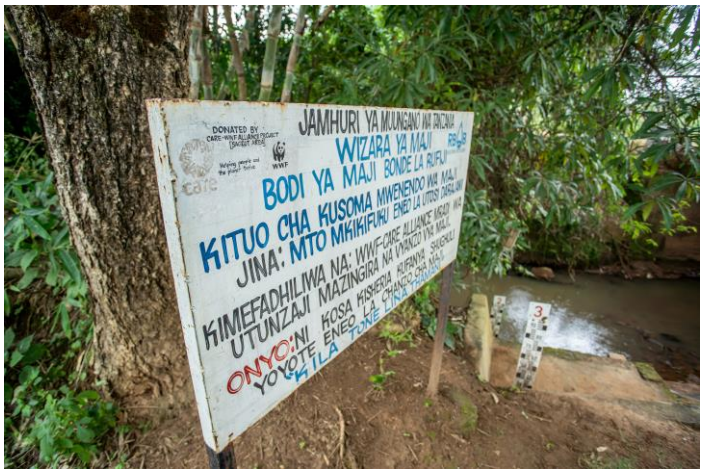
Integrated Water & Land Management through Participatory Village Land Use Planning in Tanzania

Challenges

Tanzania's Great Ruaha River flows have been decreasing since 1990, threatening the lives of millions of people and wildlife. Unsustainable farming and natural resource use practices are among the main drivers of landscape and watershed degradation in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT) region. The displacement of small-scale farmers from their land is increasing due to large-scale agriculture, leading to conflicts over land tenure and natural resource access. The overuse and degradation of natural resources are exacerbated by a lack of coordinated management and planning.

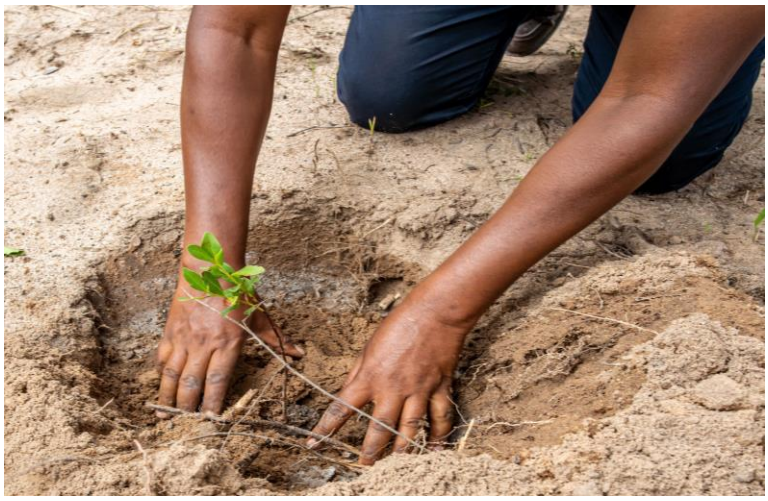


A signboard outlines community conservation programs and restrictions and penalties for agricultural use near a water source in Tanzania. © WideAngle Media | WWF Switzerland

Innovations

To address these challenges, the CARE-WWF Alliance in Tanzania designed a conservation and development program in SAGCOT promoting integrated land and water management (ILWM) through innovations in the government of Tanzania's Village Land Use Planning (VLUP) process.

The unique approach to VLUP includes three key innovations that build upon each other to increase efficiency, enable equitable processes, and improve conservation outcomes:



A community member plants a symbolic tree seedling during a celebration in Iringa. © WideAngle Media | WWF Switzerland

Process Improvements

71%

The Alliance's innovative approach to VLUPs is 71% more efficient than the traditional approach to completing stages 1 through 4.

47%

of participants in the Village Land Use Management Committee are women. Women have historically been excluded from decision-making and are now promoting fair access to land titles.

78%

of natural resource and community boundary conflicts were resolved during the landscape-level VLUP process.

- Working with diverse partners, especially increasing and strengthening participation of marginalized groups, like women, youth, small-scale farmers and water-users;
- Planning at a basin or landscape scale, starting with the identification of water sources as a foundation for improving ILWM; and
- Leveraging efficient satellite imagery and Modified Mobile Application to Secure Tenure (mMAST) technology for more accurate mapping.

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Key Outcomes at a Glance

Across 14 VLUPs, villages set aside 17,743 ha as natural forest reserves and 3,605 ha as wetlands.

21 villages, led by women, planted over 98,300 water-friendly trees, and 850+ ha of water sources are under sustainable management.

Local water flows during the 2022 dry season increased by 108% relative to 2021.

Increased water flows are supporting enhanced sustainable livelihood opportunities, including conservation agriculture, tree nurseries, beekeeping and fishponds.

Results

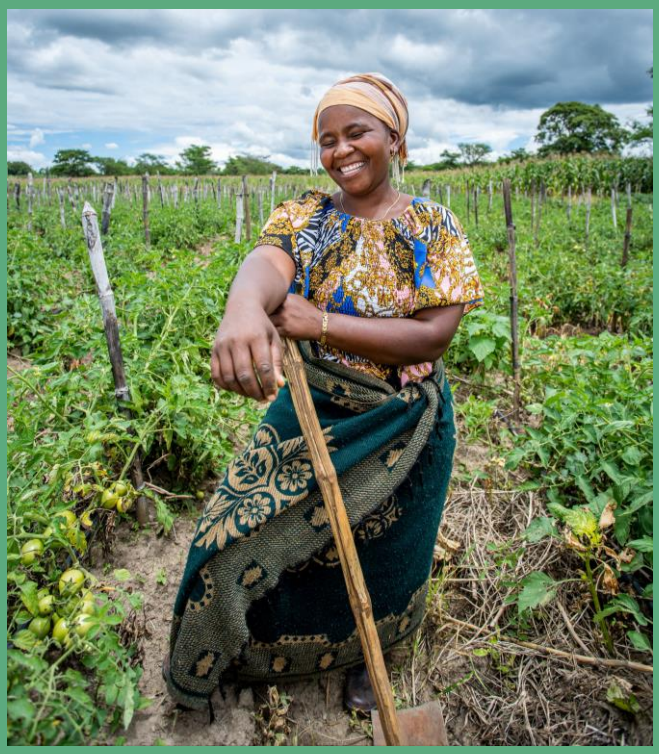
Tackling not only land but also water planning in multiple contiguous villages at a time increased communities' ability to quickly resolve nature-resource conflicts and enhanced ecosystem connectivity. Because of the more inclusive participatory VLUP process, women felt empowered to lead in the development and implementation of Community Conservation Action Plans to restore water sources. And, through the enhanced use of satellite imagery in mMAST, improvements in efficiency and equity were made in the issuance and management of Certificates of Customary Rights of Occupancy (CCROs), particularly for women.

Upscaling VLUP Improvements

The Government of Tanzania integrated key innovations piloted by the Alliance into its national VLUP guidelines. In part due to this improved process, VLUP rollout across Tanzania has increased from 14% of villages in 2018 to 24% in 2022.

Despite Tanzania's ongoing natural resources conflicts and challenges, the improved VLUP model offers a bottom-up approach that provides local communities with the resources and approaches to identify and prioritize their land use needs and develop land use and water protection plans that reflect their goals. The Alliance's evidence and experiences showcase tangible ways to integrate common pool resource management principles that improve VLUP's scale and impact, participation, accountability, and meaningful contribution to meeting the needs of historically marginalized community members.

For the first time in these villages, women possess land title deeds.
Lidia Kivinge from the Utosi village:
"I am very happy today to have this certificate, as a woman. For me, it is like a dream because I never heard of a woman possessing land in our community."



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Resources:
A detailed learning brief on the CARE-WWF Alliance VLUP Program in Tanzania is available online.

For more information about the CARE-WWF Alliance visit WWF or CARE.

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