COMMITMENTS

The Ministers of Environment from the seven “most advanced” countries on Earth (as they consider themselves to be since 1976 – the US, Canada, Japan, Germany, UK, France and Italy) met online at a UK-initiated summit last May.

The event took place remotely under the looming shadow of the pandemic: “We recognise that some of the key drivers of global biodiversity loss and climate change are the same as those that increase the risk of zoonoses, which can lead to pandemics,” the summit participants recalled in a press release. Hence, the crucial need to start thinking now about the world we want for tomorrow. “We stress our determination to put climate, biodiversity, and the environment at the heart of our COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments,” the ministers added.

Many things were stated most of which relate to climate change. A few points, however, focus on the preservation of biodiversity. “Despite existing global agreements for the protection, conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity, global negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystem functions are projected to continue or worsen,” the ministers warned, taking stock of the situation, which necessarily calls for a reaction. “We commit to take urgent action to address the five direct drivers of biodiversity loss, all a result of human activity: changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species.”

Although they “recognise that deforestation, forest degradation and ecosystem conversion are global threats to our climate, biodiversity, food security and livelihoods and are driven by the expansion of agriculture, mining, logging and infrastructure projects,” the ministers do not speak of the primary causes of these phenomenon.

Notable, overpopulation and demographic growth are never mentioned.

Some possible solutions to these issues are supposed to be found during the next Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity, set to take place at the end of the year. “We commit to champion ambitious and effective global biodiversity targets, including conserving or protecting at least 30 percent of global land and at least 30 percent of the global ocean by 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and address climate change, including through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures (OECMs) by 2030 (30by30), recognising that Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, are full partners in the implementation of this target,” the ministers stated.

More specifically, “we recognise that the illegal wildlife trade (IWT), trafficking in timber and timber products, hazardous and other wastes, and precious metals, gemstones and other minerals, illegal logging and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing have a devastating impact on our natural environment and livelihoods.”… “We commit to increase our efforts to reduce the demand for IWT products by developing targeted and evidence-based interventions in order to inform consumer behaviour and close markets where these illegal products are trafficked and sold.”

Intentions are good, suggestions interesting, but will actions follow? In parallel, most of the G7 countries are undertaking actions that sharply contradict their statements – such as Canada in Namibia and Botswana, or France in Tanzania, about oil exploration. In short, virtual meetings foster virtual commitments. Let’s stay watchful and careful.
MOOC Conservation

MOOCs

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Ongoing session: 18 January to 13 June 2021 (midnight).

MOOC registrations: mooc-conservation.org.

THE ESSENTIALS

What are they? They are short courses geared to a specific profile of protected area conservation actors.

Four options are possible: Rangers, Managers (involved in Research R or in Law enforcement L) and Leaders.

Inscriptions: mooc-conservation.org

RANGER ESSENTIAL
For protected area (PA) professionals who apply decisions and ensure the implementation of activities inside the PA.

MANAGER ESSENTIAL
For protected area professionals who need to plan, manage and assess the work carried out by field agents.

MANAGER LAW: focuses on law enforcement and the valorisation of the PA and its natural resources.

MANAGER RESEARCH: focuses on research activities, monitoring-evaluation and ecological monitoring.

LEADER ESSENTIAL
For actors who are influencing the protected area context at a larger scale, without necessarily working directly inside a protected area.
Ambassadors etc.

TWO NEW AMBASSADORS:
OMAR (DIFFA, NIGER) AND JAMES (SIERRA LEONE)

Two new ambassadors joined the team. James (left) and Omar (right) volunteered to support students in their respective regions, and to participate in the creation of local networks of conservation and protected area professionals.

AMBASSADOR? An ambassador is a designated Papaco MOOC student who volunteered to help students in his/her city or region. Website with all ambassadors: here.

List of ambassadors (click on the name to send them an email):
- Benin, Kévin
- Bouaké, Bernadette
- Burkina Faso, Valéry
- Burundi, Léonidas
- Comoros, Humblot
- Côte d’Ivoire, Mamadou
- Douala (Cameroon), Mathias
- Gabon, Brice
- Guinea (Conakry), Moussa
- Haïti, Talot
- Kara (Togo), Jean
- Kenya, James
- Kindu (DRC), Ohm
- Kinshasa (DRC), Emmanuel
- Kisangani (DRC), Richard
- Mali, Seydou
- Lomé (Togo), Samuel
- Lubumbashi (DRC), Albert
- Madagascar (Tana), Raymond
- Morocco, Rachid
- Mauritania, Fall
- Niger, Oumarou
- Nigeria, Michael
- Pointe Noire, Charmand
- Rwanda, Leonard
- Senegal, Thiam
- Chad, Seid
- Tunisia, Moadh
- Yaoundé (Cameroon), Pascale
- Zambia, Chewe
- Zimbabwe/South Africa, Fanuel
- Diffa (Niger), Omar
- Sierra Leone, James
Introduction

Engagement with other individuals, organisations and communities involves very different values and aspirations—they can be thought of as clients, customers and collaborators—and is complex, occurring across a diversity of geographical, social and political settings. The detail of how to engage successfully will be dependent on the specific context, so this chapter does not prescribe what to do in a specific situation, but rather presents concepts and principles to allow managers to recognise this diversity and to adopt approaches suited to their circumstances, selecting from an array of tools and strategies.

Collaboration in protected area management

Increasing moves towards cross-tenure or landscape-scale biodiversity and natural resource management, such as integrated catchment management and connectivity conservation, place protected areas as part of a wider system of resources, values, organisations and actors. Even where protected areas are not part of a wider connectivity conservation initiative, managers will—and indeed must—
establish relationships with neighbouring landholders, other government agencies, visitors and NGOs. This adds social considerations to the mix of natural, legal, financial and institutional considerations to be recognised and dealt with. Some community engagement is required in, for example, developing management plans. There is, however, typically a practical requirement for more and different forms than those stipulated in legislative or planning processes: protected area management occurs within a complex matrix of interests and groups. These social considerations include matters relating to different cultural groups who use protected areas or have an interest in their management, and therefore include issues of cross-cultural understanding and communication.

Protected area management exists within a political context, which will vary between countries and localities, where different values and expectations regarding natural areas and human use of them influence management. In some jurisdictions, park agencies and similar organisations have considerable status, authority and resources; in others they may not. Hence the relationships between these organisations and other agencies, NGOs and communities will vary, and styles of engagement will need to be fashioned according to the political context. A factor influencing the political context is the degree of freedom of the media, the interest of the media in conservation and the attitude of powerful media interests. What works in one place may not work in another, depending on political and legal rules and structures, the strength of different social values and the power of different groups.

Working with multiple stakeholders places different requirements on management and the agencies responsible (for example, a national park service), and different demands on the time and skills of management staff at all levels and in all roles. Community engagement, stakeholder liaison, management of public–private partnerships and inter-agency collaborations have become part of the role statement for protected area agencies and staff. Consider the range of individuals and organisations that have clear roles or interests in the management of protected areas:

- neighbours—private sector or community landholders and tenants, whether residential, agricultural or private conservation
- local communities in the surrounding area, including indigenous communities and nearby urban residents
- indigenous and local communities who reside in a protected area and/or are reliant on resources in them for their livelihoods
- other public sector land or natural resource management agencies and their staff, at the same level of government—forest agencies, environmental protection authorities, catchment management authorities or water commissions, or maritime and fisheries agencies in the case of coastal and marine reserves
- other public agencies, at the same level of government, which may require access to or collaboration with protected areas—emergency management, military, police or infrastructure and transport suppliers
- agencies in levels of government other than those responsible for the protected area, across the spectrum of local, regional, provincial/state, national and international—for example, European Union or United Nations
- politicians and political parties or movements who influence (positively or negatively) protected area policy and management
- NGOs interested in nature conservation, including advocacy groups, those engaged in collaborative management and philanthropic organisations contributing to reserve acquisition or management
- tourists and recreational users, local or from a distance, regular or occasional, individuals or organised interest
groups

- local or regional private sector (commercial) interests, such as tour guide firms and accommodation operators, generally of a small scale but who may be linked to larger firms or networks
- larger commercial interests (with or without a permanent local presence), up to the scale of powerful transnational corporations
- research organisations whose activities rely on access to protected areas or inform management.

This list indicates a huge array of interests, which is realistic anywhere there is a significant protected area estate. Across these groups there are partners and potential partners, those who are interested or disinterested, opponents, collaborators with a common interest, and those focused on commercial opportunities. Some individuals will play multiple roles—for example, a member of the local community who visits the protected area for recreation and who is also involved in tourism promotion as an elected local government member and a local businessperson.

Within protected area management agencies, different staff will engage with different parties for different reasons. Senior executives will engage formally with senior officials from other agencies, with industry bodies or recreational user lobby groups and the media, whereas operations staff will interact on a day-to-day basis with locally based agency staff, local communities and businesses, local politicians, immediate neighbours and visitors. Similarly, engagement will vary according to the type and location of a protected area—that is, remote or near a city. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) definition of a protected area is ‘a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values’.

There is clearly a great diversity of ‘stakeholders’: individuals and groups who have an interest in the management of protected areas, whether a single area or a system of protected areas. This is matched by the diversity of protected areas and the aims of these areas.

These categories define different primary purposes, and thus different relationships that groups in a society will have with protected area management and staff. They also indicate a greater or lesser degree of control over use of or visitation to a protected area, often defined in legislation and other formal policy. For example, a strict nature reserve (Category Ia) or a natural monument (Category III) may have tight regulatory controls over other uses, whereas Category V–VI areas may permit recreation, tourism operators, fishers, miners or subsistence food harvesting in a more or less managed fashion. Categories V–VI are managed as cultural landscapes where nature conservation exists alongside resident communities’ livelihoods and social practice; engagement between communities and managers is not optional in these situations but is essential to the core purpose of land management.

These purposes are, however, what an area is mainly managed for, and most often there is a mix of uses and users, and thus of relationships with individuals, societal groups and organisations. This mix of users comprises the clients, customers and collaborators of protected area management—those whose services are sought and used by managers, those who use or purchase the services provided by protected areas, and those who work with protected area managers towards a common purpose. These are fundamentally different relationships, based variously on shared values and goals, commercial obligations, expectations of service provision, or regulatory
or policy requirements to be met.

Simplistically, the relationships and interactions between protected area managers and ‘others’ are thought of as primarily involving recreational users and tourists who utilise the area so as to enjoy its natural amenity, possibly extending to illegal or unwelcome visitors, commercial operators within or adjacent to the national park and landholders abutting the park. Protected area managers themselves know there are many more: environmental NGOs, voluntary rangers, resource extraction firms, local communities dependent on the protected area in some way, a variety of other government agencies, and so on. The list of those with whom a protected area manager ‘engages’ can be very long, and as the move towards whole-of-landscape conservation and land management continues, the list and variety will inevitably grow.

Protected area management is not alone in moving towards partnerships and collaborative governance, as this has become more important in water and catchment management, forestry, fisheries, urban planning, climate adaptation policy and other areas, and valuable perspectives have emerged from the broader field. Protected area managers can look to their peers in other agencies and sectors within their jurisdiction for insights from other participatory processes.

General principles of engagement

The following principles reflect generic issues in collaborative resource management and public participation more widely. These principles are general, they overlap to some extent (for example, recognising motivations, reciprocity and clarity) and may be in tension (for example, persistence and limits to volunteerism).

1. Recognition of different motivations: Although protected area managers engage with other parties around the common concern of the management of a protected area or areas, or the implications of that management for other areas and interests, the motivations will rarely be the same. The manager will be concerned with the protected area above all else, whereas the other party may be concerned with biodiversity conservation more broadly, regional fire management, local livelihoods and economic development, maintenance of cultural sites, or tourism and recreational access. Even within one user group there will be different motivations, such as with recreational users of a protected area. At the extremes, there will be those who may oppose protected areas as a means to pursue nature conservation, or those who agitate strongly for stricter conservation measures than managers can countenance. Such varied motivations may coincide, or may be the possible basis for compromise, or create conflict. It may in fact be difficult to discern the primary motivation of a stakeholder, such as where private profit may be conflated with community economic development, or where deep cultural attachment may be conflated with nature conservation. Different motivations need to be clearly identified and openly discussed, to avoid ‘hidden agendas’ or tensions that remain unrecognised and therefore not properly dealt with.

2. Reciprocity: Consistent with different motivations, the purpose of engagement and participation is, for a protected area manager, the integrity and protection of the area in question, whereas for a client, customer or collaborator that may not be the main purpose. Bluntly, people will want something out of the relationship, whether that is the protection of a species, recreational opportunities, business prospects, protection of a culturally significant site, clean water downstream, access to food sources or information. Engagement strategies, and the attitude and approach of protected area managers to engagement, must recognise these wants and view engagement as a reciprocal arrangement aimed at satisfying— if possible— these different wants. At the least, an understanding of why some needs and demands cannot be met can be reached in a transparent fashion.

3. Clarity and transparency: Openness and honesty are the basis of relationships and of collaboration, or at least of compromise and toleration, and even of unresolved conflict that nonetheless ends with mutual respect for each party. Engagement and participation in protected area management should be based on clarity over the purpose of engagement, what is on the agenda and who will make decisions. Communities or commercial interests accept limited engagement, but not false expectations of how much influence they have.

4. Persistence: Engagement takes time and effort and there is an understandable tendency to cease a process of engagement or a partnership once an immediate need is met. Interest groups and local communities view ‘on again,
5. Limits to volunteerism, and the capacity to engage:

Engagement takes time and effort on the part of protected area staff, but it is part of their job (or should be). The skills of staff, however, will vary in their ability to engage and communicate with external parties, so training and capacity building may be needed. For many others, particularly local communities or NGOs, contributing to protected area management is voluntary, whether or not the relevant management agency has invited their input. This must be recognised and the limits to volunteerism respected, by not placing onerous expectations or demands on people and by respecting their capacity to engage (time, travel costs, technological support and so on). Some community members may require financial or technical assistance to allow participation.

6. Exclusion and inclusion can interact:

When a participatory process is established, some people and interests may be intentionally or unintentionally excluded by the way in which the process is structured. As the political scientist Schattschneider put it, ‘whoever decides what the game is about decides also who can get into the game’. Managers and governments make decisions about the geographical scale of a consultation (and thus who is included), the topics that are relevant (and thus who will be interested) and the timing and location of meetings or the accessibility of web-based or written materials (and thus who can access the process). Such decisions may make engagement easy and obvious for some groups and individuals, or difficult or impossible for others.

7. Representativeness:

Engagement strategies involve deciding who will be involved (see the section ‘Engage with whom?’ below), and this often involves a decision regarding which particular individuals or organisations can best represent relevant interests. This requires protected area managers to be aware of the relevant interests and groups, and to ensure that the process is sufficiently representative to be fair and defensible and to produce outcomes that will be accepted or at least understood by interested parties. For example, a local chamber of commerce may or may not represent the specific businesses most concerned with the protected area, and a residents’ or community group may or may not represent those people who live close to and are most affected by management plans. One individual may have difficulty representing a ‘community’ that is not homogenous in its views. Especially important is being aware of the difficulties of engagement for, and gaining representation of, marginalised groups in society, such as the poor, remotely located, young people and women. Representation may be a very different matter with many local, indigenous or tribal communities compared with organised business or conservation groups, and strategies such as a series of community meetings may be required to identify representatives. Asking a person to ‘represent’ a particular group may constrain their input and limit their role to defending or advancing only that set of interests. In some situations, involving people on the basis of their knowledge and expertise may be advisable, allowing them to have a wider scope of input. A mix of representative and expert-based membership of advisory or consultative groups can be effective.

8. Skills and resources for collaboration:

Engagement takes time, requires resources and demands appropriate skills. Engagement processes that are rushed, poorly designed or inadequately implemented may create tensions and can damage valuable relationships. Engagement and participation require skills that should be engendered and
valued, from survey design through written communication to the running of community meetings. Engagement also may take considerable time, and management processes (such as a management plan review) should recognise this and cater for it. Engagement also requires resources such as adequate funding, staff allocation and information.

These are guiding principles not rules or the ingredients of a recipe, but they reflect the lessons accrued from participatory processes in natural resource and environmental management over many decades. If considered early and carefully, application of these principles will increase the likelihood of positive engagement.

Engage with whom?

The core message of this section is that protected areas have many values, and thus are of interest to many individuals, communities and organisations who may be located nearby or at a distance. Protected area managers must recognise these multiple interests and be thorough in identifying and engaging all those who have a stake in the protected area/s in question, whatever their interest. This section has provided general guidance on answering the important question: who has an interest in protected area management in this particular situation?

Why: The purposes of engagement

The core message of this section is that engagement with communities and other organisations is not singular in its purpose, but is undertaken to allow the realisation of different goals held by different individuals and groups. Protected area managers need to be clear about the goals to be achieved through engagement—that is, their own motivations but also those of partners—so that these purposes are more likely to be achieved. This section has provided general guidance on answering the important question: what is the purpose of engaging other parties in protected area management in this particular situation?

How: Forms of engagement and participation

The core message of this section is that there is a range of participatory strategies and methods available, and communications media, to suit different purposes and people. As with anyone reaching into a toolbox, protected area managers should consider the who and why, and then select the form of participation—the ‘how’—suited to their situation. This section has provided general guidance on answering the important question: what is the appropriate form of participation and engagement in protected area management in this particular situation?

When should engagement occur?

The core message of this section is that engagement with communities and other organisations varies in the timing, requirements for preparation and regularity of contact and communication. Timing will vary across purposes and forms of engagement. This section has provided general guidance on answering the important question: when does an engagement strategy or process need to occur, at what intervals, and how can protected area management be prepared?

Conclusion

Protected area management involves negotiation, consultation, partnerships and sometimes conflict with neighbours, clients, customers and collaborators. These relationships embed protected areas within complex social, economic and institutional landscapes—far from the idea of reserves being managed in isolation as ‘islands’ in the landscape. This presents managers with both the challenge of how best to engage with diverse groups and individuals and the opportunities for better outcomes that these relationships offer. Engagement and collaboration have become—and will increasingly feature as—core competencies of protected area managers, requiring time, resources and skills. Also, adaptive management is most likely to succeed if the knowledge and skills of communities can be harnessed as well as communities being supportive of management initiatives. • Consultez le document complet en cliquant ici.
Identifying priorities for Forest Landscape Restoration based on participatory mapping and forest inventories at subnational level – Togo

Forest landscapes and the benefits they provide – e.g. timber, fuelwood, water regulation, soil protection and climate regulation - are crucial for the wellbeing of people in Togo. Many landscapes, however, are degraded due to unsustainable use of resources. It is crucial to improve their conditions, via restoration, for improving food security and access to water. This solution defines concrete options for forest landscape restoration (FLR) and land use planning based on participatory mapping and forest resource inventories at subnational level covering 410,000 ha. It provides the basis for the sustainable management of agrarian, forest and mangrove ecosystems with different land tenure systems such as sacred, community and family forests and protected areas, contributing to the wellbeing of the local population, climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation.

Full article: here.
More info on Panorama: here.

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