

Public-Private Partnerships



Cooperation between the public and private sectors is playing a vital role in the success of Rhino Ark's fencing and conservation projects. Rhino Ark builds relationships with local communities, private individuals and corporations along with the National Government, County Governments, Ministries responsible for Forests and Wildlife, Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service, that help preserve Kenya's vital ecosystems and water towers. The Government of Kenya has provided funds for both the building of the Mount Kenya and Mau Mount Eburu fences and is supporting the maintenance of the Aberdare fence through the establishment of the Aberdare Trust. Public-private partnerships are also crucial in the governance, implementation and monitoring of the fencing projects.



The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, hands over the Aberdare Trust document to Rhino Ark Trustee, Dr. Perez Olindo. Looking on are David Mbugua, Director, Kenya Forest Service, and Julius Kipng'etich, Director, Kenya Wildlife Service.

Finance

Until 2011, private contributions formed the majority of Rhino Ark's financial capabilities, with the Rhino Charge contributing up to USD 1 million annually. As Rhino Ark expanded its work to Mount Kenya and Mau Mount Eburu and upped the pace of its activities, greater public funding came on board as the Government of Kenya acknowledged the importance of the work being undertaken. The former President H.E. Hon. Mwai Kibaki declared the fence an invaluable investment "which should be secured and maintained". The Government of Kenya has committed KES 200 million a year for the next five years to finance the construction of the Mount Kenya fence. The public-private financing partnership has the benefit of sharing responsibility for the fence, broadening public engagement and improving financial sustainability.

Governance

The Aberdare Trust is a public-private partnership launched to maintain the Aberdare fence. The Trust involves Rhino Ark, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the Kenya Forest Service and the local communities who now have a legal framework to participate in its maintenance and all governance issues pertaining to the fence. The Trust will maintain and manage the fence and ensure that the fence objectives are met. Functioning as a partnership, the Aberdare Trust will benefit from increased legitimacy as well as greater levels of transparency and accountability.



Implementation

The construction of the fence is only possible with the support of local communities. They provide the labour for fence building while the Kenya Wildlife Service oversees construction. The local communities are also vital for maintenance. Every 4 km section of the fence is maintained by a fence attendant who is a member of the fence adjacent community. Without them the fences would quickly fall into disrepair. The tasks of reforestation and wildlife and ecosystem monitoring also fall on the local communities, who are best placed to undertake them. Local communities participate in forest protection through intelligence gathering and community policing. Government agencies support the partnership by providing the day-to-day supervision for the fence construction and maintenance, law enforcement as well as providing the technical expertise that the local workforce requires. Rhino Ark completes the public-private partnership by raising funds for the fence projects, providing overall supervision, governance and quality control for the fence construction and maintenance, as well as ensuring full engagement of the communities. This cooperation enables the implementation of the Rhino Ark fencing and conservation projects to (a) benefit from the strengths of the various partners and reduce duplication, (b) ensure direct community participation and increase acceptability of the fence, and (c) provide flexibility which is essential to respond efficiently to any emerging issues during the fence build and maintenance.

Challenges

Despite the benefits derived from public-private partnerships, certain challenges remain. The public sector has yet to fully appreciate the benefits of public-private partnerships and to provide appropriate mechanisms to further engage the private sector. Meanwhile, the private sector has yet to fully realize the dependency of their respective economic sector on the natural capital and the need to invest in the natural capital as it helps reduce business risks – such as flash floods, water shortages and energy shortages that could stem from any further degradation of Kenya's water towers.



"We will find a solution which will continue to enrich both the fence edge communities and the wider national and international public who benefit from a much more stable Aberdares today."
Dr. Perez Olindo – Rhino Ark Founder Trustee – 11 May 2012