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# Governing Conservation Tourism Partnerships in Kenya

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### Highlights

- Compares how two conservation tourism partnerships in Kenya are governed
- Provides a theoretical framework for understanding dynamic tourism partnerships
- Analyzes the internal and external congruency of conservation tourism partnerships
- Argues that metagovernance can ensure effective and democratic partnership outcomes
- Discusses how non-state actors can also take on metagovernance roles

### Abstract:

This article adopts the Policy Arrangements Approach to study how the stability of conservation tourism partnerships is governed. Our study compares two private-community partnerships in Kenya to explore how incongruences resulting from internal dynamics and external challenges are faced. Drawing on the notion of metagovernance, the article examines the roles of the actors involved in ensuring internal and external congruence. It is concluded that conservation tourism PCPs are adaptive entities that need to be actively governed, to ensure long term outcomes that are effective and democratic, and that both state and non-state actors can take on this role.

### Keywords:

Governance, congruence, conservation, private-community partnership, Kenya, metagovernance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1990s, partnerships of various forms and scales between diverse societal actors have been deployed for advancing sustainable tourism (e.g., Haase et al., 2009; Medeiros de Araujo and Bramwell, 2002; Selin, 1999). The surge of tourism partnerships reflects wider societal trends (e.g., Glasbergen et al., 2007; Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2012) and is a manifestation of the widely recognized shift from government to governance, where authority is transferred from the state towards networked governance arrangements between state, market or civil society actors (e.g., Kooiman, 2003; Rhodes, 1997).

To enable the development of conservation tourism (Buckley, 2010) outside state-protected areas in Eastern and Southern Africa, partnerships have been established between local communities and private entrepreneurs (e.g., Ashley & Jones, 2001; Carter et al., 2008; Lamers et al., 2013). Private-community partnerships (PCPs) are one of many initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges of earlier, centralized, conservation efforts, in which state-protected conservation areas were created from which local communities were displaced (e.g., Peluso, 1993). These decentralized efforts are also believed to address the need for natural resource use and management that is based on participation and collective action of user communities and collaboration between state and non-state actors (e.g., Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Conley & Moote, 2003; Ostrom, 2005; Nelson & Agrawal, 2008).

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in Africa, however, has had mixed results (e.g., Leach et al., 2002; Mbaiwa & Kolawole, 2013; Sebele, 2010). Challenges faced by community-based tourism, particularly, include communities' lack of business skills and access to transnational tourism markets (e.g., Spenceley & Snyman, 2012), the long-term dependency on external donor funding (e.g., Kiss, 2004), and the unequal distribution of benefits and power among community members (e.g., Manyara & Jones, 2007). Partnerships with private entrepreneurs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were introduced in community-based tourism since the late 1990s to address these issues, but present a suite of problems of their own. These problems include imbalanced relations between individual private investors and heterogeneous communities, unfair partnership deals, local political struggles emerging after implementation, and misalignment with the wider institutional environment (e.g., Ashley & Jones, 2001; Meguro & Inoue, 2011; Southgate, 2006).

Extant studies have mainly focused on the effectiveness of these partnerships and the desirability of the neoliberal discourse they often represent (e.g., Brockington et al., 2008; Spenceley, 2003), while the longer-term consequences for governance remain understudied. Research in this area is timely and relevant, as multi-actor partnership arrangements continue to flourish and the recent literature suggests that in many of these partnerships political struggles and governance challenges seem to increase rather than decline, particularly in East Africa (Ahebwa et al., 2012; Lamers et al., 2013).

PCPs in conservation tourism run the risk of being affected both by internal dynamics, such as the imbalanced relationships between partners, and external challenges, such as the lack of state orchestration between fragmented, overlapping and competing partnerships or other initiatives (see also Glasbergen,

2011). This raises the question how coherent PCPs in conservation tourism are, both internally and externally, who governs this coherence, and how. Addressing this question is relevant in order to gain insights into the mechanisms undergirding the efficacy of PCPs in solving societal challenges without falling short on democratic credentials, such as representation, accountability, transparency and participation (e.g., Meadowcroft, 2007).

In this article, we address this question by providing a comparative analysis of two tourism-conservation enterprises implemented by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) in Laikipia County, Kenya. AWF is an international NGO focused on nature conservation across Africa. Since the late 1990s, AWF has developed and promoted conservation enterprises, defined as “a commercial activity that generates economic benefits in a way that supports the attainment of a conservation objective” (Elliott & Sumba, 2011: 4).

Conservation enterprises aim to protect biodiversity and alleviate the poverty of people living with wildlife through various sectors, such as agriculture, livestock production, forestry and fisheries, but mostly through tourism (see also Van Wijk et al., 2014). By developing tourism-conservation enterprises, such as lodges, tented camps and cultural villages in biodiversity-rich areas, AWF aims to incentivize communal landowners to set aside land for nature conservation. Livestock is excluded from these areas to make room for wildlife and tourism enterprises. Through different funding mechanisms (e.g., donor grants, social venture capital), ownership of the immovable assets remains with the community, while management of the enterprise is put in the hands of a private entrepreneur. Revenues of the enterprise are shared with the local community through a variety of fees (bed night fees and user fees). As such, tourism-conservation enterprises exemplify PCPs in conservation tourism with AWF acting as, in their own terms, an “honest broker” in establishing deals and in providing “external oversight over the benefits agenda” (AWF, 2011: 44).

## 2. GOVERNING THE CONGRUENCE OF CONSERVATION TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS

Many scholars have acknowledged that a policy instrument’s capacity to perform partly depends on the congruence of internal as well as contextual factors, including the interplay with other instruments or state agencies through co-management (e.g., Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Ostrom, 2005; Young, 2002). The literature on managing common pool resources also stresses the importance of congruence between rules for provisioning and appropriating resources and local conditions, such as resource availability, predominant culture and livelihood strategies, for robust institutional arrangements (e.g., Cox et al., 2010; Ostrom, 2005). This literature furthermore highlights the importance of nesting resource management initiatives in larger scale governance systems, for example by allowing them to learn across cases, to ensure equity and oversight, and to increase capabilities in issues extending the boundaries of the resource unit (e.g., Marshall, 2008; Ostrom, 2005).

While this literature has provided useful insights into the governance of natural resources, in this study we draw on the Policy Arrangements Approach (PAA). The PAA framework was developed to “describe

and characterise [policy] arrangements [and] to interpret and understand their relative stability or change, and the mechanisms behind these dynamics” (Arts & Leroy, 2006, pp. 13). Policy arrangements are defined as “temporary stabilizations of the substance and organization of a particular policy domain” (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000, pp. 54), whereby the substance is linked to the ‘discourse’ and the organization to the ‘actors’, ‘resources’ and ‘rules’ of a policy arrangement. These four dimensions are inextricably interwoven, implying that any change in one dimension induces changes to other dimensions.

Discourses refer to sets of ideas, perceptions, beliefs or paradigms prevailing in a given policy domain. They constitute the reference points of actors, or coalitions of actors, in interpreting policy problems and solutions (Arts & Leroy, 2006). Discourses are produced and reproduced in contextualized social practices and give meaning to physical and social realities. Policy arrangements are often informed by one or more concurring policy discourses, which may be challenged by competing discourses (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000). The dimension of actors refers to the individuals, organizations, and coalitions involved in, or associated with, a particular intervention. A coalition is formed when individual actors join with others to achieve similar goals. Coalitions may share resources or the understanding and interpretation of discourses but may also be challenged and eventually changed (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000). Ownership of, or the ability to mobilize, resources defines and configures relations of power between actors.

Different types of resources may be mobilized and deployed in a policy arrangement, such as financial resources, land, knowledge, political influence, or networks. Because resources are the media through which power is exercised, they may lead to new inequalities within and between societal fractions. Concurrently, by forming coalitions, the disadvantaged actors may generate influence over powerful actors in decision-making and policy implementation processes. The rules of the game refer to both the formal and informal rules that guide, enable, and constrain the behavior of the actors in a policy arrangement (Van Tatenhove et al. 2000). The formal rules are fixed in legal forms or agreements defined by the actors involved, while informal rules are much more based on everyday practice and routines. Rules shape the way a policy intervention is implemented, for example, by specifying how decisions are made, who gets what, and who does what.

The stability of policy arrangements, like PCPs, depends on its internal and external congruency. Policy arrangements are internally congruent when the four dimensions of the policy arrangement demonstrate a high level of coherence. Policy arrangements are externally congruent, when they are coherent with the wider institutional environment in which they are embedded, at global, national, regional and local levels. (Arts & Goverde 2006; Van Gossum et al. 2010). At one extreme, the four dimensions are aligned, internally and externally, leading to clear outcomes accepted by all involved. At another extreme, dissenting actors and discourses lead to internal and external conflicts, especially over the distribution of resources and prevailing rules of the game. As such, PAA presents a dynamic and adaptive approach for understanding the effectiveness and democratic character of institutional arrangements. However,

congruence should not be understood as full-consensus or functional-fit, as it leaves room for reflection, deliberation and change (Arts & Goverde 2006).

Despite the usefulness of the PAA for studying tourism partnerships (see also Ahebwa et al., 2012), the approach has been sparsely used in tourism studies. Yet, the PAA acknowledges that multi-actor arrangements are dynamic as changes in particular dimensions of the governance system may evoke responses in other dimensions. The PAA and its concept of congruence are also attentive to shifting relations between state, market and civil society actors as well as the role assumed by non-state actors in contemporary policy making, as is increasingly happening in the tourism sector (e.g. Haase et al., 2009). Given that partnerships in conservation tourism bring together actors with different interests, frames of reference, and capacities to access material and symbolic resources, the PAA is well-suited to examine these discursive, institutional and power-related governance dynamics.

While the PAA thus argues that internal and external congruence are necessary for partnerships' efficacy, it falls short in theorizing how to ensure such congruence. More specifically, it does not specify which actors are supposed to safeguard the congruence of policy arrangements. This question of metagovernance is important for understanding how actors can contribute to steering non-state governance arrangements in ways that are seen by those involved as effective, participatory, equitable, transparent and accountable (Meadowcroft, 2007; Glasbergen, 2011). Metagovernance, defined as 'strategic steering in the governance system' (Visseren-Hamakers, 2013: 147), is a relatively new concept in the governance literature. Public authorities are typically viewed as the most legitimate and suitable actors for providing oversight, steering and coordination of non-state governance arrangements (e.g., Entwistle et al., 2007; Sørensen & Torving, 2009). Yet, Glasbergen (2011) and Visseren-Hamakers et al. (2011) have recently argued that this role also is, and can be, performed by NGOs or multi-actor partnerships. The concept of metagovernance has so far mainly been used to refer to managing the relationships among multiple initiatives and policies (see Visseren-Hamakers, 2013).

In this study, we expand the concept by also denoting strategic steering within a single initiative. In this context, then, metagovernance refers to those activities aimed at enhancing the internal and external congruence of a particular policy arrangement.

### *2.1 Study Methods*

Research was conducted on two tourism-conservation enterprises, The Koiya Starbeds lodge ('the Starbeds') and The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille ('the Sanctuary'), located respectively on the communally-owned Koiya and the Kijabe and Nkilority group ranches in Laikipia County, Kenya (see Figure 1). Adopting a comparative analysis allows for studying the dynamic character of PCPs and its relations with one another and the wider institutional environment. Hence, to aid the comparability both cases were selected based on their shared AWF partnership model and close location, representing a similar cultural and socio-economic context.

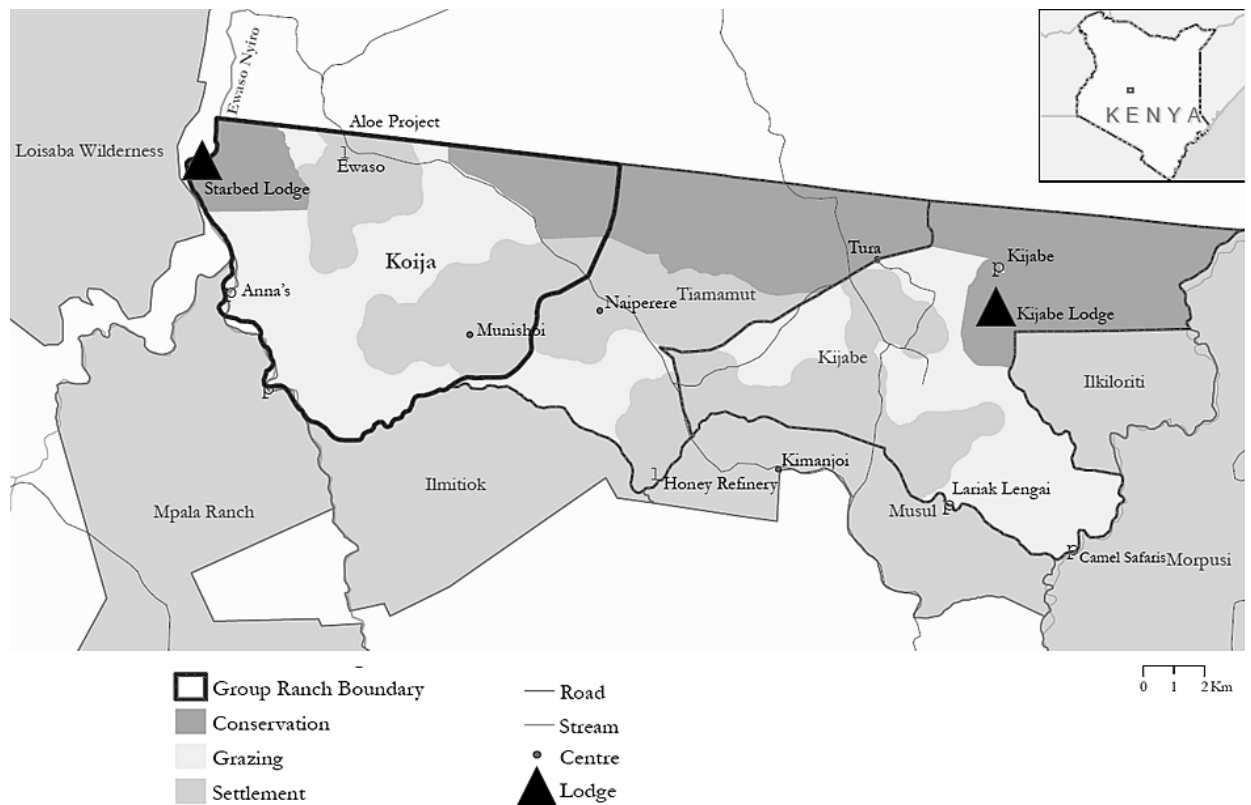


Figure 1: Map of the study area (adapted from Sumba et al. 2007)

Laikipia is characterized by a complex mosaic of land tenure systems, different types of land use, a diversity of human cultures, and, consequently, an intricate mixture of areas variously compatible with wildlife conservation. Land tenure mainly varies from large private ranches, often owned by Kenyans of white settler-origin, to government-owned ranches and group ranches, communally-owned by Maasai and Samburu pastoral groups (e.g., Carter et al., 2008; Lesogorol, 2010). The principal land uses within Laikipia include extensive livestock ranching, wildlife conservation and tourism, and, increasingly, sedentary crop cultivation. Laikipia borders two national parks (Mount Kenya and Aberdares) and three national reserves (Samburu, Buffalo Springs and Shaba). Wildlife moves between the parks and reserves and has little alternative but to traverse private and communal land, with cattle grazing and crop cultivation areas. For example, elephants come into conflict with humans by raiding crops and by threatening, and occasionally killing, people and livestock (e.g., Gadd, 2005; Thoules & Sakwa, 1995). In recent years, wildlife conservation and tourism have gained greater prominence in land-use practices of large private landowners and group ranches in Laikipia by expanding habitat, building lodges and conducting nature-based activities (Gadd, 2005).

The authors were involved as researchers and supervisors in a one-year post-doc project and a PhD project. AWF endorsed and facilitated both projects by providing documentation, interview opportunities, contacts, and logistical support during fieldwork, but the research was carried out independently by the authors. Primary data was collected in the form of interviews, focus groups and observations during multiple fieldwork visits by the authors, covering around 12 weeks in total, between



October 2010 and November 2012. Secondary data sources on both cases, such as reports and academic literature, were also collected. Interviewees were selected based on their leading or central role in the partnerships and included AWF personnel, the private investors, community leaders and representatives of spin-off projects in the group ranches. In addition, interviews were held with representatives of relevant state agencies, conservation organisations, tour operators, donors, and managers of other community and private enterprises in the area involved in conservation tourism.

A total of 58 individual semi-structured interviews were conducted, ranging between 30 minutes to two hours, whereby some informants were interviewed in small groups and some key-informants on more than one occasion. The selection procedure ensued a majority of adult male interviewees (83%). To counter this bias, six focus group interviews were held with members of the Kojia (1), Kijabe (1) and Nkiloriti (2) group ranches that included women and youth representatives, as well as with regional AWF staff (2). Interviews were held in English and, when needed, assisted by a Maasai interpreter.

The conceptual framework was operationalized in the interview protocol by including questions regarding the respondent's view on the establishment of the lodge and the conservation area (discourse), the main actors involved (actors), the land and funds invested (resources), the rules and practices of decision-making, monitoring, sanctioning and distributing revenues (rules of the game), the governance challenges facing the partnership (e.g. transparency, accountability, participation) and its impact on nature conservation and community livelihood (effectiveness). Most interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview transcriptions were coded in ATLAS-ti (ATLAS-ti n.d.) and analyzed to capture notable commonalities and differences between the two cases and respondents' perspectives on the establishment, performance and governance challenges of both partnership arrangements, their internal and external congruence, and the actors involved in steering the partnership's congruency. The interview findings were cross-validated and triangulated with field observations and secondary data sources.

The results of the analysis were presented and discussed at a validation workshop organized in Nairobi in November 2012 with 25 key informants, including community representatives. Anonymity was guaranteed to all interviewees; therefore, a coding system is used for referencing and quoting interviews in this article (see Table 1). Finally, valuable feedback was received on a draft of this article from the private investors and AWF.

## *2.2 Establishment and evolution of the partnerships*

In this section we briefly describe how both PCPs were established and have evolved, structured by the four dimensions of the PAA. Subsequently, we will analyze the performance, the internal and external congruence of the partnerships, as well as discuss the metagovernance role of AWF and other actors in and around these PCPs.

Table 1: Coding of interviews

Coding	Interviews
C-I-KS-1 to 7	Interviews with Koiya community leaders
C-FG-KS-1	Focus group with Koiya community members (including women and youth group representatives)
C-I-SOL-1 to 13	Interviews with Kijabe community leaders
C-FG-KS-1 to 3	Focus groups with Nkloriti and Kijabe community members (including women and youth group representatives)
P-I-KS-1 and 2	Interviews with representatives of private investor Koiya Starbeds
P-I-SOL-1 to 7	Interviews with representatives of private investor Sanctuary at Ol Lentille
A-I-1 to 11	Interviews with AWF representatives
A-FG-1 and 2	Focus groups with AWF regional staff
O-I-1 to 17	Interviews with other organizations involved in Laikipia conservation tourism

Glossary: C = Community; P = Private investor; A = African Wildlife Foundation; I = Individual interview; FG = Focus Group interview; KS = Koiya Starbeds case; SOL = Sanctuary at Ol Lentille case; O = Other organizations

Both PCPs were established as part of the conservation enterprise program of AWF following a neoliberal discourse in nature conservation and livelihood enhancement (A-1-8). In the late 1990s, AWF launched an awareness campaign for group ranches in the region to attempt to bridge the neoliberal discourse of conservation tourism with the communal discourse of Maasai and Samburu pastoralists. By demonstrating the merits of enterprise development and framing wildlife as livestock that can also be “milked” and generate a secure source of income if protected (C-I-KS-5, 6, 7), AWF attempted to translate the interests and cultural values of pastoral communities into a conservation tourism discourse. Because the substantive dimension of the policy arrangements established in both cases are similar, we focus our descriptions of the two PCPs on the organizational dimensions: the actors, resources and rules of the game.

*2.2.1 The Koiya Starbeds lodge.* The Koiya Starbeds lodge is a partnership between the Koiya group ranch (‘Koiya’), Oryx Limited (OL), a private investor that leases and manages the neighboring Loisaba Wilderness ranch, and AWF. Koiya consists of approximately 1200 people, managed by an elected group ranch committee. In the past, droughts regularly forced pastoral livestock keepers to trespass and illegally graze at Loisaba, which jeopardized OL’s tourism business due to declining wildlife numbers (Sumba et al. 2007). The private investor, a Kenyan of white settler origin, realized that a constructive relationship with Koiya would cushion his ranch from such occurrences. In 1999, the AWF conservation awareness campaign negotiated the establishment of settlement, grazing and conservation zones on the Koiya group ranch and convinced the community to facilitate the establishment of a satellite enterprise of OL on their land to generate income from wildlife conservation.

Koiya set aside a conservation area of approximately 200 hectares to attract and accommodate wildlife and to locate the Starbeds. The US\$ 48,000 needed for the initial construction of the lodge was funded by the United States Agency for International Development. Transaction costs from the mobilization and capacity building campaign were granted by AWF, while the Koiya community provided labor in the construction and small funds for securing their land rights (see Sumba et al. 2007). The Starbeds provides

accommodation to tourists (around \$500 per person per night for non-residents) in three rustic and raised wooden platforms partially covered by a thatched roof along with some catering facilities. The platforms contain a ‘starbed’ that can be wheeled out onto the open deck for a night under the open sky. The Starbeds is basically run as a satellite enterprise of Loisaba in terms of its transport infrastructure, management, marketing links and human resources. The immovable assets of the lodge are owned by Koiya, while the movable assets are owned by OL, which also manages the lodge as postulated in a joint contract. The Starbeds opened for business in 2001.

The Koiya Conservation Trust was established to manage the partnership among Koiya, OL and AWF. The rules of the game of the trust specify a board of five trustees—two representatives from Koiya, two from OL and one from AWF—which meets three times a year. The AWF representative chairs the meetings and ensures that all partners adhere to the agreements. Trustees hold office for three years but can be re-elected. Representatives of the three partners in the trust have largely remained the same over the years. The trust’s main tasks are to manage the revenue that is generated by allocating capital to maintain the lodge and the conservation area, and distributing community benefits.

The partnership agreement establishes that the trust receives a bed-night fee for each guest at the lodge (\$85 per night for a non-resident and \$48 for a Kenyan resident). Of these funds, the trust reserves 25% for capital development and property maintenance. Of the remainder, 80% is allocated for projects that are collectively beneficial, such as primary education, student bursaries, water provision, health services and the employment of community conservation scouts (C-I-KS-1; A-I-7), and the remaining 20% is given to the Koiya group ranch committee for financing management and projects.

*2.2.2. The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille.* The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille was initially a partnership between the Kijabe group ranch (‘Kijabe’), foreign impact investor Regenesys Limited (RL) and AWF. Kijabe consists of around 800 people living on the group ranch territory and another 2,000 people living elsewhere (e.g. other group ranches, or towns like Nanyuki and Nairobi). Kijabe agreed to set aside one third of its land (2,000 hectares) as conservation area. During the construction, the neighboring Nkiloriti group ranch (‘Nkiloriti’), consisting mainly of Samburu pastoralists, claimed that part of this conservation area belonged to them. Investigation proved inconclusive. Nevertheless, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed to transfer 20% of the bed night fee and employment to Nkiloriti on the condition that another 600 hectares of their land would be added to the conservation area. In addition, the private investor has been working with other neighboring group ranches that have added tracts of land to the Sanctuary in return for financial compensation or the establishment of a satellite enterprise (P-I-SOL-5).

In 2003, AWF initially started the construction of the lodge with a regional private contractor funded (\$100,000) by USA’s and the Netherlands’ international development agencies. After the initial investor backed out in 2005, RL became involved and signed a 25-year management agreement with Kijabe to manage the enterprise and the conservation area. A grant of \$400,000 from the European Union and the Government of Kenya’s Tourism Trust Fund enabled further construction and the transfer of the

immovable assets to Kijabe. RL invested additional private funds (\$1.5 million) to complete the construction and furnish the lodge. The Sanctuary is a high-end tourism enterprise (around \$750 per person per night for non-residents) comprising four exclusive houses, each with their own team of staff (e.g., chamber maid, butler, guide). The lodge opened for business in early 2007 (P-I-SOL-2).

The Kijabe Conservation Trust was established to manage the partnership arrangement. In its trust board, Kijabe and RL are each represented by three members, while AWF has one trustee. Early on Kijabe decided to be represented by elite group ranch members, including a national politician who was to act as chair of the trust. Consequently, AWF decided to nominate its own president as trustee. The busy agendas of the trustees made it difficult to meet regularly. In addition, disagreements over the control of the enterprise and personal tensions between the chair and the private investor culminated in conflicts. As a result, after May 2010, the trust board did not meet for about three years. Mediation of AWF to reconcile the trustees and review the agreements has resulted in a revised partnership agreement in January 2013.

The rules of the game stipulate that the private investor pays an annual rights fee to Kijabe (approximately 20,000 USD) to obtain the right to live and run an exclusive business in the conservation area, as well as bed-night fees to the trust (80 USD per night) for each guest staying at the lodge. The trust uses half of its income to fund the conservation scouts, while the other half is distributed to the two group ranches. Based on a community investment plan, the Kijabe group ranch committee spends 40% of its income on school bursaries and 60% on other ends (P-I-SOL-2; C-I-SOL-2, 4, 6).

### 2.3 Comparison of partnership arrangements and performance

The two PCPs share basic features, such as the establishment of a trust to enable the long-term involvement of AWF in the partnership and to collectively manage the benefits accruing from the enterprises. However, there are also notable differences related to the actors involved, the resources used, and the rules agreed upon in the partnership (see Table 2). For example, at Koiya the trust is formed by local representatives, while at Kijabe it consists of elite representatives. The resource investments made in both cases also differ widely, with the Starbeds being established on a relatively small donor grant and the Sanctuary on much larger sums of donor funding, private investments and a private loan. Overall, the Sanctuary has witnessed many changes in its short history, such as the non-functional trust board and the private investor's arrangements with other group ranches, while the Starbeds arrangement seems to have remained more stable (C-FG-KS-1).

Table 2: Summary of partnership arrangements

Items	Koiya Starbeds ecolodge	Conservancy at OI Lentille
Group ranches involved:	Koiya g.r.	Initially, Kijabe g.r. Nkloriti g.r. through an MOU Later links with other group ranches

Compilation of trust board:	Koiya g.r. (2 members) Oryx Ltd. (2 members) AWF (1 member - chair)	and communities Kijabe g.r. (3 members - chair) Regenesis Ltd. (3 members) AWF (1 member)
Community trustees:	Local/regional level representatives	National/regional level representatives
Group ranch membership:	Koiya g.r.: clear membership	Kijabe g.r.: unclear membership
Private investor:	Oryx Ltd.: neighboring Kenyan investor	Regenesis Ltd.: foreign investor operating on the Kijabe group ranch
Financial input:	Donor grants: \$70k No private investor input	Donor grants: \$500k Private investor: \$1.5 million Loan: unknown amount
Land for conservation:	200 hectares Clear land ownership	Initially: 2,000 hectares Currently: 8,100 hectares Unclear land ownership
Community benefit share:	Guest-night fee: \$85	Guest-night fee: \$80 Rights fee: \$20k per year

In terms of performance, both cases have demonstrated substantial employment levels, immediate community benefits, improvements in education and healthcare in the group ranches, and improved security, on relatively low occupancy rates (see Table 3). The Starbeds is economically viable, as the operational costs are largely covered as part of OL (P-I-KS-2). For the Sanctuary, however, the occupancy has to improve in the next few years to make the enterprise viable (P-I-SOL-1/2). Being a larger enterprise, the Sanctuary has been able to generate more jobs and has been very successful at attracting donations from wealthy guests staying at the lodge (P-I-SOL-2). When comparing the contribution of the two partnerships to conservation, the case of the Sanctuary is most convincing, both in terms of land size protected and the reported recovery of biodiversity.

#### 2.4 Internal congruence

Our analysis shows that both partnerships were initially designed in internally relatively congruent ways, but this changed over time due to changes in the arrangement's dimensions. First, it appeared that the actors involved in both partnerships adhere to contrasting discourses, which increasingly affected their prioritization of different rules of the game, resources and outcomes. For example, the neoliberal perspectives of the private investors and AWF focus on private management as a central vehicle for generating value from wildlife and creating incentives for the community to engage in conservation. In contrast, the communally-oriented group ranch leaders perceive the role of the private investors to be too dominant in the partnership, particularly regarding the management of the enterprises (C-I-KS-2, 3, 5, 6, 7; C-I-SOL-2, 3, 4; C-FG-SOL-1, 2). Group ranch leaders in both cases wish for more transparency regarding the financial operations of the enterprises to assess whether they receive a fair share of the benefits (C-I-KS-3, 5, 6; C-I-SOL-2, 4; C-FG-SOL-1, 2). Their suggestion typically is to place a community member close to the private investor to "have someone who is our eyes there" (C-I-SOL-4).

Table 3: Summary of partnership performance

Items	Koiya Starbeds ecolodge	Conservancy at Ol Lentille
Occupancy (approx.)	Less than 20%	Less than 30%
Economic performance	Viable as a satellite of Oryx Ltd.	Not viable over long term at <30% occupancy
Employment for local	40 direct (lodge, trust, projects)	80 direct (lodge, trust, projects)

community (approx. in FTEs)	75 indirect (crafts)	50 indirect (private projects) Unknown (crafts)
Community benefits from the trust (approx.)	\$15k per year (guest-night fee)	\$23k per year (guest-night fee and rights fee)
Contribution to nature conservation	Size limited (200 hectares), signs of recovery, still grazing	Size substantial (8100 hectares), recovery, endangered wildlife, some grazing
Contribution to education and healthcare	Improvement in healthcare, education, water provision, and security	Major improvement in provision of healthcare, education, water and security
Additional benefits: (approx.)	Loisaba Community Trust: approximately \$30k Other enterprises: unknown	OI Lentille Trust approximately \$250k

Drawing on their entrepreneurial logic, however, both private investors have rejected these requests as they claim to have the right (i.e., RL pays a rights fee) to manage the enterprise exclusively (P-I-KS-2; P-I-SOL-2). They further argue that many community members lack the capacity to understand the financial complexity of a transnational tourism enterprise (P-I-KS-2; P-I-SOL-2; C-I-SOL-6). Nevertheless, the private investor at the Starbeds recently decided to bridge the discursive divide with the Koiya leaders by providing an overview of all the costs and benefits involved (P-I-KS-2), which seems to have satisfied the information needs of the group ranch leaders (C-I-KS-5; A-I-8). In addition, transparency and trust in the Koiya partnership has been further enhanced by allowing group ranch leaders to attend trust board meetings as observers (C-I-KS-7).

Second, changes in the constellation of actors and related resources have affected the internal congruence, particularly at the Sanctuary. Land set aside by Kijabe appeared to be partly owned by the neighboring Nkiloriti group ranch, which had to be brought into the partnership through a separate agreement. Nevertheless, Nkiloriti leaders feel marginalized (C-FG-SOL-2; 3), which produces tensions in the partnership (C-I-SOL-1; P-I-SOL-2; A-FG-2).

The partnership arrangement of the Sanctuary also involved high-level community and AWF representatives and large sums of invested resources, resulting in high stakes, distrust and tension in the trust board that misaligned with group ranch interests and failed to execute the rules of the game established for decision making. Due to the non-functioning of the Kijabe trust board, for a considerable period, existing agreements have been carried out by the private investor with limited feedback from the other partners. This incongruence was tackled by a revised partnership agreement to avoid escalation of transparency and accountability disputes when controversies grow or major decisions have to be made that affect other partners. Both PCPs have faced instability during group ranch committee elections and shifts in local leadership, along with the subsequent politicization of the partnerships by local leaders who wish to increase their share of the benefits or their political power (A-I-8; A-FG-2; P-I-KS-2). For example, the unclear membership registration and the seizing of power by members living outside the Kijabe group ranch, as well as the weak leadership at the Nkiloriti group ranch, result in unreliable community partners.

Third, both partnerships also see themselves faced with uses of collective natural or financial resources

that run counter to the rules of the game established for conserving wildlife or livelihood enhancement, such as illegal grazing in the conservation area, misappropriation of group ranch funds, buying more livestock or cultivating crops. Failing to address these issues in ways that are equitable, transparent and accountable resulted in a lower internal congruence and a more unstable partnership. For example, at Koiya, the annual financial audit of the group ranch accounts by AWF revealed that one of the group ranch leaders was falsifying bursaries for personal benefit and prevented an escalation of these corruptive practices (C-I-KS-2, 3; C-FG-KS-1). However, it is claimed by community leaders that AWF has not lived up to its promise to regularly provide audits. In turn, AWF and the private investors claim that the communities generally do not want to take offences to legal courts, preferring to settle disputes on the group ranch according to local traditions (A-I-8; A-FG-2; P-I-KS-2), leading to offenders being punished too lightly (A-FG-2; C-I-KS-3). The partners clearly have contrasting institutional preferences for dealing with monitoring and sanctioning, which affects the internal congruence of the partnership.

### *2.5 External congruence*

Institutional arrangements are also considered more stable if they are externally congruent with the institutional environment in which they are embedded, at global, national, regional and local levels. Globally, the PCPs under study align with the neoliberal discourse and actions of international organizations in nature conservation and development (Brockington et al., 2008; Sachedina et al., 2010) and its donors (O-I-8). Eastern and Southern Africa have witnessed a proliferation of PCP arrangements for conservation tourism and the lessons of experiments with such arrangements in different political and socio-cultural contexts are documented and shared (e.g. AWF, 2011; Elliott & Sumba, 2011).

Nationally, the emergence of conservation enterprises is partly a response to a policy void due to the inability of the Kenyan government and its Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to adequately protect state-owned wildlife outside state-protected areas, as well as to address human-wildlife conflicts on privately and communally owned land (A-I-4; O-I-1). PCPs, such as tourism-conservation enterprises, bring in new actors (e.g., private investors), new rules of the game (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding), and new resources (e.g., donor funding, business revenue, philanthropy) to tackle some of the challenges arising from this national institutional deficit. However, the proliferation of different PCP models, or other initiatives for conservation tourism, is likely to result in increasing external incongruence, as it creates a myriad of conservation areas managed in different ways with different or unequal deals for communities, sub-optimal forms of ecosystem-based conservation and a diffuse market for investors, tour operators and tourists (O-I-1).

Such proliferation of PCP models is also apparent in Laikipia, as the two conservation enterprises under study cooperate, but also compete, with other conservation tourism initiatives scattered across this region, such as private conservancies, community-based tourism enterprises, and PCPs arranged by other organizations. Group ranch leaders, investors and conservation organizations are increasingly aware of the deals, conditions and models involved in other PCPs in the region, which creates confusion but also opens up opportunities for learning (O-I-3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10). Concurrently, the prospects of PCPs are limited

and they do not provide a panacea for protecting wildlife and providing livelihood, as the market might not be able to attract enough clientele for many more enterprises, particularly in regions with limited carrying capacity of ecosystems to support higher numbers of tourists not servicing the mainstream market, like Laikipia (O-I-1, 2; A-FG-1).

At the local level, each of the two conservation enterprises is also faced with a range of external incongruences, such as the emergence of additional enterprises, partnerships, and investments by the private investors' trust funds. For example, two additional tourism enterprises have been established at Kojja, based on individual agreements made between local private entrepreneurs and the group ranch committee (C-FG-KS-1). Also, at the Sanctuary, the private investor has managed to substantially extend the size of the conservation area by establishing partnerships with surrounding group ranches, each with their own financial arrangements. Kijabe group ranch leaders are disappointed about these deals, as they considered the activities of the private investor to be exclusively devoted to them (C-FG-SOL-2, 3).

In addition, both private investors are managing their own trust funds, from private philanthropy or guest donations. These substantial financial streams and their impact create confusion among community members regarding the role of the private investor. Are they partners, stakeholders or philanthropists? Group ranch leaders desire more influence on how the private trust fund's resources are to be raised and spent (C-I-SOL-10), while the private investors argue that the funds are earmarked for human development projects and are to be distributed based on a tendering process to ensure equitability, transparency and accountability. In short, these new enterprises, relationships and projects form a growing financial and regulatory complexity that is difficult to separate and comprehend for group ranch members and other actors.

## *2.6 Metagovernance*

It becomes clear that both PCPs are dynamic. They have faced, and are still facing, a range of internal and external incongruences that may hamper their capacity to perform effectively or democratically. We have also seen that attempts to make the Starbeds more democratic (e.g. allowing observers) or the Sanctuary more effective (e.g. establishing new partnerships) necessitates changes in the arrangement's dimensions. This does not have to become problematic as long as actors engage in metagovernance to restore the internal and external congruence of the arrangement in case it continues to deteriorate. However, who should be responsible for metagovernance and what this actor, or these actors, should do is not self-evident.

Internally, AWF has been involved in metagovernance, cushioning the misalignment of discourses and the resulting conflicts over the rules of the game and resources during meetings of the trust board, safeguarding the accountability of the partners, and mediating in the revision of incongruent arrangements. While AWF recognizes the need for an "honest broker" between the private investors and the communities in establishing and implementing partnership deals, and claims successes in playing this role (AWF, 2011; Elliot & Sumba, 2011), the views of the other partners are mixed. At Starbeds, the



private investor heralds the involvement of AWF and claims that their brokering role partly explains why the partnership is still running. However, some Koiya community leaders view the role and interest of AWF as being mainly on a par with those of the private investor and opposed to community interests (C-I-KS-2, 4).

At The Sanctuary, the private investor typifies the involvement of AWF as essential and very effective in the start-up phase, but less so in the revision of the partnership arrangements due to a lack of resources and a weakened presence in the area due to the high rotation rate of AWF personnel in the region. The Kijabe leaders have also expressed concern about AWF's ability to reinstall the trust board, as it would affect their power in important matters concerning the community (C-I-SOL-1, 2, 3, 4). AWF lacks human and financial resources to sustain their internal metagovernance role over time. It should be made clear that the brokering role of AWF is also hampered by their own stake of conserving wildlife and role as partner in the partnership, which makes their position not neutral.

A range of organizations, including AWF, acknowledge the need for staying involved to take care of the internal congruence of both PCPs as they fear an exit strategy would have disastrous consequences (O-FG-1). Since donors often fund new initiatives for relatively short periods of time, it is less clear how this longer-term involvement could be financed. AWF considers claiming financial compensation for brokering services provided and creating more risk in the partnership arrangement by relying more on loans and social venture capital. These developments clearly indicate a stronger neoliberal approach advocated by AWF, whereby the inclusion of risk is believed to create a greater sense of ownership and to require more due diligence of all partners, which would result in less need for mediation by a third party (A-I-8, 9). Whether the communities and private investors will continue to accept a brokering role of AWF based on these conditions remains to be seen.

Externally, AWF actively cooperates with other regional actors as part of their landscape-level approach to conservation (A-FG-1, 2; see also Henson et al., 2009). Nevertheless, our respondents express contrasting views regarding the impact and suitability of the metagovernance role of AWF in Laikipia. Some praise the ground-breaking work AWF has done, particularly in providing indispensable resources, community awareness campaigns, and training (O-I-2, 7). Others believe that the influence of AWF is dwindling due to lack of experienced staff and resources. For example, the private investor at the Sanctuary believes that "AWF, as a pan-African institution (...), has spread itself unbelievably thin. (...) They have bitten off more than they can chew and in this area we are seeing the consequences of that" (P-I-SOL-2).

Recognition is important, because from an external congruence perspective other candidates are available for playing metagovernance roles. For instance, the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) is a regional network organization already involved in bringing together actors, sharing experiences and providing technical support to landowners in addressing the challenges and opportunities provided by conserving wildlife in Laikipia (O-I-7). The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is another network organization focusing on

providing security to landowners by establishing and facilitating conservation tourism PCPs in northern Kenya and, increasingly, in Laikipia (O-I-3, 4, 5). NRT is already expanding its influence by supporting the Naibunga Conservancy, which is an organization that binds together the conservation efforts of nine group ranches in the region, including Koiya and Kijabe. Recently, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association was formed; an association of community and private conservancies in Kenya aimed at creating an enabling environment for conservancies to deliver environmental and livelihood benefits. Along with AWF, these organizations are thus already, or will be, sharing metagovernance functions for conservation tourism partnerships.

Calls for standardization as a form of metagovernance are also addressed by state agencies, such as KWS and the recently established County Government of Laikipia. For instance, KWS is in the process of developing new regulations on community enterprise development that will likely have consequences for the external congruence of conservation tourism partnerships in Kenya (KWS, 2012; O-I-1; 2). However, organizations involved in developing and managing these partnerships, such as AWF, NRT and several others, are able to influence the outcomes of this policy to prevent incongruence with their current approaches. As put by a key KWS officer: “AWF has a very good model of enterprise development and I think it’s something that when we are pushing these policies there are some things we can borrow” (O-I-1). Above all, if the Kenyan government is to regulate conservation tourism partnerships, it would bring back the state as a central metagovernance actor in this sub-sector in Kenya. When and if this policy shift will bring sufficient standardization and coordination, and how this would affect the effectiveness and democratic credentials of conservation tourism partnerships, remains to be seen.

### 3. CONCLUSION

This paper contributed empirically and theoretically to the literature on governance of natural resources and conservation tourism by examining the internal and external congruence of one particular model of governance: PCPs.

Empirically, this paper compared the partnership arrangements and the governance challenges of two tourism-conservation enterprises in Laikipia County, Kenya. We can conclude that conservation tourism PCPs are important governance arrangements for addressing the joint objectives of conserving nature and enhancing livelihoods, particularly in areas where the role of state actors is less prominent or dwindling. Yet, PCPs are highly political and dynamic by nature. Our analysis shows that the Starbeds appears to be a more stable partnership as it has attempted to deliver community benefits in a transparent, participatory and accountable way. With its disputed land-ownership, unclear group ranch membership and conflictive trust board, the Sanctuary has been less stable, but it does seem to confer greater benefits to the local community and, particularly, contribute more substantially to nature conservation. Extending the effectiveness, or enhancing the democratic credentials, of PCPs leads to change, but does not have to lead to conflict, or their collapse, as long as stability in the partnership arrangement is re-established in time.

We further conclude that stability and change in conservation PCPs can be explained by the internal and external congruence of different dimensions of the partnership's policy arrangement. Internally, the communities and private partners involved do not easily trust one another because they exhibit contrasting logics and discourses (see also Entwistle et al., 2007; Meguro & Inoue, 2011). Both partnerships also see themselves faced with resource uses (i.e., community benefits, natural resources) that run counter to the rules of the game established for conserving wildlife or realizing collective benefits (see also Meguro & Inoue, 2011). Failing to address these issues in ways that are considered equitable, transparent and accountable by all partners will result in a decrease of internal congruence of the arrangement (e.g., Arts & Goverde, 2006). Weak local institutional settings and varying preferences of partners among a plurality of institutions dealing with monitoring and sanctioning are not helpful in addressing such challenges (see also Southgate, 2006).

Further, despite their alignment with international neoliberal discourse, both PCPs are facing a range of external incongruences. For example, at the local level the emergence of new private enterprises and livelihood projects by private trust funds leads to confusion about the purpose of various financial streams and the role of the private investor. Moreover, the regional and national proliferation of partnership arrangements in the field of conservation tourism, and, particularly, the national and regional attempts and plans to standardize and align these approaches, is creating a dynamic institutional environment that may further affect external congruency levels.

We are aware that our respondents mainly represented leading figures, while the perspectives of the wider communities have not been extensively surveyed in this research. Further research could be conducted on the level of community understanding of changing partnership arrangements, the extent to which they feel represented by their leaders in the trust boards, and the actual contribution to their livelihood.

Theoretically, this article makes two important contributions to the literature on the governance of conservation tourism partnerships and other forms of natural resource use. First, we demonstrate the utility of the conceptualization of PAA scholars (e.g., Arts & Goverde, 2006; Van Gossum et al., 2010) of congruence for examining the internal dynamics and external relationships of partnerships, or other multi-actor governance arrangements, in tourism. This complements the work of other authors in natural resource management that have highlighted the importance of the congruence or nestedness of institutions (e.g., Cox et al., 2010; Marshall, 2008; Ostrom, 2005). We realize that the cases analyzed represent niche tourism products, but believe that our conceptualization of internal and external congruence can be put to use in other settings where multi-actor governance arrangements attempt to steer tourism processes and outcomes. Studying the internal and external congruence of multi-actor arrangements thereby enables a deeper understanding of how governance of partnerships in tourism, or other networks, occurs.

Second, the internal and external dynamics of PCPs calls for adaptive governance approaches to ensure that multi-actor partnerships or networks remain effective and democratic (e.g., Folke et al., 2005).

Regular revision of partnership agreements, as is currently practiced by NRT (O-I-4), could contribute to this call. We argue that metagovernance is needed to safeguard stability, both from an internal and external congruence point of view. Although many authors assume that public authorities would be best positioned to take on metagovernance roles (e.g., Entwistle et al., 2007; Sørensen & Torving, 2009), our study suggests that non-state actors, such as AWF, can also perform and share these tasks if resources can be secured (see also Glasbergen 2011). AWF has played an important role in the founding of the conservation tourism PCPs studied in this article, but is now increasingly confronted with internal (e.g. financial, organizational) and external (e.g. political, operational) challenges that make its long-term involvement in these partnerships uncertain.

Metagovernance in private arrangements for sustainable development is ultimately a highly political activity (Glasbergen 2011). However, in the implementation of the Starbeds and the Sanctuary, AWF has portrayed itself as an ‘honest broker’, being neutral and outside of politics (AWF, 2011; Sumba et al., 2007). In practice, it is much more difficult for transnational NGOs to continue their metagovernance efforts and effectively navigate the complex and often harsh political dynamics encountered during partnership implementation, particularly if they are also an interested partner. It may well be that, for the cases studied, locally and regionally rooted organizations, such as LWF, NRT or the recently established County Government of Laikipia, eventually will be better positioned to effectively and democratically fulfill metagovernance roles, or that such tasks could be played by multiple actors and partners. It also remains to be seen in what way, and to what degree, the KWS will succeed in its plans to impose common standards on the proliferation of conservation tourism initiatives in Kenya.

In short, this paper shows that the role of metagovernance is volatile, which raises the more general question of which state and non-state actors are best positioned to shoulder particular metagovernance roles at specific points in time. Thus, further research on the characteristics of the actors performing metagovernance, the roles they play in governing internal and external congruence, and conditions for effective and democratic outcomes is warranted.

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