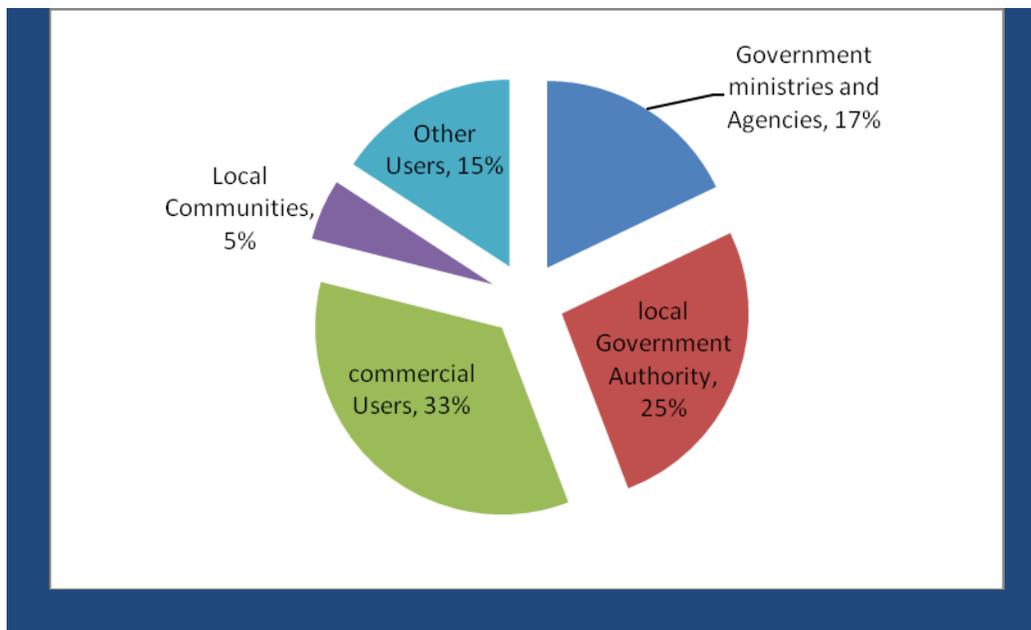


# EQUITABLE BENEFIT SHARING OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN MARA RIVER BASIN



## POLICY BRIEF

September 2012



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EA	East Africa
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
IGC	Inter-Governmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore
INRM	Integrated Natural Resource Management
KFS	Kenya Forest Services
KM	Kilometre
KWS	Kenya Wildlife Service
MAT	Mutually Agreed Terms
MRB	Mara River Basin
PIC	Prior Informed Consent
RAI	Retouch Africa International
TANAPA	Tanzania National Parks
TWBHH	Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health
USAID/	United States Agency on international Development
VEC	Village Environmental committees
WRUAs	Water Resource Users Associations



# 1.0 POLICY BRIEF

## 1.1 Summary

1. This policy brief aims at reviewing the status of equitable benefit sharing of natural resources within Mara River Basin and offering options for improving this state for the benefit of all stakeholders. Benefit sharing is widely recognized as essential to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. One of the main concerns behind the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and one of its central objectives is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits in the context of genetic resources.
2. In the context of the MRB given that both Kenya and Tanzania are signatory to the CBD, it is important that equitable benefit sharing of natural resources are promoted. However, this is not possible without understanding what these benefits are and how best they can be shared out among the various stakeholders. The situation is even worse with respect to the local communities who for a very long-time have been marginalized and have no say with respect to the benefits derived from biodiversity conservation. Instead this category of stakeholders is the one which bears the brunt of human-wildlife conflict and negligible benefits from tourism and other related services from the Mara River Basin.
3. The Mara River Basin covers about 13,750 km<sup>2</sup>, spanning an area from the Mau Forest in the Mau escarpment, Kenya, through Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya and Serengeti National Park in Tanzania, draining into Lake Victoria at Musoma. It is a transboundary basin with approximately 65% located in Kenya and 35% in Tanzania. The Mara River covers a distance of 395 km from the source to Lake Victoria.
4. The water quantity and quality has been degraded over time by human activities particularly in the highlands. This has affected ecosystem functioning and the socioeconomic activities of the Basin. The degradation of MRB ecosystem has generated considerable interest in support for its sustainable management.
5. The policy recommends all stakeholders to act as agents in sustainable management and especially in developing strategies that require accountability. This way, stakeholders will themselves add value to the basin and sustain their own benefits through collaborations that are complementary.
6. The policy brief also recommends that sustainable management interventions be strategic and adaptive and that rationale for enhancing ecosystem restoration and improving ecosystem management practices be understood before implementation. It is also important that external support consider and incorporate long term role of stakeholders in sustainable management of the ecosystem.

### **Recommendations:**

- a) In sustainable ecosystem management, the rationale for enhancing sustainability and ecosystem management practices should be well understood before implementation.
- b) Review existing benefit sharing mechanism at multi-stakeholder forum and be guided by the models of best practices in equitable benefit sharing and meaningfully participation of local communities.

- c) Promote adoption of mechanized revenue collection mechanism such as e-ticketing that has the potential of reducing leakages to bare minimum thus make more benefit available for sharing among all the stakeholders equitably.
  - d) Direct benefit sharing revenue toward eco-friendly income generating activities and reinvest these in conservation initiatives that improve local communities' livelihoods.
7. Advancing the equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity resources is particularly significant in the context of the MRB because it increases transparency and allows for implementation of social and environmental responsibility. By so doing then the redistribution of costs and benefits of conservation of the Mara ecosystem at all levels will be addressed particularly with regard to the local communities.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

Degradation of the Mau Forests, which comprises the headwater areas for Maasai Mara River, has resulted into deterioration of the river's water quality and quantity. Also, conversion of rangelands in the middle catchment to agricultural use has exacerbated this poor state. These problems have arisen due principally to rapid human population increase and unplanned, uncoordinated settlement in the catchment as a result of lack of land use guidelines and ineffective policy implementation.



*Degradation of the Mau Forest has led to reduced water quantities that feed into the Mara River Photo RAI:2013*

This has led to a number of interventions being identified and implemented, often with multiple partners or implementing organizations with multiple donors. One of the projects is the Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin (TWBHH-MRB) supported by USAID/EA. This initiative aimed to promote harmonized Mara River Basin management practices for sustainability. The assistance agreement was signed in September 2009 and the project started in October 2009. It has just completed its third and final year of implementation (October 2011-September 2012).

Benefit sharing is widely recognized as essential to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. One of the main concerns behind the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and one of its central objectives is the fair and equitable sharing of benefits in the context of genetic resources. However, benefit sharing is also inherent in another objective of the CBD: the sustainable use of biodiversity. Indeed sustainable use is considered as a valuable tool to promote conservation of bio-diversity; precisely due to social, cultural and economic benefits that people derive from the use. Benefit sharing is also recognised in CBD provisions on traditional knowledge.

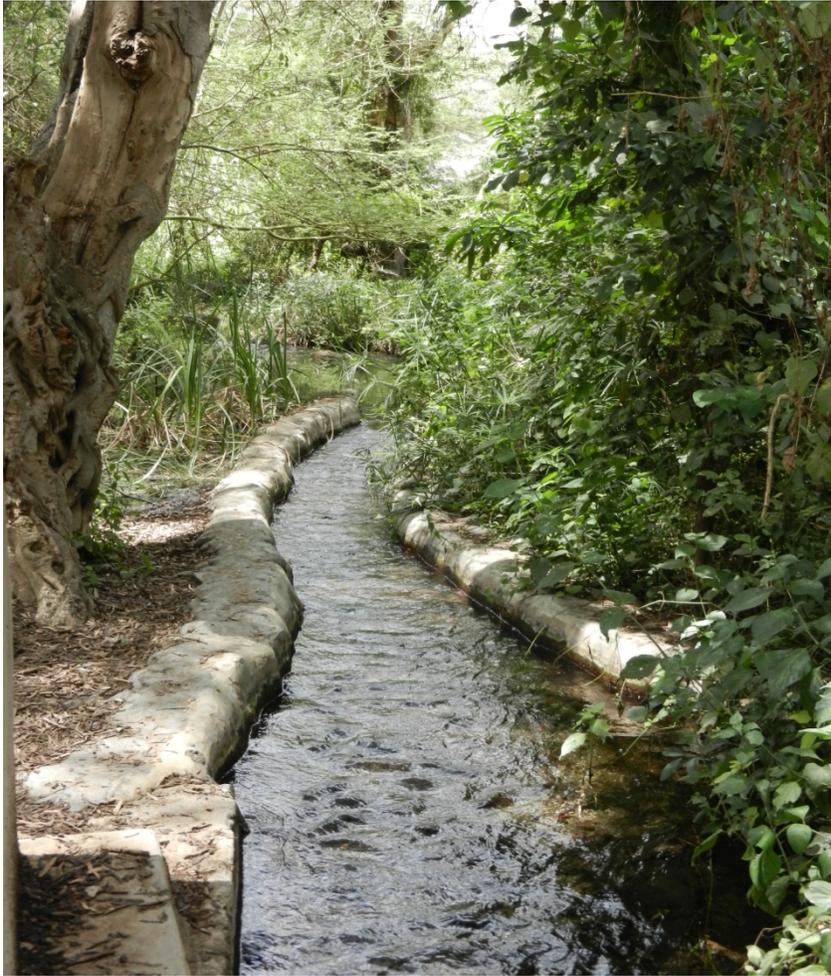
In the context of the Mara River Basin and given that both Kenya and Tanzania are signatory to the CBD, it is important that equitable benefit sharing of natural resources are promoted. However, this is not possible without understanding what these benefits are and how best they can be shared out among the various stakeholders. The situation is even worse with respect to the local communities who, for a very long time, have had little to say with respect to the benefits derived from biodiversity conservation and therefore see themselves as marginalized. Instead this category of stakeholders is the one which bears the brunt of human-wildlife conflict and negligible benefits from tourism and other related services from the MRB.

Consequently, advancing the equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity resources is particularly significant in the context of the MRB because it increases transparency and allows for implementation of social and environmental responsibility. And yet to-date, there could be many practices in MRB with respect to benefit sharing and are not documented. It is thus imperative that to enhance the governance of biodiversity resources in the basin, best practices on enhancement of equitable sharing of benefits from natural resources in MRB are documented, so that the redistribution of costs and benefits of conservation of the Mara ecosystem can be addressed, particularly with regard to the local communities. This is what this consultancy has attempted to accomplish.

As explained earlier, identifying “best practices” involves judgment, which requires prior analysis using the specific set of criteria. For a “practice” to be considered “best”, it has to be relevant, efficient and effective, be ethically sound, sustainable, have a possibility of duplication, involve partnership, involve the community and have the political commitment (See Chapter 1, Table 1.5). A “Best Practice” needs not meet all the above criteria; it should meet at least the “effectiveness”, “efficiency” and “relevance” criteria in addition to one or more of the other criteria

### **3.0 EQUITABLE BENEFIT SHARING FROM NATURAL RESOURCES IN THE MRB**

Fair and equitable benefit-sharing is one of the three objectives of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity-CBD (2010). It holds that countries, farmers, and indigenous communities that grant access to their plant genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge should share in the benefits that users derive from these resources. Commonly referred to as *The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity*, it is an international agreement which aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding, thereby contributing to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.



Benefit to the river include catchment protection and river banks (Photo RAI: 2012)

In the context of trans-boundary watercourses, benefit sharing may be defined as the process where riparians cooperate in optimizing and equitably sharing the goods, products and service connected directly to the watercourse, or arising from the use of its waters. The starting point is that cooperation within an international river basin is seen as desirable and it is understood that a number of benefits will result from cooperation (Sadoff & Grey 2002; Waterbury 2002). There also has to be cooperation and partnership amongst all stakeholders in the basin. Benefits to be shared are usually described as **benefits to the river** (e.g. improved water quality, environmental protection (protecting the catchment and riverbanks, etc.)), **benefits from the river** (e.g. hydropower, irrigation, domestic livestock watering, etc.), **benefits because of the river** (e.g. reduced risk of conflict, increased food security, etc.), and **benefits beyond the river** (e.g. integration of markets, benefits of regional trade, etc.).



Benefits from the river include sustainable access to water for all users ( Photo RAI:2012)

The third objective of the CBD, to ensure *“the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources...”* has taken centre stage now with negotiations to develop an international regime on Access and Benefit Sharing. While some progress has been achieved on negotiations related to access regulations, discussions on benefit sharing are still evolving. The provisions of the CBD and its Bonn Guidelines on ABS provide direction to the measures that countries may implement to achieve fair and equitable sharing of benefits among the different stakeholders. Other international instruments, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGR) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) through its Inter-Governmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC), also address issues related to the implementation of benefit sharing measures. Despite developments in deliberations on benefit sharing in such forums, countries are found to be cautious to implement measures related to benefit sharing.

### **3.1 Mechanisms and Types of Benefit Sharing**

Mechanisms for redistributing costs and benefits in the case of water can be identified to include: payment for water, payments for power-purchasing agreements and financing and ownership arrangements. Cooperation in a transboundary river can take many forms, ranging from sharing data to joint management. Cooperation in benefit sharing can help to create a friendly environment that could lead to broader cooperation. To realize such cooperation needs an effective national policy and regulatory framework, as well as supportive regional initiatives.

In this Policy Brief for MRB, three natural resources are taken into account: forests, water and Wildlife/Tourism. To cover all these, the perspective of Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) is adopted, taking the “Ecosystem” as the natural resource whose benefits are to be shared.



*Quantifying benefits could be realised especially on hydrological power production from the River Basin Photo RAI:2012*

The benefit sharing involves assessing benefits to the entire basin, as well as to certain portions of the basin, and **quantifying benefits** to some degree. It should also allow external or **out-of-basin benefits, especially where there a hydrological power production from the river basin.**

The objectives of benefit sharing are to:

1. Promote positive attitudes towards the conservation and management of natural resources.
2. Promote partnerships, incentives and benefit sharing to enhance the conservation and management of natural resources.
3. Provide a legal and institutional framework for cost and benefit sharing in the conservation and management of natural resources throughout the transboundary resource.
4. Conserve the ecosystem's natural resources for the benefit of the current and future generations.
5. To reduce pressure on natural resources by providing employment opportunities for communities by using natural resources more efficiently.
6. To build the capacities of relevant stakeholders to engage in sustainable management of the ecosystem thus leading to increased food security.

**Table 1. Benefit Sharing mechanisms**

BENEFIT SHARING MECHANISMS	CHARACTERISTICS
<b>Community Fund</b>	A lump sum and/or regular payment into a community-based fund for the benefit of local residents.
<b>Local Ownership</b>	Offering ownership shares in a project to local citizens, either through their own investment or through a profit-sharing or part-ownership scheme

<b>Benefits in Kind</b>	The developer directly provides or pays for local community facility improvements, environmental improvements, visitor facilities, school and educational support, e.g. collection of medicinal herbs; apiculture and honey harvesting; harvesting of timber and fuel-wood, etc
<b>Local Contracting</b>	This includes also associated local employment during construction and operation.
<b>Resource use Price Reduction for the Local Community</b>	The local community consumes or purchases energy directly from the developer at a discounted price.
<b>Compensation</b>	The developer compensates for possible damages associated with a development.
<b>Indirect Social Benefits</b>	Any other benefit accruing to the community that is not directly quantifiable, such as prestige, eco-tourism, knowledge, etc.
<b>Spinoff economic benefits</b>	associated with local manufacturing such as through job creation - local jobs and taxes

### 3.2 The need for Equitable Benefit Sharing

- (a) A major challenge facing the MRB is the degradation of natural resources. The underlying causes of this are;
- i. the increasing population which needs more land for food production, and
  - ii. the traditional view in rural populations that the best use for land is agriculture.
- (b) Lack of a comprehensive natural resources cost-benefit sharing policy and law in the light of changed circumstances,
- (c) Encroachment and increased pressure (due to population) on the remaining natural resources- these resources therefore need constant monitoring by communities themselves who in turn incur costs and for that reason need to be compensated for their input.
- (d) The need for good corporate governance in the natural resources sector which in turn means that the costs and benefit of management should be shared among all the relevant stakeholders.
- (e) Power devolution (decision making, implementation, enforcement) where the management of natural resources has to be devolved to the lowest possible level.
- (f) The requirement by the Constitution(s) for public participation in the management of natural resources.
- (g) The wish by the governments to domestic the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The most important justification for equitable benefit sharing is that: ***with lack of benefits and inadequate incentives, many communities will prefer agriculture to conserving natural resources even on their own land. Thus, land which is not under agriculture is often referred to as "idle" land. This is because the agriculture practiced provides more tangible benefits and incentives than any of the natural resources managed*** e.g. Wildlife or Forests

### 3.3 General Guiding Principles in Equitable Benefit Sharing

- Natural resources should be utilized on a sustainable basis; e.g. in forests, utilization should be allowed while continuous replanting takes place.
- The conservation of natural resources like forests and wildlife will be recognized and promoted as a land use options, and thus managers of these natural resources should be provided with incentives to enable them to continue with their practices.
- Benefits accruing from the conservation and management of natural resources will be shared equitably among stakeholders.
- Positive attitudes and perceptions towards the conservation and management of natural resources should be promoted among communities especially through cross site and exchange visits.
- The conservation and management of natural resources should be based on a long term horizon to enhance sustainability.
- Participatory approaches to the conservation and management of natural resources will be promoted (WRUAs, CFAs).
- Good governance principles, rule of law, effective institutions, transparency and accountability, respect for human rights and the meaningful participation of citizens will be integrated in natural resources conservation and management.
- The conservation and management of resources will be devolved to the lowest level possible (preferably village/household level) and decisions should be made through committees e.g. Village Environmental Committees.

### 3.4 Advantages of Benefit Sharing

Box 1 below summarises the advantages of benefit sharing.

#### Best Practices of Benefit Sharing

1. What are benefits?
  - a. Incomes
  - b. Human resources development (trainings, etc.)
  - c. Culture exchanges
  - d. Improvement in quality of life
  - e. Conservation
2. Why share benefits?
  - a. To promote cooperation within the community
  - b. Social-economic development
  - c. Equitable distribution
  - d. Sustainability
  - e. To ensure community ownership
  - f. Wider awareness of benefits of eco-tourism
  - g. Influence impact of conservation
  - h. Multiplier effect
3. How to share benefits?
  - a. Develop community or conservation fund
  - b. Develop various activities
    - To involve a broad range of service providers
    - To ensure exchange between tourists and community
  - c. Involve various/different stakeholders
  - d. Develop internal rules for service providers
  - e. Collect taxes and redistribute as benefits
  - f. Share information

Figure 1: Benefits sharing of gross Earnings from MRB Natural Resources by different stakeholders on Kenya Side

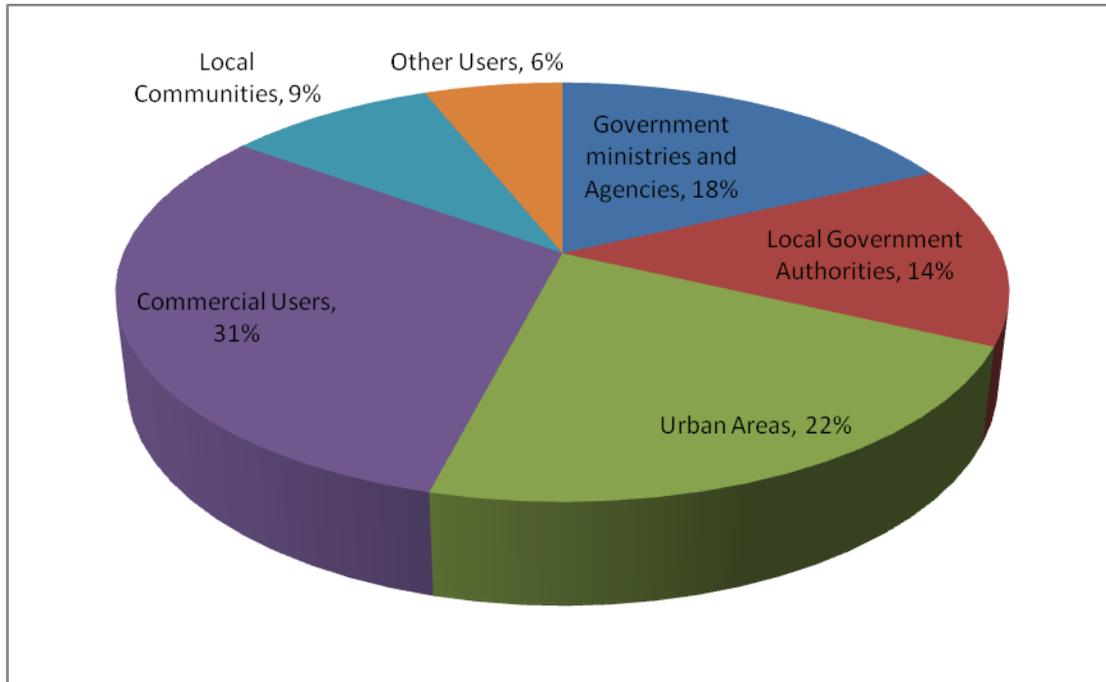
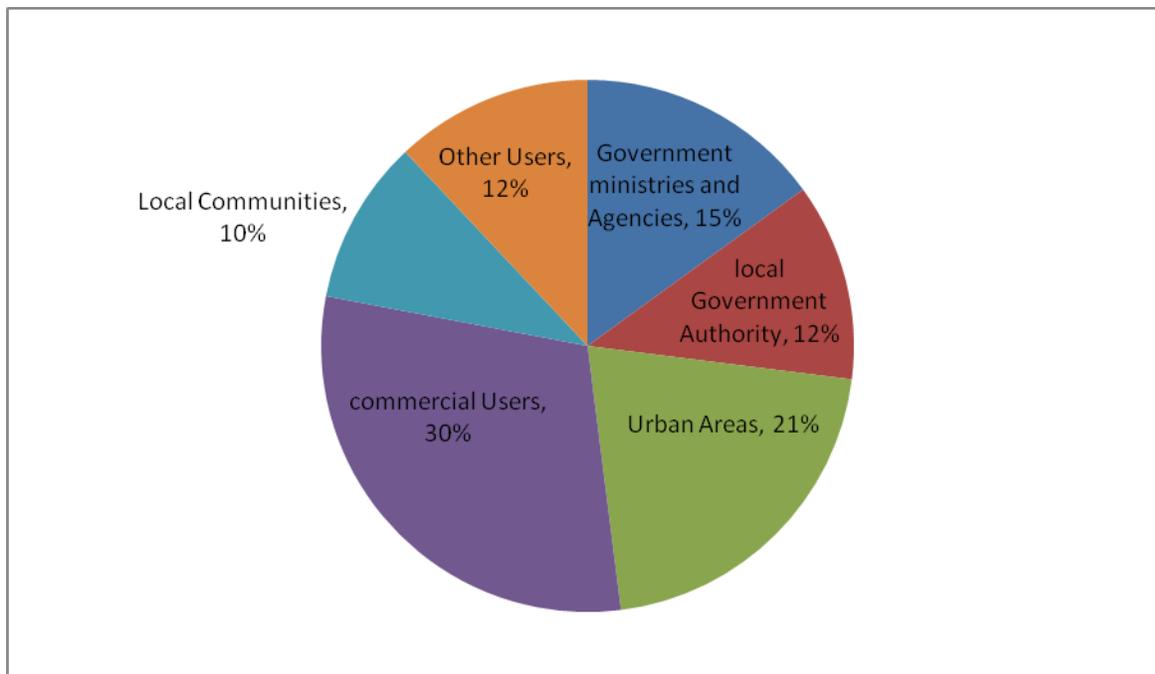


Figure 2: Benefits sharing of gross Earnings from MRB Natural Resources by different stakeholders on Tanzania Side



. The Stakeholders

It is well to remember all the stakeholders in the MRB:

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## UPSTREAM

### Forest dwellers

Large scale tea farms, a tea factory, water bottling company, Mosot water distribution company, and urban authorities

Water users associations

### Farmers

*with direct demand:* tea factory, water bottling company, water management authorities, water distribution companies, town authorities, urban and rural water vendors, urban businesses and residents, hospitals, schools, large scale horticultural farms, tourist lodges and camps, group ranches and rural communities

### Livestock keepers

Mixed farmers, dairy farmers water vendors and business people Small scale farmers

The Kenya Forest Service

Narok County Council

Bomet Town Council

Water Resources Management Authority (WRMA)

Tirgaga and Kapkoros tea factories, Tenwek Hospital, Secondary schools

-The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

-Secondary schools, Tenwek hospital and medium scale commercial enterprises.

-Ministry of Water/ Mosot water services Company / Bomet Town Council

Logging companies,

Community forest associations

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## MIDSTREAM

Livestock-keepers

Farmers

-with indirect demand: wheat farms, conservation areas (public and private), local authorities, tourist lodges and camps, tour operators, tourists, NGOs and the Government

-Group ranches and small scale urban commercial enterprises

The tourist hotel industry

Tourist lodges, horticultural farms, Narok and TransMara County Councils

Tourist camps and wheat farmers

Tourist hotels and lodges

The wildlife park owners / managers

Tourists

Commercial enterprises

Large scale irrigation farmers

WRMA

The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS)

Private conservancies, Water vendors

Mara WRUA

Poor households

Pastoralists

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## DOWMNSTREAM (Mainly in Tanzania)

## Livestock-keepers

### Farmers

1. *Public Institutions:* Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Narok County Council, Trans Mara County Council, Nyayo Tea Zone
2. *Private landowners:* tea states, individual small scale farmers, large scale farmers, private sanctuaries, group ranches

### The tourist hotel industry

### Wildlife park owners / managers,

### Tourists,

*with indirect demand:* conservation areas (gazetted and un-gazetted areas), tourist lodges and camps, artisanal fishermen, local authorities, NGOs and the Government

### Commercial enterprises,

### The Lake Victoria Basin Board;

### The Musoma Urban Water and Sewerage Authority (MUWASA);

### Tarime Municipal Council

### Mining enterprises

*with direct demand:* gold mining companies, small scale gold miners, urban authorities, urban businesses and residents and rural communities

### -Gold mining companies

### Large scale mining companies

### Urban centres

### Water Users Associations (WUAs),

### Water vendors

### Households in commercial centres

### Fishermen

### Water vendors

### Hunters

### 3. *Communities:* hunters and gatherers

### Poor households

### -Small scale gold miners

- Subsistence farmers
- Agro-pastoralists
- Small scale urban commercial enterprises

*1. Public Institutions :*

Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and Forest Department

*2. Private landowners:* mining companies

*3. Communities:* small scale farmers

## 4.0 POLICY DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Benefit sharing is participation in the economic, environmental, scientific, social or cultural benefits arising from access and use of natural resources and associated traditional knowledge under Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT). It is implemented under the following conditions:

- (1) A fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of natural resources and associated traditional knowledge is provided in order to support compliance with the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- (2) Benefits are provided according to the specific stages of use set out in the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) agreement (discovery, research, development and commercialization), and are renegotiated when the type of use is expected to change beyond the agreed PIC. Benefit-sharing considers and provides short-, medium- and long-term benefits.
- (3) Benefits are shared fairly and equitably with all those who have been identified as having contributed to the natural resource management, scientific or commercial process, including governments at different levels, and/or indigenous and local communities, and relevant stakeholders who are the owners, managers or custodians of the ecosystem resource.
- (4) Benefits are intended to create or strengthen capacity in the providers or other stakeholders, especially through technology transfer and training, which is relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of the ecosystem resources.
- (5) Benefit-sharing arrangements are implemented in good faith, respecting the terms and understanding of Prior Informed Consent agreed for use of the ecosystem resources collected, and the terms and conditions negotiated in the Mutually Agreed Terms.
- (6) Benefit-sharing provisions are negotiated and implemented in a manner that contributes to the conservation of ecosystem and its biological diversity.

Further, it is mandatory to:

- Comply with all the applicable laws and regulations regarding benefit-sharing in force in the provider country.
- Take into account the expressed desires and needs of the other organization/ community and its capacities when negotiating benefit-sharing provisions, in a fair and constructive manner so as not to put them at a disadvantage.
- Use a comprehensive and open list/menu to choose from possible monetary and non-monetary benefits to begin the process of negotiating benefits, to apply flexibly for the different cases and situations.
- Consider short-term, medium-term and long-term benefits. The time frame of benefit-sharing should be clearly stipulated. Furthermore, the balance among short-, medium- and long-term benefits should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Determine the benefit-sharing mechanisms jointly between the user and provider organizations, depending upon the type of benefits and the specific conditions.
- Promote the benefits that directly reach the providers (owners/manager/ custodians) of the ecosystem resource, including local and indigenous communities. Training, capacity building and technology transfer should be especially considered.

- Provide appropriate monetary benefits including financial contributions for research and conservation, royalties, etc. to the extent possible.
- Carry out the use of genetic resources in and with the participation of the provider country and other providers (owners, users, custodians), including local and indigenous communities, unless it is not feasible.
- Identify opportunities in the source country and collection location for participation in the commercialization process and value adding activities.
- Seek the original provider of the genetic resource for re-supplying material, if additional material is needed for research and development or the commercialization of a product.
- Establish appropriate monitoring/tracking and reporting mechanisms in the legal arrangements.



*Gazelles grazing in the Mara Triangle Photo RAI:2012*

The Transboundary Water for Biodiversity and Human Health in the Mara River Basin project has sponsored a number of studies in the MRB which have elucidated many important issues that underlie the need for institution of equitable benefit sharing as one of the foundations for sustainable management of the MRB ecosystem. This policy brief unites the recommendations put forward in these studies to provide policy direction. These are:

- Integrated approach to ecosystem sustainability, particularly Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) approach for MRB management.
- Ecosystem management strategies that hold stakeholders accountable.
- Ecosystem management interventions that are strategic and adaptive to changing circumstances or/and unforeseen situations.

- Rationale for enhancing sustainability and improving ecosystem management practices (for land, for forests, for water and for wildlife and other biodiversity) should be well understood before implementation.
- Review existing benefit sharing mechanism to ensure compliance with mutually agreed terms and well as factor in perennial complaints of the local communities.

## **Integrated Approach to Natural Resources Management**



*A pride of lions in the Maasai Mara Reserve Photo RAI :2012*

- a) Over the years, there has been haphazard settlement in the upper catchment of the MRB and conversion of land use in a disorderly manner.
- b) Forest de-gazettement has taken place without consideration to the consequences to the downstream ecosystem.
- c) The middle catchment has seen most of the wildlife dispersion areas converted to wheat and barley farms, following no defined policy or process.
- d) Water over-consumption, declining water resources and volumes, pollution, droughts, floods have increasingly posed a challenge to development, water for health and environment.
- e) Private conservancies have been established haphazardly on the Kenyan side despite a loudly announced moratorium. These conservancies depend on the same wildlife as the Protected Areas.
- f) The real earnings and therefore benefits from wildlife tourism are not equitably shared.

***A process which promotes the coordinated development and management of land, water, wildlife and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant***

*economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without comprising the sustainability of ecosystem* is therefore imperative.

**Recommendations:**

**The Government should apply INRM approach at all levels for effective integration of policies and activities in catchment restoration.**

**Strategies that hold stakeholder accountable**

- a) Many stakeholders with diverse interests are involved in the MRB.
- b) On instituting policy and interventions, it is important to understand the stakeholders, their interest, role, strengths and weaknesses.
- c) Stakeholders include local individuals, communities, private sector, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, politicians, government agencies, departments and ministries, donors, including intergovernmental organizations.
- d) All stakeholders should be held accountable of their activities.
- e) For purposes of implementation, collaborations, partnerships and implementation structures should be formal and activities should be governed through a formal agreement.
- f) Stakeholders should not compete but complement each other to achieve a common goal of a sustainable ecosystem.

**Recommendations:**

- a) Government should implement Restoration strategies that hold stakeholder accountable for their activities in implementing INRM at all levels.**
- b) Agreements, Partnerships and collaborations should be legal and complementary.**

**Adaptive Ecosystem Management Interventions**

- a) Management interventions change with circumstances or/and unforeseen situations including disasters.
- b) Continuous monitoring may detect challenges requiring change in approach.
- c) Flexibility in implementations is important but must be based on verifiable facts and negotiated.

**Recommendations: Government should implement ecosystem management interventions that are adaptive for effective ecosystem sustainability.**

**Rationale for enhancing sustainability and improving ecosystem management practices (for land, forests, water, wildlife etc.) should be well understood before implementation.**

- a) For successful implementation of sustainable ecosystem management activities in context of INRM there are several critical conditions:
  - i. Supportive policies, laws, institutional and political will;
  - ii. Regulatory and decision-making framework for the actors;
  - iii. Transparent and accountability framework;
  - iv. Water resources assessment (quality and quantity);
  - v. Data and information;
  - vi. Water allocation system;
  - vii. Monitoring and evaluation; and
  - viii. Resources and capacity (Legal, physical, administrative, technical, institutions, human, financial).

**Recommendations:**

- a) In sustainable ecosystem management, the rationale for enhancing sustainability and ecosystem management practices should be well understood before implementation.
- b) Review existing benefit sharing mechanism at multi-stakeholder forum and be guide by the models of best practices in equitable benefit sharing and meaningfully participation of local communities.
- c) Promote adoption of mechanized revenue collection mechanism such as e-ticketing that has the potential of reducing leakages to bare minimum thus make more benefit available for sharing among all the stakeholders equitably.
- d) Direct benefit sharing revenue toward eco-friendly income generating activities and reinvest these in conservation initiatives that improve local communities' livelihoods.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Mara River Basin Initiative experiences and lessons learnt provide rich insight for future actions on equitable benefit sharing. The highlighted recommendations provide policy direction for implementation. First, it requires convening a consultative meeting among the stakeholders to review the current practice and proffer new sharing models that take into consideration all players including the ecosystems balance requirements. This review will require policy and legal support and subsequent enforcement. Finally, the reallocated benefits should stimulate more conservation activities in MRB to ensure sustainability of the MRB ecosystem.

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