

Sea Sense Strategic Plan

2014 - 2019



mission

To promote the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources in Tanzania for the preservation of marine biodiversity and the health and prosperity of coastal communities.

vision

Coastal and marine ecosystems in Tanzania are healthy and productive and support the livelihoods of coastal communities.

values

- Promote conservation actions that deliver benefits to both people and wildlife
- Actively engage citizens in marine resource conservation and management initiatives
- Respect citizens rights to participate in decision making processes that affect the use and management of marine resources
- Recognise links between environmental degradation and poverty
- Value traditional knowledge and cultures in Tanzania
- Commit to sharing knowledge and experiences for the benefit of others

About Sea Sense

Sea Sense is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) focusing on the conservation of endangered marine species and their habitats. The organisation was established in Mafia Island in 2001 (previously known as the Mafia Island Turtle and Dugong Conservation Project). Following considerable success in Mafia Island, Sea Sense expanded its presence to mainland Tanzania in 2004 and currently operates in six coastal districts.

Our Approach

In view of the fundamental link between humans and their environment, Sea Sense uses a 'grass roots' approach to endangered marine species conservation and recognises that sustainable and long-term change in the way marine resources are exploited can only be brought about by working in genuine partnership with coastal communities, local and central government and the private sector.

local

At a local level Sea Sense plays a lead role in promoting community based conservation actions that conserve and protect endangered marine species and their habitats in Tanzania.

district

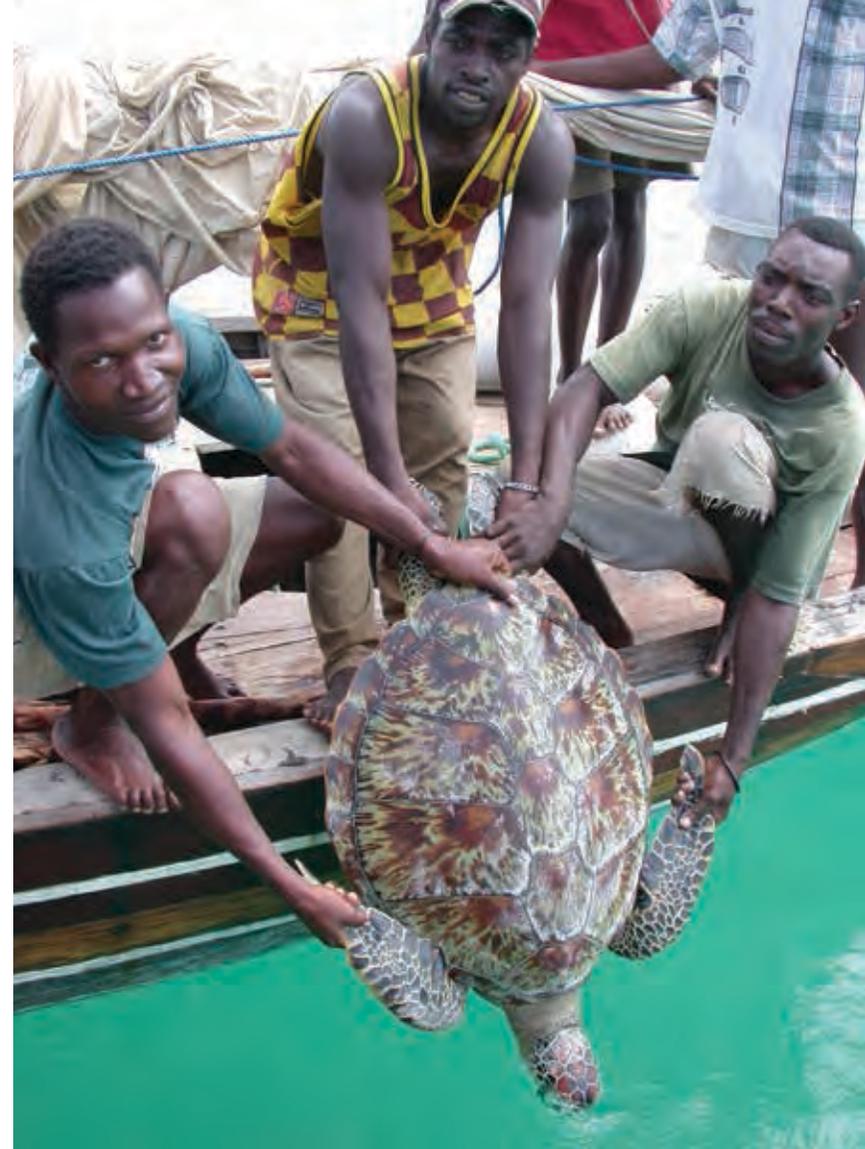
At a district level Sea Sense strives to be a leading advocate for greater engagement of coastal communities in decision making processes affecting the use and management of marine resources.

national

At a national level Sea Sense works closely with the Government of Tanzania to implement the *Indian Ocean - South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding* and the *UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on Dugong Conservation* to which Tanzania is a signatory state.

regional

At a regional level Sea Sense works with colleagues across the western Indian Ocean region to promote conservation benefits for shared populations of migratory species such as sea turtles and dugongs as well as contributing to regional datasets and policy frameworks.



Our Work

Sea Sense activities are channelled through four Priority Thematic Areas:

- **research and conservation**
- **education and capacity development**
- **sustainable livelihoods**
- **governance and leadership**

Our Strategic Plan

Sea Sense has developed a Strategic Plan for the period 2014 – 2019 to better guide our strategic direction against the backdrop of an expanding portfolio of projects ranging from research and education to ecotourism and governance. Furthermore, community based natural resource management has been adopted by the Government of Tanzania as a long term strategy across the fisheries, forestry and wildlife sectors and hence, grass roots organisations like Sea Sense are becoming increasingly sought out as partners for such initiatives. The result is a broader mission, incorporating new programmatic efforts to address human behaviours that lead to the degradation of marine and coastal ecosystems and the biodiversity they support.



The Sea Sense ‘Theory of Change’

Our ‘Theory of Change’ is based on the premise that citizens are more likely to initiate and sustain positive behaviours related to the conservation and protection of marine and coastal resources, if they have a sense of ownership of those resources. Sea Sense promotes local stewardship amongst coastal communities through access to information, learning opportunities and direct engagement in conservation initiatives. Sea Sense also provides a supportive environment for change which creates confidence and belief in the ability to turn knowledge into action, either individually or collectively.

With an increased knowledge and capacity base, citizens are able to make informed choices about how they exploit natural resources and negotiate with relevant authorities and other external parties to address local priorities and demand greater responsiveness and accountability from decision makers. This in turn, provides an incentive for decision makers and management authorities to work in a more coordinated and responsive way.

Strategic Goals and Objectives

Over the next five years, Sea Sense will work towards goals that relate to the four Priority Thematic Areas. A number of strategic objectives have been set out to guide Sea Sense towards those goals, outlined below.



Sea Sense's Four Priority Thematic Areas

1. Research and Conservation

Human activities in the coastal zone are having a significant impact on populations of endangered marine species and their habitats. Sea turtles, dugongs, whale sharks and cetaceans face serious threats from incidental capture in fishing gears, illegal exploitation for meat and oil and degradation of foraging and nesting habitats caused by dynamite fishing, unregulated tourism development, poor waste management and coastal erosion. Furthermore, there is limited enforcement of the laws protecting endangered marine species and their habitats.

Large knowledge gaps exist regarding the distribution, abundance and population trends of sea turtles, dugongs, whale sharks and cetaceans. Addressing these gaps is a major priority in order to monitor the impact of current conservation interventions and guide the development of long-term species recovery plans.



Strategic Objectives

- **Address data gaps** in relation to sea turtle, dugong, cetacean and whale shark distribution, abundance and behaviour in Tanzania.
- **Minimise direct and indirect threats** to sea turtles and emerging hatchlings at nesting beaches.
- Reduce threats to foraging sea turtles, dugongs, cetaceans and whale sharks from **fisheries interactions**.
- Establish measures to conserve and protect **critical marine habitats**.
- Facilitate the development of effective **conservation and management plans** for endangered marine species and their habitats in Tanzania.

Strategic Goal:

Increasing populations of endangered marine species in Tanzania.

2. Education and Capacity Development

Degradation of marine ecosystems continues in some part, due to poor understanding amongst coastal communities of the impacts of unsustainable resource exploitation. Low levels of education coupled with high levels of poverty often hinder access to information and as a result, communities have limited knowledge or capacity to take control of their own economic future and lack a sense of ownership of the natural resources on which they depend.

Furthermore, the value of environmental education remains unrecognised in many coastal primary and secondary schools in Tanzania and pupils leave school without a basic understanding of the natural resources that many of them will come to rely on for their future livelihoods.



Strategic Objectives

- Improve citizen's access to **information** on sustainable marine resource use.
- Facilitate incorporation of **marine conservation into national curricula** at primary and secondary levels.
- **Strengthen capacity** for community based management of marine and coastal resources.
- Elicit support for **community based natural resource management** amongst key stakeholders.
- Improve **collaboration and information sharing** between stakeholders.

Strategic Goal:

Citizens contributing to the development and maintenance of healthy and productive marine and coastal ecosystems.



3. Sustainable Livelihoods Development

The livelihoods of coastal citizens who depend on marine and coastal resources for income and food security, are threatened by continued resource use practices that are unsustainable, particularly the poorest families who often have limited alternatives at their disposal, leading to declining living standards or forced migration to urban areas.

Helping people to explore the linkages between coastal ecosystems and their livelihoods provides key insights into both incentives and disincentives for conserving them. Livelihood development and diversification has been recognised, by conservationists and development practitioners alike, as a mechanism to encourage people to move away from harmful and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.



Strategic Objectives

- Improve understanding amongst coastal communities of the link between conservation and livelihoods.
- Develop sea turtle **ecotourism** into a financially sustainable initiative.
- Expand **flip-flop recycling** project into new areas and increase range of products and sales outlets.
- Assist local communities to explore and identify additional **income generating activities**.
- Reduce participation in livelihoods activities that **harm** marine ecosystems.

Strategic Goal:

Coastal livelihoods are supportive of conservation.

4. Governance and Leadership

The inability to manage fish stocks and prevent the degradation of marine ecosystems represents a profound failure of governance at both local and national levels. A lack of transparency in decision making processes undermines the effectiveness of fisheries management and denies national revenues, thereby obscuring the true value of marine resources.

There is poor understanding of the pillars of good governance at all levels of the governance chain and as a result, personal interests are frequently prioritised without any clear accountability to wider society. Citizens are mostly unaware of their rights and rarely demand accountability from local or national level decision makers and instead view them with mistrust and suspicion.



Strategic Objectives

- Improve understanding of the pillars of good governance and the importance of strong leadership amongst **locally elected leaders** (village councils and district councillors).
- Strengthen commitment of **district authorities** to good governance of marine and coastal resources.
- Lobby key stakeholders for incorporation of fisheries sector priorities into **District Development Plans**.
- Increase **responsiveness** of central government on matters related to marine resource conservation.
- Contribute to an **enabling environment** for the conservation and protection of marine biodiversity in Tanzania and the wider western Indian Ocean region.

Strategic Goal:

Increased accountability amongst local and national governments on matters related to the use and management of marine and coastal resources.

Sea Sense Internal Environment

Sea Sense is a flexible and dynamic organisation with a small group of skilled and dedicated staff that have expertise in a range of cross cutting areas including biodiversity research, community engagement, capacity development, environmental education and project management.

Sea Sense is governed by a Board of Members which meets once per year to monitor and evaluate the performance and financial accountability of Sea Sense, set policies and strategies and approve the annual work plan and budget. All members are resident in Tanzania.

Technical advice is provided by an Advisory Committee, appointed by the Board of Members. The Advisory Committee meets with the Sea Sense Director on a quarterly basis to provide input into the planning and development of the Organisation's short and medium term projects.



Sea Sense Organisational Structure



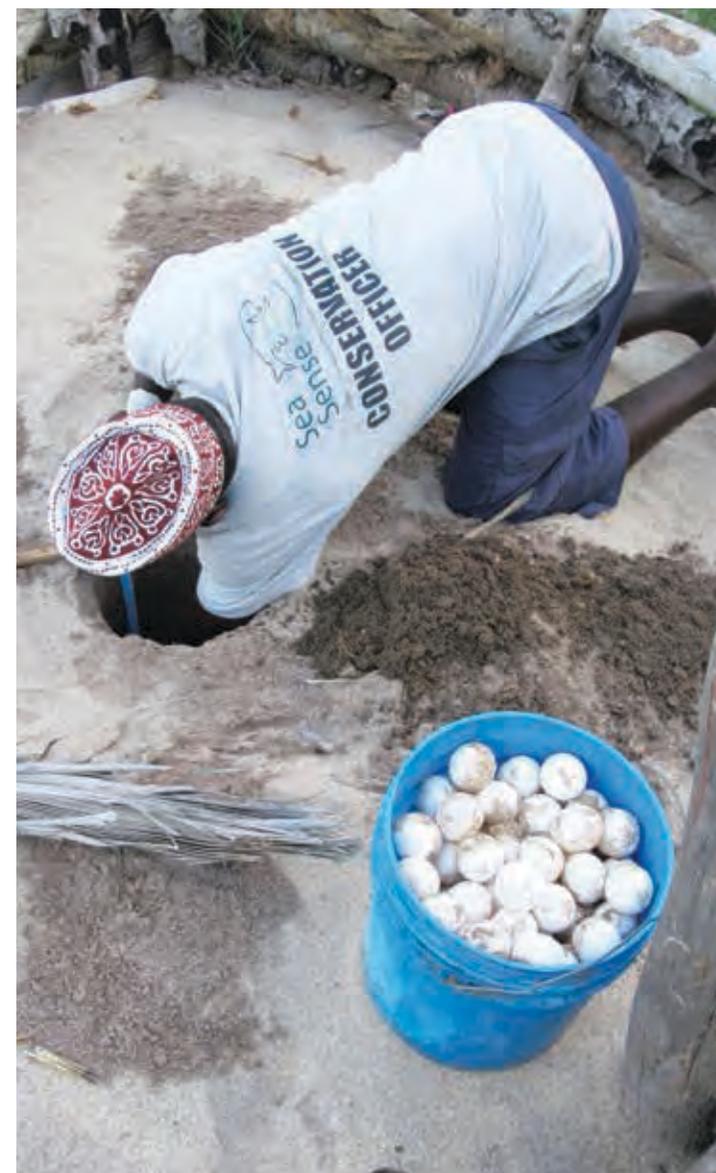
Funding the Sea Sense Strategic Plan 2014-2019

Sea Sense operations are funded by a range of sources including international development agencies, charities, corporate sponsors and private donations. Over the past three years, additional funds have been raised through the sale of Sea Sense merchandise including t-shirts, sea turtle adoptions, recycled flip-flop products and greetings cards. Sources of income are summarised below.

Source of Income	Percentage of funding (per financial year)		
	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
International Development Agencies	37.2	41.7	64.6
Charities & Foundations	51.6	42.8	27.7
Sales and donations	5.7	10.0	6.6
Corporate sponsorship	5.5	5.5	1.1

Sea Sense funding, based on the period 2008 - 2011 was approximately US\$150,000 per year. In 2012 it rose to US\$218,000 and in 2013 it rose further to US\$245,000. Moving forward, and as part of the strategic planning process, Sea Sense has prepared a sustainable financing plan which aims to generate a minimum of US\$300,000 per year to support implementation of the Strategic Plan. The financing plan includes strategies to:

- Decrease donor dependency
- Increase the level of core financing
- Diversify the funding mix
- Build up reserves
- Increase cost effectiveness of Sea Sense actions.



Review of the Sea Sense Strategic Plan 2014-2019

Sea Sense is committed to detailed assessments of organisational performance, frequent self-reflection on project successes and failures and documentation of lessons learnt to guide future project planning. In this context, a number of performance indicators have been identified that will enable Sea Sense to assess and report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan (right).

Sea Sense will assess and review the implementation of the Strategic Plan on an annual basis, throughout the plan period. This process will take place under guidance by the Board of Members and the Advisory Committee.



Sea Sense Strategic Goals and Indicators of Success

Thematic area	Goal	Indicators of Success
Research and conservation	Populations of endangered marine species in Tanzania are increasing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing number of marine turtle nests and emerging hatchlings recorded. Number of marine turtle and dugong strandings reduced. Production of distribution and abundance maps for marine turtles and dugongs. Number of habitat conservation initiatives implemented and sustained. Dissemination of research outputs in peer reviewed publications.
Education and capacity development	Citizens are actively involved in the development and maintenance of healthy and productive marine and coastal ecosystems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of citizens engaged in species and habitat conservation programmes supported by Sea Sense and operating with minimal supervision. Number and variety of education/communications materials disseminated. Number of school pupils demonstrating improved knowledge of marine ecosystems. Number of reports of illegal resource exploitation reduced (e.g. dynamite fishing, marine turtle slaughter, egg poaching, use of beach seines). Number of citizens contributing to the production of local resource action plans facilitated by Sea Sense.
Sustainable livelihoods	Coastal livelihoods are supportive of conservation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of citizens engaged in Sea Sense flip-flop recycling initiative and other income generating activities. Number of families with improved economic status as a result of marine conservation interventions supported by Sea Sense.
Governance and leadership	Local and national governments are accountable to citizens on matters related to the use and management of marine and coastal resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of citizens of coastal communities engaged in decision making processes affecting marine and coastal resources facilitated by Sea Sense. Increased responsiveness of local and national governments to environmental concerns raised by citizens.