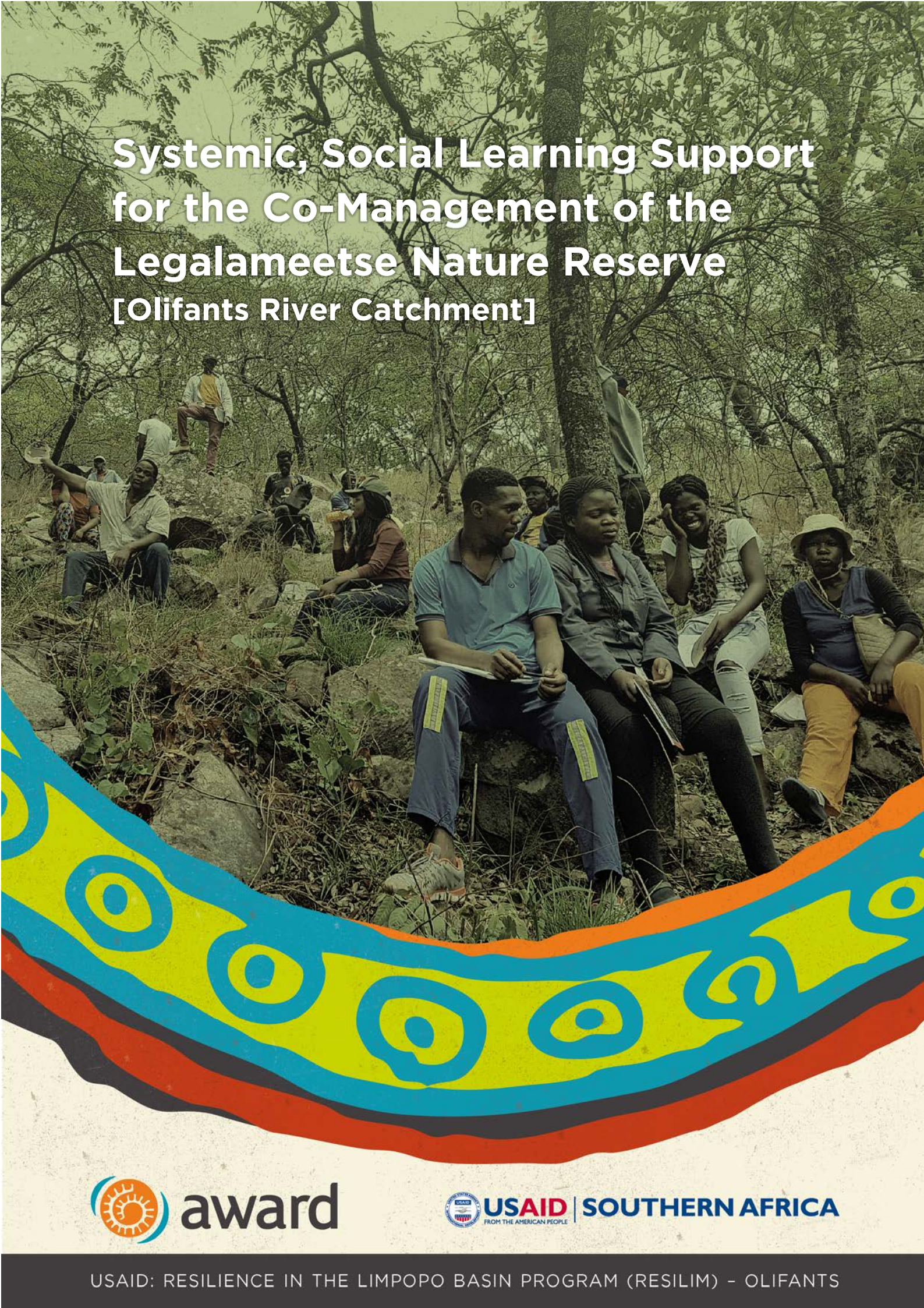# Systemic, Social Learning Support for the Co-Management of the Legalameetse Nature Reserve
[Olifants River Catchment]

Acknowledgements

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1   Introduction & overview of co-management

Co-management as a transformative process

Co-management is a process and not an end in itself. Most importantly it is a transformative process which aims to address inequities of the past.

With forced removals under Apartheid and during the colonial era, communal landowners lost their rights and identity as both landowners and custodians. With restitution we need to explicitly acknowledge that it is not only a legal process but also a socially and politically transformative one.

It is not a favour;

restitution is in and of itself a right to regain a sense of identity.

Co-management is potentially an innovative and exciting model for addressing issues of socio-economic redress and upliftment, land reform and past injustices, and conservation. Globally, there is a trend towards decentralization of management rights to communities and the public, with community involvement in protected areas being seen as a way to reduce costs and conflict and increase the legitimacy of protected areas.

Co-management has been identified by the South African government as a key mechanism for overcoming the highly contentious issue of land claims on protected areas. While protected areas are legally required to remain under conservation, beneficiaries who have successfully won claim to their land are reinstated land ownership rights and afforded the opportunity to manage their land together with the conservation agency. They are also entitled to accrue benefits from the protected area, including job creation and resource use rights. In this way, the three national priorities of land reform, environmental conservation and socio-economic upliftment are reconciled.

However, there is mixed evidence for whether such initiatives are succeeding. In South Africa, support for the process and practice of co-managing is very weak. The focus tends to be on the 'tools' of co-management, such as the co-management agreement and the restitution settlement agreements. Much of the effort and support from government is spent on drafting the co-management agreement as if this – in and of itself – will secure good co-governance of the protected area.

Whilst important, the danger is that little attention is paid to what is needed to co-manage: the governance and institutional arrangements, the role of community dynamics and expectations, and the wider socio-political and environmental context. Co-management is treated as a technical process without due consideration of the preparations needed to support both parties to engage in a new social process of co-managing.

In this regard, terminology is important. The continued referral to 'communities', 'beneficiaries' and 'land claimants' does little to recognise this right. In fact, restituted communities are "landowners".

Over and above this, the government entities responsible for supporting co-management are severely under-capacitated, with much of the required social, political and economic understanding falling outside their areas of expertise. However, without sustained support, co-management is likely to fail as both parties struggle to deal with an intensely complex environment.

Landowners of Legalameetse Nature Reserve were forcibly removed from the late 1930s to the 1960s from a rich and diverse landscape to the hotter and more arid lowveld area.
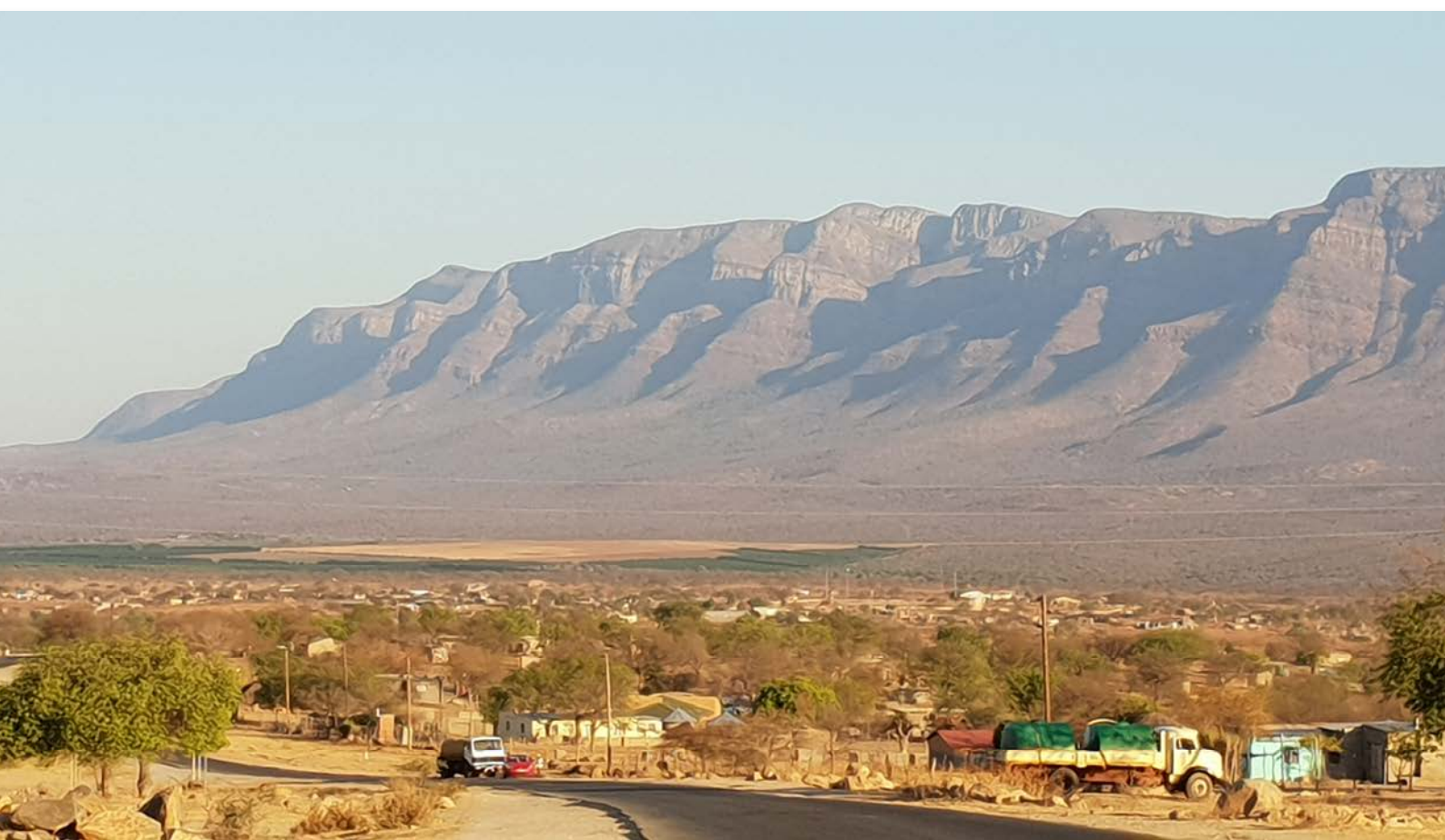
Figure 1: Area into which communities were forcibly removed

This document describes our experiences of working on co-management arrangements for the unique Legalameetse Nature Reserve (LNR) based in the foothills of the Drakensberg escarpment in Limpopo Province (Figure 2). Here six land claimant communities and the provincial management authority (LEDET or Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism) have been struggling to enter into a revised co-management agreement. At the request of both parties, AWARD facilitated a support process for co-management. In this we drew heavily on our experience of rural development, co-management and participatory processes, as well as on theories of social learning and adaptive management in complex and dynamic environments.

The work, carried out by AWARD under the RESILIM-Olifants Programme, set out to reduce vulnerability and enhance the resilience of its people and ecosystems under changing (climate) conditions based on systemic, social learning approaches. Further details of the RESILIM-O program can be found at www.award.org.za.

This document complements a forthcoming Co-management Guideline which will provide further detail on the theory, principles and methods that underlie our approach to supporting co-management.
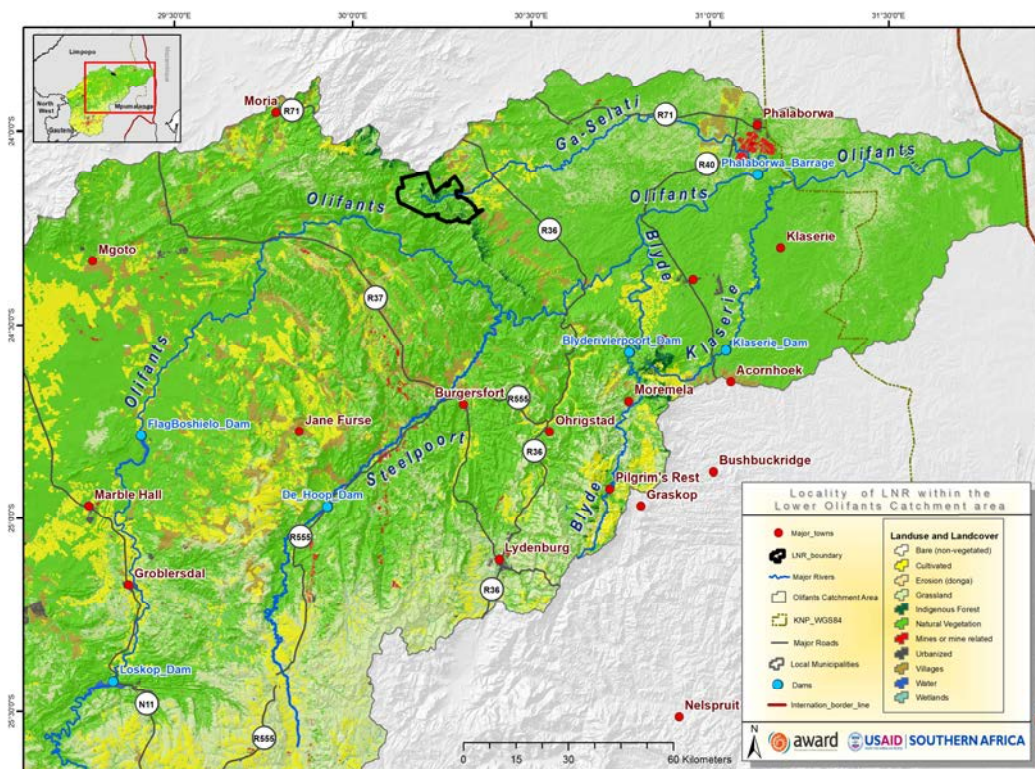
Figure 2: Map of the Legalameetse Nature Reserve in the lower Olifants River Catchment at the headwaters of the Selati sub-catchment

1.1   Our process

Notwithstanding the added complexities of co-management, it has become apparent that natural resources management is complex and beset by uncertainty and surprise. The conventional, technicist approaches of fortress conservation are no longer tenable in a rapidly changing world. Indeed, these linear approaches, based on a simplistic paradigm of 'cause-and-effect' have failed to deliver long-term sustainability. This is because as socio-political, economic and environmental factors come into play – especially in a more connected and resource-scarce world – solutions are often more complex than technical responses can deliver.

The rationale guiding our support for co-management as a dynamic and complex process, therefore, is that it requires different ways of thinking and practising. Accepting complexity means acknowledging that, despite the best plans in the world, the outcomes of actions are not entirely predictable; they cannot be known with absolute certainty. For this reason we take a strongly **systemic, social learning approach** to the praxis of co-management (detailed in the full guidelines for co-management). In essence it recognises the connectedness between 'systems of interest' and also designs process for people to co-learn and develop new practices over time.

In co-management, both the management authority and the new landowners are embarking on a new, collaborative learning journey of co-managing – in essence forming a new community of practice

Figure 3: Cultural Festival celebrations organised by landowners

2   Understanding the starting conditions

Despite the attraction, co-management support cannot start with the co-management agreement (COMA), It is important to understand that the co-management agreement is merely the tool (albeit an important one) that facilitates *co-managing as an ongoing and evolving practice*. **Given this, our focus was on designing a process to support the practice of co-managing.**

2.1   Designing co-management support: Preparatory steps

Some pointers and questions to guide the start-up phase in a co-management support process are given in the box below based on our experiences at Legalameetse.

Start-up activities

Details on the protected area
- Extent, status, management plans, development plans

Who are the stakeholders?
- Who are the beneficiaries?
- What are their capacities (of all parties)?

What is the status of the land claim?
- Have settlement agreements been reached?
- Are landowners registered (e.g. as CPAs or Trusts)
- Are property rights clear?

Institutional arrangements
- Current governance and institutional arrangements?
- What are we working towards?
- Status of a co-management agreement
- Has a co-management model been chosen?

What is the Theory of Change?
- What is the transformative vision that a co-management process will address?

Paying attention to the status of restitution is absolutely essential, particularly in situations where claims involve more than one community or cover different land-use categories.

In the case of Legalameetse, it was some years before it emerged that only some of the settlement agreements had been fully resolved. Only two of six claimants have had their land claims finalised through settlement agreements. The remaining four do not have settlement agreements but fall under one CPA which has also claimed adjoining agricultural land (see Figure 4). After 14 years, the lack of resolution for the four claimant communities is a major challenge and has stalled the drafting and signing of the new COMA with LEDET.

At the time of writing, this issue was unresolved and advice was still being sought as to whether or not claimants could be represented through an alternative institutional forms to that of a CPA. **Practitioners, facilitators and claimants are strongly advised to compile all documentation and maps at the start and to be sure that the status of property rights is fully understood by all.**
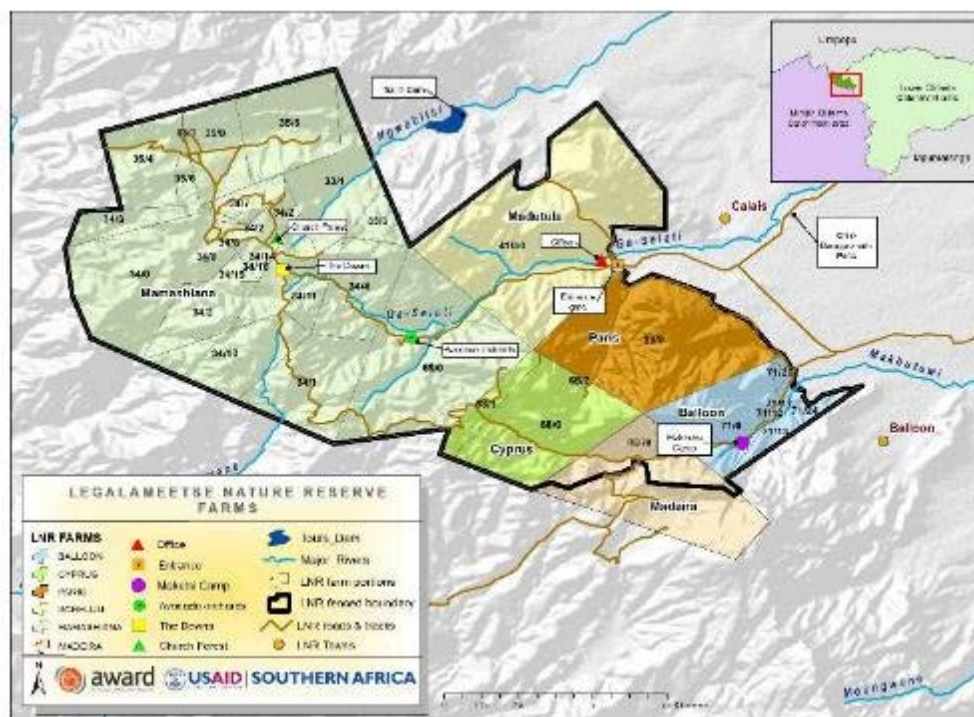
Figure 4: A map of the Legalameetse Nature Reserve and surrounds indicating land claimed by different communities. Note adjoining agricultural land and land abutting one community which they decided to include in the protected area

2.2   Co-management model

In the case of Legalameetse, the landowners have selected the Part *Co-managing – Part Lease Model* where:
a) the management authority, LEDET, leases the land and pays an agreed rate per hectare; and
b) enters into a co-management arrangement through a co-management committee and guided by a co-management agreement.

With little guidance on this, we developed a collaborative process of visioning, strategic objectives and understanding roles and responsibilities.

However, understanding what is involved in 'co-management' *in practice* lies at the heart of the matter.
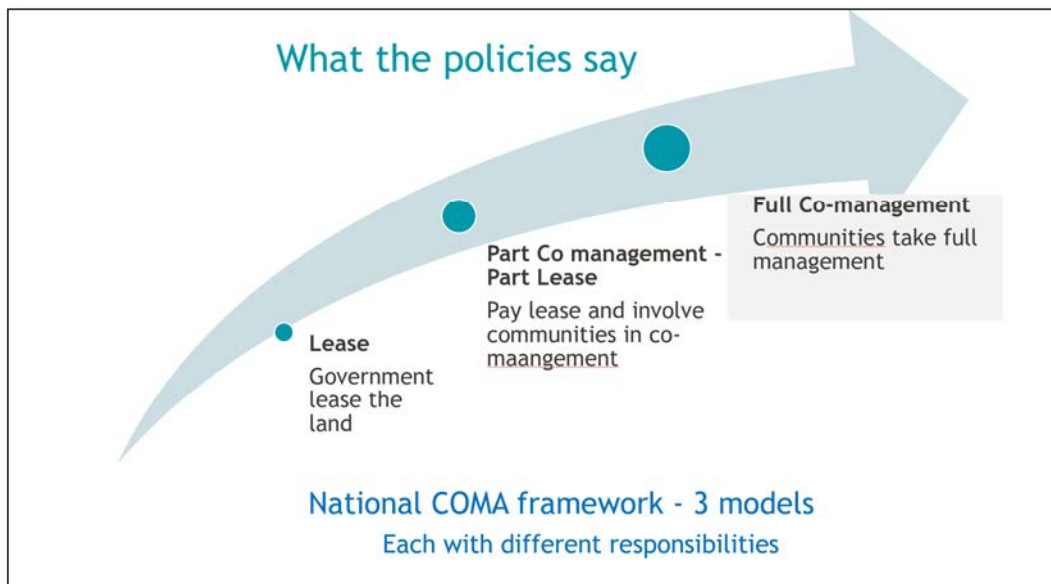
Figure 5: Schematic showing different co-management models as per the Co-Management Framework (2010)

2.3   Facilitating a collaborative understanding of context

Co-management must be based on a vision for co-managing, and a vision must be based on an understanding of context. Thus a collaborative scoping of context is key. This sounds fairly obvious but is often very poorly done in that it is limited to a desk-top review by 'specialists'. Rather, it is an opportunity to start a collaborative understanding of context in a systemic manner. Also, understanding context is an ongoing process. The activities effectively build trust and the basis for working together.

> **Box 1: Legalameetse as a socio-ecological system (SES)**
>
> Legalameetse is part of a broader socio-political and environmental system which can be called a socio-ecological system or SES. Taking this approach means recognizing that LNR is both influenced by – and influences – the broader context within which it is embedded. Any co-management process must acknowledge this. By recognizing this broader complexity, we can plan for uncertainty using various tools and processes.

2.4   Locating ourselves in the broader landscape

Various tools were used to understand context. Initially, facilitators took participants on a virtual journey of their area using Google Earth maps (Figure 6). Facilitators worked with up to ten participants to explore their general knowledge of the broader area, asking about key social and biophysical features (Box 2).

Following the mapping exercise, a shared understanding of context was developed through a timeline exercise (Figure 7) where participants noted events on a shared timeline. The lead question to start the process was: *What major event(s) do you remember that affected the Legalameetse Nature Reserve and surrounds from 1940 until today?*

Box 2: Examples of questions to prompt discussion

- Indicate the boundaries of the protected area (PA)
- Is there a river in or near the PA? Can you show us?
- What other key features are there? E.g. mountains (name these, show where they are)
- What are the major land-uses around the PA? How do you identify these?
- What impacts might these have on the PA?
- What impacts might the PA have on these?
- Where do most of the land claimants live?

Figure 6: Participants at a 'VSTEEP workshop' explore their context using a map

2.5 Broad description of characteristics that shape the protected area

To profile Legalameetse as an SES (see Box 1; that is as part of a broader socio-political and environmental system) we used the *V-STEEP process*. This is a participatory device to help people describe the context and characteristics of the catchment from different perspectives, while collaboratively learning about the 'co-management system' they live in or have a stake in (Box 3).

In the case of LNR, a number of V-STEEP workshops were run over time as new people joined the process. Participants engaged in discussions using the V-STEEP tool to broaden the understanding the context for LNR and the co-management process. These results informed the vision.

Figure 7: Example of a collaborative exploration of history through a timeline for LNR

An important principle for developing a meaningful vision is that stakeholders need to understand the context from as holistic a perspective as possible, otherwise there is a danger of the vision being unrealistic and unattainable (Pollard & du Toit 2007). A useful framework is known as V-STEEP, which provides the prompts to examine different issues. It has a history of successful use in Strategic Adaptive Management and has been used for a decade and a half by AWARD, SANParks and others.

The V-STEEP framework is simply a way to describe the context and characteristics of the catchment from multiple perspectives: **Values, Social, Technical, Environmental, Economic and Political** (governance and policy).

The V-STEEP processes are designed to be part of ongoing engagement and not simply a once-off extractive exercise. The approach is powerful because it brings people with various profiles, backgrounds, and interests together and enables them to start thinking about their context, while at the same time revealing its complexity.

2.6   Exploring issues systemically through concept maps

To start to understand the inter-connectedness of factors named in the aforementioned processes, we used causal loop diagrams (CLDs), initiated through a key question: *"What is the state of co-management for LNR?* Or *"What is the state of key natural resources in LNR?* Participants gradually built up a picture of multiple-causality and outcomes, as well as important feedbacks (Figure 8). This helped people think about co-management as a 'system' with multiple linkages, rather than simply as a co-management agreement.

Figure 8: A concept map used to explore the status of natural resources in the Legalameetse area

2.7   Understanding the practice of co-management

At the core of co-management is the activity or **practice of co-managing**. This practice is made up of many activities and hence we talk about activity systems. When co-managing a protected area, consideration must be given to the vision, challenges, the stakeholders or 'actors' involved, the rules and norms, roles and responsibilities and so on. Moreover, there will be multiple interacting activity systems: e.g. reserve management, park development, beneficiation from the park, etc.

We used the activity system framework and the CHAT tool[1] to explore co-management as a practice (Figure 9). We were aware that the activity system framework can be abstract and confusing to people. We therefore dedicated time and energy in initial workshops to familiarise participants with this tool and, in the end, developed a version translated into the vernacular.
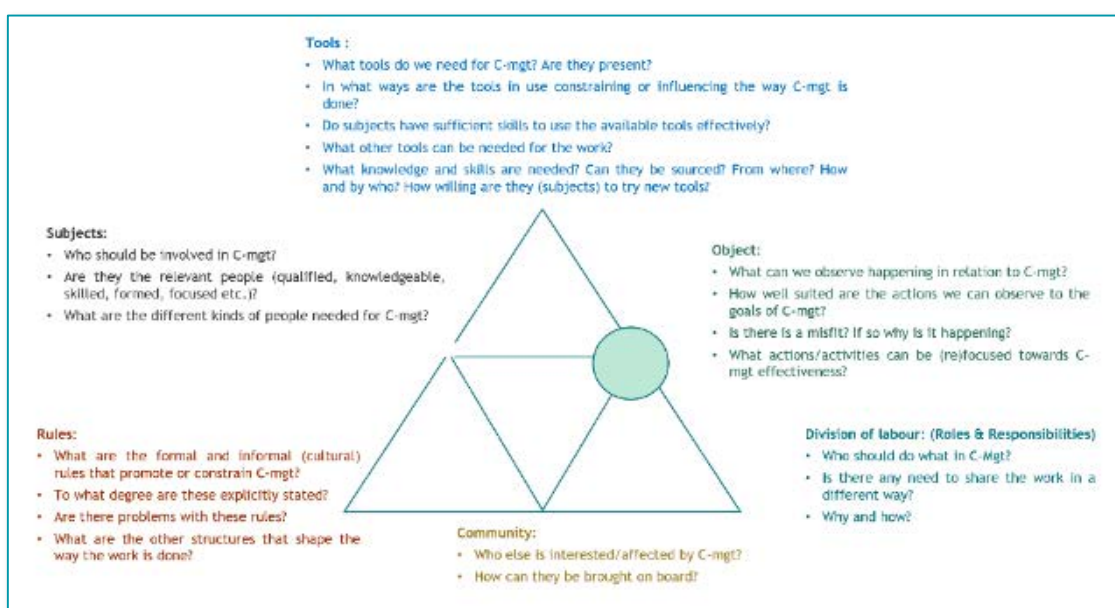

Figure 9: Example of the diagnostic questions used to mediate collaborative understanding of context at LNR

Figure 10: Members of LEDET and landowners negotiating co-management challenges

Over time we also used CHAT analysis to collaboratively understand the working together of multiple interacting activity systems such as those of the national government through the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), the provincial government (LEDET) and the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR). The activity systems framing helped CPAs, claimants, LEDET and AWARD (as development facilitators) to conceptually reinterpret the challenges related to co-management. As shown in Figure 11, we were able surface the "disturbance" related to each aspect of the activity system. From these we collaboratively designed a work plan for co-management support.

[1] *Readers are referred to brochure on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory available at www.award.org.za for a detailed description of the CHAT methodology.*
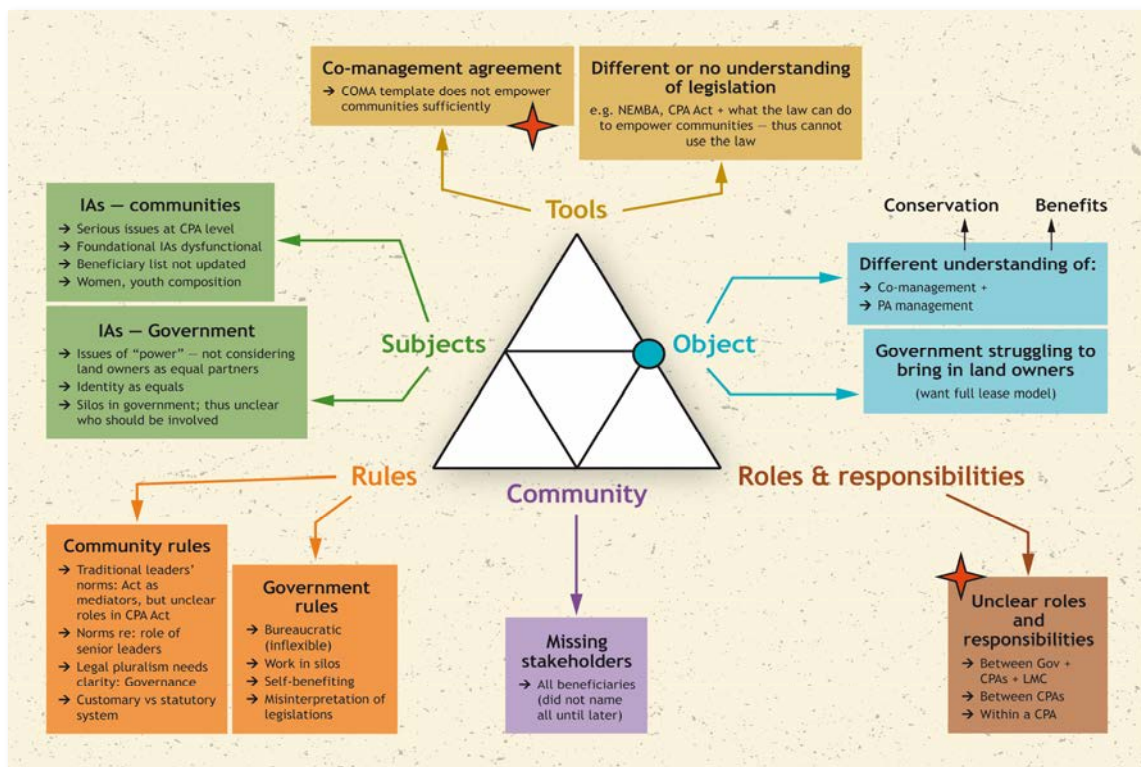
Figure 11: Summary of results from CHAT activity at LNR

2.8   Designing a workplan & process for co-management support

The challenges and needs identified above formed the basis of a collaboratively designed workplan for co-management support. Although each situation will be unique, the following areas of work which emerged from LNR are likely to be common to many situations:

■ The need to broaden the NRM scope
- Supporting government to broaden its scope from biodiversity conservation to a shared vision of co-management
- Bringing landowners on board in terms of park management and co-management in general

■ The need to address the envisioned livelihood benefits from the reserve (both financial and non-financial)

■ The need to work towards a tenable, appropriate and agreed co-management agreement to guide parties

■ The need to establish governance and institutional arrangements for co-management:

- Understanding policies, regulations and procedures (e.g. related to protected area management)
- Governance and institutional arrangements especially of different structures (Co-management Committee, Legalameetse Management Committee)
- Addressing conflict and tension
- Addressing issues of power: the changing roles and responsibilities of government and CPAs
- Developing capacity for all aspects identified above
- Clearly identifying a vision, objectives and roles and responsibilities (from chosen co-management model).

3 Developing a vison, strategic intent & institutional arrangements for co-managing

3.1 A vision for the co-management of Legalameetse Nature Reserve

Developing a vision would normally be undertaken early in a co-management support process. However, In the case of LNR, the vision, mission and strategic objectives were developed rather late in the process for various reasons. In this case there was some to-and-fro between the strategic objectives and the vision. The agreed vision and mission for LNR is shown in Box 4.

Box 4: Vision for the Co-management of the Legalameetse Nature Reserve

LNR Co-Management Committee strives to develop a culture of excellence and care in the co-management of the LNR through good governance for the conservation of cultural and environmental assets, equitable and sustainable beneficiation and development and empowering and supporting social transformation processes.

The mission:
The LNR Co-Management Committee strives to develop a culture of excellence & care in the co-management of the Legalameetse Nature Reserve through:

   i.   *Adopting principles of good governance (following the rule of law, participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and transformative);*
   ii.   *Ensuring equitable and long-term beneficiation and development based on sustainable integrated development and beneficiation planning;*
   iii. *Adoption of integrated management principles that commit to systemic planning;*
   iv.   *Conserving and maintaining the Reserve as a key biodiversity hotspot and asset as bound by the park management plan and embedded in a broader socio-ecological landscape; and*
   v.   *Empowering and supporting social transformation processes that place Legalameetse Nature Reserve as central to the social and cultural identity of the members of the communal property associations for visioning.*

3.2   Strategic objectives for co-management

Following the process of understanding context and the development of a vision, the parties collaboratively developed key strategic objectives for co-management as shown in Figure 12.
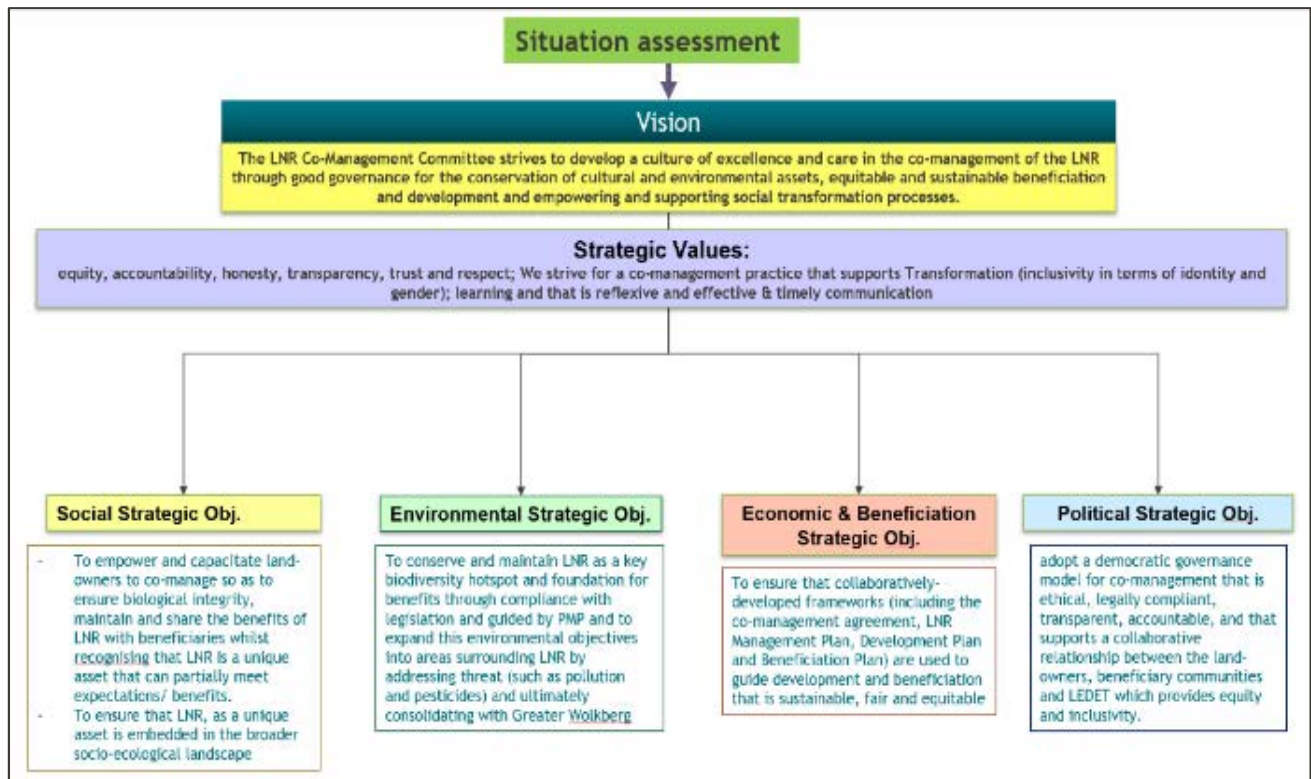

Figure 12: An example of the vision and strategic objectives for the co-management of LNR, developed by both co-management parties

3.3   Understanding governance

People often struggle with the concept of governance. Governance is a *socio-political process to manage the relationships* between people and rules and norms. Good governance refers to the structures and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation. Governance also represents the norms, values and rules of the game through which public affairs are managed. Governance therefore can be subtle and may not be easily observable.

In addition, the heuristic in Figure 13 has been developed to help people think about what governance embraces. Numerous workshop sessions were dedicated to understanding governance, management and tenure - all important concepts for both parties to understand as the basis for new institutional arrangements.

Ultimately three challenging issues for LNR and co-management were explored to give practical meaning to what is entailed in governance. These were:

- cattle grazing in the reserve;

- the access, use and oversight of the orchards (mango and avocado) in the reserve; and

- harvesting of medicinal plants in the reserve.

All three cases raised questions of governance and institutional arrangements. In all cases, informal rules and norms were in place but, with the emerging co-management arrangements, these needed to be better understood and formalized using questions related to power, authority, rights, responsibilities and benefits (see Figure 13).
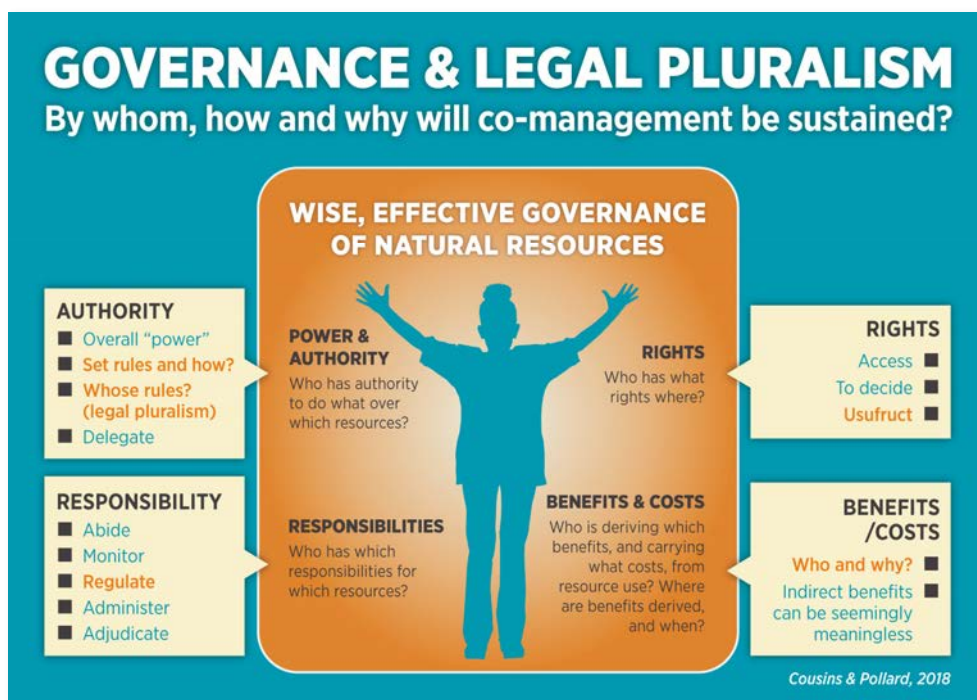

*Figure 13: Heuristic that can be used to explore elements of governance
(adapted from Cousins & Pollard 2008)*

3.4   Understanding roles & responsibilities for co-management

There is little guidance on what constitutes co-management in practice and in LNR, the lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities had resulted in confusion and tension in trying to arrive at a co-management agreement (see Figure 9).

Thus, we designed an approach that recognised that all parties are embarking on a co-learning journey. The process broadly consisted of the preceding steps for scoping context and deriving a vision and strategic objectives which then allowed the parties to look into the detailed activities and assign roles and responsibilities. (We emphasise that the process must be guided by various policies and the model chosen for co-management.) Shared learning visits to other co-management cases were useful for identifying potential pitfalls and challenges.

We then designed an approach for understanding roles and responsibilities. In the case of Legalameetse, the landowners have selected the **part lease, part co-management model** of co-management (see Section 2.1) and consequently, they will assume significant roles and responsibilities.

POLICY DOCUMENTS	IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS THAT ARISE ON RIGHTS, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Co-management framework: Models for co-management each with different roles & responsibilities	Each model will have different roles and responsibilities. In the case of LNR the part lease/ part co-management roles and responsibilities had to be detailed.
NEMPAA - talks about - **Use,** - **Access,** - **Development,** - **Capacity development**	Roles and responsibilities must be established for - Defining use (quantity? Timing? Who?) - Access (needs to be captured in the PMP and Beneficiation Plan) - What is the medium-term development strategy and plan? Who decides this and how?
Restitution in PA Institutional arrangement have clear roles, procedure & responsibilities	Places an imperative to make sure that roles, procedure and responsibilities are defined
Cabinet memo - **Structured regime of economic benefits, accrue to the claimants as owners of the land** - **Conservation in perpetuity** - **All parties to define commercial activities within the agreement**	Beneficiation Who benefits? How - Financial - Non-financial - Where is this agreed and signed? (Beneficiation Plan) Development - Who decides on commercialization? - Where is this planned and documented? (Development Plan) How do both of these link to the Park Management Plan?
Plans specific to LNR - **MPM/ IRMP** - **Development of INR** **Beneficiation from INR**	Who develops each of these? How does it happen?

The process

We used relevant legal documents and policies (Table 1) and the strategic objectives (Figure 12) to unpack roles and responsibilities. Participants worked in groups with relevant sections of policies (e.g. NEMPAA) and identified the following: a) Key activities; b) Who should do this? and c) Why?

This information was entered into a table with roles assigned to the LMC, LEDET and the Co-management Committee (Table 2). This was accompanied by detailed notes and was also cross-checked with the strategic objectives to ensure coherence and fidelity with the vision.

TABLE 2: AN EXAMPLE OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING TO THE USE OF BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ACTIVITY	LMC	LEDET	Co-management Committee
1.3. Use of biological resources **Tools: benefit sharing development plan BSDP**	• Education & raise awareness to the surrounding community members and to the T.A.s. • Engage 'COGTA' in matters relating to TAs.	• Checking of seasons to reflect how much and where can be used. • Check availability & the sustainability of the use of the resources.	• Development, endorsement and implementation of Benefit Sharing Development Plan which includes resource use

3.5 Working on organizational form & institutional arrangements

Under the part-lease, part-co-management model a **co-management committee**, guided by a co-management agreement, is essential. Since the co-management committee is a joint committee between the management authority and new landowners, the identification of positions and functions needs to be done through a transparent and mutually agreed process. The tendency may be for the management authority to assume leadership roles because of the role they have played in the past. However, we have emphasized that this must change given that they are dealing with landowners. Not addressing this will, in our experience, lead to conflict and tension.

At the time of writing, the finalization of the LNR co-management committee was still underway.

The lesson learnt from this case is that establishing the co-management committee should have been a priority at the start of the process of moving into a part-lease, part-co-management model.

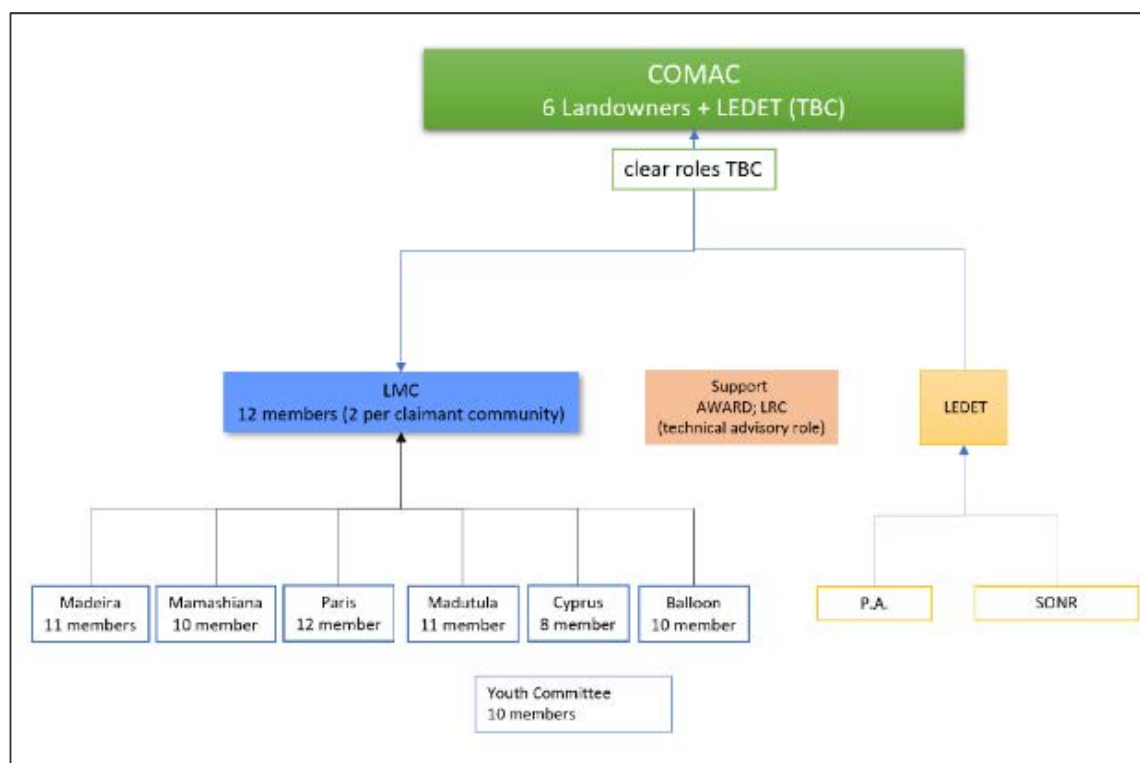Nonetheless, the proposed organogram is shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Draft organogram of the LNR co-management committee and participants. P.A. - Protected Area; SONR – State-owned Nature Reserves

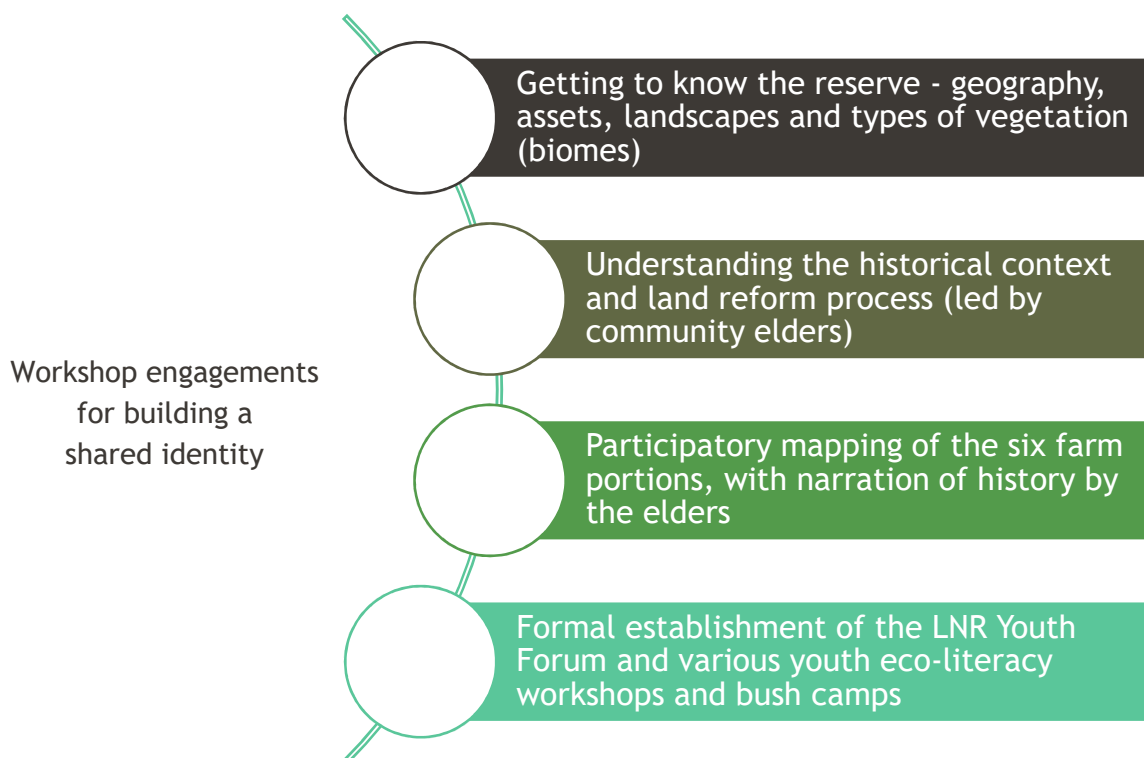# 4 Additional elements in support of co-managing

Several additional areas of support can be offered for co-management. In this section we share some that were designed and used at Legalameetse to build capacity, identity and agency amongst stakeholders.

4.1 Developing a sense of place & custodianship

As in most protected areas, the legacy of forced removals has left many psychological scars for those involved and also meant that the younger generation have little or no knowledge of the protected area. For this reason, embarking on the restitution and co-managing journey must be seen as a transformative process (see Section1). People cannot manage what they do not know.

In the case of LNR, we collaboratively designed a process aimed at building socio-ecological identity and agency, allowing youth to familiarise themselves with the land of their ancestors and to develop a sense of belonging and appreciation for the land. It colloquially became known as the 'eco-literacy' journey but this is somewhat of a misnomer in that it did not only deal with appreciation of ecological assets but also of the cultural history of LNR.

Emphasis was placed on supporting the youth, who had never been to the reserve, to start to develop a sense of custodianship by participating in the development of an **LNR Field Book** covering the history of Legalameetse as well as cultural and natural assets found in the reserve.

Workshop engagements for building a shared identity

- Getting to know the reserve - geography, assets, landscapes and types of vegetation (biomes)
- Understanding the historical context and land reform process (led by community elders)
- Participatory mapping of the six farm portions, with narration of history by the elders
- Formal establishment of the LNR Youth Forum and various youth eco-literacy workshops and bush camps

4.2   Understanding co-management as part of an integrated strategy

Co-management is not a stand-alone process but is intimately linked to other strategic considerations: how the park is managed (through a park management plan), how beneficiation from the park happens and how the park is developed. These are informed by - and inform - co-management (Figure 15). Each is a strategic area with its own vision and plan (or framework), and all contribute to meeting the vision for co-managing.

Co-managing
as a practice: what might it look like?

Figure 15: Three important strategies are needed for achieving a vision for the co-management of LNR

The *Park Management Plan* is normally the responsibility of the management authority with participation from landowners. The Beneficiation and Development Strategies for the reserve however, carry shared responsibilities that must be negotiated. To support this process we developed frameworks for Beneficiation and Development of Legalameetse Nature Reserve.

4.3   Support for an Integrated Benficiation Strategy

For co-management arrangements to work, beneficiation (financial and non-financial) from the protected area needs to be addressed. To initiate this process we worked with partners from the *Institute of Natural Resources and collective agency to co-develop ideas and take them forward (See brochure: Three Natural Resource-Based Beneficiation Models to Demonstrate Opportunities to Diversify & Optimise Benefits from Legalameetse Nature Reserve)* example, through a community cultural day in the Reserve and learning exchanges with other CPAs, and to consider partnerships they need to operationalise these plans and a preliminary business plan for selected initiatives.

At the time of writing, landowners were being supported to establish a business entity to facilitate involvement in emerging job opportunities in LNR (e.g. clearing of invasive aliens).

Figure 16: Visit to the Makuleke landowners, who provided a dramatization of their history of removals from the Kruger National Park. They are now part of the wider COMA network.

4.4　Support for a Integrated Sustainable Development Strategy

Figure 17: Landowners identify biophysical assets in LNR

Another important strategic consideration for co-managing a reserve (see Figure 11) is to consider how developments in and around the reserve will take place and how this will be guided. Again, arriving at a strategy must be done through a collaborative process.

Through the work in LNR it is clear that development is taking place on a seemingly ad hoc basis with no clear strategy and without consultation with the new landowners. This makes planning strategically for beneficiation and sustainability very difficult and highlighted the need for a medium- to long-term Development Strategy for the reserve. It has also been the source of a great deal of tension as landowners exert their identity through stating "nothing for us without us".

To initiate this we have, in partnership with a consultant, undertaken numerous engagement processes. At the time of writing this work was still being completed.

4.5　The role of networks for collective action

Networks for co-management

We have been supporting internal networks for Legalameetse landowners through a systemic, social learning approach through the inclusion of individual CPAs, the youth and 'friends of LNR' who act in an advisory role.

Wider network-building activities have also brought together stakeholders from multiple land claimant communities across the country.

Networks are key for co-management because it is by definition a collective action process. Demand is emerging from the NRM community for guidance about how to launch and sustain networks for collective action. Indeed, there is a vast literature on collective action, particularly in the CBNRM literature. Wider network-building activities have also brought together stakeholders from multiple land claimant communities across the country.

At first AWARD played a major role in leadership and organizing, but over time the CPAs have increasingly organized their own engagements and invited AWARD. While we are still playing the coordinating role in building connections between government directorates, this is gradually changing.

4.6   Other emerging support

At the time of writing, additional support is also being provided in the following areas:
1. Legal support for resolving and finalising the land claim settlement arrangements
2. Capacity development on the formation of a Business Entity so that landowners and beneficiaries can enter into contractual arrangements with respect to developments in the Reserve
3. Support for engagement in the review of the Park Management Plan
4. Support for the finalisation of the Co-management Agreement
5. Support for the finalisation of co-management institutional arrangements, policies and procedures
6. Conflict resolution.

5   Conclusion & recommendations

A great deal of progress can be made with good planning and facilitation. Nonetheless, establishing a vision, strategic objectives and institutional arrangements for co-management should not be seen as a once-off event but rather as an iterative process as participants' understandings deepen and reflections are brought to the fore. The process can be demanding, and providing sufficient time and resources is essential. Since governance and tenure arrangements are culturally derived and place-specific, policymakers and development practitioners need to take the necessary time to understand local contexts before entering into a co-management agreement which is merely the tool – albeit important – that guides the evolving collaborative co-management journey.

award
The Association for Water and Rural Development

AWARD is a non-profit organisation specialising in participatory, research-based project implementation. Their work addresses issues of sustainability, inequity and poverty by building natural-resource management competence and supporting sustainable livelihoods. One of their current projects, supported by USAID, focuses on the Olifants River and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems to sustain livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment.

About USAID: RESILIM-O

USAID: RESILIM-O focuses on the Olifants River Basin and the way in which people living in South Africa and Mozambique depend on the Olifants and its contributing waterways. It aims to improve water security and resource management in support of the healthy ecosystems that support livelihoods and resilient economic development in the catchment. The 5-year programme, involving the South African and Mozambican portions of the Olifants catchment, is being implemented by the Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) and is funded by USAID Southern Africa.

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