



ENGAGING BUSINESS:

Enlisting the Private Sector to sustain Landscapes and Communities



Wetlands
INTERNATIONAL

Environmental Challenges in Kenya

The private sector has an enormous impact on the environment, either directly through resource extraction, manufacturing, and agriculture; or indirectly through consolidation and processing of products from farmers, artisans and miners. These activities can have devastating effects like pollution and loss of resources affecting people and nature

In July 2017, Wetlands International undertook training for its staff on how to proactively engage the private sector actors to become stewards of the environment in which they operate, and to encourage the business community to look beyond their own direct impacts and support their neighbouring communities for healthy, sustainable landscapes.

Objective of the Training Program

The training, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Organisation for International Education (NUFFIC) was carried out by the Dutch consulting firms CREM and Conservation Consultancy Steven de Bie, supported by the local expert Simon Thu. The objective of the training was to understand:

- How private sector development can be compatible with sustainable landscape management, and what the roles of various players are;
- How different private sector players relate to natural resources and ecosystems and how they perceive, manage and mitigate scarcity, climate and disaster risks;
- How to organise stakeholders at the landscape level to achieve the common goal of increasing the quantity and quality of ecosystem services through funding, implementing and evaluating stewardship practices;
- How private sector operations are regulated by environmental policy instruments;
- How environmental NGOs like Wetlands International that work on sustainable development can scale to the landscape level;

- Investment climate and models of innovative funding needed to create productive but sustainable landscapes.

To ensure real-life business perspectives and considerations that guide the private sector actions, case studies were presented by the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, the Kenya Innovative Financing Facility for Water – KIFFWA, Imarisha Naivasha (an association of private sector and public institutions) and the training included a half day visit to one of Africa’s largest flower companies-Sher Roses.

As a result of the training, the following engagements have started to materialise, facilitated by the Wetlands International Staff and its partner organisations:

Laikipia

Laikipia County is a hotbed for land invasions and civil strife between the pastoralist community and the large scale ranchers and peasant farmers in competition for water and pasture especially during the dry spells. According to the peasant farmers, the scarcity of water is due to large water extractions from the rivers and streams by the commercial large scale farmers.

In a bid to address these challenges, the Mount Kenya Ewaso Water Partnership of Wetlands International a

local implementing partner, has been instrumental in bringing together different stakeholders with competing interest to a common understanding of the issues facing water allocation in the region including ten major private ranches, conservancies and large scale commercial growers .

The Partnership has enabled the commercial growers to understand the challenges of the small farmers, and of the pastoralists with the large ranchers, in trying to come up with a better formula for water sharing especially in the dry periods. But still, the challenge is that there are many who are unwilling to join the partnership fearing they would be coerced to compromising the economic mainstay which is fully dependent on water resources they use.



Kajiado

1. Magadi Soda Company

Since 1911, Magadi Soda Company has been producing soda ash at Lake Magadi, 120kms south west of Nairobi. The company recovers trona (a naturally occurring mineral that contains sodium carbonate compounds) from one of the purest surface deposits in the base of the Rift Valley and converts it into soda ash, which is





transported by rail to the Port of Mombasa for onward shipping to the markets. The company has for decades been involved in corporate social responsibility to improve the lives of many poor people that live in Kajiado County.

Land degradation as a result of poor agricultural practices by the community has led to increased flash floods and soil erosion in the upper catchments of the areas surrounding Lake Magadi which is home to a variety of birds and wildlife.

A desk review was conducted to understand the impacts of environmental degradation on the activities and productivity of the target companies. It was noted that land degradation and poor agricultural practices have led to increased flash floods and soil erosion in the upper catchments of the areas surrounding Lake Magadi. These have negative impacts on both the ecosystem and the production of soda ash. Soda ash production is dependent on the quality of the naturally occurring trona which is composed of calcium carbonate. Change in land use has decreased biodiversity of the area. CESPAD, another partner agency of Wetlands International, has initiated contacts with Magadi Soda Company with the aim to transform the engagement with the local community to reverse ecosystem degradation in the region.



2. Oolaiser Water and Sewerage Company

Oolaiser Water and Sewerage Company was incorporated on the 30th of June 2006 to provide efficient and effective water and sewerage services within Kajiado North and West Sub-Counties. The company has a dam that is located in Kiserian Town. The dam construction started in 2008 and ended in 2013. With a height of 18 metres and a capacity of 1.8 million litres, the dam has a daily supply capacity of 15,700m³ and is currently supplying domestic water in constituencies in Kajiado North and Kajiado West for 253,000 residents.

Despite its importance, the dam is threatened by environmental degradation in the catchment area. The pollution is a result of the lack of sewerage systems and high dependency on onsite sanitation facilities. Poor agricultural practices and solid waste spilling over from the residential areas has worsened the quality of the water in the dam. CESPAD is facilitating engagement of Oolaiser with the community around the dam region to reduce impacts of degradation that can affect hundreds of thousands of people dependent on its water.

Isiolo

Ewaso Ng'iro is Kenya's third longest river, with its sources on the north-western slopes of the iconic Mt Kenya and Aberdare Ranges, flows through arid and semi-arid landscapes of Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo, Meru, Wajir, Mandera and Garissa Counties into the Merti Aquifer and Lorian Swamp, after which it passes through Somalia, joining the Jubba River covering of 15,200 km². The Ewaso supports a human population of 3.6 million people, while its banks create verdant oases in Samburu, Shaba and Buffalo Springs in Northern Kenya that teem with wildlife in the arid landscape.

However, overtime the drying of the Ewaso Ng'iro and the receding water levels due to seasonal variability and over-extraction for upstream irrigation, have seen this oasis and wetlands around it diminish, threatening both the terrestrial, aquatic life and a number of bird species. Keystone species like elephants and the unique Grevy Zebras have been adversely affected and their survival threatened leading to loss of investment in tourism and conservation sectors. The pastoralists that are fully dependent on its water and grazing fields have borne the brunt of the diminishing water resources.

To determine the kind of economic activities particularly those with a major impact on water, Wetlands International Kenya and CETRAD, a scientific research organisation, undertook a detailed survey to identify the exact location and scale out investments along the Ewaso Ng'iro basin.

On 15th September 2017 more than 200 participants concluded a 5-day trek along the Ewaso Ng'iro basin. Withstanding the scorching sun in an almost bare ground the teams trekked for 240 kilometres from Merti county to Archer's post, Isiolo county in a week, to raise awareness on issues affecting river Ewaso Ng'iro. The campaign dubbed the "Camel Caravan Walk 2017", made various stops along the way promoting and advocating for protection and restoration of Ewaso-Ng'iro River



basin ecosystem and promoting a peaceful co-existence among the communities who depend on this river as their lifeline. Organised by MID-P and IMPACT local implementing partners, this initiative brought together different stakeholders, key among them the county government, government agencies, CBOs, CSOs and other iNGOs. Contacts were made with potential private sector companies, especially the ranchers and conservancies in Northern Kenya, in an effort to enlist them as partners for sustainable landscapes and communities.

More stories on this initiative are captured on our website: <http://africa.wetlands.org/News/tabid/2929/ID/4675/Communities-living-along-the-Ewaso-Ngiro-basin-journey-with-camels-to-advocate-for-the-conservation-of-the-river-while-promoting-a-peaceful-co-existence.aspx>.

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