



Reducing Poverty through Sound Environmental Governance



Children present saplings from a WWF-funded nursery, Udzungwa Mountains, Tanzania
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Natural resources are the backbone of many developing countries economies: 92 per cent of all export earnings in Africa originate from primary commodities such as agricultural, mineral, marine and forest products.

Seventy percent of the world's poor live in rural areas and depend directly on natural resources for their food, water, energy, shelter, medicine, income, and clothing.

However, environmental degradation is severely undermining these people's livelihoods and chances for long-lasting economic growth. Managing environmental resources and good environmental governance are essential to achieving poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Good environmental governance needs to reflect the dynamic nature of poverty-environment linkages and fundamentally relies on participation, equity, coordination, transparency, and accountability.

Monitoring and enforcement capacity

Fisheries along the West African coast are with €320 million annually the most important source

of foreign exchange and a key driver of economic and social development in the region. To foster good governance of fisheries to tackle illegal fishing, infrastructure is needed for effective monitoring and surveillance and data gathering should be evaluated, made public and used in future management².

Land ownership

Unclear land ownership in some African countries is offering people little incentive to sustainably use and invest in the land, which results in large-scale-desertification, food insecurity, displacement and death and poverty.

MDGs

In light of the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, it is crucial to identify that environmental sustainability (MDG 7) will be essential for achieving MDG 1-6. Only then will long term substantial revenues be generated to support economical recovery and security, secure food supply (MDG 1) and decreases health risks (MDG 4-6) for the world's poor.



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This sheet will give a few insights¹ into environment-governance linkages as well as an indicative list of suggestions, based on best practices and lessons learned.

It is meant to be a tool for promoting dialogue between WWF and other stakeholders/ decision-makers in the process of sustainable development in Africa.

Environmental linkages

PARTICIPATION

While the link between democratization and environment is complex, public participation translates into more effective decisions made about environmental resources and improves credibility and brings legitimacy. Meaningful participation entails involving all relevant stakeholders - ranging from local communities, to public and private institutions - in reaching broad-based consensus.

EQUITY

By allocating more equitably natural resources-based wealth and addressing land tenure and property rights, rural communities (that are most dependent to environmental assets) have clear incentive to manage natural resources thereby protecting the environment, reducing poverty, and fostering economic growth.

A focus on women, indigenous groups, and other marginalized groups, that are especially disempowered by constrained property rights and poor access to land and natural resources, is particularly needed.



Freshwater management in South Africa. 43 women in the Thubaleth'elihle Craft Group, weaving bags, conference folders and mats from wetland grasses.

COORDINATION

Coordination between stakeholders at all levels is essential if good environmental governance is to be achieved. This includes mainstreaming the environment in all economic and social policies, and forming strong partnerships between and among local communities, NGOs, government institutions, the private sector, regional bodies, and donors.

TRANSPARANCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

A lack of transparency and accountability undermines the opportunity to use natural resources revenues to reduce poverty and foster economic growth. In countries with poor governance, rather than using natural resource wealth to support economic growth, natural resources wealth is instead being used to finance national and personal interests.



A logging truck is being checked by forest guards in south-east Cameroon. Logging trucks are often used to transport illegal bushmeat to the country's major cities, Cameroon.

'Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment.'

Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize winner 2004 for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace.

SUGGESTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- ▶ The **Partnership for Principle 10 (PP10)** is an effort to help nations enhance citizen access to environmental information, participation, and justice. The PP10 works with civil society groups, governments, donors, and international institutions and commits partners to design and implement practical strategies that range from financing development of information laws and systems to training in environmental impact assessments and development of pollutant release registers³.
- ▶ Since 1996, the **government of Namibia** has allowed semi-nomadic farmer communities in the Kunene region to establish conservancies – areas in which communities may utilize wildlife, set up eco-tourism projects, and retain economic benefits. The conservancies have not only hugely benefited the communities but have also improved the environment: they have employed 3,000 people, earned €770m in 2003, and increased wildlife numbers⁴.
- ▶ The **World Commission on Dams (1998-2000)** brought together vastly different perspectives - including social justice activists, a former chairman of a dam association, and a corporation CEO – to address the highly contentious problem of large dams. They were able to gather a large knowledge base on dams and produced a consensus report. The report emphasizes the need to recognize the rights and risks of all different stakeholders affected by the proposed dam and to negotiate with all relevant stakeholders in finding appropriate outcomes⁵.
- ▶ The **Vietnam Forum for Environmental Journalists (VFEJ)** – set up in 1998 with support from the WWF Indochina Program- is a forum for environmental journalists to exchange information, skills and experience. Its ultimate goal is to motivate the public to be actively involved in environmental protection

issues and in turn to challenge governments and powerful industries to address environmental concerns. VFEJ consists of nearly fifty members from the main newspapers, radio and television stations based in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

► **The Poverty Environment Partnership (PEP)** - a relatively informal forum initially organized by the EC, UNDP, DFID & World Bank – are working towards increasing poverty-environment linkages in major development instruments (such as CSPs & PRSPs) and national policies.

Although the World Bank, the EC, and other

International organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of environmental integration in country strategies, recent surveys indicate that the environment is insufficiently mainstreamed⁶.



► An international **'Publish What You Pay'** campaign (a coalition of 250 NGOs worldwide) aims to create a more accountable system for the management of natural resources based revenues by holding multinational companies accountable to disclose taxes, royalties, and other payments made to all government for

the extraction of natural resources⁷.

► The **Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)**, encourages producer governments to disclose bookkeeping over payments by oil, gas, and mining companies to governments and

revenues received by governments. The initiative may be extended to other extractive industries such as logging and fishing.



Gold mining on the outskirts of Minkébé Gabon

Recommendations

GOOD environmental governance promises to improve livelihoods, especially of the poor, and promote economic growth. It entails:

- 1 integrating environment as a cross-cutting issue in all policies and programmes
- 2 strengthening local community involvement in natural resources based management, especially by the rural poor who significantly depend on natural resources
- 3 allocating more equitably natural resources-based wealth in support of poverty alleviation and good governance
- 4 addressing land tenure and resource access issues
- 5 improving civil liberties, including through improved information access
- 6 improving coordination through partnerships between public agencies, private institutions, donors, etc.
- 7 improving accountability and tackling corruption
- 8 promoting environmental standards-boundaries
- 9 managing resources across political and institutional boundaries
- 10 developing indicators to incorporate environmental externalities (e.g. green accounting) and
- 11 monitoring environmental governance

References

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- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

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