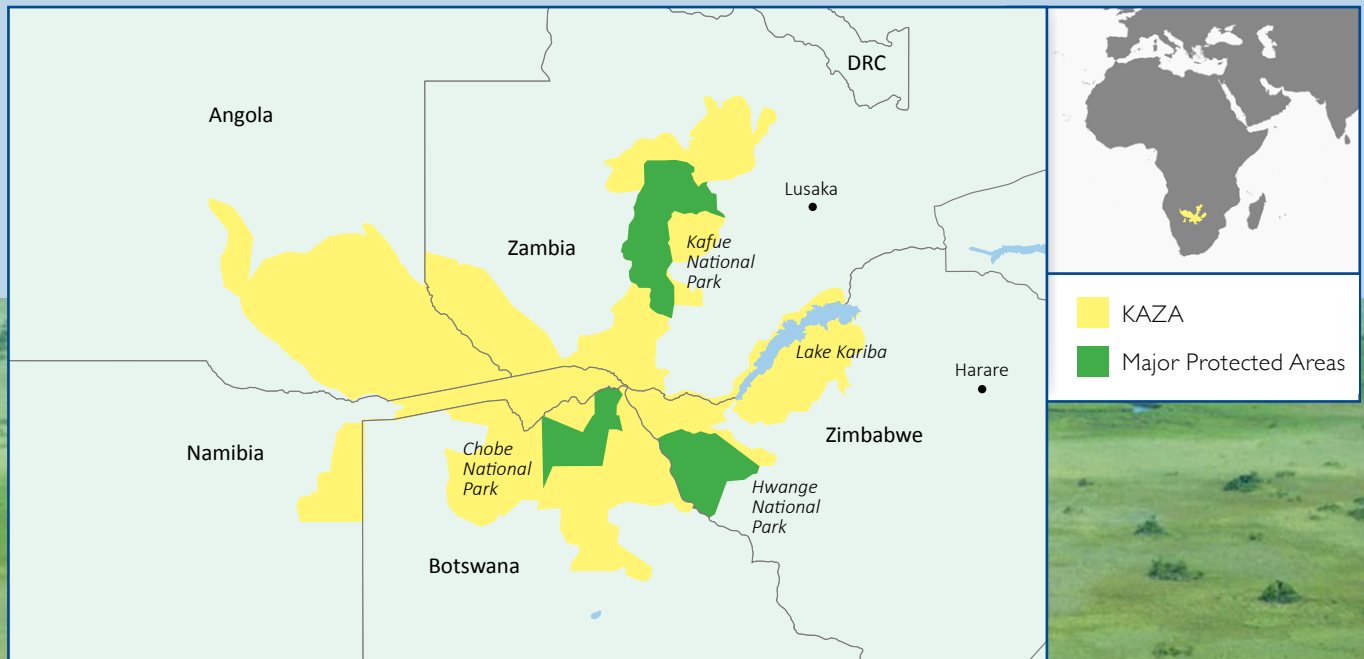




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# SCAPES LANDSCAPE PROFILE: THE KAVANGO-ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (KAZA)



OKAVANGO RIVER, ANGOLA, 2012: Rising in the northern Angolan highlands, two rivers converge to form the Okavango River (known as the Kavango River in Namibia), one of the last free-flowing rivers in the world, which eventually empties into the sandy expanses of Botswana's Kalahari Desert, forming the Okavango Delta. Photo by Mark W. Atkinson for USAID

## THE KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA (KAZA) AT A GLANCE

- KAZA straddles five countries (Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and covers more than 450,000 square kilometers.
- The project was implemented by the Wildlife Conservation Society, with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Rockefeller Foundation.

## THE PLACE AND THE PEOPLE

Across large swaths of semi-arid Southern Africa, where rainfall is meager and crops are difficult to grow, millions of people depend on raising livestock for their livelihoods. Their animals are free to roam, feeding on pasture bestowed by the landscape. Unfortunately, they share the land with wildlife such as the African buffalo, which often carry transboundary viruses like foot and mouth disease. This poses a challenge for farmers, for if they wish to sell their healthy, free-range beef on the lucrative export market, they must abide by international trade regulations — regulations that demand that cattle be physically separated from wildlife out of concern for disease.

In response, over decades, farmers have built thousands of miles of fences to isolate their stock from neighboring wildlife. Although the practice benefits livestock owners who export beef, it does not help other farmers and pastoralists to access export markets, and it is incompatible with larger conservation goals because it disrupts wildlife migration routes and blocks access to water and grazing. And as wildlife is affected, other sectors of the economy, such as nature-based tourism, also feel fenced in.

Throughout southern Africa, transfrontier conservation areas (TFCAs) incorporate national parks, game reserves, conservancies and land under traditional communal tenure. They provide opportunities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, and they are a priority for the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In fact, SADC envisions up to 120 million hectares of connected TFCAs — the boldest terrestrial pro-conservation agenda in the world.

The largest of Southern Africa's 14 TFCAs is the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA). It is home to more than 1.5 million people and their livestock, and it harbors some 250,000 elephants, the largest contiguous population of its kind in the world. If the enduring tension between livestock owners and conservation advocates — whose positions are often viewed as incompatible — can be ameliorated in KAZA, the lessons can perhaps be applied in grasslands as far away as East Africa and Central Asia.



MAKGADIKGADI PANS, BOTSWANA, 2013: Veterinary Cordon Fence. Photo by Mark W. Atkinson for WCS

## THE CHALLENGE

KAZA was one of nine transboundary landscape-scale efforts under USAID's Sustainable Conservation Approaches in Priority Ecosystems (SCAPES) project. In KAZA, SCAPES was implemented by Wildlife Conservation Society, with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Rockefeller Foundation. The implementing partners fostered an enabling environment for wildlife defenders and livestock producers to cooperate on major issues. The project summoned stakeholders, outside experts, governments and international bodies, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the World Organization for Animal Health and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN to examine the region's animal health policy and devise solutions. This led to relationship building, partnership opportunities and a series of policy papers outlining innovative ideas.

One of the project's foremost aims was to find new ways ahead for the beef trade, based on the safety of the meat production process rather than a cow's place of origin. Project-sponsored studies found, for example, that commodity-based, non-geographic approaches to disease control along the value chain may ensure safe exports. Such an analysis had never been attempted before.

The implementing partners encouraged dialogue to improve the compatibility between international food safety standards and animal disease management standards, which are currently governed by separate institutions. The SCAPES project sought to integrate and streamline these regulatory mechanisms, both of which, ultimately, are about the mitigation of potential biological hazards. The project also conducted a first-of-its-kind study of the socioeconomic implications of land-use choices related to livestock and wildlife conservation on a SADCTFCA.

Communication was vital to the project. By conducting outreach and publicizing its research, the project expanded awareness among policymakers and stakeholders. Through e-newsletters, brochures, photo galleries, videos and attendance at conferences, the project facilitated an exchange of ideas and played a vital part in the debate over animal health policy. By playing the role of honest broker while working with multiple sectors — all with acknowledged vested interests — the project maintained a degree of distance and objectivity necessary to guarantee future cooperation on issues such as wildlife and livestock health, and human health and livelihoods.



ZAMBEZI REGION, NAMIBIA, 2010: Draught oxen in wildlife conservancy. Photo by Mark W Atkinson for WCS

## THE LESSONS

Botswana emerged as a particularly active TFCA partner. Top wildlife-focused officials in that country, including from its Department of Wildlife and National Parks, have often requested advice from SCAPES and endorsed its recommendations. Personal relationships, or “biodiplomacy,” were at the heart of the project’s work. That said, the dominant land-use policies in the KAZA

have been in place for some 50 years, growing out of the colonial era. Changing them will require patience and persistence. Gaining traction within policy circles can be an arduous process, and with turnover among key government officials and multilateral staff, it was difficult to institutionalize ideas during the life of the project.



KAVANGO ZAMBEZI TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREA, NAMIBIA, 2012: KAZA TFCA Official Launch. Photo by Shirley Atkinson for WCS



ZIMBABWE, 2010: Elephant testing fence. Photo by Mark Atkinson for USAID