

Headline	
CARBON CREDIT IN NORTHERN RANGELANDS OF KENYA	
Domains of change	
Changes in the lives of people facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability, and/or the realisation of their rights	X
Changes in laws, policies and practices that affect people's rights	
Changes in the capacity of organisations and communities to support people's rights;	
Changes in partnerships and collaborations that support people's rights;	
Changes in the participation of groups facing poverty, marginalisation or vulnerability in their own development	X
Changes in local leadership and ownership of development and humanitarian work.	X
Basic Information	
Danish representation	The Danish Embassy in Nairobi
Name of partner	Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT)
Year of submission	2022
Name of project / programme / approach	Improving Community Resilience and Rangeland Management
Project / programme period	2012-2015; 2016 - 2020; 2021-2025 (3 phases)
Country	Kenya
Constituency	The programme targets 39 Community Conservancies in 10 Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of Northern Kenya (now 43 Conservancies').
Strategic priorities	Resilience, peace and stability, Green Growth and Governance
Summary (1000 characters only, including spaces)	<p>Denmark has supported increased resilience to communities and natural resources in Northern Kenya through Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) since 2012.</p> <p>The programme has contributed to improved livestock pasture, wildlife habitat and resilient rangelands that have accumulated soil carbon, which has eventually been structured as a carbon credit project which is generating income for communities in 14 out of the 30 NRT community conservancies.</p> <p>The carbon project uses rangeland activities in community conservancies to generate revenue for local communities. It is anticipated to remove 50 million tons of CO₂ over 30 years – the equivalent of the annual emissions from over 10,000,000 cars – and will generate millions of dollars for local communities.</p> <p>The first year (2022) of carbon credits sale has generated USD 14.6 mio. out of which, each participating community conservancies has received USD 324,000. Each community is using the income to fund its own priorities, including education, water access and sanitation.</p>

The carbon credit revenue has so far been secured up to 2024 and has potential of increasing the revenue base for the communities thus improving their livelihoods.

Context

NRT mostly operates in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) of Northern Kenya. These drylands are home to the **poorest counties** in the country, which are characterised by heavy dependence on mobile livestock production and other intensive forms of natural resource utilisation. Poverty in the region is very high with an average poverty index of 70%.

The **economy and current land uses** of the arid areas are dominated by pastoralism and small-scale businesses based on conservation and tourism-related activities. These areas support 70 % of the country's livestock and 90 % of its wild life.

Climate change and variability hurts the livestock production in the region particularly by reducing the availability of forage and water during droughts, increasing the incidences of massive loss of livestock, disease and leading to breakdowns in the economic infrastructures, which have pushed many families into poverty. Changing and declining availability of forage has impacted pastoral movement of livestock leading to increased conflicts between different resource users and negative impacts on vulnerable ecosystems. Population growth further worsens the increased demand for land and natural resources and can further increase the vulnerability to climate change.

Objectives

This programme has the objective to assist people in Northern Kenya in adapting to the consequences of climate change and acts as a drought buffer, reducing conflict over pasture and improving peace in this sensitive region.

Through the work with NRT, Denmark aims to contribute to increasing the resilience of the poorest communities in Kenya and to improve their ability to adapt to climate change through sustainable, peaceful use of natural resources in the ASAL-region. As such, the programme aims to improve sustainable management of natural resources, including through: 1) sustainable economic growth through skills development, job creation and sustainable enterprise, 2) contributing to peace, security and social stability, 3) investing in health, water and education infrastructure as well as 4) building community based governance institutions that promote inclusion and equality.

Change

The programme has contributed to improved pasture for livestock, habitat for wildlife, resilient rangelands and revenue generation for the community members from carbon sales as well as other forms of enterprises such as beadworks, livestock trade, tourism enterprises among others. This soil carbon project is presently the biggest carbon credit project of its kind globally which has leveraged the way of life of the pastoralist communities that inhabit the NRT conservancies.

Herders are encouraged to take the lead in grassland restoration by zoning, planning, and rotating where they graze their livestock. Soil health improves with rotational grazing, resulting in increased plant cover and higher-quality pasture for cattle. When the animals are in better condition, they generate more milk and meat and command higher market prices.

Rotational grazing reduces soil erosion and keeps rivers cleaner thus contributes to availability of water for domestic, wildlife and livestock. It further raises surface water levels and leads the soil to store more water, allowing more pasture to grow even in dry seasons. Increased pasture growth results in more carbon being added to the soil, which raises the carbon content in the soil. By obtaining consistent carbon funding, herders can plan and rotate where their livestock grazing, leading to the restoration of close to two million hectares of savannah grasslands in an increasingly arid area.

Out of the Community Conservancies carbon revenue, 5% has been given to County Governments who have in turn used the funds to support drought response activities in drought stricken areas of the county. A good case is Isiolo County who has received Ksh 9.1 Million from Nasuula conservancy and has used it to support Kinna community and others with supplies for drought relief.

There is potential for expansion of this project to other conservancies as this has proved to be successful and demand from other conservancies for consideration to similar projects has gone up.

Contribution

Denmark's support to NRT rangelands management has heavily contributed to sustainable grazing regimes, which have enhanced soil carbon sequestration in the fourteen community conservancies. These practices are not only creating healthier herds but also sequestering carbon in grassland and savannah soils. This ecosystem service is measured in carbon credits, creating new income for rural communities, enhancing conservation efforts—including the protection of four endangered species -the Eastern Black Rhino, Grevy's Zebra, Reticulated Giraffe and Beisa Oryx while addressing impacts of climate change.

Lessons

A number of lessons have been documented from the implementation of the NRT support. Among them are:

1. Due to recurrent prolonged droughts, **Rangelands management** remains a difficult challenge, with high levels of range degradation, soil erosion and loss of soil carbon. Results of conservancy-level planned grazing and rehabilitation have had good localized success but have not been able to negate major external forces such as population growth, invasion by pastoralist from non-conservancies areas, and climate change. However, without the rangeland's management interventions, the situation would have been more severe and benefits like those of carbon credit could be accrued. As such the rangelands management remains a core intervention that has multiple benefits to communities, and nature.

2. **Peace** is very central to success of development projects. There is need for continued engagement with local elders, youths and women to enhance peace dialogue in this ASAL region, which is prone to conflict because of resources competition. NRT has been implementing peace efforts including, combining teams of elders trained as peace ambassadors, rapid reaction peace meetings and youth forums. Without peace, there is no development.

3. **Good governance and policies.** There is need to strengthen community governance for better leadership and representation in decision-making fora. In the ASALs, women are normally ignored and thus need to have deliberate efforts to engage women in the governance structure who are the most affected by issues of conflict, climate change and loss of livelihoods. NRT has continued to have deliberate programmes that ensure women are involved in decision making at all levels.

Evidence

This case study is generated from NRT State of conservancies reports, programme related documents, end of programme reports, routine field visits to the project sites and press briefs.

Photos:



Alternative livelihood enterprises - During a field visit by Amb. Ole to NRT projects



Health habitat equals healthy wildlife and better tourism



During community awareness meetings to strengthen governance



Improved rangelands equals healthy livestock and better markets and income



Community members receiving cheques from revenue generated from conservancies projects



One community school benefiting from Carbon revenue

IATI Tagging

This case study should be listed under relevant activities in the IATI Registry and tagged using following categories:

- Country ([Country - iatistandard.org](http://iatistandard.org))
- Region ([Region - iatistandard.org](http://iatistandard.org))
- DAC 3 Digit Sector ([DAC 3 Digit Sector - iatistandard.org](http://iatistandard.org))
- DAC 5 Digit Sector ([DAC 5 Digit Sector - iatistandard.org](http://iatistandard.org))
- Humanitarian Scope Type (where applicable, [Humanitarian Scope Type - iatistandard.org](http://iatistandard.org))