NABU

Capacity development for green NGOs in Africa

AFRIEVOLVE

NATURAMA

GHANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

SOS FORETS

NatureKenya
THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

NatureUganda

NatureTanzania
Engaging Communities to Conserve Nature

Foreword

Svane Bender
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AfriEvolve
project co-coordinator

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AfriEvolve
project co-coordinator

Dear esteemed AfriEvolve partners and colleagues, distinguished readers,

six of the nine key planetary boundaries regulating the state and functioning of Earth's ecosystem have now been pushed outside a safe, sustainable operating space. Among these deeply interconnected factors are climate change, biogeochemical flows, land-system changes and biosphere integrity. Global efforts are being undertaken to better align the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) within planetary limits and thus to ensure humankind's future.

The **AfriEvolve project** has evolved into a successful integrated model for capacitating African green NGOs to transform local communities into sustainable and resilient societies. In six sites in countries in West and East Africa, AfriEvolve supported highly vulnerable small-scale farmers, especially women, to pilot **Climate Smart Agriculture** adapted to site-specific, sustainable settings. Resilient, innovative, food-securing strategies were tested in diversifying local and regional food value chains, resulting in less dependency on external chemical inputs and less pressure on natural resources. Results and lessons learned were tailored into different on-site and off-site **learning formats** and shared amongst AfriEvolve partners and beyond. With this progress, we are undoubtedly contributing at a site-specific level to the mitigation of some of the key planetary boundaries and achievement of the SDGs.

This booklet provides you with an overview on the agroecological parameters of each site and challenges, Climate Smart Agriculture approaches and other methodologies employed, the peer-to-peer capacity building programme for the partnering NGOs and practical insights into successes and challenges.

We at NABU wish this publication to become a documentation of an outstanding project with extraordinary partners, an inspiration to others within and outside of the BirdLife network and a model for multiplication in Africa and beyond. We also hope it may be a useful tool for environmental practitioners, agriculturalists and policymakers in Africa.

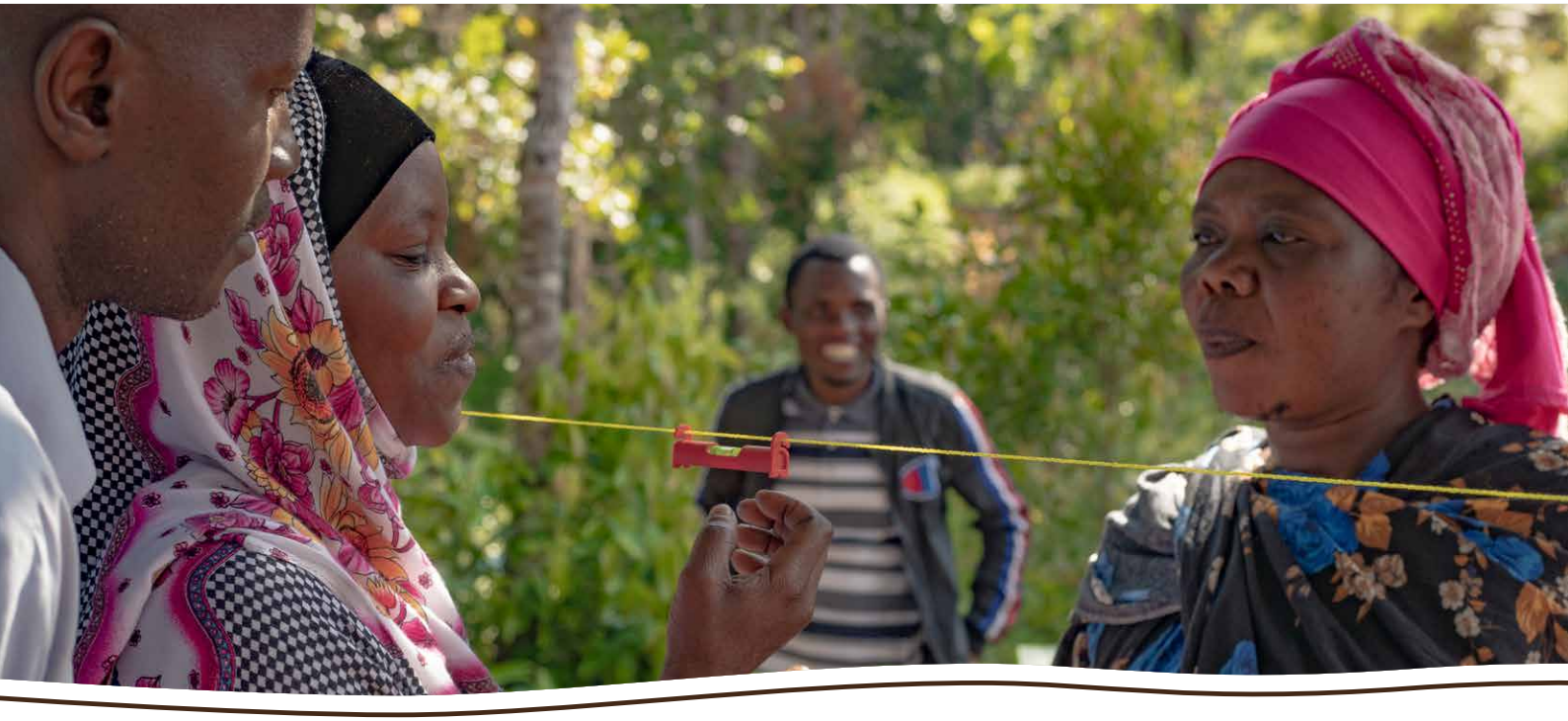
We would like to sincerely thank all our project partners, the project's board, contributors and collaborators and specifically our donor, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), for making AfriEvolve a success!

Svane Bender

Summary of project structure, methods and goals

In the AfriEvolve project, NABU and its six partners worked together to build their organisational capacity through mutual learning, strengthen their regional cooperation and improve their expertise in innovative agricultural systems. The project duration is from February 2021 to December 2023. The participating AfriEvolve Partner organisations are Foundation NATURAMA (West Africa cluster coordinator), Nature Kenya (East Africa cluster coordinator), Ghana Wildlife Society, Nature Uganda, SOS-Forêts, Nature Tanzania. These organisations form two regional clusters - an east- and a west African cluster - to enhance transboundary cooperation and networking. Generally, the activities of the AfriEvolve project are based on two pillars. Firstly, on organisational development of the participating NGO partners and secondly, on the establishment of new climate-adapted agricultural practices in pilot sites. Each pilot site is based in one unique ecosystem in each of the six project countries, namely Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

More information about the AfriEvolve project and the Climate Smart Agriculture pilot plots can be found at **www.afrievolve.com**



Online lecture series on organisational development

Green NGOs play a critical role in advocating for the interests of local communities and in securing livelihoods. Nevertheless, local organisations in Africa are confronted with numerous structural challenges to securing long-term funding, to retaining expertise and to increasing their influence beyond the environmental sphere at national and regional level. To tackle these challenges, targeted organisational development measures and regional cooperation structures of green NGOs are essential. Therefore, NABU and six African NGOs have been setting up two regional cluster networks (one each in eastern Africa and western Africa) for enhancing their organisational development.

The capacities of the six partner NGOs have been developed through tailored online trainings and South-South collaborations with field trainings. The AfriEvolve partner NGOs co-organised more than 80 hours of online learning lectures and monthly cluster exchange meetings to accomplish their assigned organisational and community development targets.

Climate Smart Agriculture

All involved six African NGOs work at the focal point between conservation in and around protected areas and the needs of local peoples' livelihoods. Rural communities suffer increasingly from the effects of climate change such as heavy rain falls, unexpected frost, extreme dry spells, and erosion, which exacerbate poor harvests and crop failures. This in turn results in poverty and increased dependency of people on the natural resources of their environment.

Why Climate Smart Agriculture?

To face these challenges, Climate Smart Agriculture measures have been introduced as a sustainable approach which aims to transform and reorient agricultural systems to address the current problems of food security and climate change jointly and synergistically.

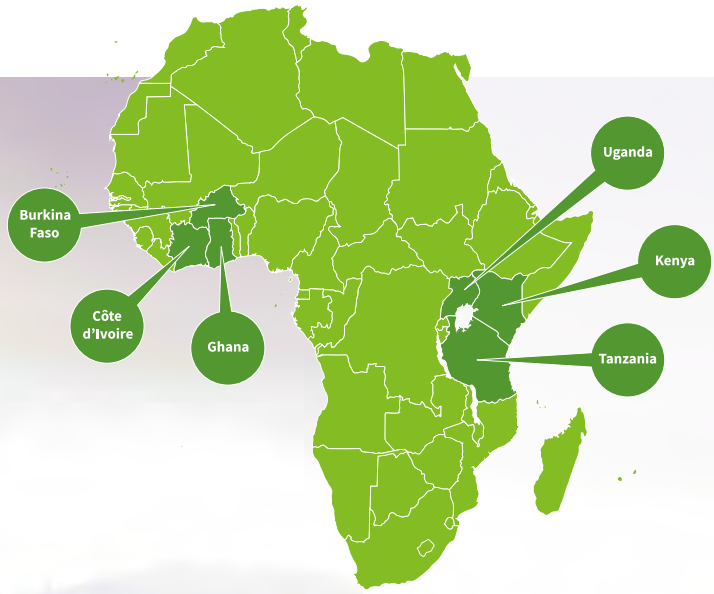
How?

With AfriEvolve, Climate Smart Agriculture capacities were strengthened through tailor-made trainings with a total of about 50 hours of expert lectures organised in 10 cross-cluster digital sessions. Furthermore, exchange visits with a total of 30 days of field training were facilitated during the project duration. Since all six NGOs had limited prior experience with Climate Smart Agriculture but rapidly saw its merits as a highly suitable approach to link nature conservation, climate change challenges and land use needs, it was decided to develop six small pilot sites with the respective target groups. For this purpose, each NGO independently identified a suitable area in their country with the target group to pilot Climate Smart Agriculture tailored to local conditions.

The pilot sites are each implemented by one project partner organisation in a pilot area of environmental and social significance. **The pilot sites are:**

- The Yala Delta is Kenya's largest freshwater swamp and a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) at the north-eastern end of the Lake Victoria.
- The Echuya Forest Reserve is a highland forest area in the heart of the biodiverse Albertine Rift Valley in western Uganda.
- The Amani Nature Forest Reserve in the Tanzanian East Usambara Mountains is covered with remnants of very old forests and is of outstanding importance for nature and species conservation.
- The Sourou Valley is a Sahelian gateway from Burkina Faso to Mali with broad floodplain marshes with acacia forests.
- Mognori is in north-western Ghana, on the edge of Mole National Park, and serves as an important wintering area for many migratory bird species.
- With lagoons, evergreen (primary) forests, dry and wet coastal savannah, wetlands and mangrove areas, Azagny National Park in Côte d'Ivoire is one of the most important nature reserves in West Africa.

Online lectures



About the **Climate Smart Agriculture** online lectures

This online lectures series discussed climate change and its impacts on biodiversity and people living in communities on the edge of protected areas in the 6 pilot regions. It also highlighted Climate Smart Agriculture measures that farmers are implementing themselves or with external support to mitigate the impacts of climate change. All partners have set their own priorities for their lectures, which reflect the regional conditions.

1. NABU

2. Nature Kenya

3. SOS-Forêts

4. Ghana Wildlife Society

5. Nature Uganda

6. Nature Tanzania

7. Fondation NATURAMA

Presentations

Videos

Online lectures

1

Climate Smart Agriculture

Experiences and perspectives from NABU

Date: Tuesday 25 January 2022
Speakers: C. Mwongera, S. Fournet, M. Jerusalem, C. Gornott, T. Kassahun T., T. Kirschey
Organisations: Kenia University, NABU, NK

Summary: In this lecture, basic concepts about Climate Smart Agriculture were presented, including practical perspectives for Africa. A detailed report was given on the state of the science on the impacts of climate change. Based on this, basic principles of Climate Smart Agriculture in forestry, peatland management and water management were discussed. Furthermore, experiences from a case study on agriculture in Ethiopia were shared and applied experiences of NABU on carbon management were presented.

2

Climate Smart Agriculture

Experiences and perspectives from Nature Kenya

Date: Tuesday 15 February 2022
Speakers: E. Mateche, P.Matiku, V. Ndetu, R. Makhanu, R. Nyambati, J. Mutunga, M. Muga, P. Gacheru

Summary: This lecture will focus on applied concepts of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), presented through Kenyan case studies from the field. In addition, the national CSA assessment and the resulting policy practice in the implementation of CSA play a role. A further case study is dedicated to the greening of coffee cultivation as well as agroforestry and the restoration of forest landscapes. The lecture concludes with CSA experiences from drylands and ecosystem-based adaptation to them.

3

Climate Smart Agriculture

A practical insight from SOS-Forêts

Date: Tuesday 29 March 2022
Speakers: W. Egnankou, A. Y. Konan, N'D. R. Etile, D. Kouassi, T. Kamelan, W. Egnankou, E. Kouamelan

Summary: Practical case studies in Côte d'Ivoire were used to explain applied concepts and resources on CSA. The national evaluation of CSA was also discussed and practical examples were given, such as the implementation of a CSA method in cocoa cultivation through agroforestry. Further topics included reforestation in drylands, which is also important in Burkina Faso to adapt agriculture to the changing climate. Finally, the management of water and fisheries resources for CSA were discussed.

4

Climate Smart Agriculture

Experiences and perspectives from Ghana Wildlife Society

Date: Tuesday 26 April 2022
Speakers: Y. Ntiamo-Baidu, Y. A. Boafo, E. H. Owusu, S. Dittoh, R. Appoh, M. Tampoe, E. G. Nartey, E. L. K. Dawoe, S. Ayambila

Summary: In this lecture, the Ghana Wildlife Society provided information on climate change and its drivers in general, and discussed the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and agriculture. This was followed by a discussion of numerous climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies, such as farmer-managed irrigation techniques, rainwater harvesting, climate-smart irrigation technologies, as well as solar-powered irrigation systems and integrated soil and water management. Finally, GWS presented a practical example of shea picking and processing.

5

Climate Smart Agriculture

Experiences and perspectives from Nature Uganda

Date: Tuesday 17 January 2023
Speakers: A. Byaruhanga, S. Muwaya, V. Kalema, J. Muhebwa, A. Barahukwa, J. Karuhura, J. Tukahirwa, S. Maniraguha

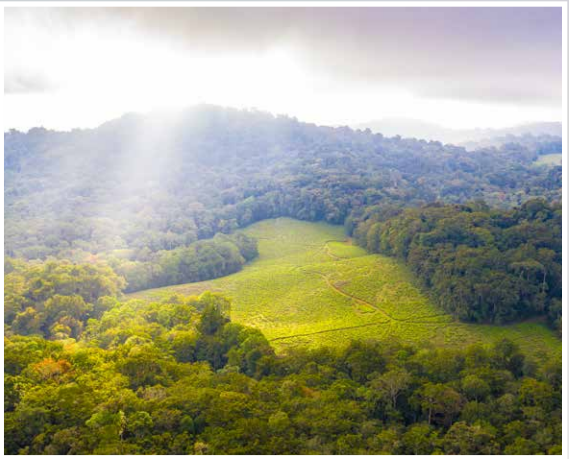
Summary: This course covered the subject from a technical point of view, but was written for the general public. The online lecture focused on the impacts of climate change on people and nature in Uganda and a brief description of the causes. Particular emphasis was placed on the impact of climate change on biodiversity and agriculture in Uganda. Based on this, the focus was on climate-adapted strategies in agriculture and on securing yields despite a changing climate. Nature Uganda presented best-practice examples from their pilot project, which focused on agriculture, forest management and environmental education.

6

Climate Smart Agriculture

Experiences and perspectives from Nature Tanzania

Date: Tuesday 14 February 2023
Speakers: Emmanuel Mgimwa, Dr Frederick Baijukya, Prof Susannah M. Sallu, Prof. Felister Mombo, Barbara Yassin Madiwa, Scholastica Mbinile, Dr. Atupelye Komba



Summary: The participants learned about general concepts of climate change and Climate Smart Agriculture in a Tanzanian context. Additionally, the contributions of cutting-edge research were presented and the effectiveness as well as sustainability of CSA were measured. Best practice examples of CSA interventions were shown. Afterwards, the online lecture presented the linkage of CSA and biodiversity conservation, as well as further concepts, such as contributions of community revolving funds on climate change and CSA adaptation. Finally, the implications of Remote Sensing and GIS on Climate Smart Agriculture were discussed, as the new state-of-the-art standard for managing climate smart projects.

7

Climate Smart Agriculture

by NATURAMA from Burkina Faso

Date: Tuesday 14 March 2023
Speakers: I. Zeba, N. Gloy, B. Barbier, I. Sawadogo, S. Liersch, A. Nana, C. Samba, Dr Bationo

Summary: One of the central themes in this online lecture has been the fundamental understanding of climate change and its implications. We delved into the concepts surrounding climate change, examined its causes, impacts, and the urgent need for effective adaptation and mitigation strategies. Participants gained valuable insights into the importance of Climate Smart Agriculture as an approach to address the challenges posed by climate change in Burkina Faso.

About the **Organisational Development** online lectures

This online lecture series looked at the principles of organisational development in environmental NGOs. It focuses on the process of identifying and developing effective projects (and ‚matching' them to donors), using monitoring and evaluation to improve implementation and communication, and ensuring the sustainability of projects and dissemination of results and lessons learned.

Similarly, the development, implementation and review of organisations' strategic plans was focused. Furthermore, it addressed some of the principles and practices of good governance, leadership and management. The focus was on individual and collective experiences, case studies and lessons learnt.

8. ***Governance, strategy and management***
9. ***Membership, marketing and fundraising***
10. ***Communications***
11. ***Project development and implementation***
12. ***Partnerships and networking***
13. ***Reflections on getting the best out of people, project management and sustainable financing***

Presentations **Videos**

8

Organisational Development

Governance, strategy and management

Date: Tuesday 17 May 2022
Speakers: P. Buckley, Nonie Coulthard, P. Zurita, J. Arinaitwe, I. Zeba, C. K. Vandyck, P. Kasoma, P. N. Kalunda, Y. Barshep, T. Tende

Summary: This first lecture on organisational development focused on governance, strategy and management. It identified organisational capacities, priorities and the approaches and tools needed for success, and set the strategy in context with sub-strategies on specific topics (e.g. fundraising, communications) and annual work plans. In addition, the role of senior staff and the board and the relationships between them for successful management were illuminated. The online lecture then explained how to build good ‚leadership' and management at the right levels and discussed how staff and volunteers can understand their role within the wider mission of the organisation and be good team players.

9

Organisational Development

Membership, marketing and fundraising

Date: Tuesday 21 June 2022
Speakers: P. Buckley, N. Coulthard, H. Timmins, M. Goulson, E. Owusu, E. Mgimwa, A. Purps, U. Achunine, W. Egnankou, K.H. Fritzgerald, G. K. Mwatete

Summary: This online lecture explored why membership in an NGO (or supporter network) can be important for citizens, and shared experiences of making a membership scheme financially viable or ‚cost effective'. Here, the involvement and use of members as an active instrument for conservation plays an important role. Presented here were some case studies of attempts to increase membership (and civil society support) in Africa and make it more beneficial to the organisation. NGO staff learned about developing and implementing a fundraising plan and different types of funding (earmarked and non-earmarked), as well as the value and limitations of each type. New sources of funding were also imparted, along with new ways of raising funds to support the organisation and its conservation mission. Particular attention was devoted to the diversification of funding for community-based organisations and SSGs, as well as the process of empowering these groups to fundraise on their own and strengthening community-based financial practices to become less dependent on support from national NGOs.

Online lectures

10

Organisational Development

Communications

Date: Tuesday 05 July 2022
Speakers: N. Coulthard, P. Buckley, S. Anstee, L. Kihumba, E. Serra, A. Wassung, B. Gcabashe, F. Mukhida, M. Lewis, K. Mwathe, A. Dumuya, R. Makhanu, O. Soneye

Summary: Effective public communication is important for NGOs that rely on donations. This lecture focused on developing a communication plan and other materials that are effective tools for conservation, as well as methods for becoming better communicators and advocates. Developing and communicating clear environmental messages to different audiences, including communities, plays a crucial role. Participants discussed assessments of which tools among the different approaches work best to secure community awareness, support and commitment. Finally, the online lecture explored how brand recognition can be achieved by developing a trademark for the organisation.

11

Organisational Development

Project development and implementation

Date: Tuesday 26 April 2022
Speakers: Y. Ntiamo-Baidu, Y. A. Boafo, E. H. Owusu, S. Dittoh, R. Appoh, M. Tampoe, E. G. Nartey, E. L. K. Dawoe, S. Ayambila

Summary: Participants learned how to design the alignment of project objectives with the right donor programme and how to select the right interventions for a coherent project. Clear project development tools such as stakeholder analysis, project cycle and elements of the logical framework were taught. Key takeaways for participants: Effective project monitoring and evaluation plays a crucial role in any project, including accountability to the donor and the public. Communicating the key results and lessons learned from a project to the target group is important to ensure the sustainability of project results and follow-up.

12

Organisational Development

Partnerships and networking

Date: Tuesday 15 November 2022
Speakers: N. Coulthard, P. Buckley, S. Kanyamibwa, M. Kootsositse, M. B. Ochieng, T. Lehmberg, R. T. Baganda, A Nana, A. Ngari

Summary: The aim of this lecture was to present the need and methods for building stronger and sustainable national and regional networks to raise awareness and share resources. The targeted overcoming of boundaries to cooperate with other partners, e.g. from the development sector, plays a decisive part in this process. Another ubiquitous principle in this process: Integrating lessons learned from field work into coherent policy and advocacy strategies. Guidelines were provided for identifying and securing the right international partners to support NGOs in implementing their agendas.

13

Organisational Development

Reflections on getting the best out of people, project management and sustainable financing

Date: Tuesday 06 December 2022
Speakers: N. Coulthard, P. Buckley, V. Nandokha, M. Graham, S. Bender, A. Hipkiss, T. Chikomo, S. Fournet, M. Jerusalem

Summary: In this final lecture of the Organisation Development Series, participants learned how to increase the contribution of volunteers and interns to their human resources and the efficiency of their organisations. Also highlighted: How to ensure a progressive and necessary diversity policy - gender, age and ethnicity balance - in an NGO without neglecting to increase the efficiency of institutional fundraising and diversification of fundraising. Participants took away key insights and practices for improving their project management.

Lessons learned

The Climate Smart Agriculture pilot project sites

The evaluation of projects is one of the most important processes for reflection and improvement of one‘s own work. This step is necessary to ensure the quality of work and thus the basis for the achievement of the defined objectives in a world of constant change and development. This chapter is an evaluation of the Climate Smart Agriculture pilot projects in the six different pilot case regions in each of our project partner countries. The reflection was carried out in an open space in the form of a discussion.

1

The biodiversity-rich Amani Nature Forest Reserve **in Tanzania**

Amani Nature Forest Reserve is a magnificent tropical highland forest located in the heart of the East Usambara Mountains in Tanzania. The Amani Nature Forest Reserve in Tanzania is known for its various soil types, including clay, loam, and sandy soils. The region receives a substantial amount of rainfall, with an average annual precipitation ranging from 1,500 to 2,500 millimetres. The climate in the Amani Nature Forest Reserve is generally classified as tropical, characterized by high humidity and temperatures that range between 20°C and 30°C throughout the year. Precipitation patterns in the East Usambara range have undergone substantial changes over time. Historical data from the 1930s indicate that the dry season was shorter during that period, and there was a significantly higher amount of cloud cover compared to current conditions. (BirdLife International (2023)[1]) The reserve is renowned for its lush vegetation and unique wildlife, making it a hotspot for biologists and conservationists alike (one of 34 biodiversity hotspots in the world). The reserve is home to a range of plant and animal species, many of which are endemic to the area. The forest also serves as a crucial carbon sink, absorbing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The forest in the East Usambara range underwent fragmentation in the past due to the clearance of land for coffee plantations initially, and later by the establishment of tea plantations. The local communities surrounding Amani Nature Forest Reserve have utilised the forest's resources for generations, practicing agriculture and harvesting non-timber forest products. The reserve's forested slopes provide vital water resources for the surrounding communities, and the forest's soil fertility is preserved using organic farming practices.

In addition to its ecological significance, Amani Nature Forest Reserve also provides a critical habitat for endangered species like the Colobus monkey, several endemic chameleon species and numerous bird species. However, despite the value that Amani Nature Forest Reserve holds for both the environment and the local communities, it faces several challenges: Deforestation, illegal logging, poaching and climate change are all major threats to the reserve's strength and longevity. Moreover, these challenges are compounded by unsustainable land use practices and low economic prospects. Various conservation efforts have been implemented, such as reforestation initiatives, community-based natural resource management practices, and education programs on sustainable farming practices, but much remains to be done. The reserve's diverse plant and animal life provides crucial resources for nearby communities, while also contributing to the area's overall biodiversity and ecological well-being. However, continued conservation efforts are necessary to ensure that this valuable Amani Forest ecosystem remains intact for generations to come.

1. BirdLife International (2023) Important Bird Area factsheet: East Usambara Mountains. Downloaded from http://datazone.birdlife.org/site/factsheet/7033 on 14/06/2023.

Challenges of spice production *in the Amani Nature Forest Reserve*

Several challenges were identified in spice cultivation, processing and marketing in the Amani Nature Forest Reserve, including hygienic handling of food products, understanding the need for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) materials, as well as the necessity of organic boosters on spice farming.

During the project duration a general need to improve hygiene standards in spice processing for the production facilities was discovered, including rooms and suitable apparel (masks, gloves, aprons, hair restraints). Besides that, it was also noted that the machines required more electricity for operation than could be provided in the region. To address these challenges, investments were made to improve hygiene standards through the provision of necessary equipment such as cloth and masks. Trainings were also conducted to ensure proper usage of the equipment and adherence to food hygiene and safety protocols. Additionally, efforts were made to enhance the production facility, including better room conditions. To resolve the power supply issue, the machine was relocated to an area with better access to power, ensuring its smooth operation.

Another key challenge faced in the project was related to implementing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and organic boosters for spice farming, which are a comprehensive and sustainable approach to pest control and fertilisation of soils. IPM combines multiple strategies to effectively manage pests and nutrient loss while minimizing environmental impact. It was difficult for farmers to understand the concept of using resources, such as garlic, for IPM instead of utilising them for food production. The challenge here lay in shifting the perspective to recognize that these resources were necessary for effective pest management rather than for immediate consumption or food production purposes. To address this, the project implemented training programs and demonstration plots to educate farmers on the benefits and importance of IPM and organic booster practices. Moreover, providing farmers with a range of alternatives of methods helped to increase their engagement and the adoption of sustainable management practices, ultimately leading to more resilient and productive agricultural systems. These lessons emphasise the importance of effective education and training methods when introducing new concepts in agriculture. Tailoring demonstrations to align with farmers‘ existing knowledge and practices helps to bridge the understanding and knowledge gap and promotes the adoption of sustainable farming techniques. Overall, the challenges encountered in spice farming, hygiene in food production, machine requirements, and the need of IPM and organic boosters, the project aimed to improve the overall sustainability and success of the spice industry in the pilot region. These lessons will inform future decision-making processes and help in the planning and implementation of similar projects, ensuring more successful outcomes.

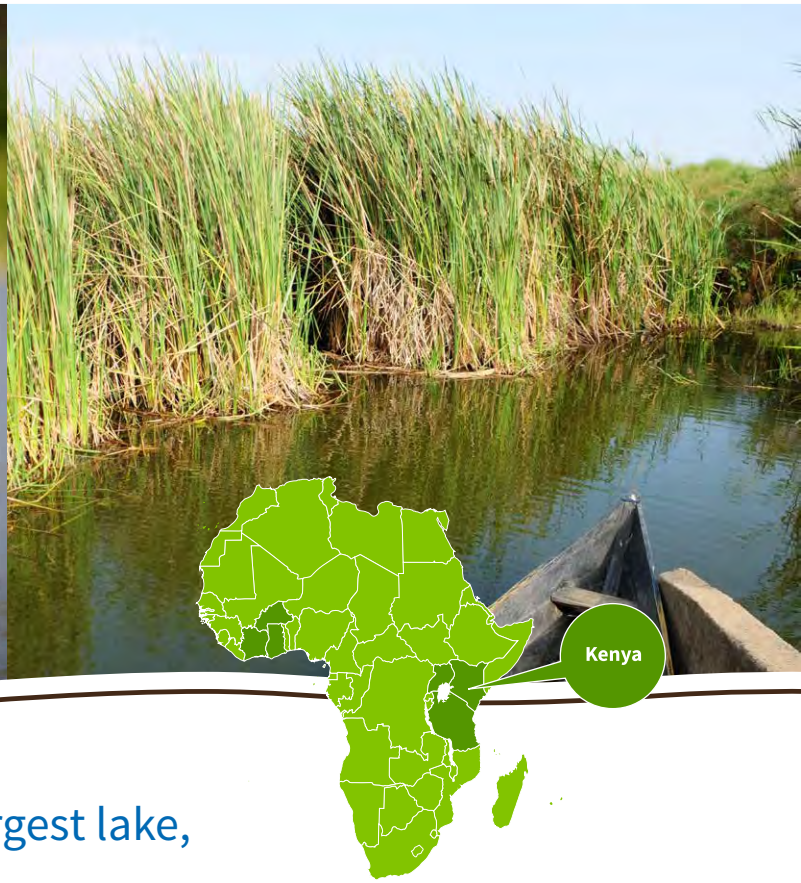
Best Practice example

Access to finance for better livelihoods – the case of a community revolving fund system

Up to 500 million smallholder farmers worldwide face a significant funding gap of 170 billion USD, with limited access to financing due to several reasons. Local financial institutions see them as too risky or lack specialized financial products for the sector. Farmers are often outside the formal economic sector and lack collateral to secure loans, leading them to resort to informal finance. Cultural barriers, including reluctance to take on loans or financial exposure, also contribute to the problem. Women face additional obstacles in accessing financing and investment, despite being vital to building a sustainable economy. Furthermore, farmers lack sufficient access to financial capital in the Amani Forest Reserve, which hinders the goals of improved farming, value addition, and marketing of spice products.

The AfriEvolve project provides financial support to farmers for adopting Climate Smart Agriculture practices through a community support fund that offers soft loans for material, seedlings, tools, and packaging. Around 75 beneficiaries, 60 percent of whom are women, have been provided with loans totalling around 14,000 EUR to support spice marketing, processing, packaging, and selling activities.

The financial support through the Community Revolving Fund has enabled beneficiaries to make growth in their business capital investments. An farmer training program was conducted to improve the farming skills of the 86 participants, and two representatives attended a national farmers‘ day for marketing linkages and knowledge exchange. The Community Revolving Fund has improved farmers‘ marketing skills and the value chain while bringing environmental and social benefits. The objective is to also reapply learnings from this work to other regions to increase the scale of positive impacts. The system is guided by a committee and policies to ensure its sustainability. Financial growth to loan beneficiaries will eventually enable farmers to produce greater and sustainable yields of higher quality and lead to improved livelihoods as well as social relationships from family to the regional level. The AfriEvolve project has shown positive and visible contributions to spice farmers at the Amani Nature Forest Reserve and will enable farmers to sustainably grow their spice farming in the future.



2

Living on the shores of Africa‘s largest lake, Lake Victoria **in Kenya**

The Yala Swamp, located in western Kenya, is a complex ecosystem and Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) that supports both human livelihoods and the natural environment. It covers an area of approximately 20,756 hectares and is one of the largest freshwater wetlands in Kenya. The Yala Swamp is characterized by diverse soil types, including clay, loam, and organic-rich soils. The swamp is surrounded by a mosaic of different land use methods, including smallholder agriculture, livestock grazing, and commercial plantations. These land use impacts with the swamp ecosystem in complex ways, affecting water quality, soil fertility, and wildlife habitats. The area experiences an average annual precipitation ranging from 1,500 to 2,000 millimetres. The climate in the region is predominantly tropical, with high humidity and temperatures ranging between 20°C and 30°C throughout the year.

The Yala Swamp is characterised by a unique hydrology, with complex patterns of inundation and drainage driven by seasonal rains and lake level fluctuations. This variability creates a diversity of microhabitats that support a wide range of plants and animals, including some that are endangered like several cichlid fish species or the Sitatunga Antelope (nationally endangered). Papyrus (*Cyperus papyrus*) is the predominant vegetation species. The swamp is also a vital resource for local communities, who rely on it for fishing, agriculture, and drinking water. The swamp provides important ecosystem services, such as water filtration, erosion control, and climate regulation, that are essential for human well-being.

However, the Yala region faces several threats, including drainage and conversion for agriculture and development, overgrazing, and pollution from agricultural runoff and human waste. These threats are compounded by the effects of climate change, including more frequent and intense floods and droughts. To address these threats and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Yala Swamp, a number of conservation and management strategies need to be implemented, such as the promotion of sustainable land use practices, like agroforestry and organic farming, adapted to climate change effects - summarised as Climate Smart Agriculture.

The Yala Swamp provides an example of how complex and interconnected agro-ecosystems can support both human livelihoods and biodiversity conservation. By working together to protect and manage this valuable resource, local communities, government agencies, and conservation organisations can ensure that the Yala Swamp continues to thrive for generations to come.

Challenges with Climate Smart Agriculture *at Lake Victoria*

The CSA pilot project engaged various methods to address key challenges in agriculture and livelihoods, focusing on crop farming, fish farming, poultry, beekeeping, establishment of tree nurseries for agroforestry/fruit trees and the sustainable production of papyrus products. Each CSA pilot method faced unique challenges, such as poverty-related issues in crop farming. However, the project participants implemented targeted solutions and learned valuable lessons to overcome these challenges and promote sustainable practices in each respective field.

A major challenge in crop farming was that due to their poverty, farmers were not able to stock up on seeds after the harvest and buy seeds for the following seasons. This posed a significant challenge to their farming activities and required continuous external support. A very similar challenge has been seen in fish farming. To overcome these two similar challenges, a solution was found by helping the fish farmers or tillers to develop business plans and training them to set aside capital specifically for the purchase of fingerlings and raw materials for fish feeds, as well as seeds for the next season. This approach aimed to improve their financial capabilities and promote sustainable fish farming and cropping practices. The key learning from both challenges was the importance of long-term management plans, with fish farmers and crop farmers trained to save seedlings or seeds for future harvests to ensure a continuous supply for their farms.

Some regions in the project area are facing extreme drought, which has been a problem in eastern Africa for some time. This entailed challenges for beekeeping, limiting its feasibility. Bees need sufficient access to water and moisture for general survival and successfulhoney production. To address this challenge, beehives were strategically placed near natural water sources to ensure consistent access to water for the bees. In areas where natural sources were limited, beehives were clustered, and water was provided to boost colony colonisation and minimise hive absconding. The lesson we have learned is the necessity of a continuous water supply, even in unusually dry years due to climate change, to sustain valuable beekeeping.

Finally, we were confronted with a challenge from a completely new field. The COVID-19 pandemic led to a decline in sales of papyrus products by tourists, which was fundamental to the success of the CSA pilot method for the sustainable swamp management. As a result, weavers heavily relied on the local sale of baskets used for example for fish transportation, leading to a decrease in product sales volume. To alleviate this problem, a new market for the sustainable products had to be found. For this, pilot centres were set up at the village level and linked to the markets at the county level. In addition, marketing efforts focused on selling products in Nairobi through Nature Kenya‘s office shop. The key finding is that it is important to diversify customer groups to reduce dependence on a single market segment and increase resilience to external disruptions.

3

The **Echuya Forest** reserve in the middle **of the East African Rift Valley**

The Echuya Forest Reserve in Uganda is a unique highland forest protection site at an altitude of 2,570 metres that is home to a diverse range of plant and animal species. The Echuya Forest Reserve in Uganda features a range of soil types, including clay, loam, and sandy soils. The forest reserve covers an area of 4,000 hectares and is in the south-western part of Uganda, near the border with Rwanda. The area receives a moderate amount of rainfall, with an average annual precipitation ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 millimetres. The climate in the Echuya Forest Reserve is classified as humid, with temperatures typically ranging between 15°C and 25°C throughout the year. The reserve is situated on the eastern edge of the Albertine Rift, which is a hotspot of biodiversity in Africa. The reserve is providing to a range of valuable ecosystem services, including water regulation, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration. The forest acts as a regional water buffer, absorbing rainfall and releasing it slowly, which helps to maintain water quality and quantity downstream. The forest is also an important habitat for endangered species such as the mountain gorilla, as well as other primates, birds, and small mammals. Additionally, the reserve serves as a critical nesting ground for migratory bird species, including the Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon and the Collared Sunbird and is categorised by BirdLife as an Important Bird Area (IBA).

The forest reserve provides a range of products and services to local communities, including timber, non-timber forest products, and tourism. The forest is used for traditional medicine, fuelwood, and construction materials, and also supports beekeeping and butterfly farming. The region in and around the Echuya Forest Reserve is characterised by the coexistence of natural forest, smallholder agriculture, and livestock grazing.

However, the forest is under threat from human activities such as deforestation, illegal logging, and charcoal production. The civil society in the reserve is supported by the Ugandan government and green non-government organisations such as Nature Uganda, with several conservation and restoration programs in place to protect the forest and its biodiversity. By providing important ecosystem services, the forest helps to sustain the livelihoods of local communities while protecting valuable biodiversity. Sustainability and conservation efforts are required to ensure that this fragile ecosystem continues to thrive for generations to come.

How can Climate Smart Agriculture be optimally adapted to local conditions?

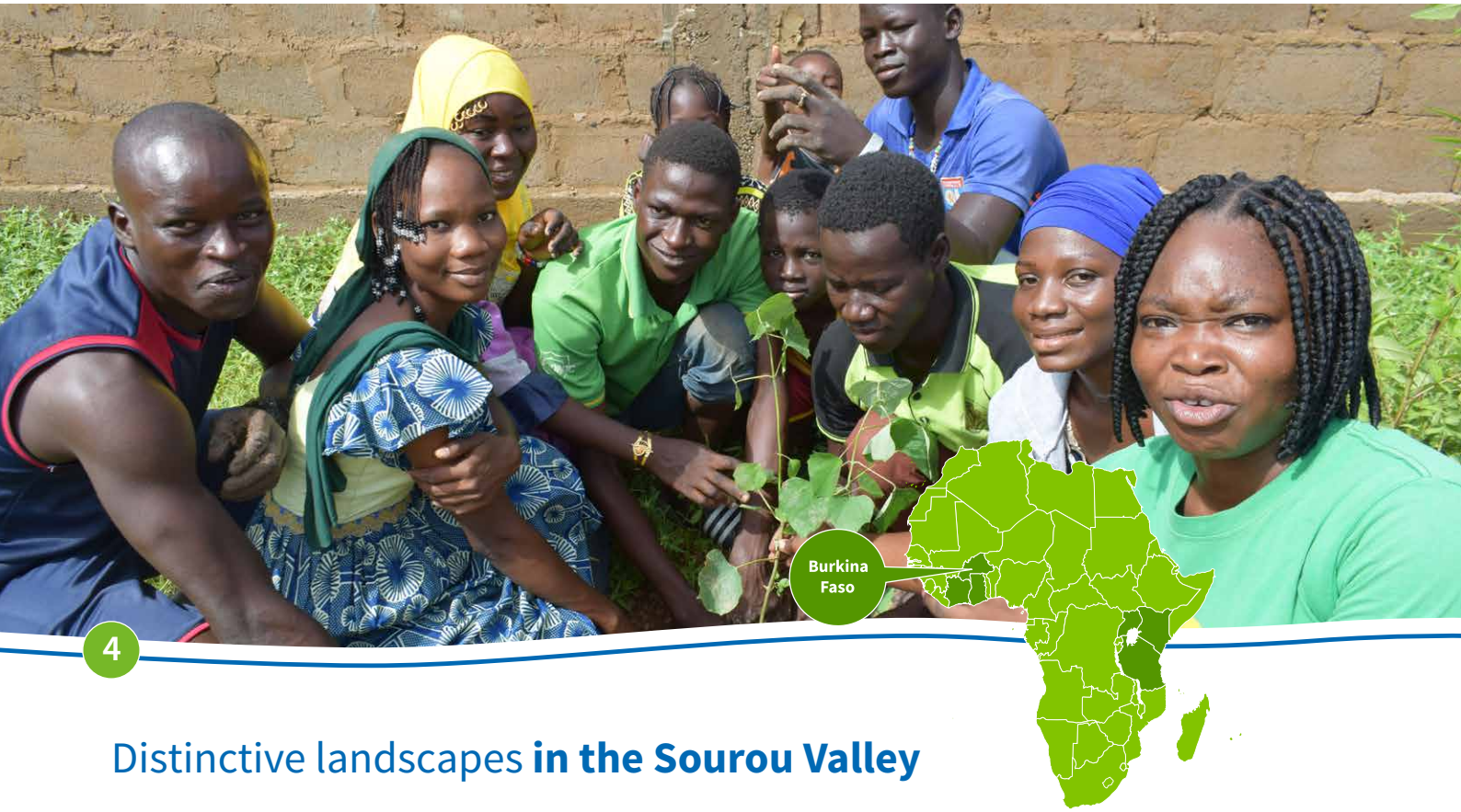
Nature Uganda has gained the trust and support of local communities as a reliable and long-term partner in the Echuya Forest Reserve. They have established a Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) pilot site to test new agriculture methods adapted to climate change, demonstrating their commitment to sustainable farming practices.

The sheep farming activities have been under risk, as only 90 sheep instead of 200 could be made available to the farmers, due to limited capacities within the community in the beginning of the project. Moreover, the price of sheep increased due to a regional pest outbreak, further complicating the situation. Suitable sleeping facilities for the sheep had to be created first and the handling of sheep in enclosures was new for the community. Therefore, the project conducted additional trainings in sheep farming for the communities, focusing on building farmhouses and providing guidance on effective sheep farming practices. Additionally, the project recognised the need to introduce a community-based enterprise, which would gather capacities and knowledge, ultimately increasing the total output of the sheep farming initiative. This could also serve as a demonstration farm to showcase best practices to other community members.

Besides these hurdles, the pilot sites faced significant challenges due to the mountainous landscape, resulting in landslides, erosion, and heavy rains that negatively impacted the sites and soil fertility, with the loss of many seedlings. Moreover, further seedlings failed to survive due to drought followed by heavy rains, necessitating a second round of planting and the provision of more seedlings than initially planned. Through training programs, the general land management practices were improved, including the implementation of land use by-laws. In future projects, the establishment of long-term land use plans is crucial for effective resource management and to reduce the risk of losses.

One of the major challenges hampering beekeeping was the low colonisation rate of the beehives. Out of 100 beehives set up, only 40 became inhabited by bees. The reason for this low settlement rate is the use of pesticides in agriculture by local landowners. In response, a community training was implemented to raise awareness about the harmful effects of pesticides and promote the use of organic alternatives. Once colonisation took place, the honey production created significant value for the community and reduced the use of fires for land clearing in the region. It is necessary to further reduce the use of chemical pesticides and encourage the adoption of organic pesticides, which are safer for bees and the environment.

Another hurdle was raising the acceptance of energy-saving stoves, since some of the households preferred to use real firewood instead of charcoal for time-saving reasons. By continuously advising and providing demonstrations to households about the benefits and effectiveness of energy-saving stoves, many people could be convinced. The benefits of the energysaving stoves include direct contributions to mitigating climate change and deforestation, and fostering better health due to less smoke and a more efficient cooking experience. This underlines the importance of starting with detailed trainings, awareness raising measures and demonstrations to educate households about the advantages of energy-saving stoves or any other Climate Smart Agriculture method.



4

Distinctive landscapes **in the Sourou Valley**

The Sourou Valley in Burkina Faso is a fascinating Sahel ecosystem characterised by diverse soil types, including sandy soils, sandy loam, and clay soils. Located in the western part of the country, the valley is characterised by a semi-arid climate and sandy soils with broad floodplain marshes and acacia forests, which present significant challenges for agriculture. The region experiences a semi-arid climate with a distinct dry season and a shorter wet season. The average annual rainfall in the Sourou Valley ranges from 500 to 900 millimetres, with most of the precipitation occurring between June and September. The climate in the area is generally hot and dry, with temperatures varying between 25°C and 40°C throughout the year. However, over the years, farmers in the region have developed innovative techniques and strategies to cope with these challenges and create smallholder farming systems. Nevertheless, changing climatic conditions are increasingly challenging these traditional farming methods.

The natural resources of the Sourou Valley farmers are under considerable pressure: loss of floodplain forests to agriculture, collection of firewood, especially for smoking fish, and unsustainable fishing are causing long-term damage to the area and its important ecosystem services. Poor soils and resulting low yields lead to deforestation, which further increases degradation. Climate Smart Agriculture could help local communities improve their food security while renaturalising ecosystems. The Sourou Valley is the fourth „transboundary Ramsar site“ in Africa. It has a total area of more than 77,000 hectares and comprises, in Burkina Faso, the Sourou Valley and in Mali, the Sourou Floodplain. Hydrologically, the Sourou valley is drained by the Sourou and Mouhoun rivers. The Sourou valley is an important livestock area because of the abundance of pasture. Livestock are raised by almost all households as well as by pastoralists who come seasonally to the banks of the river. The livestock population, which is estimated at around 253,000 cattle and 337,000 sheep and goats, is almost entirely fed by natural pasture.

Through the challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, the Sourou Valley struggles to remain a vibrant and productive agro-ecological zone. The innovative techniques and strategies developed by local farmers serve as a model for sustainable agriculture in semi-arid regions around the world, but the promotion of Climate Smart Agriculture practices and the support local farmers is needed, to ensure food security, enhance natural resource management and resilient communities.

Tree nursery for sustainable renaturation
with native tree species in the Sourou Valley.

What are the challenges of adapting agriculture in the Sahel to a changing climate?

Reforestation activities in the Sourou valley in Burkina Faso have faced several challenges that have necessitated innovative solutions.

The project nursery site benefited from the construction of a water tank, which stored water from nearby community wells. The manual water supply was coordinated by the community, mainly the women, to ensure a sufficient supply of water for the young plants. One of the main lessons learned was the need to drill a borehole directly on the nursery site. This borehole would provide a reliable water resource, not only for nursery production, but also for supplying drinking water to the surrounding communities and livestock. By having a direct source of water on site, reliance on manual transport from distant wells could be eliminated, saving time and effort.

In addition, it is essential to carry out a more in-depth survey beforehand on the choice of species of interest to the beneficiaries, in order to ensure the sustainability of reforestation activities. The fact that a selected species was only marginally accepted by the community was a challenge. Understanding the specific needs and preferences of local communities would ensure that the species selected for reforestation efforts corresponded to their requirements and priorities.

One of the main problems identified was that the number of hives per beneficiary was insufficient to generate significant income for reinvestment. The solution is to focus on personal reinvestment by increasing the number of hives owned by each beekeeper. By developing their beekeeping activities and increasing the number of hives they manage, beekeepers can generate higher incomes and have more resources to reinvest. Some valuable lessons have been learned from these beekeeping activities. One of the main lessons is that it is entirely possible to increase the amount of hives per beneficiary, ideally up to five. Increasing the number of hives not only allows beekeepers to generate more income, but also to amortise the costs associated with auxiliary equipment such as protective suits and tools. By having more hives, beekeepers can optimise their operations and achieve economies of scale.

Another important lesson is the potential for collectivising ancillary equipment on a village scale. By pooling resources and sharing equipment among the beneficiaries of a village, investments can be rationalised. This approach not only makes it possible to manage costs, but also facilitates collective accounting for the depreciation and renewal of the equipment needed for the long-term viability of the beekeeping activity.

Best Practice example

Beekeeping and compost production in Burkina Faso

Beekeeping provides alternative sources of income to agricultural activities and therefore potentially better livelihood opportunities, but also contributes greatly to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. In the Sourou valley in Burkina Faso, where natural resources are under considerable pressure, an exosystemic approach with Climate Smart Agriculture adaptation has been taken up by the surrounding communities for soil regeneration with composting and beekeeping. 50 beneficiaries were trained by NATURAMA in modern beekeeping techniques. 102 Kenyan hives and 50 beekeeping kits were given to the farmers. The participants were informed about natural predators, safety measures and disease management. Good beekeeping practice also requires a detailed knowledge of the plant species that grow in the environment of the hives, and this information could serve to encourage beekeepers to preserve and recover these vegetation types.

The national market for honey in Burkina Faso is expanding and the industry already employs several thousand people. Bees contribute nearly 4.9 million USD per year to the national economy. The honey industry is, therefore, a sector with high potential for job creation. Additionally, honey has an important cultural meaning in Burkina Faso, being widely used for cultural rites and festivals, religious rituals, in traditional medicine and in the local cuisine.

As organic matter remains the best regulator of soil fertility, the AfriEvolve project in collaboration with NATURAMA organised a 7-day training workshop on compost production and application. Instead of the use of chemical fertilisers in improving agricultural yields, the project highlighted the benefits of natural compost, which promotes the conservation of micro-organisms and insects and is also much cheaper. The participants of the training understood how easy it is to produce organic manure without heavy labour and appreciated the learnings.

5

Azagny National Park is a juwell on **the coast of the Côte d'Ivoire**

The Azagny National Park, located in the southwestern region of Côte d'Ivoire, covers a unique range of lagoons, evergreen (primary) forests, dry and wet coastal savannahs, wetlands and mangrove areas. The park covers an area of 21,850 hectares and is one of the most important national parks in West Africa. The park is surrounded by ranges of hills and elevations, and in the centre is a wide, often marshy basin where the water level fluctuates depending on the season. The climate here is tropical and humid all year round, with an average rainfall of 2,300 millimetres.

The park is known for its rich biodiversity, home to several rare and endemic species of flora and fauna, including the African manatee, pygmy hippopotamus, and several primate species such as colobus and Diana monkeys. The flora of Azagny National Park also boasts considerable diversity, including trees such as teak and mahogany, and medicinal plants such as the African pincushion. Furthermore, the agricultural lands surrounding the park support several cash crops, including cocoa, coffee, and rubber. The population consists of representatives of the Avikam ethnic group (subsistence farmers and fishermen), migrants of the Baule group from the centre of the country (cocoa/coffee cultivation for cash crops) and migrants (labourers/cash crops) from Burkina Faso and Mali. As a result, conflicts between the local population, industrial plantations and the Parks and Reserves Authority (OIPR) are increasing. Despite being an area of significant agricultural activity, the local communities around the park try to manage their lands to prevent extensive degradation of the park's environment.

The dominant agricultural crops are food crops (tubers, cereals and plantain) and industrial crops (coffee, cocoa, rubber and oil palm). However, the increasing population and climate change have had a negative impact on the environment in the park and the food supply in recent years.

The Azagny National Park in Côte d'Ivoire is a unique ecosystem, with diverse flora and fauna, and responsible agriculture practices that promote ecological sustainability need to be enhanced. NABU and SOS-Forêts must continue to recognize the importance of such an ecological important region and work towards its conservation and sustainable land-use to preserve these ecological treasures for generations to come.

Water basin for salt extraction from seawater.

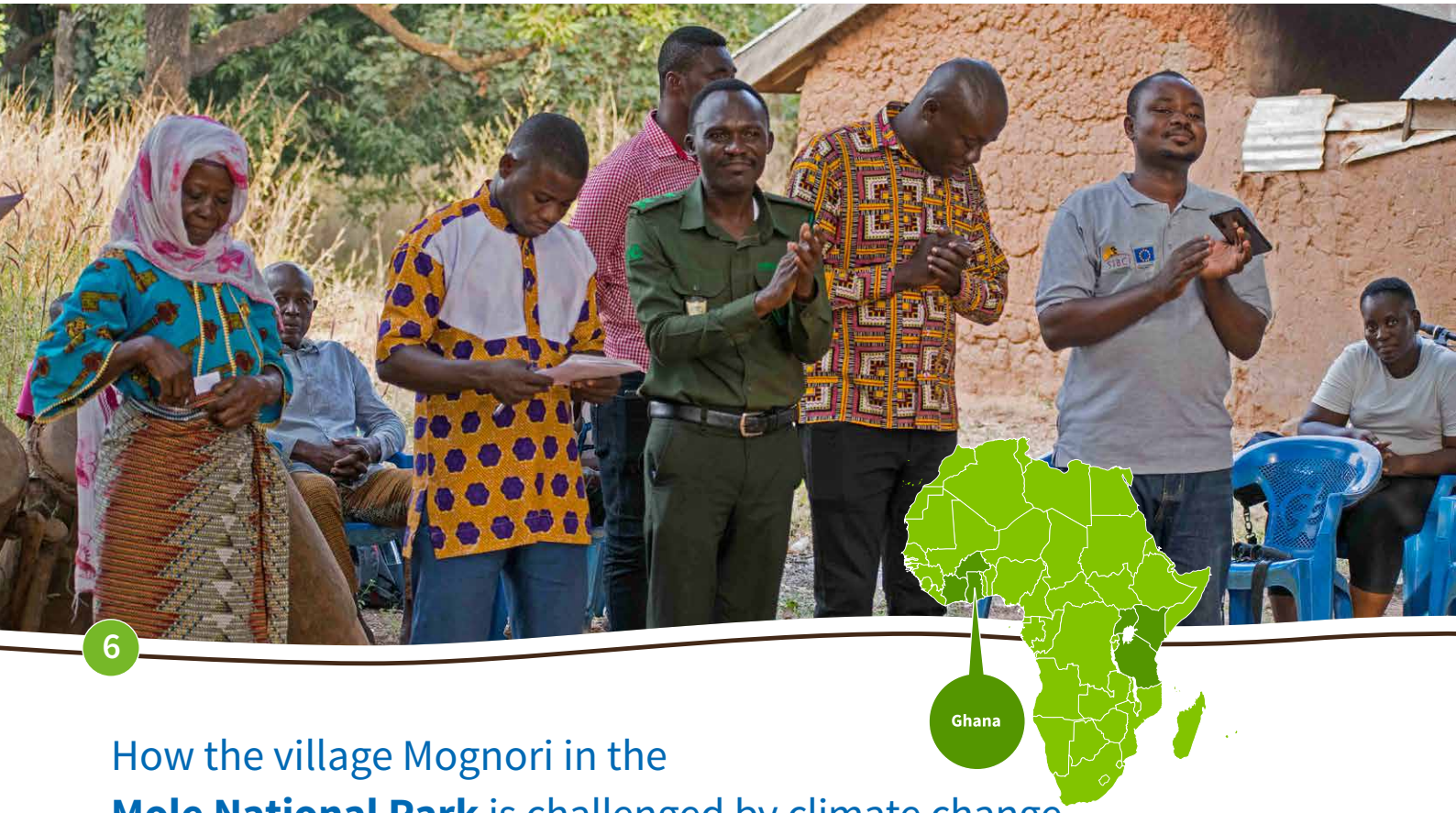
Challenges in reforestation and salt production from seawater in the Azagny National Park

One of the main difficulties encountered in setting up agroforestry (cocoa and forest trees) was the high cost of purchasing the first 1,700 seedlings from structures outside SOS-Forêts, which put a strain on the budget. To remedy this situation, SOS Forêts took the initiative of buying seeds instead of seedlings and setting up a community-owned nursery. In this way, we have been able to grow the remaining 1,000 seedlings at a lower cost. Valuable lessons were learnt from this experience. It has emerged that the state structures have a reliable source of high-quality seedlings, which SOS-Forêts will continue to use, but we would also like to purchase seeds to develop our own community-based nurseries. This approach would reduce investment costs for reforestation and agroforestry activities and enables a transfer of knowledge to the community.

In Côte d'Ivoire, beekeeping is mainly developed in the savannah zone in the north of the country and not in the rainy southern forest zone, where the CSA pilot site is located. In this pilot project, the experts selected for the project therefore based their activities on the northern savannah model as a basic approach with clear dry and rainy seasons. However, they were faced with the challenge of adapting the techniques for colonising hives and adjusting the harvesting period to the forested area of southern Côte d'Ivoire. Frequently, hives in the forest zone were affected by insect invasions, which resulted in reduced harvests and even crop losses. This problem was solved by increasing the frequency of visits to identify the right local harvesting period, which corresponds to the period from September to November for a first harvest and from February to April for a second - earlier than in the northern savannah zone. However, these periods remain quite unpredictable due to climate change. Additionally, during the trapping phase, the hives were placed high up where they were less accessible to the insects.

For solar salt production, the problem is that the dry season over the last two years has not been as intense as usual, resulting in irregular rainfall that has affected the natural sun-drying process and therefore bringing instability in salt production due to too much rain at the wrong time. Salt production is highly dependent on the dry season. One solution developed by the women to minimise the impact of irregular rainfall on production was to use trays in addition to tarpaulins to manually accelerate the drying process in a second phase. However, a cost-benefit analysis needs to be carried out first.

Some key lessons were learned from this experience. Firstly, exploring the possibility of communities making a financial commitment rather than receiving everything for free could increase responsibility and ownership in both beekeeping and sustainable seedling production. In this approach, the Kenyan hive would be more suitable for beekeeping, as it is less costly and less restrictive in terms of monitoring for local communities. Secondly, the pilot beekeeping project in the forest zone of southern Côte d'Ivoire has provided basic data for developing beekeeping in the coastal and forest zone of Côte d'Ivoire. The lessons learned from this pilot project will make it possible to determine the best methods for beekeeping in the southern forest zone, which contains a large mangrove area and whose honey is said to be of very high quality.



6

How the village Mognori in the **Mole National Park** is challenged by climate change

Mognori in Mole National Park is an important wintering area for many migratory bird species and has been designated as one of the Important Bird Areas in Ghana based on BirdLife International criteria. It is nestled in the historic and culturally rich Northern Region of Ghana. The average annual rainfall in Mole National Park ranges from 1,000 to 1,200 millimetres, with the majority of the precipitation occurring between May and October. The climate in the area is generally hot and humid, with temperatures typically ranging from 25°C to 35°C throughout the year. The Mognori community is made up of subsistence farmers who cultivate small plots of land using traditional methods on several different soil types, including sandy soils, laterite soils, and clay soils.

Mognori is in the savannah woodland zone of Mole National Park. The Guinea Savannah Woodland is characterised by scattered trees and shrubs with sparse grass cover. The soils in this zone are generally sandy and poor in nutrients. However, the Mognori community has developed farming practices that enhance soil fertility and support sustainable agriculture.

The adjoining national park and the region around the community are home to about 742 vascular plant species, over 90 mammal species including five primate species, 314 bird species, 33 reptile species, nine amphibian species, and 120 butterfly species. Species of conservation and tourism interest in the area include Elephant, Buffalo, Spotted hyena, Leopard, Caracal, Civet, Genet, Jackal, Mongoose, Warthog, Kob, Waterbuck, Bushbuck and Roan antelope. Birds of conservation concern include Critically Endangered White-backed, White-headed and Hooded vultures.

One of the most significant farming practices in Mognori is intercropping. This technique involves planting two or more crops together on the same plot of land. This practice is prevalent in Mognori because it minimises soil erosion, maximises land use efficiency, and reduces pest and disease pressure. However, farmers in the community cannot afford to mechanise land preparation - most of them practice slash and burn, shifting cultivation and fallowing when exhausted. Cereals (maize, sorghum), roots and tubers (yam, cassava) and legumes (groundnut, cowpea) are the common crops cultivated. In addition, irregular rainfall patterns resulting in extended periods of drought are increasingly causing the loss of arable lands and poor yields, threatening the regular harvest patterns necessary for intercropping. Low rainfall with increasing average annual temperatures also contributes to pest infestation and general low agricultural productivity. To enhance and improve sustainable farming practice, methods against droughts and erosion need to be further promoted within Climate Smart Agriculture concepts.

Mognori in Mole National Park is an example of traditional farming practices, which are nowadays challenged by changing climate, especially by increasing drought, erosion and missing rains, and need to be improved through Climate Smart Agriculture adaptations.

What are the challenges in implementing drip irrigation?

The establishment of a drip irrigation system at the Mognori demonstration farm faced several challenges. The initial plan to establish two rainfed demonstration farms proved unsuitable due to incompatible roofing systems and the high cost of investment in storage facilities required to store enough water for use during the dry season. There was therefore the need to identify another water source. The two available options were groundwater and the Mole River. River pumping was not considered because the turbidity of the Mole River was too high for drip irrigation. The river is also about 1 kilometre from the demonstration site and would therefore require a lot of energy to transport water to the plants. Groundwater therefore became the obvious choice. The choice of groundwater also came with some challenges. The first was selecting a location with adequate groundwater resources, leading to increased investigation costs to ensure secure access to the deep aquifer. Additionally, the contractor initially chosen from the region to drill the borehole and install the irrigation system lacked capacity, resulting in the need to find another contractor from a different region.

The choice of groundwater also resulted in increased investment cost, mainly from procurement of solar pump, panels and other accessories initially not envisaged in the rainwater harvesting design. Due to this, a single demonstration site with groundwater-based, solar-powered drip irrigation system was constructed. By utilising this system, the yield was fully secured, eliminating potential water gaps during the dry season that may have arisen with rainwater harvesting.

From this experience, valuable lessons were learned: It became evident that conducting a preparatory feasibility study during proposal development is essential to design and budget suitable infrastructures. Overall, the establishment of the drip irrigation system in Mognori's demonstration site required adapting plans, finding suitable contractors, and selecting the most appropriate water source to ensure long-term success and sustainability.

The land tenure arrangement in the community also posed a bit of a challenge. Women traditionally do not own land but gain use rights through their husbands or male relatives. Therefore, in order to hand over the demonstration site to the women, who often live in dependency and have less economic development potential, there was a need to negotiate with the men. This was achieved through a win-win mechanism where the women have production and financial independence, but men are represented on the management committee which provides a supervisory role over the demonstration site. The lesson learnt here is that project designs must take into consideration the cultural dynamics of societies, especially with regards to access and control of natural resources.

Best Practice example

Increased yields and food-security through solar-based water irrigation systems at Mole National Park in Ghana

The pilot site Mognori - where with support of NABU a solar-based irrigation system was built - is in north-western Ghana, on the edge of Mole National Park. With the background information provided in the agro-ecological sites description, including increasing droughts and erosion through climate change, Ghana Wildlife Society (GWS) in partnership with NABU e.V. has built a solar powered drip irrigation demonstration farm which is being used as a training hub for climate-smart activities. With this innovative and cost-efficient system, smallholder farmers are able to irrigate larger areas of land, diversify crops, and increase their yields. Solar-powered drip irrigation systems have demonstrated a way forward towards economic transformation and empowerment.

What has been implemented: A cost-effective pumping system was installed to help pump the water from a borehole into Poly-Tanks. The borehole will simultaneously serve as a groundwater source and rainfall/run-off harvesting reservoir to serve as a sustainable water source. Drip irrigation is the most efficient method of irrigation because the water is applied precisely to the plants through a tube with outlets, without much water loss through evaporation.

60 farmers have already been trained on the effective application of drip irrigation rainwater harvesting systems (management, profitability and sustainability), diversified crop production and soil and water conservation. 10 percent of the profits of the beneficiary farmers will be used for necessary repairs and replacement of worn-out driplines. Through the irrigation system, the agricultural cultivation of the community has become independent of rainfall and drought periods that threaten their existence. Moreover, the farmers can grow crops all year round, even during the dry season. In this way, the crop yield is increased. Solar irrigation has been touted as a key climate smart strategy for Africa, and research confirms a large expansion potential.

The general objective of GWS and its partners in this landscape is to contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development that responds to the challenges of climate change.

Paul Matiku on Organisational Development and the AfriEvolve Project

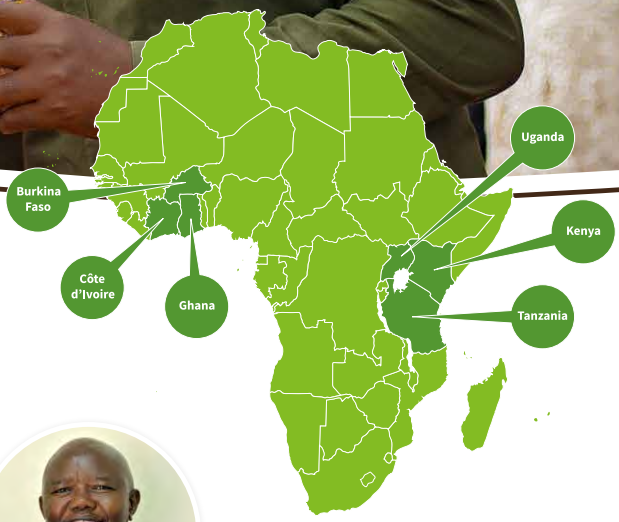
In the realm of organisational development, an integral aspect of the project, alongside CSA, played a crucial role. To adequately address this facet, two clusters, East and West Africa, were established. Nature Kenya took charge of coordinating the East Africa Cluster, while NATURAMA undertook the responsibility for the West. These clusters aimed to foster networking and bolster the capacities of the NGO partners.

Allow me to delve into the East Africa Cluster, where Nature Kenya assumed a leadership role. Over the course of two years, we witnessed commendable collaboration and stimulating exchanges among the partners: Nature Tanzania, Nature Uganda, and Nature Kenya. Notably, one partner emerged as a fresh face on the NGO landscape. Through their participation in the AfriEvolve project and the East Africa Cluster, Nature Tanzania experienced sustainable growth and has now become a full-fledged BirdLife member. This remarkable achievement offers numerous benefits to the NGO. The opportune timing of the AfriEvolve project facilitated Nature Tanzania's transformation into a successful and esteemed BirdLife member, much like Nature Uganda and Nature Kenya. We had the privilege of observing the evidence of this progress during the Peer 2 Peer East Africa Exchange in Amani last October. The event showcased the impressive community work of Nature Tanzania and provided valuable insights into the advantages of Organic Boosters, knowledge that we will apply to our own projects.

Following our visit to Uganda, we were honored to explore the exceptional efforts of Nature Uganda in the Echuya Forest Reserve. Our journey offered a glimpse into Nature Uganda's excellent work in Climate Smart Agriculture, an enlightening experience that broadened our understanding. Additionally, partners had the opportunity to witness the arduous yet captivating endeavours by Nature Kenya in implementing various Climate Smart Agriculture techniques within the challenging ecosystem of Yala Swamp. This exchange between partners proved to be the most stimulating and inspiring aspect of our collaboration.

Furthermore, we established another avenue for peer-to-peer exchange. Nearly every month, we organised online lecture events on Climate Smart Agriculture or Organisational Development, where each partner prepared and shared insightful presentations. These online lectures garnered immense success, attracting a substantial number of viewers.

Allow me to summarise some of the key elements of Organisational Development covered in this online lecture series. While I cannot encapsulate the entirety of the events, I aim to provide readers with a glimpse into the components addressed and the valuable lessons we gleaned. At the governance level, Nature Kenya delivered a successful online lecture in May 2022, shedding light on the operationalisation of organisational stra-

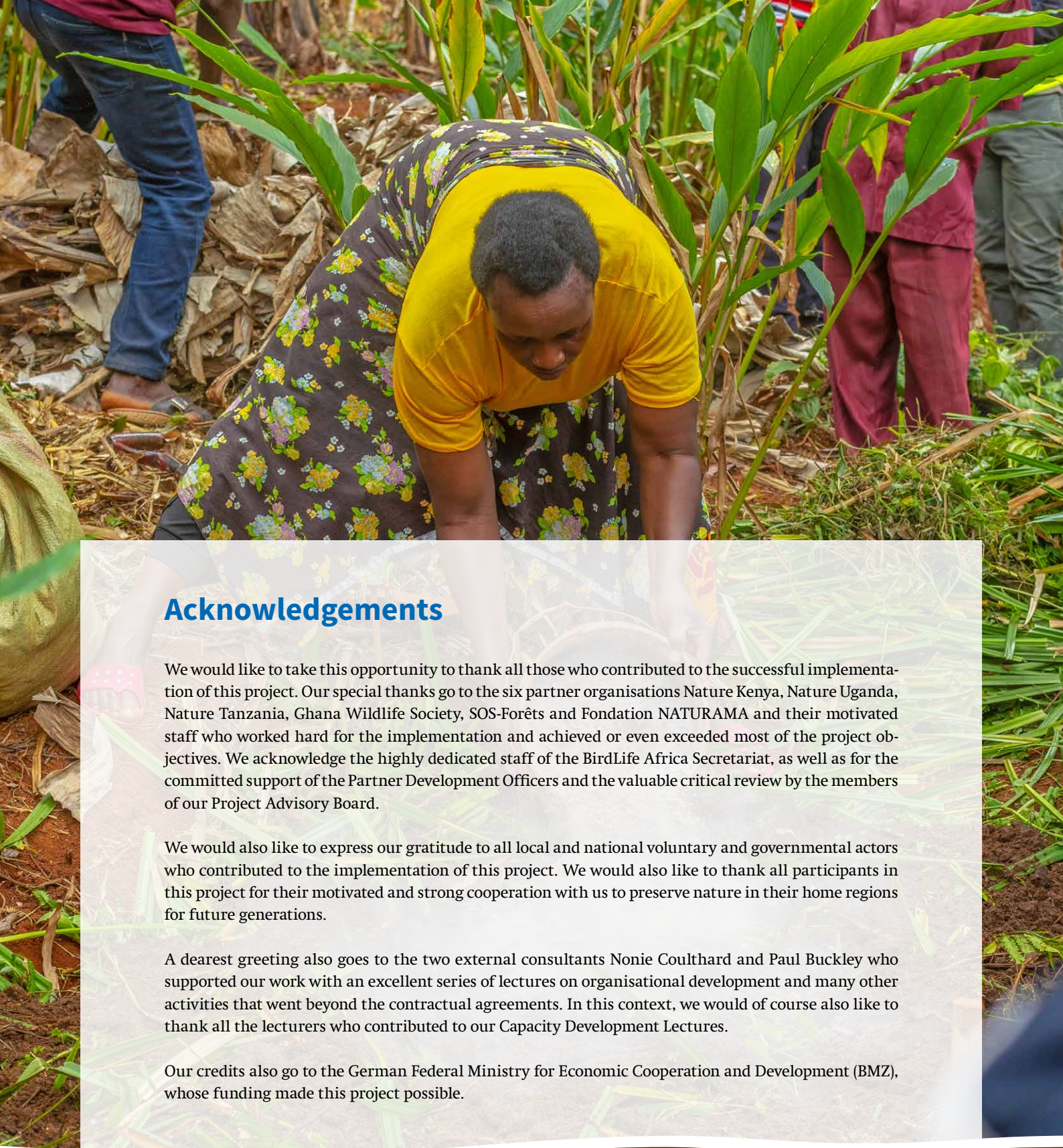


tegies and the implementation of organisational programmes. We also held a meeting focusing on Membership, Marketing, and Fundraising, during which Nature Tanzania's Executive Director, Emmanuel Mgimwa, discussed the challenges faced by small NGOs in generating income and developing effective fundraising plans. Moreover, Nature Kenya presented a compelling case study on effective communication, using the Tana River Delta as an illustrative example.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Nonie Coulthard and Paul Buckley, the consultants who organised the Organisational Development lectures. However, the active participation of all organisations was indispensable in ensuring the success and mutual benefit derived from these online lectures. We are immensely grateful to have been part of this project and eagerly anticipate fostering further collaboration among our partners in the future, as we strive to implement cutting-edge conservation and community initiatives.

Thank you sincerely
Paul Matiku

Paul Matiku
Executive Director
at Nature Kenya



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We would also like to express our gratitude to all local and national voluntary and governmental actors who contributed to the implementation of this project. We would also like to thank all participants in this project for their motivated and strong cooperation with us to preserve nature in their home regions for future generations.

A dearest greeting also goes to the two external consultants Nonie Coulthard and Paul Buckley who supported our work with an excellent series of lectures on organisational development and many other activities that went beyond the contractual agreements. In this context, we would of course also like to thank all the lecturers who contributed to our Capacity Development Lectures.

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