An Analysis of Institutions and Management Outcomes of Mt. Elgon Cross Border Ecosystem

Research carried out by researchers from Kenya and Uganda under the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) research programme from 1998 to 2016 in the cross border Mt Elgon ecosystem has shown significant differences in management success between institutions managing forest resources and those which manage wildlife resources. Whereas the management of wildlife in both countries is based on the command and control system, that of forests apply a mixture of command and control and participatory approaches of management.

Both forests and wildlife occur in the same ecosystem. Forest resources are managed by both wildlife and forestry institutions using policies. These policies seem to be moving to a mixture of approaches involving the use of buffer zones and fencing off of the forest resources. Tea bushes and solar fencing have been used with varying degrees of success. The study was carried out in Mt. Elgon ecosystem using IFRI tools. Special emphasis was lied on the Governing body and how governance was instituted in the cases of wildlife and forest resources.

This paper reports on an assessment of management options carried out in the cross border Mt. Elgon ecosystem by both forestry and wildlife management institutions and their outcomes. While the outcomes are based on a study of Mt. Elgon ecosystem, experiences have also been drawn from similar ecosystems in Kenya and Uganda. These are the Mt. Kenya and Aberdare Hills ecosystems in Kenya and the Ruwenzori Mountains in Uganda.

Preliminary results show that while the command and control system of management seem to be more successful, it is less participatory and opposed by those communities who depend on the resources for their livelihoods. The problem of access is being exacerbated further by putting fences and buffer zones thereby making the resources inaccessible to adjacent communities.

Various institutional policy mixes are being debated for inclusion in relevant forest and wildlife policies and legislation by the year 2020.