About WWF-Kenya

WWF is one of the world’s largest and most experienced independent conservation organizations, with over 5 million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries.

WWF’s mission is to stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world’s biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Locally, we are ensuring a healthy natural environment supporting growth in Kenya.
Problem and the expected outcomes
(target beneficiaries, areas, and partners)

In the past, management of natural resources, notably water and forests in Kenya has laid emphasis on protection through a command and control system by government with minimal participation of other stakeholders. Consequently, communities were alienated from these resources with no opportunity for participation and decision making. Over time this created animosity between the natural resources managers and communities. The previous natural resources management policies and legislations had inadequate provisions for community participation in natural resources management. The result of this in the Mara River basin was worrying; a trend towards rapid forest encroachment, unsustainable utilization of forest resources, deteriorating river water quality, disruption of flow regimes in the Mara River, and skewed distribution of benefits.

In Coastal Kenya, there are globally important coastal forests (terrestrial and mangroves) in Kwale and Kilifi that are rich in biodiversity, recognized as global biodiversity hotspots and some hold important cultural values to the local Mijikenda community, nine of them being enlisted as World Heritage Sites.

An estimated 60% of natural habitats in the Eastern Africa Coastal Forests Ecoregion have been lost due to an increasing demand for wood-fuel by local industries and households, unregulated cross-border trade, large-scale economic developments (mining, agriculture) and uncontrolled wood fuel production. The landscape is within the East Africa deforestation front, one of the 11 places where the largest concentrations of forest loss or severe degradation are expected in the near future. The coastal forests in Kenya are highly fragmented and managed under different regimes, often with inadequate planning and management capacities. The landscape has mangrove forests estimated at 8,354 ha and 8,535 ha for Kwale and Kilifi respectively.

Mangroves provide goods and services that are of ecological, economic and environmental importance to the people including wood for construction and fuel-wood, fisheries and carbon capture. They are facing threats from overexploitation, pollution, poor management systems and practises and from climate change and haphazard management.
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Our strategies and Intervention

WWF has adopted a participatory approach in the management of natural resources. The first group of stakeholders are local communities in the areas where we work. They are involved in programme activities through Community Forest Associations (CFAs) and the county forum for traditional Kaya forest conservation (Mijikenda ethnic groups) in forest areas, Beach Management Units (BMUs) along the coast and Water Resource User Associations (WRUAs) in areas involved in fresh water management and small scale tree growers associations.

The community benefits through increased sustainability of and control in the management of natural resources on which their livelihoods depend. Attention is given to education, income generation, improved production and efficient energy use, to create crucial public support and benefits for communities.

WWF also works closely with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and especially county level CSO networks for natural resource management e.g Kenya Forests Working Group, and others. CSOs will partner in policy influencing and will receive WWF support to strengthen their capacity for this work.

Government Agencies are involved as project strategic partners receive technical support to improve their capacities to implement their policies, programmes and plans. In Coastal Kenya, WWF Kenya already has a MoU with KFS and KWS at the national level. An MOU with KMFRI is being finalised. Additional MoUs will be developed with the respective county governments.

WWF will also work with the private sector, in order to encourage and support their efforts to make production processes more sustainable. This will be done through dialogue, training, linking, and development of standards and promotion of best practices. Key private sector actors include:

- Base Titanium Ltd. and two ranches for forest restoration and as model of best practices
- 1,000 members of the Charcoal Producers Association (CPA) and Kwale Wood Fuel Association, to adopt wood-efficient technologies and implement charcoal regulations.
- Bamburi Lafarge, Coast Calcium, Pwani oil and artisanal miners will be sensitized to reduce their ecological footprint
- The Kwale International Sugar Company (KISCOL) and other commercial agriculture companies will be sensitized on sustainable water management
Case Study: Achieving participatory forest management with Community Forest Associations

To address the problem of poor management of forests, the Kenyan government adopted participatory forest management (PFM) as a strategy to improve the management of Kenya’s forests and woodland areas for current and future generations with the enactment of the Forests Act (2005). PFM is a technique of management that is based on the sharing of rights, responsibilities, benefits, and obligations between the community members (and the state).

WWF in the Mara River basin has embraced PFM as an approach towards achieving sustainable forest management. This is after recognizing the fact that involvement of the wider stakeholders would significantly contribute towards sustainable management of forests. PFM encourages the involvement of communities in particular in decision making in forest management as well as acquire a share of the forest benefits. This is important because the new management approach needs to be supported by all those who are expected to implement it or even to be affected by it in one way or another. The main objectives are equity, conflict resolution, awareness, forest production, poverty reduction and sustainable utilization. WWF in the Mara River basin have over the years strived to explain the contents and implications of the new forest policy and law to the communities living adjacent to the country’s major forest ecosystems in order to enhance their involvement.

Working together with KFS and other key partners, WWF organized forest adjacent communities in the headwaters of the Mara into
CFAs, taking them through the process of formation and ultimately registration with the registrar of societies. The CFAs have an elaborate management structure, complete with forest scouts to work hand in hand with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) rangers. As the KFS forest station manager of the Nairotia forest stations once remarked, “The CFAs act as a ‘live fence’ around the forest; halting illegal activity in the forest and ensuring that forest laws are enforced”. Three CFAs in the basin, with the support of WWF and KFS, have gone ahead to develop 5 year participatory forest management plans (2012 – 2016) and have taken an extra step to sign forest management agreements with the Kenya Forest Service, officially ushering in an era of co-management of forest resources between the forest adjacent community and the Kenya Forest Service.
Case Study 2: Ecotourism helps build communities and protect the forest

Whilst most of the ancient Kaya forests had already been declared as National Monuments under Kenyan law, about 15 years ago we realised we needed to find additional ways to make sure that these beautiful forests were being managed in a sustainable way. Giving them the status of National Monuments was just one way of conserving them, but we needed to find other ways to bring the communities they supported closer to them.

We soon realised that the communities living next to the forests were often very poor and highly dependent on the forests for their well-being. It was clear we needed to find a way of increasing the amount of money going directly to the people themselves and help them be more involved in the decisions about how the forests were managed. That’s why it was decided that a pilot ecotourism project was needed in one of the sacred Kaya forests. Soon, the project would see visitors paying to experience the sacred forest, meeting locals, and buying their goods, while some of the money raised would be used to support conservation work in the forest, which is reported to be home to 52 bird species and 192 plant species!

But after two years of piloting the project from 2001 to 2003, we found that that over 95% of the women involved with the project didn’t have access to commercial banks, so they had no way of saving the small amounts of income that they got from selling their handcrafts to tourists, dances and entry fees to the forest. As a result, they couldn’t borrow money either to support their families or develop their communities. We needed to do more! So in 2003, the Kaya Kinondo Financial Services Association was set up.

At the start, the Association had 125 members across two villages but since then, has expanded to cover the whole of the Kinondo area across 25 villages surrounding three forest blocks: Kaya Kinondo sacred forest, Kaya Muhaka sacred forest, and Gogoni Forest Reserve. By today, the Association serves over 4,000 members of the community, including 869 women, 779 men and 140 groups (which have an average of 20 members each). Since the first loans of £180 were given to five women, the Association has grown massively – in terms of membership, savings, and loans. In fact, last year the bank issued credit of over £160,000!
The project also strengthens participation of target communities in decision making processes to ensure future conservation and livelihoods interventions, including those by County Government, remain relevant and effective.
In Kwale and Kilifi, by seeking to leverage additional funds and in-kind commitments from service providers and the community, the efficiency of this work will be enhanced. The project also strengthens participation of target communities in decision-making processes to ensure future conservation and livelihoods interventions, including those by County Government, remain relevant and effective.

The geographic scope of this work builds on WWF Kenya’s existing efforts in Kwale’s terrestrial landscapes whilst also formally expanding into the neighbouring county of Kilifi (nascent work has been underway in Kilifi for a number of years) and the associated seascapes of Kwale and Kilifi.

In line with the approach captured in the WWF-Kenya FY15-20 Strategic Plan, a very deliberate shift from a ‘project’ approach to a landscape/seascape approach with a multi-sectoral orientation is needed in WWF’s work in Kwale-Kilifi to respond to the urgent and significant threats being faced, particularly as a result of large-scale economic developments. Working with strategic partners, WWF must be proactive and provide timely options and solutions to inform sustainable economic development, which takes into consideration environmental integrity and societal needs.
OUR VISION

A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND GROWTH IN KENYA

Why we are here.
To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/kenya