



UDZUNGWA LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

A Long-Term Strategy for the Conservation of a
Globally Unique Ecosystem in Southern Tanzania

FOREWORD

This is a summary of the first landscape conservation strategy for the Udzungwa Mountains in southern Tanzania. The overall goal of this conservation strategy is to ensure the long-term persistence of the area's exceptional biodiversity. Landscape-level conservation is a proven conservation strategy for sustaining and recovering biodiversity and ecosystem services, as well as improving the wellbeing of the people who depend on them. To this end, the Udzungwa Landscape Strategy (ULS, hereafter) seeks to identify geographical areas of priority and develop both interventions and activities with key stakeholders, including protected area (PA) managers and neighbouring communities.

WHY IS THE ULS UNIQUE? THE STRATEGY OFFERS:

A highly focused and **selective approach to landscape and natural resource stewardship** that has been collaboratively developed and designed by key stakeholders.

A **balanced allocation of resources** between the conservation of PAs in the Udzungwa Mountains and the wellbeing of communities living adjacent to them.

Guiding principles to foster consultation, transparency, equity, human rights, human-wildlife coexistence, and knowledge-sharing.

Transparent handling of financial flows to the protected area complex, thereby promoting collaboration on front-line activities to effectively protect forests and other habitats.

Support for the implementation of community-based projects led by civil society organizations that are embedded in the Udzungwa landscape and committed to working cost-effectively for the benefit of biodiversity and local people.

Fostering of stakeholder synergy across the Udzungwa landscape to achieve more cooperative relationships and harmonized conservation actions.

Mobilization of existing knowledge and evidence for more sustainable and restorative practices as well as improved forest stewardship.

A chance for participants to learn lessons and promote adaptive management through continuous monitoring and evaluation of project progress, including regular dialogue between protected areas and community partners.



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journey!**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Udzungwa Mountains are part of the oldest mountain range in East Africa — the Eastern Arc of Kenya and Tanzania. With 1,673 km² of forest cover, the Udzungwas constitute one of the world’s most exceptional areas for biological diversity, harbouring more than 2,500 plant, 400 bird, and 120 mammal species, as well as thousands of invertebrates still unknown to science. Not only are the Udzungwa Mountains Tanzania’s most important biodiversity hotspot, but they are also of vital importance to more than a quarter million people, whose wellbeing and livelihoods depend on the water and climate regulation provided by their forests.

The overarching goal of the Udzungwa Landscape Strategy (ULS) is to facilitate the long-term conservation of the Udzungwa Mountains landscape. Well-resourced and well-managed protected areas are critical to conserve Udzungwa’s biodiversity. However, with just over a fifth of the landscape legally protected, there is a need for a holistic, long-term strategy that goes beyond protected areas and encompasses neighbouring land and communities.

The ULS aims to fill critical resource gaps for both protected areas and adjacent communities, supplementing rather than replacing existing government and civil society support. It focuses on the three largest and most biodiverse core protected areas (PAs) – the Udzungwa Mountains

National Park (UMNP; 1,990 km²), the Kilombero Nature Forest Reserve (KNFR; 1,345 km²), and the Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR; 328 km²) – as well as the 71 villages on their periphery. The strategy envisions and fosters balanced support for communities and PAs, tailored to the needs expressed and prioritized by community members and PA staff themselves. In line with this, a consultation process was carried out in 23 representative villages to gain insights into the benefits and challenges of living in the Udzungwa Mountains landscape. Villages were selected through an expert-led process that took into consideration proximity to PAs, reported threats, and community needs. Community members voted on priority conservation and social interventions which they would like to see happen as part of the ULS. Conservation interventions prioritized by communities included energy efficient stoves, Village Savings and Loan Associations, and animal and fish farming. A similar process carried out during the strategy development stage identified natural resource protection activities as a key priority for PA staff. These insights reinforced the fostering of greater cooperation across the landscape as a key goal of the ULS.

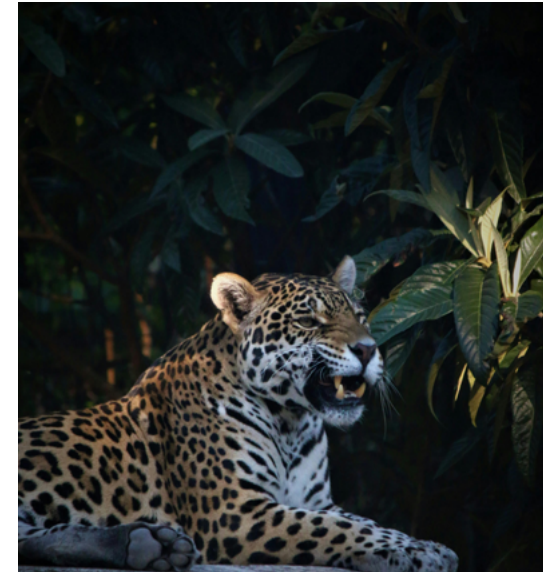
Based on these engagements with local communities and PA managers, four strategic objectives were developed to conserve the Udzungwa Mountains landscape under the ULS:

- 1. Enhance the capacity and efficacy of protected areas.**
- 2. Improve the wellbeing and livelihoods of communities in ways that reinforce their stewardship of forests.**
- 3. Strengthen relations between communities and protected areas, as well as collaborations among other stakeholders in the landscape; and ensure strong governance of the ULS.**
- 4. Develop a comprehensive Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Process to systematically improve the strategy.**

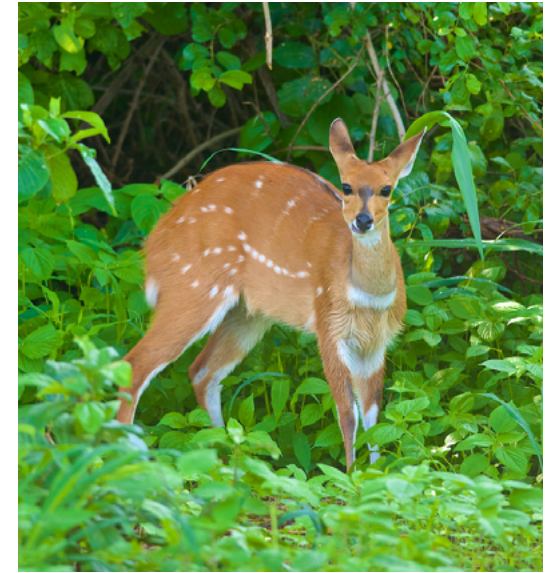
A coalition of partners with long-standing engagement in the area has come together to develop and oversee the ULS. Development of the strategy took place throughout 2023 and involved extensive consultations with national and international stakeholders. The ULS aims to achieve an initial, long-term sustainable commitment of 1 million USD per year for a minimum of 20 years, with the goal of increasing funding over time. Importantly, the strategy recognizes that prioritization of activities, as well as alternative funding streams, will play an important role in ensuring the

01.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UDZUNGWA MOUNTAINS LANDSCAPE



The Udzungwa Mountains of Tanzania harbour a unique ecosystem and cultural heritage. The area is home to more than 46% of Tanzania's endemic vertebrate species, including 20 species that are found nowhere else in the country. The Udzungwa Mountains National Park (UMNP), Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR), and Kilombero Nature Forest Reserve (KNFR) protect some of the most biodiverse forests on the African continent and are therefore core to the ULS. No fewer than 18 rivers originate in the Udzungwa Mountains, sustaining hydropower stations that generate over 30% of Tanzania's electricity. Such ecosystem services are vital to the agriculture-based economy of more than a quarter million people living across 71 neighbouring villages.



02.

ULS MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

Supported by the Hempel Foundation, a coalition of national and international institutions (hereafter, the ULS coalition) was formed with the aim of bringing the ULS to life over the course of 2022-2023.

THE ULS COALITION COMPRISES:

Southern Tanzania Elephant Program (STEP): a local NGO leading the ULS implementation

Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA): the national-level authority responsible for managing and regulating the use of areas designated as National Parks, including Udzungwa Mountains National Park.

Tanzania Forest Services Agency (TFS): core PA authority, Nature Forest Reserves.

Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre (UEMC): field station, biodiversity research & monitoring; leading the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning component of the ULS.

Associazione Mazingira NGO (AMNGO): local NGO established by its Italian counterpart, community conservation, and social research.

Natural History Museum of Denmark (NHMD), Denmark: scientific advisory role, and UEMC coordination.

Department of Biology, University of Florence (UNIFI), Italy: scientific advisory role, UEMC and AMNGO coordination.

A ULS Steering Committee was established comprising implementing partners. The SC is supported by a Secretariat and four Working Groups, each dedicated to one of the ULS Strategic Objectives. A local ULS Project Manager and additional team members were recruited by STEP.



03.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ULS

3.1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

The ULS was created based on a Situation Analysis of the Udzungwa Mountains Landscape (full document available here), which identified the following key threats to the landscape:

- Deforestation
- Illegal wildlife hunting
- Human-induced bushfires
- Erosion of forest buffer zones for agriculture
- Poorly planned expansion of rice, sugar and tree plantations
- Water overuse and pollution due to agriculture
- Lack of resources and management capacity for PA protection
- Insufficient coordination across government agencies

The Situation Analysis indicated that all these threats could be addressed and mitigated through better conservation planning at the landscape scale, improved livelihood security and wellbeing for the communities, and long-term conservation assistance to PAs.

3.2 PROTECTED AREAS WORKING GROUP (PAWG)

The Udzungwa Mountains National Park (UMNP), Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR), and Kilombero Nature Forest Reserve (KNFR) were identified as the three core PAs in the Udzungwa Mountains landscape, based on their overall size, the extent of their forests, their biodiversity status, and the presence of threatened and endemic species (Figure 1).

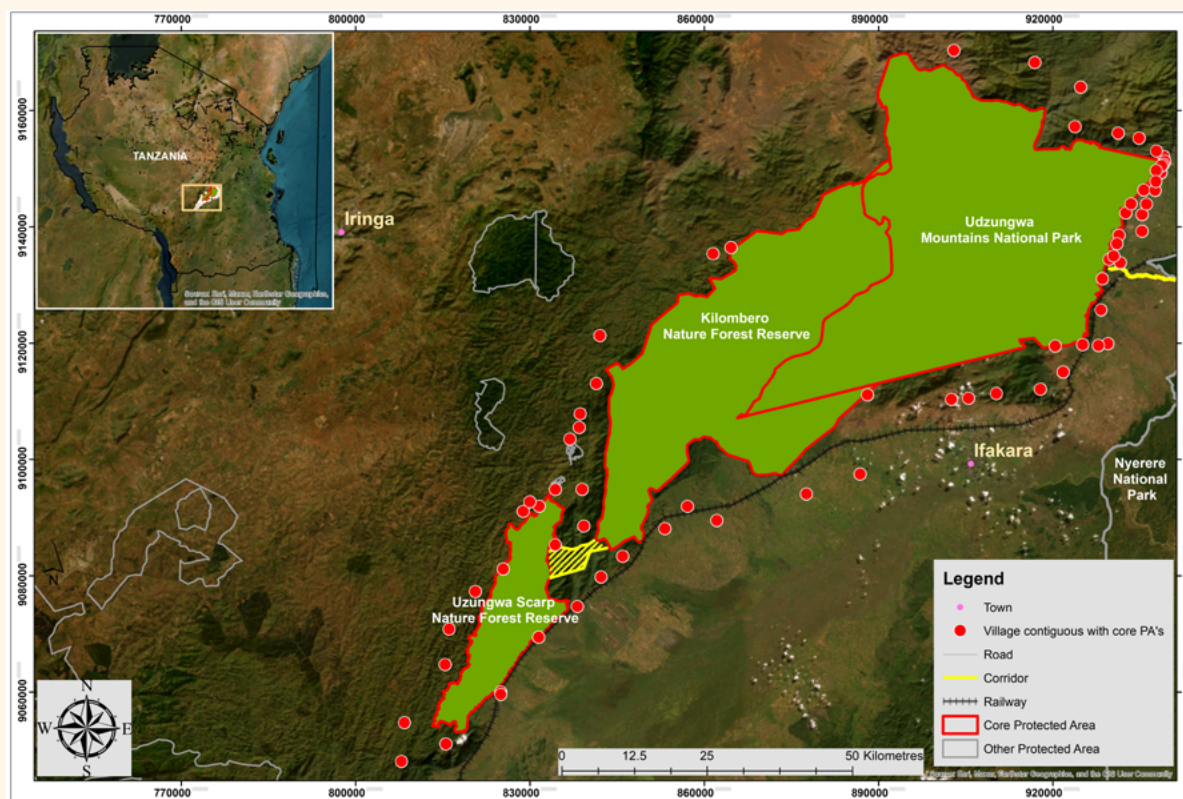


Figure 1. Udzungwa Landscape Strategy master map showing the three core protected areas: Udzungwa Mountains National Park (UMNP), Uzungwa Scarp Nature Forest Reserve (USNFR), and Kilombero Nature Forest Reserve (KNFR).

Through a series of meetings, the PAWG, in collaboration with representatives of the core PAs, identified threats and challenges as well as reviewed General Management Plans. This participatory process brought together the relevant departments

and programmes of the different institutions, with the aim of addressing management objectives, opportunities, and further collaborations among all stakeholders involved.



3.3 IDENTIFYING PRIORITY COLLABORATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES

In April 2023, a workshop was convened that brought together 28 experts working in and around the Udzungwa Mountains. The objective of this workshop was to introduce the ULS, identify and prioritize effective conservation programmes, and select focal villages to be consulted. Participants agreed that a key approach of the ULS should be to focus on the communities most likely to have an impact on, and/or to be negatively affected by, the existence of the Strategy’s three core PAs. These were defined as villages adjacent to at least one of the core PAs (UMNP, KNFR, and USNFR). A total of 71 villages met this criterion.

To build the foundation of the ULS, a subset of the 71 villages were consulted to gather information about peoples’ perceptions, attitudes, and expectations for their livelihoods. The results revealed that the main challenges identified by the communities living around the ULS core PAs were human-wildlife conflicts, PA boundary conflicts, access to water, alternatives to firewood, and access to healthcare and education.



After the preliminary village consultation, a free-listing approach was used to develop a list of proposed social and conservation interventions. These interventions were then ranked and prioritized through a democratic and transparent voting system during village assembly meetings. Information from the-

se meetings was assembled into a village database (VDB), which summarized past and present projects carried out in the different communities, identified social and conservation interventions, and their ranking (see Figure 2).



Figure 2. Summary of "What We Heard" during technical workshops, village consultations, and Protected Area Working Group (PAWG) meetings. This includes the needs and benefits according to the "community" and "protection" groups, as well as common themes among stakeholders.

04.

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE ULS DEVELOPMENT

The ULS brings together a wide range of national and international stakeholders. Figure 3 provides a summary of the national institutions, partners, and social groups involved in the Udzungwa Mountains, many of which are currently active members of the ULS coalition.



CORE STAKEHOLDERS

- **Communities**
 - 23 PA-adjacent villages
 - 10 around USNFR
 - 9 around KNFR
 - 4 around UMNP
- **Protected Areas**
 - KNFR & USNFR
 - **TFS***
 - UMNP
 - **TANAPA***

INTERMEDIARIES

- **Civil Society**
 - NGOs
 - TFCG, AWF, Reforest Africa, **STEP, AMNGO***
 - Academic & Research Institutions
 - Mkwawa University, **NHMD, UniFI, UEMC ***

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

- **Donors**
 - Hempel Foundation
 - Eastern Arc Conservation Endowment Fund
 - Aage V Jensen Charity
- **Regional Government**
 - Iringa
 - Mufindi & Kilolo Districts
 - Morogoro
 - Kilombero District (Mlimba & Ifakara municipalities)

* Coalition members

Figure 3. Stakeholders involved in the Udzungwa Landscape Strategy process.

05.

20-YEAR STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

- The overarching goal of the ULS is to conserve the Udzungwa Mountains landscape and biodiversity. The Strategy is guided by the following Strategic Objectives (see Figure 4):
- **SO1. Protected Areas:** Enhanced efficacy and conservation capacity of the three core protected areas.
- **SO2. Communities:** Improved wellbeing, local livelihoods and participation of communities, including in ways that reduce their reliance on and improve their stewardship of forests.
- **SO3. Collaboration and Governance:** Better protected area-community relations, collaboration among all stakeholders in the Udzungwa landscape; participatory governance of ULS.
- **SO4. MEL:** Centralised and transparent Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning programme to support an adaptive, effective, and resilient ULS.

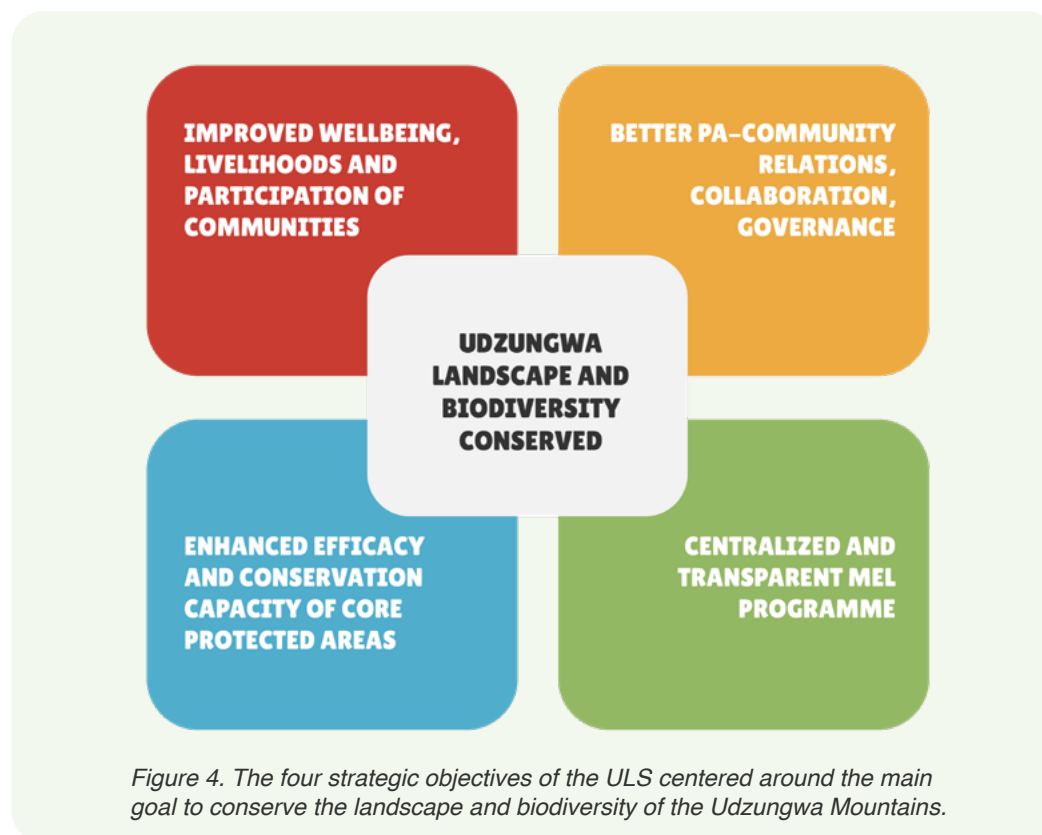


Figure 4. The four strategic objectives of the ULS centered around the main goal to conserve the landscape and biodiversity of the Udzungwa Mountains.

6.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: ENHANCED EFFICACY AND CONSERVATION CAPACITY OF CORE PAS

This objective was developed in collaboration with the PAWG and comprises priority actions selected by PA authorities (TANAPA and TFS) based on a resource gap assessment. These priorities relate to improving the management and conservation capacity of PAs, including more staff, patrols, equipment, inter-institutional communication, capacity building, and improved accessibility to both Nature Forest Reserves (KNFR and USNFR).

6.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVED WELLBEING, LIVELIHOODS, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

This objective is based on the priorities and challenges identified by communities during the consultation process, and focuses on the need to mitigate the negative impacts of community livelihoods on PAs, whilst also emphasizing the benefits PAs may bring to people. In particular, the need for energy efficient stoves emerged as the most important priority among consulted villages, followed by improved access to safe and reliable credit through Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) (Figure 5).

VSLAs enable individuals to invest in income-generating activities suited to their needs, thus contributing to household income diversification and resilience. They also represent a more financially inclusive mechanism for women. Facilitating access to both energy efficient stoves and VSLAs was expected to have a significant positive impact for on forest conservation and community wellbeing.

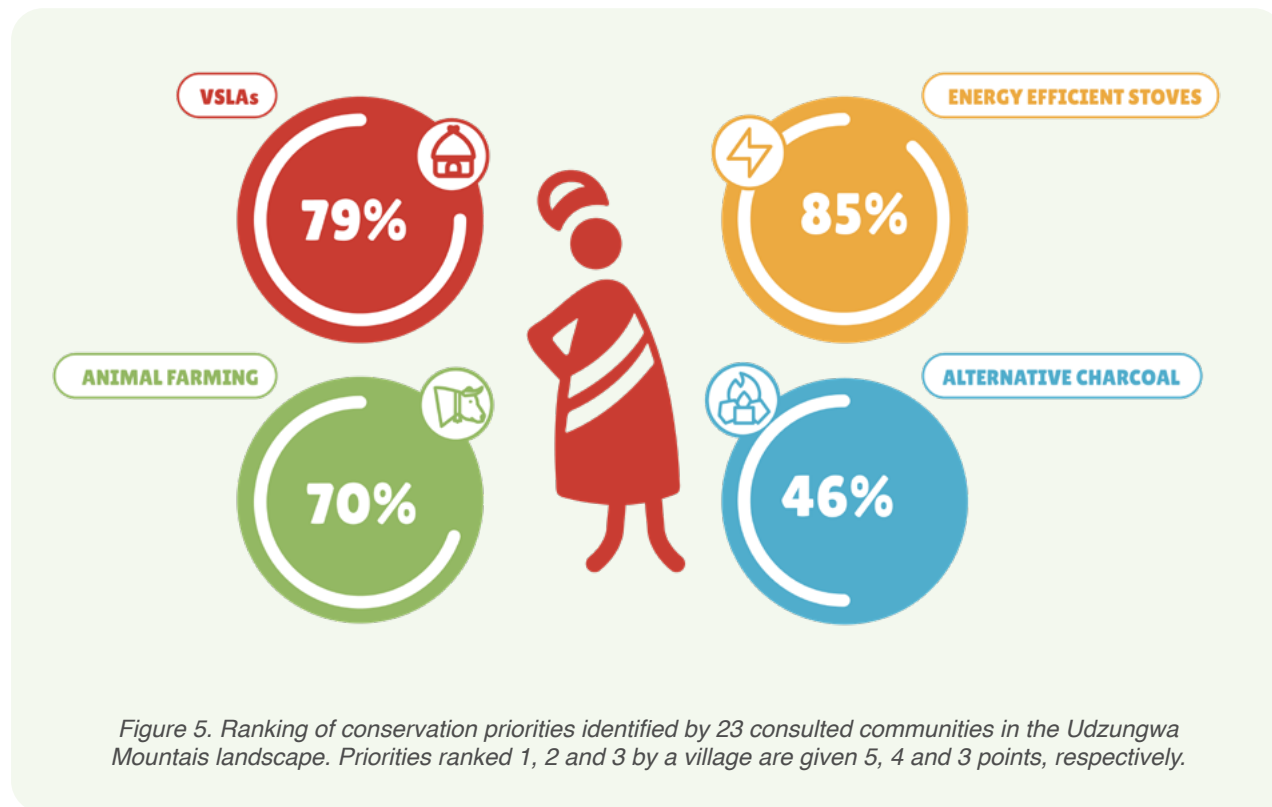


Figure 5. Ranking of conservation priorities identified by 23 consulted communities in the Udzungwa Mountains landscape. Priorities ranked 1, 2 and 3 by a village are given 5, 4 and 3 points, respectively.

6.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVED PA-COMMUNITY RELATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

This objective addresses the negative interactions between PA staff and local communities, as reported independently by both parties. Such negative interactions relate to the use of and access to natural resources, law enforcement (e.g., illegal activities and arrests), conflicts over boundaries, worship rights, and the movement of people between villages or regions. Although both parties acknowledged these conflicts, neither prioritized their resolution as part of their plans and budgets. To bridge this gap, the ULS project implementation budget includes funding for activities aimed at improving PA-community relations.

6.4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4: MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING (MEL)

Monitoring is an essential component of long-term conservation approaches. The ULS will implement a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) programme, which will be led by the Udzungwa Ecological Monitoring Centre, and co-managed by the Natural History Museum of Denmark, the Science Museum of Trento, the University of Florence, and TANAPA. This MEL component will consolidate and extend relevant existing biodiversity monitoring pro-

grams, as well as facilitate new initiatives aimed at assessing the impacts and progress of all components of the ULS. A set of both novel and well-established monitoring programs has already been put forward as a priority for the MEL program. Collected data will also contribute towards the calculation of the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration (STAR) metric, which will serve as a complementary action of the ULS MEL program. This component will be carried

out by the IUCN (<https://www.iucn.org/resources/conservation-tool/species-threat-abatement-and-restoration-star-metric>), and funded by Hempel Foundation independently from ULS. To manage the ULS MEL program, a dedicated dashboard will be set up through a consultancy during the Strategy's first year.



06.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW AND FINANCING

The ULS will provide support to the three core PAs and adjacent communities. An equitable split in resources is anticipated between conservation and communities, while acknowledging overlaps and the need to build strong relations between them.

The ULS will follow an adaptive and flexible process, with priorities reviewed and updated year-to-year. It acknowledges that conservation and community priorities may not always align, and that trade-offs will need to be explored and agreed upon. Monitoring and evaluation will be implemented from the onset of the ULS. Opportunities for securing long-term financing will be sought through innovative and emerging means, such as carbon and biodiversity credits.

Considering these priorities, the following allocation of funds was agreed between ULS partners (see Figure 6):

80% of the funding will be split equally between supplementary financing for PAs (40%) and civil society programs with communities (40%)

10% of the funding will be allocated to monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL), feedback and consultations, ensuring transparency, and the implementation of an adaptive and dynamic strategy over time

The remaining 10% will be allocated to building relationships, including strengthening conflict resolution processes, recruiting a ULS manager, capacity building, applied research, and training.

Figure 6. Allocation of funds among the different components of the ULS



A range of funding opportunities will be explored to sustain the ULS in the long-term, including carbon and biodiversity credits. Biodiversity credit schemes, in particular, could harness the unique biological

richness of the Udzungwa Mountains and the ULS' goal to conserve and monitor it over time. To this end, the MEL component of the Strategy will review and assess the feasibility of implementing such schemes.

07.

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING



08.

BE PART OF THE ULS

The ULS is dedicated to ensuring the long-term preservation of the Udzungwa Mountains landscape and biodiversity. It recognises that this is only possible through enabling the protection and support of the communities that live in and rely on this unique forest ecosystem.

To our knowledge, our ambitious vision for implementing a transparent, collaborative, and inclusive conservation approach is the first of its kind in Tanzania. However, we believe that our comprehensive long-term plans, combined with our experienced team and partners, form the ideal foundation to achieve this critical mission.

Your support is vital to the success of the ULS.



Do you want to know more about the ULS?

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UDZUNGWA
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STRATEGY

WE THANK

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