

## INVITED SYMPOSIUM

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### THE POTENTIAL FOR CONSERVATION CONTRACTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN MADAGASCAR

The desire to conserve the exceptional biodiversity present in Madagascar's forests has been an important stimulant of the roughly \$300 million invested in the environment in the past decade. An assumption has been that local inhabitants around important forests need viable economic alternatives to unsustainable resource consumption. We hypothesize that a more direct link between allocation of resources and realization of conservation would encourage donors to invest and ensure that their investments benefit more directly the poorer rural inhabitants living around forests. We are testing an approach in several ecological contexts where direct conservation payments are calibrated to ensure biodiversity conservation. The proposed conservation contracts, under which resource managers will receive remuneration for biodiversity conservation services, will use existing resource management transfer contract mechanisms. Reinforcement of community-based management is particularly relevant in Madagascar where very little land of biodiversity importance is privately owned. Community organisations would receive most revenues, while a proportion would go to the Ministry of Water and Forests and Communes for their help in establishment of the contracts, compliance and monitoring. Biodiversity indicators would be agreed in advance and subject to independent audit.

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Direct and Indirect Approaches to Ecosystem Conservation