

## »» A cross-cutting analysis

## Not every national park will see money growing on trees

What has succeeded so well in South Africa's Kruger National Park – environmental protection, profitability, even the co-financing of other parks and the creation of new sources of income for neighbouring communities – does not apply to other, less spectacular national park programmes. That is the finding of a thematic assessment that summarised evaluation results of FC projects supporting eight national parks in seven countries. There was an initial hope that such parks – on the heels of investing in park management, access roads and tourist infrastructure – would develop into vibrant sources of revenue. Yet this turned out to be unrealistic. New ideas are necessary to ensure financial sustainability, such as the merger of parks with different levels of profitability into national park networks. But even that is often not enough: global public goods like environmental conservation or biological diversity require action at a global level.

The global concern is challenging: Pristine landscapes and ecological systems are to be preserved in developing and emerging countries where biological diversity is especially rich. Contributing to this is a stated priority of German DC, and considerable funding from the BMZ budget is made available in its pursuit. FC currently finances

EUR 860 million worldwide. Activities that have already been completed received a total of EUR 90 million in funding.

The demands on conservation and biodiversity activities are high. On the one hand, environmental protection – particularly when it comes to national

benefit rather than burden neighbouring populations. On the other hand, protected areas are to be financially self-sustaining or even produce surpluses so as not to strain any further countries' already limited budgets.

A sector assessment for the BMZ examined how these demands coexist in practice by analysing eight evaluation reports on activities in seven countries (Brazil, Madagascar, Malawi, Nicaragua, Peru, Tanzania and Uganda).

### Supporting conservation does not always benefit neighbouring communities

The results are sobering: none of the examples that were assessed indicates that promoting conservation and improving the living conditions of neighbouring populations go easily hand in hand. What is more likely is a conflict of objectives, which should be given due consideration during programme planning: if neighbouring groups are to profit significantly and also support conservation activities, then one must be open to a long-term perspective – including a correspondingly long-term project period – and be ready to provide sufficient funds to assist those target groups.

Another finding from the assessment underlines that effective protection of natural sites requires not only 'soft' measures like assistance for neighbours, but also 'hard' ones such as supervision, monitoring and patrolling – all combined in a way that is adapted to local conditions.

### National parks can rarely cover their costs through tourism revenues

Equally important is a coherent plan that takes into account local circumstances and capacity, including an explicit linkage between financial support and conservation. Relying on income from protected areas, however, has



Lemurs, endemic to Madagascar, are highly endangered.

Source: KfW/Matthias von Bechtolsheim

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largely proven misguided. In general, covering national parks' running costs with tourist revenues already is a challenge, let alone engage in 'benefit sharing' of surpluses with park neighbours.

It has also become clear that benefits from conservation areas – biological diversity, for instance, or positive contributions to water conservation and climate protection – are not sufficiently compensated by the rules of the market. Many protected areas are not easily compensated by the rules of the market. Many protected areas are not easily

accessible or are not considered spectacular enough to attract significant numbers of tourists. One positive finding, however, is that singularly impressive parks such as South Africa's Kruger National Park and Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve do not only succeed in recovering their own operating costs, but can also provide financial support to other protected areas.

The sector assessment concluded that if global public goods like conservation and biological diversity are to be secured for the long term, then global

action is required that is not limited to conventional project assistance. Long-term financing – for example through park networks, endowment funds, etc. – is also necessary. Developing and emerging countries, which often place much larger areas of land under protection than industrialised nations do, cannot meet these challenges alone. ■



The global interest: National parks help preserve biological diversity.

Source: KfW/Alfredo Carrasco Valdivieso