

Covid-19 Emergency Support to Conservancies in the Maasai Mara Region, Kenya

Building back better

GIZ in Kenya

German Development Cooperation has a long-standing tradition in Kenya. The engagement is oriented towards Kenya's development agenda, as for instance stipulated in Vision 2030 and in the country's medium-term strategies (MTPs).

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Technical Cooperation is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in partnership with the Kenyan Government and local and international partners.

Mara Region

The Maasai Mara ecosystem is home to around a quarter of the total wildlife population in Kenya. About 70% of the wildlife temporarily live outside the state designated Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR). A protection-oriented management of the neighboring land, which is privately owned by approx. 14,500 local landowners, is a vital prerequisite for the future of the nature reserve and the survival of viable wildlife populations. Landowners have organized themselves to introduce a wildlife and habitat protection-oriented form of land use. They have voluntarily made available their individual plots to create 16 conservancies cover-

Project name	Covid-19 Emergency Support to Conservancies in Maasai Mara Region
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Political Partner	Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife (MoTW)
Project region	Maasai Mara
Objective	Conservancies as a land use model in the Maasai Mara region have emerged from COVID-19 crisis more sustainable, resilient, and representative than before.
Duration	04/2021 – 03/2023

ing an area of more than 140,000 ha (almost the same land area as the national reserve). The business model of the conservancies is primarily based on tourism income from private tourism companies which covers operational costs of wildlife and habitat protection and to pay lease fees to the landowners, respectively, to make them benefit directly from incomes generated by tourism. The model is compatible with the traditional pastoralist land use of the Maasai population in the region, allowing an extensive cattle farming laid down in a code of conduct including grazing plans for cattle.



The Challenge

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the tourism industry in Kenya, which contributes 90% to the financing of nature conservation, to a near standstill. This has caused severe financial losses to the conservancies and the landowners, risking their collapse and consequent loss of conservation gains accumulated this far. In addition, the conservancies employed 391 community rangers (more than 50% young people) who monitor and secure the wildlife during daily patrols and who work closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Moreover, about 2,000 mostly local young people found work in tourism camps and lodges. These incomes have collapsed since March 2020 and put the approximately 100,000 residents who depend on the 16 conservancies under severe hardship.

The conservancies' umbrella association, Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA), developed a COVID-19 crisis response plan overseen by a crisis group that include donors to support its member conservancies.

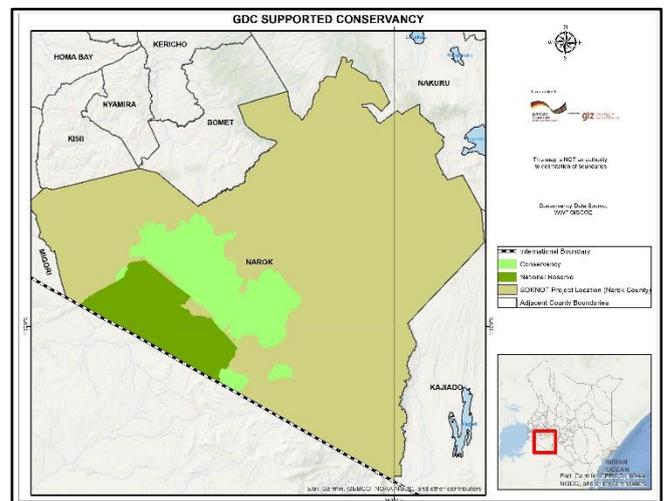


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The Project

The COVID-19 emergency response is linked to “*building back better*”. Therefore, this project aims at supporting the Mara conservancies to emerge more sustainable, resilient, and representative after the COVID-19 crisis through targeted efforts to;

- Stabilize conservancy income
- Strengthen governance, representation and management capacities
- Diversify business models for improved resilience of the conservancies and communities
- Support government structures on national and county levels to implement the required support to the conservancies



The 16 conservancies have developed individual governance improvement plans in collaboration with the MMWCA, which identify shortcomings and set out possible solutions. The strengthening of its member conservancies sought by the MMWCA also includes the implementation of a gender strategy.

This aims to consider the interests of women and young people in the management of the conservancies and to enhance the representation of women in decision-making and management bodies.

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