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"Frank Vorhies: Integrating Conservation and Economic Development"

Vorhies, Frank, and Michelle Westerlaken

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In this *Smart Forests Radio* episode, we speak with Dr. Frank Vorhies. Frank is the director of African Wildlife Economy Institute at Stellenbosch University in South Africa and the founding director of Earthmind, a conversation network founded in Switzerland and now based in the UK. He explores the economic aspects of conservation initatives, focusing on how different views of conservation and biodiversity influence contributing activities and quantification methods. Advocating for conservation as sustainable use of natural resources, as opposed to strict protection, Frank discusses integrating conservation with industrial and urban development and emphasises the need to measure use-related indicators alongside protection-related ones. He delves into how the concept of Verified Conservation Areas (VCA) for biodiveristy restoration came about, making an area unit measurable, tradable, and investable. He also highlights how shifting from a carbon-focused approach to an area-based approach, like VCA, combined with a digital platform, can facilitate sustainable practices and enable transparent information sharing among various actors, including gas factories. (Source: Smart Forests Atlas)

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