
INCENTIVE MEASURES FOR THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN UGANDA: A Case Study of the 'Development Through Conservation' Project in Communities Around Bwindi National Park

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presented at a workshop on
Incentives for Biodiversity: Sharing Experiences
Montreal, Canada
30 August - 1 September 1996

Overview. Based on information provided by Erie Sentongo Tamale, this paper describes the use of incentive measures to motivate the community towards enhancing biodiversity conservation in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park in south-western Uganda. The project worked to facilitate conservation while meeting development needs through three components: community conservation, park management, and development. The paper outlines the effectiveness of the incentives, lessons learned from the project, and recommendations for national governments, multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, and international and national NGOs.

1. Project Location Description and Purpose

Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park is situated in south-western Uganda just south of the Equator. It was originally a gazetted forest reserve, but due to its great diversity of plant and animal species, including regional endemics such as the mountain gorilla, it became a national park in 1992.

To compensate the local community for their loss of access to the reserve and to motivate the community towards enhancing biodiversity conservation, incentive measures were initiated. These measures were aimed at sensitising the local communities, and encouraging appreciation for the economic benefits of biodiversity. Benefit-sharing of park conservation was instituted, thereby decreasing illegal and unsustainable resource use in the park.

In 1988, WWF-US. subcontracted CARE-Uganda to assist in extension services. The Development Through Conservation (DTC) project, has focused on gaining community support as a complement to the in-forest conservation efforts by providing development alternatives to harvesting forest products and providing a better understanding of the economic

benefits of biodiversity. A primary goal of halting encroachment into the Bwindi forest is to conserve the habitat of the mountain gorilla.

Since 1991, the approach taken by CARE-Uganda has been to facilitate the conservation of the forest park as well as meeting the development needs of the local communities through three components;

1. community conservation,
2. park management, and
3. development.

The DTC project was established following consultations from the following organisations:

- Government Departments (the Department of Environment, Forest Department, Uganda National Parks, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries);
- District Authorities, Local Councils, and NGOs/donors including WWF, CARE and USAID; and
- The local people, the Park Parish Committees, Park Management Advisory Committees comprising the chairpersons of the Forest Societies and the Beekeepers' Association, and additional collaborators and stakeholders.

2. Institutional and Legal Framework

Biodiversity conservation and management in Uganda is executed through four main agencies:

- Forest Department
- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Fisheries Department
- National Environmental Management Authority

Accordingly, the legislative framework for biodiversity conservation is provided in the different Legislative acts under which these agencies were established. Two recent acts have directly addressed issues of biodiversity conservation and resource management. The latest Uganda Wildlife Statute, 1996 has provisions to:

- protect rare, endangered and endemic species of wild plants and animals;
- conserve wildlife throughout Uganda so that the abundance and diversity of their species are maintained at optimal levels commensurate with other forms of land use in order to support sustainable utilisation of wildlife for the benefit of the people of Uganda;
- enhance economic and social benefits from wildlife management by

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- establishing wildlife use rights and promotion of tourism;
 - implement relevant international treaties, agreements or any other arrangement to which Uganda is a party; and
 - increase public participation in wildlife management.

Some of the strategies articulated for addressing these objectives are:

- develop the capacity to analyse the impact of user fees, incentives, and disincentives in government agencies responsible for natural resource management, policy formulation and regulation;
- develop policies and procedures to assess appropriate user fees or rights of access in the areas of land use, water use, sewerage use, pollution, fishing and forestry, and/or to incorporate the costs of producing and maintaining a resource into the costs and benefits of the resource users; and
- mobilise private sector resources to achieve environmental conservation and management objectives, through the use of incentives, management contracts, leases, concessions, joint ventures, and production sharing agreements.

The policy emphasises sustainable use of wildlife resources through community conservation and creation of appropriate incentives to promote conservation in areas next to national parks and reserves. One important feature of the Statute is the introduction of Distinct Wildlife Committees and Local Wildlife Committees which would be useful in negotiating with the respective government departments regarding any incentive measures aimed at communities adjacent to wildlife areas.

3. Effectiveness of the Incentive

The DTC Project has demonstrated the following effects.

- It has succeeded in making people around the park more aware of the need to conserve both the forests and the farmlands and has contributed to changing the community's attitude towards conservation.
- The development component of the project has enabled farmers to increase the sustainable production and use of goods and services from the park and the farmland, thereby compensating for overall community hostility due to their subsequent loss of access to the forest resources.
- The project has helped to harmonise the relationship between Uganda National Park and the local people.

4. Lessons Learned

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- Before advising on an incentive measure for biodiversity conservation it is essential that prior detailed study should be undertaken to identify the underlying conservation problems.
 - Depending on scale, successful incentive measures may require a concerted effort by several partners: the local community, government donor agencies, and nongovernmental organisation.
 - Compensation is an expensive incentive measures and it may not be a sustainable method for protecting conservation oriented activities.
 - For local communities to be equal partners in the incentive measures, considerable time has to be devoted to the development of community institutional structures.
 - It is important to ensure that the definition of beneficiary communities or customers is all inclusive and equitable.
 - The existing national sectoral and cross-sectoral policies and legislation need to be reviewed to assess their adequacy or appropriateness before introducing new incentive measures for biodiversity conservation.
 - NGOs are in a more strategic position than government, to implement incentive measures aimed at the conservation of biodiversity.

5. Recommendations

5.1 National Governments for action at the local, national and international levels

- The concept of using endowment funds for sustainable conservation of biodiversity should be encouraged and applied in more biodiversity-rich areas.
- Government should try to raise funds locally through such mechanisms as conservation levies on resource extraction.
- In establishing a trust for biodiversity conservation, ownership should be vested in the target communities.
- Endowment funds provide a useful mechanism for encouraging trans-boundary resources.
- Before approving projects that involve incentive measures, issues related to sustainability and institutional linkages between the projects and the central government, district administration and local councils should be addressed.
- The process for implementing incentive measures should be simple and straightforward.
- An enabling macroeconomic, and biodiversity policy and legal environment is essential.
- Local communities representation on any committee must be effective so as not to undermine the credibility of any incentive measure.

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- Clear criteria should be developed for project eligibility under any incentive measure.

5.2 Multilateral and Bilateral Donor Agencies

- A combination of direct monetary incentives with non-monetary incentives should be used after a thorough identification of conservation problems.
- Greater effort should be made to ensure that the size of the trust fund is adequate enough to achieve significant impact in positively altering community attitudes towards conservation.
- In introducing a new concept such as an endowment fund in an area, patience, and action learning are essential.
- Direct compensatory incentive measures tend to be expensive and should be used as a last resort.
- Local communities and all stakeholders must be involved in the planning of any incentive measures targeted for them.
- In identifying beneficiaries care should be taken to ensure that there is clear definition of communities to ensure indigenous or minority groups are not overshadowed by more prominent and powerful segments of the population.

5.3 International and National NGOs

- As a result of their intimate relationship with local communities, NGOs should help in implementing incentive measures
- NGOs should lead the implementation of any integrated conservation and development aspects of projects aimed at biodiversity conservation through the application of incentive measures.