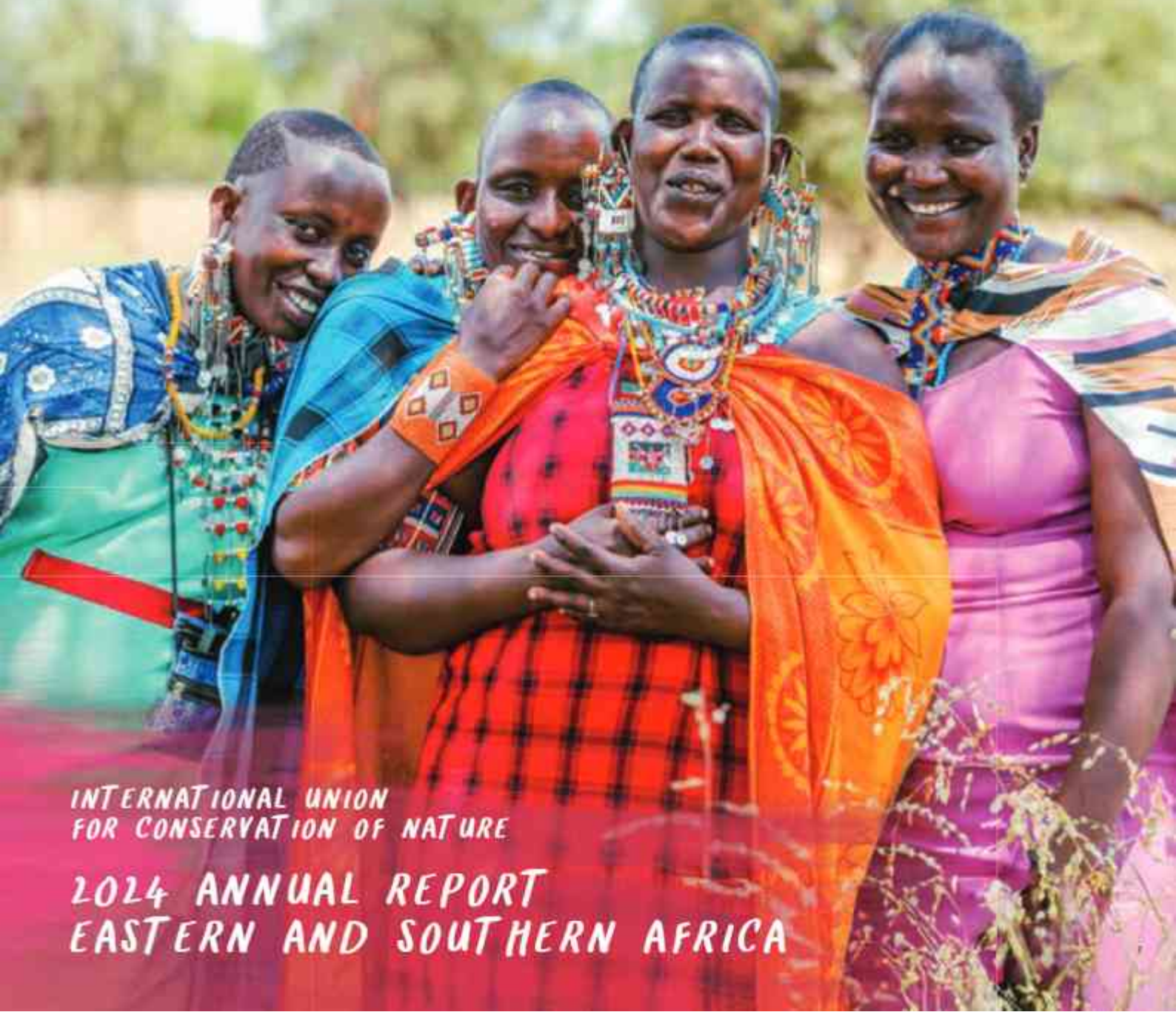




REGENERATING AFRICA



INTERNATIONAL UNION
FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

2024 ANNUAL REPORT
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

In 2024, the IUCN Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) continued to demonstrate its **commitment to supporting strategic conservation and sustainable development actions across the region**. Through strategic partnerships with governments, development partners, civil society, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and the private sector, the programme scaled up the implementation of transformative actions to address critical environmental challenges including **biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation and diminished livelihoods systems**.

A **standout achievement of the year was the hosting of the inaugural Pan-African Conservation Forum (ACF)**, a landmark event that brought together over 500 stakeholders from across the continent and beyond. Under the theme "African Solutions for Nature and People: Creating Transformative Responses to the Biodiversity and Climate Crisis in Africa," the forum provided a platform for meaningful dialogue on biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, inclusive finance and equitable conservation. The forum culminated in the adoption of the Africa Conservation Declaration, which outlined a shared roadmap for collaborative action in addressing pressing conservation challenges.

Looking ahead, **in 2025 IUCN will host the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi**—a milestone event which will convene experts, leaders, and decision-makers to reflect on the journey from Marseille (the preceding WCC) to shaping the future of conservation. High on the agenda will include motions, governance elements and above all the 20-year vision that will underpin the 2026 – 2029 strategy that seeks to scale-up, transform, empower and mobilize the union to address the most compelling challenges to conservation in this generation.

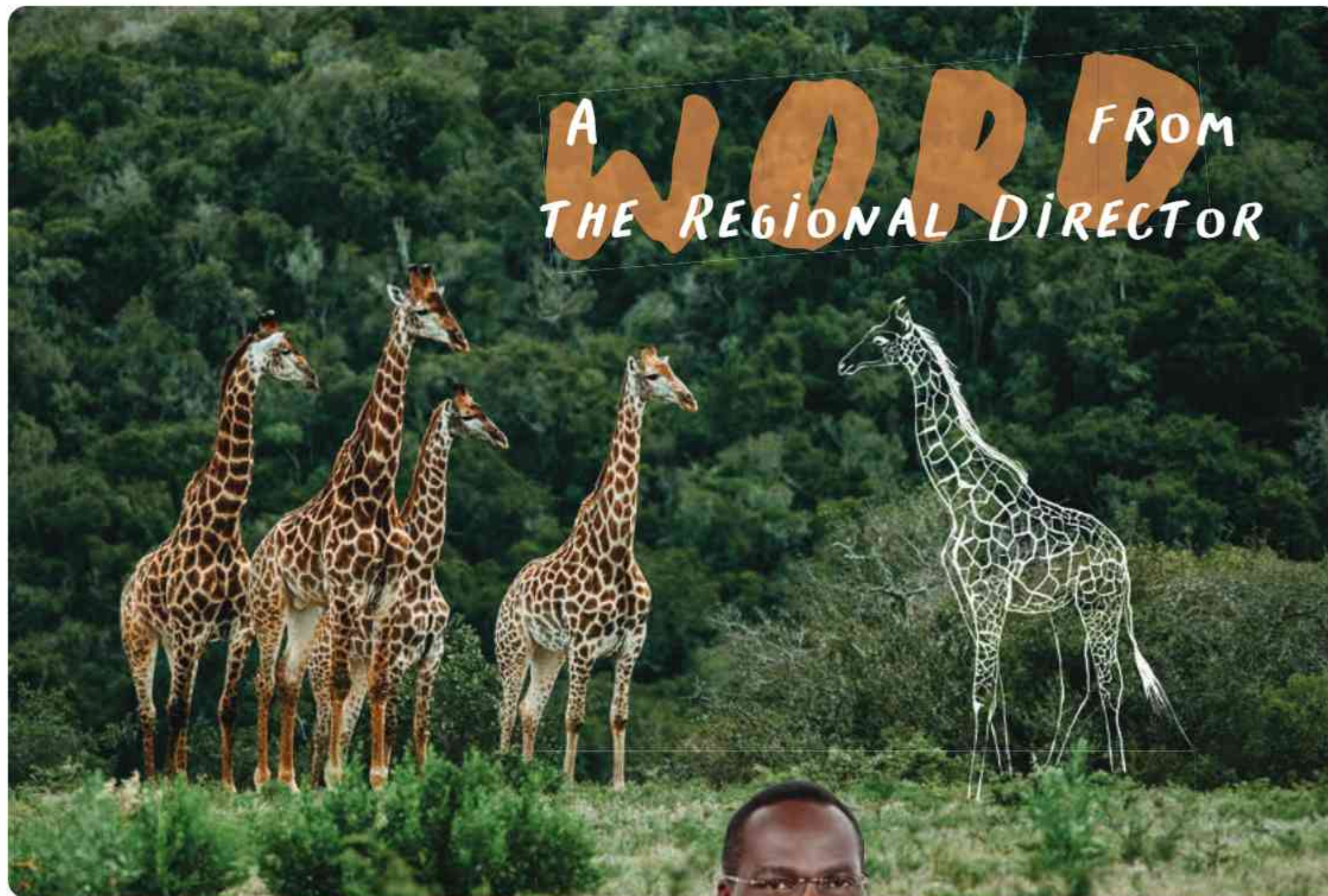
IUCN ESARO remains committed to working with partners across the region, and beyond, to build a **more sustainable and equitable future for people and nature in Eastern and Southern Africa**.

A landmark event in 2024 was the inaugural pan-African Conservation Forum (ACF), which brought together over 1000 participants from across Africa and beyond. Centered around the theme, "African solutions for nature and people," the forum became a critical platform for dialogue on biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and sustainable finance. The forum culminated in the declaration of 'Voices from Africa' — five urgent action points that emphasize the need to place people at the center of conservation, increase investment, unleash youth potential, and amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs). This shared roadmap for action highlights the collective responsibility we all share in protecting Africa's natural heritage.

In 2024, ESARO's focus extended to empowering the next generation of conservationists, strengthening partnerships, advancing environmental conservation, and building community resilience. The Great Blue Wall emerged as a flagship initiative aimed at scaling up the regenerative blue economy and enhancing ocean and coastal resilience. This included building the partnership with ODISEA for marine research and conservation, which strengthens local and regional capacities for marine stewardship. Our commitment to empowering communities was further demonstrated through various initiatives that highlighted the powerful impact of cross-sectoral partnerships in advancing conservation and supporting a sustainable economy. Additionally, we focused on restoring ecosystems, reviving species, and promoting resilient livelihoods. Our large landscape restoration programs, including forest landscape restoration and drought resilience efforts, have been vital for ecosystem recovery. Through Integrated Water Resources Management, we are building water security by strengthening water governance and catchment management. Our work also continues to address climate change and biodiversity loss, ensuring the restoration of balance in key conservation landscapes while enhancing community resilience.

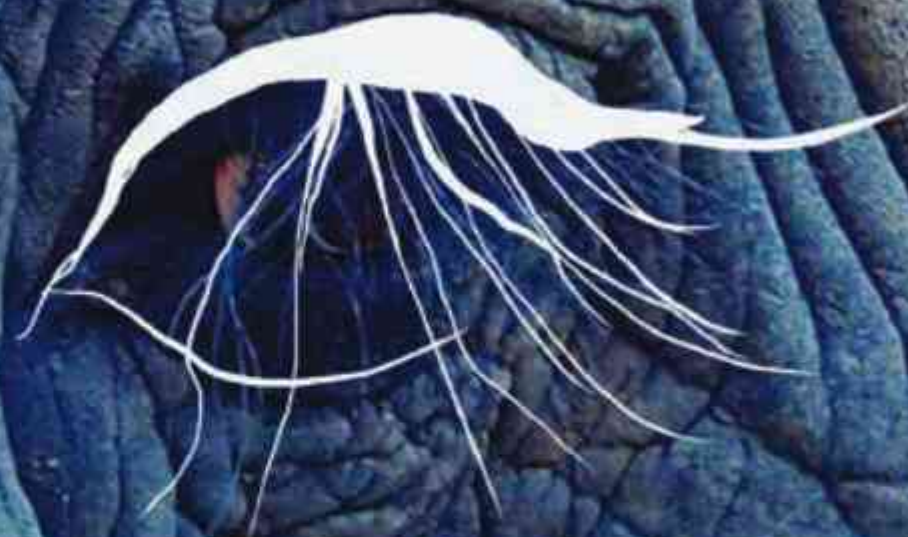
Looking ahead to 2025, the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi presents an important opportunity for IUCN and the global conservation community to come together, share insights, and set the course for the future of conservation. The upcoming 2026-2029 strategy will be pivotal in scaling efforts and empowering communities to address the urgent environmental challenges of our time.

At IUCN ESARO, we remain resolute in our commitment to the interconnectedness of Nature and People. Building on the momentum of 2024, we will continue to drive forward with the goal of creating a sustainable and equitable future. As we look to 2025 and beyond, we are steadfast in our mission to advance conservation and sustainable development, working in partnership with our State and NGO Members, public and private sector stakeholders, and the whole of society to safeguard the region's rich biodiversity for future generations.



LUTHER ANUKUR
IUCN ESARO REGIONAL DIRECTOR

IUCN AT A GLANCE



ABOUT

IUCN IS A UNIQUE DEMOCRATIC MEMBERSHIP COMPOSED OF BOTH GOVERNMENT, CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND COMMISSIONS FORMED OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS.

The experience, resources and reach of its more than **1,400 Member organisations** and the input of some **14,000 experts** make IUCN the largest global environmental network and global authority on the status of the natural world and the measures needed to safeguard it.

VISION

A JUST WORLD THAT VALUES AND CONSERVES NATURE.

UNITED

UNITED FOR LIFE AND LIVELIHOODS

Adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille, the Nature 2030 IUCN Programme was the result of many years of deliberation across the Union. Covering a ten-year period for the first time, the Programme is a call for mobilisation to IUCN Members, Commissions and the Secretariat. This longer-term outlook aligns with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

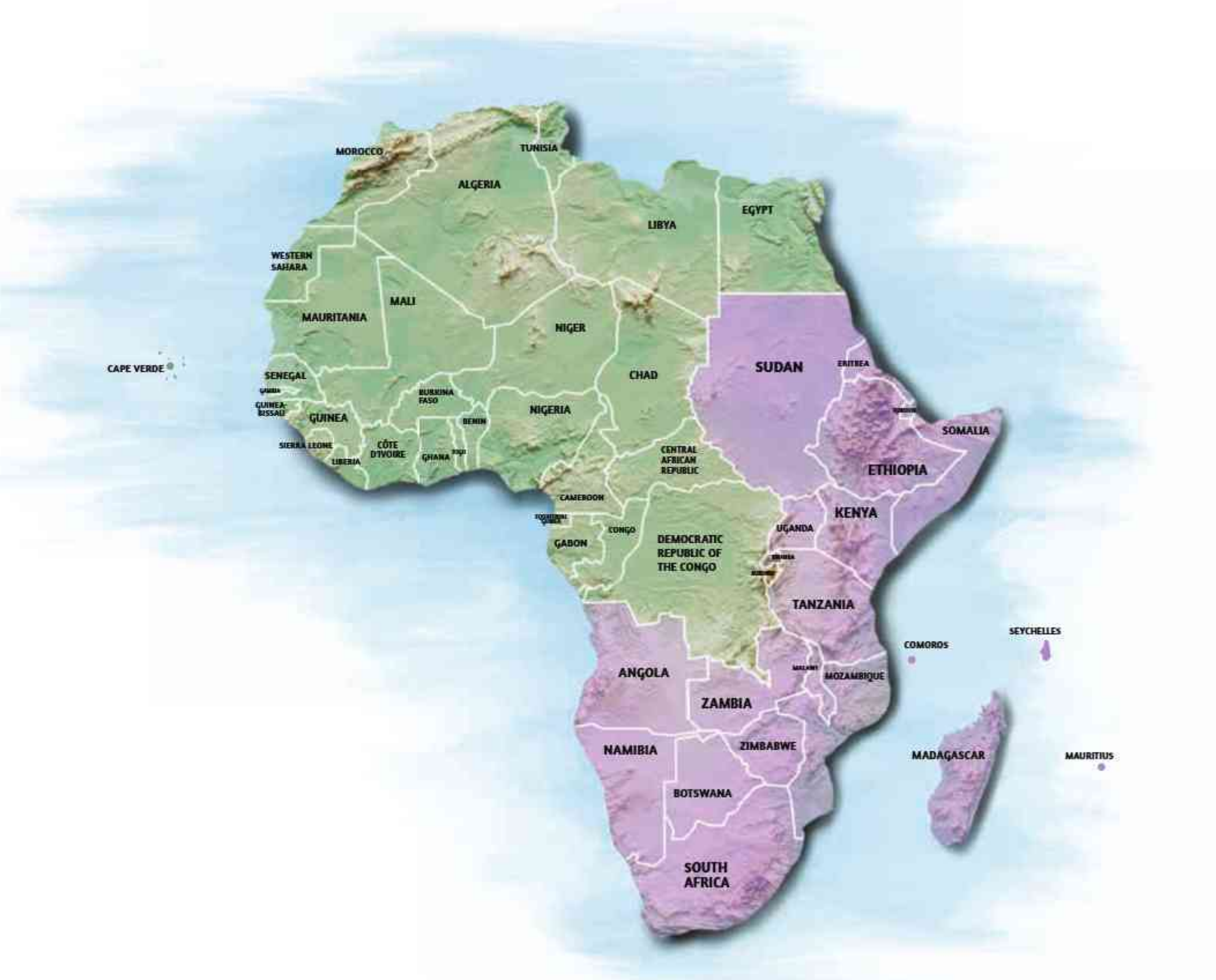
MISSION

INFLUENCE, ENCOURAGE AND ASSIST SOCIETIES TO CONSERVE THE INTEGRITY AND DIVERSITY OF NATURE AND ENSURE THAT ANY USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES IS EQUITABLE AND ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE.

ABOUT IUCN ESARO

We work across 24 countries in the Horn of Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and the Western Indian Ocean: **Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.**

Our program is carried out by our Nairobi, Kenya Regional Office - seven country offices in Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, as well as a staff presence in Ethiopia, Malawi, Zambia, Comoros, and Madagascar, which includes a robust corporate services department and a devoted team of regional technical experts.



MEMBERSHIP & COMMISSIONS

108 IUCN ESARO MEMBERS BY CATEGORY

9

Member States

8

Government Agencies

1

Subnational Government

8

International Non-Governmental Organizations

76

National Non-Governmental Organizations

4

Indigenous Peoples Organizations

2

Affiliate Organizations

IUCN, with its diverse membership encompassing government agencies and civil society organizations, plays a crucial role in advancing conservation efforts worldwide. This broad representation fosters innovation, allowing us to incubate new ideas and serve as a trusted source for best practices, tools, and international conservation standards. As a neutral platform, we facilitate collaboration among governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities, and indigenous peoples' organizations. Together, we work towards resolving environmental challenges and achieving sustainable development.

In 2024, we continued to strengthen our membership base, encouraging a vibrant and engaged membership in the region. There was an increase in membership numbers from 107 in the year 2023, to 108 in 2024. We onboarded the City of Cape Town which is the first sub-national category member in the region.

We introduced several new initiatives, including the country membership profiles which received positive feedback and significantly contributed to member engagement and a quarterly regional membership newsletter. Several physical meetings were held with members in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Kenya and South Africa.

In 2024, we also constituted the ESARO regional committee with its first meeting on 30th April 2024. The regional committee meetings have since been held monthly. The regional committee has eight members - Dr. Adalbert Aine-Omucunguzi - Chair, Mr. Pejul Pedro Sebastião Calenga - Co-Vice Chair, Mr. Vongani Maringa - Co-Vice Chair, Mr. Steve Itela - Treasurer, Ms. Fauza Namukuve - Secretary, Ms. Britta Hackenberg and Ms. Karen Price. The mandate of the committee is to support IUCN's mission, facilitate co-operation among members and other parts of the IUCN, support members to participate in the IUCN's governance and programs as well as raise the visibility of the IUCN.

National committee meetings convened in Kenya, Madagascar, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe. IUCN ESARO has seven national committees recognized by the IUCN Council - Botswana National Committee of IUCN Members, Kenya National Committee of IUCN Members, Malawi National Committee of IUCN Members, Mozambique National Committee of IUCN Members, South Africa National Committee of IUCN Members, Uganda National Committee of IUCN Members and the Zimbabwe National Committee of IUCN Members. Their mandate is to facilitate co-operation, participate in IUCN governance, promote the IUCN's mission, be environmentally responsible, co-ordinate regional work, among others. These meetings provide value to both longstanding and new members alike.

A key highlight of the year was the Africa Conservation Forum which was co-hosted by IUCN and The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife. This forum was a platform for the Union to bring together for the first time, all IUCN Members in Africa to discuss and seek solutions to the various challenges and opportunities. The forum helped elevate continental priorities, ensuring they played a more prominent role in shaping the global conservation agenda. It was grounded in robust, science-based evidence, crucial for developing transformative solutions to the interconnected nature and climate crisis facing Africa.

During the year, we unfortunately saw nine members rescind.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to growing and diversifying our membership while continuing to provide valuable opportunities and services. Together, we look forward to a promising year of collaboration and growth.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES (8)

South African National Parks	South Africa
Ministry of Environment and Tourism	Namibia
	United Republic of Tanzania
Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority	Ethiopia
Uganda Wildlife Authority	Uganda
Direction Energie-Environnement - Conseil Régional de La Réunion	France
Administracao Nacional das Areas de Conservacao	Mozambique
Wildlife Research and Training Institute	Kenya

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ORGANIZATIONS (4)

Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee	South Africa
Indigenous Information Network	Kenya
Fikambanana Bongolava Maitso	Madagascar
Association Antrema Miray	Madagascar

AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS (2)

International Centre for Research on Agroforestry	Kenya
Fundação para a Conservação da Biodiversidade	Mozambique

INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (8)

African Wildlife Foundation - Kenya HQ	Kenya
Western Indian Ocean Marine Sciences Association	United Republic of Tanzania
Game Rangers Association of Africa	South Africa
Albertine Rift Conservation Society	Uganda
Peace Parks Foundation	South Africa
Conservation Through Public Health	Uganda
Cheetah Conservation Fund	Namibia
Care for Wild Rhino Sanctuary	South Africa

MEMBER STATES (9)

Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Madagascar
Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife	Kenya
Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security	Mauritius
Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment	Seychelles
Ministry of Forestry, Fisheries & The Environment	South Africa
Ministry of Environment Wildlife and Tourism	Botswana
Ministério da Cultura, Turismo e Ambiente República de Angola	Angola
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations	Lesotho
Ministry of Environment, Rwanda	Rwanda

SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS (1)

City of Cape Town	South Africa
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NATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (76)

Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa	South Africa
Société Réunionnaise pour l'Etude et la Protection de l'Environnement Ile de la Réunion	France
Endangered Wildlife Trust	South Africa
Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi	Malawi
World Wide Fund for Nature - South Africa	South Africa
South African Association for Marine Biological Research	South Africa
Botanical Society of South Africa	South Africa
Namibia Nature Foundation	Namibia
Council for Nature Conservation	Mauritius
Delta Environmental Centre	South Africa
Khama Rhino Sanctuary Trust	Botswana
Department of Environmental Management, Makerere University	Uganda
Wildlife Clubs of Kenya	Kenya
BirdLife Botswana	Botswana
BirdLife Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust	Uganda
Nature Seychelles	Seychelles
Nature Kenya - The East Africa Natural History Society	Kenya
The Environmental Conservation Trust of Uganda	Uganda
Nature Uganda	Uganda
BirdLife South Africa	South Africa
Malawi Environmental Endowment Trust	Malawi
Southern African Wildlife College	South Africa
Wilderness Foundation	South Africa
Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association	Zimbabwe
Wildlife Conservation Action	Zimbabwe
FANAMBY	Madagascar
Madagascar Wildlife Conservation	Madagascar
Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur les Primates de Madagascar	Madagascar
National Association of Conservancies of South Africa	South Africa
National Association of Professional Environmentalists	Uganda
Island Conservation Society	Seychelles
Coastal Oceans Research and Development - Indian Ocean (East Africa)	Kenya
Association Rwandaise des Ecologistes	Rwanda
ResourceAfrica South Africa	South Africa
Groupe Local d'Observation et d'identification des cétacés de la Réunion	France
Wildlands Conservation Trust	South Africa
SANCCOB (Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds)	South Africa
Mulanje Mountain Conservation Trust	Malawi
Mauritian Wildlife Foundation	Mauritius
Environmental Protection & Conservation Organisation	Mauritius
Fondation pour les Aires Protégées et la Biodiversité de Madagascar	Madagascar
NamibRand Nature Reserve	Namibia
Fondation Tany Meva	Madagascar
Madagasikara Voakajy	Madagascar
Lilongwe Wildlife Trust	Malawi
Dahari	Comoros
Population, Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium	Ethiopia
N/a'an ku se Foundation	Namibia
Busitema University Faculty of Science and Education Nagongera Campus	Uganda
Action pour la Protection de l'Environnement et la Promotion des Filières Agricoles	Rwanda
Wildlife Poisoning Prevention and Conflict Resolution	South Africa
South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association	South Africa
Wildlife Direct Kenya	Kenya
Lapalala Wilderness School	South Africa
Africa Institute for Energy Governance	Uganda
Hiroa Conservation Programme	Kenya
Namibian Chamber of Environment	Namibia
Community Action for Nature Conservation	Kenya
Zambia Community Based Natural Resources Management Forum	Zambia
Conservation Outcomes	South Africa
Watamu Marine	Kenya
Associacao do Meio Ambiente de Cabo Delgado - Amigos da Terra	Mozambique
Oceans Alive Trust	Kenya
Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association	Rwanda
Climate Action Network Tanzania	United Republic of Tanzania
Kilimanjaro Animal Centre for Rescue, Education and Wildlife (C.R.E.W.)	United Republic of Tanzania
Conservation Alliance of Kenya	Kenya
Sudanese Development Initiative	Sudan
New Millennium Women Empowerment Organization	Ethiopia
Mount Kenya Wildlife Conservancy	Kenya
Centre for Social Planning and Administrative Development (CESPAD)	Kenya
African Hub for Ocean Impact NPC (OceanHub Africa)	South Africa
Tsavo Trust	Kenya
Professional Hunters Association of South Africa Foundation	South Africa

OUR PEOPLE

AT IUCN ESARO, OUR STRENGTH LIES IN OUR DEDICATED AND DIVERSE TEAM. OUR PEOPLE ARE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND OUR MISSION TO CONSERVE NATURE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA.



101
MALE



70
FEMALE



20
NATIONALITIES

IMPACT ACROSS ECOSYSTEMS

PROGRAMMATIC RESULTS IN 2024

€8.7 M



The SOS African Wildlife Initiative, has awarded a total of 56 grants, amounting to €8.7 million.

€6.28 M



A total of 61 grants, amounting to €6.28 million, were distributed by BIOFAMA from 2019 to 2024.

€9.3 M

A total of 18 grants, valued at €9.3 million, have been awarded since the SADC TFCA Financing Facility's inception in 2020. Grant agreements were first signed in April 2022, with the most recent in July 2024.

39,824



Hectares brought under restoration in 2024

23,202



Hectares brought under Sustainable Land Management or Sustainable Agricultural Practices

71,789



Km2 brought under improved management effectiveness

38



PCA sites had improved management

16



Number of policy products developed

76



Number of water-infrastructure developed or improved

93,762



Total number trained or capacity built
Males: 42% (40,140)
Females: 57% (53,621)
Youth: 15% (14,760)
IP&LCs: 1% (912)

285,572



Total number of beneficiaries
Females: 30%
Youth: 8%
IP&LCs: 1%



LANDSCAPE RESTORATION

IN 2024, NEARLY 40,000 HECTARES WERE BROUGHT UNDER RESTORATION IN RWANDA, TANZANIA, UGANDA AND KENYA. THIS INCREASED THE CUMULATIVE AREA BROUGHT UNDER RESTORATION TO APPROXIMATELY 500,000 HECTARES.



PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS MANAGEMENT

OVER 71,700 SQUARE KILOMETERS OF PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS (PCAs) WERE BROUGHT UNDER IMPROVED MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (ESA), INCREASING THE AREA UNDER IMPROVED MANAGEMENT IN 2023-2024 TO 179,660 KM2.

COASTAL AND OCEAN RESILIENCE (COR)

4 SEASCAPES WITH IMPROVED EQUITABLE SEASCAPES GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS ESTABLISHED WITH SEASCAPES MANAGEMENT AND ACTION PLANS.



INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



GREEN AND BLUE JOBS WERE CREATED FOR OVER 6,500 PEOPLE. JOB TYPES INCLUDED TREE NURSERIES, TREE GROWING, FODDER PRODUCTION, MARICULTURE AND CLIMATE RESILIENT VALUE-CHAINS. THIS INCREASED THE NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED TO OVER 91,000 (7% INCREASE FROM 2023).

GREEN JOBS CREATED



BENEFICIARIES

OVER 185,000 PEOPLE (50% FEMALE, 8% YOUTH AND 1% IP&LCs) BENEFITED FROM IUCN ESARO INTERVENTIONS IN 2024. THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ESARO BENEFICIARIES TO 539,679 IN THE PERIOD 2021-2024.

THE BENEFITS RANGED FROM IMPROVED RESILIENCE AND ACCESS TO ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, TRAINING, SUBGRANTS, BLUE AND GREEN JOBS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE.





PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

SUPPORTING THE REGION WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TARGET 3 OF THE GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK (GBF)

In 2024, IUCN ESARO advanced GBF Target 3 (30x30) by improving protected area governance across 41 sites in eight countries using the IUCN Green List Standard and supporting Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) dialogues and frameworks in five nations and the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. Key achievements included launching the State of Protected and Conserved Areas in Eastern and Southern Africa report with 24 countries and supporting the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) as the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) Subregional Technical and Scientific Cooperation Centre for East Africa, enhancing capacity and collaboration for effective biodiversity management.

NEW TRAINING FACILITY AND PROGRAMME FOR RANGERS AND MANAGERS OF SADC TFCAs

IUCN launched the Training Facility and Programme for Rangers and Managers of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) during the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA Summit in Livingstone, Zambia. The €11 million programme, managed by IUCN on behalf of SADC, includes a €5 million first phase focused on mobile field training units, curriculum development, on-the-job training, and training of trainers, set to run until June 2028.

IUCN-ODISEA PARTNERSHIP AND EXPEDITION

IUCN-ODISEA partnership launched a groundbreaking marine expedition at COP29 in Baku, focusing on exploring and documenting marine ecosystems in the WIO region. The first phase, based in Nosy Be, Madagascar, emphasized marine research and storytelling to capture community perspectives. This initiative aligns with the Great Blue Wall's (GBW) Blue Nature and Blue People pillars, aiming to enhance scientific understanding, raise public awareness, and inspire community-driven conservation efforts through an impactful communication campaign.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVES IN MOZAMBIQUE

IUCN ESARO expanded its youth-focused activities in 2024, laying the foundation for a dedicated youth programme in 2025. Initiatives included webinars and youth training sessions under projects such as Save Our Mangroves Now in Mozambique. These efforts support GBW's Blue People pillar and regional youth inclusion strategies by empowering young people to actively participate in marine conservation. The initiatives aim to inspire and equip the next generation of ocean stewards to lead future conservation efforts.

IUCN ESARO SIGNS KEY MOUS WITH ZANZIBAR'S MINISTRY OF BLUE ECONOMY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

IUCN ESARO strengthened its regional collaborations in 2024 by signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Blue Economy Zanzibar and the European Union under the Bahari Yetu project. These partnerships focus on marine conservation, seagrass restoration, and promoting a sustainable blue economy in Tanzania and the WIO region. Supporting GBW's Blue Partnerships and Blue Planet (Governance) pillars, these MoUs aim to enhance institutional cooperation and policy frameworks to ensure the sustainable management of marine resources.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS (NBS) FOR ADAPTATION TRAINING FOR ACTORS, PARTNERS AND DECISION-MAKERS IN ANTIRANANA SEASCAPE, MADAGASCAR

To enhance the implementation of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) in the Antiranana seascape, Madagascar, and ensure adherence to the IUCN Standards for NbS, IUCN organized capacity-building workshops. These workshops engaged 19 local partners, 35 implementers, and 10 policymakers from key regional departments (fisheries, environment, and land use). Participants gained valuable skills to better assess, plan, and implement ecosystem-based approaches within their respective areas of intervention.

ADVANCING FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION AND SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN RWANDA AND MALAWI

IUCN advanced forest landscape restoration (FLR) efforts in Rwanda and Malawi through initiatives such as Alliance for Restoration of Forest Landscapes and Ecosystems in Africa (AREECA) Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPAs) and Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change through Enhanced Community Based Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Province of Rwanda (COMBIO). In Rwanda, a sub-national Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) process in the Eastern Province led to the development of a restoration strategy for seven districts, aligning with the Bonn Challenge targets for 2030. A Payments for Environmental Services (PES) scheme targeting water users' associations was piloted to engage the private sector in restoration financing through a transparent investment plan. Key FLR value chains were also developed to inform restoration business cases and grassroots conservation schemes. In Malawi, IUCN supported the World Bank Group in updating the national restoration assessment report, highlighting degradation, areas under improved management, and restoration opportunities by 2030.

HIGH-LEVEL COMMON GROUND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE DIALOGUE FOR MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

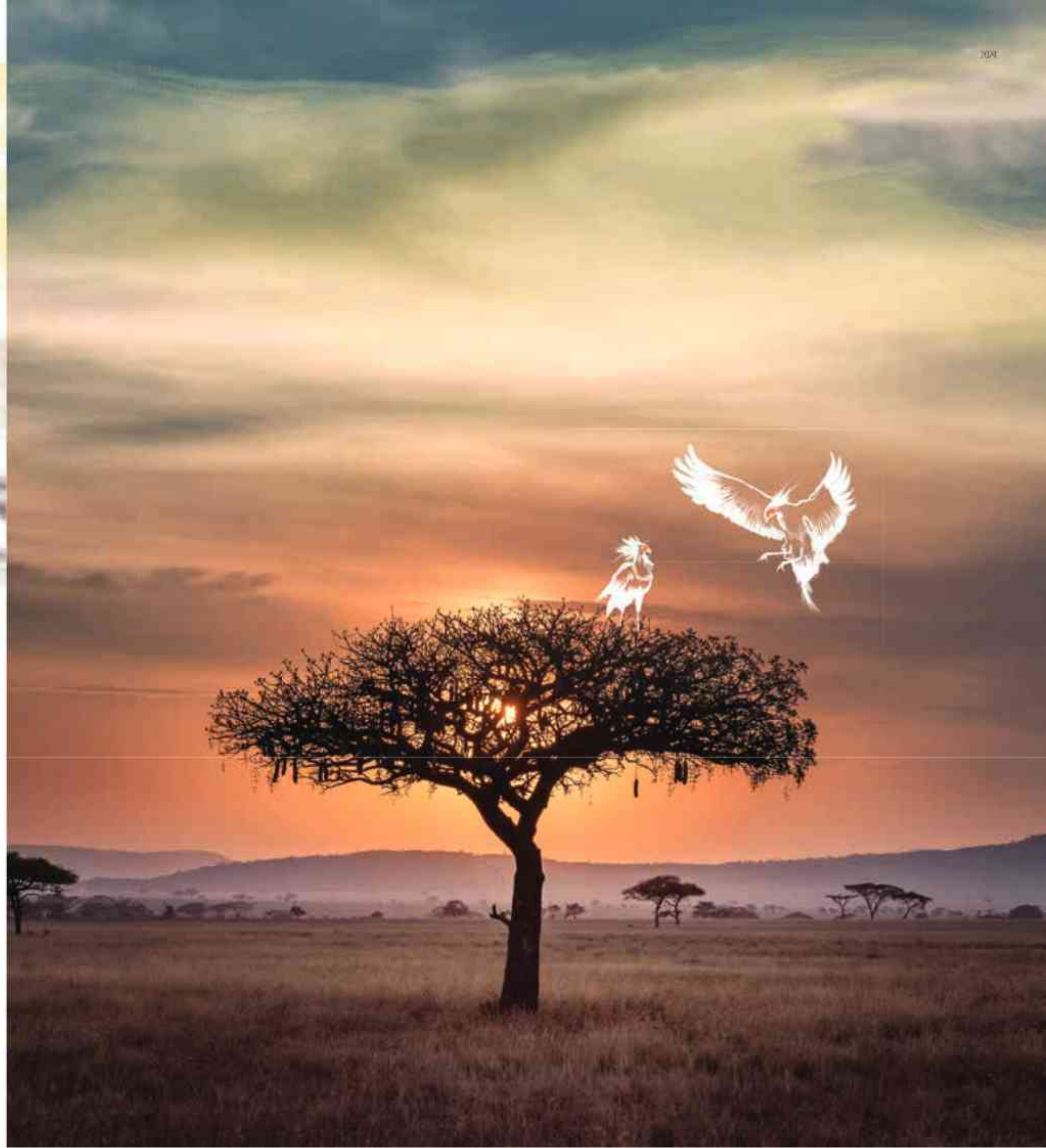
IUCN in collaboration with IKEA Foundation organised high level policy initiative that framed a common ground for sustainable agriculture. This was endorsed by civil society, private sector, and farmers' organizations under the leadership of Uganda's Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), in collaboration with the Association for Strengthening Agriculture Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and IUCN.

ROADMAP FOR THE BILATERAL AGREEMENT FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY BASIN BETWEEN KENYA AND UGANDA

The Building River Dialogues and Governance (BRIDGE) project, funded by Swiss Development and Cooperation, promotes transboundary water resources management, water supply, sanitation, and biodiversity conservation in over 14 river basins globally. In East Africa, IUCN ESARO has supported the development of the EAC Water Policy and IWRM Strategy. At the basin level, the project has facilitated the creation of a cooperation framework for the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin shared by Kenya and Uganda. In 2024, the two countries agreed on a Roadmap to finalize a binding Bilateral Agreement for the basin's water management, building on the previous MoU and aligning with international best practices.

DEVELOPMENT OF CLIMATE RESILIENT EASTERN AFRICAN TRANSBOUNDARY WATER MANAGEMENT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY (CREATES) PROGRAM

The Climate Resilient Eastern African Transboundary Water Management for Environmental Sustainability (CREATES) program, developed throughout 2024, is aligned with the EU's Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on Transboundary Water Management (TWM), which aims to promote water security, regional stability, and resilience across Africa. Denmark has committed DKK 300 million to support the initiative from 2024 to 2028. Managed by IUCN and United Nations Environment Programme-Danish Hydraulic Institute (UNEP-DHI), CREATES will focus on enhancing climate resilience in the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi and Mara Transboundary Sub-basins, shared by Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. The program's objectives include improving cooperative water management, addressing climate change impacts, resolving water-related conflicts, and implementing nature-based solutions alongside small-scale infrastructure to improve water accessibility for domestic and productive use.



PROGRAM *HIGHLIGHTS* AND



ACHIEVEMENTS



RESTORING BALANCE

*PROTECTING ECOSYSTEMS, REVIVING SPECIES,
AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES IN
KEY CONSERVATION LANDSCAPES*

As a cross-cutting theme, biodiversity conservation is implemented across all IUCN ESARO projects and portfolios supporting the conservation of priority species and habitats in terrestrial systems, inland water systems, coastal & marine ecosystems and links to the integrated themes of climate change and nature governance at various levels of project to programme, policy to practice. IUCN ESARO aims to ensure that biodiversity is stabilized, sustained, retained and restored from all sources including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems. The biodiversity theme focuses particularly on effective conservation and management of species, ecosystems and areas of conservation significance necessary for the persistence of biodiversity.

In 2024, IUCN ESARO has achieved several important milestones in supporting biodiversity conservation, especially through area-based conservation efforts, e.g. by building capacities of IUCN members as well as supporting direct action on the ground.

IUCN ESARO is actively supporting the implementation of Target 3 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which aims for the protection of 30% of the planet's land and marine areas by 2030. By 2024, 22 terrestrial and 19 marine protected areas across eight countries in the Western Indian Ocean were evaluating their management effectiveness and governance using the IUCN Green List Standard. Additionally, IUCN has been providing technical assistance, developing regional capacity, and aiding the creation of national OECM (Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures) frameworks in five countries (Kenya, Angola, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique) and for marine conservation areas in the WIO region. While OECMs are key to achieving the 30x30 goal, significant capacity development is still needed for effective implementation. A key achievement in 2024 was the launch of the second edition of the 'State of Protected and Conserved Areas in Eastern and Southern Africa' (SoPACA) report, developed with input from 24 countries in the region. The report, launched at the IUCN Africa Conservation Forum, provides valuable data and capacity to improve biodiversity management. Furthermore, through the BIOPAMA project, IUCN supported the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) to become the CBD Subregional Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centre for East Africa, which will play a crucial role in supporting the implementation of the CBD in the region.

The Training Facility and Programme for Rangers and Managers of SADC TFCA was officially launched on the sidelines of the KAZA TFCA Summit in Livingston, Zambia, on 11 May 2024. The event was officiated by Zambia's Minister

of Tourism, Hon. Rodney Sikumba. In attendance were KfW Board Member – Christiane Laibach, SADC Secretariat represented by Domingos Gove, IUCN ESARO Regional Director – Luther Anukur as well as Ministers of Environment and Ambassadors of Angola, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The €11 million training programme is a special funding window under the SADC TFCA Financing Facility, managed by IUCN on behalf of SADC. The first phase of the training programme (€5 million) will be implemented by service providers responding to calls for proposals, which will include the provision of mobile field training units, development of curricula, on-the-job training and training of trainers, among others. The programme will be implemented up to June 2028.

The second phase of the BIODEV2030 project, funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) and coordinated by Expertise France (EF), was launched in June and July 2024 across Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Uganda. The project aims to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) in 15 countries by promoting practices that balance biodiversity and development. In Ethiopia, the launch workshop gathered 45 participants from 23 organizations, focusing on adopting KMGBF and endorsing the Bale eco-region as a pilot site. In Kenya, the launch aligned with the revision of the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plans (NBSAP), with strong support from the French Embassy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development. Mozambique's launch addressed updating national biodiversity targets and attracting private investment for biodiversity projects. Uganda's launch, attended by government and civil society stakeholders, highlighted the inclusive nature of the project, particularly engaging indigenous communities. BIODEV2030 Phase 2 represents a major step towards fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration and ensuring the long-term conservation of

biodiversity in the region, aligning with global goals for biodiversity preservation.

In 2024, the Government of Rwanda, through the Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA), requested IUCN to lead the revision of the country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The previous 2016-2020 NBSAP achieved successes in protected area expansion, ecosystem restoration, species conservation, and community involvement but faced implementation challenges, including financial constraints, limited technical capacity, and gaps in data for monitoring progress. By the end of 2024, IUCN submitted a draft NBSAP aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, setting 22 national targets that support Rwanda's commitment to halting biodiversity loss by 2030. The revised NBSAP aims to enhance Rwanda's socio-economic development by recognizing the value of biodiversity, which supports key sectors such as agriculture, hydrology, climate change mitigation, tourism, and cultural heritage. Notably, the economic value of ecosystem services from Kigali's wetlands is estimated at over \$22 million per year, with ecotourism playing a significant role in the country's economy.

In Uganda, under the BIODEV2030 project phase 2, coordinated by Expertise France and funded by Agence Française de Développement (AFD), IUCN supported the establishment of a national biodiversity stakeholders platform comprising over 30 members. The inaugural meeting of this platform, held in July 2024, also served as the launch of BIODEV2030 phase 2 in Uganda and was attended by representatives from AFD and USAID. The platform's key functions include validating biodiversity studies, providing a forum for stakeholder voices, and formulating policy recommendations. To enhance project coordination and implementation, the project adopted a task force model. This task force, composed of representatives from the national biodiversity multi-stakeholder platform, convened twice in 2024.



IMPACT STORY

IMPACT STORY I

IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS AND
PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT IN THE
KAMUNGI CONSERVANCY, BORDERING ONTO
THE TSAVO WEST NATIONAL PARK, KENYA



KAMUNGI CONSERVANCY 10% FENCE PLAN

The Kamungi Conservancy, nestled along the borders of Tsavo West National Park in Kenya, faces the dual challenge of preserving its unique wildlife while fostering the development of local communities. Under a transformative grant from the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) initiative, Tsavo Trust's (an IUCN member) project in the conservancy has achieved remarkable progress in improving both the livelihoods of local people and the management of the surrounding protected areas. Through targeted actions that reduce human-wildlife conflict, enhance food security, foster community employment, and generate sustainable income, this project has not only delivered immediate benefits but also laid the foundation for long-term conservation and community development.

The BIOPAMA project focused on multiple key strategies to address the challenges of the Kamungi Conservancy and its surrounding communities. A central goal was to reduce human-wildlife conflict (HWC) and improve food security, which led to the successful installation of fences designed to protect farmland from elephants. This initiative, known as the 10% Fence Plan Phase 2 and 3, has significantly mitigated conflict between wildlife and local farmers, ensuring that agricultural land remains safe and productive. Additionally, the project offered employment opportunities by hiring community scouts to conduct anti-poaching patrols. This team successfully reduced poaching activities, safeguarded wildlife, and improved the safety of local farmlands. Governance structures were also strengthened, including the restructuring of the Kamungi Board, implementation of a grievance redress mechanism, and the introduction of a bulk SMS system for more effective communication.

REDUCED HUMAN WILD LIFE CONFLICT
AND IMPROVE LIVELIHOODS



The implementation of this project was a collaborative effort involving several key stakeholders. Tsavo Trust took the lead in implementing the BIOPAMA medium grant initiatives, while BIOPAMA itself provided the essential funding and technical support. Crucially, the project's success leaned on the active involvement of the Kamungi community, whose members were direct beneficiaries and played a vital role in the project's implementation. Furthermore, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) provided invaluable guidance and expertise in wildlife conservation and management, ensuring the project's alignment with best practices.

The interventions under this grant resulted in transformative changes for the Kamungi community, significantly improving the livelihoods of the local communities and reducing the HWC incidences. One of the most impactful elements of the project was the installation of seven 10% fences. These fences, strategically placed around farms, dramatically reduced human-elephant conflict (HEC) incidents in the targeted areas. Farmers have since reported a remarkable average increase of 70% in crop yields, enhancing food security and reducing vulnerability to food scarcity. In a survey conducted with 16 households, 15 reported that their harvests would sustain them for over six months, with only one household projecting four to six months of sustenance.

The success of the 10% fence plan has not only improved food security but also has fostered a more peaceful coexistence between the local communities and wildlife. Farmers are no longer fearful of crop destruction by elephants, which has, in turn, reduced the number of retaliatory killings and increased the community's tolerance toward wildlife. The continued maintenance of these fences will remain a critical factor in maintaining these benefits for local communities and wildlife. The introduction of community scouts has been another key factor in the project's success. These scouts have significantly contributed to reducing poaching and HWC. By conducting regular anti-poaching patrols, the scouts protected both wildlife and the local farms. During the project period, the five scouts working with the KWS Team drove 193 elephants away from farmlands, and patrolled an area covering 32,909 kilometres. Importantly, poaching-related illegal activities decreased by 60% between the first and last quarters of the project, from 264 incidents to just 107.

Furthermore, the Kamungi Scouts conducted awareness drop-in sessions for the community, which greatly improved the relationship between the scouts and local residents. With an average of 90 community members attending these meetings, awareness about conservation challenges and the roles of the scouts and KWS greatly increased. This collective education effort helped reshape the community's perception of wildlife conservation, fostering a sense of shared responsibility.

A key component of the project was enhancing governance and community communication. The restructuring of the

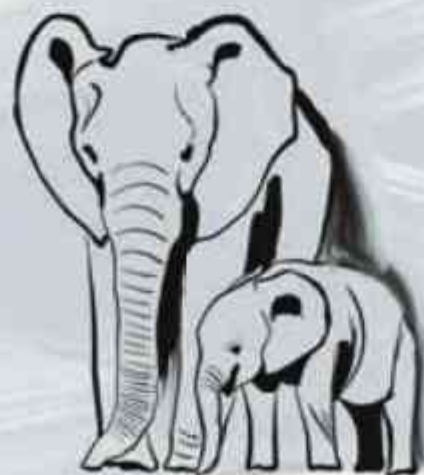
Kamungi Board, alongside the introduction of a grievance redress mechanism and bulk SMS system, greatly improved transparency and engagement. Attendance at conservancy meetings surged from an average of 30 participants in 2022 to 90 in 2023. The increased participation demonstrated the community's growing confidence in the governance structures and their interest in staying informed about and involved in the management of the conservancy.

The project's investment in tourism infrastructure is expected to have a lasting impact on the livelihoods of the local communities. Through the BIOPAMA grant a tourism facility was established within the conservancy comprising of Four two-bedroom blocks, a kitchen, bar, and seating area, to accommodate up to 12 guests on a self-catering basis. In addition to the physical infrastructure, 6 community members were trained in hospitality management, ensuring that they are well-equipped to run the ecotourism operations. The tourism facility, which is owned and managed by the community anticipates generating an estimated \$11,000 annually from just six bed nights per month. This revenue will support ongoing conservation activities and reduce the conservancy's reliance on donor funding, ensuring long-term sustainability of the conservancy operations.

5 SCOUTS

INCREASE IN CROP YIELDS

REDUCED HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT



KAMUNGI ECO-TOURISM BANDAS

IMPACT STORY

The project's success can be attributed to several key factors. The community's initial support for conservation, combined with their willingness to participate in project activities, provided a strong foundation. Additionally, the collaborative efforts of Tsavo Trust, BIOPAMA, KWS, and the Kamungi community ensured that the project benefited from both the technical expertise of conservation organizations and the valuable insights and knowledge of local stakeholders.

However, challenges included the need for continuous capacity building in conservation and tourism management, and some initial resistance to new governance structures. Overcoming these barriers required patience, education, and consistent engagement with the community, ensuring that everyone understood the long-term benefits of these changes.

The success of the Kamungi Conservancy project offers valuable insights that can be scaled and replicated in other regions facing similar challenges. One of the key lessons is the importance of co-designing projects with local communities. Involving all stakeholders in

the planning, implementation, and monitoring phases creates a strong sense of ownership, which significantly enhances the sustainability of the initiatives.

Communities living around protected areas often bear the brunt of HWC and other negative impacts stemming from conservation efforts. These challenges can lead to conflicts and the depletion of biodiversity within the protected areas, as local communities, struggling with poverty, may turn against conservation efforts. By supporting livelihood initiatives, communities are incentivized to embrace conservation, fostering a more sustainable approach to managing protected areas.

The combination of HWC mitigation, community employment, ecotourism development, and strong governance, if successfully sustained in the long term, creates a model that can be adapted to other communities living alongside wildlife. With continued support, the Kamungi Conservancy project holds the potential to inspire further investments in community-based conservation, ensuring both people and wildlife thrive together.

IMPACT STORY 2

SAFEGUARDING THE LILLIE CYCAD: A UNITED EFFORT TO PROTECT A CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES IN SOUTH AFRICA



The Protection of the Critically Endangered Lillie Cycad project was initiated to address the urgent conservation needs of the Lillie Cycad (*Encephalartos dyerianus*), a species endemic to the Lillie Flora Reserve in South Africa. The reserve represents the only known habitat for this critically endangered plant, listed under CITES Appendix I, with an estimated population of just 500–700 individuals. The cycads face a significant threat from poaching due to their rarity and high demand in illegal trade markets.

The conservation emergency emerged in August 2021 when the Limpopo Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) Department announced the withdrawal of its field rangers from the reserve due to budget constraints, leaving the cycads vulnerable. Poaching incidents increased, including the theft of several plants and attempted poaching events where poachers were found armed and dangerous. The Lillie Cycad's slow growth and limited habitat make any loss devastating, highlighting the urgent need for intervention.

Selati Wilderness Foundation (SWF) took on the moral duty of protecting these cycads given the reserve's proximity to their management area. The foundation, in partnership with LEDET and the IUCN/SSC Cycad Specialist Group, designed the



RANGERS' UNITS BEFORE AND AFTER

project to prevent poaching and improve monitoring and security.

The project implemented a multi-pronged approach that included employing field rangers, installing advanced monitoring technology such as WPS camera traps, and enhancing ranger accommodation and infrastructure. These efforts aimed to provide 24/7 protection, ensure early detection of poachers, and create a sustainable conservation model for this critical habitat.

The project involved the collaboration of several key stakeholders. The Selati Wilderness Foundation NPC served as the primary implementing organization, while LEDET (Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism) acted as an implementing partner. The IUCN Specialist Cycad Group and Hemmersbach Rhino Force also contributed as valuable partner organizations. ProTrack provided essential support in field operations and security.

The project's primary objective was to enhance the protection of the critically endangered Lillie Cycad with support from the grant there were no poaching incidents reported throughout the project. This marked a 100% decline in unnatural losses, a critical step in ensuring the species' survival, although one cycad was damaged by Chacma baboons.

The project was able to employ operations personnel on 12-month fixed-term contracts, later extended to ensure continuous security. These personnel,



PS CAMERA SHOTS

24 WPS CAMERA TRAPS

RGB DRONES

SOLAR POWER FOR CONTINUOUS OPERATION

LIDAR SURVEYS FOR PRECISE BASELINE DATA

alongside field rangers were equipped with handheld radios, binoculars, and GPS trackers to effectively monitor the reserve. Additionally, 24 WPS camera traps were deployed as early warning systems, linked to a 24/7 security/operations room equipped with an inverter to address power supply challenges.

Infrastructure improvements were a cornerstone of the project, enhancing the Field Rangers' base camp through the installation of solar electricity solutions, a new access gate, and upgraded roads and pathways. These developments ensured easier access for monitoring activities. The project also leveraged advanced technology such as RGB (Red, green, and blue) drones and planned LiDAR surveys for precise mapping of the cycad population and its habitat, providing a baseline for future conservation strategies.

This initiative demonstrated how targeted conservation actions, combined with technological advancements and local engagement, can effectively safeguard critically endangered species.

The project employed advanced monitoring and security technology to create a robust surveillance system that effectively deters poaching. Utilizing WPS camera traps and a

24/7 Security/Operations Room, the initiative ensured real-time monitoring and rapid response capabilities. To overcome power supply challenges, solar power systems and inverters were integrated, providing uninterrupted operations.

Strong partnerships and expertise were instrumental in driving the project's success. Collaborations with renowned specialists, including Professor John Donaldson (IUCN/SSC Cycad Specialist Group) and Professor Andrew Davies (Harvard), introduced advanced tools like LiDAR and RGB drone technology for precise mapping and population assessments. Local partnerships, such as with the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET), bolstered conservation efforts through shared resources and expertise.

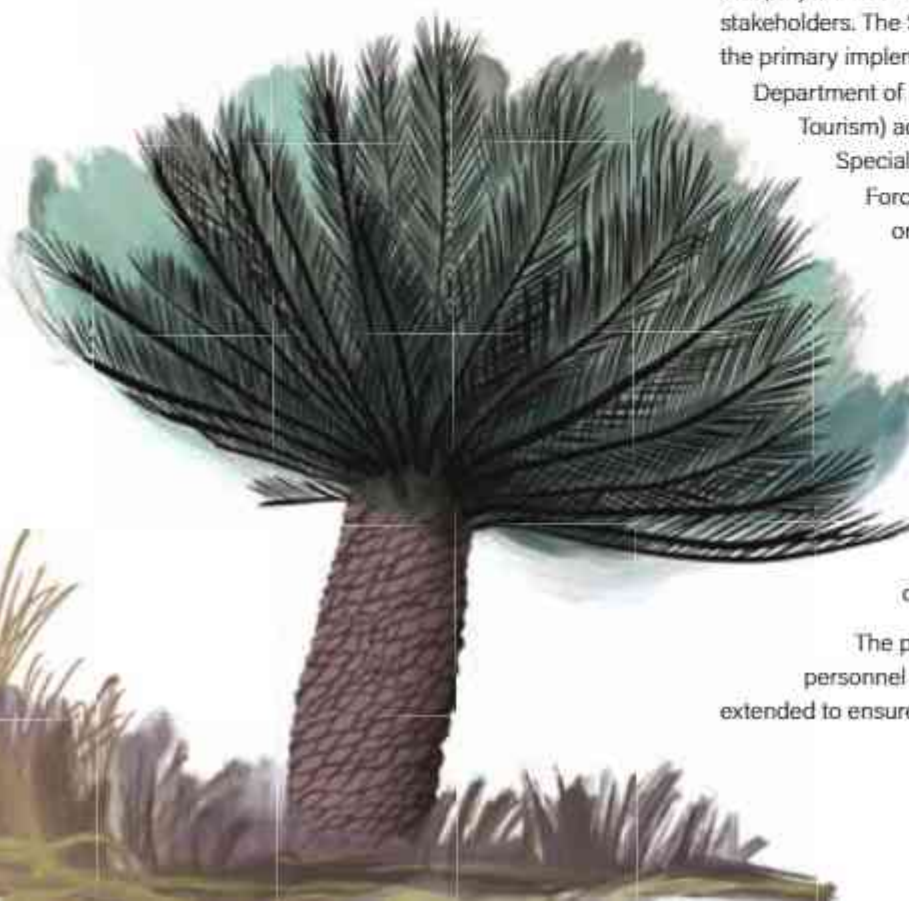
Infrastructure improvements further strengthened the project's capacity to protect the critically endangered cycads. Refurbishment of the Field Rangers' base camp, including solar energy installations and enhanced access roads, ensured seamless operations and improved ranger efficiency.

Building on a pre-existing conservation framework, the project leveraged infrastructure funded through earlier IUCN SOS grants. This strategic use of existing resources allowed the team to focus on critical upgrades and enhancements, maximizing the impact of conservation efforts.

One major issue was limited water access at the Lillie Flora Nature Reserve, which impacted logistics and operations. This was addressed by installing storage tanks and a mobile water tank with a pump unit. Additionally, the reserve's steep and rocky topography posed difficulties for physical monitoring and data collection. To overcome this, the project leveraged advanced tools like RGB drones and planned LiDAR surveys for accurate population assessments. Another challenge was the unreliable electricity supply, which disrupted operations. This was mitigated by installing solar power solutions and inverters to ensure continuous monitoring in the 24/7 Security/Operations Room.

The lack of baseline data on previous foot patrols further complicated efforts to quantify improvements in ranger coverage and effectiveness.

The use of RGB drones and planned LiDAR surveys provides a sustainable method for ongoing surveillance beyond the project's duration. The implementation of WPS camera traps integrated with a 24/7 Security/Operations Room proved to be an effective strategy for preventing poaching. Infrastructure improvements, including solar energy systems and upgraded ranger accommodations, support the long-term continuation of on-site conservation activities. Additionally, partnerships with academic experts and local organizations significantly enriched the project, presenting opportunities for scaling up collaborations and developing research publications.



FROM DREAMER TO DEFENDER

A YOUNG RANGER'S JOURNEY TO PROTECT TSAVO'S LEGACY

Bibiana Matunda had always dreamt of being in the wild. As a child, she learned about wildlife from her grandparents, particularly how her community—the Taita people—interacted with nature. Despite growing up near Tsavo National Park, the largest national park in Kenya, Bibiana never had the opportunity to visit the park.

Her dream became a reality five years ago when she was recruited as a ranger at Lumo Conservancy. At just 24 years old, Bibiana is one of only four female rangers out of 22 and the youngest.

Her passion for wildlife, combined with her adventurous spirit, led her to acquire motorbike riding skills—something she never imagined would become so valuable. In 2023, Lumo Conservancy procured two motorcycles through funding from BIOPAMA to support anti-poaching efforts. Bibiana, having already mastered motorbike riding skills, was involved in selecting the motorcycles. "I recommended bikes that were similar to those used by poachers, which helps us blend in during our rapid response missions," she explains.

Since the motorcycles were introduced, Bibiana says their patrolling efforts have greatly improved. "Previously, we only had one patrol vehicle, so our mobility was limited," she notes. "There were also areas that vehicles couldn't access, especially during the rainy season. But with the motorcycles, we can move much faster and reach areas of the bush and thickets where poachers hide."

Reflecting on the effectiveness of their patrols, Bibiana admits that the motorcycles have been essential in carrying out ambushes and have significantly increased the number of poachers arrested. "The motorcycles complement the vehicle patrols and have greatly improved our rapid

response time. In addition, the two mobile ranger outposts have also enabled us to be more present across the entire conservancy enhancing our efficiency," she says.

The mobile outposts consist of two large tents, mattresses and beddings each designed to accommodate six rangers, and another mini tent attached to one of the larger tents are rooted and pitched at different sections of the conservancy where poaching threats is high. Bibiana confidently claims the mini tent as hers. She is daring but passion gets her to join her male colleagues for night patrols where she spends time camping in the wild under the stars, chatting, cooking, and sharing stories with them. "I love the wild and the thrill that comes with the sounds of nature," she says. "I feel more at peace in nature than with humans and it brings me great joy to be in the midst of wildlife, watching and protecting them," she says.

With support from the IUCN BIOPAMA Medium grant, Lumo Conservancy, in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA), has been working to enhance the capacity of its rangers through various training programs and equipping them for effectiveness.

Through a Site-Level Assessment on Governance and Equity (SAGE) carried out in 2021, the finding revealed awareness and technical capacity gaps in the ranger workforce. Through the grant, KWCA and Lumo Conservancy have supported various trainings including an onsite 30-day ranger training covering human rights, data collection, drill, leadership and communication skills. Additional training skills on data collection through SMART and Earth Ranger tools have improved data collection skills. The rangers have also received uniforms, part-time salaries, vehicle fuel, and food rations, further improving their ability to carry out their vital work.



BIBIANA POSING WITH HER MOTORBIKE AT THE TSAVO NATIONAL PARK.
PHOTO: KENYA WILDLIFE CONSERVANCIES ASSOCIATION

"I LOVE THE WILD AND THE THRILL THAT COMES WITH THE SOUNDS OF NATURE...IT BRINGS ME GREAT JOY TO BE IN THE MIDST OF WILDLIFE, WATCHING AND PROTECTING THEM."



WITH SUPPORT FROM IUCN THROUGH THE BIODEV2030 INITIATIVE, THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA ESTABLISHED THE NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY COORDINATION MECHANISM (NBCH) AS A CENTRAL PLATFORM TO COORDINATE AND HARMONIZE CONSERVATION EFFORTS. CREDIT - STATE DEPT. FOR ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE - KENYA



ZIMBABWE PARKS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY AND IUCN SIGN A NEW COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT SIGNED ON 11TH OF SEPTEMBER, ZIMPARKS HQ HARARE. PHOTO: THE HERALD NEWSPAPER, ZIMBABWE, IVAN



TWENTY-NINE (29) FIELD SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PARKS (SANPARKS) RANGERS IN MAPUNGUBWE NATIONAL PARK RECEIVED TRAINING ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONSERVATION ORGANISED BY IUCN ESARO. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



SOME OF THE STAKEHOLDERS AT THE SADC VULTURE SITUATION ANALYSIS WORKSHOP IN SOUTH AFRICA, SEPTEMBER 2024. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO, CHRISTINE MENTZEL



PARTICIPANTS AT THE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA-BASED CONSERVATION MEASURES (OECMS), ORGANIZED BY KENYA'S STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN COLLABORATION WITH IUCN ESARO AND THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, HELD ON NOVEMBER 2024, IN NAIROBI. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS



PARTICIPANTS AT THE IUCN SOS AFRICAN WILDLIFE INITIATIVE WORKSHOP, 'CELEBRATING CONSERVATION SUCCESS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SOS AFRICAN WILDLIFE INITIATIVE,' HELD IN NAIROBI, KENYA, IN NOVEMBER 2024. REFLECTING ON THE PAST AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



PARTICIPANTS OF THE SADC TFCA NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING, KASANE, BOTSWANA, NOVEMBER 2024. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



BIOPAMA GRANTEES, PROTECTED AREA MANAGERS, AND POLICYMAKERS FROM AFRICA AND THE PACIFIC GATHERED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT THE AFRICA-PACIFIC LEARNING EXCHANGE (APLE) HELD FROM JUNE 2024, IN THE PRISTINE COASTAL AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS OF MALINDI, KENYA. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



KHAYABALI VHALIMVHO, COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE, SOUTH AFRICA GIVING THE OPENING ADDRESS AT BIODIVERSITY ECONOMY AND INVESTMENT INDABA, HELD IN GAUTENG, SOUTH AFRICA IN MARCH 2024. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



IUCN GREEN LIST TRIANGULAR COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP (TCP), LESSON SHARING AND CLOSURE WORKSHOP IN LIVINGSTONE, ZAMBIA, MAY 2024. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

INVESTING IN RESILIENT OCEAN—THE GREAT BLUE WALL

IUCN ESARO Coastal and Ocean Resilience (COR) programme works to protect and restore marine and coastal ecosystems, support community resilience, and promote sustainable blue economy practices. Aligned with IUCN's strategic priorities, the programme leverages the Great Blue Wall (GBW) initiative to unite restoration, conservation, and livelihoods across the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region.

In 2024, the IUCN-ODISEA partnership launched a groundbreaking marine expedition at COP29 in Baku, focusing on exploring and documenting marine ecosystems in the WIO region. The first phase, based in Nosy Be, Madagascar, emphasized marine research and storytelling to capture community perspectives. This initiative aligns with the GBW Blue Nature and Blue People pillars, aiming to enhance scientific understanding, raise public awareness, and inspire community-driven conservation efforts through an impactful communication campaign.

The Africa Ocean Forum (AOF), organised by IUCN took place in June 2024 in Kenya, bringing together key IUCN members, partners and stakeholders from across the African continent to address critical issues in ocean conservation and governance in preparation for the Africa Conservation Forum (ACF), IUCN's statutory regional gathering. AOF witnessed active participation of over 150 delegates, including policymakers, industry experts, scientists and community leaders.

The primary focus of the Forum was to discuss Africa's Ocean conservation and blue economy priorities and identify pathways to implement them. It took stock of the GBW Initiative. It looked at strengthening the role of Africa in global ocean governance, with a particular emphasis on promoting a regenerative blue economy, enhancing the participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP&LCs), strengthening policy engagement and tackling marine plastic pollution.

The GBW team showcased their impactful work in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region at the 7th International Marine Conservation Congress (IMCC7) in Cape Town, South Africa (13-18 October 2024). Represented by IUCN regional COR team, presented on interconnected seascapes, gender inclusivity through the ReSea Project, and the expansion of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) with legal recognition and OECM policy development. They shared insights on Mozambique's Red List of Ecosystems, the success of the Blue Guardians Project in Madagascar, and announced the upcoming Regenerative Ocean Week in Tanzania (24-28 February 2025). The launch of the Western Indian Ocean Coastal and Ocean Resilience (WIOCOR) Seagrass Grants further emphasized regional conservation efforts. With participation in over 20 sessions and collaborations with IUCN members and partners, GBW reinforced its dedication to ocean conservation for people, climate, and nature.



IUCN ESARO EXPANDED ITS YOUTH-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES IN 2024, LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR A DEDICATED YOUTH PROGRAMME IN 2025.

Initiatives included webinars and youth training sessions under projects such as Save Our Mangroves Now in Mozambique. These efforts support GBW's Blue People pillar and regional youth inclusion strategies by empowering young people to actively participate in marine conservation. The initiatives aim to inspire and equip the next generation of ocean stewards to lead future conservation efforts.

IUCN ESARO strengthened its regional collaborations in 2024 by signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Blue Economy Zanzibar

and the European Union under the Bahari Yetu project. These partnerships focus on marine conservation, seagrass restoration, and promoting a sustainable blue economy in Tanzania and the WIO region. Supporting GBW's Blue Partnerships and Blue Planet (Governance) pillars, these MoUs aim to enhance institutional cooperation and policy frameworks to ensure the sustainable management of marine resources.

Interest in mangrove management is growing in Kenya, with both state and non-state actors actively engaged in research, restoration, and sustainable use. To enhance information sharing, promote collaboration, and prevent duplication of efforts, the need for a centralized database became clear. This would also facilitate tracking outcomes aligned with national priorities and plans. In response, IUCN Kenya Country Office partnered with the Kenya Forest Service and the Kenya Marine and Fisheries

Research Institute to develop the National Mangrove Portal. This one-stop platform for all mangrove-related information and data was officially launched during the 2024 International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems.

IUCN worked with Ocean Hub Africa, to deliver two business training boot camps for small businesses or community associations, primarily focused on building business skills to be able to upscale and formalise blue economy initiatives. Following the business training, there is a monitoring and support programme to continue to ensure that the businesses and associations grow into the future. This innovative approach to supporting very small, very local business initiatives is ground-breaking and will provide a firm foundation for future initiatives in the country, region and beyond.



IMPACT STORY I

VALUE ADDITION ENHANCES KUKUU WOMEN'S COOPERATIVE LIVELIHOODS IN PEMBA

Kukuu Women's Cooperative, based in Mkoani District, Pemba, Tanzania, demonstrates how targeted investment in community-based marine enterprises can result in tangible improvements in livelihoods, productivity, and sustainability. Established in 2008, the cooperative comprises 16 members (14 women and 2 men) and has been engaged in seaweed farming as its core activity.

With support from the Bahari Mali project, implemented by IUCN with funding from the Government of Ireland, Kukuu received both financial and technical assistance aimed at strengthening its capacity in value addition, business development, and sustainable marine resource use. The group was awarded \$12,000 to support the implementation of its business plan, which included purchasing equipment such as thai ropes, a seaweed grinding machine, and materials to produce soap, oil, and shampoo from processed seaweed.

As a result of this intervention, the group's soap production capacity has increased significantly. The group now produces one batch of soap per month, yielding approximately 400 packets, each sold at \$1. In oil production, output has increased from 15 litres per month to 40 litres, boosting monthly income from \$148 to \$372. Seaweed harvesting has also grown, with monthly yields increasing from around 1,000 kgs to 1,700 kgs.

In addition to improving production and income levels, the group is exploring seaweed powder processing, which is expected to enhance income diversification and resilience in the face of falling raw seaweed prices. The anticipated market price for seaweed powder is \$6 per kilogram.

Training delivered through the Bahari Mali project also focused on improving marketing, communication, and

business management skills, which has strengthened the cooperative's internal operations and market engagement.

"We've come a long way in how we work," said Mama Bahati, a member of the group. "The project has helped us improve the quality and quantity of what we produce, and that's made a real difference for us. We used to produce with our bare hands and limited knowledge but now, with the skills and resources provided by the project, we operate with pride and purpose. We've not only transformed our business but also restored our quality of life through employment opportunities on seaweed farming."

Diversification has also opened new doors. The group has also ventured into beekeeping, establishing 17 hives with support from the project.

While there is still room to grow, Kukuu's progress reflects what is possible when community-based groups are given the tools and training to strengthen their livelihoods. The cooperative's journey is a modest but encouraging example of how investments in small-scale producers especially women can contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable blue economy in Zanzibar.

This success aligns with the core objectives of the Bahari Mali project, which aims to strengthen the socio-ecological resilience of coastal communities in Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania through sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems. The project promotes nature-based economic opportunities, especially for women and youth, by supporting blue economy incubation groups and enhancing value chains linked to marine resource use.



IMPACT STORY 2

BRIDGING THE DATA GAP: LAUNCHING KENYA'S NATIONAL MANGROVE PORTAL

Kenya's mangroves play a crucial role in the ecological and socioeconomic well-being of coastal communities. Recognizing the growing interest in mangrove management and the increasing volume of data generated by various stakeholders – from scientific research to community-based initiatives like ecotourism and mariculture – IUCN ESARO's Coastal and Ocean Resilience programme, in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service and the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, embarked on a critical mission: to bridge the existing data gap.

The result was the launch of Kenya's first-ever National Mangrove Portal during the 2024 International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems. This centralized

database serves as a vital hub, consolidating high-resolution maps, data on mangrove cover and degradation, biomass estimates, carbon stocks, and alerts related to mangrove health. Moreover, the portal showcases the valuable contributions of various stakeholders, fostering collaboration and preventing duplication of efforts.

By providing easy access to this critical information, the National Mangrove Portal will revolutionize mangrove management in Kenya. It will empower decision-makers with the data they need to inform policy development, track progress towards national conservation targets, and effectively manage this vital ecosystem.



IMPACT STORY 3

ENHANCED NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS (NBS) CAPACITY BUILDING AND AWARENESS RAISING IN THE ANT SIRANANA SEASCAPE IN MADAGASCAR

In 2024, the ReSea Project made significant strides in the Antsirana Seascape, Madagascar, empowering local communities to embrace Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) for a more sustainable future. Through a combination of comprehensive training programs and targeted awareness-raising campaigns, the project reached 838 individuals, majority being women and youth, fostering a deeper understanding of climate change impacts and the principles of NbS.

Equipped with the knowledge and skills gained through these trainings, 72 participants, including ecosystem-based approach actors and key decision-

makers, are now better equipped to design and implement effective NbS projects. This knowledge transfer was facilitated through the application of the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, ensuring that projects consider gender equality, biodiversity co-benefits, and meaningful stakeholder engagement.

The project cultivated strong partnerships with 19 key organizations, including Blue Ventures, Conservation International, and Madagascar National Parks, strengthening collaborative efforts towards a shared vision for sustainable marine resource management.

Building on these successes, the project

will now focus on establishing a network of women and youth influencers. These empowered individuals will champion the Great Blue Wall (GBW) and NbS through social media campaigns and community outreach initiatives. This dynamic approach will not only drive the adoption of sustainable best practices but also foster greater support for GBW and NbS projects at the community and policy levels. By empowering local communities and advocating for gender-responsive policies, the project will contribute to the development of a regenerative Blue Economy in Madagascar, ensuring a more sustainable and equitable future for coastal communities.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS



KEY SPEAKERS AT THE AFRICA OCEAN FORUM, IUCN'S STATUTORY REGIONAL GATHERING HAPPENED IN JUNE 2024 IN NAIROBI, KENYA, TO ADDRESS CRITICAL ISSUES IN OCEAN CONSERVATION AND GOVERNANCE IN PREPARATION FOR THE AFRICA CONSERVATION FORUM (ACF). PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



THE RESEA MADAGASCAR TEAM, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PARTNERS, AND STAKEHOLDERS, CELEBRATED WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY IN AMBOLOBZOBE, DIANA REGION BY PLANTING NEW MANGROVE SAPLINGS TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY EFFORTS. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



LAUNCH OF THE IUCN-ODISEA EXPEDITION AT COP29 IN BAKU.

RESTORED LANDSCAPES RENEWED LIVELIHOODS

A man in a pink shirt is reaching up to pick a fruit from a tree. The background is a lush green landscape with various trees and plants under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

IUCN, through the Alliance for Restoration of Forest Landscapes and Ecosystems in Africa (AREECA) and Transforming Eastern Province through Adaptation (TREPA), implemented a sub-national Restoration Opportunities Assessment Methodology (ROAM) in Rwanda, leading to the development of a forest landscape restoration strategy for the seven districts of Eastern Province. This strategy supports the achievement of the Bonn Challenge commitment and restoration targets by 2030.

In collaboration with AREECA, TREPA, and Climate Change through Enhanced Community Based Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Province of Rwanda (COMBIO), IUCN has developed and piloted a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme targeting water users' associations in Eastern Province, aiming to democratize restoration financing through private sector involvement in ecosystem restoration and sustainable water resource management.

Additionally, AREECA has supported the development of forest landscape restoration value chains in Rwanda and Malawi, contributing to potential business cases and supply chains for restoration investment. In Rwanda, this effort has informed the creation of a community environmental conservation scheme to boost grassroots restoration efforts.

In Malawi, with IUCN's support, the World Bank updated the country's restoration assessment report, identifying degradation levels, areas under improved management, and restoration opportunities for 2030.

At the Accelerating Nature-based Solutions (NbS) Conference in Zambia, IUCN and GIZ emphasized the importance of placing communities at the center of restoration efforts. A side event highlighted the need for governments to develop inclusive, adaptive, and scalable financing mechanisms for forest landscape restoration (FLR), with Rwanda's AREECA experience serving as an inspiring example.

IUCN, in partnership with ASARECA and the Ugandan Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries, hosted a Regional Common Ground Dialogue in Kampala, Uganda, focused on mainstreaming sustainable agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa. Sponsored by the IKEA Foundation, the event, themed "Promoting sustainable farming approaches for conserving biodiversity and enhancing food production," aimed to promote farming practices that restore biodiversity and enhance food systems management.

The dialogue was part of a series of discussions at national, regional, and international levels, addressing common agricultural challenges and fostering solutions that incentivize land health in key agricultural value chains. It built on the momentum of the Africa Food Systems Forum 2023, emphasizing the need for strategies and actions to support regenerative practices for sustainable food systems. The event also addressed the urgent need to shift away from agricultural practices that prioritize production over soil health, water, and biodiversity, and aimed to tackle issues such as climate change, water depletion, and biodiversity loss, which directly impact human well-being and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

In July 2024, the IUCN Rwanda office signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) to support Rwanda's Fifth Strategic Plan for Agricultural Transformation (PSTA 5). The collaboration aims to build resilient and sustainable agrifood systems by utilizing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to address food and water insecurity, climate change, and other societal challenges. This MoU will contribute to a five-year program, "Five Fruit Trees per Household and Model Orchard," which will be implemented across all districts in Rwanda.

In 2024, IUCN Rwanda collaborated with the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Environment to develop a climate change gender action plan (ccGAP). Despite having numerous national legislations, policies, and projects that address gender gaps and provide equal access to land, education, employment opportunities, and financial capital and services for Rwandan women from diverse socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds, Rwandan society is still plagued by significant gender inequalities and inequities. The plan ensures that national climate change commitments are implemented in an intersectional and socially inclusive, gender-responsive manner, ensuring that women, men, and young people can access, shape, and benefit from climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience-building interventions. The ccGAP focuses on four priority sectors, namely energy, agriculture, health, forestry and other land use which were identified through a multi-stakeholder consultative process.

The Towards Ending Drought Emergencies (TWEDE) project, anchored in the land systems program, focuses on forests, drylands, and agricultural landscapes to provide

Nature-based Solutions for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation across 11 ASAL counties in Kenya.

The project established and trained 27 grazing management committees in the Sabarwawa, Mid Tana River, and Chyulu landscapes, which had suffered from land degradation due to overgrazing, soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and increased food insecurity. Through priority community-based rangeland restoration, the project successfully restored 92,960 hectares, implementing integrated land and water management actions in catchment areas covering 2,602.3 hectares, maintaining bunds on 1,678 hectares, and assisting community members in formulating bylaws, 16 hectares of which were incorporated into county bylaws. Additionally, 1,162 hectares were dedicated to building local institutions' capacity for climate-sensitive landscape management.

The project also promoted sustainable agriculture by training community members in utilizing prosopis (livestock feed formulation) pods for livestock feed, managing prosopis, adopting farmer-managed natural regeneration agroforestry practices, and implementing soil and water conservation and climate-smart holistic grazing management techniques. Furthermore, the project supported nature-positive enterprises and livelihoods, strengthening honey, fodder, gums and resins, and camel milk value chains in the target landscapes.

Significant strides were made towards peace and peaceful coexistence among pastoral communities. For over a year and a half, no cases of insecurity or resource-based conflicts were reported in the project area. The grazing management committees collaborated effectively, sharing information with county and national security organs, which helped prevent planned raids and counter-raids. The committees' communication, through phone calls and WhatsApp, facilitated the swift response and recovery of stolen livestock and provided insights into migration patterns across the landscapes.

The TWEDE project's supervision mission, conducted to track progress since inception and the uptake of recommendations from the mid-term review completed in July 2024, ensured the project remained on track for Green Climate Fund (GCF) compliance. The mission focused on reviewing work plans and budgets for 2024-25 to meet agreed implementation and disbursement targets. Key outcomes included assessing the project's technical and financial progress, institutional and management frameworks, risk management, and gender mainstreaming efforts.

Two landscape Nature-based Solutions (NbS) coordination platforms in Vanduzi and Bâru districts were established to develop a shared vision and action plans. These platforms brought together stakeholders from sectors aligned with the SUSTAIN Pro project, promoting the implementation of NbS in agriculture and water management. The aim was to construct a unified vision for climate change adaptation that aligned with



both the district's Local Adaptation Plan and the country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), while also innovating financing systems for NbS. The coordination groups consisted of local farmers' associations, agro-dealers, traders, financial institutions, public institutions, research organizations, civil society organizations (CSOs), and development programs and partners, with 45 members in Vanduzi and 50 members in Bárue. In addition, soil conservation practices were implemented across 526 hectares in Manica province, with 139 hectares in Vanduzi district and 387 hectares in Bárue district.

IUCN has significantly contributed to enhancing the enabling environment for sustainable landscape restoration in Tanzania, focusing on both technical capacity and local and national governance. Key efforts included supporting the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) in the development and validation of the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy and Action Plan, which was validated in September 2024. Additionally, IUCN conducted studies offering strategic recommendations on improving stakeholder participation in restoration, integrating restoration and biodiversity into development plans, and accessing financing for landscape restoration. IUCN also worked to strengthen the governance of natural resources, emphasizing rights, inclusion, and equity, through engagements with village committees and water user associations across five regions and seven districts in Tanzania's Greater Ruaha and Lake Rukwa Basins. These efforts have advanced policy and governance frameworks, benefiting ministries, local authorities, and communities.

In collaboration with VPO, UNEP, Bridge for Billions and Anza Entrepreneurs, IUCN has supported the rolling out of the Restoration Factory in Tanzania. The Restoration Factory Program is a strategic program aimed at rejuvenating degraded forest areas, promoting sustainable environmental practices, and fostering economic growth through eco-friendly startups and small businesses. The programme kicked off with the selection of, mentoring and supporting 45 eco-preneurs from the project landscapes and across Tanzania. Kicked off in September and officially launched in November 2024, the first face of the 6 months programme will conclude in March 2025.

Working closely with IUCN led efforts to improve capacities for assessing and monitoring landscape restoration and agro-biodiversity and resilience. More specifically, 15 experts from district councils and research institutions were trained on applying Diversity Assessment Tool for Assessing Agro-biodiversity and Resilience (DATAR) in June 2024. The training was followed by fielding DATAR across 7 Districts in the two landscapes to provide the status of and generate recommendations for improving agro-biodiversity, resilience, and productivity. In addition, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E) tools for monitoring landscape restoration and agricultural diversity and resilience were co-developed and validated by key stakeholders from sector ministries,

departments, and agencies in October 2024. The M&E tools and frameworks will help Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) better track and report progress towards the realization of country landscape restoration and biodiversity targets.

In 2024, IUCN Zimbabwe successfully managed the first year of the CBA SCALE project, achieving significant milestones including project inception launches at national, provincial, district, and community levels. The office contracted a sub-awardee, CESVI, and led the Participatory Community Vulnerability Assessment across 15 wards in Chiredzi District. Additionally, IUCN actively participated in the end-of-year project retreat to evaluate progress and plan future activities.

Strategically, IUCN Zimbabwe signed a collaborative agreement with Zimparks, strengthening partnerships in conservation efforts. The office also advanced its membership drive, recruiting Wildlife Conservation Action as a new member and supporting Zimparks and SAFIRE in their membership application processes.

Key initiatives included developing a Resilient Human-Wildlife Coexistence Landscapes programme concept focused on cross-sectoral approaches, participating in the Mucheni Community Conservancy SAGE and Hwange National Parks IMET assessment, and submitting a proposal to the Darwin Innovation Fund for projects addressing human-wildlife coexistence.

In northern Uganda, the IUCN implemented a comprehensive conservation program at Aswa catchment, effectively integrating ecological restoration with sustainable livelihood development. Over 7,000 community members were actively engaged in implementing a diverse range of soil and water conservation practices, leading to the establishment of 134.1 hectares of conservation structures. This significantly improved soil health, enhanced water retention, and mitigated soil erosion within the catchment.

The project fostered sustainable livelihoods and green jobs through the promotion of beekeeping and aquaculture. This not only generated income for local communities but also created 116 and 121 green jobs respectively. To address the pressing issue of deforestation, the project successfully mobilized and trained 613 community members in the production and use of efficient energy-saving cookstoves. This initiative resulted in the construction of over 2,000 cookstoves, benefiting thousands of households and significantly reducing pressure on local forests for fuelwood. This integrated approach effectively empowered local communities and contributed significantly to the long-term ecological health of the Aswa catchment.

IMPACT STORY I

RESTORING HOPE IN THE ARID LANDS IN KENYA



In 2024, the TWENDE Project achieved remarkable success in rangeland restoration, restoring 92,960 hectares of degraded land across its project landscapes in Kenya. This milestone was made possible through active community participation and targeted interventions. Communities were supported to establish and strengthen 33 tree nurseries, including 22 existing nurseries that were revitalized and 11 newly established ones. These nurseries provided the seedlings necessary for restoration activities, covering 33 wards in 11 counties. A total of 950 kg of pasture seeds were distributed to communities for reseeded efforts on their farms, enabling them to improve forage availability for livestock. Protection measures, including natural and physical fencing, were implemented in 9 wards to safeguard restoration sites from human and animal interference.

One of the key interventions undertaken was the construction of soil bunds, a measure designed to enhance water conservation and stimulate vegetation regrowth in degraded rangelands. Through co-financing support from IDI, a total of 178,065 bunds were constructed, leading to the restoration of approximately 2,198 hectares of rangelands across three landscapes. To safeguard the newly sprouting grass, thorny acacia branches were strategically used as protective coverings. This innovative approach effectively deterred grazing by livestock and wildlife, allowing the grass to mature fully and produce seeds, thereby ensuring sustainable restoration and regeneration of the rangelands.

Beyond physical restoration efforts, training programs were a cornerstone of the project's success. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), and agroforestry techniques were taught to community members, improving vegetation cover and soil fertility. Training sessions on Prosopis pod utilization provided farmers with practical skills for formulating livestock feed, turning an invasive species into a resource. In addition, training on climate-smart holistic grazing management was conducted, equipping farmers with sustainable grazing techniques. Collectively, these initiatives placed 17,340 hectares on a restoration trajectory.

The National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) collaborated with ward-level grazing committees to develop planned grazing systems, enabling local communities to designate specific rangelands for use during different seasons of the year. This approach has been further strengthened by community grazing by-laws, which were collaboratively developed with the ward-level committees. These measures have significantly improved rangeland governance among pastoral communities, fostering natural regeneration and sustainable conservation practices. As a result, approximately 73,378 hectares of rangeland have been successfully restored and conserved, contributing to enhanced ecological resilience and improved livelihoods for the communities.

In collaboration with the Kenya Water Towers Agency, the project also rehabilitated 43.7 hectares of degraded land within the Chyulu and Nyambene water towers by planting 43,700 trees. This effort underscored the project's commitment to restoring vital ecosystems and securing water resources for future generations.

The primary outcome is strengthening adaptive capacity and reducing exposure to climate risks. This is being achieved by increasing the number of households practicing planned grazing, grass seed banking, and adopting soil and water conservation practices, which collectively enhance ecological health, biodiversity, and livelihoods.





MS. DOMÍNGAS PAULO, AN
ADOPTER OF ECOLOGICAL
PRODUCTION FOR PIGEON PEA,
IN BÂRUÊ DISTRICT OF MANICA
PROVINCE. PHOTO: IUCN

IMPACT STORY 2

*Enhanced resilience in
economies, people and nature:
The impact of SUSTAIN Pro
in Mozambique*

1,200 smallholder farmers in implementing sustainable agricultural practices across 526 hectares, including soil protection measures and water-efficient irrigation techniques.

These interventions have been crucial in mitigating the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon, enabling farmers to maintain their livelihoods and invest in their families' well-being. For example, in maize production, farmers adopting project practices experienced significantly higher yields compared to those who did not. Similarly, in horticulture, project-supported practices have led to substantial increases in yields for crops like cabbage.

SUSTAIN Pro has fostered the emergence of new value chains, such as organic compost production. The number of compost producers has increased significantly, leading to increased income for farmers and creating new economic opportunities within the community.

Building on these successes, SUSTAIN Pro will continue to consolidate agricultural landscape restoration by introducing agroforestry systems and strengthening partnerships with the private sector to establish innovative financial systems that support smallholder farmers. The program will also prioritize women's empowerment and leadership within farmers' associations and further develop a unified vision for implementing NbS across the landscape, ensuring the long-term sustainability of these efforts.

Agriculture is the backbone of Mozambique's economy, with over 70% of the population engaged in farming. However, smallholder farmers, who constitute the vast majority, face significant challenges, including climate change-induced droughts, high food insecurity, and limited access to resources and markets. Recognizing these challenges, the IUCN's SUSTAIN Pro program aims to transition to more sustainable food systems and healthier landscapes in Mozambique.

Funded by the Norwegian Government, SUSTAIN Pro focuses on enhancing sustainable natural resource management, implementing Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) and scaling up innovative Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to generate inclusive and sustainable livelihoods. The program prioritizes a gender-responsive approach, ensuring that the needs and priorities of both male and female farmers are addressed throughout the project cycle. In Mozambique, SUSTAIN Pro is being implemented in collaboration with the Manica Economic Development Agency (ADEM) and works closely with local government agencies and extension workers to directly engage with farmers.

SUSTAIN Pro has demonstrated significant success in enhancing resilience in both people and nature. In Vanduzi and Bâruê districts, the program has supported

IMPACT STORY

IMPACT STORY 3

*Development of sustainable finance instruments
for landscape restoration in the
Eastern Province of Rwanda*

In Rwanda's Eastern Province, a fundamental agricultural region often referred to as the country's breadbasket, land degradation poses a growing threat to food security, water availability, and biodiversity. Recognizing this challenge, the Sida-funded COMBIO project, implemented by IUCN, is pioneering innovative financial mechanisms to support landscape restoration while improving livelihoods.

At the heart of this initiative is a Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) pilot project in Gatsibo District, specifically targeting the Kiliba Dam sub-catchment in Ntende-Rwagitima. This area, critical for rice production, has suffered severe erosion and sedimentation due to deforestation, reducing the dam's water-holding capacity and threatening farmers' yields. The PES pilot seeks to reverse this degradation by incentivizing restoration through direct financial contributions from those who benefit most, the farmers themselves.

The Kiliba Dam catchment supports a 32 km micro-watershed, where water is essential for downstream rice cultivation. Already, local farmers contribute 4 RWF per kilogram of rice to the Tuzamurane Ntende Water Users Organization (WUO) for basic watershed maintenance. The PES model builds on this existing system, creating a structured mechanism where farmers' contributions directly fund reforestation, erosion control, and sustainable land management.

IUCN conducted an ecosystem services assessment using InVEST modeling to quantify the benefits of restoration, particularly improved water supply, increased agricultural productivity, and enhanced biodiversity. By linking these benefits to tangible economic gains for farmers, the project aims to demonstrate that investing in nature pays off.



Beyond PES, IUCN is exploring carbon credit financing to expand restoration efforts. However, high upfront costs for feasibility studies, stakeholder consultations, and project registration present challenges. To overcome this, IUCN is engaging potential co-financiers to support the initial phases, ensuring the project's viability before scaling.

This pilot is more than a local intervention, it is a model for Rwanda's National PES Framework, offering lessons on how sustainable finance can drive large-scale restoration. The government's strong emphasis on community-based conservation financing aligns with this vision, creating opportunities for replication across other degraded catchments.

Yet, key barriers remain, including securing long-term buyers for ecosystem services and ensuring financial sustainability beyond the COMBIO project's end in 2027. Success hinges on proving that restoration delivers measurable benefits, not just for nature, but for people's livelihoods.

By integrating PES and carbon markets, IUCN's work in Gatsibo District could transform how Rwanda funds landscape restoration, turning environmental stewardship into a self-sustaining economic opportunity for communities.

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS



EAC TBWCA TWG DELEGATES TOGETHER WITH SADC COUNTERPARTS DURING THE MEETING AT SADC SECRETARIAT OFFICES IN GABORONE. PHOTO: ESARO

ILDCRU STAFF EXPLAIN THE USE OF CAMERA TRAPS TO EAC DELEGATES. ON THE RIGHT IS AN EXAMPLE OF A KLAAR CONSTRUCTED FOR FARMERS' LIVESTOCK IN CHOBE ENCLAVE, BOTSWANA. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



IUCN RWANDA COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE AND HON. DR. ILDEPHONSE MUJAFIRI, MINISTER FOR THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL RESOURCES, RWANDA. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO



THE INTEGRATED **WATER**
RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT
(IWRM)

OVERVIEW

Both BRIDGE and CREATES are transboundary water governance initiatives funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), NORAD and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). BRIDGE is active in the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi (SMM) River Basin shared between Kenya and Uganda, while CREATES extends its focus to both the SMM and Mara River Basins. The Mara Basin is shared between Kenya and Tanzania.

BRIDGE INITIATIVE

The objective of BRIDGE is to promote sustainable development, secure livelihoods, and foster peace through enhanced transboundary water cooperation. This is achieved by strengthening water governance mechanisms, including policies, legislation, institutions, plans, and strategies.

At the East African Community (EAC) regional level, IUCN ESARO has been instrumental in bolstering transboundary water governance through the development of the EAC Water Policy, implemented via the EAC Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Strategy. Both were adopted in May 2022 by the EAC Sectoral Council on Environment and Natural Resources.

At the basin level, BRIDGE has supported the development of cooperation frameworks for managing the SMM Basin, a sub-basin of the Nile. In 2024, Kenya and Uganda agreed on a roadmap to negotiate and finalize a legally binding Sio-Malaba-Malakisi (SMM) Bilateral Agreement for transboundary water resource management and development. This agreement, supported by IUCN, builds on the provisions of a prior Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), offering a more robust framework for collaboration.

STAWI PROJECT

STAWI aims to enhance water security for domestic and productive use in Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs), targeting Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Isiolo, Wajir, Garissa, Kitui, Makueni, and Taita Taveta counties. The project safeguards access to adequate, quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development.

As part of STAWI, a feasibility study was commissioned to develop sustainable financing options for IWRM in these ASAL counties. The study focuses on leveraging declining public financing for watershed protection and NbS, aiming to increase water supply for various uses.

Key areas of the feasibility assessment include:

1. Quantifying ecosystem services critical to stakeholder interests.
2. Mapping and modeling priority areas for NbS investments.
3. Conducting economic analyses to compare costs and benefits of NbS actions versus business-as-usual scenarios.

The findings will guide the establishment of sustainable financing mechanisms, including Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes, water funds, permitting systems, and ecosystem management credits.

CREATES INITIATIVE

CREATES complements BRIDGE by focusing on implementing strategies developed under the latter's framework. This includes deploying community-based, climate resilient water infrastructure combined with Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to enhance sustainable water management and improve livelihoods within targeted basins.

The program was under development throughout 2024, with the project document set for submission by December 2024. A fact-finding mission in January 2024 and a pre-appraisal mission in June 2024 are part of the preparation process.

Launched under the EU Commission's Team Europe Initiative (TEI) on Transboundary Water Management (TWM), CREATES is aligned with efforts to improve water security, foster regional stability, and promote resilience in Africa. Denmark has pledged DKK 300 million (2024–2028) to the initiative, which is implemented by IUCN and UNEP-DHI in partnership with local stakeholders.

The goal of CREATES is to strengthen capacities for adapting transboundary water management to climate change. This includes improving cooperation on managing water resources under uncertain conditions, reducing vulnerability to climate impacts, and promoting peace by mitigating water-related conflicts.

THE WATER AND WETLANDS PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED THREE KEY PROJECTS DURING THE REPORTING YEAR:

- Building River Dialogue and Governance (BRIDGE)
- Sustainable Transformational and Accessible Water Intervention (STAWI)
- Climate Resilience in Eastern Africa Transboundary Basin for Environmental Sustainability (CREATES)

THE INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IWRM) THEMATIC AREA AT IUCN ESARO (EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE) FOCUSES ON PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER FOR PEOPLE, ECOSYSTEMS, AND ECONOMIES.

IT EMPLOYS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH THAT ALIGNS WITH IUCN'S MISSION OF CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

IMPACT STORY

IMPACT STORY I

WATERS WITHOUT BORDERS: THE KENYA-UGANDA PACT FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSBOUNDARY RIVER MANAGEMENT

In the heart of East Africa, where the Sio, Malaba and Malakisi rivers weave across the Kenya-Uganda border, a quiet revolution in water diplomacy is taking shape. These life-giving waters, which ultimately feed into the mighty Nile, have sustained communities for generations but now face growing pressures from competing demands and environmental changes.

Under the auspices of the BRIDGE initiative, a global effort to build water cooperation through dialogue - Kenya and Uganda are charting a new course for managing their shared waters. What began as discussions around a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding has evolved into something more substantial, a legally binding Bilateral Agreement that promises to transform how these neighbouring nations steward their common water resources.

The journey to this point has been deliberate and inclusive. IUCN's technical teams have worked closely with water experts from both countries, drawing on decades of international experience in transboundary water governance. They've crafted an agreement that balances national interests with shared responsibilities, informed by the realities of local communities who depend on these waters daily.

At water ministry offices in Nairobi and Kampala, in meeting rooms at the East African Community headquarters, and along the riverbanks where farmers

and fishers go about their work, the contours of this agreement have taken shape. It addresses the practical challenges of water allocation during dry seasons, coordinates flood warnings, and establishes joint monitoring of water quality. Perhaps most importantly, it creates a permanent platform for dialogue - ensuring that future challenges can be addressed through cooperation rather than conflict.

This agreement represents more than just a technical document. It embodies a growing recognition in the region that rivers do not recognize political borders, and that true water security can only be achieved through collaboration. As climate change intensifies pressures on water resources, such frameworks for cooperation become not just desirable but essential.

The path ahead still requires careful navigation. Final negotiations will need to reconcile remaining differences, and implementation will demand sustained commitment. But the foundation being laid today promises to turn the Sio-Malaba-Malakisi basin from a potential flashpoint into a model of transboundary water management, one that could inspire similar cooperation across Africa's many shared river systems.

In this effort, Kenya and Uganda are writing a new chapter in the ancient story of the Nile basin, one that recognizes that while borders may divide nations, rivers will always connect them.





IMPACT STORY 2

THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING OF WATER RESOURCE USERS ASSOCIATION (WRUA) IN TURKANA COUNTY

THE STAWI PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY EMPOWERED THE LOPIRCHICH WATER RESOURCE USERS ASSOCIATION (WRUA) IN TURKANA, KENYA, BY STRENGTHENING ITS INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY. THIS INVOLVED A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH, BEGINNING WITH A THOROUGH CAPACITY ASSESSMENT AND CULMINATING IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TAILORED ACTION PLAN.

KEY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED DEMONSTRATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS, SUCH AS WATER SPREADING AND SEMI-CIRCULAR BUNDS, TO ENHANCE WATER RETENTION, REDUCE SOIL EROSION, AND IMPROVE WATER SECURITY FOR THE COMMUNITY.

THIS COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, INVOLVING STAWI, THE WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY (WRA), GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WRUA MEMBERS, HAS YIELDED SIGNIFICANT RESULTS:

- Enhanced WRUA governance:** The Lopirchich WRUA has demonstrated significant institutional progress since receiving governance training from the STAWI project. This progress is evident in improved meeting attendance, enhanced unity and trust among members, the establishment of a dedicated office, the procurement of essential office supplies, and the successful conduct of democratic elections that saw increased participation from women and youth. Notably, 30 management members were elected, including 5 executive committee members with diverse representation, reflecting a more inclusive and participatory approach to governance.
- Improved water security:** The demonstration of water spreading bunds has already conserved 0.2 hectares of land and improved water retention within the catchment area. The WRUA has ambitious plans to expand these efforts, with plans to establish 10 hectares of semi-circular bunds and 450 hectares of water spreading bunds.
- Increased community engagement:** The project has fostered a strong sense of community ownership and engagement. WRUA members are actively participating in project activities and contributing to their success. One of the key challenges encountered was mobilizing the Turkana community, who traditionally do not reside near water resources, for community meetings. This challenge was addressed through careful planning and consistent engagement with community members. The success of these interventions has inspired replication. The Sankuri WRUA in Garissa County has already adopted the use of semi-circular bunds, successfully developing 20 hectares of land. Furthermore, the Lopirchich WRUA plans to expand its efforts, and other WRUAs in Isiolo and Wajir Counties, including Isiolo WRUA, Ramuki WRUA, and Dashegu WRUA, are planning to adopt and scale up these successful nature-based solutions, all with support from the STAWI project.





TRAINING OF THE ILIKA-TIVA WRA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON IWRM. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENTS



IUCN RWANDA COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE AND HON. DR. ILDEPHONSE MURAKIRI, MINISTER FOR THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL RESOURCES, RWANDA. PHOTO: IUCN ESARO

CLIMATE ACTION TAMING THE EXTREME

THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ARE BEING FELT ACROSS THE GLOBE, DEMANDING URGENT AND EFFECTIVE ADAPTATION STRATEGIES. IUCN ESARO RECOGNIZES THE CRITICAL NEED TO SUPPORT COUNTRIES IN NAVIGATING THESE CHALLENGES AND BUILDING RESILIENCE.

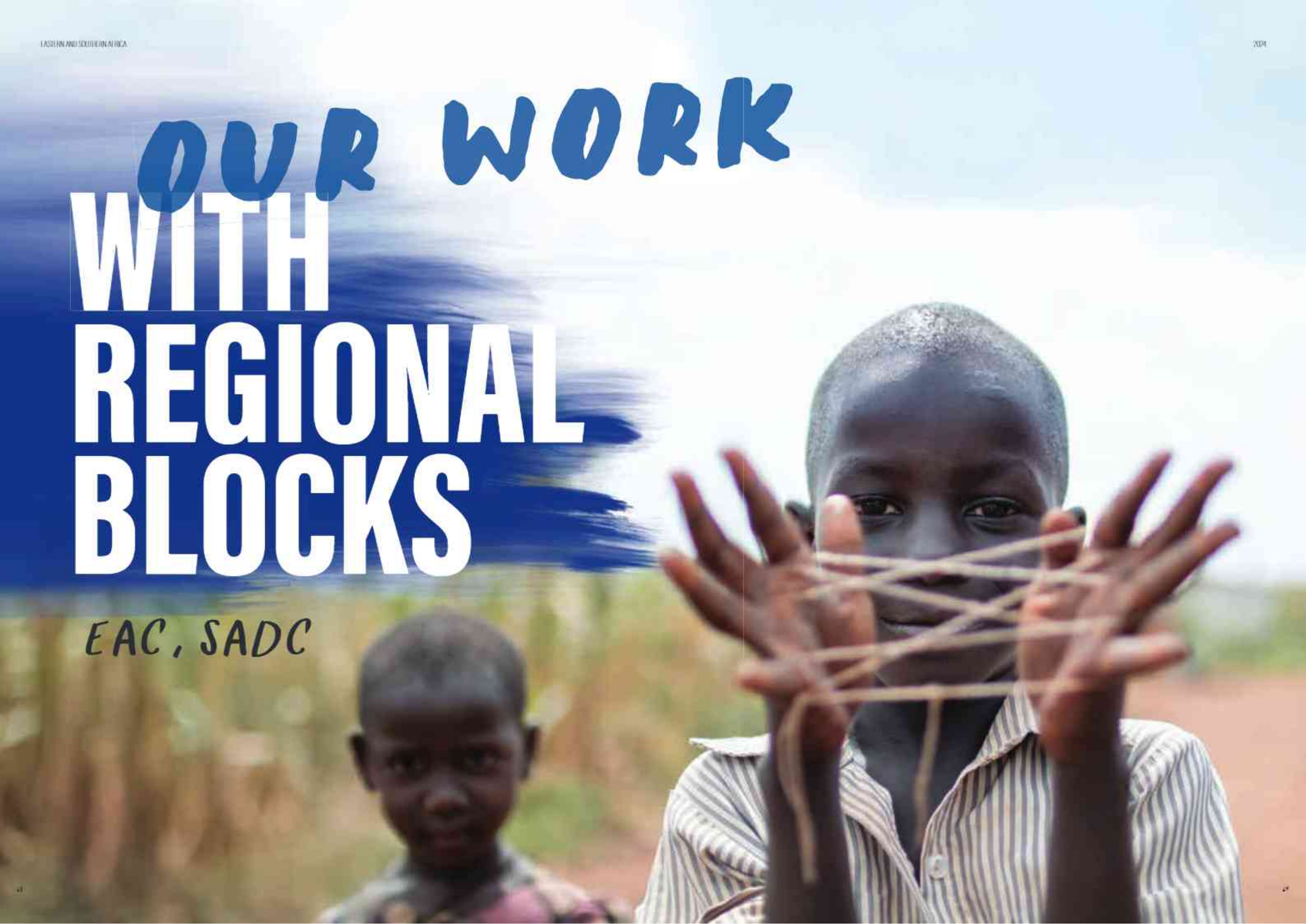
As part of this commitment, the Climate Change Adaptation Chapter of South Africa's Fourth National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was developed for the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment with funding from UNDP. The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the country's climate change adaptation status and policy implementation at both national and subnational levels.

It evaluates the impacts and vulnerabilities, compares them with adaptation actions and indicators, and explores the linkages between these actions and indicators to track progress. Additionally, the report reviews the policy process for the National Adaptation Plan and other key priority sectors, offering insights on implementation and the support needed for adaptation priorities, strategies, and policies. The project aligns with IUCN's strategic goals to enhance climate adaptation and resilience in developing countries, highlighting the adaptation gaps, needs, and urgency across South Africa's key sectors and government levels.



OUR WORK WITH REGIONAL BLOCKS

EAC, SADC



SADC TFCA FINANCING FACILITY SUPPORTING CONSERVATION ACTION IN THE REGION'S MOST OUTSTANDING NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

By end of 2025 the IUCN ESARO-managed SADC TFCA Financing Facility had disbursed over EUR 4.7 million in grants to support conservation action across the region's transfrontier conservation areas (TFCA). This includes 11 Covid-19 emergency grants whose implementation was finalised in 2024. In July 2024, IUCN ESARO convened the recipients of these emergency grants to reflect on the success stories, challenges/gaps, lessons learned and generate recommendations for improvement. The outcomes of the workshop and the grants were packaged into various outputs including a Knowledge Brief and several visibility products to demonstrate the impact of the Covid-19 package.

EAC'S EFFORTS TO CONSERVE TRANSBOUNDARY ECOSYSTEMS GET A MAJOR BOOST WITH NEW FUNDING

In December 2024 IUCN ESARO signed a grant agreement with the European Union to support the East African Community's (EAC) efforts to facilitate and coordinate transboundary ecosystems. This grant provides an opportunity for IUCN ESARO to continue its close support to the EAC Secretariat and the EAC partner states in the management of the region's rich transboundary biodiversity resources by continuing the development of the transboundary conservation areas network and other priorities including enhancing regional nature-based tourism.

NEW TRAINING FACILITY AND PROGRAMME FOR RANGERS AND MANAGERS OF SADC TFCAs

In May, the Training Facility and Programme for Rangers and Managers of Southern African Development Community (SADC) Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) was launched during the Kavango-Zambezi (KAZA) TFCA Summit in Livingstone, Zambia. The €11 million programme, managed by IUCN on behalf of SADC, includes a €5 million first phase focused on mobile field training units, curriculum development, on-the-job training, and training of trainers, set to run until June 2028.

THE TRANSBOUNDARY WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREAS WORKING GROUP (TWG).

established by the EAC Sectoral Council on Tourism and Wildlife Management, focuses on activities related to Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Areas. Supported by the CMS and IUCN, the TWG has gained insights from SADC's management of Transfrontier Conservation Areas.

EXCHANGE VISIT OF THE EAC TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP ON TRANSBOUNDARY WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREAS TO SADC TFCA (KAZA TFCA)

The Transboundary Wildlife Conservation Areas Working Group (TWG), established by the EAC Sectoral Council on Tourism and Wildlife Management, advances collaboration on transboundary conservation. Supported by CMS and IUCN, the TWG has benefited from lessons drawn from SADC's Transfrontier Conservation Areas management. A learning visit to the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA TFCA) in July 2024 showcased best practices in community engagement, governance, conflict resolution, and resource mobilization. Key recommendations include activating the EAC TBCA Network, updating MoUs, enhancing EAC-SADC cooperation for capacity building, and strengthening participation in global environmental agreements.



SPECIAL FEATURE

AFRICA CONSERVATION FORUM

The IUCN Africa Conservation Forum (ACF) stands as Africa's leading platform for advancing conservation, bringing together IUCN Members, Commissions, and a diverse array of stakeholders to tackle pressing environmental challenges. It plays a pivotal role in shaping the continent's sustainability agenda, driving biodiversity conservation, and serving as a hub for knowledge sharing, partnership building, and fostering connections among key stakeholders across Africa.

Aligned with IUCN's global mission, the inaugural ACF was co-hosted by the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, in collaboration with IUCN. This historic event marked the establishment of the first pan-African conservation platform.

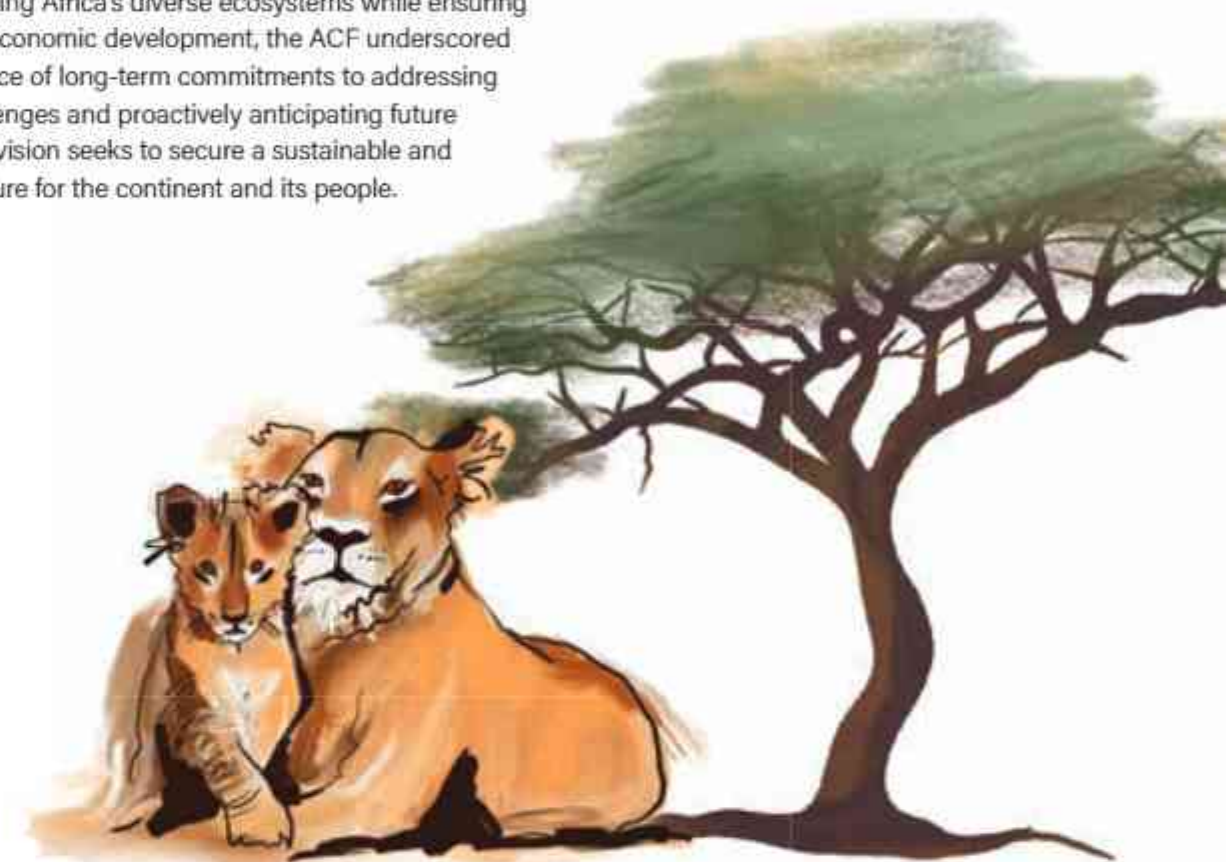
Held under the theme "African Solutions for Nature and People," the Forum sought to catalyze impactful change across the

continent by fostering collaboration among governments, NGOs, local communities, the private sector, and international organizations. Its aim was to develop transformative responses to Africa's biodiversity and climate crises. For the first time, it united the traditionally distinct subregions of Eastern and Southern Africa, Western and Central Africa, and North Africa into a single cohesive forum.

Convened from June 26 to 28, 2024, with pre-forum events on June 24 and 25 in Nairobi, Kenya, the event attracted nearly 1,000 participants. These included representatives from Africa's IUCN Members, governments, civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities, experts, and IUCN partners. This landmark gathering also set the stage for the IUCN World Conservation Congress, scheduled for October 9-15, 2025, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The ACF provided a platform to mobilize a unified African voice advocating for solutions that integrate nature conservation with sustainable development. This approach emphasized balancing Africa's economic growth with the preservation of its rich biodiversity. In the face of global challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and rising socio-economic inequities, the Forum's overarching goal was to establish resilient conservation strategies that can adapt to and thrive amidst environmental changes.

By safeguarding Africa's diverse ecosystems while ensuring sustainable economic development, the ACF underscored the importance of long-term commitments to addressing current challenges and proactively anticipating future threats. This vision seeks to secure a sustainable and equitable future for the continent and its people.



ACF 2024 IN NUMBERS



KEY MESSAGES FROM THE ACF - VOICES FROM AFRICA

WE HAVE RUN OUT OF TIME!

TRUE TRANSFORMATION MEANS MOVING FROM RHETORIC TO ACTIONS IN THE BIODIVERSITY-CLIMATE NEXUS.



WE NEED INVESTMENT

AFRICA NEEDS TO RAMP UP INVESTMENT IN ITS NATURAL ASSETS IN SUPPORT OF ITS ECONOMIES AND SOCIETY.

LET US UNLEASH OUR YOUTH

AFRICA IS A YOUTHFUL CONTINENT. AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS REQUIRE THE VOICES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ITS YOUTH.

WE WANT PEOPLE AT THE CENTER

PEOPLE HAVE TO BE AT THE CENTRE OF ALL SOLUTIONS - NATURE AND PEOPLE POSITIVE SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED.



WE HEAR THE VOICE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Dignitaries from various sectors and organisations participated in the forum. High level Government officials in attendance included several African ministers, Hon. Salim Mvurya, Minister for Mining, Blue Economy and Maritime Affairs, Kenya and Minister Zachariah Njeru, Minister of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Kenya. Hon. Dr Alfred Mutua, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, Kenya; Hon. Roger Baro, Minister of Environment, Water and Sanitation, Burkina Faso; Hon. Ahmed Omar, The State Minister, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Somalia; and Hon. Nilda Borges, Minister of Environment, São Tomé and Príncipe. Senior IUCN leaders present were H.E. Razan Al Mubarak, IUCN President; Dr Grethel Aguilar, IUCN Director General; and IUCN Councillors from Africa, including Ms Imèn Meliane, IUCN Vice-President; Ms Gloria Chinwe Ujor, Councillor; Mr Ali Kaka, Councillor; and Prof. Brian Child, Councillor.

Additionally, a total of nine Pre-Forum events were held, focusing on specific topics relevant to the ACF including: the African Ocean Forum; the Indigenous People and Local Communities Forum; the IUCN Youth Conservation Forum; Sustainable Agriculture, Ecosystems Restoration, and Nature-based Solutions Nexus in Africa; Sustainable Finance Mechanisms for Conservation; Leveraging the Wildlife Economy; A Just Energy Transition: Sustainable Development Pathways for Africa; Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) Working Group in Africa; and Identifying Species Conservation Priorities in Africa: Improving IUCN's Response to the Species Extinction Crisis. These events provided key messages and insights that informed the panel discussions on the first day of the Forum and contributed to the concluding high-level message from the ACF.

IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS

ABU DHABI, 9-15 OCTOBER 2025

POWERING TRANSFORMATIVE CONSERVATION

Held once every four years, the IUCN World Conservation Congress is the largest gathering of nature conservation experts, leaders, and decision-makers in the world. It will help shape global priorities for nature conservation and climate change for the coming decade and beyond.

The Congress aims to improve how we manage our natural environment for human, social and economic development, but this cannot be achieved by conservationists alone. The IUCN Congress is the place to put aside differences and work together to create good environmental governance, engaging all parts of society to share both the responsibilities and the benefits of conservation.

IUCN Members gathered in Regional Conservation Fora that took place between April and October 2024.

Visit <https://iucncongress2025.org> for more information.



SCAN TO DOWNLOAD
THE 2024 AFRICA
CONSERVATION FORUM
REPORT

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS



IMEN MELIANE
TUNISIA



ALI KAKA
KENYA



BRIAN CHILD
SOUTH AFRICA



GLORIA UFOR
NIGERIA

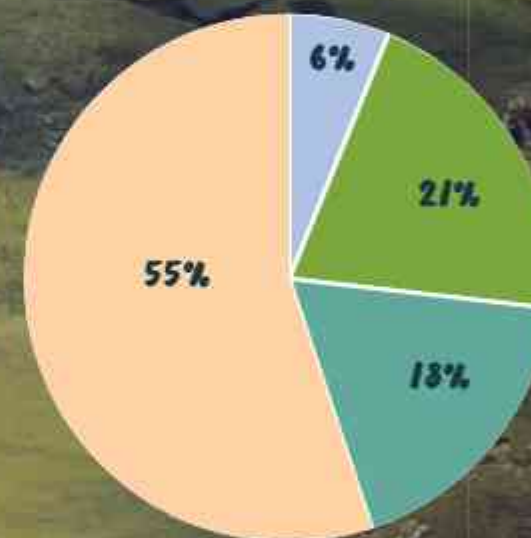
PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO GROWTH 2021-2024



THE PROGRAMME PORTFOLIO FOR ESARO HAS GROWN FROM CHF 125 MILLION IN 2021 TO CHF 179 MILLION IN 2024.

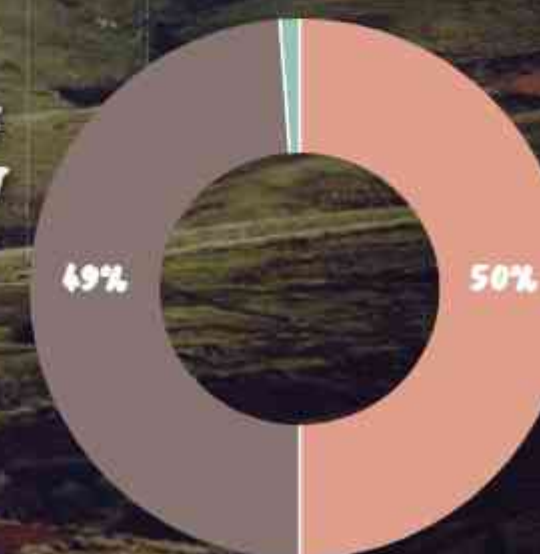
EXPENDITURE BY THEME

PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE FOR 2024 TOTALLED CHF 39.6 MILLION, WITH THE THEMATIC DISTRIBUTION ILLUSTRATED IN THE CHART.



- WATER & WETLANDS
- BIODIVERSITY
- COASTAL & OCEAN RESILIENCE
- LAND SYSTEMS

PROJECT VALUE BY FUNDER TYPE AND PROJECT STATUS

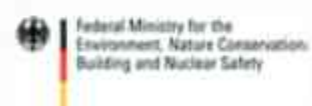


- MULTILATERAL AGENCIES
- GOVERNMENTS
- OTHERS

THANK YOU

WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO ALL COUNTRIES, IUCN MEMBERS, COMMISSIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FOR THEIR UNWAVERING SUPPORT, COLLABORATION, AND COMMITMENT THROUGHOUT 2024. YOUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS AND DEDICATION HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ADVANCING OUR SHARED MISSION TO CONSERVE NATURE AND ENSURE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA. TOGETHER, WE HAVE ACHIEVED MEANINGFUL PROGRESS, STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIPS, AND LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR EVEN GREATER IMPACT IN THE YEARS AHEAD. THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH IUCN ESARO AND FOR YOUR CONTINUED TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT.

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