



# Governing a shared, critical biodiversity landscape through cross-border dialogue platform

## Summary

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) of the East African Region has sought integration in the environment sector to address transboundary issues; however, there is a significant gap in policy development and implementation within countries, which limits integration. The Tana-Kipini-Badana bushland and seascapes of Kenya and Somalia are highly degraded, thus making a case for integrated management and multi-stakeholder approaches. Though intricate in their development, multi-stakeholder platforms create space for trust building and community participation in decision-making.

In this policy brief, we propose an integrated landscape management approach, and creation of a cross-border multi-stakeholder platform to improve the governance of the Tana-Kipini-Badana bushland and seascapes of Kenya and Somalia.

## Key Messages

1. The landscape is fraught with insecurity and conflicts over natural resources.
2. There is lack of institutional capacity and support to manage the landscape on both sides of the Kenya-Somalia border.
3. Integrated landscape management can be effective in addressing multiple issues and concerns by multiple stakeholders in the landscape.
4. Cross-border multi-stakeholder platform is a critical element in governing a conflict-laden landscape.



Figure 1: Discussions with the local communities in the cross border area to highlight issues facing the landscape.  
Photo: World Agroforestry Centre/ IGAD BMP Project

## Policy Implications

1. Conflict over natural resource management, intertwined with insecurity requires political leaders in Kenya and Somalia to genuinely engage in a dialogue, preferably mediated by IGAD.
2. Local governments on both sides of the Kenya-Somalia border need to invest in improving their own institutional capacities and governance structures to address cross-border issues.
3. Integrated landscape management should be supported to address the twin goals of enhancing livelihoods and biodiversity conservation.
4. Local governments on both sides of Kenya and Somalia need to support the creation of cross-border multi-stakeholder platform to address lingering issues, through joint action planning of policy and programmatic interventions, as well as their implementation and monitoring of outcomes.

## Background

The Biodiversity Management Programme (BMP), an IGAD initiative funded by the European Union (EU), aims to contribute to poverty reduction by improving the social and economic wellbeing of populations in the IGAD region, through better regional integration in the environmental sector. Its purpose is the conservation and sustainable management of ecosystems in the IGAD region, in order to contribute to lasting flow of goods and services.

The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) is one of the BMP implementing partners, managing the Tana-Kipini and Laga-Badana Bushland and Seascapes project. These ecosystems have critically endangered *Euphorbia tanaensis* confined to the Witu Forest Reserve, the Hirola Antelope, Aders’ Duiker, Leatherback and Hawksbill Turtles, the Tana River Mangabey (endemic to the Tana River primate reserve) and the African Elephant, Lion and African Wild Dog - found in small fragmented populations throughout the landscape. The landscape, consists of local smallholder farming communities who have wholeheartedly embraced project activities despite

life-threatening insecurity in the area. Though there are stark differences in institutional arrangements between Somalia and Kenya, local level project activities have been successfully carried out.

## Challenges to landscape resources management and governance

The ecosystems are not sustainably managed as a result of increased agricultural expansion and encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, illegal logging and overexploitation of timber and non-timber products. These fragile environments are also fraught with uncertainties resulting from perpetual conflicts, lack of trust and varying governance regimes that all serve to complicate biodiversity conservation. The biggest threat to the landscape is insecurity, followed by natural resource conflict amongst livestock herders and crop farmers, and unclear or insecure land tenure. The landscape is also prone to drought, as well as flooding during the rainy season.

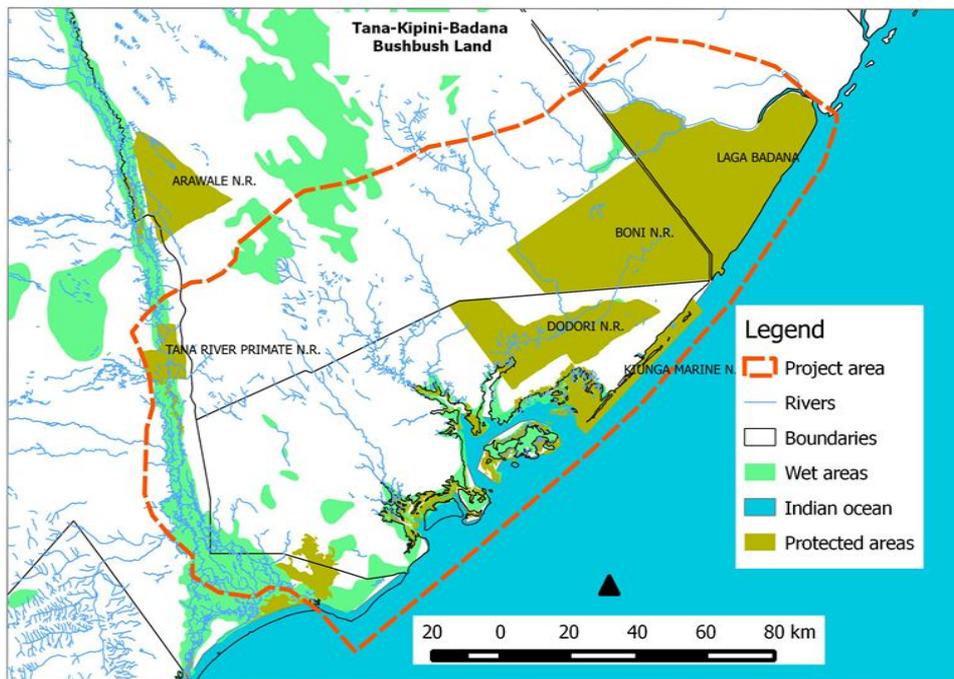


Figure 2: Project site-Tana-Kipini and Laga Badana bush, land & seascapes



Figure 3: Habitat degradation. Photo: World Agroforestry Centre/ IGAD BMP Project



Figure 4: Dumping at the coastline. Photo: World Agroforestry Centre/ IGAD BMP Project

## Making things work

Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) in the Tana-Kipini and Laga Badana bushland and seascapes presents opportunities for enhancing conservation and sustainable management of the ecosystem, while ensuring improvement of the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. The BMP has advocated for ILM, which calls for community participation through dialogue forums that enable landscape-level decision-making.

Owing to complexities in the landscape, a multi-stakeholder platform was set up on both sides of the Kenya-Somalia border, to allow stakeholders at different planning and decision-making levels exchange ideas and share experiences, and eventually make critical decisions to address productivity, sustainability and resilience issues (Figure 4). Multi-stakeholder engagement provides a unique opportunity to highlight local-level institutional capacity building needs and governance requirements. In a landscape where long-term conflicts and governance structures have eroded trust, multi-stakeholder engagements provide a bridge for building social capital.

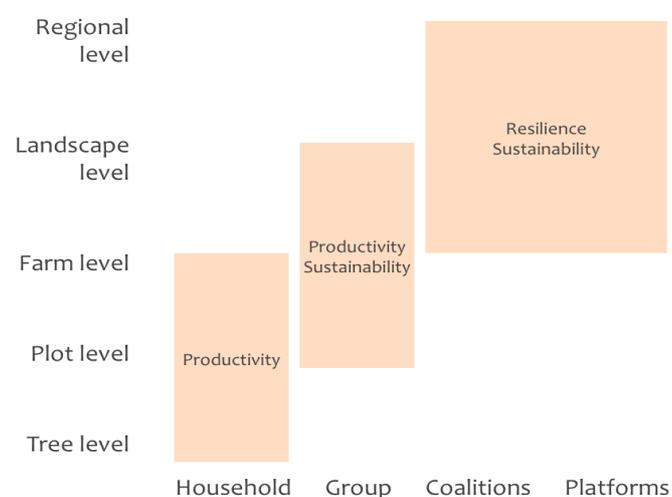


Figure 5: Operationalizing ILM through multi-stakeholder platforms



Figure 7: Engagement of cross border stakeholders on prioritizing ILM issues . Photo: World Agroforestry Centre/ IGAD BMP Project



Figure 6: High level stakeholder discussion involving IGAD on achieving sustainability and building resilience in the cross border landscape. Photo: World Agroforestry Centre/ IGAD BMP Project

## Major challenges to landscape governance

There are stark differences in landscape governance between Kenya and Somalia. Although Somalia has been affected by political turmoil over the past decades, it provided the necessary decision-making hierarchy at the local level. In Kenya, the county level is headed by an elected governor with volunteer Nyumba Kumi leaders providing support at the grassroots level. A number of policy-related issues which limited effective landscape governance prevailed:

- Forest management rules that are not easily enforceable to rent-seekers—for example, charcoal dealers colluding with forest managers and the police.
- Grassroots-level leadership is hierarchical, thus a lot of time is spent on seeking buy-in and support at every level to ensure community engagement.
- Lack of security.
- General uncertainty and suspicion, not only among the different communities, but also among institutions.
- Inter-sectoral competition resulting in disagreements and prolonged planning.
- Lack of dialogue amongst different governance actors, and poor engagement between the national and local governments.

## Key recommendations

The study suggests the following actions to IGAD and the local governments of Kenya and Somalia:

1. Provide the impetus and support for the continuity of multi-stakeholder dialogue platforms initiated by the project both within the Kenya and Somalia side of the border, to address domestic/local resource management and livelihood issues.
2. Support the creation of a cross-border multi-sectoral platform to address lingering cross-border issues.
3. Support joint action planning to improve the policy environment for integrated landscape management.
4. Enhance support for public policy training, social learning and civic education to enable people to understand governance structures and institutional roles.
5. Support formation of the Lamu county

environmental management committee to be headed by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) with multi-sectoral membership.

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**Authors:** Joseph Tanui, Grace Koech, Delia Catacutan

**Citation:** Tanui J, Koech G, Catacutan D. 2018. Governing a shared, critical biodiversity landscape through cross-border dialogue platform. ICRAF Policy Brief No. 37 Nairobi, Kenya. World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).

**Acknowledgements:** We are grateful to the CGIAR- Global Research Programme on Policies Institutions and Markets (PIM) for the funding and scientific support in carrying out this study. We also received resources from the European Union.



Email: [worldagroforestry.cgiar.org](mailto:worldagroforestry.cgiar.org)  
Website: [www.worldagroforestry.org](http://www.worldagroforestry.org)



Website: [europa.eu/](http://europa.eu/)



Website:  
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World Agroforestry Centre,  
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri  
PO Box 30677-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.  
Phone: + (254) 207224000,  
Fax: +(254) 20 7224001.  
Via USA phone (1-650)833-6645,  
Via USA fax (1-650)833-6646