

A solid pillar of German Development Cooperation:

People-oriented conservation

Never before has humankind been in a position to destroy so much of the natural basis of its existence. Set against the short-term benefits of the over-exploitation of natural resources are often enormous long-term costs. Handling nature differently – based on conservation, sustainable use and an equitable sharing of benefits – will take a lengthy political and social process. Helping to shape this process is a key task of German development cooperation.

Rainforests are home to millions of species of flora and fauna, most of which are not scientifically described, let alone understood. Regardless of considerable media coverage and countless political commitments, the loss of tropical rainforests continues at an alarming rate and on a frightening scale. These spectacular forests have thus become a symbol of the careless and short-sighted destruction of biodiversity – the diversity of life at all levels. While rainforests continue to make headlines, ecosystems such as the many other forest types, drylands, steppes, savannahs, littoral wetlands or many marine areas share a similar or even worse fate.

Developing countries of the South harbour the bulk of biological diversity. The loss of biological diversity signifies the disappearance of landscapes and their ecological functions,

knowledge and practices, cultural identity, and irreplaceable genetic information – an immense loss for us all. The daily livelihood needs of millions of people, particularly in developing countries, depend on the multitude of functions and services provided by nature. The conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use in an equitable and fair fashion therefore continues to be a priority issue for development cooperation.

Participation as a key factor

Development cooperation focuses on people, and particularly the people who are directly affected by the degradation of ecosystems in the places where they live. They are not mere recipients of development services, but active partners in the creation of solutions. The involvement of the local population in nature conservation and other development projects is not simply a question of acknowledging their rights; it also involves recognising the knowledge and experience of these people. Participation is no guarantee of either success or sustainability, but it significantly increases the likelihood that development cooperation will succeed. A large number of relevant schemes and instruments have been developed in recent years. They range from the co-management of natural resources and protected areas (see Box 1) to a broad selection of economic and other incentives,

Local rangers in the Mongolian protected area of Batshireet Sum.

Dr. Thora Amend

Consultant
Laufenburg, Germany
thora.amend@gmx.de

Tilman Jäger, Marina Kosmus, Johannes Scholl

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH
Eschborn, Germany



Photo: Sandra Fahrmeiser

Box 1: Securing benefits for local resource users in Mongolia's protected areas

Mongolia has high mountains, taiga and the steppes and deserts typical of central Asia. This makes it a fascinating country with an unusually diverse ecology. Until recently large areas of the country remained intact, but it is now facing changes on a vast scale. For many years GTZ has supported the Mongolian government as it strives to deal with the difficult task of finding a balance between rapid economic development and preservation of the country's rich natural and cultural heritage. For example, in some protected areas – often historic holy sites – a model co-management system has been introduced in order to involve the local population in decisions on zoning and usage rules. This does not make conflicts evaporate, but for the first time they are openly discussed. GTZ provides logistical support for this method of working and is available to mediate and advise. This is still an innovative approach in Mongolia but after years of intensive work it is bearing fruit there. The experience gained is now being utilised by other government bodies, NGOs and donors.



Photo: Thora Amend

such as payments for ecosystem services (PES).

Since the early 1990s, extensive calls for participation as a means of conducting negotiations between differing interests have formed part of all major declarations and strategies in the context of international development cooperation. The protection and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity, and the equitable sharing of benefits, can thus be seen as negotiating processes at local, national and international level. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) of 1992 laid foundations that go far beyond conventional nature protection by according sustainable use and the equitable sharing of the benefits arising from resource utilisation the same importance as nature conservation.

Box 2: Key guidelines of the Ecosystem Approach under the CBD

1. Focus on the functional relationships and processes within ecosystems
2. Enhance benefit-sharing
3. Use adaptive management practices
4. Carry out management actions at the appropriate scale, with decentralisation to lowest appropriate level
5. Ensure intersectoral cooperation

(Source: www.cbd.int)

Guiding principles for development cooperation

As the result of an extensive international consultation process, the CBD adopted guiding principles committing members to “the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way”. These guiding principles – the so-called Ecosystem Approach – address the political, societal, economic, cultural and ecological dimensions of issues covered by the CBD and can be applied to the development of strategies and activities at all levels (see summary of these principles in Box 2).

These guiding principles are reflected in German Development Cooperation. Since 1985 Germany has supported around 450 projects that contribute to the overarching objectives of the CBD; this reflects an average annual budget for biodiversity issues of approximately US\$ 23 million per year. Bilateral funds from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development are largely channelled through KfW Entwicklungsbank – the agency responsible for financial cooperation – and GTZ – the agency responsible for technical cooperation. Biodiversity-related projects are implemented all over the globe. Important eco-regions, like the world's largest tropical rainforest

In Mongolia people are involved in the decision on zoning and usage rules.

in the Brazilian Amazon, receive the largest shares (see Box 3).

Biodiversity does not stop at borders

Local and national processes are frequently not sufficient to guarantee the desired outcomes. Biodiversity

Box 3: Biodiversity and human rights – indigenous territories in Brazil

The destruction of the Amazon rainforest in Brazil through conversion into farmland has drastic consequences for biodiversity and for the lives of indigenous peoples. A very promising measure in the battle against deforestation is the legal securing of indigenous territories. This prevents settlers moving in and preserves the people's right to self-determination. Around one-fifth of the Amazon region is still home to indigenous peoples. Working with indigenous organisations, the responsible authority FUNAI and NGOs, German development cooperation contributes to this process. At the end of 2007 almost 100 districts, with a total area larger than that of Germany, had been legally secured; others are at different stages of the often protracted process.

Box 4: Extending the benefits: Transboundary Peace Parks

Towards the end of the 1990s, the twofold objectives of securing peace in conflict-prone regions and promoting nature conservation gave new momentum to the idea of transboundary peace parks. In 2002 the creation of the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, formed from three extensive national parks in South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, attracted global attention. Just two days after the heads of states signed the international treaty, the Ministers for the Environment removed part of the fence between the parks to symbolise the creation of one of the world's greatest animal reserves. Plans even foresee the gradual extension of the park to cover an area of 100,000 km² – a region almost as large as Portugal. The management of this extensive and important region has involved some major achievements: a framework for the tri-national park was put in place under international law, a joint management system was set up, and the Peace Parks Foundation was mandated to coordinate the establishment and development of the park's economic activities. Financial support from Germany (KfW, DaimlerChrysler and Deutsche Bank) as part of the Southern Africa Initiative of German Business (SAFRI) secures this project, especially the promotion of tourism development and coordination between the different sections of the park. While the creation of this huge protected area is a significant milestone, turning the vision of peaceful transboundary natural resource management into reality will yet require a great deal of effort from all the stakeholders involved.



does not stop at national borders. The involvement of German Development Cooperation in alliance with a broad range of actors in Germany

and partner countries takes place at different levels, ranging from international processes and regimes to legal and policy frameworks at national

In Brazil a very promising measure in the fight against deforestation is the legal securing of indigenous territories.

level and also including local and indigenous resource users. Regional approaches and transboundary cooperation play an increasingly important role (see Box 4).

Box 5: Joint learning and networking

The international wilderness camp ...

Transcending boundaries, learning from and with each other – internationally, cross-generationally, irrespective of religion, class or race: the International Wilderness Camp in the Bavarian Forest National Park makes this possible. In cooperation with German development cooperation (GTZ, DED, InWEnt) a range of traditional dwellings used by the inhabitants of protected wilderness areas have been erected there. Partnerships are built up between youth groups from different continents. The opportunity to explore nature with all one's senses while staying in the huts and tents deep in the National Park is a powerful experience that stimulates reflection on one's own values and ways of doing things.

... and the youth summit

During the 9th Conference of the Parties (COP9) to the CBD (May 2008 in Bonn) the Wilderness Camp will be the first port of call for the „International Youth Summit 2008: Go 4 BioDiv“. 50 young people from 16 countries will attend the Youth Summit, which is supported jointly by BMZ, the city of Bonn, Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald, Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt and GTZ. The participants come from protected areas in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the USA. Even before the Summit takes place the young adults will be actively involved in preparing for it. Using the Internet platform that has been set up for them, they will get to know each other and discuss their ideas and concerns about the issues on which they are focusing. In this way they will develop a feeling of community which will be consolidated in the work they undertake together in the Wilderness Camp and during the Summit in Bonn. In Bonn and at the „Diversity Expo“ they will present the material they have worked on together, including the artwork entitled „Glass Footprint“, a piece of dance theatre, videos, a photographic exhibition they have put together themselves and political statements. The Summit's aim is to portray the young people's view of the individual and global challenges associated with the protection of biological and cultural diversity and to discuss possible solutions with political decision-makers.

Communication for conservation

Capacity building, education and communication play an increasingly important role – both in partner countries and in Germany. Contributions of development cooperation organisations to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014) include workshops and training for multipliers, exhibitions of photos and daily life objects, colourful publications and inspiring cross-over projects involving young people from all over the world. Environmental communication and networking are important tools for overcoming isolation and prejudice and fostering collaboration for the good of people and of nature. An example of this is the International Youth Summit, which will be celebrated in Bonn in May 2008.



Photo: MMA/J.A. Cili Pratinestós

Outlook

Our quality of life and future development options depend to a significant extent on the functioning and integrity of our planet's ecosystems and the associated diversity of species, genes, and biomes. Although much progress on nature conservation has been made in recent decades, biodiversity loss continues at an alarming rate. Reversing the trend will not be possible without empowering people on the local level. Collaborative management and rights-based conservation approaches for a fairer world-wide distribution of restrictions and benefits will become even more important. For the creation of the required new "socio-environmental awareness", conflict management and communication initiatives at all levels will play an ever more decisive role. Additionally, the increasing scientific evidence of climate-change-related risks and impacts on biodiversity requires urgent action. All of this puts humanity under considerable pressure – but the challenges could turn out to be an opportunity to increase the "green and fair" awareness which is necessary if momentum for change is to be created.

Acronyms

- CCA – Community Conserved Areas
- CEESP – Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy of IUCN
- CMAP – Collaborative Management of Protected Areas
- PoWPA – Program of Work for Protected Areas under the CBD
- IUCN – The World Conservation Union
- WCPA – World Commission on Protected Areas of IUCN

Useful Links

- www.gtz.de/de/dokumente/en-governance-nat-resources.pdf
(Governance manual produced by GTZ, download)
- <http://www.gtz.de/biodiv>
(publication downloads and information on GTZ's biodiversity initiatives)
- www.cbd.int/programmes/cross-cutting/ecosystem
(useful information and full text of the Ecosystem Approach)
- www.cbd.int/protected/
(Programme of Work on Protected Areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity)
- www.conservation-development.net/
(environmental communication, run by GTZ and partner organisations)
- www.iucn.org/themes/ceesp (CEESP website, with information on collaborative and rights-based approaches for protected area management).
- www.millenniumassessment.org (website of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, entry point to a wealth of information including the 2005 Biodiversity Synthesis Report under the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment)
- www.povertyenvironment.net/pep/ (website of the Poverty Environment Partnership)

Zusammenfassung

Der Mensch ist wie nie zuvor in der Lage, seine natürliche Lebensgrundlage zu zerstören. Mit dem Verlust von biologischer Vielfalt gehen aber auch ein ökonomischer und kultureller Verlust einher; lokale Versorgungssysteme, aber auch sozio-kulturelle Identitäten und individuelle Verwurzelungen sind bedroht. Kurzfristigen Gewinnen stehen somit längerfristig oft gewaltige Kosten und Risiken gegenüber. Drastisch zeichnet sich dies in vielen Entwicklungsländern ab, wo die Abhängigkeit von funktionierenden Ökosystemen und den von ihnen erbrachten Dienstleistungen für das tägliche Überleben vielfach unmittelbarer sind als in den ökonomisch potenteren Ländern. Ein anderer Umgang mit Natur – der den Schutz, die nachhaltige Nutzung und eine gerechtere Verteilung des Nutzens umfasst – setzt einen langwierigen politischen und gesellschaftlichen Prozess voraus. Diesen Prozess mitzugestalten ist eine zentrale Aufgabe der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit.

Resumen

Más que en cualquier momento de su historia, la humanidad está hoy en condiciones de destruir sus medios naturales de vida. La pérdida de la diversidad biológica va de la mano con la pérdida de factores económicos y culturales. La amenaza se cierne no sólo sobre los sistemas locales de abastecimiento, sino también sobre las identidades socioculturales y las raíces individuales. Por lo tanto, las ganancias de corto plazo pueden llevar a menudo a enormes costos y riesgos de largo plazo. Esta situación se presenta en forma drástica en muchos países en desarrollo, donde la dependencia de los ecosistemas operativos y de los servicios que éstos prestan para la supervivencia diaria es mucho más inmediata que en los países de mayor potencia económica. El llegar a tratar a la naturaleza de una forma distinta – basada en la protección, la explotación sostenible y la justa distribución de los beneficios – presupone un proceso político y social largo y complicado. Tomar parte en la gestión de este proceso es una tarea central de la cooperación alemana para el desarrollo.