



A lioness and her cub in Lemek Conservancy in Maasai Mara. Photo credit: Roshni Lodhia /IMMWCA.

KENYA

COMMUNITY CONSERVANCIES SEED GRANT PROGRAM IN MAASAI MARA

The Greater Maasai Mara Ecosystem in Narok County is home to the iconic wildlife migration, a world-renowned tourist destination and a critical ecosystem for wildlife conservation. With only 26 percent of this ecosystem under government protection, community, and privately-owned land adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve is vitally important to conservation efforts. The community conservancy model provides socio-economic benefits from conservation for over 14,500 landowners and 100,000 people. These benefits also lead to an increase in the population and diversity of wildlife species, improved ecosystem integrity, increased income from wildlife-based tourism and other conservation enterprises, and enhanced coexistence between wildlife, livestock, and people. Major threats to conservation in the ecosystem include loss of biodiversity, habitat degradation, and wildlife poaching and trafficking. Additionally, the conservancy movement in the Mara faces multiple challenges; lack of a unified ecosystem-wide conservation approach and limited resources for and capacity of governance structures to fulfill the mandate of nascent and existing conservancies threaten to hinder progress.

OUR WORK

USAID works with strategic partners from the public, civil society, and private sector to strengthen the capacity and commitment of local organizations. USAID supports community-led biodiversity conservation and improved well-being through the community conservancy model. The Maasai community in Mara are dependent on nature-based tourism for their livelihoods. The goal of this project is to restore ecosystem integrity while increasing the income of local communities at the household level.

The programs objectives are to:

- i) Establish an integrated and sustainable conservancy governance model.
- ii) Secure the Pardamat Conservation Area as a mixed-model conservancy for wildlife security, biodiversity conservation, and livelihood enhancement through conservation enterprises; and
- iii) Strengthen Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancy Association as an effective membership organization to lead and coordinate the community conservation model in the Mara landscape.

USAID partners with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA) to implement the Community Conservancies Seed Grant program. They work in partnership with local and international stakeholders from the public, civil society, and private sectors, including: Narok County Government, Ministry of Wildlife & Tourism, Ministry of Environment & Forestry, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA), conservancies, local communities, landowners, tourism parties, non-governmental organizations, and research & academic institutions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- 143,072 hectares of biological significance areas placed under improved natural resources management/showing improved biophysical conditions.
- 3,898 people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation enterprises.
- Governance, leadership, and capacities for 16 local conservation organizations strengthened.
- 1,144 people trained in natural resource management and/or biodiversity conservation.
- 10 management plans for conservancies developed and five gazetted.
- 134 km of conservancy roads rehabilitated to improve access.
- Geographic Information System based ecosystem-wide map for Mara updated.
- First State of Mara Conservancies Report launched.
- Sustainable financial model for Mara conservancies based on an 80:20 percent revenue sharing ratio between landowners and conservancies developed and under implementation.
- Five additional alternative livelihoods and conservation enterprise concepts developed.
- Communication strategy developed and implemented, including behavioral change campaign on benefits of Mara conservancies and on land leases and conservancy management models.
- MMWCA developed five organization policies, including a gender strategy.
- MMWCA's Headquarters was constructed, equipped, and opened.

BUDGET: \$6.38 M
USAID FUNDING: \$6.3 M
TNC CONTRIBUTION: \$35,000

DURATION: 2015 – 2021

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS:

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA)

USAID CONTACT

Brian Otiende
Biodiversity and Water Specialist
Tel: +254-717-710-815
Email: botiende@usaid.gov

TNC CONTACT

Munira Bashir
Kenya Program Director
Tel: +254-738-350-350
Email: munira@tnc.org

MMWCA CONTACT

Daniel Sopia
Chief Executive Officer
Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association
Tel: +254-717-806-260
Email: sopia@maraconservancies.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email: usaidkea@usaid.gov
Twitter: @USAIDKenya
Facebook: USAIDKenya
Website: www.usaid.gov/kenya