

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN TANZANIA**
LESSONS FROM THE RUAHA ECOSYSTEM

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paper presented to the conference on *African Wildlife Management in the New
Millennium*, College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka, Tanzania,
13-15 December 2000

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CCS	Community Conservation Service (TANAPA)
DED	District Executive Director
DFID	Department for International Development (U.K.)
DNRO	District Natural Resources Officer
DSC	District Steering Committee (of MBOMIPA)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GCA	Game Controlled Area
HAT	Hunting Association of Tanzania
HIMA	<i>Hifadhi ya Mazingira</i> ('Conservation of the Environment' Project)
LM (GCA)	Lunda-Mkwambi (Game Controlled Area)
MBOMIPA	<i>Matumizi Bora ya Malihai Idodi na Pawaga</i> ('Sustainable Use of Wildlife Resources in Idodi and Pawaga' Project)
MEMA	<i>Matumizi Endelevu ya Misitu ya Asili</i> ('Sustainable Utilisation and Management of Natural Forests' Project)
MNRT	Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
NR	Natural resources
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (U.K., now DFID)
PAWM	Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management Project (USAID)
REWMP	Ruaha Ecosystem Wildlife Management Project
SCIP	Support for Community Initiated Projects (CCS, TANAPA)
SMUWC	Sustainable Management of the Usangu Wetland and its Catchment Project
TANAPA	Tanzania National Parks
VGS	Village Game Scouts
VNRC	Village Natural Resource Committee
WD	Wildlife Division
WMA	Wildlife Management Area

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author alone and are not necessarily shared by colleagues or the institutions to which he is attached.

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper has been prepared as a contribution to the debate on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to community-based conservation in Africa. It focuses on the development of community wildlife management in Tanzania, and in particular on the experience of successive ODA/DFID-funded projects – REWMP and MBOMIPA - working with communities in Iringa District that neighbour Ruaha National Park.

The history of these projects has been closely intertwined with that of community wildlife management in the country as a whole. Community-based approaches in Tanzania date from the late 1980s:¹ the project-linked initiatives discussed in this paper began in January 1993, when a community wildlife management component was added to REWMP, the Ruaha Ecosystems Wildlife Management Project.² REWMP ended in June 1996, but its community component was taken up by the MBOMIPA Project, which began in October 1997 and is currently due to run through to October 2001.³

MBOMIPA is the acronym for *Matumizi Bora ya Malihai Idodi na Pawaga* ('Sustainable Use of Wildlife Resources in Idodi and Pawaga'), the Swahili title of the project chosen in a stakeholders' planning workshop. Idodi and Pawaga are the

¹ Important early milestones in the development of community-based approaches in Tanzania include the start of the Serengeti Regional Conservation Strategy (1986) and of the Selous Conservation Programme (1988); preparation of the first draft *Policy on Wildlife Conservation and Utilisation* (1988); and the start of TANAPA's benefit-sharing programme (1988), later to be institutionalised as its Community Conservation Service (CCS) (Hartley 1997).

² REWMP, which began in September 1992, was originally conceived as an input to park planning: one of its principal outputs was the General Management Plan of Ruaha National Park.

³ Building on the foundation established by REWMP, MBOMIPA represents a unique collaboration between Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) and the Wildlife Division (WD) in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

two administrative divisions in Iringa district which border Ruaha National Park, cutting across the southern part of Lunda-Mkwambi Game Controlled Area (LM GCA), the protected area which forms the basis for current community wildlife management activities.

The *Wildlife Policy of Tanzania* (MNRT 1998), which was in draft when REWMP ended and MBOMIPA began, envisages the establishment of a new category of protected area under community authority and responsibility, to be called Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). One of the primary objectives of MBOMIPA is to pilot implementation of the new policy; specifically to initiate the conversion of (at least a portion of) LM GCA into a WMA managed by the Idodi and Pawaga villages – of which there are now nineteen, with a total population estimated at over 30,000 people.⁴

In the next section of the paper I will summarise some of the achievements of MBOMIPA to date in meeting this and other objectives. The section which follows this discusses past and present obstacles to the development of community wildlife management as experienced by REWMP and especially MBOMIPA. This section is meant to provoke discussion. It is about the practical problems faced in this particular context, and I have made little reference to the burgeoning academic and grey literature on community wildlife management elsewhere in Tanzania and the wider region. I leave readers to make their own wider connections, though I have not hesitated to suggest some practical lessons both here and in the brief conclusion to the paper.

2 ACHIEVEMENTS AND CURRENT STATUS

This section provides a general overview of the development of community wildlife management in the MBOMIPA Project area to date. I will focus in particular on three broad areas of achievement: sustainable utilisation and the provision of economic benefits; institutional development and capacity building; and contributions to policy and its implementation at national level. This overview should be sufficient to indicate that the interventions of REWMP and MBOMIPA have had significant impacts, although it is clear that much work still remains to be done to convert LM GCA into a fully functioning WMA under village authority and responsibility. For more detailed assessments, the reader is referred to Professor Murphree's March 2000 review of the project, as well as other project documents (e.g. Walsh 1998; 2000a).

⁴ According to the Logical Framework in the *Project Memorandum* (1997), the purpose of the project is: 'An effective and sustainable wildlife system under community authority and responsibility established in the Lunda Mkwambe Wildlife Game Control Area [LMGCA]' (sic). It has since been proposed that this be revised to the following: 'To improve livelihoods of people in the proposed Lunda-Mkwambi Wildlife Management Area (LMWMA) by establishing sustainable natural resource management under community authority and responsibility in Pawaga and Idodi divisions' (Walsh *et al.* 2000).

2.1 Sustainable Utilisation and Provision of Economic Benefits

REWMP-MBOMIPA's most obvious achievement has been to ensure that participating villages have received a steadily increasing income from the consumptive and non-consumptive utilisation of wildlife on and adjacent to village lands. It is assumed that the investment of significant portions of this income in village development (especially health and education services, and to a lesser extent in productive infrastructure) has impacted positively on individual livelihoods, though this remains to be documented in detail.⁵ Meanwhile, aerial surveys conducted for the project suggest that most key wildlife populations have remained stable and that current levels of consumptive utilisation are sustainable (Ecosystems Consultants 2000).⁶

In addition to funds and other kinds of assistance received through Ruaha National Park's SCIP (Support for Community Initiated Projects) programme,⁷ villages in the project area receive income primarily from two different forms of consumptive utilisation, resident and tourist hunting. Income from non-consumptive uses, specifically game viewing and photographic tourism, is at present negligible, though it is expected to become important in the next few years.⁸

Resident Hunting

MBOMIPA is the only project in Tanzania in which villages derive significant income from the sale of a hunting quota to resident hunters. The groundwork for this was undertaken during REWMP. In 1995 the southern part of LM GCA was closed to resident hunting and the game quota allocated to six pilot villages instead. Following the model of other projects in the country (Serengeti, Selous), villagers were assisted in hunting for meat. It was assumed that the local demand for cheap meat was a major cause of (subsistence) poaching, and that the legal provision of

⁵ Village Natural Resource Committees typically spend up to half of their income on running their wildlife management 'enterprises' – mostly to pay for their Village Game Scouts – leaving the remainder to be handed over to the Village Treasury for development expenditure (see Walsh 1998 for one example). A number of villagers have observed that they gain both directly and indirectly from these expenditures: they may benefit from the actual services provided (e.g. through improved health care), as well as from a reduction in village levies upon them - levies which once would have been raised to fund these services.

⁶ 'It is the consultant's present opinion that the populations of most species in the study area are stable, and not in a state of significant dynamic change' (Ecosystems Consultants 2000a: #5.2). MBOMIPA has now had two dry and two wet season aerial surveys conducted on its behalf, and the results of these have been used to generate and revise annual quota recommendations. A participatory monitoring system has also been developed for use by the participating villages and their Village Game Scouts (Ecosystems Consultants 2000b), and this is currently being tested and refined for use in the absence of regular aerial surveys.

⁷ Over the past three years most of the assistance from the SCIP programme to the villages in Idodi and Pawaga divisions has been channelled into the construction of Idodi Secondary School, the first secondary school in the area.

⁸ At least one major tourist facility is currently being planned in the project area, and land for its construction has already been obtained via the District Land Development Committee. Permission to build, however, has yet to be granted.

bush meat by the project would not only satisfy this demand, but also improve nutrition and generate useful income for villages. These assumptions turned out to be at least partly mistaken: poaching seems to have been driven largely by supply (and the need for poachers themselves to generate cash) rather than demand. Village hunting generated relatively little cash and insufficient meat to satisfy expectations, and was the cause of many arguments in the villages over who got what and who did not. Last but not least, resident hunters were extremely angered by their exclusion from their favourite hunting grounds in Lunda-Mkwambi, and began to complain loudly and mobilise political support in their favour.⁹

In the following year, 1996, resident hunting resumed. Most of the nine villages then participating (villages deemed to have sufficient game on their lands) decided to sell their share of the annual game quota to resident hunters, having received permission from the Director of Wildlife to do so.¹⁰ This was done by auctioning individual animals to the hunters. Two public auctions were held in Iringa in 1996. Although these auctions proved extremely controversial, and some animals remained unsold, a significant sum of money was raised: more than Tsh.5.1 million in total (Tsh.3.7 million plus for the nine villages which shared four hunting blocks, and over Tsh.1.4 million for the district, which administered a fifth block). Village government incomes were doubled, and in some cases trebled, as a result (Walsh 1996).

In 1997 a deal was negotiated with the resident hunters of Iringa which effectively put an end to the severe controversies of the past. Instead of auctioning individual animals, the quota allocations for each hunting block were sold in their entirety. The Iringa Branch of HAT (the Hunting Association of Tanzania) purchased the whole village quota (four blocks), while the newly formed Ruaha Conservation Group (an offshoot of the Friends of Ruaha) purchased the quota for the district block. These two local groupings were also given first option on the purchase of the quotas for 1998 and 1999, and divided up their purchases in the same way. One consequence of having two quite different groups of purchasers was that one began to learn off the other. In 1999 the Iringa Branch of HAT changed its name to the Iringa Wildlife Conservation Association, emulating the Ruaha Conservation Group. The primary interest of the latter is in conservation rather than hunting, and over the years they have made significant investments in the development of the Mkupule (district) block

As Table 1 shows, village and district incomes from sale of the resident hunting quota rose steadily over this period.

This year, 2000, the villages agreed to a series of changes in the organisation of resident hunting and sale of the quota. The five hunting blocks which had existed since the time of REWMP were consolidated into two blocks, reflecting local ecology (one consolidated block, Mkupule, being dominated by *miombo*; the other,

⁹ The resident hunters of Iringa are a group of heterogenous ethnic origins, including a cross-section of the wealthiest businessmen and farmers in the town and surrounding district.

¹⁰ Villages were permitted to raise their own 'village levy' on the sale of game, independent of the license fees levied by the district, which still had to be paid by the hunters.

Lunda, by *Acacia-Commiphora* woodland). In the process, the district-managed block (Mkupule district) reverted to village control. Villagers argued that the district had failed to reinvest in the block; and the district agreed to this change on the understanding that in the future – and subject to the provisions of the forthcoming WMA Guidelines - it would benefit by taxing community wildlife management in the area as a whole.

The villages proposed that the resident hunting quota should be auctioned nationwide. This proposal, however, was rejected by the Director of Wildlife: instead the sale was negotiated locally as it had been since 1997. This time the Iringa Wildlife Conservation Association (formerly HAT) and the Ruaha Conservation Group joined together to purchase the quota, coming to an internal agreement over who should pay what and where they should operate (agreeing, in effect, to maintain the status quo). Meanwhile, the Director of Wildlife agreed to a special quota of zebra, this being a species normally reserved for tourist hunting. These have been offered for sale at tourist prices, independently of the rest of the quota.

To date more than Tsh.20 million has been raised / pledged from the sale of the combined game quota for 2000. For the first time this income is being divided equally among all of the villages in the project area (currently numbering 18, following the division of two of the original 16 villages), regardless of whether resident hunting takes place on their lands or not.

Tourist Hunting

The northern part of LM GCA is set aside for tourist hunting. REWMP lobbied hard in favour of the villages bordering LM North receiving the 25% of license fees from this area that they were entitled to. In 1997 the seven villages in Pawaga division which did not benefit from resident hunting received a portion of these funds for the first time: previously all of the money had (as happens elsewhere in the country) been retained by the district. Table 2 shows the sums shared by the seven villages through to 1999. Typically the district retained some of the money received from treasury for its own purposes, although most of the funds went to the Pawaga villages during this period.

In June of this year (2000) all of the villages in the project area agreed to pool this income together with their income from other sources (primarily resident hunting). They also declared their wish to become the managers of LM North (to be incorporated in their future WMA) and therefore benefit more directly from the tourist hunting conducted there. This request has yet to be forwarded to and considered by the Wildlife Division.

Unfortunately, it seems that the MBOMIPA villages will receive none of this year's payment (deriving from last year's fees) directly. The project has recently been informed that the district has allocated the Tsh.2,480,000 that it has received to four villages in neighbouring Isimani division (which will be given a total of Tsh.800,000) and to support game patrols and related activities in the project area (Tsh.400,000 to pay for district staff; Tsh.500,000 for problem animal control, Tsh.300,000 to repair a Land Rover for use by the DGO, and Tsh.480,000 for first

aid kits, mattresses, and beds in the game assistants' camps in the area).¹¹ Despite this loss of income from LM GCA North the total income of the villages from all types of hunting has risen this year, whereas the district's income from the same sources has fallen slightly (assuming that the figures given above are accurate).¹²

2.2 Institutional Development and Capacity Building

Both REWMP and MBOMIPA have paid considerable attention to the development of an institutional framework for community wildlife management in the project area, as well as to efforts to develop the capacity for management at village level. The first Village Wildlife Committees were established under REWMP. Under MBOMIPA these were reformed as Village Natural Resource Committees (VNRCs), their membership revitalised with the application of new criteria, and their status as sub-committees of village government clarified. Training of VNRC and village government officials in tandem has focused upon the development of the skills required to manage the wildlife 'enterprise', including basic financial management. Close attention has also been paid to the appointment and training of Village Game Scouts (VGS), who are employed by the VNRCs to patrol and monitor wildlife utilisation.¹³

The 'villagisation' of wildlife management has proved both necessary (at least as an initial step) and problematic. More recently, and following the recommendations contained in the draft WMA Guidelines (2000), the 18 villages in the project area have decided to form a single association for the purpose of wildlife management.¹⁴ As noted above, they have agreed to share all of their income equally. A major job for the project now is to facilitate the formation and registration of this association.

At district level, the projects have operated with a District Steering Committee (DSC) lately chaired by the Iringa District Commissioner. Key district departments are represented on the DSC, as are other project stakeholders, including resident hunters and relevant local development agencies. The villages in the project area are represented by their five ward councillors. Although the DSC has provided a lively forum for discussion and decision-making (e.g. making critical decisions over the sale of the annual game quota), it clearly also has functioned mainly as a stepping-stone to more effective arrangements. The draft Guidelines envisage the formation of a District Advisory Committee comprising mainly district officers.

¹¹ This budget was kindly provided by the Iringa District Natural Resources Officer.

¹² We do not know as yet the reason behind the apparent drop in income from the tourist hunting license fees from LM GCA North.

¹³ Each village has 10 VGS. Although they began by working independently, they now form joint patrols outside as well as inside their own village areas. The VGS are provided with allowances of food when on duty, and this comprises the largest single expense for VNRCs.

¹⁴ They have also agreed to the addition of a nineteenth village to the association. This village had previously been excluded, in part because it was peripheral to the GCA.

Hitherto the project villages have not participated effectively in collective decision-making, lacking a collective forum in which they could do so. The formation of an inter-village association will, it is hoped, address this deficiency, making it no longer necessary for them to rely on the services of their elected councillors.

2.3 Contributions to National Policy and Its Implementation

Both the community component of REWMP and the MBOMIPA Project have had an appreciable impact on the development and implementation of national policy. This influence has been greatest in the wildlife sector, and has increased over time as MBOMIPA has matured.

When the community wildlife management component of REWMP began in January 1993, the policy environment was much less developed than it is today:

“The lack of a policy framework to direct community wildlife management within the country was a serious problem. Two pilot utilisation schemes had been launched by the WD in the Serengeti and Selous ecosystems, while TANAPA had initiated a benefit sharing scheme called “Good Neighbourliness” [*Ujirani Mwema*] in four of the northern parks. The latter was subsequently institutionalised as the Community Conservation Service (CCS). The different approaches to community wildlife management were promoted as mutually exclusive by the wildlife authorities. This symbolised the differences and divisions that lay within the wildlife sector as a whole. However, in February 1994 the WD, through its Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management (PAWM) project, held a workshop aimed at developing a new national policy for the wildlife sector. The result was the “Policy for Wildlife Conservation”. This document provides an enabling policy environment for community-based conservation. An appropriate policy framework is a critical first step to establishing community-based conservation.” (Hartley 1997: 1)

In line with its own institutional set-up, REWMP helped to promote collaboration between the different wildlife authorities, especially TANAPA and the Wildlife Division.¹⁵ Its activities as a pilot project also helped to strengthen government commitment to the development of a national wildlife policy, and one of the assumptions of the MBOMIPA Project logical framework (formulated in 1996) was that a “New wildlife policy is implemented effectively during the project period” (MNRT 1997: 6).

The new *Wildlife Policy of Tanzania* (MNRT 1998) was published in March 1998, when MBOMIPA was less than six months’ old. Since then the project has played an increasingly active role in the process established by the Wildlife Division to ensure that the new policy is effectively implemented. This has included participation in the consultative process designed to draw up guidelines for the establishment and management of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) under community authority and responsibility (currently in draft, MNRT 2000). Starting in December 1999, MBOMIPA staff (and other project stakeholders) have taken

¹⁵ “REWMP contributed to the Community Conservation Coordinating Committee (C4), which subsequently developed into a fully-fledged policy making forum for the CCS” (Hartley 1997: 1). Unfortunately the C4 has lapsed in recent years, and meetings have not been held since 1996, though TANAPA is planning to revive them (TANAPA 2000).

part in a series of workshops and meetings in which the draft guidelines have been progressively refined. The project and project stakeholders have also been visited on a number of occasions by consultants and Wildlife Division staff undertaking studies relating to the development of the guidelines and specific areas of concern therein (see Kiwango 1999; EPIQ/TANZANIA 2000a; 2000b; Booth *et al.* 2000; Christophersen *et al.* 2000; Mabugu and Mugoya 2000; Majamba 2000). Earlier this year the project also contributed to a workshop in Iringa designed to introduce the new policy and draft guidelines to District Game Officers from throughout mainland Tanzania (Walsh 2000b).

In this respect an important synergy has developed between the project and its activities at local level and policy-making efforts at the national level. It is probably fair to say that in terms of its contribution to the operationalisation of the wildlife policy MBOMIPA is now one of the two most important pilot projects in Tanzania, the other being the JUKUMU initiative bordering the Selous Game Reserve in Morogoro Region (sponsored by GTZ).¹⁶ MBOMIPA is certainly the only project which provides extensive experience of the sale of quota to resident hunters.

MBOMIPA has also hosted numerous visits and study tours from other districts and natural resource management institutions in Tanzania. It has also developed links with training institutions, and has facilitated the visit of students and staff from the College of African Wildlife Management at Mweka, as well as being the subject of an EIA training course for Tanzanian NR managers.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the project continues to receive many requests for information and collaboration from both national and overseas researchers. The presence now of three important NR-oriented projects in Iringa District (MBOMIPA and the DANIDA-funded MEMA and HIMA projects) has made this a particularly important testing-ground for new policies in the wider sector, as well as a favoured destination for NR professionals and researchers.

When REWMP was in conflict with the resident hunters of Iringa, the project often featured negatively in the national Swahili language press (in announcements paid for by disgruntled hunters). Since the start of MBOMIPA, however, and especially following a visit in August 1998 by the U.K. Secretary of State for International Development and other dignitaries, the national profile of the project has generally been positive. MBOMIPA has been cited favourably in the Tanzanian Parliament, and has featured extensively in an environmental programme aired on national television (ITV).

It is difficult to measure the impact of study tours and other visits, as well as of appearances in print and on film. There is no doubt, however, that these have formed an increasingly significant part of the project's work, contributing to the wider dissemination of the lessons learned by MBOMIPA and its primary stakeholders.

¹⁶ For details of JUKUMU (*Jumuiya ya Kuhifadhi Mazingira Ukutu*) and a comparison with MBOMIPA see Kiwango (1999).

¹⁷ This course was sponsored by the U.K. government through the Darwin Initiative and implemented by the University of Oxford and the Wildlife Division.

3 FROM THE GRASSROOTS TO GLASS CEILINGS: CONSTRAINTS AT EVERY LEVEL

In this section I will discuss some of the obstacles to the development of community wildlife management which affected REWMP and affect MBOMIPA. The projects' experience has been that there are constraints to the development of community wildlife management at every level, from the grassroots – in the communities themselves – up to the 'glass ceilings' and constraints imposed from above.

A lot of these obstacles stem from competition over resources, struggles for entitlements, and resistance to devolution and/or the loss of power. Establishing community wildlife management means empowering local communities to manage and utilise resources which in many cases they have had limited or no rights to in the past. Inevitably, any such attempt to shift the balance of political and economic power (power over natural resources) produces winners and losers. Resistance to being a loser in this sense helps explain why the process of developing community wildlife management is so slow in this part of Africa. As REWMP and MBOMIPA have experienced, there are different vested interests working against the devolution of natural resource management powers to local communities. It is in this context that external assistance is often critical to get the process of devolution going and to maintain its momentum.

3.1 Conflict with Resident Hunters

As Hartley (1997) has amply documented, the history of REWMP was largely a history of severe conflict with the resident hunters of Iringa, unresolved when the project came to an end in mid-1996. The source of this conflict was the transfer of user rights over the LM GCA South game quota to project villages, accompanied by the granting of permission for them to raise their own levy on the sale of quota animals (see above). This meant that from 1996 onwards resident hunters had to pay the villages for the animals they hunted.¹⁸ Understandably, many of them did not like this, nor did they like the closer monitoring of their activities which the mobilisation of Village Game Scouts entailed. The hunters countered by mobilising key regional and district staff in their support, as well as by complaining to higher authorities and paying to advertise their case in the national press. Ultimately, however, they lost the right to low-cost hunting in the project area, as have others – including Pawaga Prison and the Iringa town branch of CCM - who have tried to press for free grants of quota in LM GCA South.¹⁹ However, those hunters who have remained in the system have at least received some extra

¹⁸ Nonetheless, when the prices paid by resident hunters are compared with tourist hunting fees, it can be seen that resident hunting is still subsidised under the new system, though not to the extent that it was in the past – when it was virtually free (and certainly a free gift for those who broke the hunting regulations and shot animals which they had not paid licences for).

¹⁹ In the past the prison was granted its requests to hunt buffalo in LM GCA South. More recently the CCM branch pressed the project and then Wildlife Division HQ for the right to hunt a number of animals in the project area, ostensibly so that they could feed an election victory party. Needless to say their request was refused and they were advised to contact the joint purchasers of the quota (the Iringa Wildlife Conservation Association and the Ruaha Conservation Group).

benefits in return for their payments. These include better hunting (more game²⁰), the use of recognised guides (Village Game Scouts), and the likelihood of there being less disturbance (as there was when hunting was poorly controlled).

One of the ways in which REWMP and then MBOMIPA overcame resistance from the resident hunters was to establish a recognised institutional framework and procedures through which these complaints had to be channelled. The primary forum for dealing with these matters became the project's District Steering Committee, and it was this body, representing different stakeholder interests, which enabled the negotiation of an effective compromise with resident hunters in 1997. It was, of course, important that this committee also had the strong backing of Wildlife Division HQ and of its own chairman, the Iringa District Commissioner, who at critical times was able to resist negative pressure from above.

Of course not all resident hunters resisted the new system: some of them supported it right from the beginning. This was especially the case among the few members of The Friends of Ruaha who formed the Ruaha Conservation Group in order to bid for the Mkupule district-managed hunting block. Their primary aim has been to conserve rather than hunt in this area, and they have acted as a role model for at least some other resident hunters in Iringa.

3.2 Friction with Potential Investors

An analogous situation has arisen more recently (since the start of MBOMIPA) with pressure being put on the project by potential investors and their political backers. More than one group of investors in tourism has attempted to secure development rights in the project area without consulting with either the district authorities or the project. In this situation the primary concern of the project has been to safeguard village interests and ensure that proper management planning and environmental impact assessments are undertaken before tourist facilities are developed. This is easier said than done in a context in which outdated legislation still applies and the procedures to be outlined in the WMA Guidelines are still in draft. Again, it is only with strong support from Wildlife Division HQ and its own District Steering Committee that the project has been able to bring those investors attempting to subvert due process into line.

Again, some would-be investors have followed correct procedure, and this has helped the project to develop its own model for others.

3.3 'Good Governance' and Competition for Resources at Village Level

Meanwhile, there are also problems of a kind at village level, though these are perhaps not entirely unexpected, and they also have their positive side. The generation of significant new village funds from natural resource utilisation (in particular sale of the annual game quota) has undoubtedly increased the potential for conflict over village government resources. During the transition period between REWMP and MBOMIPA it became particularly clear that some of the

²⁰ Now including animals (zebra) which were not previously on the quota.

Village Wildlife Committees established by REWMP had become loci of political and economic power in their own right. They identified themselves with the project rather than with the rest of village government, and did not think of themselves as accountable to the latter. Therefore, at the start of MBOMIPA, a concerted effort was made to reform the committees and make it clear that they were sub-committees of and responsible to village government, with a primarily technical and advisory role to play. The Village Natural Resources Committees are there to help manage the wildlife ‘business’, but the profits of that enterprise belong to the village as a whole and should be invested in village development for benefit of all villagers. In order to foster the integration of the committees and the rest of village government, MBOMIPA has also provided training for both committee and other key village government officers.

As might be expected, this has not stopped conflicts from taking place over the control of the financial resources generated by natural resources. Institutional development has, however, helped to direct these conflicts into more positive channels. In many villages changes in village government as well as committee membership have been brought about by charges and allegations about the misuse of natural resources and the proceeds thereof. This can be seen as evidence of the development of ‘good governance’. Although a cynic might see it purely as a symptom of conflict over local political and economic resources, there can be no doubt that it has its positive side. Again, the important lesson here is that conflict can be turned around by being brought into an institutional framework and its procedures, which can play a critical role in solving and removing the sources of conflict. And if you can’t persuade a ‘loser’ that he’s a ‘winner’, then at least you can structure his loss, make the rules and procedures clear, and strengthen your institutions in the process.

3.4 Collaboration and Resistance at District Level

I have already referred to some contrasting aspects of the project’s relationship with the district: the importance of the District Steering Committee, and past resistance to the empowerment of villages by some district staff allied to recalcitrant resident hunters. MBOMIPA now works in close partnership with Iringa District Council – more deliberately so than REWMP, which was based at Msembe in the headquarters of Ruaha National Park, and therefore physically remote from the district offices. However, although MBOMIPA has good working relationships with most relevant departments and officers, there still remain significant pockets of resistance to its work within the district. This manifests itself in a serious lack of cooperation from some quarters (I will refrain from specifying which), and in some instances active undermining of project and village objectives.

The root problem, again, is one of competition over resources. The District Council is evidently unhappy with its lack of direct control over project funds and expenditure, and at various times has made this clear (MBOMIPA is a national project in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and financial management is the responsibility of the donor, DFID). Non-cooperation, however, has meant that significant funds available for district use have not been used (e.g. funds for the support of field and other activities, and funds for the training of

district staff). This might be seen as an aspect of the ‘bureaucratic box’ problem – the division of responsibility for environmental matters between different ministries, departments, and levels of government. In some ways it is an unfortunate consequence of decentralisation, and the removal of district officers from their original parent ministries.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to see other factors at work. Districts have recently benefited from decentralisation and despite the good intentions of the Local Government Reform Programme (which envisages the districts as service providers) there are clearly some district staff who do not want to give away their newly-acquired powers. And there are others, sad to say, who are happy to continue pursuing personal agendas in tandem with their official duties. The natural resources sector is one of many which provides ready opportunities for the personal accumulation of wealth, especially by corrupt officers, and this is no more or less a problem in Iringa than elsewhere. This is certainly one source of non-cooperation, especially prevalent when REWMP was in conflict with the resident hunters of Iringa.

At the same time, we should not close our eyes to other possible causes of lack of cooperation. In some instances, for example, district departments and staff clearly lack the skills to undertake the tasks expected of them. When MBOMIPA began, it was anticipated that the District Natural Resources Office would take the initiative in many areas of work. Despite repeated requests, this has either not happened or its results have been disappointing, except when work has been led by project staff or external consultants. This situation has not been helped by the fact that some officers who have begun collaborative work with the project have subsequently been transferred to other districts or other posts within Iringa District.

As noted in an earlier section, there have been both good and bad developments in the past year. Following a request from project villages, and with the agreement of the District Executive Director, the hunting block previously managed by the district (Mkupule) reverted to village control. However, MBOMIPA villages’ share of the income from tourist hunting licenses in LM GCA North has been taken away from them by the district, and neither they nor the project were informed of this reallocation in advance. We have thus reverted to the situation which is normal nationwide: most villages neighbouring game reserves and other tourist hunting areas do not get their due in this respect from their district councils.

3.5 Conflict with the Usangu Game Reserve and its Tourist Hunters

A rather different kind of problem has been presented to the project and project villages by the gazettelement of the Usangu Game Reserve in 1998. This new reserve was created to protect the Usangu wetland (the immediate source of the Great Ruaha River) from the depredations of livestock-keepers and others, and to add a buffer zone to the south of Ruaha National Park. From available boundary descriptions, however, it appears that the game reserve may well swallow a large part of the southern end of LM GCA, almost the whole of the Mkupule area.²¹ It is

²¹ The game reserve boundary also appears to encroach on a section of Ruaha National Park south of the Great Ruaha River.

further claimed that all of this area is within Mbarali District and therefore Mbeya Region rather than Iringa District and Region - a claim which is hotly disputed by Mahuninga and other villages bordering Mkupule. These villages and the Iringa District authorities were not consulted when the boundaries of the Usangu Game Reserve were being drawn up, the argument being that if the new reserve was wholly in Mbarali and Mbeya, then they would not need to be asked! Two boundaries are therefore in dispute: the boundary of the protected area (Usangu Game Reserve), and the administrative boundary (between Mbeya and Iringa Regions and their respective districts on either side of the boundary).

These boundary problems are currently being investigated by the Wildlife Division and the district authorities on either side, and it is hoped that all the parties involved can agree on a solution. This kind of dispute can be expected to occur more and more across the country as the value of wildlife rises and the number of protected areas of different types increases, community-run WMAs included.

In recent years the *miombo* of Mkupule has become the richest hunting area in LM GCA South. One reason for this appears to be that the progressive dry season drying-up of the Great Ruaha is resulting in the movement of animals away from the river and towards the escarpments on either side of its valley, where there are more water sources and vegetation cover. Mkupule is one such area. Ironically, the seasonal drying-up of the Great Ruaha was *the* environmental problem which the creation of the Usangu Game Reserve was meant to help prevent.²² Instead the gazettement of the reserve has given the tourist hunting company based in Usangu access to Mkupule – which is now a better hunting ground than ever because of the dry season movement of animals away from the not-so-great Ruaha. This hunting company is only too happy to take its clients to Mkupule: as recent aerial surveys have shown, there are few animals left to hunt in the Usangu Plains, and the outfitters must perforce exploit the northern belt of *miombo* bordering Ruaha National Park (SMUWC 2000).

The current problem is that the Director of Wildlife has already issued a game quota for LM GCA South including the southern end of Mkupule. This area is managed and hunted by the Ruaha Conservation Group, as it has been for the last four years, during which time it has invested considerably in its development. Despite earlier having been issued a letter asking them to remain in their former hunting blocks, the tourist hunting company has increasingly been bringing clients into Mkupule. There are in effect two quotas being hunted in the same area, and the two groups of hunters are now in conflict. On their side at least, the Ruaha Conservation Group allege that the practices of the hunting company leave a lot to be desired.

If this issue is not resolved shortly in favour of the MBOMIPA villages, then it will almost certainly have a number of negative consequences. The MBOMIPA villages will lose their best hunting area and the game quotas requested and issued

²² Ongoing research by the SMUWC Project (Sustainable Management of the Usangu Wetland and its Catchment) suggests, however, that the exclusion of livestock-keepers and others from the Usangu Game Reserve will not solve the problem of the seasonal drying of the Great Ruaha, which appears to have its primary cause in the expansion of dry season irrigation in the south of Usangu (SMUWC 2000).

for LM GCA South will have to be reduced accordingly. There will be a concomitant loss of income for the villages – possibly up to a half of what they are currently earning from the sale of the quota. This will be a considerable blow to the future WMA, much worse than the loss of income from LM GCA North. The loss of the southern part of Mkupule to the game reserve will likely see the withdrawal of the Ruaha Conservation Group from future game purchases and direct involvement with MBOMIPA. This will mean removal of an important stakeholder and role model, and possibly the generation of considerable bad publicity. To donors and other stakeholders in the wildlife sector nationwide, a negative outcome may well be interpreted to indicate lack of real government commitment to developing community wildlife management. If one of the wildlife sector’s most important donor-funded projects can lose a case like this, then what hope is there for other initiatives in the country?

The legislation that will enable the establishment of community-run WMAs should ensure that these kinds of resource conflict on the ground can be minimised in future, if not avoided entirely. Matters are not helped at present by the fact that MBOMIPA, and other projects like it, are in the precarious position of operating in something of a legal limbo. The new WMA legislation is needed urgently, the sooner the better.

4 CONCLUSION

With difficulties like those presented above, we cannot pretend that establishing community wildlife management is easy. This should not be taken, however, as a counsel of despair. Most of the obstacles which have been faced by REWMP and MBOMIPA have at bottom derived from competition for power and the control of resources, whether natural or otherwise. This is perhaps inevitable, given that the development of community wildlife management in Tanzania entails the empowerment of communities by devolving user rights to them – rights which have previously been vested in government and/or usurped by the unscrupulous. Moreover, the examples I have given suggest that an important strategy in removing these constraints is to develop appropriate institutional and legal structures and procedures, providing frameworks in which conflicts can be managed, disputes settled, and compromises negotiated.

Building these frameworks is not a task which can be undertaken by communities alone. They need external allies, whether in or outside of government; and the progressive forces in government itself need allies, whether in the form of bilateral donors or supporters in the private or voluntary sectors. Ironically some donors, including DFID in Tanzania, are currently reconsidering their support for the natural resources and environmental sectors. For some advisors, community wildlife management comes very low down on their list of priorities of the most promising ways in which to eliminate world poverty.²³ Learning that developing

²³ The following negative assessment is taken from DFID’s *Country Strategy Paper for Tanzania*, published in April 1999:

“One of the most biodiverse countries in the world, Tanzania earns an estimated \$70 million a year from wildlife tourism and sport hunting. However, many rural communities

community wildlife management is a messy and time-consuming business will do little to enhance its perceived importance. But if we lose heart now and give up the struggle to empower communities to manage their own resources, then I am sure that Africa and its inhabitants will be much poorer in future than we could ever imagine at present.

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derive few benefits from the wildlife protected areas, which amount to 28% of the country. The Government has only recently developed a national environmental policy, implementation of which depends on better institutional arrangements than currently exist. Tanzania does not yet have recognisable national strategies for sustainable development which link environmental and poverty reduction policies.” (DFID 1999: 5)

And here is one advisor’s recent judgement on MBOMIPA itself:

“When the opportunity cost of investment funds is considered, the project seems very likely to impoverish Tanzania even though it has brought some limited benefits to a small number of poor people” (DFID EA 2000).

In view of assessments like this it is hardly surprising that DFID is currently considering ending support for MBOMIPA when its four-year funding comes to an end in October 2001. This is despite an external consultant’s recommendation that the project be extended for three years (Murphree 2000).

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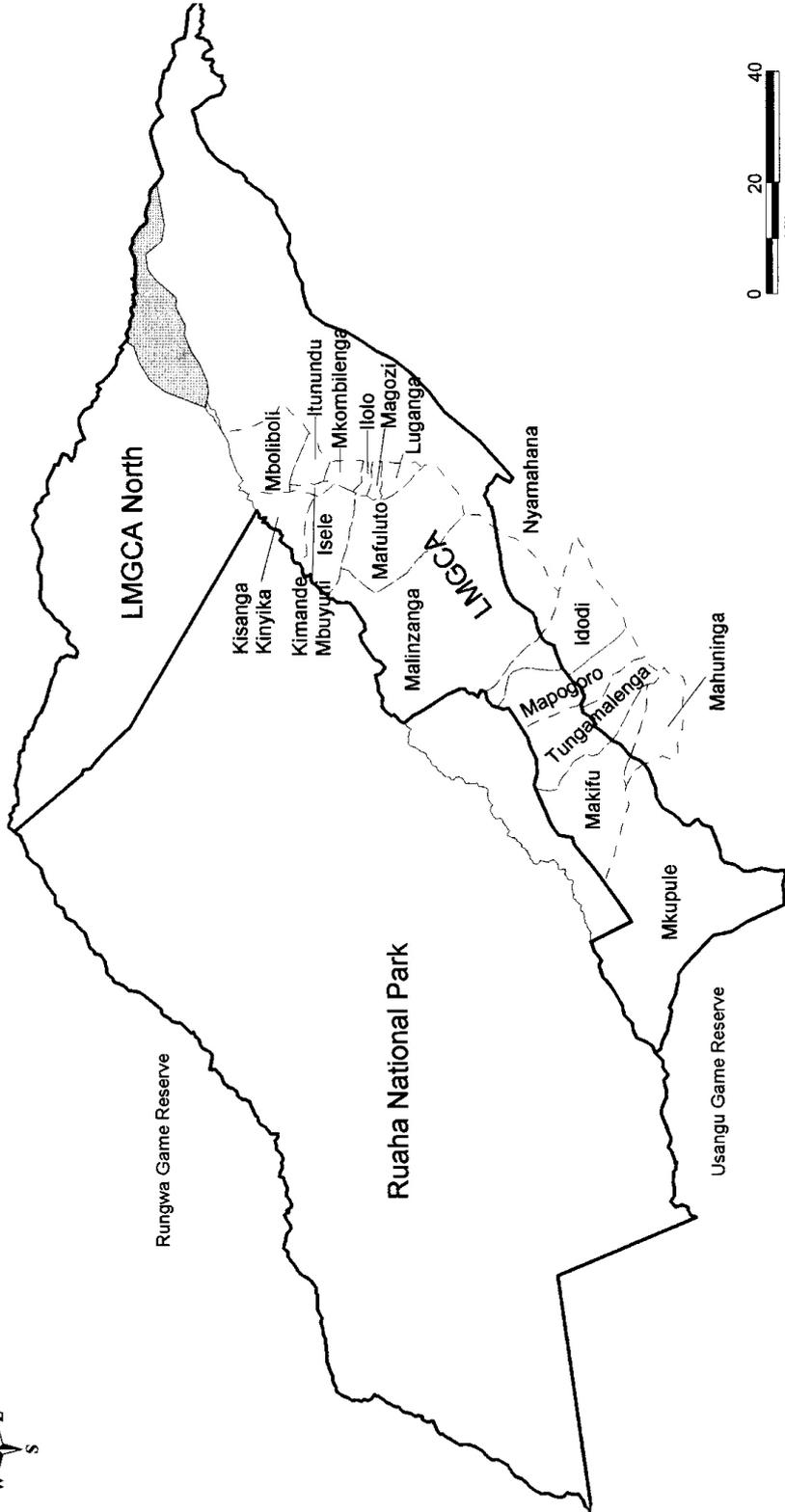
Table 1**Village and District Incomes from Sale of the Resident Hunting Quota (LM GCA South, Idodi and Pawaga Divisions), 1996-99**

INCOMES FROM RESIDENT HUNTING	1996 (Tsh.)	1997 (Tsh.)	1998 (Tsh.)	1999 (Tsh.)
Idodi & Pawaga Villages (n = 9)	3,703,619	6,100,000	10,603,998	12,000,000
Iringa District (excluding licence fees)	1,402,100	2,100,000	2,700,000	3,000,000
TOTAL VILLAGE & DISTRICT INCOMES	5,105,719	8,200,000	13,303,998	15,000,000

Table 2**Village Incomes from 25% Share of Licence Fees from Tourist Hunting (LM GCA North, Pawaga Division), 1996-99**
(sums rounded to nearest Tsh.)

INCOMES FROM TOURIST HUNTING	1996 (Tsh.)	1997 (Tsh.)	1998 (Tsh.)	1999 (Tsh.)
Pawaga Villages (n = 7)	-	1,750,000	4,128,059	4,106,499
TOTAL VILLAGE INCOMES	-	1,750,000	4,128,059	4,106,499

MBOMIPA Project Area



- Rivers
- RNP/LMGCA boundaries
- Village boundaries
- ▣ Mtera Dam
- ▨ LMGCA Lunda-Mkwambi Game Controlled Area