



THE NAMIBIAN CHAMBER OF ENVIRONMENT OFFICES AT 18 NACHTIGAL STREET, WINDHOEK



Newsletter 1, November 2016

ISSUE 1, 2016

Background on the NCE

Welcome to this first newsletter from the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE). You can read about why the Chamber was established, its objectives and values, its strategic programme areas and progress to date.

Why establish a Chamber of Environment for Namibia?

This question is best answered by posing the following questions:

(a) When was the last time that the environmental sector in Namibia got together to discuss the state of Namibia's environment, to debate the national environmental priorities and decide on how the non-state environmental organisations could best help address these priorities?

(b) When last did the conservation sector in Namibia hold a research meeting to discuss progress in any area of scientific interest, to discuss research results and recommendations, and to consider future priorities?

(c) When last did the environmental NGO sector meet with GRN to share information and insights, to plan collaborative initiatives, to discuss how best to allocate GRN finances from the national budget to address conservation priorities?

(d) When last did the environmental NGO sector engage effectively in the review and development of environmental policies and legislation, hold GRN accountable against ministry missions, delivery of outcomes contained in environmental policies, national development plans, V2030, etc?, and

(e) who is there to represent the interests of the environmental NGO sector in Namibia, to speak on behalf of the sector (with their consent) and to further their interests?

The answer is that these things are not happening because there is no non-governmental organisation with the mandate to facilitate them and make them happen. Addressing these sorts of gaps and short-comings would add

considerable value to the work of environmental organisations and individuals, and to the general state of Namibia's environment.

Most environmental NGOs in Namibia have a specific conservation focus, ranging from a single species to a taxonomic group, from a specific geographic area to a specific thematic area. No organisation currently has a mandate to support and represent the sector more widely. Thus, there is currently no support mechanism for Namibia's environmental NGO sector. The Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) was set up to address these shortcomings and to provide relevant and appropriate support to the sector, in the same way that the Chamber of Mines or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry provide support to their members in their respective sectors.

Organisational structure

The Namibian Chamber of Environment is a non-governmental membership-based organisation, established as a voluntary association and body corporate separate from its members [*universitas personarum*] under Namibian

Common Law. Its Members constitute the "Council", the highest decision-making organ of the NCE. At its AGM the Council elects Members to serve on an Executive Committee (ExCo). The ExCo has all the necessary power to oversee and give strategic direction to the Chamber.

The current interim ExCo comprises representatives of the three Founder Members, being Otjikoto Environmental and Education Trust, the Namibian Environmental and Wildlife Society and Sustainable Solutions Trust. Additional members are the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO) and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST).

Objectives and Values

The NCE has two sets of Objectives, aspirational and operational.

Aspirational Objectives:

- Conserve the natural environment,
- Protect indigenous biodiversity and endangered species,
- Promote best environmental practices, including habitat rehabilitation,
- Support efforts to prevent and reduce environmental degradation and pollution.

Operational Objectives:

- Represent the environmental interests of Members,
- Act as a consultative forum for its Members,
- Engage with policy and law makers to improve the environmental policy setting in Namibia, as well as effective policy implementation,
- Build environmental skills in young Namibians,
- Support and advise its Members on environmental matters and best practices, and facilitate access to environmental information.



The Chamber espouses the following **Core Values**:

- Uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Namibian Constitution and the laws of Namibia. This includes the principles of sustainable use, protection of biodiversity and inter-generational equity,
- Encourage compliance with, and uphold and share, best environmental practices,
- Develop skills, expertise and mentor young Namibians,
- Political and ideological neutrality,
- Non-discrimination and inclusiveness.

Membership

There are two categories of Membership:

- Full Member**, applicable to Namibian registered non-governmental organisations whose main business, or a significant portion of whose business, comprises active participation in or promotion of Environmental Matters; and
- Associate Member**, applicable to Namibian and Permanent Resident individuals, and non-Namibian registered non-governmental organisations, whose main business, or a significant portion of whose

business, comprises active participation in or promotion of Environmental Matters in Namibia.

There are currently 15 environmental organisations that are Members of the NCE with a further 14 NGO applicants to be tabled at the next ExCo meeting in early December. We anticipate that NCE will have a Membership of at least 35 environmental NGOs by the end of 2016.

Membership is free and becoming a Member is easy – just complete the application process on-line by going onto the NCE website (see below).

Sponsorship

The NCE has four categories of Sponsors:

- **Gold Sponsors** - contribute N\$1 million or more per year,
- **Diamond Sponsors** - contribute N\$500,000 or more per year,
- **Silver Sponsors** - contribute N\$250,000 or more per year,
- **Tourmaline Sponsors** - contribute up to N\$250,000 per year.

How can the corporate sector help the NCE and its Members?

- ✓ **Help fund the NCE** – all funds go directly towards good conservation and sustainable development projects run by NCE Members,
- ✓ **Consider a long-term partnership rather than once-off support** – this allows for the development of programmes rather than short projects, and has a far greater impact,
- ✓ **Use your influence to encourage your major suppliers to support the NCE for the length of your contracts with them** – this allows for match funding, or corporate "crowd" funding, which shares both the risk and the recognition, and

allows your funds to be spread across more projects,

- ✓ **Use your influence to encourage your clients to support the NCE** – this helps promote awareness of Namibia's environment and contributes to match funding.

The NCE's institutional costs are all covered. The NCE's Strategic programme areas (see below) are also all funded, except for its grants programme. This means that all funds received go directly into projects and into the field – there are no overhead costs.

How can the NCE help its corporate Sponsors?

- ✓ We can help you comply with international environmental norms and standards (King IV, Equator principles, UN and IUCN business standards, etc),
- ✓ We can help ensure that funds go to real conservation priorities, where appropriate aligned with GRN programmes and institutionally integrated,
- ✓ We can earmark your contributions for specific environmental issues, (e.g. the marine ecosystem, anti-poaching, endangered species),
- ✓ We can ensure sound grants management, accountability and transparency,
- ✓ We can also deliver socio-economic investments in projects linked to sustainable natural resources use.

KING IV REPORT ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, 2016

Governance of ethics

In addition to setting the example with its own ethical behaviour, the governing body should ensure that it governs the ethics of the organisation. The critical role of ethics cannot be overstated. As King III put it: "ethics... is the foundation of, and reason for, corporate governance".

Ethics includes, but is not limited to, the prevention of fraud and corruption. Ethics refers not only to the relations between the organisation and its internal stakeholders, but extends to the organisation's ethical relationship with society, its responsibility for the ways resources are used and how outcomes are affecting the economy, society and the environment. Ethics considerations are part of the rationale for regarding the organisation as an integral part of society, for corporate citizenship, sustainable development and stakeholder inclusivity.

KING IV REPORT ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE, 2016

Sustainable development – the response

Sustainable development, understood as "conducting operations in a manner that meets the existing needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs", is a primary ethical and economic imperative in response to the challenges and opportunities posed by the organisation being an integral part of society and its status as a corporate citizen. Organisations should expand their view of success and redefine it in terms of long-term, positive outcomes for business, society and the environment. The essence of sustainable development is an organisation enhancing its resources and the relationships that it relies on.

Progress

The Chamber opened its offices in late July this year. Over the next few months the focus was on getting the core institutional things done – getting furniture, IT equipment, phones, a PO Box, internet, drafting policies and an office manual, setting up security, job descriptions, banking, preparing the budget and strategy, setting up the ExCo and holding meetings.

We have a great Office Manager, Henriette Krohne, who started work at the Chamber on 25 October after returning from Honeymoon! In addition to running the office, Henriette will be our front-line contact for Members. Please give her a call or drop her an e-mail – she will give you whatever information you need on the Chamber.



Henriette Krohne, NCE Office Manager

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The Namibian Chamber of Environment aims to break the negative perceptions between the responsible corporate world and the pragmatic environmental sector and build a common vision for business and environment – after all, we have only one world from which to derive our goods and services, maintain a healthy planet and protect our children's wellbeing. Namibia can create a global example of corporate Namibia and environmental Namibia working together to secure our biodiversity heritage while promoting sustainable development.

Strategic programme areas

The NCE has eight (8) **strategic programme areas** as follows:

- 1. Membership support:** Provide facilities at the Chamber's office for particularly field-based NGOs and researchers when in Windhoek – workspace, internet, secure parking, boardroom for meetings and storage space.
- 2. Environmental Policy Research:** Establish a **Policy Research Forum** to identify, prioritise, research and publish in area of environmental policy and other policies impacting on the environment. There is currently a vacuum in this area and, as a result, environmental planning, policy development and management suffer.
- 3. Advocacy:** Engage with government on policy and legislative issues, development priorities and budget allocations as well as issues of mutual importance to NCE Members and government.
- 4. National facilitation:** Organise conferences, symposia and workshops on topical environmental issues and on research themes, and facilitate Member's positions on international negotiations, treaties and conservation priorities.
- 5. Environmental Information:** Build and manage Namibia's Environmental Information Service (the EIS – www.the-eis.com) comprising an e-library with references and down-loadable publications, reports and data sets – the largest environmental library in Namibia; citizen science data collection via atlas projects (e.g. mammals, carnivores, snakes, invasive alien plant); landscape photographic gallery (time series land changes) and a scientific on-line journal (currently under development).
- 6. Young Namibian training and mentorship:** Create an annual internship programme and link to the Environmental Policy Research agenda; create incentives for mentoring young

Namibians in the grants application process (see below); set up a bursary scheme for post-graduate studies in environment fields.

7. Fund raising: Support our Founder Sponsors to raise funds within the corporate business sector in Namibia, from overseas business sector, embassies and high commissions in Namibia and international Foundations. Support a well-placed Namibian NGO Member to become accredited to the Green Climate Fund.

8. Grants making: Set up a structured, on-line grant making process, with a grants review forum (pool of experts). The system will provide for transparent on-line grant application, review, management and reporting, with applicants, managers and sponsors being able to "look in" and see progress.

It is also important to emphasise what the Chamber will **not** do. It will not carry out field work or implement projects, other than those which serve the interests of the whole sector and all Members, such as arranging

conferences, research symposia, providing an environmental information portal and carrying out policy analysis. It will thus not compete with the work of its Members.

Mean-and-lean

The NCE has established a small, cost-efficient office with low overheads at 18 Nachtigal Street near Ausspannplatz. All overhead costs as well as seven of the eight Programme areas, are fully funded. This means that **all** other funds raised, donations made and financial contributions to projects go directly into the field – no overheads.

Please come by and visit us at the Namibian Chamber of Environment.

Kind regards,

Chris & Henriette

Symposium on animal movements and satellite tracking in Namibia



The symposium takes place on 23-25 November 2016. More than 20 organisations have registered to give papers, including delegates from South Africa, Botswana and Scotland.

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