

Reconciling Conservation and Development: Are Landscapes the Answer?

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ABSTRACT

The landscape scale is being used for complex initiatives that have the dual objective of conserving biodiversity and alleviating poverty in developing countries. Working at landscape scales greatly expands the level of ambition of conservation organizations. The skills and competencies needed are different to those that conservation organizations have conventionally deployed. Influencing landscape patterns will be gradual and require medium to long-term commitments. Given the lack of evidence for the effectiveness of these approaches in developing countries they should be used cautiously and in many cases should complement and not replace a focus on more conventional biodiversity protection. Working at a landscape scale does not reduce the need for setting clear conservation goals. Important elements for success are the recognition of the dynamic nature of landscapes and of changing societal perspectives on biodiversity. The underlying drivers of change must be addressed and the broad context understood. Landscape conservation should be based on broadly negotiated landscape scenarios and a long-term effort to build constituencies and bring about social change. Landscape approaches must be constructivist and recognize uncertainty and unpredictability.

Key words: biodiversity; constructivist conservation; landscapes; scenarios.

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IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, BIODIVERSITY GOALS are achieved through a mix of total protection complemented by a broad spectrum of environmental restrictions on the use of nonprotected land (Bennett *et al.* 2006). Conservation interventions are made across the entire landscape in areas and conservation is just one among several management goals (Philipps 2002). The composition of the portfolio of conservation approaches differs according to a country's stage of economic development, population density and culture.

Similar landscape approaches are now used to achieve conservation goals in developing countries where there is a need to address the trade-offs between conservation and local livelihoods (Sayer & Campbell 2004). These approaches are based on the assumption that the landscape is the appropriate scale for reconciling these trade-offs. However previous integrated conservation and development models that aspired to achieve win-win outcomes have been criticized for not delivering effectively on either alleviating poverty or on conserving biodiversity (McShane & Wells 2004). This paper



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