

## Facilitating Agency

**Experiences:** The important role of Facilitating Agencies in the implementation of the Small Grants Facility project in two Districts in South Africa

### Case Study 7



*Clockwise: Small Grant Recipients during a Briefing Session and Concept Development workshop convened by Conservation South Africa, Namakwa District (Photo: SANBI); Heat and drought tolerant climate-resilient livestock that were introduced in the Leliefontein and Kamiesberg communities, Namakwa District (Photo: SANBI); An established climate-smart communal garden in the Mamanyoha Village has introduced drip irrigation techniques to irrigate agricultural produce, Mopani District (Photo: SANBI).*

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Above left: Representatives from the Department Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment during a site visit to the Namakwa District (Photo: DFFE); Above right: Semi-Arid landscape of the Namakwa District (Photo: DFFE).



## Key Messages

The role of Facilitating Agencies, an innovation of the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility (CA SGF) project, was critical to its success. Positioned to manage the multiple and complex challenges presented by local and international expectations, Facilitating Agencies functioned as interlocutor, translating grant requirements into contextualised responses.

- Strengthening community and government linkages, facilitated by the Facilitating Agencies, yielded multiple benefits. It was important to facilitate awareness and alignment of government priorities, offering the opportunity to improve the sustainability of Small Grant Recipient projects. In addition, government relationships assisted in navigating processes required to secure requisite permissions and licences.
- Optimising available resources and accessing expertise when needed is required to allow the Facilitating Agency to respond with agility to the multiple and diverse needs that emerge. This would be further facilitated by having a large and specialised team who were able to provide support and capacity building.
- Sustainable Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation requires time for knowledge and practices to become embedded.
- Adaptive management practices must enable flexible decision-making processes to facilitate agile responses to emerging project and community needs. Processes should accommodate, and resource, unanticipated delays to strengthen the programme's ability to respond to unanticipated needs.
- Facilitating learning within and between projects and across regions was key to individuals and communities contextualising and expanding their understanding of adaptation responses. Learning exchanges, including project visits, and networking were successful platforms for shared learning.

## Project Overview

The "Taking Adaptation to the Ground: A Small Grants Facility for enabling local level responses to climate change" project (known as the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility project) was funded by the Adaptation Fund in 2014. The project sought to pilot a new mechanism of Enhanced Direct Access for local level climate change adaptation in South Africa, with a broad goal of understanding how such a mechanism could be scaled and replicated in the future.

The objective of the project was to increase resilience and reduce the vulnerability of local communities who are most vulnerable to climate change through building capacity and empowering these communities to identify and implement adaptation measures. It aimed

## Project Overview (Continued)

to facilitate the inclusion of climate change adaptation responses into local practices so that assets and livelihoods would be protected from local climate-induced risks associated with expected dry spells and droughts, seasonal shifts and storm-related disaster events. The emphasis was to support projects that harnessed local knowledge and creativity, integrated climate science, addressed gender disparities and ultimately generated tangible adaptation responses.

The Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility project targeted vulnerable, rural communities in the Namakwa District in the Northern Cape and the Mopani District in Limpopo, South Africa. The project offered grant sizes of approximately US\$100 000 to communities for the implementation of tangible climate change adaptation responses that were identified locally. The project was approved as a four-year pilot project but was extended to over five years to accommodate unforeseen delays.

# The Facilitating Agencies: Linking Global Expectations and Local Needs

This case study provides an account of the CA SGF project from the perspective of one of the innovations of the project: the role of the Facilitating Agency. The Facilitating Agencies were critical to the success of the CA SGF project, working directly with the National Implementing Entity and the Executing Entity as well as alongside the Small Grant Recipients to ensure practical implementation, monitoring and reporting of the community adaptation projects. A Facilitating Agency was designated in each of the two regions, providing additional insights into contextual factors that impacted the Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation projects as well as the CA SGF project as a whole. This case study highlights areas of intervention in which the Facilitating Agencies played a key role in the CA SGF's overall success.

## The project context

It is important that project management is sensitive to context. Continuous assessments and the incorporation of adaptive management practices was important for effective project administration. As the project advanced, increasing

familiarity with context revealed the possibilities in terms of Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation and the requisite support needed to achieve these prospects within the constraints of the project administration.

## Institutional arrangements

Recognising significant gaps in capacity at the community level, the CA SGF project proposal outlined a framework to deliver cascading levels of support to address the anticipated complexity within the planning, implementation and monitoring of the standardised grant-making mechanism as well as facilitate the climate change adaptation goals outlined in each of the Small Grant Recipients' projects.

The arrangements therefore included a variety of roles, with oversight responsibilities occurring at different levels by the National Implementing Entity, Executing Entity, and Facilitating Agency for each district. Figure 1, on the following page, provides a graphic representation of the CA SGF project institutional arrangements.

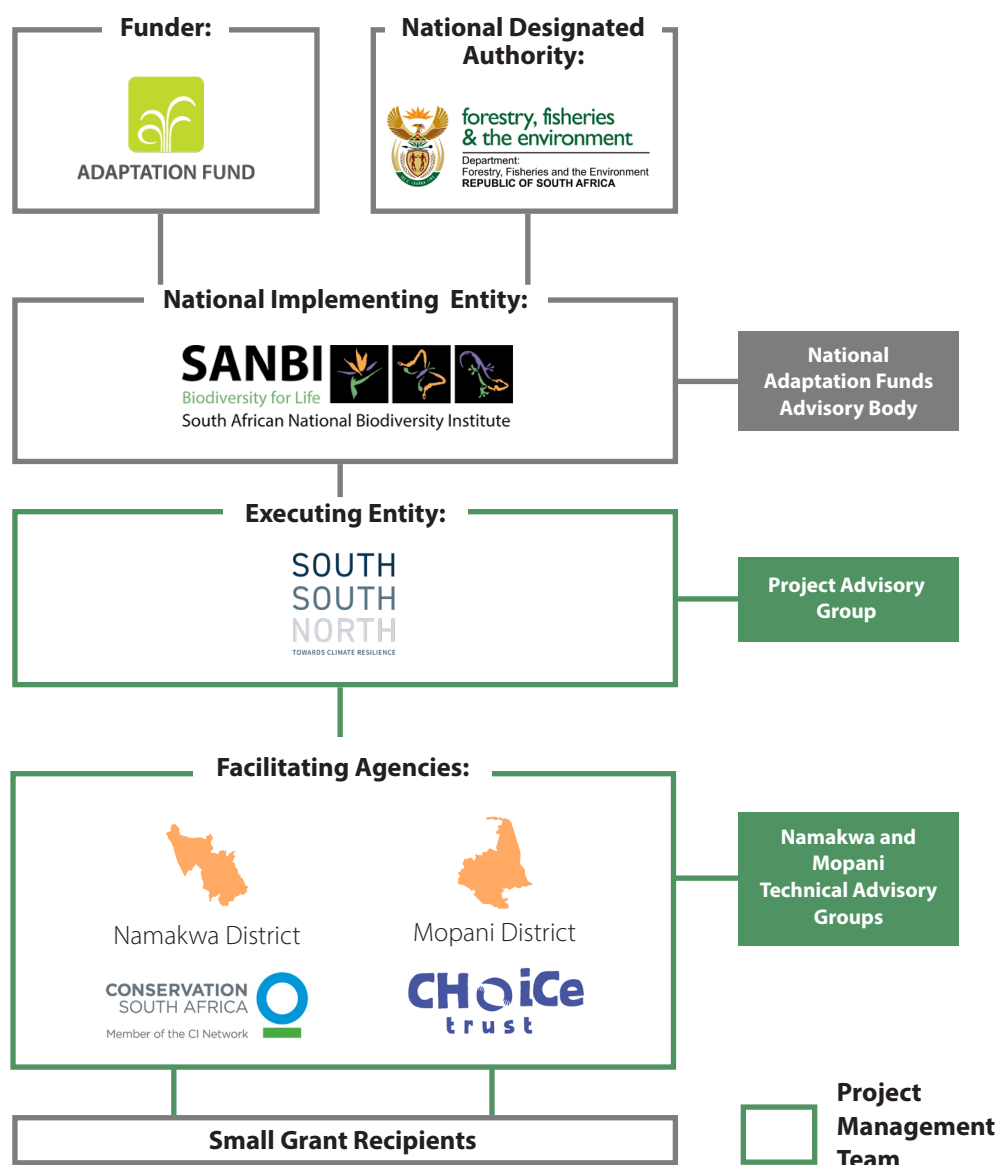


Figure 1: CA SGF project management & execution.

The specific role of the Facilitating Agencies was to work closely with Small Grant Recipients and support small grant project identification, development and implementation processes including local-level project administration, reporting and financial management. In practice, this meant assessing capacity gaps, designing

and delivering capacity building training across disciplines, and overall provincial project management and reporting. The Facilitating Agencies ultimately provided invaluable support without which the CA SGF project would have struggled significantly, perhaps even fatally, across multiple levels.

## Climate change vulnerability and geographic context

The CA SGF project was implemented in two Districts in vastly different regions of South Africa, both with high, but different, climate change risks and different histories, capacities, cultures, systems and sets of relationships.

Each regional context had its own climate vulnerability, risks, social and economic priorities and activities, relationships and capacities of local government.

## South Africa

South Africa, situated on the southern tip of Africa, is highly vulnerable to climate change. The two provinces in which the CA SGF project operated, Limpopo and the Northern Cape, are expected to experience more erratic and

extreme weather. Figure 2 shows the location of the two provinces highlighted on a map of South Africa, and below are summaries of Vulnerability Assessments to provide a contextual overview from a climate change perspective.

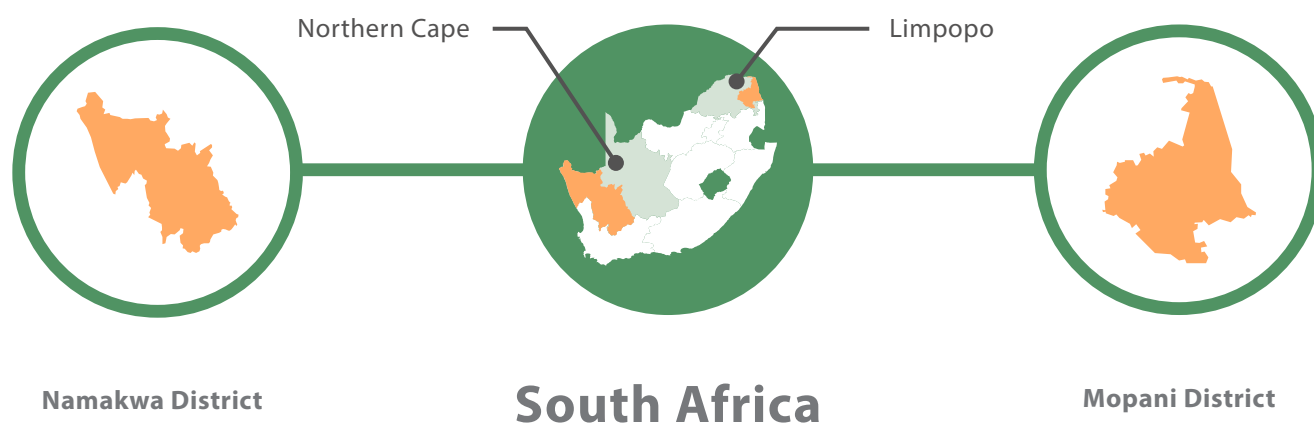


Figure 2: Map of South Africa showing the two project target areas for the CA SGF project: the Namakwa District (Northern Cape Province) and the Mopani District (Limpopo Province).

### Mopani District, Limpopo Province

Located in the northern-most area of South Africa, the Mopani District experiences summers that are warm (mean maximums of ~30°C) and wet, while winters are mild (mean minimums of ~8°C) and dry. Annual rainfall in the Mopani District, characterised by bluffs and valleys created through erosion, varies considerably between 400 and 900mm. Furthermore, there is large inter-annual variability, with monthly maximum rainfall sometimes reaching 340mm in comparison to average monthly totals of 50-100mm for the summer months.

Mopani is projected to experience appreciable warming, with mid-term (2050s) temperature increases ranging from 1 to 3°C, with greater warming in the west than the east, and particularly in spring. Long-term projections (2080s) anticipate warming of between 2 and 5°C. The Representative Concentration Pathway 8.5 emission projection (where no mitigation measures are taken) results indicate very significant warming in the long-term future – up to 6°C.

### Namakwa District, Northern Cape Province

Located in the western part of South Africa, the majority of the Namakwa District Municipality falls into the winter rainfall zone, mostly receiving its rainfall from mid-latitude cyclones (cold fronts). The average maximum temperature in summer is 30°C and dry. Winters are cool, with minimums approaching 0°C. The Namakwa area is classified as semi-desert, with average annual rainfall varying between less than 100mm along the coastal belt to between 100 and 250mm inland. Much of the district receives low but, importantly, predictable winter rainfall.

As with the Mopani region, projected temperature rises in Namakwa expected in the mid-term future (2050s) will be in the range of 1 and 3°C, particularly in summer, and long-

term (2080s) projections of between 2 and 5°C. Warming is generally less pronounced over the coastal areas of the region.

Both projects benefitted significantly from local-level Vulnerability Assessments that were undertaken. The Vulnerability Assessments, from which results are captured above, highlighted the latest scientific evidence regarding climate projections. As important, however, was the local-level consultation that was conducted to further identify community concerns and priorities within the context of climate change. This information significantly informed the CA SGF project design.

## Local government context

South Africa's governance structure involves strong political and functional leadership of local government. There are broadly three types of local government, including Metropolitan, Local and District municipalities. The CA SGF project was located in two different District Municipalities. The responsibilities of municipalities are diverse and include the provision of services such as electricity, household water, sewage, refuse removal,

as well as some levels of road infrastructure and public transport. They also lead the development of an Integrated Development Plan, which outlines the development strategy of the municipality and influences other relevant policies such as Spatial Development Plans and Disaster Risk Plans. Government mandates intersect with climate adaptation responses at the local level.

## Socio-economic context

The Mopani District is characteristically rural and topographically diverse, with 81% of the population living in rural areas and an additional 5% on farms. Access to basic services varies, with 80% having access to piped water and 93% having access to electricity<sup>1</sup>. Although the 2011 census identified a statistically equal number of households headed by men and women, the Greater Giyani and Greater Letaba areas, in which the CA SGF project was implemented, have a particularly high ratio of women - nearly 2 out of every 3 people - which is largely attributed to the migration of men to other areas in search of employment<sup>2</sup>. The last census (2011) noted the official unemployment<sup>2</sup> rate of the

Mopani District as 39.4%, with over half of the youth (ages 15 - 34) unemployed<sup>3</sup>.

The Namakwa District is the least populated district, and the largest, within the country, with considerable spaces between towns that provide infrastructure and services. The unemployment rate at the last census was 20.1%, with youth unemployment at 25.4%<sup>4</sup>. The "largest contributing industries" to the economy are government grants, followed by trade and mining. The poverty rate in 2014 was 26.2%, having declined significantly since the previous decade<sup>5</sup>.

## Local Capacity: Climate change knowledge and other skills required

Despite the fact that both the Northern Cape and Limpopo provinces were highly vulnerable to climate change, there was low capacity within the district's civil society organisations and government institutions to understand or address projected climate change impacts<sup>6</sup>. The capacity gap was recognised through extensive local engagement during the project planning phase.

The lack of capacity was further corroborated during the first Small Grant Recipient project briefing session, conducted in Namakwa and Mopani Districts in October

and November 2015, respectively. During the briefing session, participants were asked to assess their knowledge of climate change. In the Mopani District, 23% of participants indicated they had never heard about adaptation, as compared to 2% in Namakwa. While the Namakwa District ratings were higher, largely due to Conservation South Africa's implementation of climate change interventions for five years prior to the CA SGF project inception, a lack of critical understanding in conceptualising and implementing climate change adaptation projects was evident.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=7988>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mopani.gov.za/about/demographics.php>

<sup>3</sup> <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/128/mopani-district-municipality>

<sup>4</sup> <https://municipalities.co.za/demographic/136/namakwa-district-municipality>

<sup>5</sup> Namakwa District Municipality, IDP Revision 2018/2018

<sup>6</sup> K Waagsaether, 2014. 'Vulnerability Assessment Greater Letaba and Greater Giyani Local Municipalities; prepared for the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)



# Facilitating Agencies, a Tale of Two Contexts

The importance of the Facilitating Agency as the local supporting role cannot be overstated. It was, as projected in the project proposal, a great innovation of the project design. While the National Implementing Entity and the Executing Entity interpreted the compliance and reporting requirements and provided strategic insight to ensure alignment with the CA SGF project and Adaptation Fund strategic goals, the Facilitating Agencies effectively put it all into practice. Success required competence and agility from the Facilitating Agencies to respond to multiple and complex scenarios for as many as seven unique projects, while facilitating compliance with, and linkages to, grant expectations.

Throughout the CA SGF project, Facilitating Agencies were required to assess and respond to local socio-economic dynamics to facilitate climate adaptation while operating

within the institutional arrangements. The evolving capacity needs of the Small Grant Recipients required continual support and capacity building responses due to the multiple demands of the CA SGF project as well as project implementation, which was often complicated due to technical and contextual challenges, such as drought. Engagement with government at varying levels also demanded time and energy as activities intersected with public mandates and priorities.

The cases below articulate the stories of the two Facilitating Agencies with respect to their role within the CA SGF project. Through their experiences, social, economic, political and environmental nuances can be better understood within the context of the provision of Enhanced Direct Access climate finance. This is followed by key learnings and relevant examples.

## Conservation South Africa: The story of Facilitating Agency implementation in Namakwa

Conservation South Africa, the Facilitating Agency for the Namakwa District Municipality, has been implementing innovative, community-driven programmes addressing land degradation and climate change in South Africa's poorest and most biodiverse rangelands since 2001. Conservation South Africa came into the project with extensive experience working with communities to understand and manage their natural resources base, enhance livelihoods and food security, develop innovative green economic activities, and promote and sustain incentive-based investments in education, community well-being and community learning. Their long-term involvement resulted in an in-depth understanding of local governance, community dynamics, ecological systems and impacts of climate change in the region, which in part informed the CA SGF project proposal.

Conservation South Africa began working on climate change projects in 2008 and was integrally involved in the 2011 local climate change Vulnerability Assessment, requiring extensive engagement with local and district municipalities. Although climate change awareness was initially low, the Vulnerability Assessment and subsequent development of the Namakwa Climate Change Response Strategy facilitated significant capacity growth within Conservation South Africa and local government, and strengthened their working relationship. Strong relationships between Conservation South Africa and local and District municipalities facilitated government support during proposal development, implementation and, in some cases, the sustainability support for some of the Small Grant Recipients. Engagement between Conservation South Africa and government with respect to issues involving climate change continues to the present day.



Indicative of the longstanding community work conducted in the area, Conservation South Africa had existing relationships with many Small Grant Recipients, with whom they continue to work following the

CA SGF project closure. In alignment with their long-term organisational aims, this included collaboration with at least two Small Grant Recipients to develop joint funding proposals post CA SGF project.

## **CHoiCe Trust: The story of the Facilitating Agency implementation in Mopani**

Established in 1997 to address the health needs of local communities, CHoiCe Trust was contracted as the Facilitating Agency for the Mopani District in the Limpopo Province. The organisation was started by a group of committed nurses and health practitioners to provide essential health training and interventions to farmworkers. However, it adopted a development lens after the realisation that farmworkers' behaviour was influenced by their families and neighbours who were struggling with education and unemployment.

CHoiCe Trust's current focus, the provision of direct services and local capacity building, caters broadly to the development needs of communities, having established strong relationships with members of civil society as well

as local government. Prior to the CA SGF project, the organisation had many years of experience managing grants for development projects and brought significant expertise in capacity building, but had limited experience in the environmental and climate change sectors.

With nearly two decades of community work in the Limpopo area, CHoiCe Trust has established strong relationships with many communities and stakeholders. With a footprint extending to 100 villages in the area, and through the provision of services to vulnerable adults, children and capacity building of civil society organisations throughout the province, the organisation's contextual knowledge of the surrounding communities was a key asset.

## **Lessons Learnt**

### **The critical role of managing local and international expectations**

Playing a key role in the Project Management Team and Project Advisory Group, the Facilitating Agencies were required to have a full understanding of the international, national and local requirements in order to ensure their application within the Small Grant Recipient community projects. The Facilitating Agencies translated CA SGF project expectations into local practice, developing mechanisms to identify the skills or knowledge required for each Small Grant Recipient project to meet the requirements. They also designed and delivered requisite capacity building training. The fact that the Facilitating Agencies were physically located within, and part of, the communities in which they worked was critical to contextualise requirements within social practices and "ways of doing things" that communities understood.

Similarly, the Facilitating Agencies ensured that the CA SGF Project Management Team and oversight authorities understood and were appraised of, and informed by, the beneficiaries' needs, concerns and priorities. Working with the contradictions that arose between the cultural priorities and social contexts (in which community-based projects exist) and established grant making and international practices, was an important part of this role. The Facilitating Agencies were therefore responsible for translating local conditions and international expectations to bridge this gap.

### ***Example: Offense taken by community members during a meeting***

During a community meeting in an area with strong Khoisan representation, the participants were asked if they considered themselves to be 'Indigenous Peoples'. The compliance framework established by the Adaptation Fund required adherence to the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples for people who identified as such. The group responded adamantly that they do not identify as such. The question was repeated during the meeting, causing consternation amongst the group.

The Facilitating Agency intervened, supporting the Small Grant Recipient to gain insights into the background to the question and suggested a means to achieve

compliance with the Environmental and Social Principle, while ensuring that community perspectives were acknowledged and respected. The Facilitating Agency also facilitated a session with the Executing Entity, National Implementing Entity and Small Grant Recipient, so that sensitivities related to the matter could be discussed and resolved. The Facilitating Agency acknowledged that local vernacular does not always mirror international discourse and that terms thought to be neutral in one context have varying historical and cultural meaning in another. The community accepted an apology and continued to work in good faith for the rest of the project.

## **Optimise available expertise and resources to address the multitude of challenges**

It is highly unlikely that expertise in the many areas required for a project of this complexity would be found in any single local organisation, particularly within the vulnerable communities that Enhanced Direct Access seeks to empower. Leveraging regional and organisational strengths ensured contextual knowledge of service providers and built local capacity. Furthermore, the Facilitating Agency team needed different people with different skills and specialised support. Facilitating Agencies

benefited from having expertise in climate change adaptation as well as project management, financial and grant administration and management, monitoring and evaluation, procurement and bookkeeping. Community and government engagement experience was required to respond to and articulate local needs and priorities. Experts needed to be available internally and often externally (through sub-contracted consultancy arrangements), to deliver specialised technical services relating to project implementation, such as engineering or hydrology.

### ***Example: Co-development of contextually appropriate customised tools***

It became apparent in the earliest stages of the implementation of the CA SGF project that extensive capacity-building efforts would be required. In an effort to leverage the different, but complementary, organisational strengths, the two Facilitating Agencies collectively developed a combined methodology for training needs

assessments. It proved useful to have Conservation South Africa's experience in articulating local-level adaptation to climate change combined with CHoiCe Trust's experience in community development and community-based grant making. The result was a shared approach that was more robust and contextualised to the CA SGF project.

### ***Example: Utilising sub-contracted, interdisciplinary expertise***

The 'Concordia Farmers Adaptation Project' built shelters to protect livestock from climatic stress due to climate change. The beneficiaries drove shelter design and placement; however, technical expertise was required to ensure and sign off structural integrity, value for money and ecological impact of placement. During the

development of the second prototype, an engineering firm and green architect worked remotely (given the distance from the site location) but in parallel to assess and approve the designed structure. This interdisciplinary approach was useful and added value to the design. However, when a building contractor was appointed, the costs associated

with building the structure increased considerably because the new design required heavier steel to ensure structural integrity.

Accessing experts in various disciplines was critical to ensure the safety and sustainability of the structures. The benefit of contracting the engineer and green architect in parallel was anticipated, but unfortunately, foresight didn't

include the additional costs of the building contractor. Recognising the complexity and multi-disciplinary aspects of climate adaptation measures, and the requisite expertise and budget required, the importance of involving all key players concurrently was highlighted. Obtaining service providers with different skills and responsibilities to work together from the beginning would have been a more efficient approach.

## **Strengthening community and government linkages**

Strong relationships between the Facilitating Agencies and local, municipal and District government assisted Small Grant Recipients to access government support during proposal development, project implementation and, in some cases, for the long-term sustainability of the project. These relationships also assisted in understanding and navigating the processes to acquire requisite permissions or licences as part of the Small Grant Recipient project implementation. Engagement with political structures led to the integration of some Small Grant Recipient project activities into the local Integrated Development Plans, aligning priorities and, in some cases, facilitating the allocation of resources, in terms of expertise and finances.

In accordance with the project design, each Facilitating Agency was asked to convene a Local Reference Group, subsequently named the Technical Advisory Group, for their region. The Technical Advisory Group was responsible for ensuring the projects were locally contextualised and technically robust and properly coordinated into on-going programmes of work that integrated indigenous knowledge. The Facilitating Agencies were encouraged to include members from local municipalities, relevant provincial departments and research and academic institutions. Incorporating local government representatives on the Technical Advisory Group facilitated government support for the Small Grant Recipient projects and promoted sustainability, particularly in regard to activities that fell within government remit.

### ***Example: Including local government and key stakeholders in the projects***

The Technical Advisory Group members across the two regions consisted of representatives from the Department of Environmental Affairs, Agricultural Research Centre, Department of Agriculture, Provincial Economic Development Department, District Municipality, universities and the Facilitating Agencies. The Technical Advisory Group was first convened to assist with the proposal review process, where the members with local knowledge and expertise played a critical role. The Technical Advisory Group also met regularly, especially during the inception phase of the project, providing an opportunity to familiarise relevant government entities with Small Grant Recipient project objectives.

In Namakwa District, government representation ensured that all project applicants were aligned with local and District strategies for the region. Bringing local government into the project implementation stage was noted as useful. Consistent government representation improved the flow of information and increased support from local government to Small Grant Recipients, particularly through the inclusion of project activities in the local Integrated Development Plan processes, ensuring that all projects were aligned with local and District development strategies.

### ***Example: Local government involvement in project sustainability***

Seeking to improve safety for fishers as climate change produces less predictable weather patterns and more extreme weather events, the 'Building Resilience for Northern Cape Small-scale Fisher Communities and Cooperatives' project supported the upgrade of their Safety at Sea system and the development of their own emergency response planning process. The system involved the installation of the safety system technology and locators, which were made available for local fishers on

a 'per use' basis. The location of fishers was then monitored by a trained Safety System Operator. The Safety System Operator was an ongoing position employed by the local municipal government. To further promote sustainability, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed with the municipal government to formalise their commitment to capacitate the local Maintenance Committee, which was developed to manage and monitor the maintenance of assets.

## **Time is required to ensure knowledge is embedded into practice**

Sustainable Community-Based Climate Change Adaptation requires knowledge to become embedded in practices, necessitating a considerable investment of time and material resources. It may involve significant behavioural changes on behalf of the individual or at the community level, or the establishment of governance and management

structures. Future community-based adaptation projects would benefit from recognising the importance of allowing for substantial and flexible timelines. Mechanisms should be integrated into future projects that adopt adaptive management practices to allow and account for resource disbursement and plan for unanticipated delays.

### ***Example: Allowing time for embedding knowledge***

The timeframe allocated for Small Grant Recipient project implementation was not always adequate to ensure the knowledge and skills were embedded into practice. The embedding of knowledge and climate-smart agriculture practices required a capacity building programme that

included multiple training sessions, mentorship and follow-up to promote their continued application in practice and facilitate sustainability. In the Mopani District, some capacity building activities could not be fully completed within the project timeframe.

## **The Importance of flexible processes and dedicated, well-resourced preparation time**

Delays in the early stages of the CA SGF project implementation had a cascading effect. In many cases, the process to review, approve and contract Small Grant Recipients was longer than expected. Although the review process was revised, applying an adaptive management approach, this learning came at a cost, resulting in a reduced time period available for project execution. Some Small Grant Recipients had one year, rather than the ideal two to three years, available for implementation. Shortened implementation periods for the Small Grant Recipients were exacerbated by the need for greater levels of support and capacity building than anticipated, all of which drew upon finite and predetermined resources. Furthermore, delays had material cost implications as Small Grant Recipient project budgets became outdated.

Future projects should anticipate longer periods and devise mechanisms that integrate adaptive management practices to allow for unanticipated delays without negatively impacting community project timelines or resource allocation. This should include applying proportionality to compliance responsibilities. Adopting a phased approach for Small Grant Recipient project implementation is worth exploring. Having properly resourced budgets for costs and time during a post-approval but pre-implementation stage, in which detailed planning that includes the necessary levels of specialist expertise – would provide a shortcut to effective and more efficient implementation. It would also double as a thorough capacity needs assessment and capability building phase for both technical adaptation and project management skills.



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**Initially there were 24 shelters [for the animals], but as the project went on and it took such a long time to implement, it came to less than 18, and now it seems that only 11 will be built. There will be some disappointment, I'm not sure who, but I know there will be some disappointment. I'm looking for how we can help to build our own shelters.”**

**6 June 2019, Small Grant Recipient Beneficiary Focus Group Discussion**



*Above: An example of a livestock shelter delivered through the implementation of the Concordia farmers Adaptation Project in the Namakwa District (Photo: SANBI).*

### ***Example: Contracting delays impacted project implementation***

For several projects, the contracting process was prolonged. Exacerbated by a lack of local resources and low levels of capacity, an extension was required for the Small Grant Recipients to meet the detailed conditions for contracting, including compliance conditions such as obtaining a tax clearance certificate and establishing a dedicated bank account. Three Mopani District and two

Namakwa District projects took 31 weeks or more from first approval by the Project Advisory Group to receive a signed contract; three projects took over 45 weeks to be contracted. The CA SGF project had to be completed within a specific time frame, which resulted in a reduction of time for Small Grant Recipient implementation.

## **Facilitating learning between communities or projects**

Facilitating learning within projects, between projects and between regions, was key to individuals and communities contextualising and expanding their understanding of climate change adaptation responses. The CA SGF project design dedicated resources to ensure opportunities to “reflect on implementation experience throughout the project”, enabling regular learning exchanges for the project.

Inter-district workshops exposed a range of climate adaptation technologies to communities and Small Grant Recipient projects. These workshops broadened understanding of the available adaptation measures that could be undertaken. Some projects were stimulated to integrate additions to their own projects, resulting in tangible value-add activities. The Facilitating Agencies

ensured the participation and relevance of workshop content and facilitated inter-project engagements to further learning of climate adaptation in community contexts.

The Facilitating Agencies also promoted networking with peer organisations to enhance knowledge, skills, experience and resource sharing. CHoiCe Trust encouraged Small Grant Recipients implementing climate-smart agriculture projects to form part of the local climate-smart agroecology group comprised of universities, civil society organisations, the Department of Agriculture and private sector institutions. A WhatsApp group was developed and managed by the Facilitating Agencies to facilitate ongoing communication.

### ***Example: Inter-district learning event facilitated a deeper understanding of community adaptation***

During the third year of the project, the Facilitating Agencies co-organised and co-hosted a successful inter-district learning event in Johannesburg that involved participation by all the Small Grant Recipient organisations. In addition, project beneficiaries and most of the CA SGF project partners were in attendance, including the National Implementing Entity, (South African National Biodiversity Institute), the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and

the Environment, the Adaptation Network, the Mopani Technical Advisory Group, three researchers, the Facilitating Agencies and the Executing Entity (SouthSouthNorth). There were 54 attendees in total, 32 of which were Small Grant Recipients and their beneficiaries. The event was lauded as highly successful. Two projects from the Mopani District motivated for budget changes to integrate adaptation technologies into their projects.

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**All languages came together here to learn from each other”**

**Anton Swartbooi, June 2019 Inter-District Learning Workshop**



*Above: CA SGF project implementation partners during a site visit learning about water security challenges in the Ga-Ntata Village in the Mopani District (Photo: SANBI).*



## **Conclusion**

The Facilitating Agencies were vital in filling the gaps in practice and policy. Critical to the project's success, the role required the development of multiple strategies and tools to respond with agility and competence to various local needs. As new needs emerged throughout the CA SGF project lifecycle, the Facilitating Agencies quickly adapted and provided customised support within the rapidly changing context of climate impacts in rural communities. As a region-wide experience, the CA SGF project intersected

with farmers' practices, social practices and government policies. The role required expertise to empower the communities and provide the Small Grant Recipients with customised tools, resources and training to complete their climate-adaptation projects within the rigour and constraints of the grant making process (informed by the requirements of the CA SGF project design, government systems, and the expectations of the Adaptation Fund).

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