



## WPC Recommendation 25

### Co-management of Protected Areas

The benefits of promoting and strengthening partnerships for conservation have been repeatedly stressed by IUCN, from Council Resolution 22 of 1952 to Resolution 1.42 of the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Montreal (1996) and Resolution 2.15 of the IUCN World Conservation Congress Amman (2000). They have also been emphasised by the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Millennium Development Goals and the WSSD plan of action.

Co-managed protected areas (CMPAs) are defined as protected areas (as per IUCN categories I-VI) where management authority, responsibility and accountability are shared among two or more stakeholders, including government bodies and agencies at various levels, indigenous and local communities, non-governmental organizations and private operators, or even among different state governments as in the case of trans-boundary protected areas.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the size, number, and complexity of protected areas systems has increased to impressive proportions. In accordance with good governance principles, consolidating, expanding and improving this global system of protected areas should be done while respecting the rights, interests and concerns of all stakeholders, including their right to participate in decision-making in the establishment and management of protected areas. The sharing of protected area management authority, responsibilities, benefits and costs should be distributed among relevant actors, according to legitimate entitlements. Such entitlements should be defined through a negotiation process that specifically involves disadvantaged groups, and results in stronger engagement of civil society in conservation.

Are governments alone able to ensure the accomplishment of all their protected areas conservation objectives and social requirements? Some estimate this to be plainly impossible. Fortunately, there is a substantial wealth and diversity of conservation-relevant knowledge, skills, resources and institutions at the disposal of indigenous, mobile and local communities, local governments, NGOs, resource users, and the private sector. Co-management settings are one of the most effective ways to mobilise such conservation-relevant resources, but are they successfully enlisted and implemented?

1. Current efforts to involve indigenous peoples, mobile peoples and local communities in protected area management are often limited to consulting them, asking their help in implementing predetermined activities or assigning to them some “benefits” (often unrelated to the costs incurred), without effective discussion and negotiation of options. This may be due to various causes, but lack of supportive policies and capacities are at the roots of many failures. Actions are needed to facilitate: Understanding the potential of, and obstacles to, co-management approaches;

2. Undertaking co-management processes;
3. Negotiating co-management agreements;
4. Developing co-management organizations;
5. Integrating adaptive governance approaches with more familiar adaptive management exercises; and
6. Learning by doing through participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The diversity of co-management approaches makes them capable of fitting different contexts. If properly understood and adopted, co-management can lead towards more effective and transparent sharing of decision-making powers, a more active, conservation-friendly and central role of indigenous, mobile and local communities in protected area management, and a better synergy of the conservation capacities.

*Therefore, PARTICIPANTS in the Communities and Equity Cross-Cutting Theme at the V<sup>th</sup> World Parks Congress in Durban, South Africa (8-17 September 2003):*

RECOMMEND international conventions, governments, protected area agencies, donor agencies, conservation NGOs, communities, and the private sector, and in particular IUCN - The World Conservation Union as potential inspirer and leader of well coordinated and synergistic efforts, to:

1. SUPPORT the review, consolidation, strengthening and expansion of existing experiences of co-management of protected areas;
2. PROMOTE the participation of stakeholders in decision-making concerning protected area management, with particular regards to indigenous, mobile and local communities, and disadvantaged groups via a range of mechanisms including information generation and sharing; joint visioning and participatory assessment exercises; support to stakeholder organising and capacity building; negotiated management agreements and benefit sharing; and full empowerment and accountability for conservation in effectively co-managed and community-managed areas;
3. CREATE or strengthen enabling legal and policy frameworks for co-management in protected areas;
4. UNDERTAKE programmes to develop and strengthen institutional and human capacities for co-management of protected areas as part of efforts towards good governance and more effective management, including setting up basic training and refresher courses for natural resource managers, national and international exchange visits and joint learning initiatives among PA institutions and sites engaged in co-management efforts;

5. PROMOTE participatory action-research in co-managed protected areas with emphasis on stakeholder identification, social communication initiatives, negotiation processes, consensus-based decision making, co-management outcomes and impacts, and legislation and policies for a supporting environment;
6. EXPAND the sharing of experience and lessons learned on co-management of protected areas at national, regional and international levels including by strengthening the work of the Co-management Working Group (CMWG) of the IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economics and Social Policy (CEESP) and of the joint World Commission on Protected Areas/CEESP Theme on Indigenous and Local Communities, Equity and Protected Areas (TILCEPA); and
7. CALL upon the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to address co-management issues in their programme of work for protected areas, in particular with regard to enabling legal and policy framework, capacity building, participatory action-research and exchanges of experiences and lessons learned.

**Stream:** Indigenous/Local Communities, Equity, and Protected Areas

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