



# Incentivizing local communities to actively participate in the conservation of the EAMs ecosystem

Working with a mixed group of local communities, government institutions, private sector actors and other partners in advancing conservation of the EAMs ecosystem is interesting but yet challenging. Over the last 20 years the EAMCEF – a Not-for-Profit Non-Governmental Organization registered as a Trust Fund functions as a long-term and reliable funding mechanism to support Community Development, Biodiversity Conservation and Applied Research Projects in the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania – has been operating across the ecosystem, among other objectives, in co-creating and supporting sustainable incentives to promote conservation efforts and social economic development of surrounding communities, and thus wishes to share three key messages linked to incentive development.

## Snapshot of recent key results (2011-2023) in targeted sites.

- » **430+ projects** funded in the 3 thematic areas.
- » Over **Tsh. 6.7 billion** grant support to projects
- » **9 Protected Areas** received operational support.
- » **Over 70%** reduction of forest fire incidences
- » **6,121 Ha** of degraded areas rehabilitated by refilling of 403 mining pits and planting of indigenous trees.
- » **2,853 km** of boundaries cleared and maintained in 9 reserves reducing forest encroachment and fire outbreaks – unclear and invisible boundaries have been a source of land conflicts with local communities surrounding the forests.
- » Over **4,500,000 trees** planted on boundaries/buffer zones of Protected Areas
- » **45,282 community members** empowered on establishment and implementation of alternative livelihood activities
- » **655 farmers** trained on soil and water conservation techniques. (conservation agriculture) on **863 ha** of land leading to a 200-300% increase in agricultural production, higher incomes and enhanced food security.

- » Over **150,000 community members** benefited from short term employment as casual labourers in various conservation activities such as boundary clearance and maintenance, and boundary tree planting.
- » **16,346 households** adopted use of fuel-efficient stoves leading to over 73% cut in firewood consumption, employment to local artisans and reduced pressure on the forests.
- » **145 certificates** of customary rights of occupancy provided under the EAMCEF facilitation, thereby strengthening tenure rights among local communities. 954 land conflicts got resolved during the last 10 years.
- » **3,843 km** of ecotourism nature trails cleared and maintained – thereby increasing access to the nature reserves, attracting tourists.
- » **31 campsites** established and renovation of ecotourism information Centre supported thereby increasing visibility and number of visitors.
- » **Reduced degradation** and improved protection of Protected Areas
- » **Improved ecotourism infrastructure** within Protected Areas
- » **Improved conservation awareness** and networking with adjacent communities achieved.

**Message 1:** Policy and legal frameworks for natural resource conservation provide an enabling environment for participation of local communities, however inadequate financial and technical support hinders actions on the ground.

- Tanzania's national policies, strategies and regulatory instruments related to natural resource management provides an adequate framework for participation of local communities in the management of natural resources, specifically forest and wildlife resources as a focus in this case – either as managers and owners of the resources within their village and community lands, or as co-managers of resources owned by the central government, regional and district authorities. In the forest sector, a Participatory Forest Management (PFM) approach was developed to enhance participation and benefit sharing through Joint Forest Management (JFM) and Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) models. JFM is exercised in state-owned forests whereby communities participate as co-managers while CBFM is exercised under community-lands where local communities are both owners and managers of the forest resources. In wildlife rich areas, a similar model exist – called Community-Based Conservation (CBC) where communities actively participate in wildlife conservation through formulation of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) which are then registered as Authorized Associations (AAs).
- With a credit facility of US\$ 2.4 Mil. from the World Bank during the establishment phase (2002-2009) EAMCEF was able to finance activities and operations, and further strengthen its work through extensive funding from the Government of the Kingdom of Norway (2011-2023) amounting to USD 9,072,000 and TZS 9,162,920,000, and co-financing from other partners. Through the project support EAMCEF managed to promote adoption of diverse alternative income generating activities that empowers communities economically and reduces direct dependence on forests while addressing immediate drivers of ecosystem degradation in 12 District Councils. EAMCEF also supported the management and conservation efforts of 9 Protected Areas (8 Nature Forest Reserves and 1 National Park) across the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania. This support contributes directly to the implementation of related national policies and strategies and local level development plans.

**Call for Action:** Adequate financial resources are required to sustain and scale up conservation efforts across the EAMs ecosystem, including through dedicated support on community-based conservation and development

**Message 2:** Promoting of off-forest alternative income generating activities is an effective method of creating incentives for active participation of local communities in conservation of protected areas within the EAMs ecosystem.

- Communities living across the EAMs ecosystem continue to benefit directly and indirectly from a combination of various ecosystem services generated by the environment around them – including regulating services, provisioning services, cultural services and supporting services. It is under the provisioning service category where local communities obtain all products from the ecosystem – such products include food, raw materials and energy. Such services are free in nature but the ecosystem, in turn, requires responsible consumption in order to sustain a continued flow of the services. Given the importance of the EAMs ecosystem at local, national and global levels, the government of Tanzania designated the EAMs ecosystem to encompass protected areas in the form of Nature Forest Reserves and National Park. This designation means reducing the space available for other competing land uses such as agriculture, livestock and pasture production, mining activities, and timber production. These competing land uses become immediate causes and key drivers of environmental degradation within protected areas if not well managed.
- Our work on community development and conservation is geared to put local communities at the heart of conservation by supporting alternative economic activities that would accelerate the improvement of rural livelihoods and social welfare and thus reducing total dependency on forest products. Our experience working across EAMs ecosystem through provision of technical support and grants for small-scale alternative income generating activities (such as; beekeeping activities, production of biogas from animal wastes, butterfly farming, soil and water conservation agriculture, fish farming practices, adoption of locally-made fuel wood energy efficient stoves, horticulture farming, land use planning, livestock keeping, spice tree farming, sunflower farming for oil production, soya beans farming, mushroom farming and agroforestry) has empowered participating local communities with an incentive to undertake community-based conservation actions linked to the overall protection of the EAMs ecosystem – thus reducing pressure on Protected Areas. This complements government efforts in managing these PA.

**Call for Action:** Planning and budgeting (from government and partnership programmes) for protected area management should strongly consider inclusion of dedicated budgets to support community-based alternative livelihood activities as an incentive mechanism in addition to other benefits obtained from any income generated from particular PAs. This mechanism does not only incentivize communities to participate in conservation activities but also provide economic empowerment which in turn reduces direct dependence on protected area resources.

**Message 3:** The Eastern Arc Mountains Conservation Endowment Fund (EAMCEF) offers a unique experience, and an effective and efficient delivery mechanism to channel resources for conservation of the EAMs ecosystem.

- As a Trust Fund, functioning as a long-term and reliable funding mechanism to support Community Development, Biodiversity Conservation and Applied Research Projects in the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania; EAMCEF has extensive experience in delivering technical and financial resources to communities, local governments and protected areas managers across the EAMs ecosystem, in support of its vision “to see that, the Eastern Arc Mountains and the people who depend on them live in harmony as one sustainable ecosystem...”

- Through our extensive network of implementing partners, dedicated Board of Trustees, local advisory committees, project monitoring and evaluation committees, experienced secretariat and staff, presence of necessary equipment and facilities, among others, EAMCEF have managed to deliver up to USD 2,582,743 (TZS 6,480,024,743.00) in support of conservation efforts across the EAMs of Tanzania, in targeted sites since 2006.
- EAMCEF recent achievements over the last ten years, in terms of the tangible results, empowerment and capacity building, capital initiation, and overall conservation outcomes are traceable and noticeable.

**Call for Action:** EAMCEF as a reliable funding mechanism provides an opportunity for partnership and channelling of resources for effective and efficient implementation of conservation initiatives (through grant management functions).

## About EAMCEF

The Eastern Arc Mountains Conservation Endowment Fund is a Trust Fund that was established and functions as a long-term and reliable funding mechanism to support Community Development, Biodiversity Conservation and Applied Research Projects, which promote the biological diversity, ecological functions and sustainable use of natural resources in the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania. EAMCEF operates as a Not-for-Profit Conservation Finance Trust (CTF), mobilizes financial resources and issues project grants to Government Departments (Central and Local Governments), NGOs, CBOs, Local Communities, Research Institutions, Academic Institutions, Private Entities as well as interested individuals.

## Our Vision

To see that, the Eastern Arc Mountains and the people who depend on them live in harmony as one sustainable ecosystem. The forests and mountains will provide goods and services – from water to electrical power, from food and cash crops to medicines- for the people of Tanzania. And the world community will benefit from a protected biodiversity hotspot and a major carbon sink reducing global warming and mitigating climate change impacts.

## Our Mission:

We catalyse resources to foster conservation of forest biodiversity and resilience to climate change effects in the Eastern Arc Mountains of Tanzania through investment in sustainable community development and livelihood improvement, sustained financing for protected areas management and financial support to applied biodiversity and climate change research.

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