



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Maintain natural capital for the well-being of communities. PAs flourish when embedded in a landscape in which the welfare of all stakeholders is considered.
- Integrate the ecosystem services values of PAs into national development policy, management priorities and planning.
- Natural capital, economic valuations and accounting can guide policy and business decision-making around conservation. The economic contributions from PAs should be used to make a strong business case for adequate investment in PAs.
- Increase the income-generating base for PAs through the development of a trusted, international certification system that enables the expansion of PES schemes for PA conservation in Africa.
- Place emphasis on tourism and business enterprises that are compatible with conservation and promote the value of PAs by stimulating local economic development opportunities. This can include the creation of conservation-friendly certified products to be sold on international markets.

Increasing the Economic Value and Contribution of Protected Areas in Africa

Romy Chevallier & Richard Milburn¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent decades the international community has begun to support protected area (PA) governance systems that demonstrate the combined effort to achieve biodiversity and conservation goals while promoting the sustainable use of natural resources and job creation. If effectively managed and equitably governed, PAs can operate as economic institutions, providing monetary and non-monetary benefits to support Africa's development priorities.² In order to enhance their socio-economic contribution, it is necessary to use measurable instruments that highlight PAs' values beyond biodiversity, demonstrating their income-generating potential and contribution to sustainable land-use. If accounted for appropriately, these economic benefits can secure support for the creation, continued existence and expansion of PAs, and inform decisions about the management priorities of conservation zones and the broader landscape. New, innovative approaches are required to increase PAs' financial contributions to communities, including through public-private eco-tourism ventures, certification and fair-trade schemes for wildlife products, and monetary rewards for their non-market, ecosystem services.

INTRODUCTION

The more value African countries derive from PAs, the more importance they will attach to them and the more effectively they will be regulated and protected. Similarly, if local communities consider natural resources and wildlife as central to their livelihoods, they will use these resources in a more sustainable manner. However, with disputes over land claims and land tenure and a lack of equitable compensation schemes, as well as the absence of strong governance mechanisms, people will utilise natural resources beyond sustainable levels. This will have a negative impact on the health and integrity of ecosystems and threaten their ability to provide essential natural services.

This briefing highlights the monetary and in-kind value of PAs at a community and national level, to lend impetus and support to the conservation of PAs and the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. Existing benefits directly attributed to larger coverage and more effective PA management include income generation through services such as water, food and fuel provision; recreation and eco-tourism; natural resource harvesting; hunting; gene pool services; bio-prospecting; medicinal and ornamental plants; education; and research. The indirect benefits of PAs comprise a broad range of ecological functions such as watershed protection; breeding habitats for migratory species; climatic stabilisation and resilience; carbon sequestration; and the intangible aesthetic and spiritual benefits of nature. These ecosystem services go largely unmeasured by traditional economic indicators and yet are utilised widely. African decision-makers need to incorporate both market and non-market benefits into their development choices. This will help attract additional investment to conservation and make alternative, less sustainable economic activities less appealing.

ESSENTIAL POLICY MEASURES

A number of policy measures are essential to the successful conservation of a PA and its ecosystem services.

First, PAs must be aligned with local development priorities and co-managed by local resource users. PA governance models currently range from strict, exclusionary protection to managed landscapes that include a degree of natural resource utilisation. PAs can be managed by national, regional or local authorities, trusts, indigenous peoples, local communities and private individuals, often in collaboration with each other. Regardless of the model used, parks must strive for meaningful engagement with communities living near PAs – from collaborative decision-making and co-management to direct economic benefits that create support for the conservation goals of PAs. Communities can enforce locally determined regulations by using indigenous knowledge, local resources, surveillance and social controls, and community leaders should form a central part of the governance structure adopted to manage these areas.

Many community-led biodiversity management programmes are operating successfully in PAs across Africa. These include the Shoebill Protection Programme in the Bangweulu Wetland Park, Zambia, where local fishermen are employed to notify park authorities of birds' nests in an effort to protect this threatened species.³ Other examples

include successful amnesty programmes in the Odzala-Kokoua National Park, Congo-Brazzaville, where former poachers are trained to become eco-guards and eco-monitors to conduct wildlife research and monitoring.⁴

Second, integrating the benefits of ecosystem services into PA planning, policy construction and management is essential. Valuing the natural services and functions associated with ecosystems helps local authorities and conservation managers to justify the establishment and continued protection of PAs in economic terms. This demonstrates their link, directly and indirectly, to generating income for communities. Once this link between natural assets and development gains has been established, decision-makers can incorporate PA management strategies and objectives into cross-sectoral planning and priority frameworks at all scales. For example, ecosystem services from dedicated conservation zones need to be embedded in national regulatory frameworks and mainstreamed into economic planning and development policy. Integrating these approaches will improve coherence with other development goals and help to avoid unwise trade-offs, especially with competing sectors such as water, tourism, agriculture and disaster risk reduction.

Conservation and development priorities must also be central to national or trans-boundary frameworks for the integrated management of landscapes. The sustainable management and planning of PAs must combine biological conservation measures (based on sound scientific analysis) such as core protected areas, buffer zones and ecological corridors with the realistic demand for biological resources. Identifying these differing land-use needs upfront will help to pre-empt potential resource conflict. Various tools can be used in management planning and conflict resolution for designated landscapes, such as zoning, spatial mapping and strategic environmental assessments (SEAs). Thorough SEAs include an analysis of all pressing ecological, economic and social needs such as poverty-alleviation strategies, land use priorities, ecological thresholds and vulnerability tipping points, as well as strategies to enhance communities' resilience.

IMPROVING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND INCOME GENERATION

Conservation areas can benefit local communities through substantial revenue generation. However, in many cases, conservation-related tourism generates largely private and unevenly distributed benefits. Increasing tourism's

contribution to PA financing and management is therefore essential. Some conservation models specifically demarcate eco-development zones within PAs to enhance opportunities in and around PAs. Where possible, it is important to upscale these development projects to employ more community members, seeking larger-scale, lower-impact solutions. Ideally, people living in the buffer zones around PAs should also secure income from eco-friendly resource use. In Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, for example, a trust fund has been established to protect mountain gorillas and their habitat, distributing some 60% of the revenue earned to community projects promoting sustainable development and conservation in the park's border areas.

Commercial operations, in partnership with the public and private sectors, can also be structured to generate a larger income base for PAs. These partnerships are useful in cases where governments lack the human or financial capacity for implementation and management. For example, Africa Parks, a conservation non-governmental organisation (NGO) that represents seven national parks in Africa, compiles a business plan for each PA, determining the capital investment necessary to cover the park's operating and management costs through entrance and concession fees. It seeks financial partnerships with commercial investors, bilateral and multilateral donors, conservation NGOs and philanthropists to develop and operate tourism lodges.

NGOs and private companies can lend important technical assistance to communities regarding land claims, capital investment, enterprise development and the marketing of their own tourism products. The African Safari Lodge Foundation and the Peace Parks Foundation, for example, have helped communities in the Maputo Special Reserve broker deals with financial institutions such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and provided them with transactional support to establish the \$3 million Chemucane eco-lodge.⁵

It is also necessary to explore methods other than tourism to increase PAs' revenue-generating base. Innovative schemes and financial incentive mechanisms can be used to generate further income for parks beyond eco-tourism, such as creating products that appeal to consumers in international markets.

The use of economic instruments to conserve and pay for ecosystem services is gaining traction globally, not just in the carbon markets but also in the biodiversity and water markets. Payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes operate on the premise that natural ecosystems provide valuable services that can generate an income from watershed

and biodiversity conservation. Essentially, these market mechanisms and PES schemes, such as biodiversity offsetting mechanisms and blue carbon projects, offer financial incentives to protect the non-market ecosystem benefits. It is hoped that these measures will encourage behavioural change through incentives that offer additional employment benefits and supplementary incomes, thereby promoting the long-term sustainable use of natural resources. Existing PES schemes encompass private deals, both voluntary and obligatory; financing schemes; government programmes; and a mixture of private–public partnerships. Although they are by no means a natural resource management solution, PES schemes encourage policymakers to prioritise the non-market benefits of conservation or non-use of a resource. The total economic value associated with managing ecosystems more sustainably or protecting them entirely is often higher than the value associated with the conversion of the ecosystem through farming, clear-cut logging or other intensive uses.

An example of this is Wildlife Works, a project development and management company that uses the emerging marketplace for carbon offsets from REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation) to protect threatened forests and wildlife, creating financial incentives for local landowners. In 2011, the Wildlife Works Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project was verified under the Verified Carbon Standard and the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard – the world's first REDD+ project to be issued carbon credits. The initiative protects some 500 000 acres of Kenyan forest, securing the wildlife migration corridor between Tsavo East and Tsavo West national parks while bringing direct carbon financing to 100 000 people in surrounding communities.⁶

However, there is still a need for a centralised and reputable certification scheme to enable more organisations, individuals and businesses to invest in PES schemes for PAs. This certification system should focus on a broader range of ecosystems provided by increased PA management (beyond carbon) such as biodiversity and endangered wildlife protection.

Restoration and rehabilitation initiatives can also provide substantial job creation benefits and achieve the mutual goals of development and biodiversity protection. This is apparent, for example, in South Africa's expanded public works programmes, such as 'Working for Water', 'Working for Wetlands' and 'Working for Land', which implement invasive alien vegetation clearing, wetland rehabilitation, waste management and fire prevention

respectively. These state-funded projects take place in and outside PAs in South Africa and in 2013/14 created 13 141 temporary jobs for communities adjacent to park areas.⁷

ENHANCING AN INDUSTRY OF 'WILDLIFE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS'

Given the worldwide popularity of wildlife and conservation, it is important to develop market vehicles that encourage international support for ethical conservation. Many conservation-conscious consumers have disposable income to spend on products such as local crafts, which can provide communities with revenue contingent upon successful conservation. This can create a win-win outcome for both biological conservation and local development. A certification scheme, similar to Fairtrade⁸ but focusing on good governance and PA conservation, could market such products and generate additional revenue for conservation initiatives. This also allows for revenue-generation in PAs where alternative tourism models are less viable, for instance in regions that are inaccessible or volatile, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The certification programmes and registered trademarks that do exist in Africa are mainly small scale and dedicated to the development and marketing of community products that conserve threatened species. Examples of these are the clothing products created through 'Certified Wildlife Friendly'⁹ and 'Predator Friendly'.¹⁰ The Elephant Pepper Development Trust trains farmers to use non-lethal chilli deterrents rather than injuring or killing elephants. Elephant Pepper PTY Ltd produces two varieties of pepper sauces and four spice grinders. Income is then returned to aid conservation initiatives and community participation.

However, while some schemes are already in place, it is necessary to scale up initiatives and mobilise investment and support from the business sector to ensure that programmes are sustainable, successful and produce high-quality goods that appeal to consumers.

CONCLUSION

Highlighting the broad benefits provided by PAs is important to ensure that they are properly considered in policymaking and that nearby communities perceive them as being valuable

to their livelihoods. The benefits from PAs must be shared equitably through compensation or incentive mechanisms benefiting the people living in the vicinity of parks.

Africa's conservation agenda cannot be seen as separate from its development agenda. Innovative entrepreneurial schemes and mechanisms need to be developed to increase the revenue generating base of PAs, both for conservation and biodiversity purposes, and to ensure job creation for the broader community. Increased recognition of the direct and indirect benefits of PAs and their contribution to livelihood development should result in more ambitious conservation goals being realised.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Romy Chevallier is a senior researcher for the Governance of Africa's Resources Programme at SAIIA. Richard Milburn is a research co-ordination and PhD candidate at the Marjan Centre for the Study of Conflict and Conservation in King's College London's Department of War Studies.
- 2 This policy briefing does not suggest that protected areas are a solution to local development challenges in and of themselves. However, they can contribute towards socio-economic development.
- 3 African Parks, 'Bangweulu Wetlands, Zambia', http://www.african-parks.org/Park_3_167_Shoebill+Conservation+Programme.html.
- 4 *The Guardian*, "Poaching is too much risk" – the pygmy poacher who became elephant protector, 13 February 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/feb/13/pygmy-elephant-poacher-protector>.
- 5 World Bank Group, 'Bush and Beach in Mozambique: Community-Private Partnership Backs Future Eco-Lodge', 2015, <https://www.wbginvestmentclimate.org/advisory-services/investment-generation/tourism/mozambique-tourism.cfm>.
- 6 Wildlifeworks, <http://www.wildlifeworks.com/index.php>.
- 7 SANParks (South African National Parks), *Annual Report 2013/14*, <http://www.sanparks.co.za/assets/docs/general/annual-report-2014.pdf>.
- 8 Fairtrade is an ethical certification scheme promoting equality and sustainability in the farming sector.
- 9 Certified Wildlife Friendly, 'Who we are', <http://wildlifefriendly.org/who-we-are/>.
- 10 Predator Friendly, <http://www.predatorfriendly.org>.

The Governance of Africa's Resources Programme (GARP) is funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. SAIIA gratefully acknowledges this support.

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