



CAMPFIRE ASSOCIATION

ORGANISATIONAL
STRATEGY
2025 - 2030





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THE ROLE OF THE CAMPFIRE ASSOCIATION

The Campfire Association in Zimbabwe plays a crucial role in community-based wildlife management and conservation, working closely with Rural District Councils (RDCs) to enhance local governance and resource management. Campfire registered as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) in 1994 to manage wildlife for community benefit after the 1982 Parks and Wildlife Act amendment.

The program supports 2.4 million people living in Campfire areas, including 200,000 active households and 600,000 indirect beneficiaries. CAMPFIRE helps to protect 50,000 km², protecting 3 to 5 million hectares of wildlife habitat (12.7% of the country). It operates in 58 districts, with 23 actively involved, 33 safari operators, and 8 photographic safaris.



OUR VISION AND MISSION

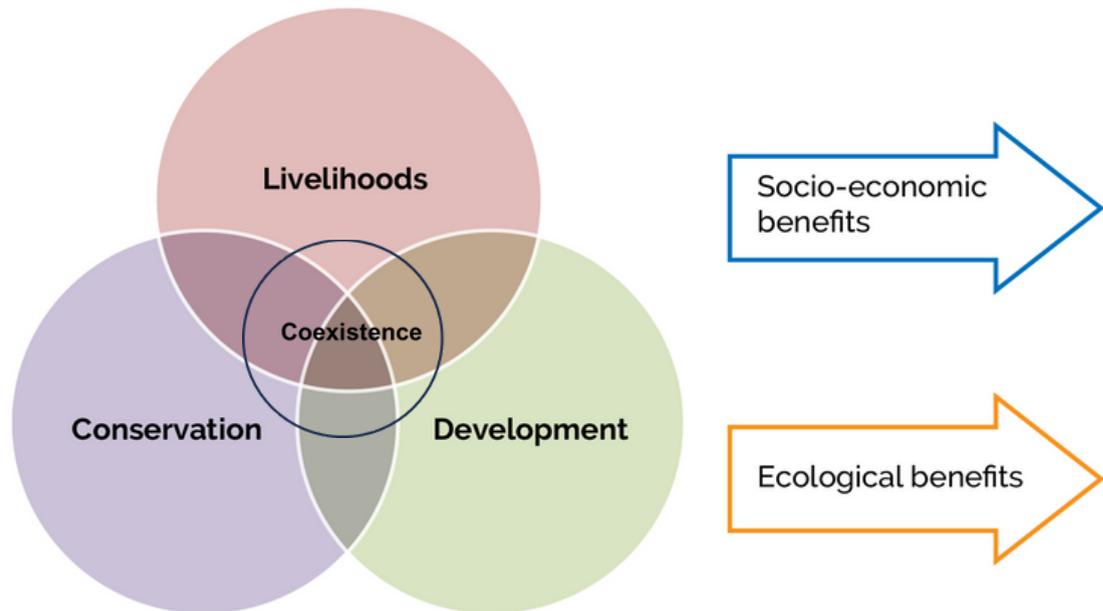
Our vision:

A Zimbabwe where communities coexist with and benefit from wildlife and nature

Our mission:

We provide strategic representation, guidance and support to communities, empowering them to effectively conserve their natural resources and share in the benefits.

OUR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



The work of the Campfire Association is at the nexus of livelihoods, conservation, and development, yielding both socio-economic and ecological benefits that are vital for the wellbeing of local communities in Zimbabwe. By supporting the RDCs to empower local communities to manage and benefit from their natural resources, the association creates a strong incentive for conservation, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility among people living in wildlife-rich areas.

This approach helps to mitigate human-wildlife conflict through creative solutions which help people co-exist harmoniously with animals. It also enhances local economies through eco-tourism and sustainable resource practices, providing direct financial benefits to communities.

Additionally, the association's efforts in promoting biodiversity contribute to healthier ecosystems, which are essential for maintaining the balance of local wildlife and habitats.

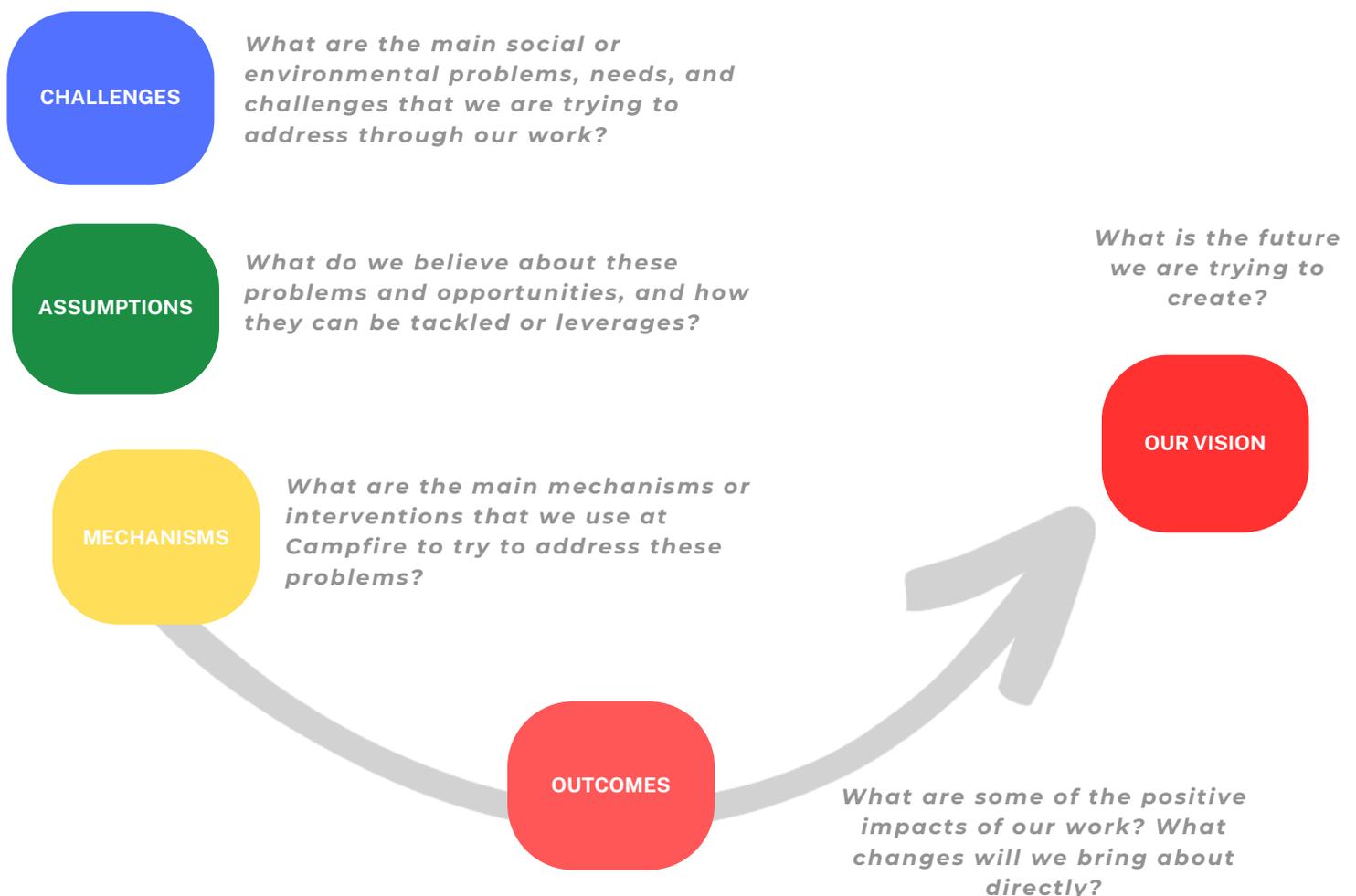
Ultimately, the Campfire Association exemplifies how integrating conservation with community development can lead to resilient livelihoods, ensuring that both people and nature thrive together.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change is a methodology for planning, participation, adaptive management, and evaluation that is used to promote successful social change. Applied to Campfire, it describes the pathway that Association will follow to achieve a desired impact.

Over the period of several months the Campfire core team worked with key partners from ZimParks and Resource Africa to develop a clear vision and mission and Theory of Change. This was the foundation for a five-year Programme Framework and a shorter-term action plan.

This strategy was shared, discussed and strengthened at a strategy workshop in Harare in September 2024.





CHALLENGES

Dependency on natural resources:

Many communities have a high dependency on natural resources, making them vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation.

Overreliance on revenue:

There is an overreliance on hunting and tourism revenue, which makes communities susceptible to changes in international policy and public perceptions.

Increased wildlife crime:

Increased poaching and wildlife crime have escalated, contributing to biodiversity loss in sensitive conservation areas.

Human/wildlife conflicts:

Ongoing conflict between humans and dangerous or destructive wildlife such as elephants and lions is exacerbated by human settlements encroaching into wildlife movement corridors.

Limited governance capacity:

Communities often have limited capacity to effectively govern community conservation areas, or commercially leverage their wildlife resources. They are asking for support to increase their skills.

Governance challenges for RDCs:

RDCs face challenges with limited governance and compliance standards, leading to inconsistencies in standards and practices across regions.

Elite capture of resources:

Capture of natural resources by those in power can undermine community benefits and equity.

Funding limitations:

Limited funding availability hinders the effective implementation of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) initiatives.

STRENGTHS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Strengths:

A key strength of Campfire lies in its relationships with national stakeholders, including Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) and the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife and Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, which are critical for policy and decision-making.

Additionally, Campfire has established long-term partnerships with key international funders and organizations, such as Jamma International and USAID. The association collaborates with other national organizations through the Community Leaders Network (CLN) to develop data collection processes and conduct monitoring, contributing to a broader regional knowledge base.

Campfire also benefits from strategic support from civil society partners like Resource Africa.

Assumptions:

- Emerging national and international policy frameworks are supportive of local communities as custodians of natural resources. We need to create clear standards that govern the way that we work together and ensure that communities benefit properly from conservation.
- There are untapped opportunities to increase the role of communities in the value chain in the wildlife, unlocking social and economic benefits for communities. We need to creatively diversify income both for Campfire and communities, to support local and organisational sustainability.
- Climate change is going to become an increasing threat to natural habitats and needs to be factored into our planning and thinking.
- Rural communities are generally less supported and resourced than urban communities and should be prioritised.



Communities are willing to become more involved in stewarding and managing the natural environment and are calling for capacity building support and partnership.



MECHANISMS

Campfire has identified three mechanisms for addressing the key challenges faced by their members, across Zimbabwe.

Our mechanisms for creating change over the next five years include:

1

Mechanism 1

Partnership and governance

To strengthen and advance partnerships and CBNRM governance locally, regionally and nationally

2

Mechanism 2

Implementation support

To guide and support the implementation of local and provincial CBNRM projects

3

Mechanism 3

Advocacy and storytelling

To advocate for the interests and participation of local and provincial stakeholders in national discussions and strategies

Responding to the 2018 review of the Campfire Association

In 2016 the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife received financial support from the European Union (EU) and established a National CBNRM Steering Committee to coordinate a review of the Campfire Association. A final validation workshop of the review process was conducted on the 23rd of May 2018 presenting the key recommendations from the District Surveys and Consultative Workshops.

The key recommendations of this process have been deeply considered in the development of this strategy, particularly in relation to institutional strengthening, advancing policy and legislation, and strengthening the business model for CBNRM at a local level.





MECHANISM 1: PARTNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

**OBJECTIVE 1: TO STRENGTHEN AND ADVANCE
PARTNERSHIPS AND CBNRM GOVERNANCE
LOCALLY, REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY**

KEY ACTIVITIES

- 1.1 Ensure best practice governance of the Association
- 1.2 Support local and provincial CBNRM governance
- 1.4 Support national CBNRM governance

Outputs:

- Organisational: board; secretariate; strategy; staffing organogram; collaboration framework
- Local and provincial: service provider relationships; contracts; business plans; guidelines for rural district councils; novel benefit sharing mechanisms
- National: engagements with government partners; policies; strategies; platform for engagement across levels of CBNRM governance

Outcomes:

- Well governed, sustainable Association
- Strengthened collaboration across communities, government and civil society
- Improved governance structures at different scales



MECHANISM 2: IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE 2: GUIDE AND SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL CBNRM PROJECTS

KEY ACTIVITIES

2.1 Develop a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning framework for monitoring local and provincial CBRM activities.

2.2 Collaborate as partners in multi-stakeholder projects, at the intersection of conservation, livelihoods and development.

2.3 Support the implementation of strategic, Campfire-led projects through project management, financial administration, reporting and governance.

2.4 Develop and disseminate an annual report for the Association, consolidating local and provincial CBNRM activities.

Outputs:

- Co-designed projects and programmes
- Implementation structures (financial structures; project management structures)
- Monitoring and evaluation systems, data, reporting

Outcomes:

- Strengthened local capacity for implementing community based natural resource management
- Improved tracking of community-level projects and impacts



MECHANISM 3: ADVOCACY AND STORYTELLING

OBJECTIVE 3: ADVOCATE FOR THE INTERESTS AND PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL STAKEHOLDERS IN NATIONAL DISCUSSIONS AND STRATEGIES

KEY ACTIVITIES

3.2 Implement a policy and advocacy campaign to raise awareness with national policy makers about the importance of CBNRM

3.1 Develop a Communication Strategy for the Association

3.3 Host and participate in conferences, Think Tanks and fora on CBNRM and facilitate local involvement.

3.4 Host an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for members and affiliates.

Outputs:

- Project/ activity map/ archive
- Campfire website
- Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Case studies
- Conferences and dialogues

Outcomes:

- Strengthened national representation of CBNRM
- Increased visibility of local communities in national and international discussions

SUSTAINABILITY

Campfire's main income source is from safari hunting levies. We are operating under current revenue sharing guidelines, informed by national policies. Hunting levies are currently split 55% to communities, 26% to RDCs, 15% for RDC admin, and 4% to the Campfire Association. At present there is no mechanism for legally enforcing these guidelines, which means that compliance is low. At present the income from levies does not cover the costs of the Campfire Secretariate, let alone its programme of work. Campfire is actively exploring options to enforce the 4% levy which would improve sustainability.

Hunting levies are vulnerable to changes in international hunting policy and the whims of the tourism industry and should not be Campfire's only income. Historically, Campfire has supplemented hunting levies with project funding from organisations such as USAID. It is critical that Campfire ideate programmes of work which support the RDCs to meet the needs of communities, including building the local capacity for fundraising, community-led conservation and the wildlife economy.



THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

At present, Campfire requires strategic investment to strengthen its business model, develop its programme of activities, and rebuild its relationship with members. We invite partners to work with us to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Campfire programme.



CONTACT US

WE WELCOME YOUR PARTNERSHIP

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