



# COASTAL FORESTS PROJECT

Communication and Awareness Strategy


## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines a Communications and Awareness Strategy for the Coastal Forests Project. The strategy feeds into and complements the various communication strategies currently being undertaken by state and non-state agencies in an effort to arrest and redress the threatening blight facing coastal forests of Tanzania. In addition, the main conservation issues have already been documented. Hence, there is both good information and an experiential base and some existing awareness, on which to build additional awareness activities.

In order to undertake this work, an extensive literature review was conducted. In-depth individual interviews were held with key informants. It was also considered very important to garner the opinions and experience of people working directly in the field. To that end, a questionnaire was circulated to a number of key stakeholders in an effort to gain an understanding of the characteristics and challenges of forest sector communication in Tanzania.

Both the cause of environmental problems and possibilities for addressing them depend on human perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, which are linked to values, preferences and beliefs about the world. Therefore, the goal of the strategy is to raise awareness and promote dialogue amongst decision makers, the general public and to place the issues related to the better conservation of the lowland coastal forests of southern Tanzania and Zanzibar in the media. Indeed, experience has shown that forest management can be enhanced most effectively when all stakeholders can interact and share ownership of a collaborative programme, which is underpinned by high levels of awareness and well-informed discussions.

The strategy outlines what the key messages should be and identifies a select variety of methods and techniques for developing public awareness and promoting coastal forest biodiversity conservation. These include radio and television programming, social media, traditional media, printed materials and messages printed on promotional material. The



strategy should be accompanied by annual action plans by which these and future improvements will be delivered. These action plans are to be reviewed whenever necessary and will be supported by internal and external monitoring and evaluation. As the communication strategy is fully implemented, on-going process monitoring will measure the responsiveness and efficiency. Qualitative and quantitative assessments at mid-term and the end of the communication strategy will indicate whether the strategy was successful.

A communication strategy will never be "finished": it must be an iterative and evolving document, changing in the light of new developments and improving understanding of the audiences' and stakeholders' needs. Implementation will require institutional support, capacity building, coordination and cooperation among various stakeholders at different levels.





## 1.0 BACKGROUND

The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is endowed with many small patches of coastal forest that harbour endemic biodiversity and are amongst the critical ecosystems of the world. Two species of trees thought to be extinct until recently are among the significant species found in the area. Yet, the coastal forests have been subjected to high intensities of forest resources utilization. Some forests have been highly degraded due to encroachment. Forests are being cleared to satisfy demand for agricultural and forest products, and space for residential housing. While the devastating commercial logging of the early 2000s has been abated, illegal harvesting of poles and timber and clearance of non-reserved forest continues. Agricultural encroachment into mangroves is becoming an issue in parts of the coast where land is cleared for flood-irrigated rice. Bush fires are another hindrance to sustainable forests management in many coastal areas. Hundreds of hectares of natural forests are set to fire every year reducing biodiversity values by killing various species of flora and fauna and retarding growth rates of some of the tree species.

Through the initiative of the government, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the country is implementing a four-year project aimed at strengthening overall conservation and management of the Coastal Forests of Tanzania, focusing on both Zanzibar and three priority landscapes in south-eastern Tanzania. The overall aim of this project is to conserve the globally valuable biodiversity within the Coastal Forests of Tanzania through enhancing the status of these areas within the national protected area network, and by undertaking targeted actions on the ground that seek to improve conservation while trying to improve the living standards and opportunities for participating in forest management by the local population. This will be achieved through a combination of measures, including capacity building at relevant levels, direct intervention measures to solve known conservation problems, and the introduction and promotion of environmentally sustainable livelihood alternatives. Among the expected benefits, ecosystem services derived from coastal forests are to provide a wide variety of benefits for people, such as the protection of fisheries, watersheds and soils. Furthermore, forests constitute an important source of raw materials for both the rural poor who depend on forest products to meet basic livelihood needs, and for industry's demand for timber and non-timber products.



## 2.0 RATIONALE

Among the key drivers for biodiversity loss within coastal forests is the low level of awareness on the importance and services that forest biodiversity provides. In addition to the general issue of low environmental awareness is the lack of awareness of changes in the policy and law relating to forest management. The engagement of local communities in forest management has been plagued by popular and polarised public perceptions of forests – either as entirely owned by central government, or, at the other end of the spectrum, basically free-access resources with little or no stewardship status. Whilst current policies call for the involvement of communities, villages are still largely unaware of the relevant legislation including the Forest Act (2002), relevant procedures for participatory forest management, and what incentives truly exist. Relevant policy documents are not readily available in many villages and if they are available, they are in the English language and thus not accessible to many. Lingering perceptions regarding forest ownership status and delays in getting the participatory forest management message out to rural areas have acted as perverse incentives driving unsustainable harvests.

Environmental Communication (EnvCom) is the main pathway to building awareness, participation, capacity, and action. It is inclusive of a diverse range of communication processes and media products to support public participation and project implementation geared towards positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours that lead to environmental sustainability. It is a two-way social interaction process enabling the people concerned to understand key environmental factors and their interdependencies and to respond to problems in a competent way. EnvCom aims not so much at information dissemination as at a shared vision of a sustainable future and at capacity building in social groups to solve or prevent environmental problems.

While communications cannot solve all problems, implementation of these innovative communications initiatives can raise awareness, generate confidence, impart new knowledge and help change attitudes, promote economic growth, help create dialogue between coastal people and between them and decision/policy makers, and contribute to the aspirations of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA).



### 3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

During the literature review and discussions with stakeholders, several issues emerged which need to be taken into consideration in the development and implementation of this communication strategy.

- Coastal communities rely heavily on the exploitation of forest resources to sustain their livelihoods. In the absence of tangible alternatives, it is unrealistic to expect that people will forgo opportunities to use natural resources around them to meet their needs. Thus, there is need to develop and disseminate information with regard to environmentally-friendly income-generating activities e.g. bee keeping.
- It is essential to deliver appropriate and relevant messages to target groups. For example, messages discouraging charcoal production are being delivered primarily to rural coastal dwellers however contrary to the belief that charcoal production is an individual, rural enterprise; it is often the case that businessmen in urban centres are operating the charcoal-production syndicates.
- Since one of the main objectives of this strategy is to raise public awareness regarding coastal forest conservation, activities which have a wide outreach into the community, such as the use of radio, are more desirable than others which reach only a few people at a time.
- Strategies with a multiplier or cascade effect, such as sensitization of Village Environment Committees ultimately reach a wide population and are thus cost effective and make good use of available resources.
- Widespread awareness that the general public and local communities have an important stake in coastal forest conservation needs to be developed and amplified.
- Awareness materials need to be developed and field-tested in consultation with local communities. Messages aimed at rural residents should be relevant to their lifestyle and avoid jargon and scientific terminology





## 4.0 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

The following strategic communication objectives are aimed at supporting the implementation of the Coastal Forests Project:

1. To increase public awareness on the conservation of the coastal forests of southern Tanzania and Zanzibar
2. To promote public understanding that sustainably managed forests of coastal Tanzania provide more environmental, economic and social benefits locally and globally and
3. To raise awareness of alternative income generating activities available for coastal communities of Tanzania



## 5.0 AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

The communication strategy aims to reach all key stakeholder groups benefiting from coastal forests with relevant information about the project and its key messages. Based on field surveys, the stakeholders can be divided into the following broad groups.

### 5.1 Local communities

Local communities that collect forest products and get services from surrounding coastal forests include individual households, groups of village forest products traders, village natural resources committees and village councils. A profile of this group reveals that they are the predominantly literate to semi-literate, largely with group-anchored, value-laden and tradition-bound beliefs and attitudes towards tree planting and forest management. Usually, trees are taken for granted and are seen as God-given, worth little regard for replenishment when felled, and sustenance thereafter. Products involved include, charcoal, poles medicinal plants, fruits weaving material and firewood. Depending on accessibility and proximity to district council headquarters, sometimes these groups do pay district royalties for forest and agricultural products sold. In recent years, many villages have established Village Natural Resources Committees to enhance conservation of coastal forests through Joint Forest Management (JFM) or Community Based Forest Management (CBFM) principles. Members of these groups benefit through training, recognition by the community and income earning through approved legal forest trades for example sale of confiscated forest products from illegal traders. Few groups of villagers also specialize on production and sale of saw logs and sawn timber on a small scale using rudimentary tools. Most of the trade is, however, illegal.

### 5.2 Private Sector (Commercial Forest Product Dealers)

The private sector consist of individuals, groups or companies with high investment capital and business skills. In most cases they are outsiders and not members of the coastal forest village communities. Their ambition is to realize rapid profits from clearing coastal forests, sometimes with little consideration or environmental and biodiversity conservation. Whilst there are legitimate businesses working in this sector, a significant number of organisations' business is illegal and revenue collected by the government is often below the true value of the products harvested.



### **5.3 Local Government Authorities (LGAs)**

Local governments are allowed to collect revenue from the sale of forest products originating from local authority forest reserves (LAFRs) as well as a percentage of revenue from the sale of forest products originating from central government forest reserves in their districts. The local governments assist in coordination of extension services, law enforcement, promotion of tree growing and management of local government forest reserves of conservation and biodiversity values. Of late the local governments are also expected to manage the central government forest reserves within their districts.

### **5.4 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)**

Various local Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are operating within the coastal forests assisting in awareness raising and extension services, financing of forestry and environment activities, promoting gender roles, women empowerment and revenue collection. Some of the active NGOs include: WWF, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group (TFCG), Community Network of Forest Conservation in Tanzania (MJUMITA), Kilwa Timber Harvester Association (UWAMBALI), Mpingo Conservation Project (MCP), Tanzania Natural Resources Forum (TNRF) and the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (WCST). These organisations can effectively contribute to prevent illegalities, promote public education and awareness about the value of forests, the manner in which they are utilized and about the incidence of illegal acts thereby generating enough political pressure to contribute to prevent forest crimes. Moreover, illegal acts sometimes occur simply because of the ignorance of the provisions of the law and the rationale behind them. Better knowledge thus contributes to prevention of illegal acts.

### **5.5 Government Sector Ministries**

Various sector ministries are involved directly or indirectly in conservation and management of coastal forests covering: policy formulation, sector planning and budgeting, law enforcement, revenue collection, information systems, extension, research, training, monitoring and evaluation and coordination of other stakeholders. As a secondary audience, government sector ministries have the opportunity to amplify key messages that are being voiced under this strategy.





## **5.6 Children and Youth**

The population structure of the coastal areas where the youth represent a big percentage of the population, strongly suggest that special consideration be given to this segment of the population. Children and youth are also a unique target group, not only because they make up such a large part of the population, but because it is more likely that they will suffer most from the effects of present-day environmental degradation. It is imperative that special efforts be made now to make them aware of the state of the environment, so that they will become concerned enough to take action. Furthermore, children and youth have a greater capacity to change their attitudes and learn faster than adults.

## **5.7 Media**

The media has substantial influence over public opinion and their buy-in and support can have either a very positive or negative impact on the Coastal Forest Project. Ensuring that media personnel are accurately informed about the issues at hand will facilitate accurate, relevant and positive reporting. Bringing the media on board effectively will play a key role in influencing all other key stakeholders and enhance the media's ability to do so effectively.



## 6.0 KEY MESSAGES

There are three key messages, each linked to a specific communication objective. They are listed with supporting or sub messages. The messages rebalance misconceptions about coastal forest management and underline the benefits that sustainably managed forests provide society.

Objective 1: To increase public awareness on the conservation of the coastal forests of southern Tanzania and Zanzibar

**Message: Tanzania has made substantial progress in developing the enabling conditions for community involvement in the sustainable management and conservation of its coastal resources. The Coastal Forests Projects provides continued and strong support to these efforts.**

*Protecting coastal forests is a social responsibility on the shoulders of each citizen, institution and organization in Tanzania.*

*Existing behaviours exhaust environmental resources and lead to its deterioration; do not bequeath a poor environment for your children that will not sustain them.*

*Protecting and maintaining the environment is an ancient coastal behaviour encouraged by religions and coastal culture along the ages.*

Objective 2: To promote public understanding that sustainably managed coastal forests of Tanzania provide more environmental, economic and social benefits locally and globally.

**Message: Exploiting coastal forests is not always bad for the environment. As long as the forests are managed in a sustainable way, there can be a multitude of benefits: for people, biodiversity and the climate.**

*Our coastal forests can provide part of the solution to limiting climate change, and to helping the entire Tanzanian society to adapt to the changes that we all face.*



*We can use the coastal forests to supply timber and building materials, but if we use them too much they will survive and we will be the losers*

*Coastal forests contain unique species found no-where else in the world; we should be proud of this and encourage people to conserve these species*

Objective 3: To raise awareness of alternative income generating activities available for coastal communities of Tanzania

**Message: Coastal forests make an immense contribution to local livelihoods and the national economy. Spread the message about the importance of preserving available resources.**

*There are alternative means that could fulfill your economic and social needs while protecting your surrounding environment. Find out how.*

*Sustainable forest management holds the key to redressing the current assault on coastal forests and promoting livelihoods*

*Various laws and regulations provide the legal basis for villages to identify, declare, own and manage forest resources in ways that are both sustainable and profitable.*





## 7.0 COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND CHANNELS

A variety of media and channels are available for developing public awareness, and promoting forest conservation in the implementing districts. Public awareness activities that could be carried out in support of the key messages are listed below under the main types of delivery mechanisms. This list is by no means exhaustive and may be expanded as the project's public awareness strategy is implemented.

### 7.1 Radio

Radio is reputed across Tanzania for being the cheapest, simplest, most portable, most adapted medium of mass communication for reaching a wide range of audiences. For this reason, local radio stations within each target district should be approached and requested to provide time for programmes focusing on coastal forest management. Such stations, in collaboration with district forest officers can also launch live debates with stakeholders, documentaries and talk shows where people phone to encourage 'talk back'. A strategy such as this will help minimize the unidirectional flow of information, which is usually the bane of radio use for development purposes. These days, radio can benefit from forest conservation information, which is freely available on the Internet. Such information can be adapted and made situation-relevant for local use in forest conservation activities.

**The project should also consider producing and disseminating a series of Public Service Announcements and given to radio stations to play seeking to awaken communities to the dangers facing coastal forests and arousing a sense of responsibility, promoting attitudes, techniques and practices in favour of wise use, protection and restoration.** Generally, these kinds of announcements can be sent as ready-to-air audio files, although radio stations sometimes prefer scripts that their announcers can read live on the air. While they can be produced very simply with a single actor reading or performing a message, they also can be elaborate, slickly-produced messages with music, dramatic story-lines, and sound or visual effects. Public Service Announcements are generally inexpensive. Since the airtime is donated, the only cost is production.



## **7.2 Bulletin boards**

Bulletin boards such as those maintained by many villages are an attraction and a good source of information for the general population if they are regularly updated. The bulletin board is cost effective in the sense that it provides access to information for a large audience from a single copy.

## **7.3 Printed Media**

In this category of the mass media are newspapers, magazines, posters, brochures, leaflets and illustrated booklets, most of which have already been widely utilized along the coast for conveying conservation information and messages. However, there is broad scope for production of additional materials, particularly with illustrated messages aimed at rural audiences. Posters are especially effective as they can be widely distributed and displayed in public areas. Leaflets are particularly cost-effective and can be mass-distributed. All printed materials will be most effective when they are attractively illustrated, and with a clear and to the point message. On-going communication activities to be delivered through publications and diffused to the target audiences will include:

- i. a project brochure
- i. a poster focusing on the threats facing coastal communities and what is being done to contain the tide
- ii. a poster focusing on the alternative income generating activities supported by the project and
- iii. a biannual newsletter that will provide up-date developments, profile initiatives and report on achievements that would be distributed through existing networks

## **7.4 Promotional Material**

Messages printed on t-shirts, caps and calendars and other things used or encountered in daily life can be an effective means of passively conveying a message to coastal communities. A primary feature of this technique is that the messages are frequently encountered and reinforced, and impossible to ignore. This technique could potentially be used to convey conservation-oriented messages, but the amount of information that can



### **7.5 Interpersonal communication**

This field covers a wide range of activities where interpersonal information-sharing takes place. This may include various workshops, seminars and other publicly held events including village meetings. The project will therefore support and encourage a series of forums in order to enable communities and government to enter into a dialogue over conservation of coastal forests. These forums will provide a platform where issues related to forest conservation can be discussed between Government, practitioners and forest adjacent communities.

### **7.6 Videos/Films/Television**

These techniques combine picture, sound and motion, and are thus the closest medium to reality. In a movie, a complete process can be shown in a short time. Environmental issues, development processes, technologies can be captured and shown to audiences at a convenient time and place. They also combine entertainment and education and so have wide appeal. With proper management, they can be used extensively and thus reach many audiences. While they transcend the bounds often imposed by illiteracy or information and knowledge acquisition, the major constraint is that they are expensive to produce and to show. The project should be cognisant of these limitations when supporting these forms of outreach.

### **7.7 Social Media**

In the past few years, we've seen a shift of the traditional web communication model from one-way communication to a two-way feedback loop. Increasingly, new social media tools particularly creative utilization of mobile telephony and Web 2.0 social networking sites may help advance forest conservation messages especially among the younger, technology-savvy audiences. The project should consider advertising itself on social networking sites like Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.





## 7.8 Traditional Media

There are several traditional media in the coastal areas that are very effective communication tools, especially in rural areas. These include traditional dance performers that are often skilled at translating complex messages into forms that can be easily understood by rural populations or populations with low literacy levels. While traditional media are limited in their ability to reach a large audience, traditional performances can be recorded and disseminated using modern media, particularly radio, to reach a large audience. This melding of the effectiveness of traditional media with the efficiency of modern media in reaching a large audience has often proven to be one of the most effective ways to communicate messages to rural populations or populations with low literacy levels. Other indigenous media forms that should be used to promote the culture of coastal forest conservation are opinion leaders. Being firmly anchored in the cultures of the people, traditional media is not only pervasive, cheap and widely accessible; it also enjoys a high credibility status.



## 8.0 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The communication work within the Coastal Forests Project will be overseen by WWF and implemented in collaboration with The Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. It will complement the communication activities that are outlined in the communication strategy for the National Forest Programme and TFS Participatory Forest Management Programme.

The work will also complement the information, education and communication strategy for the Eastern Arc Mountains and for REDD+ in Tanzania. The project will work through the Communications Unit of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division including the Zonal Extension teams.

It will be necessary to retain a service provider who will provide technical backstopping in the development of communication materials, monitoring and in working with the mass media, coastal forest stakeholders including District Natural Resources and Mangrove/ Coastal Forest conservation Officers, and the Community Forest Network of Tanzania (MJUMITA). The TFS Mangrove/Coastal Forest management teams in southern Tanzania will be supported to provide information to rural communities on the values of coastal forests and the best ways to ensure their conservation of provision of long term benefits to people. Materials to be distributed by the extension teams will be developed by the service provider in collaboration with TFS.



## 9.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The results of communications will be monitored and evaluated continuously following the extent to which planned activities are being implemented. As with any strategy, the purpose of monitoring is to measure progress during the intervention to recognize potential problems and opportunities and introduce modifications. The purpose of evaluation is to determine whether goals have been met. Data will be collected and analyzed immediately to allow coordinators to assess whether activities are on track; whether target audiences are being reached; whether some strategies are more successful than others; and if some aspects of the interventions should be re-evaluated and modified.

The following primary set of indicators is recommended for measuring the outcomes of communication activities:

- i. Number of radio programmes aired focusing on conservation and management of coastal forests
- ii. Number of project-related community meetings held
- iii. Number of people reached through traditional performances
- iv. Number of news stories published covering conservation and management of coastal forests and
- v. Number of followers on social media forums

To gain a more complete picture, implementation of the communication interventions will be reviewed and their impact assessed by an external reviewer at the time of the mid-term review and at the end of the project. This evaluation may have to look at the key results e.g. behaviour changes and impact on overall achievement of communication objectives through primarily sample surveys among key groups and stakeholders. Changes in stakeholder knowledge, attitude, practices and behaviour will be taken as indicators of the impact that will have been made by strategic communications.



## Communications Strategy Matrix

OBJECTIVE	TARGET AUDIENCE	KEY MESSAGE	COMMUNICATION MEDIA AND CHANNEL
To increase public awareness on the conservation of the coastal forests of southern Tanzania and Zanzibar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Commercial Forest Product Dealers</li> <li>• Local Government Authorities (LGAs)</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)</li> <li>• Children and Youth</li> </ul>	Tanzania has made substantial progress in developing the enabling conditions for sustainable management and conservation of its coastal resources. The Coastal Forests Projects provides continued and strong support of these efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project brochure</li> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Promotional Material</li> <li>• Radio PSAs</li> <li>• Village meetings</li> <li>• Seminars</li> </ul>
To promote public understanding that sustainably managed coastal forests of Tanzania provide more environmental, economic and social benefits locally and globally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Commercial Forest Product Dealers</li> <li>• Local Government Authorities (LGAs)</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Government Sector Ministries</li> </ul>	Exploiting coastal forests is not always bad for the environment. As long as the forests are managed in a sustainable way, there can be a multitude of benefits: for the climate, for people and for biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radio and TV programmes</li> <li>• Radio PSAs</li> <li>• Village meetings</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>
To raise awareness of alternative income generating activities available for coastal communities of Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local communities</li> <li>• Local Government Authorities (LGAs)</li> <li>• Children and Youth</li> </ul>	Coastal forests make an immense contribution to local livelihoods and the national economy. Spread the message about the importance of preserving available resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIGA poster</li> <li>• Radio PSAs</li> <li>• Radio programs</li> <li>• Village meetings</li> <li>• Traditional songs and dance</li> <li>• Bulletin boards</li> </ul>

