



Activity brief (December 2014)

Botswana Department of Forestry and Range Resources – Fire Management Program

10 November 2010 – 31 December 2014



Background: With a semi-arid climate, and large expanses of national park land as well as commercial and communal grazing land, Botswana is prone to bushfires. Whilst such fires can be considered a natural occurrence, they can also pose serious risks to flora and fauna as well as to large- and small-scale economic activity and livelihoods. Whilst traditional, community-based responses to fire management continue to play a key role in preventing and putting out fires, the Botswana government has recognised the need for a more robust, strategic and country-wide approach to fire management, as part of a wider role in national forestry and resource management.

Objective: The activity aims at building Botswana's capacity for preventing, managing and fighting bushfires to reduce the economic, social and environmental costs of bush fires. It will complete an ongoing program of cooperation between these two partners.

The activity is structured around three core components aimed at: putting in place key organisational arrangements for bushfire management at national, district and community levels; developing key systems, procedures and strategies for fire management; and enhancing core skills and competencies for firefighting, monitor and prevention.

Activity description: The NSW Rural Fire Service provides technical assistance, training and firefighting equipment to the Botswana Department of Forestry and Range Resources (DFRR), particularly in Chobe and Ghanzi Districts. The program is delivering fire management training to field, district and central-level staff, and improved their capacity to fight and manage bushfires.

During the final two years of the program, in addition to further training in Botswana, DFRR personnel are undertaking short-term training secondments with the NSW Rural Fire Service in Australia.

The Australian Government manages this activity directly. The program leverages an acknowledged area of Australian experience and expertise to help address African development issues.

Sector: Agriculture and food security

Expected outcomes: The program will develop community-based fire management and district-level fire management processes to reduce the damage caused to food production and tourism.

The program – with its focus on the northern, drier areas of Botswana where there is limited income-generating potential from agriculture – will address the humanitarian aspects of people affected by bushfires, natural resource management aspects and the impacts of global warming on the future prevalence and severity of bushfires in Botswana.

Results to date:

- More than 4 000 staff and community members have improved knowledge of fire management and firefighting techniques.
- The activity has successfully led to the establishment of the Fire Management Division within the Department of Forestry and Range Resources in Botswana.
- The activity assisted with the development of legislation to secure greater protection to agricultural producers in the country.

Participating country: Botswana

Latest amendment approved: 04/07/2014

Implementation partners: NSW Rural Fire Service and Botswana Department of Forestry and Range Resources

Cost of current phase: AUD 500 000