

Bio-rights – Governments & NGOs

Governmental agencies and NGOs have met with varying success in their efforts to target socio-economic and environmental problems. Although small achievements are commonly made, extreme poverty and environmental degradation remain among the biggest problems of our ages. One reason for the slow rate of change is that many organisations tend to largely stick to their own working fields. Rarely do they decide to also incorporate other issues that closely interrelate with, or even impact on their own activities. As a result many conservation and development efforts are insufficiently streamlined and sometimes even counteracting. An integrated approach to development and conservation might help to increase overall success. More cooperation could lead to increased project efficiency and as well might prevent both fields to exert a negative impact on each other. Bio-rights might be a tool to accomplish this.

Why Bio-rights?

An innovative approach to ongoing problems

Many traditional development and natural resource management activities have proven their success over the last decades. Nonetheless there remains a lack of sound mechanisms that sustainably integrate development and conservation activities. Changes in the perception of community rights, stimulated many organisations to experiment with Payment for Environmental Services (PES). Acknowledging that communities have certain 'rights' over the natural services in their environment, PES compensates local communities to prevent degradation of a specific service. As such these mechanisms establish a promising link between development and conservation. Many PES mechanisms however, don't include well established conservation and development mechanisms, such as training, awareness raising and community empowerment. This might negatively impact long-term sustainability and overall efficiency. Bio-rights brings both elements together. It combines successful approaches from the past with innovative market-based mechanisms. As such it provides a promising approach to ongoing problems.

Reaching global goals and obligations

The state of the world increasingly demands for development of stringent policies and challenging conventions. The UN millennium development goals call for a significant increase in welfare and sustainability by 2015. Under the UNFCCC Kyoto protocol considerable efforts are made to cap emission of greenhouse gases. Several other global policies and conventions are currently being developed. These objectives cannot just be solved through the mechanisms that are currently in place. They demand integration of a whole range of complex factors as well as multi-sectoral cooperation. Bio-rights might facilitate cooperation, concomitantly accomplishing success at different levels.

Options to work together with other sectors

Bio-rights typically involves a whole range of actors, ranging from local communities to global stakeholders that benefit from improved environmental services. Bio-rights can also be developed as a market-based mechanism, also involving partners from the corporate and finance sector. As such the mechanism provides opportunities to widen the scope of development and conservation activities and to develop partnerships towards a more prosperous and sustainable world.