



**The Global Conservation Program  
Achievements and lessons learned from 10 years of support for threats-based  
conservation at a landscape and seascape scale**

**African Wildlife Foundation  
Conservation of Resources in African Landscapes (CORAL)**

**Kilimanjaro Heartland, Kenya-Tanzania**

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## Key achievements, impacts and lessons learned

With support from USAID's Global Conservation Program (GCP), African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and its partners achieved substantial conservation and development results in each of four priority landscapes, known as African Heartlands. AWF's Samburu, Kilimanjaro, Zambezi and Maasai-Steppe Heartlands were the focus of our efforts within GCP's portfolio of globally important conservation landscapes. Program activities over these 10 years were in support of the project's overall result, which was to establish landscape-level conservation in each of these Heartlands. Our approach to achieving conservation impact in Africa was to focus on priority large landscapes that have the potential to conserve viable populations of wildlife as well as key habitats and ecological systems well into the future. Within each Heartland, AWF worked to develop conservation strategies to protect and maintain these elements of biodiversity while meeting human needs and aspirations.

Throughout ten years of GCP support, progress in each of these Heartlands was cumulative. The strategy across Heartlands is structured around results that closely align with AWF's Heartland Conservation Process (HCP). GCP provided AWF the resources to adequately plan and design our program in each Heartland, and enabled AWF to demonstrate conservation impact in these sites through implementation of priority interventions. Priority interventions were focused around several themes which include: strengthening protected area management, resource monitoring, species conservation, participatory land use planning, wildlife-based enterprise development to secure livelihoods of local people, and capacity building with local institutions to strengthen natural resource management. AWF also helped to integrate sustainable economic development into conservation through support for empowerment and land use rights, improved governance of community institutions and facilitating the development of community wildlife-based enterprises, often in remote and marginal areas, and in equitable partnership with the private sector. These results from GCP support also leveraged additional funding opportunities from a range of sources that enabled AWF to scale up its activities to abate threats to biodiversity conservation targets.

Specifically, AWF's Kilimanjaro Heartland made significant progress with 10 years of GCP support. Highlights of summary achievements are the following:

- Improved transboundary planning and implementation of threat abatement activities undertaken in priority land units in Kilimanjaro Heartland.
- Processes strengthened through close collaboration with stakeholders, leading towards enhanced landscape-scale priority interventions.
- Information assembled from ecological and socio-economic assessments, leading towards improved strategic planning and threat abatement interventions.
- established an applied research program and community outreach for the cross-border elephant population in this Heartland, focusing on the Tanzanian dynamic of this species; and
- Facilitated participation of key Tanzanian and Kenyan stakeholders (govt., NGO, and communities) in the development of the Amboseli National Park General Management Plan.
- Established an anti-poaching network that is starting to link monitoring and protection efforts on both sides of the border through monitoring and surveillance to curb bush meat trade along the Kenya-Tanzania border.
- Wildlife conflict resolution strategies developed by villages on both sides of the border.
- Formation of TBNRM teams and joint meetings held between Kenya Wildlife Service, Provincial administrations of both Kenya & Tanzania, and other stakeholders.
- Conducted detailed assessments of wildlife migration corridors and dispersal areas and identified critical threats to these targets; Progress made towards securing critical corridors/dispersal areas;

- Established a ranger-based monitoring program around Amboseli National Park and now linking with wildlife monitors across the border in West-Kilimanjaro (TZ).
- Operationalized community wildlife conservancies through participatory NRM planning, establishment of monitoring/security mechanisms, and developing wildlife-based enterprises.
- Increased areas brought under conservation management through support of conservation-based enterprises;
- Developed conservation-based enterprises to contribute to livelihood improvement and conservation objectives in key areas of the Heartland.

## **GCP program background**

The Global Conservation Program (GCP) was a partnership between USAID and six leading US-based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that was established to conserve globally significant areas of biodiversity. African Wildlife Foundation was one of these six implementing partners of GCP. Over the past 10 years of GCP support, partner organizations implemented site-based programs around the world. These programs worked at varying scales, from the community level to large landscape and seascape scales. GCP was designed to achieve conservation results in partnership with NGOs, and to promote best practices, partnerships, and build communities of practice. It was a long-term centrally funded and managed program that complemented investments of bilateral missions and partner organizations. GCP's central mandate focused on achieving landscape-level conservation results in a representative selection of the world's most biodiverse areas. The program also focused on the sharing of lessons learned and conservation approaches among sites and partners.

## **Location, global importance and key threats to this landscape/seascape**

Kilimanjaro Heartland, a 23,000 km<sup>2</sup> transboundary landscape, is recognized to be globally significant for its biodiversity. The landscape straddles the border between southern Kenya and northern Tanzania, includes the semi-arid savanna of the greater Amboseli ecosystem just north and west of Africa's highest peak, Mt. Kilimanjaro, a World Heritage Site. This landscape is characterized by a wide range of physical and climatic features that give rise to diverse range of habitats including afro-montane, woodland, open savanna and freshwater. From Mt. Kilimanjaro and Mt. Meru, the landscape rolls to low-lying areas of semi-arid savannah in both Kenya and Tanzania. Mt. Kilimanjaro forests discharge much of its annual rainfall to the plains below through underground aquifers that feed the many springs and swamps in the Amboseli basin. On the Kenya side, the Heartland's most distinguishing features include: Amboseli National Park, designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1991, and seven large Maasai group ranches characterized by acacia-savannah grasslands. On the Tanzanian side, distinguishing features include Mt. Kilimanjaro and Arusha National Parks, and the low-lying savannas of Longido extending to Lake Natron in the Rift Valley. The Heartland contains great biological richness, with the wide-ranging elephant as a keystone species. There are also large populations of ungulates, endangered species such as the black rhinoceros and wild dog, large carnivores and a great variety of birds. Lake Natron, a Ramsar site designate currently without any protection status, provides critical breeding habitat for many birds, including flamingoes. The most critical threats affecting conservation targets are land use change (conversion to agriculture); subdivision of land; human-wildlife conflict; and poaching. Critical underlying drivers of threats include climate change, human population growth in the landscape, and high levels of poverty.

## **GCP partner historic and current roles in this landscape**

Through GCP support AWF played a facilitation role as well as directly implementing conservation actions on the ground in Kilimanjaro Heartland. AWF worked closely with several key partners in this transboundary Heartland to advance landscape scale conservation efforts which included in Kenya the Kenya Wildlife Service, district officials, members of group ranches, and community leaders, and in Tanzania, local communities, TAWIRI, TANAPA, and the Wildlife Division.

## **GCP partner approach to threats based conservation at a landscape scale**

AWF Heartlands are biologically important landscapes with scope to maintain healthy populations of wild species, habitats, and conserve natural ecological processes in perpetuity. Over the past ten years of GCP support and working at landscape-scale, AWF was able to develop and fully adopt a threats-based approach to its biodiversity conservation program across Africa. AWF now uses a proven iterative, threats-based, strategic planning process, known as its 'Heartlands Conservation Process' (HCP), to design and prioritize interventions. HCP helps AWF and its partners to develop intervention strategies that address critical threats to the ecological viability of these landscapes, identifying specific biodiversity conservation targets while also working to improve the livelihoods of local people. Conservation targets include individual species, habitats, and ecological services aiming to represent the suite of biodiversity of the site. Conservation targets drive landscape-scale conservation planning including monitoring threats and refining threat-mitigation actions, developing intervention strategies, and measuring conservation impact. The overall goal of AWF's GCP program was to partner with USAID and a broad spectrum of stakeholders to achieve integrated biodiversity conservation and sustainable economic development in four priority landscapes in Africa through improved practice on the ground, policy advocacy, and cross-site learning. AWF's conservation objective for Kilimanjaro Heartland was to maintain the ecological integrity of this landscape by developing sustainable conservation interventions that protect biodiversity and important habitats and corridors. Interventions were designed to secure land and critical habitats for wildlife, maintain landscape connectivity, protect important wildlife species, and promote capacity and policies that advance conservation in the landscape.

## **Implementing conservation at landscape scale**

In the four AWF Heartlands supported by the GCP, AWF made significant progress over the past 10 years with support from USAID and other donors. We made important gains in: securing wildlife movement corridors and dispersal areas through detailed assessments and implementing participatory land use plans in key areas; established applied species research programs and security networks for wildlife protection; and facilitated transboundary collaboration between partners across international borders. Key milestones have also been achieved to operationalize community wildlife conservancies through participatory NRM planning. In addition to building on the impetus and intellectual capital of GCP supported work, AWF believes that over the last several years we have achieved a number of important advances in our integrated approach to sustainable landscape scale conservation. These advances add new dimensions and richness to our Heartland program. Specifically, AWF now leads the field in Africa with innovative strategies in areas such as: private land conservation tools; restructuring state assets; integrating livestock, agriculture and conservation; developing local community-based security networks; and advances in Conservation Enterprise. These and other intervention strategies will help ensure GCP success at landscape scale will make a lasting contribution to biodiversity conservation, sustainable natural resources management, and livelihood improvement in Africa.

## **Sustainability**

To address socio-economic and financial sustainability, each AWF Heartland forms a sizeable economic unit in which tourism and other natural resource-based activities contribute significantly to local livelihoods. Because of the importance of poverty and livelihood vulnerability as an underlying driver of threats to conservation in Africa, AWF is committed to integrating socio-economic parameters into its strategies, and particularly into our work on land, enterprise and capacity, while our applied species research often addresses human-wildlife conflicts. To promote financial sustainability in Kilimanjaro, AWF worked with each stakeholder group to ensure its financial objectives were reasonable and realized. AWF also worked with the private sector and their community partners to ensure fair and lasting income benefits from conservation enterprise deals. AWF worked with government partners through its policy work to ensure that land use planning and zoning takes account of government fiscal regimes. And lastly, since its founding and throughout the GCP program, AWF contributed to the development of African leadership in conservation as well as capacity for conservation management at field level. In Kilimanjaro, AWF worked with community leaders to improve the skills needed to manage land and promote conservation enterprises.

## Measures of success

In order to measure results under GCP, AWF utilized its PIMA monitoring and evaluation system, which monitors key indicators at site, cross-site and organizational (pan-African) levels. PIMA feeds into an ongoing process of lesson learning and program adaptation at activity, landscape, national, region and continental level, with best practice also fed into global policy processes. Impact in GCP-supported sites was measured according to four strategic areas: land and habitat protection, species conservation and reduction of threats to biodiversity targets, human livelihood measures such as economic returns from conservation enterprises, and capacity building and conservation leadership impacts. Using annual results from its performance assessment tool, the program worked to adaptively design and adjust interventions to ensure delivery of landscape level conservation impact, and livelihood improvement. In order to continually improve this system, we engaged other conservation organizations and partners in developing status measures for biodiversity targets, as well as socioeconomic indicators.

## Value of the GCP program

The Global Conservation Program was instrumental in supporting African Wildlife Foundation to develop and apply its Heartland Conservation approach to 4 priority biodiversity landscapes in Africa, one of which was the Kilimanjaro Heartland. The financial and programmatic support from GCP enabled AWF to implement tangible conservation actions on the ground, along with developing and refining the practice of landscape-scale conservation. The intellectual exchange between USAID and GCP partners were fundamental in improving the practice of global biodiversity conservation, while leading to lasting conservation and sustainable development impacts at site-level well into the future. Program goals and conservation objectives in AWF's Kilimanjaro Heartland were achieved with the invaluable support from USAID's GCP.

### Additional Information:

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