



Briefing Note

Cross-Border Multi-Stakeholder Platform of Tana-Kipini-Laga Badana Bushland and Seascape, Kenya-Somali Border Post the Biodiversity Management Program

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Introduction

The Horn of Africa, particularly the eastern Africa region, covering the coastal strip of Kenya, Somalia Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti have a historical context characterised by conflict and insecurity. Periodic mass migration and break down of law and order has weakened the grassroots' institutional fabric, thus threatening not only peoples' livelihoods but also the sustainability of natural systems. In line with the state of the region, the Biodiversity Management Program (BMP) of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) of the Horn of Africa was established to promote sustainable biodiversity conservation in the Tana-Kipini-Laga Badana Bushland and Seascape—a cross-border landscape of the extreme southern part of Somalia and north-eastern Kenya.

The cross-border area is characterised by frequent migration, weak grassroot institutional structures, severe land degradation of the forest-bushland due to poaching of valuable tree species such as *Brachylaena huillensis* and *Combretum schumannii* which are preferred by the carving and construction industry and use of wood energy for cooking and heating. Further, selective logging for timber and poles continues to be a major problem. Regeneration of some logged-over forests are prevented by repeat slashing and burning by the Aweer people and trampling by livestock in southern Somalia as the main livelihood system is pastoralism. In addition, new settlers from other parts of Kenya are coming in and clearing large swathes of land for cultivation along the Hindi—Bodhei Junction, west of the Lungu Forest.

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Overview of the cross-border multi-sectoral platform (MSP)

Established in 2016, the Tana-Kipini-Laga Badana Bush Land and Seascape (TKLBBS) MSP operates in the north-eastern Kenya and southern Somalia border (Fig 1). The land and seascape is an important, highly diverse and threatened biodiversity area with high concentration of endemic species, approximately 550 plant, 6 mammals and 9 bird species, as well as several more species of arthropods. The border is economically underdeveloped with high incidence of poverty, consequently imposing pressures on land and ecosystem services. The TKLBBS MSP consist of 20 members representing community interest groups, civil society groups (CSO), non-government organizations (NGOs), government agencies and ministries such as Kenya Wildlife Services, Kenya Forestry Department, Somalia Ministry of Environment, and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Kenya and Somalia, and international organizations such as World Agroforestry (ICRAF) and IUCN. The purpose of the MSP is to oversee the establishment of a cross border network of protected areas in the TKLBBS, including the mapping of management options and facilitating a roadmap of institutions required to strengthen partnerships, enhance trust building, and create a conducive environment for communities to improve their economic and social wellbeing through sustainable cross border ecosystems management.

The TKLBBS MSP is an institutional construct facilitated by the BMP—an initiative funded by European Commission (EC) through the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) of the Horn of Africa. The BMP aims to contribute to poverty reduction by improving the social and economic wellbeing of the populations in the IGAD region, through better regional integration in the environment sector. The IGAD-led BMP's first phase ended in April of 2018. Seeing the important roles of the MSP in achieving project success, the second phase of the BMP was conceptualized with intentions to further strengthen the MSP not only in Tana-Kipini, but across several project sites/landscapes covered under the BMP.

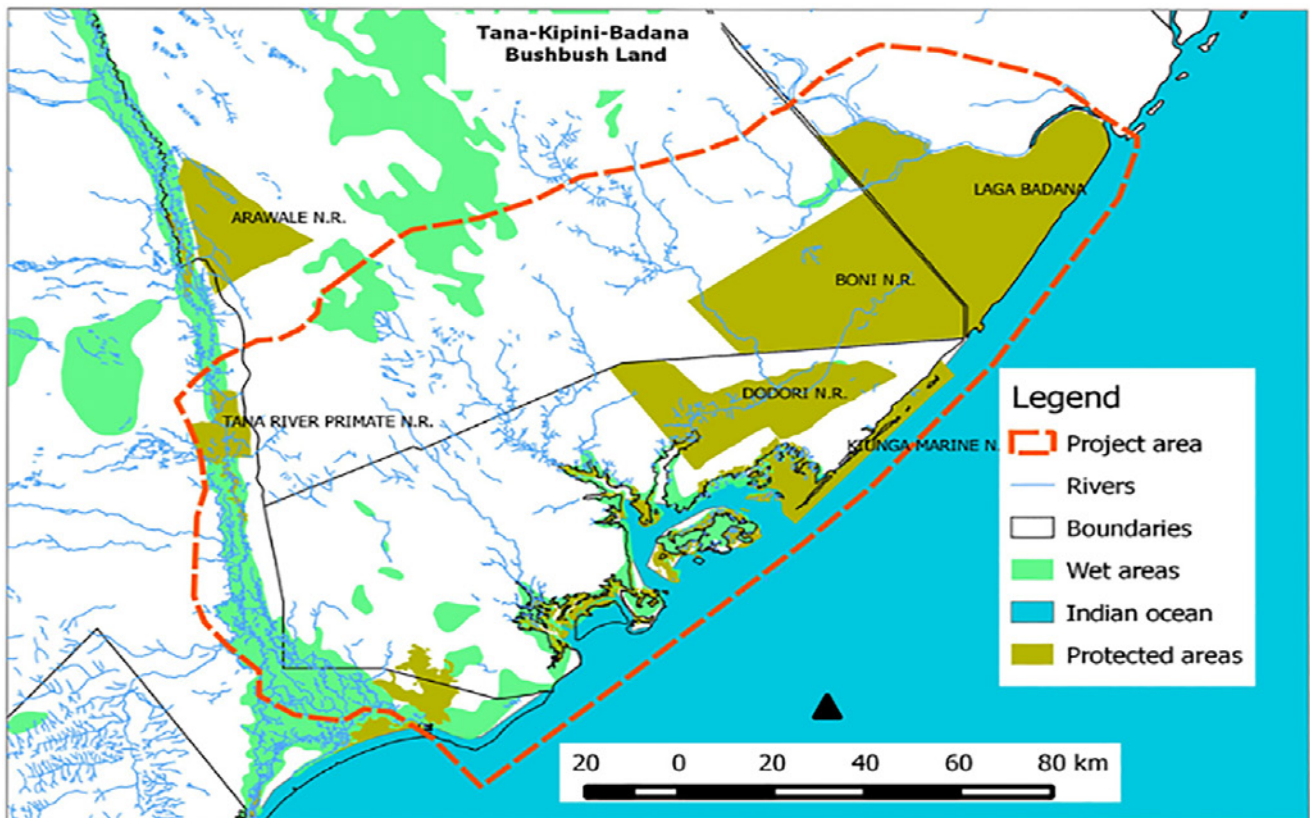


Figure 1. Tana-Kipini (Kenya) and Laga-Badana (Somalia) Bushland and Seascape

MSP purpose and actors

Based on the main purpose of the MSP, which is to promote cross-border cooperation in biodiversity conservation and landscape management, and to facilitate the establishment of a trans-boundary protected area, an inclusive strategy was developed to bring on board different stakeholders and governance structures at various levels with a view to minimizing potential conflicts.

As shown in Figure 2, various governance levels (regional-landscape-farm-plot- tree levels) involve different actors. At the tree-plot-farm level, numerous households of different ethnicities and socio-economic backgrounds are involved in various farm-oriented activities. At landscape level (beyond farm), households form into interest-groups such as on water harvesting, agroforestry, afforestation, and honey production and marketing. Interest groups are then formed into clusters that further aggregate into a coalition of clusters at the national-regional level. Trans Boundary Steering Committees (TBSC) were created with responsibilities to monitor progress and advice on cross-cutting issues related to various project activity implementation. The MSP is constituted at the national-regional level, composing 20 members, including technical partners (e.g., ICRAF, IUCN, KWS), the IGAD technical team, cluster representatives, and cross-border partners and members of the TBSCs. At the household level, decisions made are mainly about improving farm productivity, which could have little impact to the larger landscape. However, decisions made by community interest groups do influence attitudes, and can improve total productivity at the larger landscape level, as well as initiate sustainability measures. Coalitions of groups into clusters, and their representation in the MSP influence and enhance resilience and sustainability of the whole landscape.

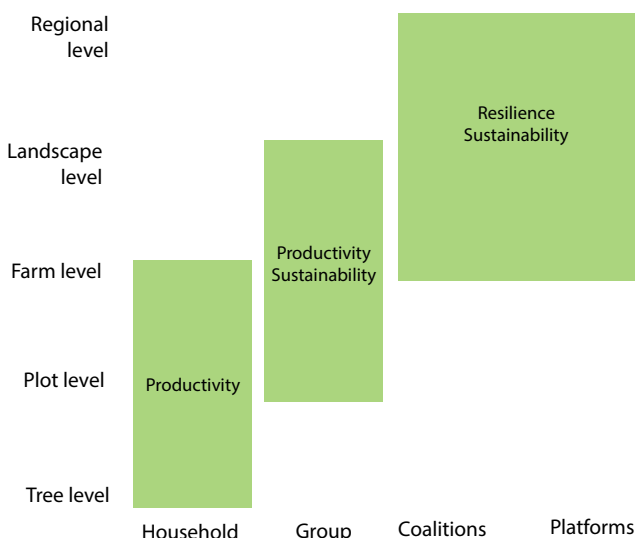


Figure 2. Actors in the action arena

The landscape is mainly populated by pastoralists and agriculturists. The Orma and Pokomo communities occupy the western and southwestern side of the Witu Forest Ecosystem (WFE); the Awer people on the northern side;

Kikuyu and a mixture of other migrant communities including the Kisii, Luhya and Luo on the eastern side; and the Sanya, Mijikeda and the Swahili people to the west of WFE; whilst the Somali pastoralists occupy the northern part of the TKLBBS land and seascape. Due to sensitivity brought about by historical conflicts, all stakeholders have been involved in planning activities, including negotiations on various natural resource management aspects. Gender representation was dependent on activities being undertaken, and capacity building activities has been well represented in terms of men and women participation.

Developing institutional infrastructure for cross-border biodiversity management

The quest for sustainable management of natural resources amid increasing demand for local livelihoods provides a daunting mission for leaders in the Horn of Africa. Conflicts and strife further exacerbate an already complex situation. Thus, in developing multi-stakeholder initiatives for the BMP, it was clear from the onset that the structure, function, and mode of operation needed to reflect prevailing circumstances and must be always inclusive.

In the TKLBBS, divergent interests exist amongst and between different actors at various levels (farm-landscape-region). Divergent interests grow and complexity arises as the number of stakeholders increase across different levels of the action area; consequently, the action of actors entail tradeoffs that have ripple effects across each level; hence, the BMP initiated what is called, simple partnerships involving a number of households and other stakeholders at the village/community level, which were aggregated to create 'simple coalitions', and further, into platforms, to address broader landscape issues, in a nuanced manner (Fig 2).

At the community level are farmers, farmer groups, traders, service providers and leaders such as chiefs and heads of clans were supported to form 'simple partnerships'—this was the first step in the development of the MSP. Initial membership criteria were that they had to belong to some community groups or be undertaking collective

action whether formally or informally. Typically, community groupings were based on interests, occupation, and livelihood pursuits. Representatives of these partnerships (community interest groups) are represented at the county level in clusters where they are joined by government representatives, NGOs and civil society members, in what is referred as 'simple coalitions'. At county level, the clusters include Lamu County spatial planning unit under the Ministry of Lands and Water and Ministry of Trade and Tourism. The County commissioner's office works closely with TKLBBS MSP in supporting the project on matters related to security and coordination of county government units. ICRAF, National Museum of Kenya (NMK) and Lamu County Spatial Unit work closely to support the land use planning (LUP) process. The Biodiversity Land Use Plan (BLUP) unit has been established and hosted at Lamu Fort, which is managed by the NMK. The County Government Ministry of Lands and the NMK have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in the LUP process. ICRAF also relates with other state authorities at county level including the Ministries of Agriculture and Irrigation, Fisheries and Livestock, Education, Youth and Gender, which have been involved to support different activities. In Somalia, the Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Rangeland is the focal point ministry to the BMP. In Kenya, ICRAF works with the central government by contracting the KFS and NMK, to support specific project activities implementation. However, as the MSP formation process evolved from a collection of community groups into a coalition of specific clusters based on interests and partnerships, specific tasks were then handled at the cluster level.

At the national-regional level, full representation of clusters makes up the MSP wherein policy makers, biodiversity managers and experts, local communities, civil society, NGOs, educators, national government agencies, and international partners (e.g., ICRAF) can interact and make decisions that impact directly on the target beneficiaries. ICRAF engages and collaborates with the Ministry of Energy, Environment and Mineral Resources and Ministry of Environment and Tourism at the regional level.



Figure 3. Illustration of coalitions of clusters that make the platform

MSP contributions to the BMP and impacts

At the onset of the project, mistrust was such that it was not even possible to link the different partner ministries in the management of the project. However, once the multi-stakeholder formation process was at cluster level, different sector partners were able to relate better through specific activities jointly undertaken. The multi-stakeholder dialogues conducted and support to community members, thus helped to build the much, needed trust in implementing the BMP. The MSP has served as bridge to build consensus amongst stakeholders. Since it has served to represent a much wider representation of different viewpoints across several vertical levels of governance, it has become an effective trust nurturing instrument. The landscape conservation committees have effectively used the dialogue processes to engage various stakeholders in developing various rules and ensuring higher participation in safeguarding natural resources. In a region strewn with civil conflicts and uncertainty over the future, the dialogue processes present opportunities for communities to look beyond peace-making, to discuss trade and development.

The MSP's strong point is enabling the emergence of leadership in various conservation and development sectors that are deemed crucial for livelihood improvement. It also provides an important link in harmonized leadership amongst transboundary communities. One other major success of the MSP has been in trust building, enabling diverse groupings in terms of tribe, clans, interests and areas and nationalities to manage a discussion on sustainability and livelihoods. The MSP's role in helping to build institutional capacity through its members that represent various stakeholder-groups or sectors at different levels, and engagement in decision making around transboundary issues has been considerably recognized, in view of the volatile and hostile nature of the areas since the collapse of the Siad Barre's regime in the late 80s. Buy-in, and good working relationships amongst MSP members has accelerated project implementation, and generated ripple effects beyond the initial biodiversity agenda. Some of the spinoffs were increased internal and cross-regional trade, and the revival of cottage industries such as honey production and horticulture. Further, the MSP processes inspired IGAD and other donors to scale out the process in other transboundary areas.



Photo 1. Consultative talks with Maisha Masha women in Lamu County on setting BMP priority activities.
Photo by ICRAF

The successful implementation of the BMP, which covered more than 4,000 farmers can be greatly attributed to the use of multi-stakeholder engagement processes. An example of multi-stakeholder-led process is demonstrated by KFS in its agroforestry and rehabilitation of protected areas and farmlands. Through this activity, KFS, collaborated with ICRAF, Lamu Conservation Trust, community leaders, farmers, where each stakeholder played distinct roles. ICRAF provided technical support on species selection, planting niches and germplasm support, Lamu conservation trust and community leaders supported in mobilizing the community while the community provided labor and land for planting the trees. Through this activity, farmers established individual nurseries, woodlots and boundary tree planting on their farms, and protected areas were enriched through natural regeneration and replanting of degraded areas.

The MSP was also instrumental in promoting coexistence between human and wildlife through community sensitization and awareness raising about the 2013 wildlife act. The stakeholders involved in the activity were KWS, local leaders, ICRAF, and the Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT-Coast), during which 500 farmers were sensitized about the 2013 Wildlife Act. The training impacts were realized within a short period with reduced cases of human wildlife conflict. Through the same collaborative efforts, NRT-Coast managed to develop community management and development plans and established a community monitoring system for Hanshak Nyongoro conservancy. Through the management plan, Hanshak Nyongoro conservancy managed to fundraise for some money from the Lamu county government and partners to support school children in the area.

To expand livelihood sources for the communities in the area, the MSP engaged the stakeholders in participatory mapping on various livelihood options in the area during which high value crops and bee keeping were prioritized for support. Structures that facilitated access to water and those for water management were also installed. Line ministries from Departments of agriculture, irrigation, livestock in both Kenya and Somalia were involved in the intervention. These efforts resulted in community groups being supported with over 60 langstroth beehives, 3 centrifuges, and bee harvesting kits. Technical support was also provided on apiary management, colony establishment, value addition and market linkages. In a good season, farmers could harvest more than thrice in a year with each hives producing a minimum of 10 liters and a maximum of 25 liters of honey. Half a liter of honey retails at KES 400 at farm gate.

In Somalia, the BMP milestones were realized through the engagement of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Juba land state, Ministry of Livestock,

Forestry & Range (IGAD focal point), and the Ministry of Water, Energy and Minerals of Juba land state. The support received from consultants from the Savana Consultancy Limited, Imaan Relief and Development Organization and Somali Wildlife and Natural History Society who coordinated and supported in the implementation of activities on rainwater harvesting, honey value chain, biodiversity assessment and developing a vision and roadmap for establishment of a conservation area in Somalia.

The MSP--- post the Biodiversity Management Program

All the 20 representatives of various stakeholder groups in TKLBBS are still, in theory, members of the MSP. However, the end of BMP phase 1 and the effects of COVID 19 made it difficult to secure additional funding to operate the MSP as a unit. There was no more funding to support the MSP cross-border operations such as in organizing meetings and capacity development activities, which in turn reduced the number of stakeholders reached. High turnover of contact persons in the project site in Somalia also limited MSP level activities. Some cross-border dialogues were also halted due to lack of funds, including dialogues around the formation of transboundary protected area management plan to enhance cross border biodiversity conservation. Access to funds, to support the MSP operations was found highly important to scale up cross-border interventions.

Despite these challenges however, individual MSP members sustained their efforts to support biodiversity conservation initiatives within their respective localities leveraging on similar project and government support. Notably, in line with its development and policy mandates, the Lamu County government scaled up some interventions by leveraging on the community groups/platforms established by the MSP during the BMP. Officials from the County government's Department of Agriculture mobilized more community members to embrace soil water conservation technologies and water management systems. As a result, more than 20 additional farmers have installed ground water systems with solar pumping technologies to improve farm productivity. The Sun Culture company has partnered with the project to supply the highly demanded solar pumps, consequently opening a new office in Tana Delta for ease of access to the community. Food and nutritional security have improved especially with integration of vegetable and fruit trees on farms to supplement cereal and maize production.

Furthermore, farmer-champions who were members of the MSP have engaged other communities beyond the initial project sites especially in Mpeketoni area. The champions mobilized several farmers who organized themselves and invited key experts to train them especially on tree nursery establishment and management practises, sustainable land management systems, food-based value chains and water management. So far, the group has engaged a water expert to prospect ground water in Mpeketoni.



Photo 2. Community members desilting the water pan in Ras Kamboni, Somalia. Photo by ICRAF

Model farmers who were capacitated through activities of the MSP have expanded their initiatives—for example, one farmer who owned a small tree nursery now operates commercially, selling seedlings to other farmers, the Kenya Forestry Service, and private companies.

The establishment of honey collection center in Hindi was birthed through the initiatives of the BMP on honey value chain development through trainings, provision of beehives, bee processing equipment and training on entrepreneurship. The Lamu County government established the center to serve as market for the farmers to increase their livelihood resilience and environmental health.

In Somalia, through the district officer of Ras Kamboni who is also a member of the MSP, the local community expanded the water pan rehabilitated by the project to meet the water needs of the cross-border communities in Lamu and Somalia. The water pan was affected by the drought experienced in 2020 and 2021 due to very low to no rainfall in the year forcing some of the community members to migrate to other areas.

Many of the initiated interventions have found a life of its own within the communities, such as the food-based value chain intervention that included incorporating fruit

trees, bee keeping, high value vegetables and agroforestry trees on farms for increased nutritional diversity, access to firewood through pruning of trees and income obtained from sale of surplus fruits and vegetables. With increased farm productivity, instances of harvesting wood from protected areas to earn livelihood has reduced as farmers spent more time on the farm and are able to earn income from their farm activities.

Efforts by the MSP to reach more community members with the message of biodiversity conservation has been made part in normal community meetings. In these meetings, model farmers deliver the message to other community members on importance of conservation, how to diversify livelihoods and the structures required to support livelihood initiatives. Armed with knowledge, several farmers have approached micro finance systems to finance their farms on loan with agreed repayment period. Some farmers have also reached out to experts to train them on water abstraction and solar pumping technologies to enhance land productivity. With increased farm productivity cases of slash and burn agriculture is reduced as farmers can meet their demand with the current land which in turn give land ample time to regenerate and allowance emergence of saplings that grows to trees. This with designated grazing areas facilitated natural regeneration process enhancing land health.

After BMP phase 1, major milestones that have been recorded by the MSP include expansion of about 5 individual nurseries to commercial nurseries. During the first phase of the BMP project, farmers obtained technical knowledge on nursery establishment and management and over 10 farmers started their individual tree nurseries—of these, 5 farmers have now expanded the size, number and diversity of tree species raised in nurseries, and are serving several markets that include KFS, private companies, schools, individual farmers, and their own farms. Moreover, with increased honey production and harvest due to use of better hives and technical know-how, the Lamu County government established a honey collection center where farmers aggregate their produce for sale to get better prices. The center allows farmers gain better prices and market for their produce.

The project intervention has recorded a spill over in neighboring areas especially in Mpeketoni in Lamu County where over 20 non project farmers have installed ground water systems for supplemental irrigation to improve their farm productivity for better incomes and food security.

Insights on the sustainability of the MSP

In the wake of the COVID 19 pandemic, reduced donor funding, and shift in donor priorities, local institutions and structures provide huge opportunity to sustaining

and expanding landscape restoration interventions on both sides of the cross-border landscape. On the Kenya side, the Lamu County government took on much of the roles of the MSP by rallying the support of community stakeholders and local agencies, to continue and expand the promising interventions initiated through the MSP during the first phase of the BMP.

However, cross-border MSP activities especially meetings and dialogues between MSP members from the Kenya and Somalia side have seen a decline after the BMP project. This is concerning as the lack of continuous engagement in dialogues and learning exchanges between stakeholders might create a vacuum in leadership and coordination, which can be detrimental to the cross-border landscape. An important lesson learned from TKLBBS is the need for a strong and long-term cross-border MSP that can outlive a three-to-four-year project. In the case of TKLBBS, it is important to provide continuous support to the cross-border MSP, to bridge utterly disparate stakeholders and foster lasting cooperation, peace and order, and effective cross-border governance. Since it is in the best interest of Kenya and Somalia to conserve biodiversity and the integrity of landscape and people in TKLBBS, it is only apt for both countries to strengthen and institutionalise the cross-border MSP, so it can continue to serve its purpose and function.



Photo 3. Mobilization of Local communities in Ras Kamboni, Somalia on Natural Resource Management. Photo by ICRAF

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