



COASTAL LIVELIHOODS AND MANGROVES PROJECT

*Strengthening Community Rights and
Coastal Resilience in Kenya*

VISION FOR IMPACT

- Mangrove forest cover: **60,000 hectares**
- Carbon mitigation potential: **8 million** tons of CO₂ equivalent
- Coastal population: **4.3 million**

The Challenge: An Ecosystem Under Pressure

Kenya's mangrove ecosystems span more than 60,000 hectares of biodiverse habitat and provide critical ecological, economic, and climate benefits to 4.3 million people. Mangroves protect coastal communities from erosion and storm surges, serve as fish breeding grounds, sequester carbon, and support coastal livelihoods.

In recent decades, these valuable forests have faced growing degradation from unsustainable harvesting, increasing land-use pressures, climate change, and weak governance structures. These threats place essential ecosystem services for people and the planet at risk.

This work will serve as a blueprint for improving livelihoods and advancing conservation goals across coastal Kenya, demonstrating how collaboration with government, local institutions, and communities can lead to better outcomes for people and planet.

The Opportunity: Restoring Kenya's Mangrove Forests Through Tenure Security

Kenya's 2025 Nationally Determined Contributions aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35 percent by 2035 while promoting low-carbon, climate-resilient development. As part of this commitment, Kenya has set an ambitious target to rehabilitate 14,000 hectares of degraded mangrove forests by 2032. Achieving this goal will require locally led stewardship grounded in secure, equitable forest tenure rights.

Landesa's work advances a vision for sustainable mangrove ecosystem management in Kenya by strengthening government and community efforts to restore thousands of hectares of mangrove forest—nearly one quarter of the country's total mangrove area.

Coastal community members, including women and socially marginalized groups, will benefit from stronger tenure and resource rights, improving livelihood security for more than 1 million people in the project area.

Phase 1: Building Momentum in Kilifi County

Since 2026, Landesa has worked closely with Community Forest Associations (CFAs), the County Mangrove Management Committee, and other stakeholders in Kilifi County to strengthen tenure security, governance, and community-led mangrove conservation. Although communities are increasingly engaged in conservation through CFAs, tenure insecurity for the adjacent communities and unclear resource rights continue to limit incentives for long-term stewardship and equitable benefit sharing.

Landesa's approach centers gender-equitable and socially inclusive tenure, leveraging Kenya's climate commitments to advance a rights-based model for forest restoration and conservation.

Phase 2: Scaling Impact Across Coastal Kenya

Building on strong political will and early momentum, Landesa seeks to scale this initiative by deepening and strengthening our work in Kilifi county through five action pathways:

- **Law and Policy Reform**

Through inclusive dialogue and advocacy, Landesa will influence and contribute to the implementation of relevant laws, policies, plans, and strategies, including the National Mangrove Ecosystem Management Plan, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, Kenya's Nationally Determined Contributions to the Paris Agreement, and related blue economy frameworks.

In partnership with line agencies, CFAs, and other mangrove ecosystem stakeholders, Landesa will scale work underway in Kilifi to develop and implement user rights rules and guidelines for inclusive, equitable, and sustainable community access to mangrove forest resources.

- **Institutional Capacity and Multi-Stakeholder Governance**

To strengthen governance, Landesa will foster cross-agency collaboration through duty-bearer trainings and land tenure dialogues and the convening of an inter-agency working group on mangrove priorities. We will work with the County Mangrove Management Committee platform in strengthening coordination, monitoring and reporting of the mangrove interventions in the county.

At the regional level, Landesa will engage strategically through the Western Indian Ocean Mangrove Network to strengthen sustainable management and restoration of mangrove ecosystems across eastern and southern Africa.

- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)**

To ensure women, youth, and other marginalized groups are included in mangrove management decisions, Landesa will scale GESI trainings in Kilifi County. By engaging duty-bearers, public officials, and community leaders, this work will help shift social norms and enable diverse groups to participate meaningfully in mangrove governance and conservation.

- **Community Leadership and Awareness**

To promote community leadership in mangrove management, Landesa will train CFAs, Beach Management Units, and local women- and youth-led organizations on governance, inclusive and participatory leadership, and conflict transformation. Landesa will also expand legal awareness through radio programming to support community-led restoration toward Kenya's 14,000-hectare benchmark.

- **Strengthening Land Tenure for Adjacent Communities**

To reduce local communities' overdependence on mangroves for livelihoods, Landesa will work with relevant stakeholders to map and address land tenure issues affecting communities adjacent to mangrove ecosystems. This work will engage women, men, and youth to resolve tenure challenges, strengthen land and resource rights, and create a foundation for alternative and diversified livelihoods. Activities will include land tenure assessments, tenure dialogues for mangrove protection and management, and support for community-empowering interventions that enhance land and resource tenure security.

