GRANT FACT SHEET

Strengthening the network of climate resilient ecosystems across the Pemba Channel coral reef climate refuge, Tanzania

The Pemba Channel in northern Tanzania is an Ecologically or Biologically Significant Area (EBSA) renowned for both its marine biodiversity and its role as a sanctuary from climate change for coral reefs. Hosting over 380 species of bony fish, including the Critically Endangered coelacanth and more than 20 species of sharks and rays, it also serves as a breeding and feeding ground for various marine mammals and a habitat for Tanzania’s five species of marine turtles. Its mangroves and coastal wetlands provide crucial habitats for seabirds. The area supports significant local fishing and serves as a vital link between the mainland’s Tanga-Mkinga area and the islands of Pemba and Unguja. The Pemba Channel has a thriving tourism industry and its fish supplies over 90% of Zanzibar’s animal protein, giving the area much social and commercial value.

Tanzania is facing adverse impacts from climate change and these are affecting its marine environment and coastal communities. With rising temperatures posing a significant threat to surrounding reefs, Pemba Channel’s distinct, cool waters could serve as a crucial sanctuary, offering marine species refuge from the effects of climate change. In recent years, however, the region has experienced a considerable depletion in biodiversity due to the widespread destruction of coral reefs by harmful fishing practices and other factors. This jeopardises the food security of coastal communities reliant on marine resources for their livelihoods.

The project aims to strengthen climate change resilience in ecosystems and local communities through reducing their reliance on fisheries, improving effective MPA management and financing, and supporting habitat restoration and nature-based climate adaptation. WCS and Mwambao Coastal Community Network seek to protect two sites, one on either side of Pemba Channel. These are an existing MPA on the mainland, the Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park (TACMP), and a new MPA on Pemba Island, east of the Pemba Channel Conservation Area.

The project will implement activities that support revenue generation for communities and MPAs, ensuring its financial sustainability. This includes developing a financial plan to provide resources for stakeholders to enhance ecosystem conservation and safeguard livelihoods. Climate-relevant coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, will be restored or rehabilitated, including 150 ha of mangrove area. The project will apply an adaptive strategy, working closely with governments and stakeholders, and collect data to inform marine spatial planning. This will help to improve MPA management effectiveness and ensure the project’s long-term sustainability. Alongside further Blue Action-funded conservation efforts on Pemba, this project completes the protection of the entire island.
KEY TARGETS

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<th>Newly created MPAs:</th>
<th>Effectively managed MPAs:</th>
<th>Number of beneficiaries:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1,070 km²</td>
<td>554 km²</td>
<td>7,308</td>
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KEY ACTIVITIES AND AREAS OF WORK

**MPA GOVERNANCE**
- Establish a general management plan for TACMP and the new MPA in Pemba that incorporates climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Conduct a workshop with stakeholders to validate the zoning of MPAs and formalise a Marine Spatial Plan that accounts for climate change vulnerability and adaptation.
- Help with establishing and formalising the demarcation of the new MPA in Pemba, and provide support for the construction of its infrastructure, as well as in TACMP.
- Assess and develop Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) capacity in MPAs for improved effective management and support the establishment of effective MCS systems with communities and government stakeholders through consultations, training, and equipment provision.
- Create sustainable financing solutions for Pemba and TACMP, including developing a financial plan.

**SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS**
- Identify and establish effective sustainable management actions with communities that support resilient ecosystems.
- Promote alternative livelihood opportunities and improve existing value chains in communities by building capacity for necessary equipment, supplies, training, etc.
- Undertake fishery and socio-economic surveys with community members, including women and vulnerable groups.
- Promote experiential learning around the benefits of conservation and sustainable resource management using field observations and side-by-side monitoring.

**HABITAT CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION**
- Identify sites and restore degraded climate-relevant coastal ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass, including 150 ha of mangrove restoration and 300 ha of seagrass rehabilitation in TACMP and Pemba.
- Strengthen capacity for MPA managers and communities by providing training for effective management and equipment for restoration and monitoring.

**SPECIES CONSERVATION/SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES**
- Collect ecological baseline data through fish biomass and coral reef benthic surveys in TACMP and Pemba.
- Conduct studies on the location of biodiversity hotspots in the two MPAs and optimal locations for No-Take Zones.