



Deutscher Tropentag, October 9-11, 2002, Witzenhausen
“Challenges to Organic Farming and Sustainable Land Use
in the Tropics and Subtropics”

**Wildlife Co-Management in Kenya: an Empirical Analysis of
Landowners’ Incentives for Participation**

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Abstract

Collaborative management (in short co-management) has increasingly become important because it seeks to create negotiated agreements between state and local communities (other stakeholder groups may also be included) and, therefore, offers a possibility to overcome conflicts over natural resource exploitation. However, achieving successful co-management is confronted with many challenges, one of the most pressing being achievement of effective participation of the landowners or resource users in the management process. Moreover, it has remained unclear as to what kinds of incentives would motivate landowners to become stakeholders of co-management arrangements in nature conservation and maintain their participation throughout the process.

Taking two wildlife conservancies in Kenya as an example, this paper analyses the kinds of incentives that make landowners participate in collaborative management arrangements. The fieldwork for the results presented in this paper was conducted in the wildlife dispersal areas of Shimba Hills National Reserve and Amboseli National Park in Kenya, where a total of 136 households, based on two stratified random samples, were interviewed.

To assess the economic incentive for participation, a financial benefit-cost analysis is performed. For both study areas, this analysis shows that investing in wildlife conservation is not financially viable to the landowners. In order to study other incentives, a two-stage least squares econometric model is applied. The results show that — under conditions where cash benefits are fairly distributed to the landowners — receiving benefits from nature conservation is a strong incentive for participation. Landowners are also motivated to participate because their involvement in the co-management arrangements enables them to protect their own property rights, reduce losses from other economic activities (e.g. livestock farming), safeguard human life, and derive non-cash benefits from infrastructural developments by the state and conservation non-governmental organisations.

Keywords: Benefit-cost analysis, biodiversity management, co-management, incentives for participation, wildlife conservation