

Sustainable Regional Development: Balancing Global and Local Stakes

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Various studies in the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn (Switzerland) and Mt. Kenya (Kenya) World Heritage Sites reveal that they provide an internationally acknowledged label for shared landscapes as a common asset for regional development. The decisive element in success is genuine participation in planning and shared access to the benefits of change.



Figure 1: Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn region (courtesy of Management Centre Unesco World Heritage Site Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn)

The studies confirm that global frame conditions can only be as effective as their local level of compliance and implementation and that the purpose of site protection differs between countries in the North and the South.

The North focuses on:

- counter-balancing peripherisation,
- preserving the cultural landscape,
- enhancing touristic attractiveness,
- strengthening regional identity and
- promoting more sustainable development.

The South focuses on:

- easing pressure on the sites by constraining natural resource exploitation, often without due compensation and by empowering local stakeholders to prevent resource conflicts.

This results in the following opportunities and success factors in sustainable regional development (see Table 1):



Figure 2: Panel of stakeholders (courtesy of Management Centre Unesco World Heritage Site Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn)

Feature	Jungfrau Aletsch Bietschhorn WHS	Mt. Kenya WHS
Regulatory Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well functioning • legally binding policy guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weak regulating governance • local-level self regulation practices
Global WHS Label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identity building over common concerns in heterogeneous spatial units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • landscape protection but also inhibition of agriculture • risk of economic loss
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interconnectedness • economic/touristic landscape validation • decentralised employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vehicle to address conflicts of interest • natural resource use regulation

Table 1: Overview of main features of Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn and Mount Kenya regions



Figure 3: Mount Kenya region (Photo by U. Wiesmann)