

**Malawi:
Resource Conservation Nyika and Vwaza Marsh
Resource Conservation Nyika/Vwaza Marsh – Access Road Maintenance**

Ex post evaluation report

OECD sector	41030: Biodiversity	
BMZ project ID	1995 65 730; 1995 70 391; 2002 66 262	
Project executing agency	Department for National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) for conservation project National Roads Authority (NRA, since 2007: Road Authority - RA) for road maintenance project	
Consultants	Agrar- und Hydrotechnik (conservation project) DIWI Consult International (road maintenance)	
Year of ex post evaluation report	2008	
	Project appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	Q 2 1996 (conservation project) Q 3 2002 (road maintenance)	Q 2 1996 (conservation project) Q 3 2002 (road maintenance)
Period of implementation	48 months (conservation project) 12 months (road maintenance)	78 months (conservation project) 18 months (road maintenance)
Investment costs	EUR 6.75 million (conservation project) EUR 1.6 million (road maintenance)	EUR 6.59 million (conservation project) EUR 1.37 million (road maintenance)
Counterpart contribution	EUR 0.56 million (conservation project)	EUR 0.2 million (conservation project)
Finance, of which FC funds	EUR 6.19 million (conservation project) EUR 1.6 million (road maintenance)	EUR 6.39 million (conservation project) EUR 1.37 million (road maintenance)
Other institutions/donors involved	GTZ (conservation project)	GTZ, CIM (conservation project)
Performance rating	3 (conservation project) 4 (road maintenance)	
• Relevance	3 (conservation project)	

	3 (road maintenance)
• Effectiveness	3 (conservation project) 4 (road maintenance)
• Efficiency	4 (conservation project) 4 (road maintenance)
• Overarching developmental impacts	4 (conservation project) 4 (road maintenance)
• Sustainability	3 (conservation project) 4 (road maintenance)

Brief Description, Overall Objective and Project Objectives with Indicators

The objective of the conservation project carried out in cooperation with GTZ was to contribute to the sustainable protection of the neighbouring nature reserves, Nyika National Park and Vwaza Marsh Wildlife Reserve, and improve the conditions of life of the local population. The overall objective was to create a sustainable protected habitat for flora and fauna biodiversity. The indicators for project objective achievement were: (i) self-financing reserve administration, (ii) contributions to the border zone population from park income, also with a view to raising their standard of living and (iii) maintenance of the infrastructure built.

The objective of the project "Conservation of Nyika/Vwaza Marsh - Maintenance of Access Road" was to improve resource conservation management in Nyika/Vwaza by ensuring better access to the two nature reserves.

Project Design/Major Deviations from Original Planning and Main Causes

The design of the resource conservation project provided for the following measures: (i) development and rehabilitation of infrastructure, such as road repair in the parks, tourist amenities, personnel, park administration and park warden buildings, water supply systems for park administration as well as game fences; (ii) provision of the nature reserve administration with vehicles, office and fieldwork equipment; (iii) advisory services in building supervision, focusing on strengthening nature reserve management and in drafting resource use guidelines and programmes; (iv) a border zone fund directed by the GTZ component to install and rehabilitate school and teachers' buildings and construct shallow and deep wells to improve water supply to the local population. The road maintenance project was concerned with the periodical maintenance and rehabilitation of the two access roads with a total length of 133 km. In hindsight, the design and results chains of the projects with the three pillars (i) strengthening nature park administration, (ii) border zone development and (iii) improvement of access to infrastructure are still appropriate and conform with current state-of-the-art knowledge.

The executing agency of the conservation project was the Department for National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) attached to the Ministry for Tourism, Culture and Wildlife. The project executing agency for the road maintenance project was the National Roads Authority.

The participation of the target group in border zone management was institutionalised in Malawi for the first time with the attendant legislation. The anticipated income from the touristic use of the park and the resultant effects on park management and the local population were heavily overestimated at project start. Besides difficulties with access infrastructure, this lower income was also due to persistent poacher activities curbing the park's animal population. Poaching had already considerably depleted the animal

populations of the park at project start so that the original plan for commercial hunting, for example, was no longer feasible for reasons of wildlife biology. Other contributory factors to unsatisfactory income were the inefficient management of the tourist facilities by a private entrepreneur as seen by the park administration and general deficits in the executing agency's implementation of economic measures.

Current finance for park management is insufficient for adequate operation. The revenue earned till now has only been enough to cover about 2/3 of usual expenditure, so that funds for the necessary replacements of equipment and the adequate mobility of park personnel are frequently unavailable. The maintenance of the structural infrastructure installed is, in contrast, largely assured.

Key Results of Impact Analysis and Performance Rating

The programme has stabilised biodiversity, halted the drastic decline in wildlife and initiated a slight recovery in the numbers of various species. Relations between the park administration and the local residents have improved considerably and made some contributions to raising their standard of living. The road maintenance project, however, was only able to make a provisional improvement to the poor access to the reserve as the project executing agency could not ensure maintenance after project completion. The much shorter access road to the park (6 km), in contrast, is passable all year round. Altogether, the project objectives have only been met in part.

Of relevance for a macroeconomic assessment of the measures are the benefit of protected flora and fauna and the net benefit of tourism. Based on the results available, the reserves can be expected to have made an important contribution to nature conservation in Malawi.

The programme makes a direct contribution to environmental protection and resource conservation. No adverse environmental impacts are expected. It has strengthened the rural population's rights and competencies in planning and investment and supported decentralisation. Improved law enforcement has reinforced governance, eased tensions between the surrounding population and local authorities and, with that, raised acceptance for the parks in general. The large majority of the local population can be classified as poor. The direct beneficial socio-economic effects of the projects on the local population have fallen short of initial expectations. However, the programme has improved cooperation between the park administration and local population, albeit in small measure, and raised the legal income and productive potential of the poor by permitting certain kinds of resource use in the parks. It has laid the legal foundation for target group participation in border zone management and institutionalised the related rights of women. It afforded scope for contributing to gender equality.

In summary, we assess developmental efficacy as follows:

Relevance: The sustainable improvement of the tourism sector to lessen heavy dependence on tobacco cropping is one of the Malawian Government's declared development-policy objectives. This is even more relevant than before project start. Besides Lake Malawi, special priority is attached to the touristic development of the existing national parks and game reserves. By setting up an exemplary park administration and in particular by involving the local population in reserve management for the first time in Malawi, the programme made an important contribution to improving national legislation and nature reserve management in general. Cross-border cooperation with neighbouring Zambia was initiated and then formally established under a Malawian-Zambian memorandum of understanding after project completion, placing nature conservation cooperation between the two countries on a new footing. The programme conforms with the development-policy goals and

guidelines of BMZ on conserving and promoting biodiversity (MDG 7) as well as poverty reduction (MDG 1). The green sector is no longer a priority in the BMZ country strategy for Malawi today, however. The three pillars of the projects (i) strengthening nature reserve administration, (ii) border zone development and (iii) improved infrastructure access also conform with state-of-the-art knowledge in terms of results chain and design. The different competencies (roads component: National Road Authority; border zone development in cooperation with GTZ: Ministry of District and Municipal Administration and regional authorities; nature reserve management: DNPW) called for a large coordination input, which was not always delivered, particularly in the initial phase of the programme, and this impaired synergies and resulted in some inefficient fund allocation. Border zone development carried out by the relevant TC project is inadequate measured against today's benchmark (approx. 5% of FC funds). The programme was conceptually well assimilated into the existing donor setup. Assessment: conservation project rating 3; access road maintenance project rating 3

Effectiveness: As to project objective achievement, our assessment is as follows. The programme has succeeded in stemming the dramatic decline in wildlife and bringing about a slight recovery in the numbers of various species of fauna. It has contributed to considerably improving relations between the park administration and local residents and their standard of living in some areas. The anticipated earnings from the touristic use of the park and the resultant effects on park management and the local population were, however, heavily overestimated. Besides difficulties with infrastructure (deteriorating road conditions, termination of air traffic between the provincial capital and the parks at project start), a particular contributory factor here was poaching that depleted the park's animal population. This had already brought about a large reduction in the animal populations of the park at project start so that the original plan for commercial hunting, for example, was no longer feasible for reasons of wildlife biology. Other reasons for unsatisfactory income were the inefficient management of the tourist facilities by a private entrepreneur as seen by the park and general deficits in the executing agency's implementation of economic measures. Current finance for park management is insufficient for adequate operation. For lack of sufficient revenue, the necessary replacements for equipment cannot be made and park personnel mobility is restricted. The revenue earned till now is only enough to cover about 2/3 of usual expenditure. Infrastructure, in contrast, is generally maintained. Altogether, the project objectives can be deemed to have been met in part only. Assessment: conservation project rating 3; access road maintenance project rating 4

Efficiency: The capacity shortcomings of the executing agency required a much larger budget for consultancy services as compared with project appraisal, as did the employment and the assignment of a CIM expert to strengthen it in nature reserve operations at the expense of the investment component. Delays, particularly in constructing the tourist lodge (about 4% of the budget for the nature reserve project), incurred higher costs. Due to the smaller numbers of tourists as a result of the deterioration in park access but also of past and current problems with the private operator of the tourist amenities, full advantage was not taken of income-earning opportunities. Moreover, the entrance fees (US\$ 1 to 5) for the parks are well below those in neighbouring countries, so that income from international day visitors in particular falls short of potential. A clear, allocative economic assessment cannot be made of the investments financed by the programme in schools and wells in the border zone. The measures did, however, bring about a definite improvement in relations between the park administration and the local population (e.g. regular consultative meetings and institutionalised participation of local residents, increased reporting of

poaching by the population, active dialogue on resource use in the parks) and have had their intended impacts in this respect. Unit costs per kilometre of road maintenance were considerably less than the estimates at programme appraisal. The extended roadways, however, require intensive maintenance by the Road Authority, which does not perform this task adequately at present. To reduce routine and periodical maintenance costs, particularly on the critical stretch inside the Nyika reserve, it would have been more expedient to upgrade the road further with higher unit costs. Assessment: conservation project rating 4; access road maintenance project rating 4

Overarching developmental impacts: The resource conservation project has contributed to creating a sustainable protected habitat for flora and fauna biodiversity. The wildlife populations have stabilised for the most part. The local resident population benefits from the installed infrastructure (schools and water systems) and - on a comparatively small scale - from park income as well as from the legal use of its resources. The FC contribution has had some beneficial capacity-building effects. The institutional and legal framework initiated by the project has improved Malawi's sectoral policy in resource conservation and laid a major foundation for the sustainable protection of national reserves. The parks' boundaries have not been altered, the income from the touristic use of the park has risen and relations between the park administration with the local residents have improved considerably. Although the local effects have fallen well short of expectations and have been impaired by the inadequate promotion of the target group and the inefficiency and doubtful sustainability of the German contribution, they are still remarkable under the prevailing general conditions. Without the project, these impacts would probably not have been achieved at all, to a far lesser extent or after a considerable delay. The road project, in contrast, improved the access to the NNP for a short time only and the anticipated effects were not achieved for the most part. Assessment: conservation project rating 4; access road maintenance project rating 4

Sustainability: The sustainability of the projects is beset with some risks, particularly the insufficient operating cost recovery due to the smaller numbers of tourists than expected. In the medium to long term, the park management will continue to depend on external funding despite past increases in allocations from the national budget of Malawi. Under the financial resources currently available, the present condition can be expected to continue at least for the short term (also evidenced by the stabilisation of wildlife populations even after project completion, the ongoing dialogue with Zambia, the recent legal provisions on local resident organisations). However, a clear increase in the wildlife populations, which would also benefit tourism development in Nyika appear improbable without external support. This is why the responsible administrations are making successful efforts to step up cooperation with private foundations (local organisations and the internationally highly regarded Peace Parks Foundation). Moreover, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility are planning a programme to support the local population and parks in North Malawi. Based on current information, the sustainability of road maintenance is much less secure. The road is only accorded secondary priority by the responsible Road Authority and the local districts, with limited funds earmarked for other areas. Assessment: conservation project rating 3; access road maintenance project rating 4

Performance rating: Even though the local impacts of the national park project fell well short of expectations, and the inadequate promotion of the target group, the inefficiency and the sustainability risks detract from the results, they are nevertheless remarkable under the prevailing general conditions. Without the project, these impacts

would not have occurred at all, to a lesser extent or only after considerable delay. Altogether, the nature reserve project can rate as satisfactory. Largely due to its dubious sustainability, the developmental efficacy of the road maintenance project, in contrast, is rated as unsatisfactory. Overall assessment: conservation project rating 3; access road maintenance project rating 4

General conclusions

Account should be taken of the frequent problem of follow-on costs in nature reserve projects already in project design (e.g. through cooperation with non-governmental organisations that could support long-term park management). The scope for earning own income is often overestimated in parks. State administrations are usually incapable of mobilising additional sources of income or putting available ones to effective use.

Nature reserve projects often only bring minor economic benefits for the local population. Project objectives, indicators and measures should therefore be specified in less ambitious and more realistic terms.

Different projects pursuing the same objective (here: resource conservation project and road maintenance) should also be linked institutionally and implemented, operated and maintained in coordination with each other.

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success (project rating)

Projects are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being relevance, effectiveness (outcome), “overarching developmental impact” and efficiency. The ratings are also used to arrive at a final assessment of a project’s overall developmental efficacy. The scale is as follows:

- 1 Very good rating that clearly exceeds expectations
- 2 Good rating fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
- 3 Satisfactory rating – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate
- 4 Unsatisfactory rating – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
- 5 Clearly inadequate rating – despite some positive partial results the negative results clearly dominate
- 6 The project has no positive results or the situation has actually deteriorated

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A rating of 1 to 3 is a positive assessment and indicates a successful project while a rating of 4 to 6 is a negative assessment and indicates a project which has no sufficiently positive results.

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Sustainability level 1 (very good sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.

Sustainability level 2 (good sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected.)

Sustainability level 3 (satisfactory sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.

Sustainability level 4 (inadequate sustainability)

The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and an improvement is very unlikely. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

The overall rating on the six-point scale is compiled from a weighting of all five individual criteria as appropriate to the project in question. A rating of 1 to 3 indicates a “successful” project while a rating of 4 to 6 indicates an “unsuccessful” project. In using (with a project-specific weighting) the five key factors to form an overall rating, it should be noted that a project can generally only be considered developmentally “successful” if the achievement of the project objective (“effectiveness”), the impact on the overall objective (“overarching developmental impact”) and the sustainability are considered at least “satisfactory” (rating 3).