

Why Promoting Environment, Conservation and Tourism in Tanzania



Tourism is vital to Tanzania's economy. In 2015 it accounted for 17 percent of the country's GDP and a quarter of its total foreign currency. The country's giraffes, elephants, rhinoceroses, and lions attract 1.5 million tourists annually who patronize tour companies, hotels, restaurants, and other local businesses.

However, Tanzania's tourism, worth \$2.4 billion a year, is threatened by rampant animal poaching and trafficking, human-wildlife conflict and habitat loss, all of which harm its biodiversity. These issues had led to a 60 percent loss of Tanzania's elephant population in just five years, between 2009 and 2014.

The country's weak or non-existent conservation policies, insufficient resources, and a legal system that lacked the capacity to effectively prosecute wildlife crime cases made it difficult to address these biodiversity concerns.

In 2015, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the Promoting Tanzania's Environment, Conservation, and Tourism (PROTECT) project, led by RTI. The five-year USAID PROTECT project focused on strengthening institutions and building capacity so that Tanzanians could better protect their biodiversity and safeguard their economic growth.

Private Sector Engagement: A Key Partner for Conservation in Tanzania

USAID PROTECT engaged the private sector, including partners like the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation (TPSF), to leverage funding and resources to support wildlife conservation. These partnerships raised \$2.5 million in assets for nature-based enterprises and placed nearly 400,000 hectares of biologically significant land under improved management.

The project's collaboration with safari company Asilia Camps and Lodges focused on protecting cheetah breeding grounds in the Eastern Serengeti, as well as providing essential equipment to the Tanzania National Parks Authority's anti-poaching team for patrols.

USAID PROTECT also joined forces with the Manta Resort's Kwanini Foundation to restore and protect coral reefs in the Pemba Channel Conservation Area. This area is a key marine biodiversity hotspot that is particularly resistant to coral bleaching, but due to dynamite fishing and other destructive human activities was close to being decimated.

Supporting the civil society organizations and training institutions that partner with the private sector is crucial to ensuring a strong tourism industry. We supported the Tanzania Association of Tour Operators to successfully lobby the Tanzanian Parliament for a better tax climate for its 400 members and industry investors.

Our approach also increased the private sector's investment in conserving Tanzania's biodiversity through industries directly focused on tourism and conservation. Recognizing that wildlife smugglers use Tanzania's transportation companies and banks to commit their crimes, USAID PROTECT worked with the TPSF to train staff representing 37 companies from the aviation, financial, shipping and logistics sectors to identify and report wildlife trafficking. The project also supported the development of a code of conduct for combating wildlife crime for TPSF's 300 company members.

Improving Conservation Policies and Regulations in Tanzania

USAID PROTECT supported the development of policies and regulations that safeguarded Tanzania's wildlife, such as the endangered Masai giraffe. The project helped the Giraffe

Conservation Foundation and the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) develop and implement the National Giraffe Conservation Action Plan, a five-year strategy to conserve the country's national animal. USAID PROTECT also supported the development of a five-year National Chimpanzee Conservation Action Plan in partnership with the Jane Goodall Institute. Implementation of the plan prevents further harm to endangered chimpanzee populations and encourages reforestation and connectivity of chimpanzee habitats.

To help animals migrate freely and safely, the project supported the adoption of wildlife corridor regulations in 2018. USAID PROTECT also supported TAWIRI with the development of a priority action plan to implement these regulations at the national level. To develop the priority action plan, USAID PROTECT collected data from stakeholders through multiple workshops in partnership with the Zoological Society of London, the Wildlife Conservation Society, and OIKOS East Africa. The plan included a list of priority corridors and tasks to guide future efforts to secure wildlife connectivity in Tanzania. To help implement the wildlife corridor regulations on the local level, the project provided grants to the Southern Tanzania Elephant Program (STEP) and the Chem Chem Association. USAID PROTECT worked with Chem Chem to demonstrate how wildlife corridors were being used by installing 60 camera traps and collaring five elephants to track their movements.

The project also supported Zanzibar's adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Regulations in 2019. This adoption was crucial, as Zanzibar was previously a wildlife trafficking hub. To enforce these regulations, USAID PROTECT helped the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism build its capacity through workshops, trainings, and a manual with standard operating procedures.

Supporting Conservation Activities in Tanzania on Land and Sea

Tanzania's biodiversity includes a wide variety of different landscapes and ecosystems, all of which contribute to the country's tourism industry. In the Ruaha landscape, the project has reduced human-wildlife conflict by 99 percent by supporting the construction of 39 wire bomas across 16 villages to protect the livestock those villages rely on. The project also helped the Ruaha Carnivore Project (RCP) collar five lions and three spotted hyenas to track their movements on village lands. RCP also documented and collected detailed data on the deaths of ten carnivores, five of which involved animals getting caught in snares and later being killed. All of these data will inform future action to protect the landscape's animal population and mitigate conflict with humans living in the area. USAID PROTECT also supported the publication of the children's book, "Darem the Lion Defender," which raised awareness among youth on how to live with lions.

To mitigate conflicts between elephants and humans, USAID PROTECT partnered with STEP to build beehive fencing along the Mwanihana-Magombera corridor, where elephants used to invade and destroy farms. Beehive fencing, which uses elephants' natural fear of bees, has successfully prevented elephants from wandering into villages. This USAID PROTECT-supported activity safeguarded elephants as well as the livelihoods of farmers who live along this corridor.

In partnership with Sea Sense, a local marine animal conservation group, USAID PROTECT supported the education of key coastal villages on the importance of protecting Tanzania's green sea turtles, dugongs, and whale sharks. The project also supported Sea Sense to conduct intensive monitoring of green turtle nesting as part of its annual population census through training sessions with the turtle tagging teams. With effective training, the group's ability to document turtle nesting trends will inform future action to ensure their protection.

The project also protected the Pemba Channel Conservation Area (PeCCA) through a grant to the Mwambao Coastal Community Network (MCCN). This partnership supported marine conservation awareness campaigns for the Pemba communities of Shehias, Makoongwe, and Shidi. MCCN also provided input into the South West Indian Ocean (SWIO) fish management planning process for the PeCCA, leading to sustainable fishing programs to prevent overfishing.

Strengthening the Capacity of Local Institutions

USAID PROTECT helped multiple wildlife training institutions develop their strategic plans, business strategies and fundraising tactics to educate the next generation of conservation leaders. Because of USAID PROTECT, the College of African Wildlife Management-Mweka now has an e-learning platform and improved geospatial technology. The project also helped wildlife training institutions update their curriculums, guidebooks, and field equipment. The Likuyu Sekamaganga Conservation Training Centre is one example; the project supported the institution to finalize a new curriculum and provided a pedagogical training for faculty members.

Good journalism is crucial to stopping wildlife crime. In collaboration with the RTI-implemented USAID Wildlife Asia activity, the USAID PROTECT project developed an exchange program with top Tanzanian and Thai journalists to investigate stories on both the supply and demand side of the illegal wildlife trade. They interviewed conservation experts, government officials, community leaders, and representatives of other organizations involved in combating the wildlife trade. As a result of this effort, more than 80 stories were published on wildlife crime. This exchange program gave journalists the opportunity to learn more about wildlife crime and poaching, as well as learn from other journalists from across the globe.

Combating Wildlife Crime in Tanzania

USAID PROTECT took a multi-tiered approach to fighting animal trafficking, which occurs when animals are illegally killed and sold in other countries for meat, trophies, or traditional medicines. The Activity helped build capacity within law enforcement to improve the rate of successful prosecutions of wildlife traffickers. In collaboration with the Tanzania Department of Public Prosecution, the Lawyers' Environmental Action Team and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the project developed protocols and trained public prosecutors on prosecuting wildlife crimes. To strengthen the judicial handling and sentencing of wildlife crimes, the project supported training for more than 80 judges and magistrates using in-person and online courses on wildlife crime.

To reduce poaching at the village level, USAID PROTECT supported the PAMS Foundation to conduct intelligence-based antipoaching trainings for village game scouts and wildlife rangers to increase their capacity to use data to catch poachers. The project also assisted the Community Wildlife Management Areas Consortium and the Government of Tanzania's (GOT) Wildlife Division to provide intelligence training to key staff in community wildlife areas.

Creating a Sustainable Environment for Future Conservation Work

USAID PROTECT's work had the broad impact it did thanks to our holistic approach. We not only worked with organizations that specialize in wildlife conservation but also engaged the private sector, supporting the development of biodiversity conservation policies and building the capacity of these institutions. In doing so, we enabled private business owners, wildlife researchers, and representatives of the GOT to collaborate to strengthen biodiversity conservation on all sides.

USAID PROTECT's engagement on both the national and local levels was also key to its success. The project advocated for local interventions on a national scale while adapting national-level policies and research to benefit Tanzanian communities. By acting as the liaison between the GOT and localities, we filled a critical role that propelled wildlife conservation forward.

Through this integrated approach, we built a sustainable conservation network that continues to live on beyond the life of the project.