

## East Africa

ESPA's research in East Africa focuses on the complex interplay between nature and livelihoods. Whether its amongst communities eking out a living from one of the many coastal fisheries, on the semi-arid plains where massive upheaval threatens the traditional pastoralist way of life, or around the fringes of one of the regions iconic great lakes, these five projects are not just generating knowledge but bringing communities, policy and practice together.



## Engaging communities

ESPA research is designed with people at its heart. Every single project builds on, engages and addresses local priorities – with practical results.

**Swahili Seas** has not only helped 3,500 people around Gazi Bay restore their local mangroves, but it has also assisted them with forest tenure and the creation of a community PES scheme that brings in community income by selling carbon credits internationally.

**P-Mowtick** developed new tools for engaging with stakeholders culminating in an open meeting in Mombasa, where an audience of over 100 fishermen and fish traders experimented with a simplified computer model and reviewed possible future scenarios. By the end of the project, the stakeholders resolved to form a local governance structure (Beach Management Unit) with training for members provided through the Kenyan Fisheries Department.

## Strengthening capacity

ESPA actively supports developing country academics and their institutions, working with them to get their research into use.

The experiences gained and the specific findings from **BEST** were instrumental in a €1.7 million application by one of the BEST team members to a call for proposals issued by IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) to showcase cross border biodiversity management of the coastal forests and seascapes along the Kenyan Somali border.

The first **EAGLO** stakeholder workshop brought together 30 stakeholders, policymakers and academics from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and the EU, to agree shared priorities across the lake systems. This project also helped start several public-private partnerships, such as one with the Austrian Program in Education and Agricultural Research, allowing smallholder farmers to work with universities to address water-related vulnerabilities in Kenya and Uganda.

## Supporting practice

ESPA projects are all about on-the-ground impact – using knowledge they've generated by working with stakeholders to improve livelihoods and protect ecosystems.

Through their contacts with Earthwatch, **Swahili Seas** established a relationship with insurer Aviva, who underpinned £50,000 of the initial costs of the project. The sale of carbon credits will bring rapid financial benefit to the community without needing to cover the initial costs – increasing the longer term sustainability of the project.

Real data collected by **WD-NACE** stakeholders are improving the models, allowing local government officials and fishermen to better understand the status of their fishery and come up with management recommendations – thereby reducing reliance on outside help for support.

## Influencing policy

Another route to development impact is by working closely with policymakers to ensure ESPA generated evidence feeds into decision making processes.

When Kenya's Department of Forestry learnt that **Swahili Seas** had mapped mangrove forest cover along the coastline, they asked for the underlying data so it could be used in their planning for REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation).

**BEST** have provided the Kenyan Government with technical assistance in advance of policy formulation for the mapping of their wildlife corridors and in their natural capital accounting, as well as reviewing the Government's arid lands policy before its launch in February 2013.

## Developing tools

Models and scenarios are central to a number of ESPA projects, with the majority of teams taking a participatory approach to their development.

A model designed to link the governance and power relationships that affect fishing effort and the individual decisions that fishermen must take in their day to day activities was created through **WD-NACE**. The model was co-created with local fishermen for them to explore and comment on how it matched their experiences.

**P-Mowtick's** interactive social-ecological model allowed stakeholders and decision-makers to see and reflect on how changes to the system – such as governance or fishing effort - would impact differently on the wellbeing of different stakeholders.

## Safeguarding Nature Combating Hardship Empowering Communities

[www.espa.ac.uk](http://www.espa.ac.uk)  
Naturally Life Changing



A research programme co-funded by DFID, NERC & ESRC and accredited by LWEC

