooperate along joint conservation and development objectives towards a biodiversity economy to overcome the missing cooperation among key actors and value-chains are developed

2. **Greening of value chains and sectors**

Biodiversity-relevant value chains and growth strategies are greened and best-practice guidelines for biodiversity-relevant sectors developed and applied. The development of the guidelines will be based on exemplary implementation of the natural capital protocol with relevant companies.

3. **Coordination and Mainstreaming**

The biodiversity economy is coordinated and mainstreamed at national level and considered in the next national development plan. A national steering committee and a secretariat will be established, leading policy dialogues based on a design thinking approach to mobilize and assure buy-in.

4. **Framework conditions and up-scaling**

Legal and economic framework conditions supporting the biodiversity economy are improved. This includes the removal of potential barriers identified at landscape and sector level with regard to the biodiversity economy and the implementation of the resource mobilisation strategy as well as the establishment of a basket fund supports further up-scaling.

5. **Capacity Development**

Key actors at landscape, sector and national level are empowered to further develop the biodiversity economy and social resilience is increased

Synergies & linkages with existing policy frameworks

Climate Change mitigation

The greening of specific value chains, sector strategies, corporate case studies in implementing the natural capital protocol will include renewable energy / emission reduction objectives.

At landscape level the joint conservation targets, flanked by sustainable production and consumption measures such as local sourcing of the lodges, labeling etc. will contribute to mitigation. MET is spearheading this in planning to base the energy provision of all national parks on renewable energy

Climate change adaptation

- The development of biodiversity economies in the different landscapes increases resilience towards climate change, (more variability, more droughts, less rain) by diversifying and increasing the income base of the communities (from farming only to tourism, handicrafts etc.) and through improved ecosystem services flows
- Better cooperation, communication and improved capacities among the different players at landscape, sector and national level increase the social resilience

Linkages with the NBSAP

- The project primarily contributes to NBSAP2 goal 4 “Enhance the benefits from biodiversity & ecosystem services” by developing the biodiversity economy at landscape level (Aichi Goal D).
- By implementing the resource mobilisation strategy this project contributes with activity 4.2 directly to NBSAP2 target 17 (Aichi target 20)
- With Activity 2.3 & 2.3 the project supports the integration of biodiversity into corporate strategies and accounting systems (NBSAP2 target 2 / Aichi target 2)

Co-benefits and contribution to sustainable development and safeguards

The biodiversity economy concept encompasses the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and focusses on SDG 15 “life on land”, SDG 12 “Sustainable production and consumption” and Goal 8 “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth”.

The project will significantly contribute to sustainable economic development; by strengthening, diversifying and supporting the introduction of new value chains in landscapes; the project is expecting to generate significant benefits in this regard. The communal conservancies and the rural populations therein include some of the most marginalized people in the country.

The project will use the Addis Ababa Principles and Guidelines for the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity and the IUCN Natural Resources Governance Framework as guiding principles for its safeguard policies.

- (i) Safeguarding of critical habitats, ecosystem services are at the core of the project as most of the potential landscapes will be built around the national parks. By the integration of the adjacent conservancies, communities and private land owner the effectiveness and impact of the national parks will be increased significantly and up-scaled.
- (ii) The landscape approach includes as well the communal conservancies of the CBNRM program. The CBNRM program has well established rules, procedures and governance structures assuring the rights and participation of the communities. By establishing landscape associations their role will be increasingly associated with economic, rather than only social development and conservation. The above described increase of benefits (monetary and non-monetary income increase and diversification as well as the increase ecosystem flows) is directly aimed at local communities as a target group.

Contribution to the NDCs

Namibia’s Nationally Determined Contributions are based on specific contributions by sector and are heavily skewed to the Agriculture, Forest and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector (81.7%) followed by energy (5.7%). The biodiversity economy concept will rely on conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems to enhance their productivity and will thus fit closely with Namibia’s NDC focusing on aspects such as;

- Reduced deforestation (59.8% ^{*2})
- Forestation measures (12.3%)
- Grassland restoration (6%)
- Low carbon and renewable energy (3.3%)

² % of BAU scenario in 2030 as presented in Namibia’s NDC

The project will by its nature support interventions in landscapes that address these issues, with a strong focus on reduced deforestation in northern landscapes and grassland restoration in central and southern areas.

Greening of energy sources and best practice to promote more efficient value chains and local procurement (including improved waste management), will further contribute to Namibia's NDC.