

2024 IN REVIEW



OUR OCEAN
PEOPLE



Messages from Directors



Patrick Kimani, Director

"This was a great year. We scaled the heights and broke new ceilings. COMRED was placed on the global map through representation at the Skoll World Forum in the UK, and New York Climate Week and Schmoozefest at Tarrytown in the US. We forged partnerships with Livelihood Impact Fund, WorldFish, GIZ, Danish Church Aid, UNDP-Ocean Innovation Challenge and cultivated old ones with Blue Ventures, Maliasili and Norad."



Innocent Ngao, Director

"We experienced significant growth, strengthened our engagement with the communities we serve, and conducted a midterm review of our strategic plan. Our partnership portfolio expanded, and through effective networking, we successfully contributed to key global roundtables on climate and other critical issues. Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to build on these achievements, applying the lessons learned to enhance our impact and foster even greater collaboration for coastal communities and cities"



Joseph Tunje, Director

"The year has been a success for COMRED. We have successfully implemented various interventions and delivered outputs in line with our strategy, supported by good leadership compounded by a youthful, cohesive, and highly motivated team. I look forward to upscaling our operations and producing impactful results in the coming year."



Nyaga Kanyange, Director

"I appreciate witnessing the organization's growth from no staff to over twenty, especially this year. I appreciate the vibrancy, and the innovative ideas young people bring to the organization. I'm excited to see and witness more in the coming year."



Andrew Wamukota, Director

"We witnessed remarkable progress and growth in engaging communities in sustainable interventions and enhanced staff capacity while riding on support from existing and new partners. This achievement highlights our team's commitment and hard work to secure the necessary resources for our mission and expand our reach. Our focus on capacity development has been centered on recruiting talent with diverse skills and experiences to foster a culture of excellence within the organization. Combining all these factors has positioned COMRED in a trajectory of continued success and impact in the coming year(s)."

GOAL 1: Improved governance and management of coastal and marine resources



Data collectors during a feedback session

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

This year, we worked with **13 BMUs** in Kwale County (Shimoni, Mkwiwo, Wasini, Kibuyuni, Majoreni, Jimbo, Vanga, Mwandamu, Munje, Mkunguni, Mwaembe, Funzi, and Bodo) and **4 BMUs** in Kilifi County (Roka, Wesa, Kichwa cha Kati and Ngomeni) to enhance leadership and governance through training, mentorship, and creating awareness.

Milestones Achieved



7% increase in leadership capacity with improved financial management and record keeping.



Compliance with fisheries regulations increased, with more fishers submitting fish catch data, obtaining licenses, and participating actively in BMU activities.



60 BMU patrol subcommittee members from **12 BMUs** were trained and mentored on Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) to curb illegalities.

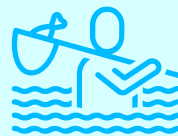




Kenya Fisheries Officers pose for a photo with BMU leaders after a leadership and governance training



BMU leaders during the leadership and governance training



Community champions raised awareness among **451** fishers across **11** BMUs on sustainable practices and conservation.



35 BMU leaders and patrol subcommittee members from **2** BMUs were trained in fisheries management.



Nine BMUs drafted and endorsed 2024 work-plans and budgets



70 community members were reached during the ***Bahari Huru Festival*** organized in collaboration with [Jukwaa Arts](#) to promote marine resource conservation.



Munje data collectors collect data

FISHERIES DATA COLLECTION

Data-driven conservation and resource management.

Since 2022, COMRED has supported **nine** Beach Management Units (BMUs) in Kwale County in collecting fish catch data using KoboCollect app. We aim to help BMUs gather accurate and reliable data to guide their conservation and resource management strategies.

In 2024, we supported **three** additional BMUs, increasing the total to **12** in Kwale and Kilifi. We organized quarterly and annual feedback meetings with BMU leaders and assemblies to present the data, facilitate discussions, and plan actionable strategies.





Project Officer Stephen Musyoka leads a data training session

Milestones Achieved



24 BMU Data Collectors (10 women, 14 men) **60 %** of them being youth, have been trained, equipped, and engaged in fish catch data collection



Over **50** BMU members (office bearers and data collectors) received training in fisheries monitoring, fish identification, and data management.



40,000 fish catch data records collected so far, from the 4 days-a-week collection routine



In 2024, we held our first fish catch data feedback session led by our **community data collectors**, who analyzed and presented the results in all BMUs.



Data collectors (right) gather data at the Octopus closure opening

EMPOWERING COASTAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH AWARENESS

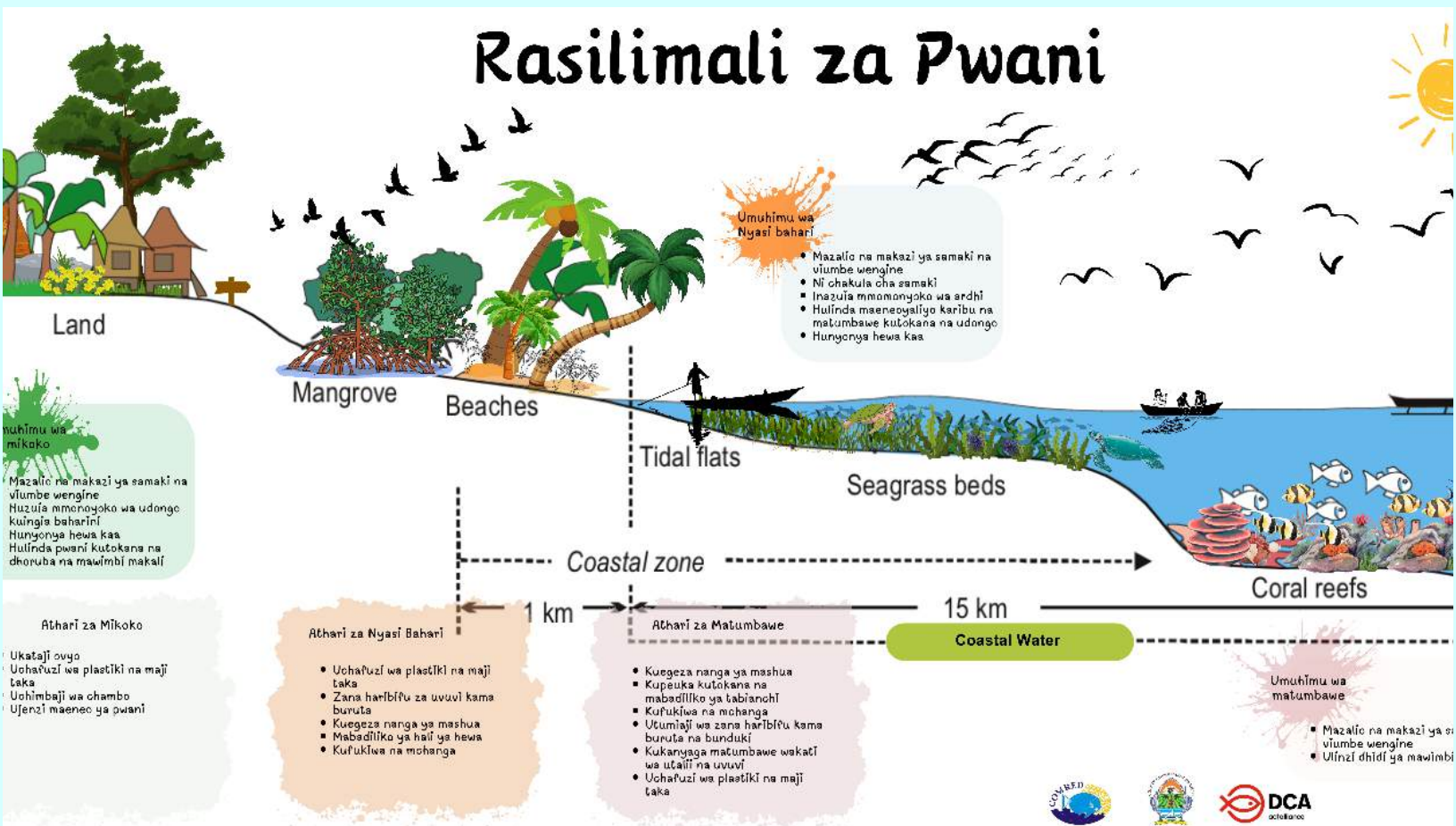
We undertook intensive awareness creation to empower coastal communities in the Malindi-Magarini Joint Co-Management Area about sustainable fishing practices. This targeted two BMUs: Kichwa Cha Kati BMU, with **217** registered members, and Ngomeni BMU, with **683** members.

We used illustrated awareness materials to communicate complex regulations and laws by simplifying them to promote sustainable fishing and enhance the conservation of marine ecosystems.

Milestone achieved



150 trained BMU members, among them **15** executives equipped with skills in leadership, governance, BMU structure and functions, national fisheries management, BMU bylaws, and financial management.



A well illustrated awareness material used during the sessions

Goal 2: Conservation of coastal and marine resources

OCTOPUS CLOSURE

In 2023, Munje BMU designated 0.4 km² (1% of the total fishing area) of their co-management area as an octopus closure site to enhance and protect community-led management initiatives.

Over the past **15** months, the Munje community has organized **three** successful opening events, each marking the start of a new octopus harvest period.



An Octopus fisher with his catch at Munje during closure opening



Hon. Fatuma Achani, Governor Kwale county, during the launch of the patrol boat

The Octopus closure has generated income for Munje fishers and other members through octopus sales and eco-tourism. This has created strong incentives for continued conservation.



Hon. Fatuma Achani with Munje and Mkwiro women octopus fishers during the opening of the closure



Women from Mkwiro BMU train women from Munje on octopus gleaning

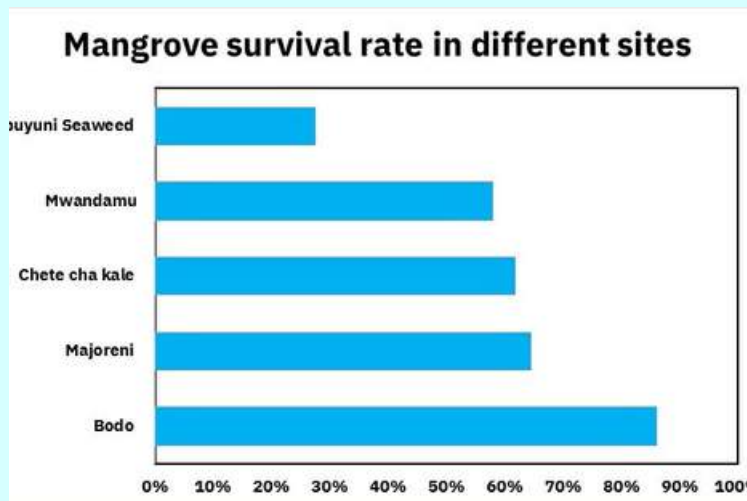


Munje octopus closure fishing ground demarcation



MANGROVE RESTORATION

We restored 3 ha of mangrove forest to address climate change, and achieved **60%** survival rate. In some restored sites, such as Bodo, there has been increase in crab populations and benthic marine life—a clear indication of the ecosystem's recovery.



From the monitoring and planting exercise, communities preferred restoration using *Avicennia marina*, *Ceriops tagal*, and *Rhizophora mucronata* due to ease of propagation.

Despite a good survival rate, there are still persistent challenges, including bait digging, siltation, logging, boat anchorage,

Goal 3: Enhanced and diversified sustainable livelihoods and access to finance



Kibuyuni dagaa processors training on life and business skills, fish handling, and hygiene

FISH VALUE ADDITION

This year, we launched a fisheries value chain development initiative to improve the livelihoods of Kwale fisherfolk through varied interventions. We began with a value chain assessment to identify existing initiatives, major challenges, and opportunities targeting communities within the Msambweni-Shimoni-Vanga seascape. This informed the development of business plans, training manuals and infrastructure needs.

Milestones Achieved

1. Capacity in various skills was built for value chain actors in Mkunguni, Munje and Kibuyuni



74 value chain actors (fishers, dealers, and scale processors) from Mkunguni, Munje, and Kibuyuni trained on life and business skills.



32 Kibuyuni dagaa processors (22 females, 10 males) trained on leadership, fish handling, and hygiene.





The constructed Kibuyuni dagaa processing area and drying racks.



Members of the group packaging dagaa

2. Several infrastructural developments were undertaken, including a processing area, energy-saving jikos, drying racks, toilet block, water supply, wastewater soak pit, and fencing of the processing compound. The infrastructure supports production, making it quicker, safer, and hygienic.



Dagaa processors drying dagaa

3. We fabricated a fish-smoking kiln, the FAO Thiaroye Technique (FTT kiln), which is now in use at Kibuyuni.



Patrick Kimani, director at COMRED during cash handover at Mkunguni BMU

ACCESS TO FINANCE (ECO-CREDIT)

The Eco-credit project commenced in 2021 in Kwale County in collaboration with Blue Ventures and Green-Fi. The project aims to provide access to credit as an incentive for marine conservation.

In the model, a group member borrows and repays a loan while committing to engage in environmental conservation activities such as mangrove restorative activities, beach clean-ups, and raising awareness. The goal is to improve the community's long-term environmental and economic resilience.

We have a total of **30** groups, comprising **62%** females and **38%** males in Kwale and Kilifi counties.



Munje eco-credit during one of their meeting

2024 Impact Highlights



Direct beneficiaries have increased from **278** to **831** between 2022 and 2024. **16%** of the beneficiaries being youth.



There has been an average of **60%** growth of the fund from loan interest, loan penalties, loan form fees, registration fees, and profits from group businesses.



28 new businesses have been started with the eco-credit loans and **123** existing businesses expanded.



Average loan issued per member has grown from **Ksh 2,600** (\$20.14) to **Ksh 25,000** (\$193.70)



Mwanatumu, CBT Mwaembe eco-credit at her shop



Eco-credit members during an eco-credit meeting



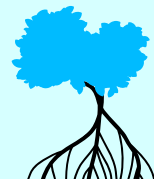
Current total group savings amount to **Ksh 4,379,840** (\$33,935).



2,580 community members reached through **26** awareness sessions



1.7 tonnes of waste collected from **129** beach clean-ups in 2024



16ha of degraded mangroves restored



Bee keepers from Yungi, Mwenjeni and Mbweni during Hive monitoring and hands-on bee-keeping training.

MANGROVE HONEY PRODUCTION

The mangrove honey production project aims to increase income for bee-keeping farmers in the Msambweni-Shimoni-Vanga seascape, thereby improving their livelihoods. This will be achieved through training in best practices in beekeeping, apiary construction, providing honey processing and handling equipment, and market development.

The project is being implemented in three villages Yungi, Mwenjeni, and Mbweni.

Milestones Achieved

- The groups have a total of **74** members. (57% women, 43% men).
- **30** members have been trained in business, life, and leadership skills.
- **74** members have received hands-on training on beekeeping skills.
- **30%** improvement in hive colonization due to hands-on training on best beekeeping practices and regular monitoring.
- **2** apiaries constructed
- **150** beehives distributed to farmers



News and Updates



ClimateWeekNYC

In September, COMRED was represented at the New York Climate Week 2024 by our Director (Patrick Kimani). [See more](#)

Wildlife ranger challenge

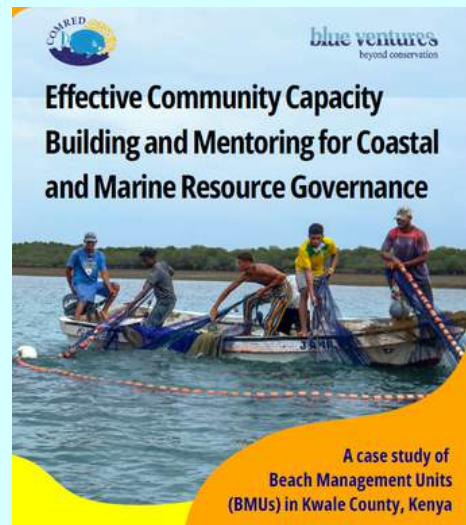
In 2024, the Munje patrol team joined the Wildlife Ranger Challenge for the first time. Over the three-month campaign, the team completed a mini-challenge (quiz) and ran a 21 km half marathon in 1 hour and 45 minutes.



By the end of the campaign, we raised £337 and secured an additional £84 in matching funds. This effort enabled COMRED to apply for a £15,500 grant to improve ranger salaries, benefits, well-being, equipment, training kits, logistical support, and administration.

Have you checked out our Leadership and governance mentorship guide?

We have drafted a mentorship guide '*Effective Community Capacity Building and Mentoring for Coastal and Marine Resource Governance*' to support community leaders, practitioners, and organizations in strengthening local governance of coastal and marine resources.



Download guide [here](#)

Exchange visit to Tanga, Tanzania



In July 2024, COMRED, in collaboration with Mwambao and Seasense, participated in a Blue Ventures-funded exchange visit to Tanga, Tanzania. The visit offered a valuable learning experience for four COMRED staff members and 10 BMU members, including data collectors and leaders.

Get to know our directors



Nyaga Kanyange, 48

Breaking the Waves

Nyaga Kanyange sits working on what is a proposal. Directors of donor-based NGOs are constantly working on proposals—that's what drives their lives. He looks more calmer in his light green polo shirt and dark shorts. That's one of the perks of working somewhere that values result over dress codes. He prefers employees who work smart and deliver results. You wouldn't tell Nyaga apart from the rest of the staff; he's grounded and unassuming. In fact, you'd probably overlook him, but he is the guy who calls the shots.

Growing up, I always wanted to study something that would connect me to the marine world because I love the water—it helps me relax. My ideal end to any workday now is a swim. Maybe that love for water goes back to my childhood in a remote area in Embu. Village boys would play with catapults, aiming at birds (out of pure mischief. I grew up playing with small wildlife, insects, and house pets, and I also kept myself busy fishing and swimming in the nearby rivers. Besides, I was a young farmer keeping ducks, rabbits, and pigeons. We were used to them, just like we were used to walking for kilometers barefoot. My parents could afford shoes, but we wanted to fit in.

After working in several roles, upon completing my undergraduate, I applied for a master's. I went to Brussels. I wanted a broader experience that was out of the norm. The application process was a journey itself. I had to go to a cybercafé—those congested rooms full of big monitors that took ages to boot—the storage—floppy diskette could hold maybe a single image! The internet was too slow, and you'd spend hours on a single thing. We used Yahoo email then.

["Do diskettes still exist?" he asks, "I don't know—that sounds like eons ago!" I respond] Anyway, I applied, and I was fortunate enough to get in. I was the only Kenyan who qualified for the course that year!

Brussels was a new world. I quickly learned to manage culture shock and racism, something you could encounter almost every day. The school kept us so busy that had no time to idle. I met new international people, and we are still friends today.

Being in your forties means learning to filter through things. Not everything requires a reaction; you also learn to care for yourself mentally and physically.

Looking back, I'm grateful this far. I appreciate witnessing our organization's growth from no staff to over twenty. I enjoy working with young people—they bring fresh energy and new ideas. It's been a beautiful journey, and I'm excited to see what's next.

By Waithira Kunene



Patrick Kimani (PhD)

Nature's Rhythms

Pursuing a PhD is like carrying a mischievous monkey on your back—constant, relentless, and impossible to ignore. It scratches at you, demanding your attention until the day you finally set it free. But I was driven—I wanted to be the best in my field, and that relentless pursuit of excellence propelled me to earn my doctorate. Leading a growing organization has also been a transformative journey. It forces you to wear many hats, knowing every decision rests squarely on your shoulders. It's a constant push to learn, adapt, and grow.

I grew up in Olenguruone, a small, forested village in Nakuru. Life revolved around farming—taking care of animals, tending crops, and learning the rhythms of nature. As the firstborn son, I carried a lot of responsibility, and those early experiences naturally guided me toward environmental science. My connection to the land shaped my career path long before I realized it.

A turtle conservation organization where I interned briefly introduced me to the marine world—and fisheries, which has been my focus for the past two decades. After earning my master's degree, I struggled to find a foothold within conservation organizations, before I turned to community work. That pivot became my entry point into engaging with communities directly, and I've been passionate about community-driven initiatives ever since.

I'm particularly interested in community-led marine conservation and value chain development, especially in fisheries. This is one of the most effective ways to improve community well-being. I am committed to making a tangible impact in this space.

Are you on Facebook? Ah! No, I find it very noisy; I haven't been there for so long.

["Has it changed?" he asks. "No, I don't think so; I deleted it long ago," I respond]

I prefer LinkedIn and Twitter, spaces where I can engage with like-minded professionals. I also read a lot. My browser has a lot of open tabs—the result of a snowball: I'll start with one article, which links to another, and another. My preferences are topics on social impact, innovation, and social science.

Despite my busy schedule, I do make time to unwind. Netflix is my escape, and right now, I'm watching *Madness*. I gravitate toward logical and creatively engaging content that straddles fiction and reality.

I envision breaking the fundraising glass ceiling by raising a million dollars in 2025, delivering measurable impact, scaling up livelihood projects, and investing in staff welfare. It's a big vision, but I'm ready to make it happen.

I'm a husband. I am a Gen-X, my lastborn is Gen-Alpha, and my first and second born are Gen-Z—offering me an intergenerational experience right in my home. I value my children and family; they are important to me.

By Waithira Kunene

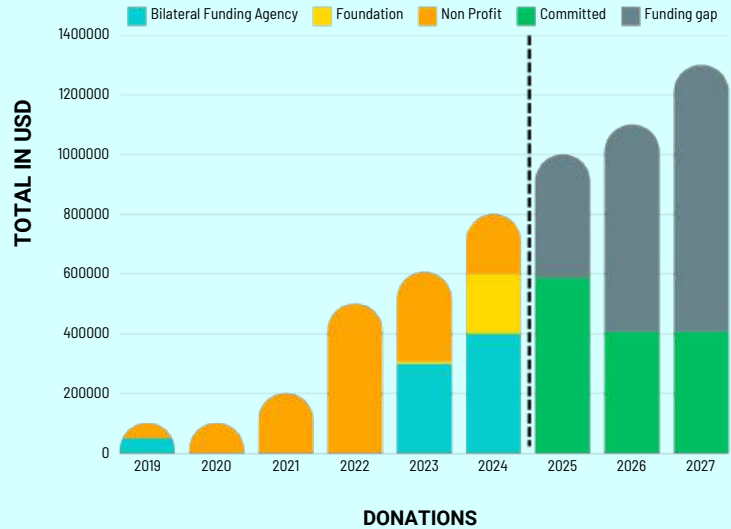
FINANCIALS

Our funding focus

In 2024, we experienced significant growth, with a larger team, broader reach, and increased budget.

As we continue to expand, we look forward to addressing key staffing gaps, strengthen critical internal functions, and anticipate a growing budget.

Annual Donor Funding



Our focus will be on reinforcing our core long- term partnerships, diversifying our funding sources, and increasing the amount of unrestricted funding in our budget. This will give us greater flexibility and enable us to make internal investments in staff capacity.

Our funding needs for the next three years

With your support, we can tackle biodiversity and climate threats, improve livelihoods, and implement our ambitious 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

Building our team

We plan to invest more strongly in our team to build an even more effective and resilient COMRED. We aim to improve our team's skills, knowledge and training and also recruit for emergent staff roles.

Our Funding Gap:

\$3.4 million for core and program costs (2025 - 2027).

\$413, 000The amount secured to June 2025.

\$1.9 million-deficit for the next 3 years



Feasibility Assessment for Public Water Transport option to road transport in Mombasa

We implemented the Full Feasibility Study (FFS) project for Coastal and Harbour Water Transportation in Mombasa in collaboration with UN-Habitat and the County Government. The FFS is a key component of the GO Blue Project.

As Kenya's top tourist destination and gateway to East and Central Africa, the city has faced rapid population growth, urban sprawl, and increased private car ownership, leading to severe congestion and economic losses. To address these issues, we assessed the viability of a coastal and harbor water transport system that provides an economical and environmentally friendly alternative to congested road transport and facilitates passenger and freight movement.

The study was informed by key strategic documents; Mombasa Third County Integrated Development Plan (2023-2027); Annual Development Plan (2023-2024); Climate Action Plan (2023-2050), and the Mombasa Vision 2035. These plans emphasize alleviating chronic road transport congestion and reducing the city's carbon emissions through Non-Motorized Transport (NMT), Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and water transport development.

The FFS will conclude after a validation workshop and publication of a report detailing water transport routes, engineering solutions, and cost options. Once implemented, this initiative is expected to enhance mobility, reduce congestion, and promote sustainable urban transport in Mombasa.

Action Research to Facilitate Blue Economy Development



This year, we conducted a commissioned study in the Diani-Shimoni seascape of Kwale County as part of the global Blue Tourism Initiative co-led by IDDRI and implemented by CORDIO East Africa. The initiative promotes sustainable coastal tourism in the Mediterranean, Western Indian Ocean, and Caribbean regions, aiming to provide scalable solutions for global sustainable tourism.

Despite the renowned natural beauty, vibrant communities, and blue economy activities such as fishing, tourism, and marine conservation in the Diani-Shimoni seascape, it faces challenges such as overfishing, mangrove depletion, climate change impacts, and limited community organization and decision-making capacity.

We assessed the current state of tourism, local livelihoods, economic drivers, natural resource health, and climate change impacts and identified strategies to enhance tourism sustainability. We produced a Roadmap for Sustainable Blue Tourism that stakeholders validated. It outlines strategic actions, timelines, and community involvement strategies, focusing on environmental conservation, social equity, and economic viability.

Thank you note

This year, we have done tremendously well by raising the highest amount of funds ever. We couldn't have done it without the generous support from;

Norad, Blue Ventures, Livelihood Impact Fund, TUSK Foundation, Dan Church Aid, UK International Development's OCEAN Grant, and the Blue Planet Fund through WorldFish;

The governments of Sweden and Norway, through UNDP's Ocean Innovation Challenge, with the support of COMESA, UN-Habitat, CORDIO, BMZ through GIZ's IKI TBCA Project and WIOMSA.

We also wish to thank our collaborating partners, Maliasili, Government agencies; Kenya Fisheries Service, Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Coast Guard Service, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, and the County governments of Mombasa, Kwale, and Kilifi.

We look forward to greater engagement, fostering stronger relationships, and even better stewardship of resources bestowed on us in the coming year.



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[Coastal and Marine Resources Development](https://www.linkedin.com/company/comred)

info@comred.or.ke | comred.or.ke