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"Multi-stakeholder Platforms and Protected Area Management: Evidence from El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve, Mexico"

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This article analyses the potentials and limitations of multi-stakeholder platforms (known as advisory councils in Mexico) involved in protected area and resource management in peripheral regions. Qualitative, in-depth expert interviews conducted in 2015 at one of the world's most prominent Biosphere Reserves focused on the sources of effective and inclusive stakeholder participation through collective decision-making and joint implementation. Results identified three key interrelated factors that explain the performance and effectiveness of the advisory council at the El Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve: 1) comparatively favourable socioeconomic and political conditions at the outset; 2) efficient internal organisation that fosters informed decision-making by consensus; and 3) the ability to influence governmental institutions through collective lobbying. As a result, the council has been able to exclude several non-local actors from resource use, obtain public funding, and participate in diverse management activities. Due to the lack of a well-defined mandate; however, it still depends on centralised institutions and has no decisive stake in the governmental decision-making process yet. Therefore, despite notable progress, genuine stakeholder participation in protected area management still faces limitations in Mexico and probably other countries as well. (Text from author's abstract)

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