



AFRICA BIODIVERSITY COLLABORATIVE GROUP



Photo Credit: Mike Harrison

Land and Resource Tenure Rights

Piloting New Approaches for Securing Tenure in Critical Ecosystems in Africa

CONTEXT

Land and natural resource tenure comprise the rights accorded landholders—individuals or groups, such as communities—to use, manage and benefit from lands. Much of rural Africa is community land managed under customary tenure arrangements. Community land and resources represent fundamental assets—primary sources of livelihood, nutrition, income, wealth and employment. They are a basis for security, status, social identity and political relations, and for many rural people, they have historical, cultural and spiritual significance. Secure tenure is essential to families’ and communities’ ability to maintain their land and resources, and protect biodiversity.

OVERVIEW

The Africa Biodiversity Collaborative Group, through its **Land and Resource Tenure Rights (LRTR)** task group, enables more effective conservation by developing and testing tools that place greater land and resource management authority in the hands of local resource users. These tools provide incentives and capacity for local resource users to exercise their authority in ways that are consistent with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of renewable resources. The objectives are to: 1) reduce barriers and enhance incentives for landowners to undertake voluntary conservation initiatives, and 2) increase formal recognition of community and customary rights over land and natural resources.

ACTIVITIES & STRATEGIES

Task members are piloting new approaches for securing tenure in three critical ecosystems: Kabobo Reserve, DRC; Kilombero Valley, Southern Tanzania; and the Greater Mahale Ecosystem, Western Tanzania. These ecosystems are anchors for biodiversity that support livelihoods for growing local populations.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In securing tenure rights in DRC, **Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)** and **World Wildlife Fund (WWF)** are supporting the Tanganyika Provincial Government to gazette Kabobo Wildlife Reserve. They are working to achieve this through: engaging the local communities to provide consent to protect the forest, carrying out stakeholder analysis to identify key players, creating committees at the local and regional levels, and training committees on roles and responsibilities of the co-management model.

Southern Tanzania

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), and **World Resources Institute (WRI)** are researching the principal approaches that are available and used by villages to support the implementation and enforcement of Village Land-Use Plans. The groups are also examining progressive land and natural resource management policies and laws which provide a comprehensive framework for enabling local communities to administer, manage and sustainably utilize their land and natural resources, such as Group Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCROs). AWF is conducting surveys to assess tools that work for local communities to feel genuinely empowered with access and use rights over land in the Kilombero Valley in Southern Tanzania following consultation with the leadership of the Tanzania Land Use Planning Commission.



Briefing Villagers on CCRO Issuance Processes. Photo credit: JGI

Western Tanzania

In Tanganyika and Uvinza Districts of Western Tanzania, **The Nature Conservancy (TNC)** and **Jane Goodall Institute (JGI)** are working on land use planning, a prerequisite activity before embarking on issuing CCROs to landholders. In collaboration with the National Land Use Planning Commission, TNC and JGI are building capacity through district staff training and providing equipment to the local Departments of Land and Natural Resources that will improve the districts' capacity to manage land and other natural resources data and information. Trainings cover: participatory land use management, participatory forest management, land titling, and the CCROs issuing process.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

In piloting new approaches for securing tenure in critical ecosystems in Africa, ABCG expects to: increase the capacity of the local community to manage and conserve biodiversity; gazette the Kabobo Natural Reserve with community support at village and provincial levels; and influence other communities and conservationists working across the continent in achieving formal recognition of community and customary rights over land and natural resources.

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