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Marja Spierenburg is Associate Professor/Senior Lecturer at the VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands, in the Department of Culture, Organisation and Management. She is currently involved in several research projects focusing on the role of the private (for-profit and non-profit) sector in nature conservation as well as in land reforms in Southern Africa.

Her research investigates the negotiations between the different parties but also within the different partner organisations concerning the meaning of the concepts of development and conservation. It also addresses the impacts of the growing importance of public-private partnerships in conservation on the land rights of local communities and the latter's possibilities to participate in the management of and benefit from conservation and land reform projects. Between 2003 and 2006 she participated in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

Marja Spierenburg's publications include, apart from a number of journal articles and book contributions, the books *Strangers, Spirits and Land Reforms – Conflicts about Land in Dande, northern Zimbabwe* (Brill, 2004) and, together with Sandra Evers and Harry Wels *Competing Jurisdictions – Settling Land Claims in Africa* (Brill, 2005).