



PROJECT BACKGROUND INFORMATION DOCUMENT & OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER COMMENTS

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Cuando River Basin

Introduction

The Cuando River Basin is one of the thirteen Sub basins of the Zambezi Watercourse. The Cuando River provides critical water resources to the heart of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA), the largest terrestrial transfrontier conservation area on the planet. The KAZA region, where Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe converge is home to 2.5 million people, shelters half of Africa's remaining savannah elephant population, and is critical for many other important wildlife species. The Cuando Basin has remained largely undeveloped, with a population of less than 200,000 people, but in recent years is seeing increasing pressure due to climate changes and unsustainable use of natural resources such as water, forests and land.

Project description

Consultants have been contracted to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Cuando River Basin. This SEA will be implemented by the Southern Institute for Environmental Assessment (SAIEA), which will lead a multi-sector team of experts from Ecosurv (Botswana); Holisticos and ACADIR (Angola); Anchor Environmental Consultants (South Africa); SAIEA and RAISON, University College Cork (UK) and individual specialists. The SEA is to provide a proactive instrument towards sustainable development of the area. A holistic approach has been chosen taking system-wide risk factors such as climate change, socioeconomic and population dynamics, degradation of ecosystem-services etc.

Objectives of the SEA

Primary objective:

Guide sustainable development and conservation, bearing in mind population growth, sector developments, climate change and other factors.

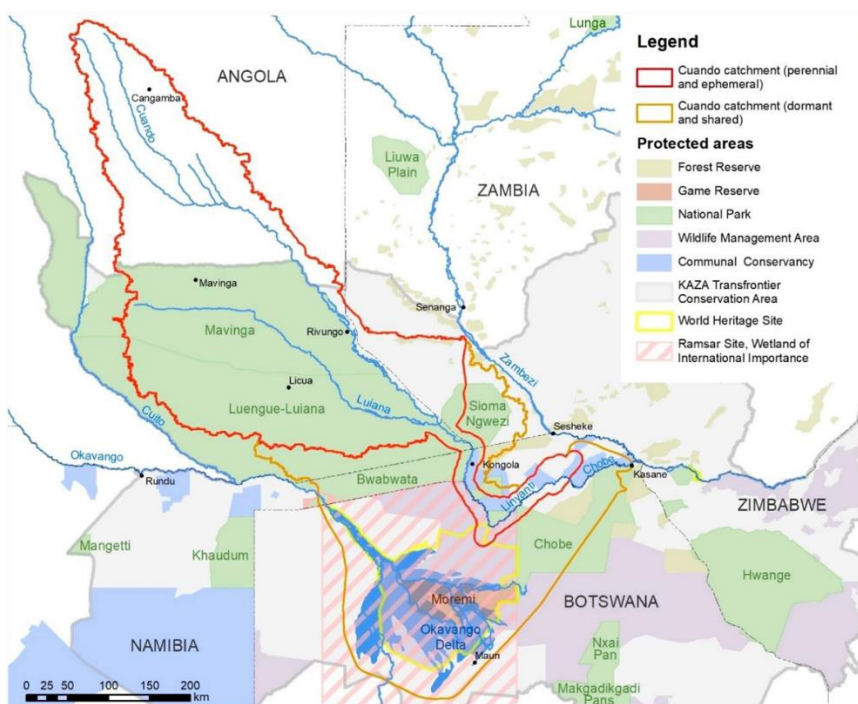
Secondary objectives:



1. Identify significant social and environmental effects of regional and national key policies, plans and programmes.
2. Inclusive stakeholder engagement building ownership and buy-in.
3. Practical outputs to help informed decision making.
4. Conservation plan for biodiversity areas & ecological corridors.
5. Monitoring and evaluation framework.

Project location

The Cuando River Basin straddles Angola, Zambia, Namibia and Botswana (Fig.3). Its catchment area of approximately 118,783km² (combined perennial and ephemeral areas) is regarded as relatively unspoilt, largely because of limited socio-economic development (mostly because of decades of civil conflict), its isolation, unproductive soils and the presence of tsetse flies. More than 80% of the basin is within Angola, with the remaining three CURB countries accounting for the rest. At its lower end, the Cuando has temporary, infrequent surface links with the Okavango and the Zambezi River Basins. From the south-western corner of the Cuando, water can connect with the Okavango Swamps via the Selinda Spillway or Savuti Channel. From the south-eastern corner, water can connect with the Zambezi River via the Linyanti Swamps, Lake Liambezi and the Chobe River. The red line in the following map reflects the study area which is the hydrologically active basin.





Key Social and Environmental Issues

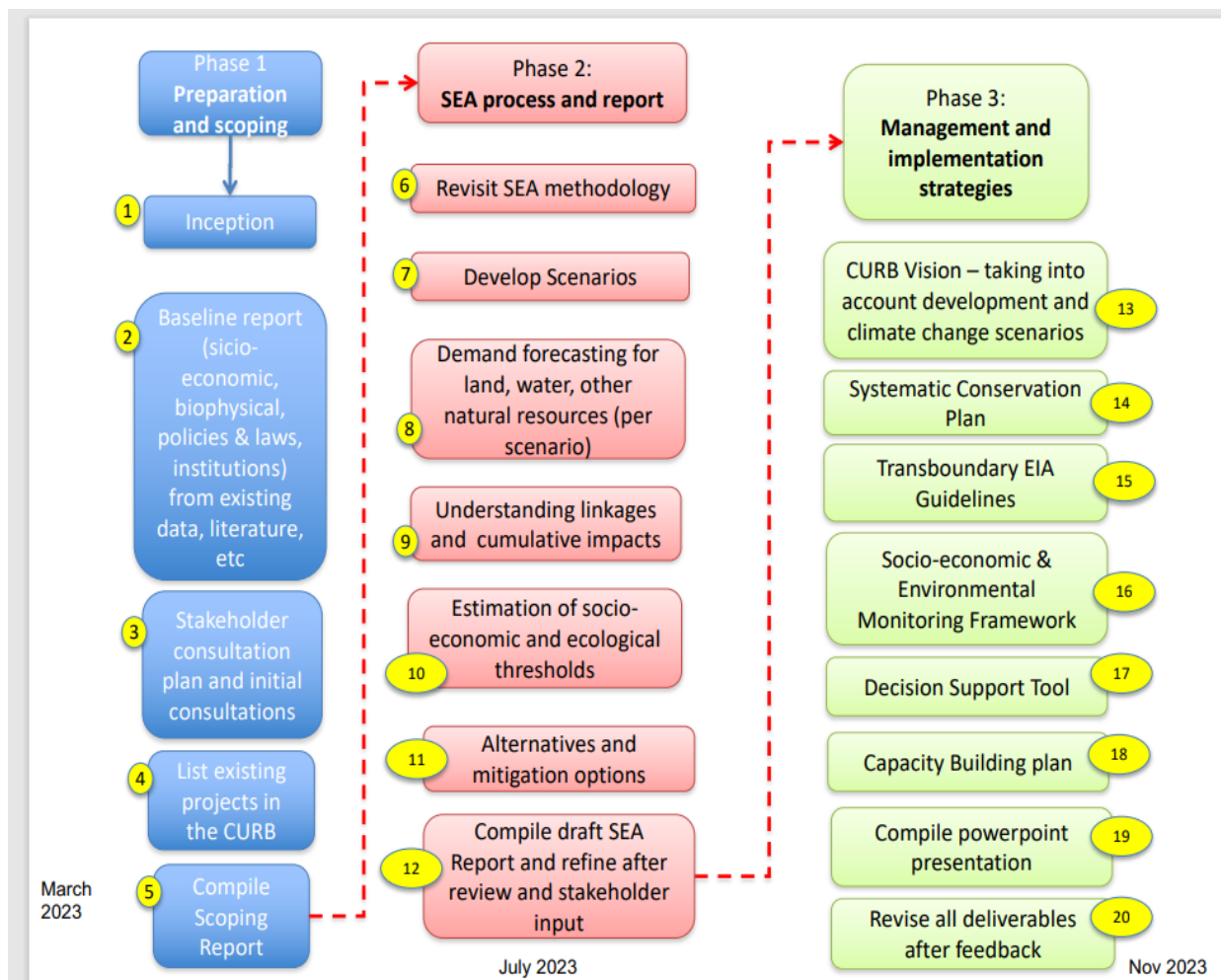
- Limited infrastructure, development and employment - over-reliance on ecosystem services;
- Generally poor soils -limited agricultural potential;
- High levels of poverty and food insecurity;
- Inadequate community empowerment & engagement;
- Impacts of poorly planned infrastructure development; and
- Climate change

Cumulatively Issues

- Increasing pressure on land, water and other resources.
- Loss & fragmentation of habitats & wildlife populations
- Human-wildlife conflicts
- Wildlife crime



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Process





Invitation to participate

Anyone who is interested or affected by the project has the right to participate in the SEA process. Please make use of the following opportunities:

- ❖ Study the information made available in this Background Information Document.
- ❖ Contact the consultations team to obtain further project information, and/or raise issues and concerns (contact details provided on the attached comments sheet).
- ❖ Register as an Interested and Affected Party in order to receive future project information and/or formally record issues and concerns.
- ❖ Complete the Comment Sheet (attached) and return by hand, mail, fax or e-mail.



Participation in the SEA Process

Your issues, concerns and comments will demonstrate your participation in the proposed development. It will also help to focus the SEA process and enhance the quality of the decisions taken by the authorities. Please participate.

SEA for the Cuando River Basin

COMMENT SHEET

Please complete and return to: Carol S. Pansiri

Or complete the online [survey](#) or use the QR code



Postal address:	P. O. Box 201306 Gaborone
Telephone number:	3161533
Fax number:	3161878
E-mail:	carol@ecosurv.com

Please fill in your personal details below:

TITLE		NAME	
ORGANISATION			



DESIGNATION			
ADDRESS			
DATE			
TEL NO		FAX NO	
CELL NO		E-MAIL	

COMMENTS (Please use additional sheets if you wish)

1. From your perspective what must the SEA avoid? Name any key threats (environmental, social or economic) that you think will change the basin in a negative way.

[illegible]

2. Name projects/activities/developments that you think should not be allowed to happen in the basin:

[illegible]



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3. Name things/ activities that you want to see maintained or improved in the basin.

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4. Please tell us of the major projects that you are aware of that are being planned for the basin over the next few years.

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We thank you for your participation.