



How the value of mangrove carbon and other ecosystem services have been incorporated into policy at national level in Mozambique specifically on the national mangrove management strategy

Mangroves are an important national and natural heritage for Mozambique, placing the country in the second position in Africa, after Nigeria, with an estimated cover of around 300,000 hectares.

Although there is increasing recognition of the role of mangroves in protecting shorelines from extreme climatic events both locally and regionally, Mozambique has faced severe mangrove degradation and loss of this valuable habitat, in an annual estimate of about 88 hectares/year, mainly due to urban expansion but also to unsustainable use of mangroves by coastal communities for building and fuel wood (coal and firewood).

Recognizing the ecological value of mangroves, concerns regarding degradation are now high on the agenda of the Government of Mozambique that has been building a political and strategic framework focused on mangrove conservation, management and restoration.

Until recently, there was fragmented and diverse legal tools pertaining to mangroves and lack of a specific instrument to guide mangrove work, causing difficulties in understanding and enforcing the legal framework governing mangroves in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

The Blue Forests Project Mozambique intervention implemented through WWF-Mozambique, has conducted several studies mostly focused on the Zambezi River Delta, the largest mangrove cover area in Mozambique, aiming at promoting better management of coastal ecosystems by harnessing the values associated with ecosystem services and carbon. The main studies conducted under the Blue Forests Project include the Pre-Feasibility Study of a Carbon Project in the Zambezi Delta Mangroves; Ecosystem services valuation of mangroves in the Zambezi Delta (valued at 1 billion USD per year); Mangrove Mapping and Change Analysis (id of 2 Community Conservation Areas) and a National Blue Carbon Policy Assessment for Mozambique. The studies were carried out in partnership with national academic institutions such as Eduardo Mondlane University or through specialized consultants.

Results of the studies have contributed to increased understanding of the value and importance of mangroves including blue carbon and ecosystem services which is crucial to improve protection and management of these important coastal ecosystems.

Through the Blue Forests Project and in collaboration with government, WWF-Mozambique have been able to coordinate the development of the National Mangrove Strategy approved in 2020 (2020-2024) – the first policy tool specific for mangroves in the country.

The National Mangrove Management Strategy identifies the national targets to be met (restoration of 5000 hectares by 2022), as well as the priorities for mangrove management in Mozambique, highlighting the need for effective management involving all mangrove

ecosystem stakeholders and considers blue carbon as a way to implement a sustainable finance mechanism for mangrove conservation. The Action Plan identifies the specific actions that the Government of Mozambique proposes to be developed in order to achieve national and international objectives and commitments, one example is the National Mangrove Restoration Program which will be launched on the 26th of July 2021 and is an opportunity to disseminate the Mangrove Strategy, mobilize stakeholders to engage in its implementation, improve guidance on restoration initiatives as well as create awareness on the importance of this ecosystem.

The Mangrove Strategy calls upon political will and joint engagement of multiple governmental agencies with a role in mangroves, as well as NGOs, civil society organizations, local communities and the private sector, required to promote mangrove conservation which has shown to be the way forward for mangrove conservation in Mozambique.

The approval of the Mangrove Strategy has set a new phase with hopes for mangrove management and conservation in Mozambique and with support from the Blue Forest Project we are building the foundations for a potential mangrove carbon project in Mozambique.