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Title Research project	Impacts of climate, land use and land cover changes on wildlife resources & human communities in the Middle Zambezi, Biosphere Reserve Zimbabwe (1980-2014)

## Abstract

Small holder farmers living adjacent to protected areas are under threat from multiple stressors due to anthropogenic and natural disturbance particularly the dual impact of human wildlife conflicts and climate change on their livelihoods. This study aims to evaluate the interactive effects of climate change and land use changes on wildlife resources and human communities within the lower Zambezi transboundary area, particularly the Middle Zambezi biosphere reserve (MZBR) . (1980 - 2014). The study will use both qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather socio-economic and ecological data related to the interactive effects on climate variability and change as well as land use and land cover changes on the socio ecological system. Participatory Rural Appraisal approach will be used to assess household vulnerability and resilience to climate variability and change. Local Ecological knowledge (LEK) on livestock depredation and climate variability and change will be gathered through household surveys and validated through the use of scientific data. An integrated approach to Land Use and Land Cover (LULC) assessment will be used where information derived from analysis of satellite images will be corroborated with data from local surveys to develop vegetation cover maps. Scientific vegetation assessment protocol will be used to collect data on plant functional traits, vegetation diversity and structure. Results of the study will contribute towards understanding the local drivers of biodiversity change thereby generating a deeper understanding of livelihood strategies for communities living adjacent to protected areas. Results will also contribute towards understanding the bottom-up and top-down regulation of wildlife populations in savannah ecosystems sustainable conservation of natural resources, particularly wildlife and the integrity of biodiversity in terms of the provision of essential ecosystem goods and services for sustaining local community livelihoods.