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Anthropocene: our last era?

“Anthropocene” is a term offered to describe the era in which we live today: a kind of new geological time, which began +/- at the end of the eighteenth century with the industrial revolution. It characterizes the current age, during which the influence of man on the Earth system has become so important that it supersedes all other (natural) phenomena. This is still mostly a debate of ideas and concepts, but this debate is essential for our future. Even though scientists sometimes question the relevance of this name, (almost) all agree on the reality of the phenomena taking place right now.

Indeed, no one can ignore the fact that human activities cause significant and irreversible changes in the terrestrial environment. These changes are linked to agriculture, industries, cities, transportation and infrastructures, hunting or fishing, mining, gas and oil extraction... these pressures have now reached such a scale that they are considered as able to disrupt the balance of the planet. These disturbances increase jointly with the human population; our population will, according to estimations, reach over 9 billion people by 2050.

This recent period in the history of our planet is characterized by a rapid acceleration in the number of fauna and flora species disappearances. The current extinction rate is estimated to be 100 to 1,000 times higher than the average found in the natural history of the earth. The general causes recognized by the CBD are as follow: habitat changes, overexploitation of resources, environmental

pollution, the introduction of invasive species and the gradual climate change. Regardless of their relative importance, they are all related to mankind and its activities, and that is what differentiates the current extinction crisis from the previous five listed in the geological history of our earth.

So are we serenely living with the sword of Damocles over our heads?

Yes, of course. As it often happens, this phenomenon is minimized in our personal and collective imagination. We continue to perceive our environment as it was, long time ago, through media overrepresentation of animal or vegetal residual populations; we're trying our best to forget what happens, especially when it comes to species that live far away and that we don't know well (we'll talk about some emblematic species in next issues of the NAPA). Fake species in animated films are now more real to many children than many species which will disappear before they are adults. Yes, many scientists believe that half of all species currently living will simply disappear before the end of this century! Let's hope they are wrong.

If we are part of the problem, then we are also the source of the solution. On our shoulders rests the future of the planet as we know it today, and of the humanity as we dream it tomorrow. We do hope that men will realize the gravity of the threat and will develop - at last - an ecologically sustainable management of its earthly capital. And that the Anthropocene will not be the last era for our species.

Among the solutions already discussed and promoted are the control of our population growth (but how?), and the improvement of our consumption patterns (in this respect, see the NAPA n°71 and the

disturbing analysis of the context of biodiversity conservation in West and Central Africa!). Two gigantic projects, dramatic but essential, indispensable, urgent if

we want the concept of "sustainable development" to mean something. The promotion of strong conservation and good use of protected areas, well managed, well valued and able to conserve biodiversity against the destructive appetite of our species, comes right after. Yes, in Africa as elsewhere, probably more than anywhere else, protected areas are part of our future. Or rather, we can't build our future without them...

This NAPA tells us a little bit what we must do now regarding supports to these PA. It tells us about the constraints and limitations of major projects for the conservation and presents the second episode of our study on their impact on the conservation of protected areas in Africa... before considering how we could do better in the NAPA n°73.

WPC – 9 months to go!



8th edition of the University Diploma on Protected Areas management in Africa

IUCN PACO - 7th April to 31st May in Ouagadougou

Organized once again with the Senghor University of Alexandria, this new DU is open to conservation practitioners from West Africa (PA managers, private sector, NGOs, researchers etc.). The training covers broadly PA management and governance issues such as environmental policies, ecology, planning, monitoring, laws and regulations, social development, environmental economics, mediation etc. The course will be delivered in French and registration is online only:

<http://continue.senghor.refer.org>

Deadline for registration: 01 mars 2014

More info

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Good governance and effective management of protected areas in Africa in 2014...

A message for the World Parks Congress

Sydney 2014

IUCN-Papaco has received more than **150 applications (coming from 32 countries in Africa)** following the call for proposal we launched, in the newsletters NAPA 70 and 71, in order to win a fully sponsored participation to the World Park Congress in Sydney, November 2014!

Selection is underway and successful candidates will be informed by the end of February. As we received far more applications than we expected, we are currently trying to gather some more supports to be able to associate more people to this process and help them attending the congress...

+ more info to come soon...



This program is sponsored by the French Agency for Development



CONSULTANCY

The FIBA (Fondation Internationale du Banc d'Arguin) is seeking to recruit a **consultant for the final external evaluation of the project "Support for the management and participatory governance of the Community Marine Protected Area of the Urok Islands (Guinee Bissau)**. For details about the work to be performed, please contact Nathalie Cadot at cadot@lafiba.org.

The deadline for applying is **February 15, 2014**.

Results and effects of major conservation projects on protected areas in West and Central Africa (II / III: adverse factors)

Direction 7 of the Road map for African protected Areas

As part of a project on improving the management of Protected Areas in West and Central Africa, with funding from the French Development Agency (Afd), the IUCN Programme on African Protected Areas & Conservation (Papaco) entrusted Afrique Nature International with the mission of assessing the value and relevance of major conservation projects for protected areas at several levels: from design to implementation of projects, in terms of results produced, the sustainability of actions and effects, as well as at the interface between the different phases of a programme. The findings and conclusions of this study may be used to draft a guide to good practice for the design and implementation of such projects. NAPA 71 described the context within which this reflection was based, as well as the main forms of support for protected areas, before presenting the positive effects of major conservation projects. This issue discusses factors hindering the achievement of expected results while a final section in NAPA 73 will propose axes and directions that will feed future reflections on the development of this guide to good practice.

IV. THE DESIGN AND CONSISTENCY OF PROJECTS: ADVERSE FACTORS

It is at the level of design of the proposed intervention, which is an essential stage, that large projects mostly get caught up, especially when analyzing the relevance and coherence of the actions proposed in the light of the national and sectorial context.

A "genetic fault": designs that are considered and shared inadequately

It is rare that an analysis allowing problems to be prioritized and cause and effect relationships identified appears in project documents, although this step forms a fundamental basis for developing intervention. Strategies are most often developed from preconceived ideas or solutions from elsewhere, whether in response to a passing fad or a mix of actions that quickly takes the form of a quick sprinkling.

A second step, the analysis of alternatives to align context, means and ambitions, is also ignored. Yet it is at this stage of planning that one can best engage stakeholders in the proposed initiative.

Preparation methods imposed by donors remain too interventionist. Some agencies or organizations are not tuned in to the problems and there are few cases of the participation that they claim so often, but taking or excessively influencing the decision themselves. This attitude is compounded by the fact that they more and more often lack field experience.

Planning workshops are replaced by validation meetings, during which the guidelines set unilaterally by consultants are approved. If it is undeniable that some analyses are made (it can even happen that too many preparatory studies, not necessarily well targeted, are available), the lack of participation on the part of protected area managers is obvious. In the end, the field is left open to experts in blending, as mentioned above, distilling a pinch of capacity building, a dose of community outreach, glass of the institutional and two large ladles of infrastructure and equipment, to end up with an assemblage with no future. And the thinking is then no longer about defining a vision, objectives and realistic results but about describing activities that are inserted with forceps into an apparent logical framework. By surrendering to the easy option, the approach of "achievement by results", less efficient than "planning by objectives", only reinforces this conceptual flaw. The top down approach, with its accompanying preconceived ideas, is still alive!



« Stakeholders participation » is too often a simple exercise of validation and not a consultation process.

A feasibility study whose primary purpose is to check consistency and viability of a project proposal can only be properly conducted if specialists with an intimate knowledge of the local conditions in the area of intervention are associated with it. "Copy-and-pasting" from one country to another, or from one region to another, is the best way to ensure failure. It is in fact well known that these are the future implementers who have to think about projects or be closely involved in the design. It is to this approach

that we can attribute the lack of ownership seen in many cases.

This lack of planning is not an academic question. It prevents the unifying of initiatives around the project document which should offer, in summary form, a good understanding of the planned activities and their goals. Later on it considerably hinders the monitoring of activities.

Misperception of contexts promoting the "project culture"

Major projects are established as if all the foundations of success were already present, as if no preliminary work was needed. In a well-meaning but simplistic reaction, major donors too often believe that providing funds can solve everything and achieving results will be correlated to the amount invested. However, a badly prepared investment may turn out to be counter-productive in fragile contexts and even destroy local initiatives.

If the contribution of large investments is quite justified in terms of infrastructure and equipment, it does not hold true in areas where changes in behavior and structure of the sectors concerned require other intervention criteria. External support should improve the course of events in a sustainable manner, without giving a boost to effects limited in time.

Major funding thus maintains the excesses of a project culture, increasingly seen as an opportunity to temporarily improve the everyday than to initiate change. To make matters worse, the findings of evaluations, when they are not overly sweetened, are rarely taken into account.

Added to this is the myth of the expert donor agencies, "capable" of preparing the groundwork for a project in a few days and with the minimum consultation desirable. The need for some implementing agencies to cover their own operating costs, by applying management costs to the projects they oversee, feeds this tendency.

Losses of memory and continuity

The failure to capitalize on knowledge acquired is staggering. The versatility of donors reinforces the almost universal tendency not to build a new project on the achievements and lessons of the preceding one. When conservation of natural resources requires long-term commitments, continuity is precisely the key to success!

Very quickly, facts are forgotten and what has been acquired remains scarcely or not exploited, since the post-project phases are rarely addressed in a responsible way. Loss of continuity can also affect donor institutions themselves, which can have as many points of view or positions as they have project managers...

Assumptions and risks: superficial identification

Risk analysis (in the sense of negative external factors that can destroy or extinguish the effects of the project) appears in preparatory documents as part of a forced exercise and not as a factor determining the success of the measures proposed.

It is however an opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue with beneficiaries and avoid obstacles that could harm the project implementation. Too often, assumptions are taken lightly, while measures they underlie should provide the contractual elements that involve the beneficiary.

Unusable bases for monitoring and evaluation

Project monitoring is essential to prevent abuses and to make timely changes in policy, but also to safeguard data, share results or facilitate the repeatability of actions undertaken.

However, project designers use all their imagination to avoid proposing indicators that leave no room for interpretation. Another loophole is designing an indicator that requires a specific study to be able to measure it, but without having built this constraint into the budget.

How to evaluate the effects of a project when the indicators are not clearly identified? It is exceptional to have a project document that describes precisely the evaluation criteria in all their dimensions - qualitative, quantitative, spatial and temporal. Yet this is the only way to judge objectively the level of achievement of the results expected. Sometimes a project worth several million euros may even be committed without a project document and based only on a finance agreement limited to broad guidelines.

A lack of coordination in programme support

The desire to "plant the flag" is still firmly anchored in behavior. Rare, sporadic meetings of technical and financial partners in a country working in the field of the environment do not adequately facilitate partnerships and where joint action is contemplated,

disparities in procedures for granting aid mean frequent loss of synergies.

In the best case, when concerted actions are decided upon, independent management of one or the other generates time lags in launching activities. When there is no lack of promises of co-financing or differences of view in the case of cross-border or regional approaches. As a good observer of this kind of lack of coordination, a village chief in southwest Mali said: *"Our problem in Africa is different ethnic groups who do not speak the same language : we have the World Bank, the European Commission, German Cooperation, French Cooperation, the International Monetary Fund, USAID ..."* (Fölmii and Fölmii, 2005).

The art of using funds for protected area conservation to address social concerns or equipment

Too many projects that receive funds in the name of conservation drift towards local development operations and remain mainly at a tentative level, since there are much more appropriate ways to intervene for that purpose. This is all the more regrettable when these activities are entrusted to conservation organizations with little competence to engage in an area that requires specific experience far away from their traditional core interests.



Lots of projects conducted in or around Pas tend to finally become development projects.

All this derives from an excessive belief in the socio-economic benefits of support for protected areas and the benefits of participatory management. It becomes a fool's bargain when it results in exchanging site protection for the promise of local development. At best, this approach has no effect on conservation, but more often it opens the door to the dreaded spiral of "hope, expectation, frustration, aggression,

degradation". The goal sought by all, knowing how different users of the countryside can live in harmony, is then a long way from being achieved.

Relevance too easily justified on a global level and lack of attention paid to consistency

In general, the relevance of major projects is justified at a high strategic level. This is much less the case when the specific context in which interventions are carried out is analyzed. Once again, the cause must be sought in the failure to listen while relevance is closely dependent on the quality of the participatory diagnosis and therefore a good knowledge of the basic situation.

Consistency is checked at the stage of analyzing alternatives. If this is not done, one should not be surprised that the means are inadequate; for example, when a budget of only U.S. \$ 200 000 is envisaged for community action in peripheral areas covering approximately two million hectares around more than three million hectares of protected areas. In the same vein, but in the opposite sense, investment choices with too little discussion have created infrastructure that unused. This is a recurring problem that results from a lack of initial original thinking that distinguishes the possible from the desirable and the realistic from the ideal.

V. THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF PROJECTS: ADVERSE FACTORS

The other effects of inappropriate design

The main stumbling block arises from the fact that it is rarely, if ever, the team who has invested in planning the project that is given responsibility for its implementation. Budgets are increasingly not designed according to activities, under the pretext of "flexibility". So only the major categories of expenditure remain, making it difficult for implementers to understand the guiding spirit behind the design of actions to be carried out. Moreover, the timing of disbursement of funds often results in too much investment at the start of the implementation so conditions for the release of funds are rarely met.

The proliferation of steering committees for projects with similar goals or as part of a joint program is another source of waste. Finally, the selection of over-ambitious objectives and outcomes (too many activities in an unrealistic time frame, taking into account neither the resources available nor management capacity) weighs heavily, right from conception, on project performance. When the project designer, in order to convince his partners, and the donor, seduced by an ambitious project

portfolio, agree to endorse objectives that each knows they cannot be held to, the effectiveness of an intervention is inevitably undermined.

The separation of components and lack of information / communication during implementation

Aspects of internal and external information / communication are rarely taken into account when designing a project. The lack of information flow and transparency between program partners or between project components is commonplace. Activities are too often carried out cut off from other partners, with the experts remaining "nose to the grindstone" to meet administrative responsibilities for which they are generally not trained.

Too much rigidity: the lack of adaptability and progressiveness

All parties agree: "we should go more slowly and over a longer time." The linkage between the obligation to respect a schedule sometimes decided years in advance, and the constraint to incur all expenditure within the time limit, hampers the search for efficiency. The frequent excessive optimism in project preparation leads to the underestimation of deadlines for the launch or implementation of activities, also weighs heavily in that direction.

Once a project is started, it becomes very difficult to change the character of the product expected or to add another one that could better ensure long-term success. This inability to adapt major projects to an evolving given situation is certainly one of the most adverse elements. Institutional and financial arrangements are cumbersome and prevent responses to unforeseen situations, such as environmental emergencies, due to an over-complex decision-making process.

Excessive centralism and cumbersome procedures

This is a particularly adverse factor: for example, obtaining a simple travel order as part of a project attached to a sub-regional organization can take more than two weeks due to the approval process. When donor procedures are superimposed on this, a double penalty system then hinders streamlined implementation of activities.

The time issue mentioned above is one thing, but the impact of cumbersome procedures on the quality of acquisitions is another. Purchasing competition is completely desirable, but is inadequate when the private sector is not very active in the majority of countries in the two regions. Is it reasonable to

require three pro forma invoices for an aerial wildlife census to be provided when just finding one operator with a suitable aircraft is already part of the obstacle course? And rules put in place for healthy and transparent competition eventually lead to a system contrary to the intended purpose since they oblige fake tenderers to be invented!

It is perfectly logical for donors to impose their own procedures to ensure proper use of funds, but these should not become an inhibiting factor. Cumbersome procedures are also the wrong response to the question of governance. As we do not try to improve it when, on all the evidence, it is one of the central problems, then we *a priori* increase controls and favor centralism at the expense of achieving results.

Monitoring and evaluation that take time to be implemented and a limited power of control

Curiously, cumbersome control procedures are accompanied *a priori* by an obvious lack of monitoring of the smooth running of a project. Thus, GEF has no possibility to intervene once a project has been approved. In this case, too many powers are given to executing agencies who often think first about recovering their management costs. GEF thus experiences great difficulty in obtaining information on projects funded.

Too often, evaluations only become systematic once projects are completed or when turns out to be difficult, if not impossible, to make desirable changes in policy. And most evaluations remain complacent. Especially when those responsible within donor institutions run the risk of being poorly rated if they do not facilitate payments or threaten to close a project.



Monitoring of impacts is rarely done on time, in a systematic and effective way.

The trap of co-financing

Co-financing is a good way of getting a project accepted when the basis for its feasibility is not fully assured. It also allows a donor to display a diversified project portfolio, showing at the least cost the commitment of a country or institution in various fields. Conformism and lack of accountability can be adverse corollaries.

Co-financing opens the door to unpleasant surprises because of its unduly extendable definition since it can encompass either a current or future project dealing with a very similar theme, or a simple agreement in principle to work together. It is then easy to construct it virtually for the occasion.

The first pernicious consequence is that artificially inflated budgets are shown, justified by objectives and performance indicators, and therefore disproportionate. And the second, more damaging, is that it is often when partners do not play the game announced, that co-funding on paper leads to rates of implementation less than 25% of those forecast.

Lack of transparency in recruitment

A well-recruited team can alter the effect of a poorly constructed project, but a well-constructed project will always be undermined by one bad recruitment. In the case of regional projects, recruitment takes a form that does not speak its name, linked to the applicant's nationality. Knowing that it will then be very difficult to dismiss ineffective staff without falling foul of the authorities of the country of which he is a national. Apart from exceptional circumstances, the recruitment system for large projects is not based on selection of the appropriate skills: too often it only encourages economic benefits for officials who make themselves available for the opportunity.

Dilution of responsibilities

As a corollary to cumbersome procedures, management systems are so diluted that no one is responsible any longer. The failure of a project never has repercussions on the image or career of a member of staff or a technician, whether at donor or recipient level, each one deftly returning the ball in a well-oiled system where we forget that the only concern should be to improve conservation in the field.

VI. THE IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE GAINS MADE: ADVERSE FACTORS

In general, the financial, and sometimes technical, dependence by the beneficiaries of a protected area

conservation project vis-à-vis the partners often remains strong, and the gains made are insufficiently viable at the end of the period of support.

A forgotten step – the post-project

The post-project phase is never adequately prepared. Closing a project is most often misconceived because it should be done smoothly, not abruptly, and in accordance with a date selected years in advance. "Peak effects" ensue, punctuated by project phases during which we only try to repair damage of the interphases without preparing for the future.

In the game of shedding responsibilities already mentioned, it is easy to lay the blame for failure to take the post-project phase into account on the contracting State. But unlike in real life, who would agree to invest in the purchase of a product or service, knowing it would be destroyed once the warranty period of three or five years expired? Yet this is what the vast majority of donor agencies do.

Dangers of the regional and multifocal approaches

Major donors are moving more and more towards a multifocal intervention with actions at several levels. The problem is that protected area conservation is then integrated into broader programs and embedded in other dynamics. So we only dilute funding that was already insufficient. Too many issues beyond the area of intervention are dealt with without having discussed how to mobilize the means. The result is a "jack of all trades" approach that is ineffective and has no impact on situations in the field.

This tendency to the multifocal is accompanied by an evolution towards very ambitious regional level programs with standardization of projects, when countries are not at the same level and are moving at different speeds. So we move farther away from the field, without having built the basis for sustainable interventions in each of the countries concerned. This makes little sense, as conservation of nature takes place primarily at local level in combination with the establishment of an appropriate national context - legal, institutional and organizational. And the gap, sometimes called a "gulf" between reflections conducted at regional level, and the capacity to intervene in the field, is striking.

The political show that constitutes the announcement of higher funding and an extension of the area covered is certainly very attractive to major donors, but is the question posed in terms of results on the ground?

The dictatorship of disbursement

This factor could also have been discussed in the previous section (effectiveness and efficiency) but the obligation to give out the maximum funding in a limited time has a much more detrimental effect on the impact and sustainability of a project. This dictatorship of disbursement sometimes takes the form of "it doesn't matter why, as long as it is spent!" So expenditure on inappropriate infrastructure is preferred over a renewed call for tenders or the risk of leaving credit unused...

Unrealistic project time frames and over-long interphases

The tendency of some donors to move towards projects with a three-year duration is inappropriate to the needs of conservation, especially when one aims to modify behavior. In this case, the time frame is in the order of fifteen years. If the duration is too limited, stakeholders hardly have time to agree properly on committing to achievements! Submitting the needs and challenges of conservation to the donor time frames causes considerable harm to the sustainability of actions undertaken.

The pathology of non-renewal of interventions

The preceding factor is compounded when certain major donors preclude themselves from funding a second phase of support by a refusal to contribute twice to the same theme or actions by the same beneficiary. In passing, these donors penalize themselves because they cannot then collect the fruits of their actions in terms of image.

Is it any wonder that the positive effects on conservation are so intangible on the ground? Replacing services, which are often structurally faulty, for too short a period, can only produce a limited effect. This is not to apologize for substitution but to emphasize that time is needed for effective support while planning a gradual replacement that may better ensure the sustainability of achievements.

The lack of capitalization, setting aside government regulators and the difficulty of working with civil society

It is very difficult to measure the contribution of major projects to the conservation of natural resources. They have undoubtedly had a positive impact in terms of awareness, knowledge acquisition and training, but positive effects on the ground are not at the same level. Major projects selected for this study have had little structural effect on protected area management. Thinking they could do without

supervisory structures by some donors was a rather clumsy choice strategically, even if only by cutting themselves off from technical dialogue with the authorities.

In addition, major projects struggle to work with civil society, which would, however be able to sustain the gains and complement the authority of supervisory structures.

Lack of action at the political level

While large projects are at the heart of public aid policies, the debate about conservation is not conducted enough at the highest levels of decision-making. Without a much stronger commitment by leaders, which deserves to be proposed during negotiations on global aid programs, improvements can only relate to technical aspects with limited effect.

Slimming down of development assistance services and the illusion of "experts on everything"

Also arising from political choices, public or semi-public services of development aid have suffered drastic cuts in their numbers. To the point where the lack of technicians makes it no longer possible to judge the quality of the projects submitted for funding and even less to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation.

Without exception, while protected areas are rarely considered priorities by governments, the widespread withdrawal of technical assistance and the emergence of budget support are coupled with excessive belief in the benefits of a regional vision left in the hands of officials pursuing other goals.

Moreover, this slimming down is accompanied by the replacement of technicians by administrators who are allegedly able "to do everything". Economists pride themselves on making the environment and alongside them pen-pushers decide what to do to save the planet.

Mixing of genres

Competition for funding is positive if it raises the level of proposals, but may have less positive effects. When NGOs no longer stick to their own strategy but just slip into the programs of major donors when they should normally be guiding them, they lose one of their reasons for existence. Abandoning the role of catalyzer of opinions and initiatives to sink into that of a follower no longer serves the cause of conservation.

Lack of ownership

It is often said that the beneficiaries lack ownership of a project and its achievements. The same governments that signed official requests for aid only a few years later consider the ensuing support project as an intervention with an "alien" character. This attitude is not unrelated to the fact that large projects come to replace or add to existing planning. Even if attachments to these are mentioned in the documents, national structures responsible for programming are not interested in actions undertaken too independently.

The mismatch between the volume of support and management capabilities / support

No project document focuses on the capacity to absorb (in the correct sense and without causing collateral damage) an outsized budget by the beneficiary's management service. This affects both the amount of the budget and the subsequent management of recurring costs associated with an increase in fiscal revenues, as brutal as it is transitory. What serious head of a company could accept a budget growth rate of up to 500% or even 1000% over one year without taking appropriate measures?



Stakeholders' needs and management capacities and project budgets are often disproportional.

VII. FAILURE OF THE FIRST CONCERNED

Misuse of projects that stifle the chances of change

As already noted, major funding can feed the excesses of a "project culture" that favors the temporary improvement of everyday life, instead of using it as a driver of change to upgrade management systems. The fact that the duties of posts within projects rarely meet the interests of efficiency only exacerbate and enable this to persist; these positions in addition duplicate those of existing

structures and weaken, instead of strengthening them.

With little administrative potestates controlling recruitment, competition for posts within a project can generate a lot of frustration or resentment. If we add a tendency by project managers to rapidly see themselves as the head of autonomous structures, the project culture - in the worst sense of the term - is a major factor in the lack of ownership. Another factor, already mentioned, is linked to the failure to analyze proposals from partners; how many times does one hear that "a project, however imperfect, cannot be refused"? If an initiative is accepted without having established one's own priorities or verified that they are taken into account, if certain prerequisites are hidden, if not enough interest is paid to preparation and structure, and to crown it all, if we do not capture the conditions for sustainability, what degree of ownership and success in the field can be expected?

The instability of positions and little taste for the field

Even if this pitfall is not encountered everywhere, too frequent changes in the holders of posts of responsibility limits the effectiveness and efficiency of projects. Low enthusiasm for appointments in the field, sometimes perceived as a punishment, can be superimposed on top of this constraint.

Low attention paid to learning and the value of training

The loss or misuse of staff trained under a project has almost become the rule. As for technical assistance, it is unfortunately too often seen as a necessary evil and therefore underutilized, while in the whole world, especially in the private sector, the tendency is to keep hold of expertise.

Much more than donors, States do not participate enough, if at all, in the phase following the closure of a project. Examples abound of infrastructure left to deteriorate or equipment fallen into neglect. This reflects a lack of involvement in the management of protected areas by States who requested support, more in response to proposals from partners than by conviction.

Lack of land use policy and long-term vision

The lack of land use planning is associated with an absence of long term vision. We do not pay enough attention to the conservation of a resource while it is relatively available. It is precisely at this moment that we should plan for its use, rather than waiting for it to

become rare before reacting and risking being too late.

The question of ownership of natural resources outside the gazetted area, whether an individual or Community right, must be asked. The fact that States have arrogated to themselves the ownership of natural resources across their entire national territory contributes to their uncontrolled use since a natural resource gains value only when it is slaughtered or destroyed, whether it is a timber or wildlife product.

A lot of rhetoric and legislative bases for very little that is concrete

The number of workshops, studies and strategies, related more or less directly to the conservation of protected areas is impressive, both at national and regional level. The number of cases where it is possible to certify that action plans have been implemented is much smaller.

In legal terms, the arsenal of available legal texts is just as notable, but the same cannot be said of decrees that remain in force. Generally, legislative instruments are well designed and largely adequate to ensure the conservation of protected areas, but impunity is rife in the face of a widely shared lack of compliance. Yet, as several studies logically conclude, protected areas that benefit from rigorous application of the law are those where conservation goals are best achieved (Hannah, 1992, Robinson, 1993; Oates, 1995 Bruner et al. 2001).

Political disinterest but excessive politicization breeding corrupt behavior

The lack of national perception of conservation of natural resources, which does not go well with electoral ambitions, is best reflected by the insignificant place it occupies in most countries' the development strategy. The rank reserved for ministries supervising protected areas in the list of government precedence is likewise indicative of the lack of general consideration given to protection of the environment. Empowering the services responsible for protected area management fundamentally changes nothing, compared to the time when these services were swallowed up in central administrations more concerned with agricultural production or forestry if not by mineral wealth.

Like other areas, and despite the fact that it is not a sector characterized by productivity, protected areas are not immune from politically-oriented appointments. It is no longer an issue of skills, but of

a system that only perpetuates poor governance of natural sites.

Denial of truth and lack of communication

The ever-present denial of the truth reinforces the lack of awareness of the continuing erosion of biological diversity and the lack of interest in building on lessons learned. It is so easy and comfortable to keep repeating the same counter-truths and therefore perpetuate the same mistakes!

It is not uncommon, either, for poor results to be passed over in silence so as not to discourage donors or avoid the loss of support, which can clearly only further damage the failure to analyze contexts and identify problems that need solving.

Huge efforts in communication and advocacy remain to be made, from local communities up to the highest leaders, passing through all the main actors and the different communities or national and regional organizations.

Reform for the sake of it

Due to specific management needs, the necessity to reform state institutions in charge of managing protected areas has been recognized for many years. However, creating new management structures too hastily is not reform! Too many countries have been content to create autonomous parastatal institutions without fundamentally changing procedures or management methods.

These new structures have thus reproduced the same failures as the former administrative services, whether it is a lack of personnel selection, resistance to interdisciplinarity, inability to remove hierarchical burdens to increase accountability at all levels of intervention or an imbalance between central staff and field staff as well as between the number of core staff their superiors who have become more bureaucrats than conservationists.

The negative effects are more important than they seem at first glance because, unwilling or unable to instil a spirit of enterprise in their actions, these relatively recently created agencies, through their greater autonomy, have exacerbated the patterns of the original administration.

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In the next NAPA : ideas, possible actions, expected improvements ...

More on www.papaco.org



JOB OFFER

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) currently seeks a **country director** to lead and manage the Republic of Congo Program. WCS's work in Congo includes management or co-management of four major terrestrial and marine protected areas, extensive partnerships with extractive industry, and a leading national role in biodiversity monitoring, protected area creation, and ecotourism development. This permanent position, based in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, provides an experienced conservation leader with the opportunity to further develop one of WCS's most complex and powerful programs and have a marked impact on the conservation of great apes, forest elephants, and Congo Basin rainforest.

The country director is WCS's legal representative in Republic of Congo and responsible for all WCS activities in the country. In Congo WCS directly manages Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (under the Nouabalé-Ndoki Foundation) and co-manages Lac Télé, Konkouati, Ntokou-Pikounda, and wildlife in adjacent logging concessions with the Ministry of Forests and logging

companies. The survival of over half of the world's gorillas, large numbers of chimpanzees, one of the three main surviving populations of African forest elephants, and one of the most intact blocks of tropical forest in the world depends critically on the Congo Country Directors' ability to manage the relationship with the government, maintain and empower an effective staff team, keep resources flowing from public and private donors, and effectively oversee the administration and management of a large and complex conservation operation.

Required and preferred qualifications for candidate:

- Required: Master's degree or higher in a discipline related to natural resources management, environment or rural development studies, protected area management, or wildlife or conservation biology
- Required: Minimum of ten years of progressively increasing responsibility for protected areas or natural resources management, sustainable development, and/or other environmental assistance or related work in developing countries; proven ability to build capacity and direct initiatives in park management, natural resource management, oversee field research, conservation biology, conservation advocacy, and project management
- Required: Proven knowledge and experience with donor government agencies and management of large agency grants
- Preferred: Proven fundraising record from government/agency sources, foundations, and private individuals
- Required: Substantial experience in host government relations, and knowledge of international conservation policy issues (including environmental treaties); proven ability to develop and maintain a network of high-level contacts with government officials, multi-lateral and bilateral technical and financial partners; demonstrated tact and negotiation skills
- Preferred: Significant work experience in Central Africa, knowledge of Central African environmental and political issues, and strong reputation in the environment community of Central Africa
- Required: Demonstrated experience effectively managing staff, superb English communications skills both written and oral and French fluency (speaking, oral comprehension, written comprehension)

More on:

https://sjobs.brassring.com/tgwebhost/jobdetails.aspx?jobId=8924&PartnerId=25965&SiteId=5168&type=mail&JobReqLang=1&recordingstart=1&JobSiteId=5168&JobSiteInfo=8924_5168&gqid=52

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of IUCN