Innovations for Biodiversity Conservation: the Case of the Conservation Stewardship Programme, Western Cape, South Africa

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WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

the world’s sixth and smallest floral kingdom
only one within confines of a single country
more than 9 000 plant species
with 2400 species considered threatened
another 300 species critically endangered
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

most of the priority areas fell outside of existing statutory protected areas and mostly on privately owned land

THE INSTRUMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS</th>
<th>NEW ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS (NEPIs)</th>
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<td>(Connelly and Smith, 1999:168)</td>
<td>(Jordan, Wurzel and Zito, 2005:481-482)</td>
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<td>traditional regulatory instruments dating from the 1960s are typically been understood as straightforward regulation and control through laws and enforcement by appropriate regulatory bodies</td>
<td>market-based instruments</td>
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<td>eco-labels</td>
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<td>environmental management systems</td>
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<td>voluntary agreements</td>
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THE INSTRUMENT

A voluntary agreement can take on different formats but can be defined in general terms as negotiated agreements in the form of formal contracts whose aim is to address quite specific environmental problems negotiated between public authorities and relevant stakeholders which can be proposed, designed and implemented by non-state actors, sometimes working alongside state actors, but sometimes also independently.

THE APPROACH

A co-management approach involves a sharing of management between the state and responsible user group and rests on the assumptions that local people must have a stake in conservation and management; and that the formation of partnerships between government agencies and resource users are essential.
POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

- National Environmental Management Act, 1998: obliges the identification of threatened ecosystems and active execution of protective measures
- National Environmental Management Act: Biodiversity, 2004: provides for the management and conservation of South Africa’s biodiversity
- National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003: protection of ecologically viable and representative areas through various options including flexible management agreements subject to a process of public participation
- Revenue Laws Amendment Act, 2008: fiscal mechanisms to provide tax incentives to private landowners

CapeNature’s CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME

**stewardship options:**

less → **land use limitations** → more

- **Conservation areas**
- **Biodiversity agreements**
- **Contract nature reserves**

less → **associated benefits received** → more
EVALUATION

For co-management to be feasible:

- are there appropriate local and governmental institutions?
- is there trust between the actors?
- is there legal protection for local rights?
- are there economic incentives for the local communities involved to conserve the resource?

Berkes (1997)

| appropriate local and governmental institutions? | The institutional landscape is populated with provincial and national conservation agencies, provincial and national government departments, local governments, NGOs and existing PPPs |
| trust between the actors? | Initial landowners scepticism based on fears of losing ownership or user rights to their land was eventually overcome through sustained and transparent relationship building by dedicated extension staff |
| legal protection for local rights? | Landowner remains the owner and key manager of the land and thus retains all ownership rights in terms of access or farming practices but although entered into voluntary, both Contract Nature Reserves and Biodiversity Agreements are legally binding contracts or agreements with damages or fines if conditions are breached |
| economic incentives for the local communities? | Apart from extension services in terms of advise and support, incentives include tax relieve to land owners by creating mechanisms where management costs or the loss of right to use the land can be deducted from income tax and the land is also made exempt from property rates’ or rate rebates can be negotiated with the local authority |
To evaluate if co-management improves outcomes, typical criteria which could be applied are:

- **process** criteria (e.g. shared vision, inclusive participation, consensus-based decision-making)
- **outcome** criteria (e.g. improved habitat or water quality, biological diversity preserved)
- **socioeconomic outcome** criteria (e.g. building of relationships and trust, gaining of knowledge and understanding, improved capacity for dispute resolution, changes to or creation of new institution)

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**Prospects and Challenges**

Challenges:

- identification of priority areas outside reserves
- legal issues relating to conservation on private properties
- lack of co-operation between funding agencies and implementation teams
- lack of institutional capacity to honour commitments made to landowners
### PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

**Advantages:**

- A cost effective and long term alternative to acquiring land for biodiversity conservation
- Sharing of responsibility through collaboration
- Building of relationships and trust between landowners and conservation agency
- Other positive socio-economic outcomes include outreach programmes, vocational training, local employment, tangible economic incentives

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**CONCLUSION**
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1 the indications are that the Conservation Stewardship Programme could provide a cost effective and long term alternative to acquiring land for reserves to expand protected areas by forming partnerships with land owners and allowing them to conserve biodiversity on their properties.

the programme also successfully contributes to the national targets for protecting threatened ecosystems and preserving the diversity of natural systems while providing social, political, economic and environmental benefits.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

2 the introduction of voluntary agreements as one of the newer non-regulatory policy instruments (at least in South Africa) incorporating the principles of co-management, signifies in a paradigm shift in the governance approach of public agencies to biodiversity conservation.

the project has successfully changed the way in which conservation agencies function; it has attracted a new generation of committed conservation professionals who operate in an extensive network of support and unity from the top down to root level.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

3 the enabling and coherent environmental legislation and policies which have emerged since 1998 created a facilitative and supportive environment for locally negotiated and implemented co-management agreements like the Conservation Stewardship Programme to be effective

its biggest advantage is that it secures a platform for a significant attempt at meeting the extensive conservation targets set for the Western Cape Province in South Africa

Thank You
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