

CROSCOG partners

- **Innovative Fisheries Management – an Aalborg University Research Centre**
Aalborg University, North Sea Science Park,
POBox 104, DK-9850 Hirtshals, Denmark
- **Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS)**
University of the Western Cape, Modderdam
Road, Bellville, X17, 7535, South Africa
- **The Centre for Social Research**
University of Malawi, Zomba, 278, Malawi
- **Centre for International Cooperation**
Vrije Universiteit, Vereniging Voor Christelijk
Hoger Onderwijs, De Boelelaan 1105,
Amsterdam, 1081 HV, Netherlands
- **Department of Fisheries**
Ministry of Natural Resources and
Environmental Affairs, Capital Hill Ring Road,
Lilongwe, 593, Malawi
- **The Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Centre**
University of Botswana, Private Bag,
Gaborone, P/Bag 0022, Botswana
- **Department of Biological Sciences**
University of Zambia, National Road, Lusaka,
50110, 10101, Zambia
- **Aquaculture and Fisheries Information**
Vision House, Plot No. 1389, Chibuku Road,
Kafue, c/o box 360246, Zambia

**Please log on to our project website where
you will find more information about the
project as well as results of the research
as these become available:**

www.ifm.dk/croscog

**The CROSCOG project runs from
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Project coordinator:

Doug Wilson
IFM - Innovative Fisheries Management
- an Aalborg University Research Centre
North Sea Science Park
Willemoesvej 2
PO Box 104
DK - 9850 Hirtshals
Denmark
Phone: +45 9894 2855
E-mail: dw@ifm.aau.dk



CROSCOG

**Cross Sectoral
Commons Governance
in Southern Africa**

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INNOVATIVE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
- an Aalborg University Research Centre

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Introduction

Many southern African natural resources are legally recognized as commons. The governance of commons in southern Africa has received a good deal of attention from both researchers and the responsible government agencies.

The objective of this project is to share existing research and experiences in the governance of large scale natural resource commons across different ecosystem types in southern Africa: including marine and other large water body coastal zones; arid and semi-arid grasslands, savannas and forest patches; and floodplain ecosystems.



Background

The project builds on existing research on commons governance done by institutions specializing in particular resource management problems. It takes as its starting point the insight that addressing natural resource degradation in Africa means finding ways to identify reproduce and encourage existing positive practices of commons management across wide scales.

The dual challenge of governance is to meet large scale problems with large scale solutions that are rooted in local practices and to use an ecosystem approach to integrate the management of different types of commons, each of which may play a role in the household survival strategies of vulnerable populations. Experience with governance in one type of commons generates lessons of value to the governance of other types of commons and for integrated governance.

Strategy

The project consists of a series of preparation tasks and workshops in which researchers who have been working on different kinds of commons in southern Africa comb their research

for lessons of use to other kinds of resources and then present this work at joint workshops.

This work takes place in two phases each one having a theme: 1) *Knowledge, Power, Economic Transformation and Existing Commons Practices*; and 2) *Building on Existing Practices to Achieve Effective Governance across Extensive Scales*.

Theme One deals essentially with the political economy of the commons, including how different kinds of knowledge are used to make decisions. Theme Two is the more programmatic theme. It seeks to find a way to solve the conundrum we face between the pressures of extreme poverty on common resources and the urgent need to conserve biodiversity through sustainable resource use. In doing so it tackles the heart of the problem – the extensive scale over which unsustainable activities are taking place.

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