



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

TANZANIA

Conservation & Empowering Local Communities

The United States and Tanzania share over six decades of partnership, dating back to the days of Presidents John F. Kennedy Jr. and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, and continuing with the strong relationship between the administrations of President Joseph Biden and President Samia Suluhu Hassan. Through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. government supports the empowerment of local communities to make informed decisions about issues that affect their livelihoods.

USAID has a longstanding, cooperative relationship with the Government of Tanzania and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, and advocates for continued progress and reforms in democratic governance, including respect for the human rights of all Tanzanians. As a matter of policy and practice:

- USAID employs a “do no harm” approach as a core operating principle of all projects. Any project that has the potential to affect marginalized communities includes such groups as key stakeholders as matter of standard practice. This includes projects that engage the Maasai, Sukuma, and other similar pastoral and nomadic communities in Tanzania.
- USAID prioritizes the meaningful inclusion of marginalized groups and surrounding communities to inform any discussions with the government and their surrounding communities regarding the use of land and local resources.
- USAID requires all projects and implementing partners operating in or near protected areas to prioritize [social safeguards](#) for communities, including consultations that rise to free, prior, and informed consent standards and other mechanisms to protect the rights of residents.
- Since 2021, USAID has worked with local communities in [six regions](#) of Tanzania to advance village-led decision making through land-use planning that reduces human-wildlife conflict and strengthens livelihoods, land tenure, and wildlife corridor functionality.

Through USAID, the United States fosters partnerships among local communities, government, civil society, and the private sector to ensure stakeholders have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

Competing Interests and Priorities

USAID recognizes the complexity of local land-use governance. As a finite resource, laws and policies governing the use of land must account for competing priorities among those communities who use and benefit from it. USAID promotes community-based approaches in its work around conservation, empowering local communities to make more informed decisions about the use of their land, and advocating for the formalization of these decisions with national governance bodies. USAID’s conservation work in Tanzania advances environmental conservation, alongside localized economic development and decision making, and the protection of human rights.

Human Rights

The United States has called for consultative decision-making processes between the Government of Tanzania and local communities that are peaceful, fair, transparent, environmentally sustainable, and inclusive. The United States does not support the involuntary removal of local communities from their homes and lands, either through policy or as a result of its development programs. The United States government is not involved in any relocation efforts in Tanzania, through USAID programs or otherwise.

Sustainable Economic Development

Tanzania is endowed with abundant natural resources and has prioritized safeguarding its rich natural heritage and wildlife, which account for 90 percent of the tourism industry. Seventy-five percent of Tanzania's rural population directly relies on natural resources to sustain their livelihoods, making stewardship of natural resources a foundation for sustainable development, stability, and long-term growth. USAID focuses on conservation and emphasizes enhancing the livelihoods of local communities linked to the natural environment through tourism, private sector collaborations, co-management, and inclusive development.

Community-led Programs

USAID has helped strengthen local organizational capacity to engage communities in planning, giving feedback, and providing oversight for public financial management and public sector services. As a result, more citizens engage in consultative planning processes, which is institutionalizing citizen-led governance and stewardship as a best practice.

Conservation is Development

Biodiversity, particularly in relation to iconic wild animals such as giraffes, elephants, and lions, is important for the national economy, as wildlife-based tourism comprises nine percent of Tanzania's gross domestic product and 25 percent of its foreign exchange earnings. In Tanzania, population growth, agricultural expansion, and climate change threaten biodiversity and can affect rural livelihoods. USAID partners with the government and people of Tanzania to improve environmental governance and natural resources management. This strategy involves developing and implementing key national environmental policies while supporting community-based conservation initiatives.

Partnerships with Local Communities

Engaging local communities as meaningful partners in development enhances their ability to advocate for their rights, determine their own priorities, and advance their self-reliance. USAID projects empower Tanzania's local communities so they can participate in key decision-making spaces at the local and national levels.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

As USAID implements these types of complex projects, it constantly refines and improves the way it supports local communities and national governments in finding a balance between localized land use and conservation related efforts. It welcomes constructive feedback and incorporates lessons learned on an ongoing basis.