

Source to Sea is a three-year initiative that will address the drivers to the loss of wetlands and their biodiversity in Eastern Africa by putting in place enabling conditions for integrated wetland management solutions at landscape and ecoregional levels.

This initiative is a partnership between Wetlands International and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Background

Wetlands in Eastern Africa connect freshwater, terrestrial and marine realms, supporting biodiversity far beyond borders, facilitating continental migrations and acting as nursery grounds while supporting the lives and livelihoods of millions of local communities. They also provide substantial benefits through climate and flood regulation, coastal protection, recreation and tourism.

Despite these fundamental benefits, the region's inland and coastal wetlands are under critical threat. Loss of wetlands is mainly caused by overexploitation of

natural resources with little regard for sustainable wise-use through intensive agriculture, wood harvesting, overgrazing in floodplains and poaching of threatened species. The main drivers of this pressure are population growth, economic development, pollution, erosion, invasion by alien species and climate change.

There is urgency to stimulate inclusive decision-making on sustainable water and natural resources management and to develop joint, viable solutions that will safeguard biodiversity in addition to the lives and livelihoods of the communities that are dependent on these wetlands.



Focus Areas

Source to Sea's focus areas are two ecoregions with four priority landscapes that share ecological characteristics, threats and opportunities for joint conservation and restoration efforts.

Rift Valley Lakes Ecoregion

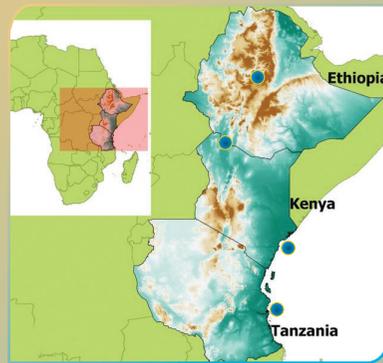
This covers the Western Rift Valley (Albertine Rift), Ethiopian Rift Valley in the north and the Eastern Rift Valley in the south with its system of alkaline and fresh water lakes in Kenya and Tanzania. Supporting the world's largest populations of lesser flamingos, this ecoregion has a unique wetland system that sustains some of the world's most inimitable biodiversity.

The two priority landscapes are Ziway-Shalla basin in Ethiopia, covering 1.5 million hectares and home to two million people and the Omo-Turkana basin which spans 161,000 hectares in Ethiopia and Kenya with approximately 500,000 people.



East African Mangrove Ecoregion

This extends from Southern Somalia to Mozambique. It includes key sites such as Lamu seascape with 60% of Kenya's mangroves, Rufiji Delta harbouring 70% mangroves in Tanzania and the Zambezi River Delta in Mozambique. This ecoregion represents Africa's most biologically diverse mangrove forests, and associated systems including intertidal flats and seagrass meadows that produce rich fisheries resources.



The priority landscapes are Lamu land and seascape which harbour 60% of Kenya's mangroves extending from the Tana River to the Kenya-Somalia border for 627,000 hectares with approximately 145,000 people, and Rufiji Delta which comprise the Rufiji, Mafia Kilwa seascape covering 70% of Tanzania's mangroves and home to 49,000 people.



Vision

Source to Sea's vision is to ensure that by 2030 high value wetlands in the Rift Valley and along the East Africa mangrove Coast have an improved conservation status that would benefit freshwater, marine and terrestrial biodiversity, and support livelihoods and a climate-resilient economy.

Objective

The overall objective is to ensure that government agencies, civil society and community groups jointly safeguard and restore wetlands of the Rift Valley lakes and East African mangrove ecoregions by 2024.

Approach

A multi-scale and participatory approach will be utilised where key stakeholders will be involved in the conceptualisation, development and implementation of interventions. The interventions will be contextualised to each landscape to ensure that benefits are tangible and effective for the stakeholders. Particular attention will be paid to linking indigenous and scientific knowledge, supporting cross-learning opportunities and sharing

best practices and experiences from implementation across the region.

This approach will enable action through:

1. Provision of knowledge and data on trends in wetland status and distribution, biodiversity and socio-economic values to support policies and practices.
2. Strengthening and enhancement of the capacities of stakeholders at local and regional levels for wetland management and biodiversity conservation.
3. Development, implementation and upscaling of integrated landscape regeneration and livelihood enhancement strategies through co-management arrangements between government, civil society and community groups.
4. Supporting the development and mainstreaming of wetlands and biodiversity conservation into ecoregional management plans and strategies for select wetland landscapes in the Rift Valley and along the Coast.



Knowledge and data provision



Capacity strengthening and enhancement



Development, implementation and upscaling interventions



Development and mainstreaming wetlands in ecoregional plans and strategies

Sustainability

To advance and enhance sustainability of Source to Sea project, Wetlands International applies a landscape approach that is inclusive and participatory. This helps overcome barriers and contribute effectively in project management by connecting all stakeholders involved, starting with the local communities. This process allows for innovation and integration and brings forth more impactful solutions.

Source to Sea will also build upon and align with existing projects with a focus to add value and stimulate collaboration.



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Sida

Sida - the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - is a government agency. Our mission is part of the national policy for global development and we strive to reduce world poverty. This is by allocating resources and knowledge with the goal of making a difference for people in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. To achieve this, we collaborate with actors from civil society and universities as well as the public and private sector.

Stay Connected

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Wetlands International

Wetlands International is the only global non-governmental organisation dedicated to wetlands. In Eastern Africa, we have representation and programmes in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and South Sudan with focus on the Horn of Africa wetlands, Western Indian Ocean coastal mangroves and Rift Valley lakes and wetlands.

Working in collaboration with government institutions, local communities and civil society, we are driven by the knowledge that safeguarding and restoring wetlands is urgent and vital for water security, biodiversity conservation, climate regulation, sustainable development and human health.

**Community, Collaborate,
Conserve - Together we
can secure wetlands for
ecosystems and human
wellbeing**