

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

PANORAMA PROJECT

Seaweed farming in Zanzibar: addressing the common challenge of aquaculture and marine conservation

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LOCATION

North Pemba, Tanzania

BENEFICIARIES

Seaweed farmers (88% are women), coastal communities, rural women fishers, tourism sector

CHALLENGE

Seaweed farming provides cash income for many women of local communities in Zanzibar. Seaweed farmers, 80% of whom are women, face several environmental, social and economic challenges. These include climate change, weak representation of women producers, difficulties in accessing international markets and insufficient protection of coastal ecosystems. Seaweed farming activities are usually small-scale and carried out in the intertidal zones largely in marine conservation areas, near mangroves and coral reefs. In response, an integrated coastal management approach and blue economy strategy were applied in Zanzibar.

APPROACH

Usually, seaweed harvested in Zanzibar is dried and exported to various parts of the world which use seaweed for pharmaceutical products and in the cosmetics industry. The approach taken focused on protecting coastal ecosystems and habitats, and enhancing arti-



Women harvest seaweed for soap, cosmetics and medicine, Zanzibar, Tanzania © Shutterstock

sanal fisheries and mariculture by facilitating alternative and diversified livelihood strategies for the seaweed farmers. The participating women were assisted in producing artisanal soap made of seaweed that they sell on local markets and direct sales into resorts to tourists visiting the archipelago.

INTEGRATED IMPACT: ADAPTATION, BIODIVERSITY, MITIGATION

During the implementation of the intervention, the project team conducted the self-assessment that helps determine whether an intervention is in adherence to the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions™. The assessment provided information about the intervention's strengths and weaknesses and helped derive concrete recommendations and corrective actions for future interventions. Two criteria were deemed insufficient. Criterion 3 (biodiversity net-gain) fell short, because the analysis of the biodiversity benefits achieved through this intervention were largely based on a desk review of existing literature and information rather than a specific assessment, monitoring framework or thorough and collective effort with key informants and stakeholders. Criterion 6 (balancing of trade-offs) was also deemed insufficiently addressed. While there was a reported willingness from the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar to consider relevant trade-offs, the limits of these trade-offs and associated safeguards were not clarified. In addition, while provisions on the rights, usage of and access to marine and coastal resources for mariculture are in place, further information on how this is applied in practice is required.

Several rounds of discussions revealed that the criteria were sometimes understood and interpreted differently by different people, impacting the assigned rating.

KEY SUCCESSES

Co-management approaches and women's empowerment: Co-management approaches were applied in marine conservation areas. These involved the government, local communities, seaweed farmers, NGOs and associations, often with international support. A particular feature was the inclusion, empowerment and support of women, considering their role as primary seaweed farmers and beneficiaries.

Taking corrective action: Several rounds of discussions, guided by IUCN expert reviewers, were held on the rationale and means of verification provided per indicator. With continued engagement, a new agenda of research and development work has emerged, including dialogues around NbS criteria and indicators with stakeholders in Zanzibar and local communities. The intent is that this will contribute to a future roadmap for Zanzibar and a framework for regular self-evaluation.