



# IMPROVING CONSERVATION OF PROTECTED AREAS IN AFRICA ...

SUMMARY OF THE MEETING IN WEOTENGA  
ORGANIZED IN BURKINA FASO (OCTOBER 2011, 25-27)



January 2012

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## Foreword

In October 2011, at a time when protected areas in Africa are subject to ever increasing pressure, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) organised the Weotenga Meeting in Burkina Faso to discuss the issues facing conservation on the continent, assess what works and what does not, identify potential areas for progress, promote new solutions, discuss new partnerships and finally invent a new future for these areas.

Key figures involved in conservation in Africa and elsewhere took part in this meeting. They discussed a general overview of the state of conservation of protected areas in Africa, analysed the current situation and past errors. They discussed and debated new courses of action that are realistic and firmly rooted in the local context. They agreed that we must better promote conservation and new development models, that we must stimulate wiser political choices and strengthen civil society, design new financing tools for conservation and review the approaches that development or environment projects take to conservation. And more...

It is difficult, if not impossible, to summarise the diversity of contexts, of stakeholders and the range of conservation issues in Africa in a single report. However, the diversity of participants in the Weotenga meeting, their experiences and their commitment helped to draft this report which while not exhaustive, at least gives a clear baseline upon which to build a roadmap for the future of protected areas on the continent.

Thus this roadmap will be the logical outcome of this report. It will be proposed to the different stakeholders in the field of conservation (Governments, donors, conservation NGOs and civil society) and will serve to improve their methodologies and, hopefully, their results.

I therefore hope that this Meeting will help provide a response to the challenge of the gradual degradation of protected areas in Africa. I hope that the roadmap that will be drawn up on the basis of this report will be able to provide an emergency short-term response while laying the foundations for the long-term...

**Nik Lopoukhine**  
**Chair**  
**World Commission on Protected Areas**

## Acronyms

ECOFAC: Ecosystème forestier d'Afrique centrale / Central African Forest Ecosystem

FEM/GEF: Fonds pour l'environnement mondial / Global Environment fund

FFEM: Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial / French Global Environment Fund

IBAP: Agence de gestion des aires protégées en Guinée Bissau / Guinea Bissau Protected Area Management Agency

MNP: Madagascar National Parks

PAPACO : Program on African protected areas & conservation (IUCN)

PNBA: Parc national du Banc d'Arguin / Banc d'Arguin National Park

PPI: Programme petites initiatives / Small Initiatives Programme

UE: Union Européenne / European Union

UICN/IUCN: Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature / International Union for Conservation of Nature

WCPA: World Commission on Protected areas

WCS: Wildlife conservatory society

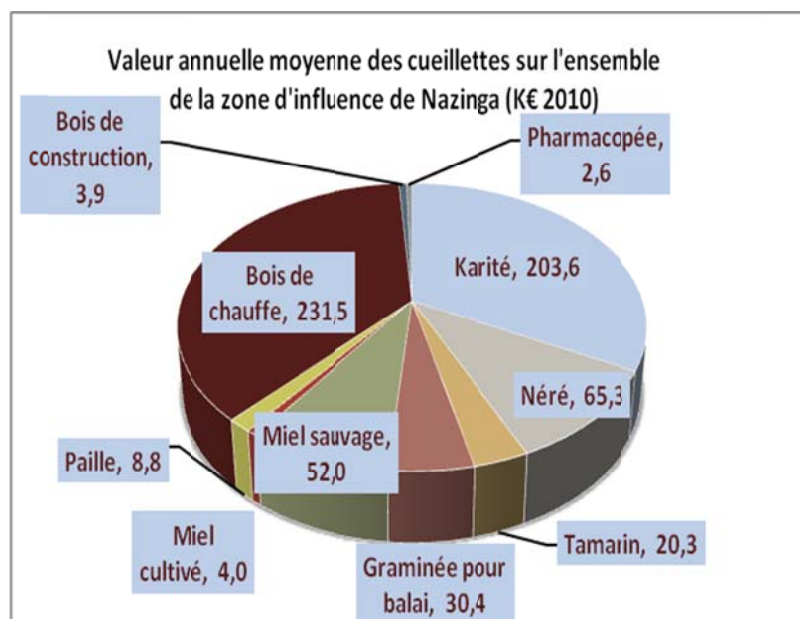
## Introduction

### Protected Areas in Africa are under pressure

Africa is a country of many facets and sometimes alarming statistics: a vast wealth of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, high levels of poverty ranking many of its countries among the poorest in the world, high population growth and a wide range of economic and political contexts.

Africa is home to some of the most precious ecosystems and species of the planet. The continent has many “protected areas” that play a fundamental role in biodiversity protection, ecosystem conservation and the sustainable management of natural resources (even if not all have the same status or impact). In Africa, the majority of protected areas were created to preserve natural wealth (animals and plants), cultural and religious heritage (sacred sites or forests, sacrifice or initiation sites) and social wealth which in themselves justify the existence of these protected areas.

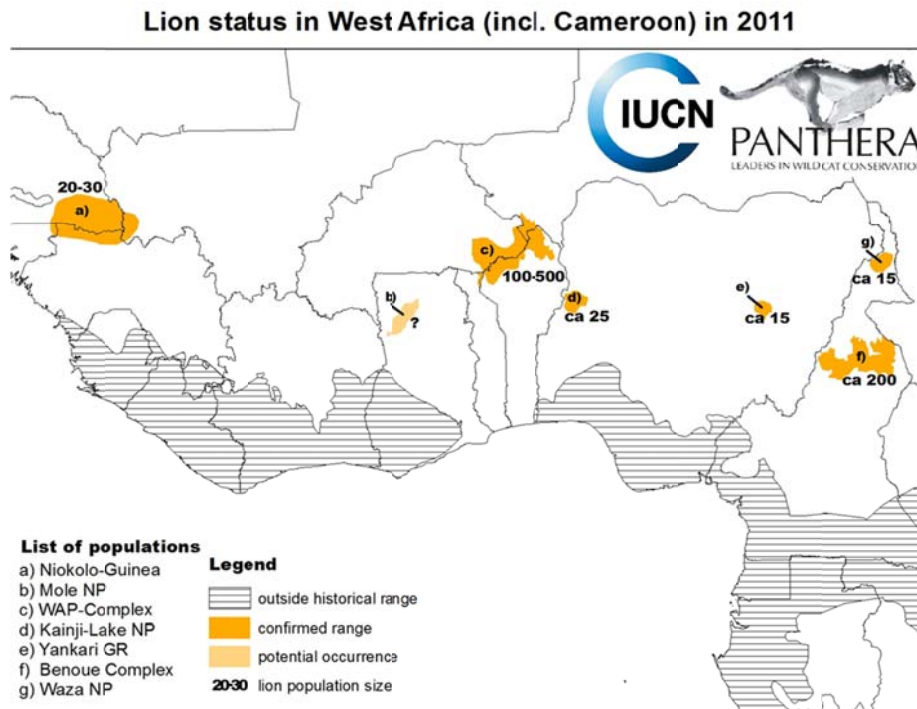
Often, the livelihoods of the communities living around or within protected areas depend on exploiting natural resources (non-timber forest products, firewood, wood for construction, medicinal plants or even fishing or hunting when these are permitted). The diagram below shows the importance of these resources, evaluated on a savannah protected area in Burkina Faso (category VI), where the use of wood and fruit represents more than two-thirds of the income earned from the sustainable use of the area’s resources (including close periphery). Tourism is also an important source of revenues for and from protected areas, although high regional disparities exist across the continent, the most successful examples coming from Southern and Eastern Africa.



Source: IUCN-Papaco

Many of the resources for which protected areas were created are now endangered, sometimes extremely so, particularly in the protected areas of West Africa. This is particularly the case for wild animals. In many sites the risk of extinction for species such as Leopard, Elephant, African Wild Dog etc. is imminent.

An emblematic example is that of the lion, whose original habitat stretches across the whole of the savannah region of West and Central Africa. However, recent surveys show tangible proof of the existence of lions in just a few sites, often in very low numbers and data is always imprecise.

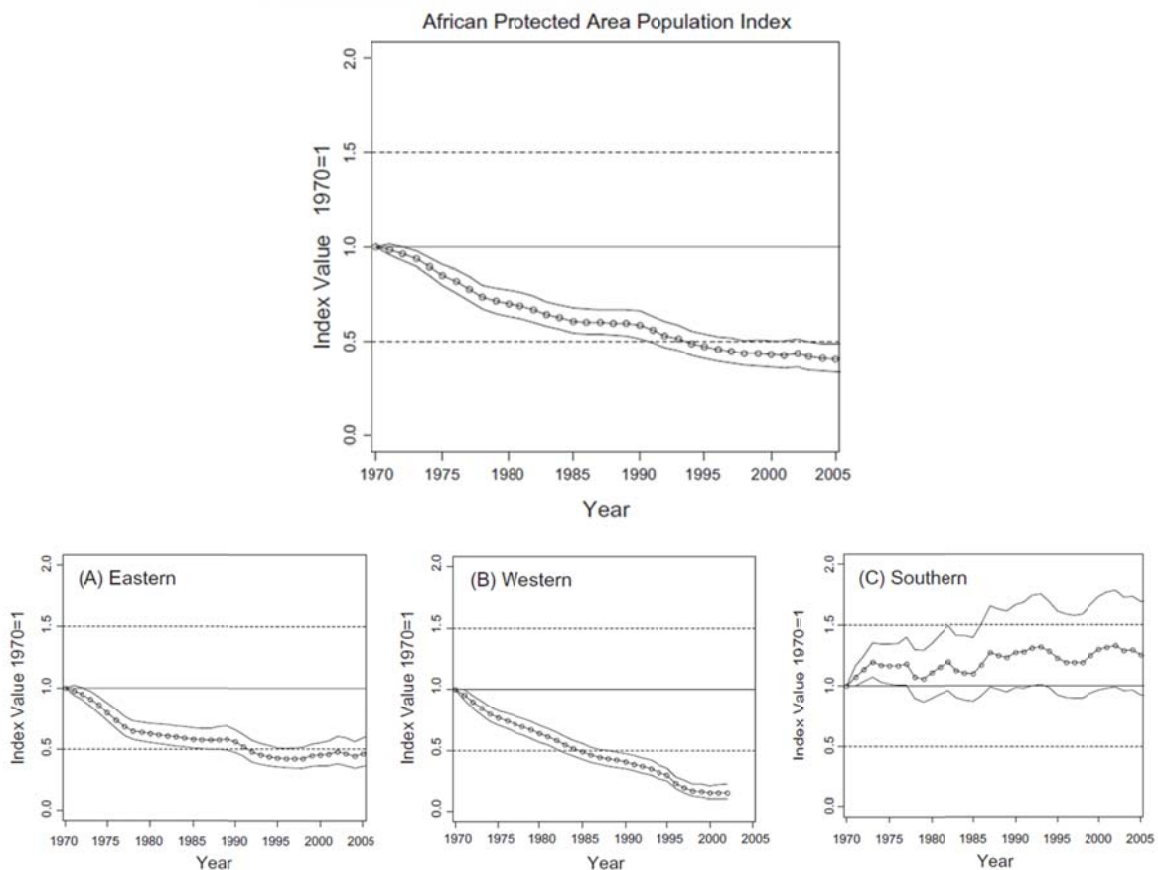


There are many causes of pressure on protected areas: logging (industrial or local), subsistence poaching and commercial poaching for the bush meat trade or for certain products such as ivory or horns, pressure through land use and conversion to agriculture, grazing, overgrazing and nomadic herding in particular in the Sahel region, as well as the expansion of the mining sector over the past 20 years which raises land tenure issues in particular, but also social issues.

*“Modification of the natural environment, in particular deforestation and its associated effects, has led to a significant and rapid degradation of West African landscapes. Skilled and committed people work in the relevant institutions and in the field, but conservation systems no longer seem to function, to the extent that it is now questionable whether there are any real protected areas left in certain countries of the sub-region.”*

Source: Francis Lauginie, Afrique Nature International, November 2009 – IUCN-Papaco APAO Letter 24

A recent study aggregated data chronologically to identify the existence of 69 large mammal species in 78 African protected areas (Craigie *et al.*). This multi-species indicator shows a general decline in population sizes, revealing an average drop of 59% in populations from 1970 and 2005. There are strong regional disparities, the situation being particularly worrying in West Africa, while South Africa fares somewhat better.



Source: I.D. Craigie & al., 2010. Large mammal population decline in Africa's protected areas. *Biological Conservation*, 143, p 2221-2228.

The status of protected areas is often unclear, implicitly affecting the way they are managed. The vast majority of protected areas, particularly in French-speaking countries, still carry the same status bestowed on them in colonial times and the way they are managed has never been reviewed to keep up with changes in the context or potential new management systems. The majority of these management systems are no longer appropriate and have failed to maintain the parks in their original state. A certain number of protected areas quite simply have no official documentation.

Most protected areas do have management or action plans but few are operational or validated and many have expired. Furthermore, the resources available to the management structures are frequently insufficient, lacking human, financial and material resources. In West and Central Africa, the majority of the protected areas with sufficient resources are supported by an international NGO or conservation programme. Protected area managers usually lack the skills needed for the role in today's context. Protected area management remains focused on ecological monitoring, surveillance and preventing poaching, however new challenges are emerging.

Nonetheless, there are successful cases. Eastern and Southern Africa have fared better from this point of view, but there are still large disparities between countries. Positive conservation contexts and management models have been developed and are widely implemented particularly in certain Eastern and Southern African countries; Kenya for instance. Some good examples also exist elsewhere but they are often isolated, rarely replicable and are always fragile (see results from the IUCN-Papaco evaluations in West and Central Africa at [www.papaco.org](http://www.papaco.org)).

Today, more than ever, park managers and those responsible for resource planning need effective tools to help them deal with the pressures and threats facing African protected areas.

It is urgent to develop new conservation strategies, to redefine and prioritise actions and to set the key conservation objectives in the short, medium and long term.

The degradation of conditions for flora and fauna conservation in Africa is a recognised fact. Needless to say it varies from place to place, depending on the context and sometimes will vary in the same area. Be that as it may. The trend is clear and to ignore it on the basis of a few success stories would inevitably lead to general failure. Today, this trend must be reversed rapidly. To do so, a response commensurate with the challenge is needed (“a revolution?”); innovative strategies, urgent actions and longer-term actions. The challenge is to propose a pragmatic **road map** to stop the degradation of African ecosystems.

Imagine, develop and promote new courses of action, think about the long-term on the basis of lessons learned... This is the mind-set that prevailed in Burkina Faso from 25 to 27 October 2011 during the workshop bringing together experts and professionals in biodiversity conservation in Africa and internationally who wanted to share their experiences, their skills and their commitment to conservation. It was an informal group of people from very different backgrounds bringing with them a great range of knowledge.

*“How can we reverse the degradation of biodiversity in Africa, in particular in West and Central Africa?”* This was the main question underlying the Weotenga Meeting, its debates and discussions with the clear objective of **formulating practical recommendations to propose a road map to improve biodiversity and protected area management in the coming years.**

The workshop participants did not examine all the challenges and issues in depth, in particular the role of those stakeholders that are not directly involved in conservation decisions. There was not enough time or people specialised in this area to go into greater depth on this subject (in particular community management of natural resources), which is already the subject of vast debate, very varied experiences and much documentation. Thus these stakeholders are henceforth referred to as the “local community” or “general public” and their point of view on the subject was not necessarily captured in the debates.

While not exhaustive, this document summarises the main challenges and strategic questions facing the different conservation stakeholders in Africa. It covers various issues such as the availability of reliable and useable data, management and decision-making capacities, application of legislation, the promotion of protected areas, land development strategies, the results of large projects, the ambitions of small initiatives and subsidies, and the different scales of conservation in terms of space and time.

The aim is to identify the major stakes for biodiversity conservation and to identify courses of action to draw up a road map. Let’s hope that the long-awaited change in conservation will benefit from the implementation of this road map...



# I. Tools for biodiversity conservation and decision-making

## 1.1 Good quality data and knowledge for better protected area management

### SOME FINDINGS

The classification of an area as protected (regardless of the category) is based, or at least should be based, on data that reveal specific characteristics, notable as regards wildlife or nature (or even culture). These data constitute the basis for justifying the need to protect an area, draw up specific legislation and measures and to involve various stakeholders.

Over the long term, these data can also be used to evaluate conservation efforts, to identify threats, strengths or gaps in a conservation system. Used as tools to assist decision-making they help to target actions and steer management programmes. Simplified and disseminated as suitable communication tools they can justify the human, material and financial investment required in a given area or be used for advocacy purposes.

On the national or regional scale, political decision-makers often lack the accurate and up-to-date information on actual pressure on biodiversity required to make the right decisions and guide their political conservation choices.

Overall, the data gathered in protected areas respond to two main, **non-exclusive** objectives that are often promoted by **different** stakeholders:

- **The production of scientific knowledge:** protected areas constitute fertile ground for research and a large number of specific studies are carried out every year. Data to answer a specific question or scientific hypothesis are usually gathered by researchers in the context of specifically established protocols. Carried out in partnership with a University or research centre, this research is mostly used for academic (publications, diplomas) or educational purposes (internships and field experience). The type of data collected may, depending on the case, be very targeted, focused on a given theme or species, and often is to be gathered and analysed over a period of time that is incompatible with urgent situations or the daily work of managers. However, this is not always the case. More and more research is focusing on more complex situations (landscapes, communities) or uses data that already exists or is collected through intense but short surveys (social sciences), thus reducing the time taken to obtain useful results.
- **Supporting protected area management:** managers are interested in data that can help them to monitor and evaluate the state of the protected area, the impact or effectiveness of their action plans or to identify priorities. To do this, most management plans list certain data to be routinely collected by management teams. In African protected areas for instance, these concern wildlife or emblematic species populations, forest cover, burned areas, water source and wetland levels, tourism levels, poaching and other infringements, patrol frequency etc.

These data are complementary and should all, in theory, contribute directly or indirectly to improving protected area conservation. However, in practice, many conservation stakeholders in Africa (particularly in French-speaking countries) highlight the incompatibility of the two approaches for

protected area management. The question is whether this finding is associated with the nature of the data themselves or the stakeholders involved.

**Regarding the data** : data must be as reliable and pertinent as possible but are only useful once they have been processed and analysed to produce knowledge or information regarding the questions asked. However, the most frequent finding among managers is that the results of research projects are dispersed, fragmented and, in particular, inaccessible, and are hence not used to inform management. Furthermore, the time needed to process and disseminate and make use of scientific data, through publications, is rarely the same as the “time” the managers have to make decisions. Finally, this also raises the issues of data property, use and access rights.

The different positions and strategies of **conservation stakeholders** on the one hand and **research stakeholders** on the other doubtless constitute a less well-identified, but just as important a problem to be resolved. On the one hand, research for biodiversity conservation involves a wide and diverse scientific community (ecology, animal and plant biology, agronomy, economics, anthropology etc.), while on the other managers, although increasingly better trained, do not have either the time or the skills required to keep track of scientific publications. However, they are regularly asked to grant permits for research in which they are little involved if at all. Furthermore, there is often a gap between the resources at the disposal of international research teams and those of protected area management teams working with national research bodies. Even when research needs have been identified by a protected area management team, these tend to carry little weight compared to the choices of international scientific teams. This type of situation leads to misunderstandings and research work that is of little use to drawing up management plans.

In light of this situation, different initiatives have been launched to encourage data gathering, processing and analysis that is useful to protected areas (see box below) and the joint development of research projects by scientists and managers. Collaborative frameworks or observatories of good practice, resources or the environment are beginning to be set up to instigate a more participative approach between the world of research and managers. This approach would appear to drive innovation and the production of useful knowledge based on the fact that both protagonists stand to gain in skills and knowledge.

**Testing of a researcher/manager collaborative framework in the context of the W/ECOPAS Programme (Niger, Burkina Faso, Benin) to improve dialogue and information sharing.**

**Marie-Noël de Visscher – CIRAD**

Between 2001 and 2007, in the context of the W/ECOPAS programme, managers and researchers tested the setting up of a strategy for collaboration and dialogue to build a research and study programme together in accordance with management priorities.

Managing to generate productive and effective interaction between researchers and managers in the daily activities of the programme constituted a real challenge. To meet this challenge, the scientific work supported by the project was defined as needing to “*contribute to resolving the questions raised by strategic operational choices*” (conservation, collaboration with local stakeholders and promotion of resources). The manager-researcher collaboration then continued in the form of thematic workshops to specify the problems raised and to clarify the operational questions and their contexts in order to define the priority areas for research. The operational questions concerned for instance the organisation of actions over the vast, diverse area surrounding the park, or the management of existing or future conflicts, or the restriction of livestock pressure on the protected area. These were then transformed into research questions, taken up in reliable and replicable protocols. For his part, the researcher also raised management questions, calling certain practices into question. For instance, does the burning of vegetation practiced in the park not reduce the open savannah areas needed for

emblematic species? Thus, the integration of data or knowledge acquisition into management decisions, well before planning project activities, was based not only on the joint development of management and research questions, but also on managers' participation in formulating study and data collection protocols and in their analysis and interpretation. The presence of a mediator between the scientific and operational components of a project was also an important factor.

See also: Binot A. et de Visscher M.N. 2012 . L'interaction recherche-gestion dans les stratégies de conservation des espaces protégés in *Effervescence patrimoniale au sud, Enjeux, questions, limites*. Ed : D. Juhé-Beaulaton, M.-C. Cormier-Salem, P. de Robert et B. Roussel . IRD éditions (sous presse)

### **The Observatory on the Environment of Banc d'Arguin National Park (Mauritania)**

#### **Frédéric Hautcoeur, GIZ Technical Advisor Banc d'Arguin National Park**

In 2007, in light of increasing environmental risks along the Mauritanian coast and due to a lack of alignment between research programs and conservation stakes in Banc d'Arguin National Park, the park's management created an Observatory on the Environment. Totally contained within the National Park's administration, the observatory members are qualified in marine and land ecology, geomatics and management of scientific information.

Its main missions are to analyse and integrate scientific data and to disseminate information and knowledge generated by scientific programmes in order to promote their use by the MPA management in the field. The Observatory also seeks to support external research programmes, to produce decision-making support tools and to act as an environmental and risk prevention watchdog. An on-line database helps to share scientific data in various fields (ornithology, marine and terrestrial ecology, biology, botany, archaeology, social sciences and pastoralism).

Many scientific partnerships have been established between Mauritanian and European institutions. While the Observatory is now able to make use of external research and produce tangible results showing the changes in Banc d'Arguin resources, it cannot yet dictate the topics for international research. There is also a need for better availability of the "decision-making support" tools for the MPA managers.

Discussions are currently underway to design and coordinate a scientific monitoring system that could provide information on environmental changes, measure the impact of activities and evaluate management effectiveness.

<http://www.pnba.mr/pnba/>

## **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

Reliable and diversified environmental data are indispensable both to develop efficient management models and, on a wider scale, to defend, promote and raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity:

- The protected area management structure should be officially recognised as the central coordinator of research actions (at local and national levels). It ensures:
  - ⇒ Research programmes and priorities are integrated into existing protected area management plans<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A simple, flexible and frequently updated plan (cf. section on management tools)

- ⇒ Multi-stakeholder (managers, researchers, decision-makers, donors) dialogue frameworks must be promoted to develop new multi-disciplinary research models.
- Constructive links and tools between research and conservation would help to enhance management efforts, in particular through:
  - ⇒ Harmonisation of data collection methodologies and protocols so they can be replicated and compared from one protected area to another, on a long term basis.
  - ⇒ Training of staff responsible for managing data collection/monitoring, using simple, robust and easily replicable tools.
  - ⇒ Development of practical interpretation techniques so that data can inform decisions

Dissemination of knowledge at different regional and/or decision-making levels is crucial for improving protected area conservation and moving towards effective decision making:

- Once analysed and interpreted, the data collected can be used to help make decisions and improve management, both at national and local levels. This is also why:
  - ⇒ It is essential to “interpret” the results giving practical, understandable and useful information and to “translate” them into environmental advocacy messages.
  - ⇒ This information must be disseminated among managers and decision-makers to ensure the best possible decisions are made.
  - ⇒ A particular emphasis will be placed on promoting and taking into account local knowledge, before reinventing the wheel.
- The research field should be widened from biology to human sciences (fundamental information for managing a protected area and its immediate vicinity) and to other aspects of land development.
- The promotion of new media for disseminating scientific knowledge would help to overcome current barriers encountered in terms of sharing results.

## NEXT STEPS

To achieve these objectives, **some essential short and medium term actions have been identified.** They may be managed and implemented by various stakeholders (decision-makers, donors, research institutes, management organisations, NGOs or civil society):

- Identify, prepare and disseminate **simple, effective and replicable data collection and research protocols** so that management teams can have **standard tools, accessible to all**, which integrate the need to make all results locally available after the study.
- Build the capacities of managers on useful data identification, data gathering and analysis methodologies by developing **appropriate training programmes, including introductory modules to scientific research.**
- Organise dialogue and collaborative frameworks for researchers and managers/decision-makers by setting up **pilot exchange mechanisms, coordinated by a group of researchers**

**and managers.** This would be an opportunity to revise the role of Scientific Committees where and when they exist.

- Support knowledge dissemination to facilitate decision-making based on reliable data, **by developing simple materials and targeting the different levels of decision-making. A variety of materials can help disseminate knowledge (Internet site, newsletter, newspaper, regular reports etc.).**
- Encourage **scientific publication on the Internet** by developing a **sustainable on-line database open to all** which will compile practical and useful scientific results (**observatories**).
- Provide the **necessary resources to promote and disseminate these tools** for gathering, sharing and simplifying information by setting aside a **substantial percentage of a PA's management budget for this purpose.**
- **Promote research programmes among the financial partners of protected areas.**



*Nazinga, Burkina faso*

## 1.2 Strengthening skills and the manager's role in the decision-making process

### SOME FINDINGS

*The need to reform the state institutions responsible for protected area management is increasingly recognised. Unfortunately, rather than doing so, we have once again confused the ends and the means and have merely created autonomous para-public establishments to replace the existing government structures. The former demonstrate the same weaknesses as the latter: staff shortages, narrow focus, inability to overcome unwieldy bureaucratic hierarchies to improve responsibilities at all levels, imbalance between central staff and personnel in the field as well as between the number of field agents and the number of managers, now more bureaucratic than conservationist.*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, November 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique nature International]

The different protected area management categories require staff of differing skill levels. Therefore there is no standard management profile, but a multitude of skills is required depending on the category and the conservation stakes of the region in question. Management improvement needs are also very different from one country to the next, from one protected area to another. From this point of view there are substantial disparities among the countries, with usually considerable weaknesses in French-speaking countries.

The skills able to be mobilised will naturally depend on the resources available: as a general rule, generalists should be sought to cover all management fields before seeking specialists if resources permit. However, it can be seen that contrary to this rule, most conservation agencies are administered by specialists (environmentalists, scientists, biologists) who lack the basic skills needed to manage day-to-day problems effectively and pragmatically. Emphasis has long been placed on building managers' skills in common managerial tasks, but it would now appear essential to train them to be veritable land developers through on-going, appropriate and practical training pertinent to local issues.

#### **Creation of a Master's in protected area management by IUCN - PAPACO**

Protected areas provide an ideal opportunity to develop jobs and resources to improve sustainable development. The IUCN Papaco thus decided to develop a Master's in protected area management, such that people could be "*trained in Africa*". This Master's degree (two years) is administered by the Senghor University in Alexandria and is open to all young graduates. A university diploma (8 weeks) on protected area management has also been developed and is run in Ouagadougou for young professionals.

These courses are aimed at protected area managers (and their scientific, NGO or private sector partners). They aim to provide them with the tools and specific technical skills required to improve the way parks are managed and to ensure their actions are sustainable. The university diploma (8 weeks) is organised in modules combining theory and practical field work where the different tools can be applied. They cover conservation and protected area management policy; evaluation and planning; participatory management and land development; the ecology of tropical ecosystems and conservation biology; ecological monitoring, wildlife inventory techniques and an introduction to GIS; data processing; environmental law and sustainable development and; environmental economics. The Master's course goes into greater depth on these issues and includes many other aspects such as environmental assessment, management, IT, basic biological data, languages etc.

Source: APAO Letter 47 – November 2011 and [www.papaco.org](http://www.papaco.org)

The technical and local approach also needs to be revised, and an overall vision should be developed, targeting decision-makers (and political stakeholders in priority) through advocacy actions and reinforcing their leadership role in the environmental field.

The question of status and the way staff are appointed is also at the heart of the debate. In most of the countries, skills have little to do with the way the central administration appoints staff. This raises the issue of the pertinence of building the capacities of staff subject to a high turnover in positions where they are not always recognised or properly paid. Examples of more independent structures in terms of management show interesting results but also have their drawbacks and a more in-depth analysis of the advantages and disadvantages is still needed in most cases.

**The Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas of Guinea Bissau – an independent protected area management structure.**

**Aissa Regalla, Coord. Seguimento das Espécies e dos Habitats – IBAP**

The IBAP was created to promote ecosystem and biodiversity preservation, to support the creation and management of protected areas and to encourage the rational and fair use of natural resources. It is a public establishment with independent authority over its administration, finances and sites. The IBAP focuses its activities on building effective, collaborative and integrated management of ecosystems, conserving biodiversity and supporting sustainable development. The action of the IBAP concerns all the entities and all fields of activities in the sector of biodiversity and protected areas including natural reserves, parks and classified forests. The IBAP develops its activities throughout the country.

**The IBAP's role is to:**

1. Coordinate, guide, implement and supervise the definition of national policy and the execution of actions to protect, conserve biodiversity, protected areas, parks and natural/created reserves.
2. Promote and safeguard the ecosystems and protected areas, to promote the socially and economically sustainable use of certain areas, including watercourses, lakes and the sea.
3. Promote sustainable management and biodiversity by all human and technical means possible.

When establishing its strategic plan, the IBAP formulated its vision as follows: **“The biodiversity of Guinea-Bissau is conserved sustainably to benefit the development of present and future generations”**. **The IBAP is based on the following documents:**

- Framework law on protected areas
- The National Strategy for Protected Areas
- The founding documentation of the different parks

Each park has an up-to-date management plan and internal statutes.

Finally, the BioGuinea Foundation has already been created to ensure sustainable financing to consolidate nature conservation, biodiversity preservation and poverty reduction efforts targeting the local communities in and around the country's Protected Areas.

Source: Instituto da Biodiversidade e das Áreas Protegidas (IBAP)

Besides building the capacities of the managers themselves, emphasis must be placed on awareness-raising and advocacy activities targeting political leaders in charge of defending protected areas, involving them in the choices directly related to protected areas. Similarly, in the medium term, a critical mass of the population must be made aware of and understand the issues at stake in order to change the old order and improve governance.

### **Madagascar National Parks (MNP), a management type with a strong and representative Board**

Madagascar National Parks was created in 1990. This private association was granted “public utility” status and oversees the conservation and sustainable management of the network of national parks and reserves in Madagascar. This conservation role encompasses environmental education, the promotion of ecotourism and science and the fair sharing of benefits generated by the protected areas with the local communities.

The association is made up of a General Assembly, a Board and a Management Team. The General Assembly specifies the MNP strategy. The Board selects and approves the projects to be carried out on behalf of the MNP in line with the strategy outlined by the General Assembly. The Management Team is the executive body of the MNP. The General Assembly includes people or organisations from the environment sector. They represent the Ministry for the Environment and national and international non-governmental organisations. Thus a diverse range of skills is mobilised for protected areas.

Source : <http://www.parcs-madagascar.com/madagascar-national-parks.php?Navigation=25>

### **The strong role of the Kenyan Wildlife Service thanks to a wider scope than just protected areas**

Created in January 1991, the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS) is a parastatal authority in charge of wildlife protection, which answers to the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife. Its mandate is to ensure security in parks, of tourists, local communities and of wildlife through its ranger corps (a paramilitary organisation). The main objectives of the KWS are the conservation of natural environments and their flora and fauna, the sustainable use of environmental resources to develop the country and benefit the communities living inside the protected areas and the protection of people and property against damage by the animals.

KWS has a certain degree of financial independence. It receives direct grants from donors and can reinvest profits from park management into other projects under its responsibility, for instance in parks running at a loss. From an institutional point of view, KWS is economically independent and politically dependent on the Government. The agency has a monitoring committee and a wildlife law review committee.

Today, KWS has acquired a significant network dimension, which is highly operational when it comes to defending conservation interests. This network helps to overcome the institutional boundary between the government sector and civil society. The widened scope of intervention, encompassing more than just protected areas, enables managers to enter into negotiation processes and contract with national authorities down to local communities.

#### **Source:**

- Dominique CONNAN – *“No politics please . . . “? Conditions and dynamics of political exchanges around Kenyan Amboseli National Park* – University Paris I – Pantheon Sorbonne – 2006-2007.

[http://www.fasopo.org/reasopo/jr/memoire\\_dea\\_connan.pdf](http://www.fasopo.org/reasopo/jr/memoire_dea_connan.pdf)

- <http://www.parks.it/world/KE/Findex.html>

Finally, when the management organisation has not reached its critical size (not enough staff to cover all fields of competence), consideration should be given to training and strengthening conservation partners (NGOs, civil society or the private sector) whose activities are more stable in the long term.



## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Capacity building generates strong leverage for a change in management modes or even governance:

- To build managers capacities, the “management skills” component of training programmes should be stepped up. This would help to widen the range of skills available locally.
  - ⇒ An analysis of existing gaps and managerial training needs would help to identify main areas for change and the structures and stakeholders able to meet these needs,
  - ⇒ An analysis of existing gaps and training needs helps to identify priority courses of action to be taken at decision-making and political levels.
- Over and above building individual capacities, the administration responsible for protected areas should be particularly targeted, to foster a “mature” administration that can develop new management systems.
- To strengthen environmental leadership and responsibility, decision-makers (particularly political stakeholders) and opinion leaders (civil society, activists) should be targeted.
  - ⇒ Using new social networks can contribute greatly to this objective.
- Support the setting up of new management structures (regardless of their status) or the reform of existing structures with appropriately skilled staff,
  - ⇒ The political level is particularly strengthened,
  - ⇒ Do not continue to support the construction of management structures or the reinforcement of existing structures if they are not effective.

## NEXT STEPS

To achieve the objectives of improved protected area management and/or governance, **some essential short and medium-term actions were identified**. They can be promoted and implemented by different stakeholders (decision-makers, donors, research institutes, management structures, NGOs or civil society):

- **Adjust training programmes** on offer to managers in light of current conservation issues so protected area managers **better understand the challenges of their profession and have the appropriate skills** to meet these challenges, particularly in terms of “managerial capacities”.
- These programmes should integrate the new fields of expertise of **climate change and solutions for adapting to it**.
- **Promote governance systems that facilitate the participation of other stakeholders** by setting up “board of governors” type structures<sup>2</sup> to which protected area managers are

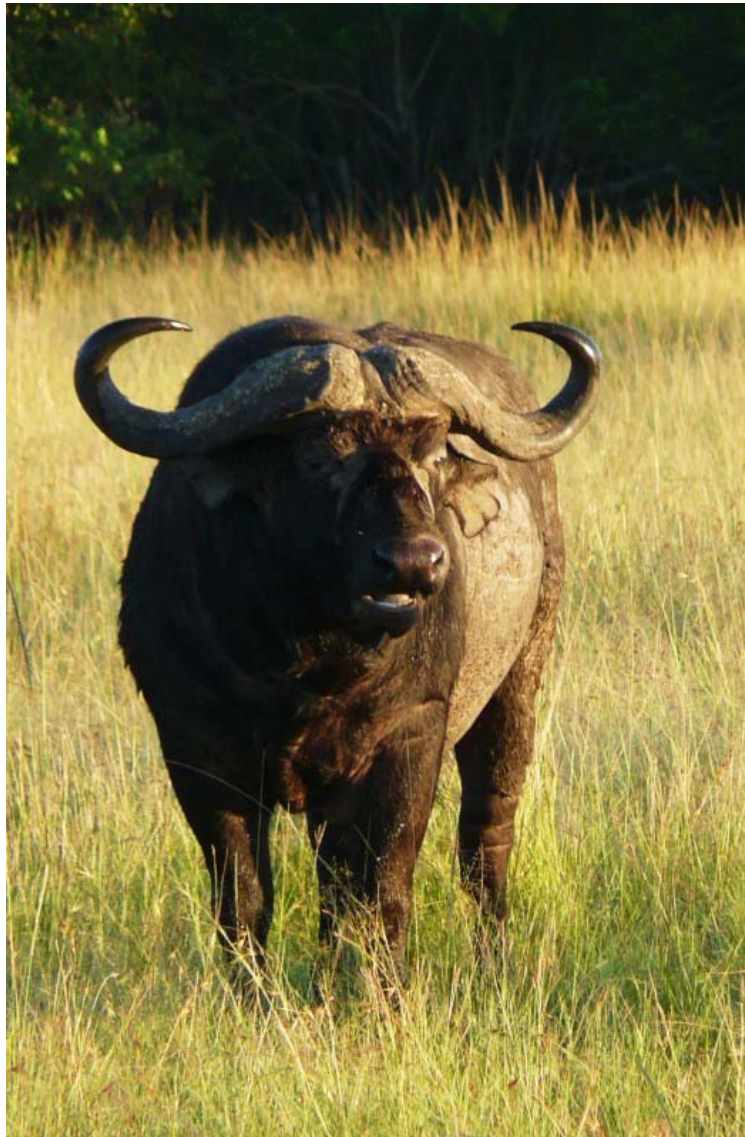
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<sup>2</sup> A board of governors has a consultative and strategic role. It helps to select, support and guide the projects/actions to be carried out. The board can also decide on budget allocations, approve financing and planning proposals for ecology-related issues, in particular protected areas.

It is made up of elected officials, representatives of socio-professional organisations, protected area managers, environmental protection agencies, research organisations, nature conservation figures, scientists, civil society representatives etc.

accountable. The range of stakeholders involved in conservation is thus widened, **more skills are rapidly available to manage parks and managers are given more responsibility.**

- Make use of the capacity of **new forms of communication and social media** to influence the public to strengthen the **voice of informed “citizens” on conservation issues.**
- **Use and present clearly the results of protected area evaluations** to improve the political foundation of these conservation areas, targeting **decision makers** in particular. The **better informed** they are, the better they can **define and monitor more realistic objectives.**
- **Train key management partners** to strengthen current changes and make them less dependent on one stakeholder. The involvement of **new stakeholders in the management and monitoring of protected areas ensures managers assume their responsibilities.**
- **Analyse management structures through institutional audits** (from local to national levels) with a view to proposing “minimum standards” for protected areas. **A template of good governance rules will help to restructure decision-making rules and levels.**



*Masai Mara, Kenya*

### 1.3 Support the application of existing laws on protected areas; promote reform as a last resort

#### SOME FINDINGS

*Generally speaking, the legislation is well thought out and more than sufficient for ensuring the conservation of nature and its resources, providing it is properly applied. Infringement and impunity are prevalent in the entire sub-region. Several studies confirm an obvious fact: protected areas where the law is strictly applied are those where conservation objectives are the best met.*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, Novembre 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique Nature International]

As mentioned above, current legislation on protected areas in Africa are often inherited from colonial times, when protection focused mainly on popular species, facilitated hunting and defined leisure areas. Furthermore, these areas were often chosen because of their lack of “utility”, and as a result are not useful from a natural resources point of view.

During the 1950s and 60s and the decolonisation processes, ecological issues were raised, boundaries were contested. The latter gave rise to conflict and existing legislation sometimes appears to be inconsistent and unsuitable.

However, modifying a law can be a hazardous or even dangerous undertaking in some cases. Indeed, certain pressure groups can gain much more power and interest from reforming the statutes or boundaries of protected areas for reasons that have nothing to do with environmental conservation (mining for instance). Furthermore, in the order of political priorities, the fight against poverty often takes precedence over all other objectives. These different factors and the resulting orders of priority can constitute a risk to the future of conservation. This is why any plan to reform must be seen as a last resort, only taken on when an analysis of the situation shows that the existing framework has become totally obsolete or constitutes a real obstacle. In all cases, revising legislation is a very long process.

Before undertaking legislative reform, it is preferable to begin by improving application of existing laws and developing tools to monitor their application and improve the existing framework. Tools such as MIST (Monitoring Information System) help to monitor and measure the application of laws and their effects and to get better results from the existing framework.

#### **MIST (monitoring information system), tool for monitoring the application of laws**

##### **Ruth Starkey and Romain Calaque - WCS Gabon**

The sustainable management of natural heritage is subject to the application of current legislation. This requires not only initial knowledge of the law but also the subsequent capacity to use limited human and material resources effectively and efficiently. To do so, access to pertinent, regular and timely spatial-temporal data regarding threats to the protected area is essential to enable protected area managers to take enlightened surveillance decisions (planning, patrols and activity assessment). These data can only be gathered by eco-rangers. “Ranger-based monitoring” is a system to organise data collection by rangers in such a way that they can be used for both managerial and strategic needs. The data provided by eco-rangers are used to monitor conservation efforts, discourage illegal activities, to identify the most endangered areas and to assess future or potential threats.

The MIST software has proved to be an effective application for ranger-based monitoring. It facilitates planning and monitoring while avoiding the problems encountered with GIS software which require too much specialised assistance and equipment. MIST works on normal computers and once set up, it can be managed by a non-specialist and the information can be easily and rapidly shared or backed-up between sites by e-mail. As well as its user-friendliness, MIST can be used to rapidly produce patrol maps and make a simple or sophisticated analysis of aggregated data. Finally, MIST can store data on legal monitoring when infringements are registered.

Since 2011, the MIST tool has been used by the national parks network in Gabon (following in the footsteps of Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and certain parks in Congo). The information gathered by the eco-rangers during their rounds are summarised in monthly, quarterly and annual reports. This information is used by Parks Managers in their decisions regarding surveillance strategies and, for the first time, the Gabon National Agency for National Parks (French acronym ANPN) can see the efforts made to cover national parks and the results. Two training modules are needed to implement MIST: one for the eco-Rangers on data collection techniques (five days) and the other for database managers on how to use the programme. The next version of MIST, baptised SMART, will be tested in five African countries (including Gabon) in 2012, and in five Asian countries.

In addition, depending on the country and the scale of intervention, existing solutions are available to enhance legislative aspects if necessary. Various actions and tools can be used to work on management plans, internal regulations, by-laws passed in the context of decentralisation and new categories of protected areas without the need to actually change the laws.

The management plan is an important and flexible “regulatory” document. In certain countries, it is a legal instrument because it has been validated by a decree (or other legal act), but its content is much easier to modify than a law.

The creation of new protected areas can also provide the opportunity for consultation with local communities and stakeholders, to pass amendments to management rules and include new regulatory frameworks into future management systems. This is the case for instance for the Banc d’Arguin National Park which, when it was created, was the subject of a specific decree. Thanks to decentralisation policy and the attribution of new responsibilities at regional and local levels, it is possible to gain leverage to assign new responsibilities at a more local level, to give more of a role and legitimacy to certain regional stakeholders, even if in many cases land tenure issues remain unresolved and the role of central government remains strong.

**In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a reform lays a new foundation for environmental management and reviews protected area status**

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, protected areas cover around 9% of the country and play an important role in biodiversity conservation. However, due to the country’s successive crises, the diversity of wildlife, flora and habitats of most of these protected areas has diminished significantly and several species are facing extinction. This degradation of biodiversity is also linked to the institutional weakness of the sector.

To deal with this situation, the Government of DRC developed a sector policy which led to the adoption in 2000 of the national biodiversity strategy and its national action plan. One of the results of this policy was the promulgation in 2002 of a new forestry law. Other reference documents were adopted: the new vision for the conservation of protected areas (2003), the strategy for biodiversity conservation in protected areas and buffer zones and the priority agenda for reform of the forestry and nature conservation sector, and the national forestry and nature conservation plan. The forest is now presented as a public good. These documents lay down the basic principles for sustainable management, rehabilitation and extension of existing protected areas.

Source : <http://www.cofed.cd/environnement2.html>

Finally, any legislative reform should be based on good practices developed in other places and incorporate modern management tools, in particular the IUCN Good Practice Guidelines and the Protected Area Management Categories. Once the framework and tools are in place, it is imperative to set up independent observatories, while the practices based on the new documents are put into practice.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Improved capacities and knowledge of legislation are prerequisites for better application of existing laws and hence for improved management of protected areas:

- Effective application of the law can only be achieved if all stakeholders' capacities are enhanced, from the bottom to the very top. Knowledge is the first step towards compliance and application of legislation:
  - ⇒ Knowledge of laws on the environment and conservation by managers, police, public prosecutors etc. is top priority.
  - ⇒ Knowledge of the role, scope and implications of decentralisation would help to measure the attribution and influence of these new skills on a local level and to reveal new stakeholders.
  - ⇒ Improvement of land tenure issues and resolving the many associated problems should also be taken into consideration.
- Monitoring application of the laws would help to better understand their consistency and pertinence and to determine if problems stem from the laws or from external factors, helping to ascertain if reform is needed:
  - ⇒ Evaluation of the legal texts would help us to bear in mind that it is often more efficient to support the implementation of existing texts than to try to modify the law, which is a long and sometimes counterproductive process.
  - ⇒ Better lobbying would help to encourage better application of the law.

## NEXT STEPS

To reach the objective of improving knowledge of legislation and its application, some essential short and medium-term actions have been identified:

- **Train and raise stakeholder awareness** (managers, police, judges, prosecutors etc.), **regarding the application of laws on the environment** and laws on conservation, in particular at local level.
- **Simplify procedures, if possible, and give regulatory authority to those stakeholders in a position to enforce them** (for instance protected area agents) to foster simple application of the law on the ground.
- **Identify and assess legal frameworks and any existing gaps** (audits) and make regional comparisons to capitalise on successful experiences. **If necessary, laws should be improved on the basis of proven good practice.**
- **Strengthen and apply all regulations, existing tools and management plans in particular.**
- Disseminate the **IUCN Guidelines** on protected area legislation. They aim to set **minimum standards for laws and their application.**

## 1.4 Promote protected areas and convince direct and indirect beneficiaries of their advantages

### SOME FINDINGS

For a long time, the promotion of protected areas was calculated for a few simple uses, for instance the right to enter and visit on a purely economic basis. Current promotion focuses on new aspects such as payment for environmental services (particularly access to good quality water), heritage promotion (for instance the intrinsic value of a rare species), carbon compensation etc. The paradigm given for conservation is that anything of value should be conserved. This gives rise to the question of knowing for whom this value exists, rather than what it is. This question was not examined in depth during the workshop as it would have involved discussing the vast issue of local management of natural resources, which has been the subject of many and varied documents and debates. Therefore, the beneficiaries and managers of PA wealth were looked at from a general and overall perspective.

While protected areas can be promoted in many ways, there can be a conflict in time between short-term promotion, often private, with immediate return on investments, and a sustainable promotion of biodiversity, often public, in the long term. Sustainable conservation stakes still tend to carry little weight in the face of a mining or other major infrastructure project (dam, port etc.) or in the context of current population growth.

#### **Mount Nimba, a World Heritage Site under great pressure**

The strict nature reserve of Mount Nimba has been classified as a biosphere reserve and UNESCO World Heritage site since 1981. It is located between Ivory Coast, Guinea and Liberia. Mount Nimba is both a very rich and specific ecosystem and a very large iron ore reserve.

In theory, Mount Nimba is totally protected, however, iron ore deposits are mined both in Liberia with a railway linking Mount Nimba to Buchanan mining port, and in Guinea, where an area with high mineralisation was declassified as world heritage to enable prospecting to be carried out.

Given Liberia's economic and political instability, Guinea plans to construct over 1000km of railway line between Mount Nimba to Kamsar mining port. The planned line would pass along the boundary of the strict natural reserve of the Ziama mountain range.

For more than 20 years, the mining of Mount Nimba iron ore in Guinea has been an issue of contention between environmental activists and mining supporters. On the one hand there is a unique mountainous ecosystem harbouring species not found elsewhere (in particular the Western Nimba toad, *Nimbaphrynoides occidentalis*, but also the Nimba otter shrew, *Micropotamogale lamottei*, also endemic to Mount Nimba) and which, due to its altitude, influences the climate in the region. On the other hand there is a project worth several billion dollars (the railway line and deep-water port of Conakry were estimated in 2008 at \$US4 billion, to which can be added several hundred million to develop the mine itself), tens of thousands of jobs and royalties guaranteed for around 20 years.

To date the project is restrained by the high investment cost however if metals maintain their current prices, the project could soon be begun. On the Ivorian side preliminary prospecting has also been noted.

Source : IUCN Papaco – Evaluation of the impact of World Heritage classification on West African Protected Areas – [www.papaco.org](http://www.papaco.org)

This is where the danger lies: in trying to quantify the economic value of an area, we risk showing that in fact other uses would have a better economic result, particularly for political decision-makers interested in the very short-term. Justifying the economic existence of conservation has thus pushed protected area managers and their partners to be innovative and creative in increasing the aspects that can be promoted (sometimes going so far as to promote values that cannot really be quantified or even defined). The win-win philosophy (based on the assumption that conservation would be the best option for everyone in the long run) is often highlighted in different conservation programmes.

However, this is rarely the case. Based on this fundamental assumption, a consensual and moderate approach is generally taken, which fails to assess the real issues at stake for conservation as it seeks first and foremost a consensus among all partners. However different stakeholders have differing ambitions and objectives and ignoring this will ultimately prevent constructive (and of course complex) negotiation.

Interventions in the field of conservation overlap with development actions. Synergies exist, but it is important to separate these fields of intervention to avoid confusion among beneficiaries. Stakeholders working in both fields should collaborate to carry out compatible and complementary actions while retaining their own objectives. From this point of view the past decade has seen environmental leaders (and NGOs and other lobbyists) take a backseat to economic development, placing conservation on the periphery of decision-making just when it has never been so urgent to give it priority.

***Business as usual?***

**A provocative comment... by Peter Howard (Environmental consultant – Nairobi – Kenya)**

A review of failures to meet conservation objectives in African protected areas reveals that in most of them wildlife is deteriorating, or resources are diminishing and those responsible for protecting them cannot do much more than “remain on the side-lines and watch it happening”. Perhaps we should accept that the “old” protected area/parks management model set up and managed by governmental agencies should change.

We need a new paradigm, not simply “business as usual”. We must focus our limited resources on world-class management services for a few sites – for instance world heritage sites and other major transboundary complexes – and adopt a more liberal approach for most of the others. We need to provide a regulatory framework to enable the communities and investment partners to commit wholeheartedly to the “wildlife business” – promoting what can be sustainably exploited.

To do this, two important elements must be set in place. Firstly, the land needs to be “rented” by a community-based or private partner in the medium term (50 years) in order to provide real incentive to invest and conserve, to reconstitute wildlife resources to a level where they can be exploited profitably. Secondly, the investor must know that they can benefit from all the business opportunities and not be “tied” to too many rules and regulations or subject to punitive taxes. In such a scenario, the “tenants” could find opportunities to invest on the basis of a diverse range of products and services (hunting, fishing, tourism, beekeeping, Shea nuts, thatch etc.). Investing in protecting their biodiversity would thus become their livelihood. In this scenario the government should provide flexible legislation preventing the destruction of habitats, crops and overgrazing of livestock in these “resource reserves” ...

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The promotion of protected areas encourages conservation stakeholders to be innovative and creative. There are many ways to assess value and are all paths to be explored, built or consolidated in light of the current need to “count” economically.

- Governance issues need to be explored and developed so that conservation becomes a veritable political choice, not just an economic one.
  - ⇒ It is important to confirm the decisions taken by involving the political stakeholders whose “environmental conscience” takes time to construct.
  - ⇒ It is necessary to move on from consensual approaches with a limited impact on biodiversity conservation and admit that what is a benefit for some can sometimes constitute a cost for others.
- Civil society has a role to play in the decisions made by governments. The way they are organised and structured can influence the decisions on where to install infrastructure, the construction of a mine or a political strategy.
  - ⇒ Supported by new media, civil society must make its voice heard in Africa, where it is still underrepresented, despite an often dense social fabric.
  - ⇒ Mentalities must change. People must find it as important to promote and conserve natural heritage as architectural heritage for example. The idea that natural public goods must be defended in the long term must take hold and become a fundamental principle in Africa as well.
  - ⇒ The change in mentalities among civil society must also include the recognition of multiple values of biodiversity and ecosystems (such as ecosystem services) and make it possible to promote protected areas for more than just their basic products or immediate returns.
- The promotion of protected areas must include all facets of their value, beyond the obvious economic benefits. This value needs to be identified and understood.
  - ⇒ This requires lobbying of decision-makers, both technicians and politicians, because they are in the best position to transmit the message to the people.
  - ⇒ Strengthening civil society for environmental leadership is also important for this change.

## NEXT STEPS

To reach the objectives of promoting protected areas some essential short and medium term actions have been identified:

- Expand the possibilities for promoting protected areas to a wide spectrum of values (and not only economic values). **The value of protected areas is diverse and should be considered for its short and long terms benefits.**
- Enhance the promotion of aspects that directly support conservation (carbon stock, protection of catchments, sustainable management of forests and conservation of emblematic species). **Highlighting certain values is better for conservation and should influence the strategies for action.**



- Encourage protected area managers to adopt **an entrepreneurial approach to promote protected areas on the basis of all the values identified** and widen the circle of partners to do so.
- **Enhance partnerships with research organisations to develop new ways of promoting natural resources** in protected areas that contribute to conservation. **Innovation is indispensable for widening the range of (good) reasons to support conservation.**
- Promote mechanisms that ensure that **the benefits (of whatever type) produced by these different forms of promotion do reach the beneficiaries** (protected areas and local stakeholders). **Moving from words to actions should enable the primary beneficiaries of these values to benefit from them** (in compliance with conservation targets).



*Dja reserve, Cameroun*

## 1.5 Conservation Politics, Strategy, Planning and Tools

### SOME FINDINGS

*In reality, decision-makers are barely involved in conservation as such. They do not seek effective and measurable results and when project evaluations are not excessively accommodating their recommendations are rarely followed although this could prevent the same mistakes being made.*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, November 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique nature International]

There is a wide range of planning and management tools at all levels (from global to local or site level) for the conservation of biodiversity and of protected areas.

**On the Global Scale:** since 1992 and the Summit in Rio de Janeiro, many conventions and agreements shape and guide the planning of biodiversity conservation.

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 gave rise to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) the first international convention on biodiversity. To date, this convention has been ratified by around 190 countries. This convention has three objectives:

- The conservation of biodiversity,
- The sustainable use of species and natural environments
- The fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources.

On the national level, national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAP) are the main instruments for implementing the Convention on biological diversity. The Convention requires countries to prepare a national strategy (or equivalent instrument) and to integrate this strategy into all sectors whose activities may have an impact (positive or negative) on biological diversity.

Source : <http://www.cbd.int/nbsap/>

In the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for instance, the signatory countries undertake to develop national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAP). However, creating more strategy documents can lead to contradictions among documents focusing on conservation or with other sector policies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

The approach chosen by these strategic documents is often very general and difficult to apply. The means of implementation are not established in line with the objectives. It is currently estimated that 85% of the signatory countries have prepared their strategy, but that 70% of the objectives set out in the NBSAPs are not implemented due to a lack of financial resources and of a clear definition of priorities (in general these documents can be compared to a shopping list). These strategic documents carry more political weight if they are also presented in clear and simple terms, which is not always the case. Thus, there is a need to move from words to actions, if the often very bureaucratic agencies responsible for protected areas are able or willing to do so.

Collaborative frameworks also exist **at the regional level**, such as the Central Africa Forests Commission (COMIFAC) or the SADC. These frameworks take a long time to set up, but produce interesting results in terms of legislative harmonisation, incentives and political commitment.

### **The COMIFAC, a unique body governing forest ecosystems in Central Africa**

In 1999 in Yaoundé, in light of the size of forests in Central Africa and the increasing threats facing them, the Central African heads of state officially undertook to work together for the conservation and sustainable management of forest ecosystems in their countries. Following this summit, a joint declaration containing 12 resolutions, the **Declaration of Yaounde**, was signed and the mandate was given to the Ministers in charge of forests to monitor its implementation in their respective countries.

The General Assembly of the United Nations, in Resolution 54/214 of February 2000 supported this initiative by inviting the international community to help the countries of Central Africa to develop their forests by providing technical and financial assistance on a regional basis.

In December 2000, freshly mandated by their heads of state, the Ministers responsible for forests in the countries concerned met in Yaounde for the first session of the Conference of Ministers responsible for forests in Central Africa during which the Convergence Plan was validated. The COMIFAC is defined herein as the sole organisation responsible for guiding, deciding, monitoring, coordinating and harmonising sub-regional actions and initiatives in conservation and the sustainable management of forest ecosystems. It monitors the Declaration of Yaoundé and also ensures international conventions and forest development initiatives are applied in Central Africa.

Source : <http://www.comifac.org/la-comifac-1/historique-et-mandat>

These integration frameworks also respond better to current trends amongst donors to globalise their support at a supra-national scale, as a means of improving efficiency and governance. However, this needs to be validated by a practical evaluation of the benefits of this approach in relation to its cost.

**At a national or even local scale**, in addition to national biodiversity strategies, the development of management plans helps to identify the pressures and threats facing biodiversity and ecosystems. This stage is important for highlighting certain priorities and identifying gaps in management of the existing network. Analysis of the ecological gaps also helps to highlight the over-representation or under-representation of certain ecosystems and perhaps classify new areas (without generating new *paper parks*) or declassify protected areas that have become obsolete (while this is a difficult issue, it is now a reality).

**On site**, the vast majority of protected areas (in particular in West and Central Africa) have no form of management plan. When they exist, protected area management plans are often unwieldy tools, long and costly to set up and often ultimately impractical. Furthermore, it is a fairly lucrative market for certain consultants specialising in this type of exercise.

Too often seen as an end in itself, or an objective, the management plan must be seen as a planning tool. Therefore it does not need to be complicated to be effective, on the contrary it should be able to be revised easily and often. However, all too often the process of implementing a management plan is inappropriate. Financing is often given as the main hurdle, but it is particularly an issue of technical competence.

This finding raises the issue of how management plans are prepared and/or implemented. Modifying the current processes for preparing management plans would go against the habits of certain donors who have become evangelical about them, even though it is proven that they do not produce the expected results. **However, a management plan is not only a result to be achieved.** The process itself is interesting, providing it is comprehensive and involves the appropriate stakeholders. Often, the manager who prepares the management plan is not the one who will implement it. Paradoxically,

management plans are often totally suitable and result from a well-run process but are confronted with specific donor strategies, other sector orientations or NGOs which follow their own logic and thus carry out actions that are not in line with the existing management framework.

Finally, it is particularly important to monitor the implementation of protected area management tools in Africa as a step towards the certification of protected areas. Certification would enable good practices to be validated and give an incentive to newly developing protected areas.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Strategic conservation frameworks and planning in Africa are part of a complex model and should be better put into practice in the field:

- The move towards a single national strategy document for biodiversity is an interesting solution to the problem of overlapping and sometimes contradictory objectives found in the various documents drawn up.
  - ⇒ This shared framework could be useful for both partners and donors. One possibility is to prepare new generation national strategies for biodiversity (which should span at least a ten-year period).
  - ⇒ This strategic document must then be able to be divided into suitable plans for each level of action that are simple and pragmatic, can be revised frequently and are replicable and easily understood by all stakeholders.
  - ⇒ Indeed, it is necessary to simplify the strategies, to simplify the intervention frameworks and to integrate biodiversity conservation into land planning policy.
- Partners, NGOs, donors etc. should work to support management plan implementation rather than try to direct or manage these plans.
  - ⇒ Experience shows that short-term and easy-to-revise plans are more effective than documents that take a long time to develop and cover an unrealistic timeframe.
  - ⇒ The existing monitoring/evaluation collaborative frameworks developed in certain countries or regions are interesting tools because they offer alternatives to an overly generalised approach.

## NEXT STEPS

To achieve strategic, planning and good management objectives for protected areas in Africa, some essential short and medium term objectives have been identified:

- In each country, finalise a **national biodiversity strategy establishing a long-term vision** that can be used to **plan and coordinate with other sectors**. It does not need to be a long process; most countries already have all the necessary material.
- **Share this strategy** with other sectors concerned by environmental management and **in particular integrate it into poverty reduction documents and climate change plans. This strategy influences key decisions in other government planning sectors.**

- **Strengthen regional or sub-regional approaches**, as these offer political potential for effective planning. **This change in scale will facilitate more appropriate and more practical decisions.**
- **Analyse the ecological gaps in existing networks** in order to build **effective, strategic and sustainable protected area groups.**
- **Review management plans when necessary or develop them according to IUCN Good Practices** so that they are built on recognised standards, known to and understood by managers. **The management plan is a basic management tool** that should be easy for the manager to use.
- **Adapt the duration of management plans** (or of all management tools) to make them more operational. **Plans which are easy to revise fit better with management changes in the field.**
- **Work towards a system for the certification of protected areas**, for instance by creating a **green list** of the best protected areas. **Recognition is a powerful tool for progress.**
- **Work also on the feasibility and impact of measures to “lose” existing labels** (by the organisations that grant them), so they become real tools for recognising not just the **intrinsic wealth of PAs** but also the **quality of their management.**
- **Support NGOs to play a watchdog role** in the effective implementation of protected area management tools in Africa. **Good practice observatories detect positive initiatives, build networks among stakeholders and share knowledge.**



*Kakum national park, Ghana*

## 1.6 Develop a conservation area with a multi-stakeholder approach

### SOME FINDINGS

*Land tenure issues are rarely, if ever, discussed. However, tensions between users of rural areas could be reduced by establishing clear contracts between the different stakeholders involved in managing the peripheries of parks and reserves. The first step would be to try to improve management of what exists, because although they constitute an interesting option, corridors are nonetheless difficult to set up, due to the heavy negotiations involved. And there is no point in struggling to create connections between protected areas if the latter are being allowed to lose their biological potential.*

*The overly statistically-based and schematic concepts of buffer and transition zones promoted by biosphere reserves are no longer pertinent. The only option is to undertake a more dynamic approach that constantly seeks to ensure that around a protected area, the closer you get to its boundary, the fewer human activities there are. We can no longer work on the basis of a fixed idea of the environment for a park or reserve, as we must take into account both a permanent analysis of changes in this interface between nature and the rural sector on the one hand, and local relationships with the protected area on the other.*

*Managing the peripheral zone in terms of space is key; managing it over time to best adapt to fluctuations in the local context is just as important. Even if protected area managers do not have to carry out development actions in the peripheral zones, they do have to have their say in guiding the development choices that will be carried out there.*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, November 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique nature International]

There are six protected area categories<sup>3</sup> defined by the IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). Management of the area differs depending on the category. Categorising protected areas is an efficient management tool that is unfortunately rarely implemented in African countries. Furthermore, the periphery of protected areas (buffer zones, peripheral zones, ecological corridors etc.) raise issues regarding their official status, management capacities or even their purpose (for instance corridors are recognised as being obsolete in terms of species management but they are important for extending protected areas). Depending on the country, these zones are defined differently in the legislation (set distance around the park, zone of influence, location of villages etc.). The communities' rights (village structures, usage rights, bans etc.), when they are defined at all also vary from country to country.

The definition and delimitation of the periphery of a protected area raises the question as to the scope of protected area management. Should they/can they limit their role to the exact boundaries of the protected area? Should they/can they intervene beyond their territorial scope? Insofar as the actions carried out around a protected area can have a direct impact on it, it seems somewhat ineffective to restrict the manager's scope to the strict boundaries of the conservation area. However, a manager's mandate cannot be contrary to that of the local authorities, a traditional leader, a Mayor or other authority (particularly land development, transport, mining or legal authorities). This raises the issue of roles and responsibilities, but also capacities.

In Guinea Bissau for example, the notion of peripheral zone is difficult to imagine because people live even within the protected areas themselves. Another example is Gabon, where the 2007 law on

<sup>3</sup> Strict nature reserve or wild nature zone, national park, natural monument, habitat or species management area, protected terrestrial or marine landscape, natural resource sustainable management area.

national parks is currently being reviewed with regard to the notion of periphery which would tend to be defined as “areas which influence the protected area”.

Ecological corridors joining protected areas also raise a certain number of questions as to the right of usage in these specific areas that are confused with peripheral and buffer zones. In practice, it is most often means applying certain conservation measures in the area between neighbouring protected areas. This tool aims to create landscape (habitat) and functional (communities) linkages between protected areas to limit the effects of fragmentation. While often controversial as their effectiveness has yet to be validated, the corridor remains nonetheless an area development tool that is much-lauded by conservation managers. This stance is usually taken as a principle of precaution that is hard to refute in light of the significant pressure on biodiversity and its habitats in general.

On the contrary, experience also shows that conservation processes are more sustainable when they are rooted at local level and rise to national scale, and actively involve the local communities concerned. Along with the formal PA managers, the latter constitute the main component of a multi-stakeholder development approach. This process can even be initiated on a transboundary scale, as shown by the case of the Great Limpopo Transboundary Conservation Area (see box).

#### **Community management and transboundary conservation areas**

The Great Limpopo Transboundary Conservation Area (GLTFCA) covers an area of around 100 000 km<sup>2</sup> of land on both banks of the Limpopo, in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The heart of this conservation programme is the Great Limpopo Transboundary Park which is made up of Kruger, Gonarezhou and Limpopo National Parks. These three parks exist within the wider framework of the GLTFCA, populated by more than 500 000 people. The GLTFCA was highly criticised, accused of considering its residents in words only and of favouring large scale ecotourism initiatives supported by environmentalists and large companies. However, upon examination of archives dating back to 2002, it can be seen that there have been no concrete results from the GLTFCA except in the sites directly controlled by the national parks authorities, i.e. the elimination of the fence between LNP and KNP and the subsequent translocation of wildlife. It is now realised that the GLTFCA will only really be successful if it considers the interests of the people living within its boundaries.

One of the unexpected advantages of this project was the formation in 2003 of a coalition of veterinarians (AHEAD: Animal Health for the Environment and Development), which fears that the wildlife corridors meant to link the protected areas will also constitute biological bridges for vectors and the pathogens they carry. This coalition grew rapidly to encompass health and human development concerns and thus included a large number of professionals from the social, ecology and economic fields. Its annual meeting has now become a forum for examining the different facets of the GLTFCA. Besides this advantage, it can be said that the project has: a) raised awareness among the bureaucratic management levels that local points of view must be included in the planning process; b) promoted community management viewpoints and approaches at local level and c) incited local authorities and public agencies to be more proactive in their planning systems, in light of the need for consensus on particular issues.

*Extract from Murphree M. and Taylor R. 2009 in Community based natural resources management in Africa – Impacts, experiences and future orientations* Roe D, Nelson F and Sanbrook C (eds) IIED (London) Natural Resources Series No.18.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The management of a conservation area is a form of land management, a mix of skills and approaches that can come together on different scales for different issues:

- Ideally, a model where conservation is covered by an institution that has a wide-reaching mandate should be promoted.
  - ⇒ Considerable resources are needed to protect the flora and fauna in protected areas,
  - ⇒ There must be a real capacity to steer the negotiation and contracting process with close operational partners and those throughout the country.
- The notion of zoning and the peripheral area boundaries must be established according to their role
  - ⇒ A peripheral area supplements a protected area to enhance its role of conservation.
  - ⇒ Protected area managers must be more involved in the land development projects around their site.
  - ⇒ An approach based on local negotiation or, if necessary, committed to transboundary cooperation should be promoted.
  - ⇒ Civil society should play a more active role around protected areas, as they can support conservation in the democratic context and hence improve the sustainability of the protected area itself.
  - ⇒ Standards for the periphery of protected areas should be established in line with the IUCN categories.

## NEXT STEPS

To achieve the conservation objectives of protected areas in Africa, some essential short and medium-term actions have been identified:

- **Integrate rules and principles of local land planning (protected areas and their surrounding areas) into the national biodiversity conservation strategy** to ensure all sector policies are interrelated.
- Define a **standard for the peripheral areas surrounding protected areas** for each management category to ensure the concept can be easily understood by all. **An area that is easy to identify and understand will enhance actions.**
- **Develop collaborative frameworks at all levels, beginning with the local level up to a wider scale**, to improve the chances of success of rules defined by users.
- **Develop ad-hoc collaborative mechanisms to involve stakeholders around protected areas in the decisions that could concern them.**
- **Similarly, ensure that the protected area manager is involved in the decision-making bodies that could concern his area.**
- Train and inform protected area managers about the environmental issues surrounding the protected area. **Managers who can understand the different interactions that affect their area will be more effective.**



- **Set up channels to inform decision-makers and politicians about protected areas to raise their awareness of conservation issues in these areas. This will ensure partners are informed of their responsibility towards conservation.**
- **Develop new environmental communication channels to raise public awareness more widely as to protected areas and the role they play in their immediate environment. Thus the local communities can support decisions that favour conservation.**



*Sahel reserve, Burkina faso*

## II. Scales of intervention and financing the conservation of protected areas

### 2.1 What is the impact on conservation of large projects to support protected areas?

#### SOME FINDINGS

*...far too often it is the donor who decides or has too much influence. In effect, the aid institutions take over the decision-making process, with local experience and priorities taking a back seat. In short, the main objective of existing financing systems seems to be to ensure the survival of large international organisations and their branches rather than to really improve the conservation process*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, November 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique nature International]

Conservation in Africa benefits from many bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes. “Large” conservation projects (with financing of several million euros spread over several years) have been or are being developed to support protected areas in their conservation role. Some examples in Central Africa such as the Central African Forestry Ecosystem project (French acronym ECOFAC) or the Central African Regional Programme for the Environment (CARPE), which is financed by the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This initiative aims to promote the sustainable management of national resources in the Congo basin. CARPE works to reduce the rate of forest degradation and loss of biodiversity while supporting local communities.

#### European Union Projects ECOPAS and ECOFAC

From 2001 to 2008, the European Commission financed, to the tune of 24 million euros, an initial Programme for the conservation and rational use of the adjacent protected areas of Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger and their zones of influence (ECOPAS). The second phase of the ECOPAS/W project began early in 2011, for a duration of five years. The new overall budget for the project is 21 million euros, 17.4 of which is provided by the EDF from the RIP of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF and the rest by the beneficiary countries and ECOWAS, as well as by the UNDP and GEF in the context of the WAP project.

The Central African Forestry Ecosystem project (French acronym ECOFAC) is much larger. Begun in 1990, it focuses on six different countries (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and the Republic of Central Africa). Since 1990, five consecutive phases have been financed by the European Union for a total of over 90 million euros.

#### Source :

[http://www.parc-w.net/img/telechargement/pdf/Prsentation\\_du\\_W.pdf](http://www.parc-w.net/img/telechargement/pdf/Prsentation_du_W.pdf)

<http://carpe.umd.edu/>

Considerable sums are invested in these conservation projects, but the actual results obtained in the field call their effectiveness into question, in particular in terms of sustainability. The main reasons given are that too much money is channelled over too short a time, there is little collaboration with local stakeholders and opportunistic stakeholders appear who are interested in the financing but not in its impacts.

Nowadays, a large conservation project will last an average of around five years. The start-up and implementation phases of these projects are weighed down with various procedural intricacies and complex partnership structures which considerably reduce the effective operational duration of the project. Stakes identified in baseline studies can become obsolete by the time the project is implemented. Difficulties with increasingly complex procedures, problems of unequal distribution between often very large investment funds and less available operating funds often hinder the operation of these projects. These problems are particularly severe when multilateral donors are concerned, the EU and UNDP being cited as classic examples.

Furthermore, the majority of major conservation projects are organised into implementation phases. The lack of continuity between phases causes activities to grind to a halt during the sometimes long months before the next phase is launched. These gaps significantly affect the management and conservation of the sites. This finding is unanimous and pessimistic. Despite the large sums invested, large conservation projects generate poor results and give rise to a feeling of “waste”. In their vast majority, the specific results in terms of conservation are unconvincing and sometimes the opposite effect to that sought is generated by the end of the project as hitherto relatively operational entities have been dismantled.

Of course, certain donors cannot modify their financing systems and these large conservation projects do theoretically bring considerable added value (for instance when data collection is needed on a large scale). They have the advantage of establishing frames of reference, enabling considerable investment at a given time and providing infrastructure for protected areas. The mobilisation of resources and multi-disciplinary teams involved in research or technical assistance offers interesting opportunities (in terms of capacity building for instance). The implementation and support of development projects helps to strengthen or create local initiatives, to motivate community and individual actions. All these advantages are enabled thanks to a considerable investment at a given moment. But to strengthen the advantages of these large conservation projects and to avoid certain mistakes, the guarantee of sustainability and effectiveness must be clearly sought from the beginning.

#### **The CARPE programme, an example of sustainable construction**

The CARPE programme was launched in 1995, financed by the American Government. It was initially proposed as a regional initiative over 20 years, divided into three strategic phases. The first phase began in 1997. It focused on compiling data on Central African forest ecosystems while simultaneously strengthening regional human resources and institutional capacities. The work was carried out directly through the partner organisations already active in the region.

In January 2003, CARPE began its second strategic phase and transferred programme management to the region. It specifically took into account support of the sustainable management of local natural resources, the improvement of environmental governance and the strengthening of natural resource surveillance capacities in Central Africa. In September 2011, a third strategic phase should begin and will last until 2016. Phase III is planned to be the final stage during which CARPE activities will be transferred to Central African institutions.

Projects like CARPE are planned over the long term with a certain degree of flexibility in the reorienting of their missions. This long-term approach makes it possible to anticipate the transition periods between the main project phases. Active technical assistance teams, simplified and flexible procedures and partitioning of the operational budget mean that disbursement processes are faster and more operators are able to absorb the available financing. The result is that the CARPE project is giving interesting results, in particular in its projects to support local initiatives and strengthen civil society.

**Source :** <http://carpe.umd.edu/>

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Large conservation project procedures are increasingly complex and cumbersome. They hinder the implementation of planned activities. While procedures are often imposed by the donor as guarantees, some can end up being a real factor of failure for these projects.

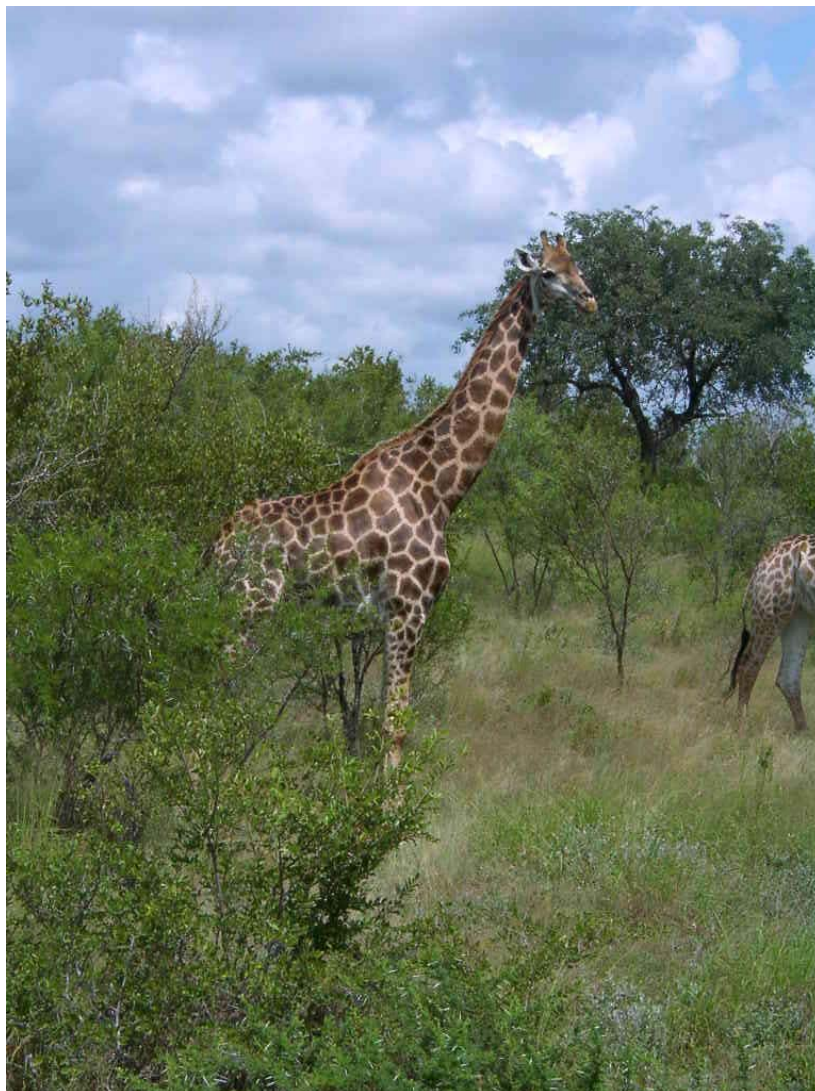
- The unwieldy institutional set-up of large conservation projects mean they have little structural impact on conservation. They should be revised to improve their effectiveness.
  - ⇒ Simplifying operational procedures improves flexibility, speeds up disbursement and improves implementation effectiveness.
  - ⇒ Learning the lessons from past phases promotes sustainable programmes (improving continuity) and enhances flexibility (meaning plans can be adjusted if necessary).
- The cross-cutting approach of some large conservation projects calls into question the effectiveness of the actions and thus should be revised in some cases.
  - ⇒ Conservation projects that are segmented into different complementary sub-projects, with specialised operators to implement each project are sometimes more pertinent.
- Large conservation projects can retain their own intervention logic but should be better aligned with the strategies of local or national plans.
  - ⇒ Advocacy and lobbying should encourage donors to work within existing reference and management frameworks.
- More efforts should be made to seek the investments for these large projects through new financing mechanisms such as trust funds. They make it possible to invest sustainably in a conservation strategy and to finance projects that are of an appropriate size over a more pertinent time scale.

## NEXT STEPS

To guarantee the efficiency and sustainability of large conservation projects for protected areas in Africa, some essential short and medium-term actions have been identified:

- **Lobby parliamentarians and organisations in donor countries** (European Union, Global Environment Fund etc.) to effect a **sea change** in the way large conservation projects are designed and implemented.
- **Align projects with existing management strategies** to strengthen processes underway and **avoid the creation of unsustainable parallel systems.**
- **Improve project management procedures** to improve results and reduce structural costs.
- **Strengthen local skills** in implementing these projects to build **sustainable actions.**
- **Remove the “in-between” phases** which destroy the results achieved. To do this, a long-term strategic approach must be developed from the outset. **Large projects must be designed as long projects.**

- Thus, as soon as the project is launched, appoint a **“third-party” partner** responsible for preparing the subsequent phase, one without a direct interest in it. **Appointing an operator that is exclusively responsible (and paid) for this will help ensure continuity between the different phases.**
- **Promote the diversification of sub-projects** that help increase the number of stakeholders and give other donors the opportunity to support them. By **sharing responsibility for implementation and by multiplying the sources of funding, a more stable and sustainable framework is established for these large projects.**
- **Create bridges between large and small projects** and enable synergy between their operators to build local capacities for the future. **To plan for the end of a large funding cycle, operators who do not depend on these funds must be strengthened.**
- **Develop quality standards** (for instance a **good conduct charter**) for large projects to **ensure that no donor, due to the size of its funds, upsets the local balance and imposes its own approach. Large projects must follow the rules and not dictate them.**



*Kruger National Park, South Africa*

## 2.2 Do small projects have an impact on protected area conservation?

### SOME FINDINGS

NGOs, private foundations and donors have developed funding portfolios for small initiatives based on the theory that local support targeting local stakeholders helps reduce poverty and thus reduces pressure on natural resources. This type of grant often concerns Category IV or VI protected areas, because the target is often community-based. The notion of “small initiatives” can cover variable geographical scales as well as different sized projects from local support of a micro initiative to supporting the setting up of an overall education programme. The grants are usually between 5 000 and 50 000 euros.

Overall, this type of support is seen to be positive as it is flexible, reasonably timely and enables a wide range of actions. These projects can be implemented quickly, although it should be noted that they tend to deal with pressing situations, such as resolving conflicts over resources, with a predominantly short-term impact.

#### **The Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund Programme**

**David Mallon –IUCN UK**

The **Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation** fund was set up by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. The fund is managed by an independent Council, made up of leaders in the field of species conservation. It allocates grants on the basis of a detailed request form that must be filled out by potential beneficiaries. The specificity of this fund is its simplicity. A simple application form aims to reduce the often difficult grant request processes. This is particularly aimed at the promoters of small projects, who are often daunted by overly complicated procedures and do not apply.

The Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund is a philanthropic endowment fund set up to:

- provide timely support for local initiatives that make a real difference for species survival,
- support those whose passion, dedication and knowledge is the key to species conservation and help the conservation of species *in situ*, in their natural habitat,
- increase awareness of species conservation and renew young people’s interest in natural sciences,
- attract new contributions for species conservation throughout the world.

This fund is for local communities, individuals, research organisations and laboratories. There are no thematic or geographical restrictions as it is open to all plant and animal species and all geographical areas. Two grant levels exist, between \$US5 000 and \$US25 000. These grants can be paid into personal bank accounts, greatly facilitating access for individuals, without having to belong to a specific organisation. Some examples of projects financed by this fund concern the protection of antelopes in Somaliland, the organisation of a workshop to develop a strategic action plan for the pygmy hippopotamus, the conservation of the Podostemaceae in Cameroon, monitoring of the Mount Kenya viper etc.

Source : [www.mbzspeciesconservation.org](http://www.mbzspeciesconservation.org)

The advantage of small initiatives is that they make it possible to experiment, to learn and then share lessons learnt and innovative approaches. They can easily be replicated and help to benefit more stakeholders over a wider range of actions. They also play a role in building local skills or at least raising awareness about environmental preservation and conservation issues. They encourage local communities to be more structured. Another advantage is that new geographical areas or themes can be financed and funds can go where large projects will not necessarily go. Furthermore, they are

often complementary to these large conservation projects. Their format means they can experiment without causing too much harm if it fails or if the expected results are not achieved.

However, it is particularly difficult to measure the conservation impact of these small initiatives. It would appear that often the beneficiary's concern is primarily to finance a socio-economic development project, rather than to preserve natural resources. This bias occurs because of the wide range of fields for which grants can be given even if the environmental aspect is underlying. In the end, many of these small initiatives do not finance conservation actions per se. Furthermore, the sustainability of the actions funded is closely linked to the degree of dependence on the grant (lack of co-financing) and on the project promoter's ability to seek additional support to continue the project.

Finally, obstacles do exist to accessing these funds. It is necessary to be familiar with project development and funding request techniques as well as to have good writing skills, which local communities do not necessarily have.

#### **Examples of projects financed by the small initiatives programme (PPI) of the FFEM**

##### **Thomas Bacha – FFEM Small initiatives fund coordinator, IUCN PAPACO**

The **project implemented by the NGO VONA** in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo aimed to support the conservation of gorillas and their habitat in the Sarambwe reserve (900ha). During the project, the NGO carried out various activities directly related to the management and operation of the protected area (marking part of the reserve limits by planting 100 000 trees along 14km of its boundary, training of Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN) guards in ecological monitoring and the creation of 28km of monitoring tracks within the reserve).

The **VONA project** fostered collaboration between the NGO and Congolese public institutions responsible for conservation and all for just 20 000 euros of funding from the PPI (for an overall project of 80 000 euros).

Other projects have aimed to support the creation of Protected Areas in zones recognised for having high environmental stakes. This is how the **Velondriake committee with project support from the international NGO, WCS**, was able, following considerable consultation with the local communities, **to gradually set up a community-managed marine protected area of 41 000ha in the Tulear zone in the south west of Madagascar.**

When the funding had been spent, 12 fishery resource protection reserves had been created and mangrove swamps and coral reefs had been mapped out for their protection, sometimes as strict and permanent protected areas. The greatest impact of the project, both in environmental and socio-economic terms, was the increase in the number of squid in the area. One of the main advantages of this project is the community involvement in managing the protected area, whose operating rules have been approved within *dina* (customary code of practice in Madagascar).

## **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

While it would appear that the impact of small initiatives on conservation is not always visible, it is nonetheless true that funding these small projects provides considerable support to large conservation projects:

- Supporting small initiatives is useful because it helps finance experimental approaches. These initiatives provide additional support to larger conservation projects and can even be a factor in their success.
  - ⇒ Small initiatives enable new conservation stakeholders to emerge, who can ensure the necessary checks and balances for existing systems if necessary.
  - ⇒ They reach beneficiaries and work at a scale that are often ignored by larger programmes and therefore play a key role in environmental awareness-raising.
  - ⇒ They also enable other types of donors (foundations, companies) to get involved, bringing new profiles and new skills to the world of conservation.
  
- To make small initiatives more effective in terms of sustainability, it appears essential to strengthen the skills of project management and governance structures.
  - ⇒ A more sustainable approach needs to be sought. Projects are often too short to enable the target stakeholders to really take ownership of them (retain the same amount of funding but give longer for implementation).
  - ⇒ South-south learning should be promoted, with experienced staff from national or international NGOs.
  - ⇒ The targets eligible for this type of funding should be widened (diversity of stakeholders) while restricting the range of eligible activities (conservation) so that the funds are really used for conservation and not just for an environmental component in a development project.

## NEXT STEPS

To guarantee the complementary nature and conservation innovation role of small initiatives, some essential short and medium-term actions have been identified:

- **Ensure that “large” projects are accompanied by small initiatives** in order to i) **increase their impact** and ii) to draw **new local partners** into local land management. Small initiatives must **enable the voices of the most isolated and forgotten stakeholders, or of those marginalised by large programmes** to be heard.
- **Develop standards for small conservation projects** (objectives, duration, terms and conditions, targets and key principles) in order to distinguish them from **small environmental initiatives within conventional development projects and focus specifically on conservation.**
- **Establish and share the list of donors that support these small initiatives** by distributing the list or **setting up an interface that promotes these donors and inspires new partners.**
- **Facilitate access of less experienced stakeholders** and promote one-stop mechanisms that group all funds for “small initiatives”. **Access to these funds for new stakeholders, ideas and experiences must be improved.**
- Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of implementation and beneficiaries from the outset. **The results of small initiatives must be used to raise awareness as widely as possible of the value of local experience.**



## 2.3 Conserving biodiversity... OK, but on what scale and over what time period?

### SOME FINDINGS

*[...] basic notions of island biogeography are sufficient to recommend the creation of as large reserves as possible (only areas over 10 000km<sup>2</sup> will have a real chance to ensure the survival of the species that inhabit African savannahs and forests): we are just as aware that one cohesive area is better than a succession of smaller reserves. Furthermore, the smaller a protected area is, the more intervention is necessary to maintain the ecological processes, at a correspondingly higher cost of protection.*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, November 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique nature International]

Biodiversity conservation should be approached as a system on various different, interconnected scales. Between interaction and complementarity, the choice of scale is a strategic, political, technical and financial one. The “right” conservation scale depends on what we wish to protect (specific species, landscape or ecosystems). From the local scale to the ecosystem scale each level is pertinent for biodiversity conservation but the objectives differ and hence so do the actions to be implemented.

The protected area itself is seen as the usual scale for conservation actions; its management is intrinsically linked to the national or sub-regional scale, essential levels particularly for the legal aspects. Working at these scales is also more logical in terms of influencing policy and lobbying. This is the case for the Regional marine and coastal programme along the West African Atlantic coast, which set up shared species conservation programmes – action on a smaller scale would have been pointless.

All the scales are potentially legitimate depending on the situation and should be determined according to the context and resources available. An approach on the ecosystem scale has become the norm as it helps to integrate most of the issues relating to the conservation of an area, although where the factors affecting it begin and end needs to be able to be determined.

#### **AWF Heartland Approach, an interesting hybrid approach**

For the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), the “*only way to conserve African wildlife is to manage wild areas. Not small areas, not even average-sized national parks, but vast landscapes that spread across hundreds or even thousands of miles*”. To do this, local communities need to be involved, trained and equipped so they can practice sustainable land management. Scientific research helps to better understand the landscape, the wildlife, the people and how they all interact. To optimise the management of these areas in everyone’s interest, a network of laws, policies and practices covers all stakeholders, from government ministries to village safari operators.

This difficult and complex task is a long-term one. AWF’s Heartland programme aims to maintain key landscapes, essential for conservation due to the unequalled concentration of wildlife and the high potential for local support. Much larger than any park or reserve, Heartland combines national parks, villages, governmental and private land. All is part of a coherent, sometimes transboundary conservation landscape. AWF works with the different stakeholders to draw up species protection and conservation strategies through applied research and works to improve conservation and local community autonomy thanks to training and economic development.

Source :

<http://www.awf.org/section/heartlands>

The notion of subsidiarity arises here. The most pertinent scale should always be the one where the best results can be achieved. To establish this, it could be useful to analyse the ecological gaps at different levels as well as the possible solutions, to identify the appropriate actors and procedures. This would probably mean working on “illegitimate” groupings (ones with no official recognition) such as the areas targeted by the ECOFAC project, but this is not a problem if it leads to tangible, ultimately transferrable results.

**The eco-regional approach, a new scale for conservation promoted by Conservation International**

The eco-regional approach provides stakeholders with new ideas, methodologies, tools and approaches which can lead and support the conservation of species, spaces and processes within a given eco-region while recognising and responding to the aspirations, needs and motivations of local populations and their government. The approach proactively anticipates a protection agreement for a wide range of biodiversity. The conservation of an eco-region is the result of discussion, planning and actions at the right scale in space and time for biodiversity conservation to succeed. The conservation of the eco-region is thus a process that works to better reach the combined objectives of conservation, partnership and sustainability.

**Source :**

[http://www.usaid.gov/mg/so6\\_docs/theme1\\_sans\\_carte.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/mg/so6_docs/theme1_sans_carte.pdf)

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The scale of a conservation area depends on management priorities and feasibility in terms of capacities, skills and resources. Yet should conservation be limited to a particular scale?

- All scales have their potential advantages and they probably combine to give good results for conservation.
  - ⇒ The need to take into account peripheral zones in protected area management is noted.
  - ⇒ The landscape scale is an interesting experiment in the medium term, particularly regarding political lobbying and advocacy issues. These great, sometimes transboundary “laboratories” produce lessons learned, facilitate sharing of experience and federate stakeholders, all of which are advantageous.
  - ⇒ Experiments with scales such as biomes or hotspots could be a good tool to determine the pertinent scale for action and to delimit a conservation area.
- In light of the different possible scales, it would appear important to analyse the conservation priorities to determine the appropriate scale of intervention effectively. Analysis of ecological gaps helps identify urgent issues and prioritise actions, thus leading to the choice of scale for action.
  - ⇒ The most appropriate stakeholders to respond to the challenges raised in the analysis must be identified.
  - ⇒ Working at the scale of a protected area is pragmatic and rapid, but it is not necessarily sustainable (especially if it is a small area).
  - ⇒ Working at the scale of a *landscape* widens the spectrum of stakeholders and responsibilities making it possible to target pilot actions and select action zones based on the gap analysis.
  - ⇒ The scale of an eco-region can help to prioritise more widely within a shared frame of reference with a longer-term vision. This approach is important for raising public awareness and prioritising regional policies.

## NEXT STEPS

To guarantee complementarity between the conservation scales and prioritise objectives, some essential short and medium-term actions have been identified:

- **Reinforce the ecosystem approach in conservation project specifications.** The ecosystem is a viable dimension for carrying out conservation actions.
- **Raise managers' awareness of this approach** and of the ensuing need to work at a different scale. **Stakeholders are thus better informed and trained in new management dimensions.**
- **Encourage exchanges between areas that have the same constraints** to build suitable solutions. **The change in scale offers a change in perspective.**
- **Step-up information sharing on certain protected area management categories** (particularly Category V) to increase the number of protected areas that are really contributing to conservation efforts. **This change of scale needs new conservation areas to be defined.**
- In doing this, **increase interaction among the different stakeholders working in the same area** (for example in the extractive industries or development).
- Document and analyse new scales of conservation to **increase effectiveness of lobbying and awareness raising among decision-makers and politicians.** The **change in scale opens new possibilities for influence which are essential to support work in the field.**

## 2.4 Integrating conservation into a long-term collaborative approach vs. an immediately effective and often segmented project approach

### SOME FINDINGS

*An interesting solution could be setting up sustainable financing mechanisms, but this can only succeed if the credibility of the beneficiary, in this case the protected area or parks and reserve network management structure, is guaranteed. [...] When sustainable financing is available, this should never be a substitute for government financial backing. Indeed, it is just as important for national budgets to take into account the value of services rendered by nature, a value that would fully justify more substantial commitments from governments.*

[Extracts from IUCN APAO Letter 24, November 2009 - Francis Lauginie – Afrique nature International]

When faced with a pressing situation, the reaction of organisations responsible for conservation or stakeholders working in this field is to set in place immediate measures which are often too thinly spread. The large conservation programmes developed in Africa usually enable considerable support to be provided at a given time for protected area development and improved management, but they are not sustainable and do not have a long-term structuring effect on the institutions in charge of conservation.

The situation worsens as soon as these programmes come to an end, thus sometimes making it very difficult to do so. Considerable sums have been invested over the past years without protected areas having really reached a sustainable level of protection and management.

While there are success stories in very particular contexts, it must be admitted that conservation programmes of recent years, particularly in French-speaking Africa, have been ineffective. This is due to the highly segmented approach to conservation: each donor, operator, NGO or government works in isolation, without discussion and according to their own timetable and without a long-term vision. Thus, as the situation worsens, we always propose the same solutions, convinced that what did not work yesterday will do so tomorrow!

Thinking of the long-term runs somewhat against current trends (liberalism, immediate profit seeking, limited short-term project approach), however conservation takes time.

Useful tools already exist; others need to be invented depending on the different contexts specific to each conservation entity.

A tool currently being developed concerns **environmental trust funds**. In theory it is a simple mechanism: the young IBAP (the protected areas management agency in Guinea Bissau) already has one and it is barely 10 years old. But it requires commitment from a higher level than the government because it requires a sustainable change in mentalities and the way agencies work (optimisation of costs).

This is how the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) also set up its sustainable financing mechanism. The scale can be supranational, as is the case of the Sangha Tri Nations Foundation in Central Africa, but this makes the approach much more complex, although obviously much more interesting (working at the scale of a complete ecosystem).

Another tool is particularly under the spotlight due to its revenue-generating potential and its sustainability: the REDD. Indeed, since the 2007 United Nations Conference on climate change in Bali (Indonesia), the principle of giving financial incentives to developing countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions caused by environmental degradation and deforestation (REDD) was accepted by the international political sphere.

REDD is now followed by a “+” and includes conservation (of protected areas or native reserves for instance), the certification of sustainable forest management and improved forest carbon stocks (for instance reforestation and regeneration initiatives providing community advantages). Furthermore, agriculture is recognised as an important source of greenhouse gas emissions, giving impetus for the adoption of improved farming and livestock raising practices to reduce emissions.

To effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Africa, we will need to work at different, interdependent levels to create financial structures and policies adapted to this new mechanism.

#### **REDD+ and the role of the Nature Conservation Research Centre (NCRC) in Ghana**

##### **John Masson – Executive Director of the Nature Conservation Research Centre**

In relation to Latin America or Asia, the African continent has been relatively slow to develop REDD+ strategies, but more recently the rate of signing up to this mechanism has increased significantly. An increasing number of countries are making rapid progress in the REDD+ process. Carbon financing in Africa is becoming the domain of government and private companies, with agendas that are often incompatible with the realities faced by the community, biodiversity and small-scale agriculture. As a result, there is a high risk that national policy will not be able to achieve significant results at local level.

For the success and long-term stability of land-based carbon mechanisms, local support is vital. Civil society groups and communities need support to participate in formulating and implementing land-based carbon financing initiatives. This requires combined efforts in the short and medium-term, specifically adapted to the needs and attributes of a range of NGOs and community-based organisations across the continent.

The Ghanaian Government and the NCRC play an important role in implementing REDD+ projects in particular by the development of a Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) mechanism. The CREMA envisages a solution to land tenure issues by setting up institutional platforms and sharing the advantages of carbon financing in Ghana and beyond. This approach is a particularly interesting pilot for West Africa.

To effectively reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Africa by creating financial structures and policy, we will need to work at different and interdependent levels. Pilot projects and activities carried out on a national scale cannot operate in isolation. They need to be supported legally, financially and to benefit from controls by national or regional institutions to monitor their emissions.

It is also clear that during the next five years local activities and targeted projects will be essential in providing short-term reductions in greenhouse gasses both at the level of national structures and in the capacities mobilised. Neither national policy design nor specific projects will be enough.

The main challenge will be to launch carbon project activities in the field, to build and strengthen the landscape of carbon emission reduction, to inform and increase national and sub-regional policy development in the process. In the immediate future and in light of the uncertainty of carbon financial markets, it is possible that some CSOs, community organisations and the private sector will have first access to financing for REDD+ initiatives, from the public sector.

Finally, regardless of the tools used, the notion of time needs to be borne in mind. In light of environmental degradation, time is needed to foster species (of both flora and fauna) and environmental resilience. Time is also needed to shift boundaries and for people to take ownership of conservation. In Europe the phenomenon is still very recent, despite considerable and lengthy mobilisation. The voice of civil society is still not loud enough.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Faced with ecosystem degradation, the notion of time is logically put under pressure by short-term emergencies. However, it is essential to sign up for the long term if achievements are to be sustainable:

- We must now work within two timeframes, the short and the long term, promote new partnerships and be able to steer the actions carried out within conservation programmes.
  - ⇒ This requires the conservation vision to be promoted in an integrated and collaborative approach, in the long term, with an adjustable and flexible strategy.
  - ⇒ Conservation actions should have a range of creative and innovative financing sources: setting up public-private partnerships, on-going training programmes, sustainable financing etc. These aspects require considerable investment in human and financial resources and donors, multilateral and bilateral cooperation agencies must particularly make this investment.
- The promotion of small initiatives can be envisaged as a transition tool. Small initiatives play an important role in terms of mobilising local populations, raising funds rapidly and responding well to short-term issues.
- Continuity is given to conservation programmes so they are no longer broken down into phases. Too many conservation projects (e.g. ECOFAC, ECOPAS) fail due to excessive downtime between phases. These programmes must be built as the central pillar for all partners.
- To move towards this approach there must be complementarity between long term programmes and short term initiatives to respond rapidly to urgent situations, to between-project phases if necessary and to the need for long-term intervention.

## NEXT STEPS

To guarantee the impact of conservation actions in the long-term, some essential actions have been identified:

→ **Promote a long-term conservation strategy:**

- **Organise environmental conferences in each country to outline a national action plan** for biodiversity conservation and protected area management **and move towards a single, clear, sustainable and uniting framework for conservation** (national biodiversity strategies for instance).
- **This approach should also concern the regional scale.**
- Approach decision-makers, guide donor and development aid actions, influence governments so that financing subscribes to this strategy. The **decisions taken are**

**based on a single framework and enable each stakeholder to carry out their actions in synergy with others.**

- **Promote new financing tools and combine traditional financing approaches with additional, complementary financing** (trust funds, foundations, REDD+, ecosystem payments, a share of profits from licences). **The sustainability of conservation will be based on the multiplication of support.**
- Inform managers of these new tools and approaches and **train them to use them. The sustainability of conservation will be based on management capacities.**
- **Raise the awareness of and inform decision-makers about these new opportunities** so they can be adopted and implemented. **The sustainability of conservation will be based on political buy-in.**
- **Reinforce existing management structures, reduce dependency on volatile support** (technical assistance) **and build sustainable systems** that are therefore relatively (and increasingly) independent of external support.



*Gueumbeul reserve, Senegal*

## Summary of potential actions

These actions summarise the various options mentioned above under the heading “Next Steps”. However, they do not cover all the fields envisaged in the report. They are classified according to the type of stakeholder involved in their implementation.

### For everyone

- ☑ Within protected area management budgets, dedicate substantial financing to communication, advocacy and lobbying to raise interest in these areas beyond the specialist audience.
- ☑ Use the capacity of new communication methods and social media to inform people about conservation and thus increase and strengthen their support for protected areas.
- ☑ Educate and raise awareness of regulatory authorities (managers, police, judges, prosecutors) as to the application of laws on the environment and conservation in particular from local to national levels.
- ☑ Identify and assess existing legal frameworks, their gaps (audit) and make regional comparisons to learn from existing experiences and share them.
- ☑ If necessary, reinforce and then apply the regulatory arsenal, existing tools and management plans in particular
- ☑ Disseminate the IUCN guidelines on protected area legislation: they aim to set minimum standards in terms of laws and their application
- ☑ Widen the promotion of protected areas to a wide range of values (not just monetary ones) at all levels (from local to regional)
- ☑ Strengthen the promotion of aspects that directly contribute to conservation (carbon storage, catchment protection, sustainable forestry, heritage management, conservation of emblematic species etc.)
- ☑ Promote mechanisms that ensure that the benefits (whatever they may be) produced by the different forms of promotion reach all potential beneficiaries (including local ones)
- ☑ Develop collaboration on management systems at all scales, beginning locally and then rising to a wider scale.
- ☑ Also develop *ad hoc* collaborative mechanisms to involve stakeholders located on the periphery of protected areas in decisions that could affect them.



- ☑ Develop new channels for environmental communication to raise greater public awareness of protected areas and the role these play in their immediate environment
- ☑ Establish and communicate the list of donors committed to small initiatives by setting up an interface to promote these donors and encourage new partners to get involved.
- ☑ Facilitate access for less experienced stakeholders and promote one-stop mechanisms that pool funds specifically for “small initiatives”
- ☑ Reinforce the ecosystem approach in conservation project design
- ☑ Encourage exchanges between areas that share the same constraints in developing suitable solutions and enable changes in perspectives and scales.
- ☑ Increase information sharing among certain protected area categories (particularly Category V) to reinforce management and partner capacities
- ☑ Promote long-term conservation strategies by organising environmental conferences in each country to outline national action plans and work towards a single, clear and uniting conservation framework
- ☑ Promote new financing tools and combine traditional financing approaches with additional and complementary financing

### **Decision-makers/politicians**

- ☑ Use protected area evaluation results, presented simply, to improve political support for these conservation areas and enable decision makers to define and monitor realistic results.
- ☑ Simplify regulatory procedures, if possible, and give regulatory authority to those stakeholders best placed to apply them
- ☑ In each country, finalise a national biodiversity strategy that establishes a long-term vision and is a framework document for planning and coordination with other sectors
- ☑ Inform the other stakeholders in environmental management of this strategy and integrate it into poverty reduction strategies and climate change plans among others
- ☑ Similarly, integrate planning issues for each area (protected areas and peripheral zones) into the national biodiversity conservation strategy

- ☑ Strengthen regional and sub-regional strategies as they offer effective potential for planning: the change in scale will help to take sounder decisions that are easier to implement
- ☑ Analyse ecological gaps in existing networks to build effective, strategic and sustainable protected area groupings
- ☑ Set up channels to inform decision-makers and politicians about protected areas to raise their awareness of protected area conservation issues
- ☑ Lobby parliamentarians and organisations in donor countries to effect a sea change in the way large conservation projects are designed and implemented

### **Donors, bilateral and multilateral agencies**

- ☑ Align projects with existing management strategies to strengthen processes already underway instead of creating parallel, unsustainable systems
- ☑ Improve project implementation procedures for better results and lower structural costs
- ☑ Eliminate “between project” phases which damage the results achieved: to do this a long-term strategic approach must be developed from the outset because large projects must be perceived as long projects
- ☑ As soon as the project is launched, appoint a “third-party” partner responsible for preparing the following phase, one without a direct interest in it, thus helping to ensure continuity between the different phases
- ☑ Promote the diversification of sub-projects that help increase the number of stakeholders and give other donors the opportunity to support them. Thus responsibility is shared and financing sources are multiplied and hence more sustainable
- ☑ Create bridges between large and small projects and enable synergy between their operators to build local capacities to manage continuity.
- ☑ Develop quality standards (a good conduct charter) for large projects to ensure that no donor, due to the size of its funds, upsets the local balance and imposes its own approach
- ☑ Ensure that “large” projects are accompanied by small initiatives in order to increase their impact and involve new local partners

- ☑ Develop standards for small conservation projects in order to distinguish them from small environmental initiatives within conventional development projects and focus specifically on conservation.
- ☑ Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of small initiative project implementation and their beneficiaries: the results of small initiatives must be used to raise awareness as widely as possible
- ☑ Make more use of management evaluation results to improve management over time
- ☑ Encourage donors to finance research programmes in protected areas

### **Research Institutes**

- ☑ Set up frameworks for collaboration and dialogue among researchers and managers on management priorities based on a protected area gap analysis
- ☑ Develop communication tools based on data and target decision-makers using various materials to enable knowledge to be disseminated and used
- ☑ Encourage scientific publication on the Internet by developing an on-line database that is sustainable and open to all
- ☑ Disseminate simple, effective and replicable data collection and research protocols to management teams so they have standard user-friendly tools that will be widely accepted
- ☑ Encourage partnerships between research organisations and protected area management institutions to develop new ways of promoting the natural resources of protected areas, based on innovative approaches

### **Management structures, administration**

- ☑ Adapt training programmes for managers so they can better understand the challenges of their profession and acquire appropriate skills
- ☑ Integrate climate change themes and adaptation solutions into training programmes
- ☑ Train managers' key partners to strengthen the changes underway and involve new stakeholders in the management and monitoring of protected areas

- ☑ Promote governance systems that enable other stakeholders to participate by setting up “board of directors” type structures so as to widen the range of skills available to manage parks and enhance managerial responsibility
- ☑ Work to certify protected areas (for instance by the creation of a **green list**) because recognition is a powerful tool for progress
- ☑ Analyse management structures through institutional audits in order to propose minimum standards for protected areas and a template for good governance rules to restructure decision-making levels and regulations
- ☑ Build managers’ capacities in data collection and analysis methodologies through appropriate training (particularly modules to introduce them to research)
- ☑ Encourage managers to adopt an entrepreneurial approach to promoting protected areas based on all the values identified
- ☑ Review management and development plans when necessary or develop them according to IUCN good practice to base them on recognised standards: the management plan is a basic management tool that should be easy for the manager to use
- ☑ Adapt the duration of management plans (or of all management tools) to make them more operational: plans that are easy to revise adapt better to changes in management in the field
- ☑ Ensure that the protected area management is involved in the decision-making bodies that could affect their area
- ☑ Define a standard for protected area peripheral zones according to each management category: a simple and clearly identified peripheral zone helps develop more effective actions
- ☑ Train and inform protected area managers in the environmental issues surrounding the protected area to make interaction in the overall area more effective
- ☑ Raise awareness of managers regarding the ecosystem approach and the ensuing need for a change in scale
- ☑ Strengthen existing management structures and reduce their dependency on volatile support and build sustainable systems
- ☑ Train managers in new financing tools and conservation approaches to create a new leadership culture able to use them

### **Conservation NGOs, local NGOs, Civil Society etc.**

- ☑ Work with local NGOs so that they can monitor the effective implementation of protected area management tools in Africa: good practice watchdogs to detect positive initiatives, build networks among stakeholders and disseminate knowledge
- ☑ Promote local capacity building in implementing projects to ensure sustainability of actions and build advocacy capacities, particularly by using social media
- ☑ Identify new (particularly local) spokespersons to carry environmental messages (ambassadors for the environment, media partners, traditional leaders etc.)

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