



Pendjari National Park, Benin: Working together to protect natural resources serves both nature and humankind

The Pendjari National Park in the north of Benin was granted special protection in 1954 as an animal reserve. It is part of a protected area covering 28,600 km² and stretching into Burkina Faso and Niger. In 1986 it was recognized by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve. The demarcation of the protected area and the resettling of the population were conducted without prior involvement of the local people, and without any parallel promotion or development measures. This led to the over-exploitation of natural resources in the now densely populated border zones of the national park. The people found it difficult to accept the new regulations designed to protect the park. In the hunting zone, for instance, land was farmed illegally, and settlements were built. As a result, the protection of the environment was no longer ensured; conflicts between the park authorities and the local population were the order of the day.

The "Pendjari National Park" project aims to maintain the protected areas in the long term, to establish efficient park man-

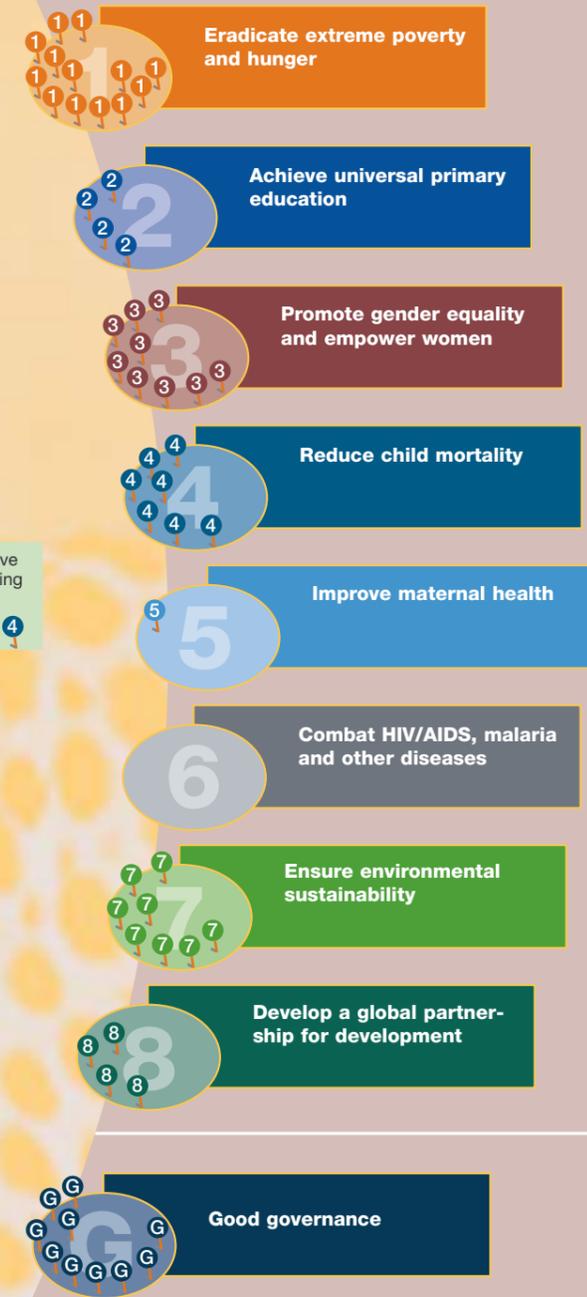
agement, and to ensure the active involvement and participation of the local people. To this end, the project is promoting the development of the inhabited zones bordering on the national park. It is advising the partner on the establishment of an effective executing organization structure and on the management of the park and hunting zones. In addition, an ecological monitoring system is being set up to observe and monitor the ecological status quo and the development thereof. At the heart of these activities is the active involvement of the local people, be it in the management of the protected and hunting areas, for instance by giving them a say on personnel-related decisions, or by creating additional sources of income through the promotion of tourism and small crafts.

With the park authorities, which are now financially independent, it has been agreed that 30 % of revenues from big-game hunting will be accorded to the surrounding villages for development measures to be decided by the villagers. The villages are

also given the meat from big game hunting for consumption or sale. New agreements between the inhabitants of the areas around the national park, the park authorities and the local authorities have removed the stigma of illegality from agricultural activities within the protected area, provided certain conditions are met (no permanent buildings, paths, etc. may be built).

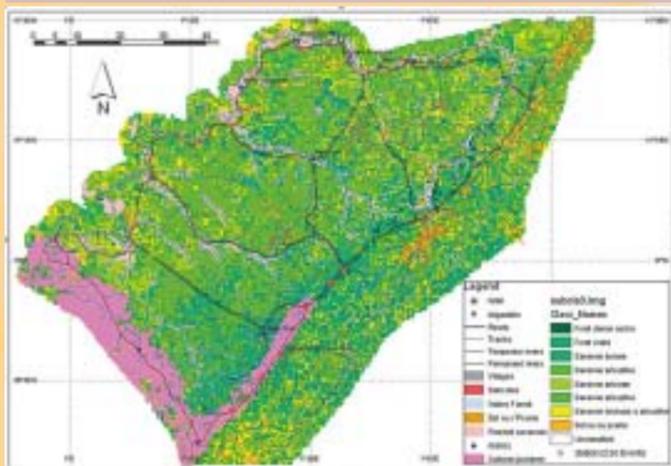
Many donors are contributing to the success of the Pendjari project: the national protection programme of which the Pendjari National Park is an important component, is promoted by the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, France and the Netherlands as well as the German development cooperation. Within the framework of financial cooperation, the roads are being built, restored and maintained administrative and residential buildings are being constructed, water points are being created, and machinery and communications technology are being provided. A trust fund ensures the financial sustainability of the measures.

The Millennium Development Goals



Good governance is about how decisions are taken and implemented in a state. Originally, the connotations of this notion included an efficient public sector, accountability and controls, but also decentralization and transparency. Today, good governance means more: It is not just confined to government action alone but also encompasses the interaction between government and civil society.

Pendjari Biosphere Reserve, Benin/Land use



"The park was not for us. We saw tourists driving through it, we saw hunters coming and going, but we saw neither meat nor money. If we came anywhere near it we were threatened and chased away. Today all that has changed."

Albert Yomboleny, President of the village association



What did we achieve?

In and around the park, 130 full-time jobs have been created for inhabitants of the surrounding area: 90 % of park personnel (60 full-time staff) has been recruited from the surrounding villages. **1 2 3 4 7**

Agreements regulate the sustainable utilization of the most important resources, such as medicinal plants, oyster fishing and fishing, roofing materials. Utilization is steered by imposing time limits. **1 4 5 7 G**

The agricultural promotion measures have to date reached some 64 % of the farming population – about half of whom are women. **1 3 4**

The number of big-game hunters is constant at about 65. The revenues generated by this type of tourism are of the order of EUR 103,000. **1 2 3 4 7**

The executing organization (CENAGREF) has far-reaching financial independence. 70 % of revenues will cover operational costs. **1 7 8 G**

The meat of the game shot goes directly from the hunting camps to the villages for sale. The village groups are responsible for organization and transport. **1 3 4 G**

For four years, funds generated by big game hunting have been paid to the village groups (in 2004 about EUR 34,500). **1 2 3 4**

Consideration has been given to the cultural needs of the local people (ceremonies) within the hunting zone. This has been contractually regulated. **G**

900 individuals in 22 village groups are the main contact for the park authorities and the new communities. **1 3 G**

The number of tourists has risen from 3,800 to 4,800. Admission fees have been raised slightly. Revenues have thus risen from about EUR 21,000 to about EUR 34,000. **7 8 G**

Representatives of the village groups are involved in all park activities (monitoring, taking admission fees, camps for hunters), and they act as wardens. **1 3 8 G**

The illegal occupation of parts of the hunting zone has been legalized, under certain contractually agreed conditions. **1 7 G**

The populations of some species have increased, but overall figures remain stable. Poaching is declining: wildlife is not longer forced to flee as far as it used to. **7**

On the basis of the business plan, 52% of present running costs are covered by revenue. This figure can rise to about 60%. The remainder must be made up by contributions from international donors and foundation funds. **1 7 8 G**

The park authorities have a management/land use plan which takes into account both the core zone and hunting zones. These planning documents are incorporated in the land use plans of the local communities. **1 3 G**

The funds generated are used for monitoring and patrolling (about EUR 5,000) and increasingly also to equip schools and health stations as an input from the local population. **1 2 3 4**



Photos: Guenay Ulutuncok / GTZ

