



Challenges and Lessons Learned from Establishing and Managing a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve: The Case of Mount Elgon (Uganda, Kenya)

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INTRODUCTION

Mt. Elgon Biosphere Reserve Uganda

- ❖ Mt. Elgon was first gazetted as a forest reserve in 1938.
- ❖ It remained so under the management of the Forest Department, with several relatively minor changes in designation,
- ❖ In 1993 its status was upgraded to a National Park. To further increase its conservation status,
- ❖ Mt. Elgon National Park was designated as Man and Biosphere (MAB) Reserve in June 2005 by UNESCO.
- ❖ Covers an area of about 1,121 km²



BACKGROUND

- Transboundary Biosphere Reserve was initiated in April 2001 and endorsed by the two countries in November 2001.
- The protected areas on both sides of the Mountain on Kenya and Uganda are Man and Biosphere Reserves.
- Mt Elgon rises up to 4,341m asl and has one of the largest Crater – 8km across.

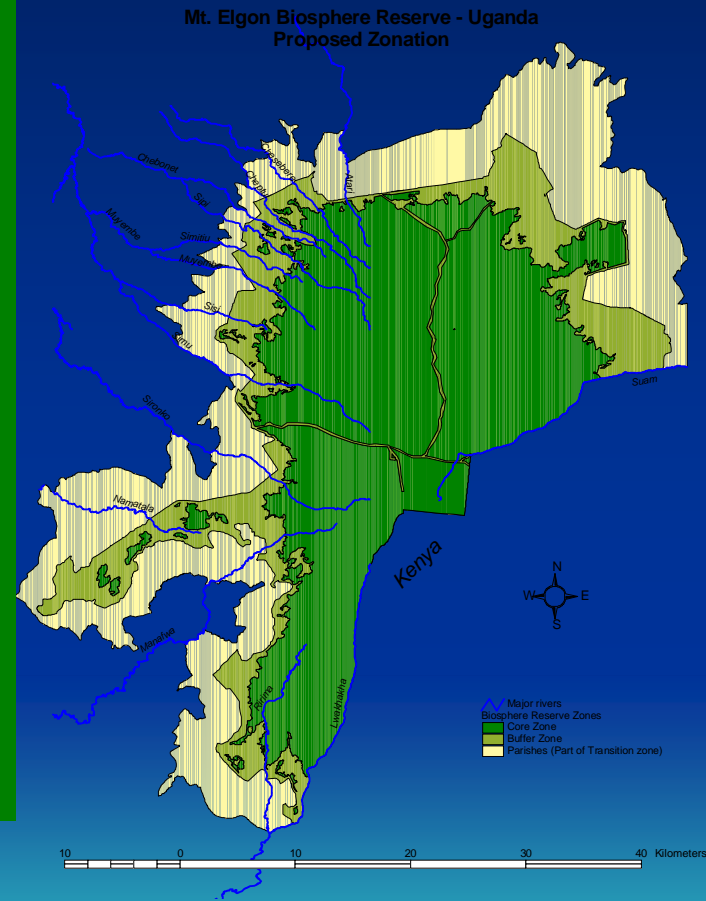
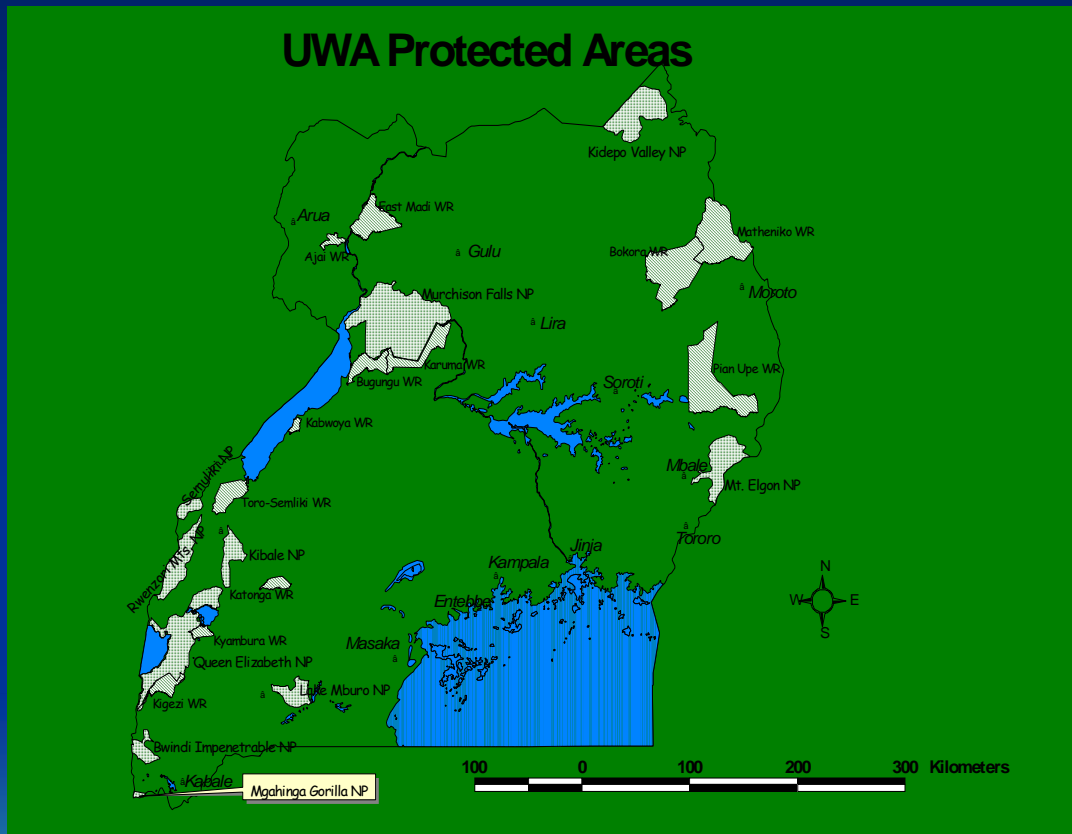


BACKGROUND CONTD.

- Protected Areas on Uganda side:
 - Mt. Elgon National Park; gazetted a forest reserve in 1938, re-gazetted as national park 1993. Covers an area of 114,500 ha
 - Namatale Forest Reserve.



LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED MT. ELGON TBR - UGANDA SIDE



IMPORTANCE OF THE MT ELGON ECOSYSTEM

- Water catchment area for both industrial and domestic use. Providing water for over 1 million people.
- Water shed for lakes Kyoga and Turkana via Rivers Mpologoma, and Suam and Bukwa respectively.
- The forest is a source of traditional medicine, food (bamboo, honey, mushrooms etc) for subsistence
- Cultural uses



IMPORTANCE OF THE MT ELGON ECOSYSTEM

Contd.

- **Biodiversity values**
- **Source of income through tourism activities**



OVERALL GOAL OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY RESERVE

Harmonized planning for and management of the entire Ecosystem for sustainable conservation of the resources therein



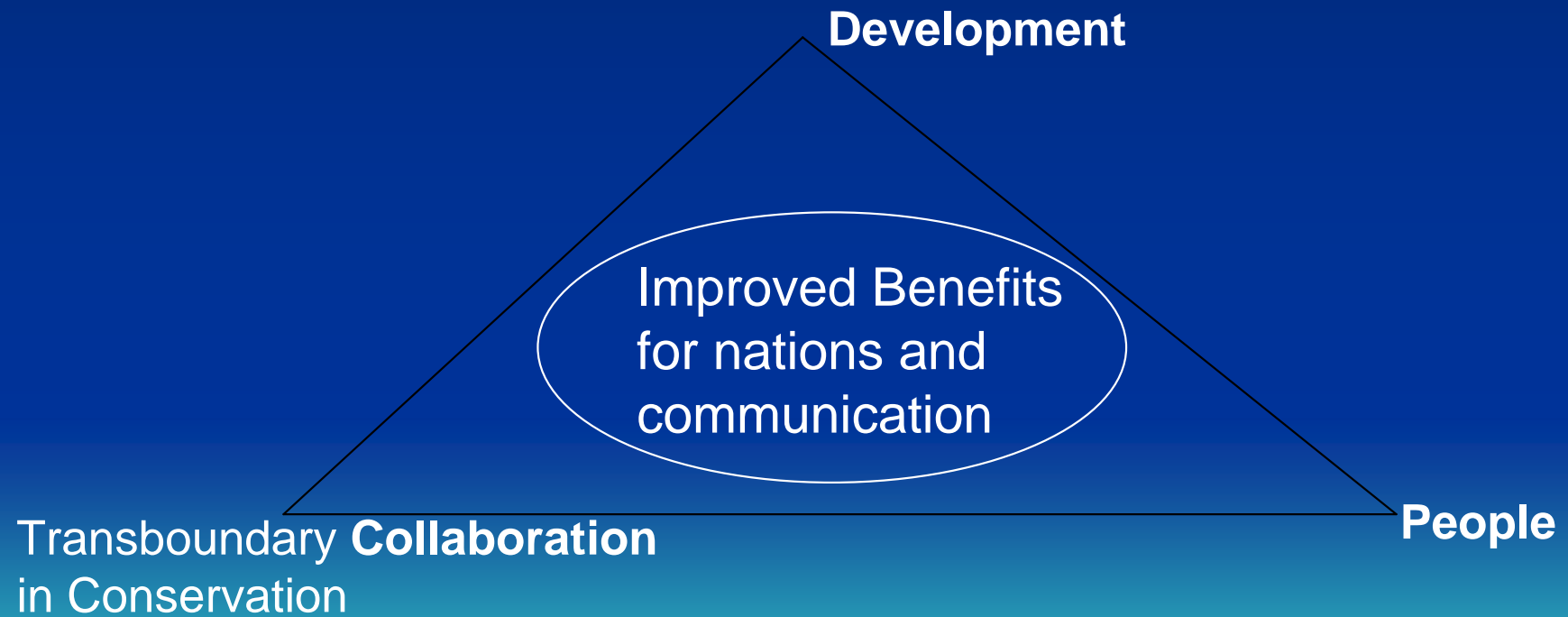
OBJECTIVES OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY RESERVE

1. Sustainable conservation of the landscape, ecosystem, species and genetic variation of the mountain
2. Foster economic and human development which is socio-culturally, politically, and ecologically sustainable
3. Provide support for research, monitoring, education and information exchange related to local, national and global issues of conservation and development.
4. Effective management of the ecosystem



JUSTIFICATION FOR THE TRANSBOUNDARY RESERVE

- Usher regional development, environment conservation and political stability



BENEFITS OF THE TBR

- **ECONOMIC:** Employment, Economic and infrastructure Development, Nature based tourism, livelihood and subsistence
- **POLITICAL:** Regional cooperation both local community and national levels
- **ECOLOGICAL:** Sustainable natural resource management and land use, increase area under ecologically sustainable management
- **SOCIAL:** Renewed cultural ties and traditions severed by artificial international boundaries, increased scoped of community NRM

PRINCIPLES OF TBR ADOPTED BY KENYA & UGANDA

- **DEMOCRACY:-** Stakeholder involvement at inception and planning for the TBR management
- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Ensuring sustainable availability of human, financial and technical resources for management of the TBR
- **EFFECIENCY:** Increased benefits both locally, nationally and regionally as compared to management costs



ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT OF THE TBR

- The respective national institutions in the two countries- UWA, KWS, KFS, etc, will continue to manage the protected areas on each side
- A TBR steering committee will be formed to oversee joint planning and management of the TBR
- Maintain Community Area Institutions initiative currently around MENP and extend it to Kenya side to promote sustainable community resource management in and around the TBR
- Reevaluate the zone boundaries on both sides to provide for greater protection of key ecosystem areas

PROPOSED ADMINISTRATIVE & MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE



TBR COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

- Executive Directors of UWA and KWS will Chair the committee
- Chairmanship will be on rotational basis of a two year term limit
- Committee Members: Chief Wardens of both Kenya & Uganda PAs, County Council, Representatives of Forest Authorities, Communities & Local Governments of both countries

PROPOSED PROGRAMMES OF THE TBR

- **TRAINING**

Aimed at capacity building for staff within the TBR to effectively implement sustainable resource management and utilization programmes

Training will involve:

- Short professional courses within the TBR or outside
- On job training within the TBR
- Joint training of staff from both countries



PROGRAMMES CONTD.

- **RESEARCH & MONITORING**

1. The national wildlife institutions of the TBR will individually and/or jointly provide scientific information that will be required for conservation and sustainable management of the biodiversity within and outside the TBR
2. The Monitoring and Research Wardens from the national institutions within the TBR will implement the R & M programmes
3. Researchers and research institutions (national and international) will also contribute to implementation of the programmes and provision of information

PROGRAMMES CONTD.

- **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Community programmes already existing in the PAs

1. Community involvement in design of programmes
2. Sustainable resource utilization in the PAs under collaborative management arrangements
3. Involving neighboring communities in tourism activities
4. Employment opportunities

All the above initiatives will be continued and enhanced under the TBR

It is proposed to develop uniform guidelines for resource access on both sides

Undertake joint resource monitoring and data analysis as an ecosystem

PROGRAMMES CONTD.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. Promotion of sustainable natural resource management and environment
2. Regional tourism within and outside the TBR under the East African Community MoU for cooperation on Environment Management
3. Joint promotion and marketing of tourism in the TBR
4. Free movement of persons, labour and establishment of residence under the East African Community Protocol on Customs Union and Free Movement of Persons.
5. Promote regional security and law enforcement within and around the TBR

PROGRAMMES CONTD.

- **PARTNERSHIPS**

1. The two governments/institutions will involve other partners through partnerships in the management of the TBR: The partners include:
 - NGOs (International, regional, national), Donors, Civil Society, private sector, etc
2. Proposals/ activities of the partners should be in line with the aim, purpose and objectives of the TBR.



PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAMME CONTD.

3. Private sector investments should be in line with the TBR Management Plan, consider the livelihoods of the surrounding local communities and must follow the EIA requirements of the two countries
4. A panel composed of the senior management of the TBR from both countries will review and vet proposals and projects of partners for implementation as well as evaluating them.



Management Challenges

- Identifying the likely role-players (TBR Steering Committee) and indicating their involvement from the outset.
- They can disperse the movement of contraband across the border through the removal of single entry points.
- Detection of illegal movement is impeded. (cuts or break in fences often indicate vulnerable spots



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- **Land conflicts**

- One of the major challenges UWA is facing in managing MENP is encroachment.
- Several boundary lines (1983, 1993, 2004)
- Waves of **encroachment** during political seasons (2,201 people in manafwa district)
3200 hectares had been encroached on since 15th January 2011, in Bumbo, Bupoto, for Votes
- Court injunctions over encroached land



Water falls that have dried up due to encroachment



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- The location of the border is obscured and this can complicate the jurisdiction of authorities in either country in the prosecution of crimes, particularly where the regulatory regime differs markedly.



Management Challenges

- Implementation of the TBR may involve relax complicated immigration procedures.
- Establishing additional entrance gates.
- Information gathering about movement becomes more difficult.
- Control of illegal activities e.g. poaching is compromised.



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- Collection of entrance fees or other revenues may be compromised;
- The question of rationalized border control facilities has provoked much debate, and requires extensive involvement with the immigration authorities in each country.
- Potential disease transmission by migratory species, such as Bird Flu, requires appropriate elements.

Cont.

- The safety and comfort of visitors . For example there may have been conflict in the past, such as active smuggling or refugee situations, like in the Virunga Park in Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda Rwanda Border.
- There may be anti-personnel mines in border areas;
- There is a need for sophisticated rescue facilities;



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- Communities will be resentful if access is denied or restricted without adequate communication and understanding;
- Rights and duties could be perceived to have been overshadowed by the magnitude and power of the TBR process;
- Sections of the community are marginalized by and excluded from planning and decision-making processes;

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- Access to opportunities is distorted resulting in community conflict;
- Perceptions of nature conservation authorities as continuing practices that impacted local communities negatively
- Relevant legislation in a partner country may not be in place.



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- Disparities in dealing with offences may lead to offenders taking advantage of a less stringent set of rules, increasing the vulnerability of the TBR;
- Differing application of the management provisions of conventions, such as CITES, may expose compliant countries to the risk of downgraded status, with implications for trade;

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- Security personnel may be unable to pursue offenders across a border or to effect an arrest in the adjacent country;
- Extradition agreements or mechanisms may not be in place.
- The risk of transmitting diseases, e.g. foot-and-mouth-disease, among wildlife populations is increased;



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- There may be accidental introduction or spread of alien plant species or pathogens, into parts of the TBR;
- Translocation of populations from elsewhere may result in the genetic contamination of local populations.



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- An effective communication infrastructure, including equipment and procedures and covering key points such as entrance gates, accommodation facilities, ranger outposts and border control posts, must be put in place;
- Information systems should be compatible, but the security of sensitive information must be protected.

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- Management of Emergencies and Disasters;
- Situations Involving Armed Conflict ;
- Coordination Framework to provide a firm basis for negotiations;



Cont.;

- Agreement on minimum altitudes for air traffic;
 - Rules and guidelines for official use of aircraft in the TBR;
 - Transboundary flights and their implications for immigration and customs control;
 - Use of private aircraft, landing zones and procedures.
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THANK YOU