



The GoBi team & friends 2007: Nadine Fritz-Vietta, Clara Buer, Marion Mehring, Martin Hirschnitz, Anne de la Vega-Leinert, Uwe Richter, Mattes Scheftelowitz, Monika Bertzky, Susanne Stoll-Kleemann (head), Ulrike Müller and Martin Welp (from left to right; Sascha Maier and Rainer Schliep are missing)

Dear participants of the GoBi global survey on biosphere reserve management!

The GoBi Research Project concluded its global survey on biosphere reserve management with the beginning of this year and has now extended the team (see picture above) to be able to analyse the vast amount of compiled data.

As Susanne (Head of the GoBi Project) has agreed to take over a position as Full Professor at the University of Greifswald, Germany (at the Baltic Sea) as Chair of Applied Geography the whole GoBi Project Team moves north to continue its work on influence factors of biosphere reserve management. We will inform you about our new contact data in the next newsletter which follows soon.

Along with this update, we present to you some glimpses on our current work. Please have a look!

With very best wishes,

Your GoBi-Team

➤ Participatory Management in BRs

GoBi's global survey shows that conservation professionals and managers of biosphere reserves indeed regard participation as one of the most important success factors for management. We asked biosphere reserve managers why or why not they have stated that community participation is relevant in their management concept.

Analysis of GoBi's Global Survey Data

The responses were grouped into five major categories. 64 % of the 213 managers which responded to our survey believe that community participation is relevant to increase acceptance and 51 % because it is part of the overall biosphere reserve concept. Still 42 % responded that community participation is important to consider traditional knowledge. Of those interviewees who gave the answer that community participation is not relevant 11 % said that this is the case because they face a lack of resources and only 2 % said that community participation is expected to decrease conservation success. Expected consequences of community participation are pictured in Figure 1.

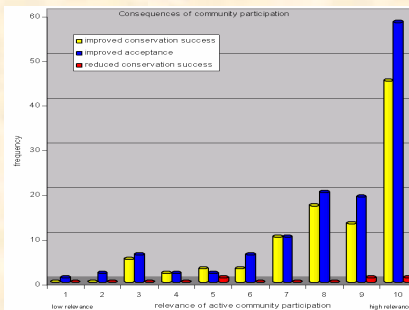


Figure 1: Consequences of community participation in biosphere reserves in relation to the stated relevance of active participation in the biosphere reserve (n=203; multiple responses possible)

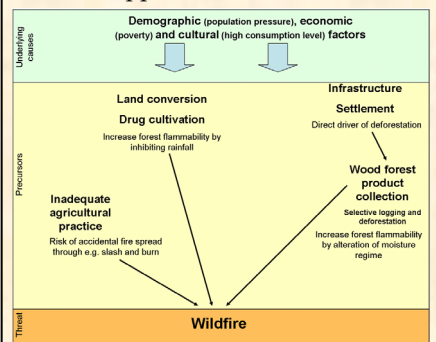
Managers must constantly balance rule enforcement with negotiation and participation. In this sensitive dialogue, they have to provide options for local users while simultaneously keeping users from destroying the biosphere reserve. This requires a high degree of mutual understanding between the manager and the user.

Overall, biosphere reserve centres have the potential of becoming parallel learning organisations fostering participatory management. Training and capacity building are necessary prerequisites for the successful application of participatory methods.

➤ Threats to Biodiversity in Forest BRs

Marion Mehring and Susanne Stoll-Kleemann explore occurrence and potential causes of threats to forest biosphere reserves, as well as their relationships to biodiversity. The results indicate that four different types of major threats can be distinguished: Fire, consumptive resource use, tourism, and global (climate) change. Out of these four, only fire was identified to specifically threaten forest ecosystems.

The authors identify wildfire as major threat to forest BRs with most of the other illegal activities mentioned acting as precursor to wildfire (see figure below). This is especially true for non-high income countries, where illegal activities appear to be most severe.



As underlying causes, Marion and Susanne identified primarily cultural and economic driving forces. Cultural aspects (e.g. hunting tradition in terms of poaching and high consumption level with respect to logging) play an important role in high income countries, while economic factors, such as poverty, are identified as major driving force in non-high income countries. However, although cultural underlying causes originate from high income countries, the consequences of individual behaviour (e.g. high value wood extraction or trophy hunting) can be noticeable as well in non-high income countries (e.g. overall alteration of tropical forest ecosystems).