



LAIKIPIA CONSERVANCIES ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN (2020-2024)

Executive Summary:

The Laikipia Conservancies Association is a member-led organization established in 2019 with the goal of bringing together conservancies in Laikipia to address common challenges and amplify our individual impacts. As one of the most important wildlife areas in Kenya, the future of Laikipia as a conservation landscape depends on conservancies. These

institutions form a diverse mosaic, with different land tenure, governance, and management models, yet are aligned through recognition that a collaborative vision and management approach is critical to the future of conservancies as the core of a broader conservation landscape that supports people and wildlife.

VISION

A connected and well-managed Laikipia landscape that conserves nature and improves people's lives.

MISSION

To support and strengthen Laikipia conservancies.

Our Goals:



Laikipia Conservancies are recognized and valued

Increase public support and recognition for our members through better documenting and communicating the impacts of conservancies.



Supportive policies and regulations enable and incentivize conservancies

Promote an enabling policy and regulatory environment for our members at local and national levels.



Effective and well-managed conservancies

Elevate the impact of Laikipia conservancies by supporting and strengthening the management capacity of our members.



Conservancies are secure through long-term conservation tenure

Strengthen land tenure of member conservancies, ensuring long-term conservation.



The Laikipia conservation landscape is collaboratively planned and managed

Facilitate a collaborative planning and conservation management approach among conservancies across Laikipia.



Conservancies are financially prosperous and economic contributors to Laikipia

Develop new business mechanisms to strengthen the financial resiliency of our members.

Background:

The Laikipia Landscape and Conservancies:

Laikipia is one of the most important wildlife regions of Kenya where a deep sense of place and cultural attachment to the land has motivated people to find ways to co-exist with wildlife. Across this rangeland plateau fringed by highland forests, a mosaic of private and community conservancies collectively manage 3500 sq km of wildlife habitat, sustaining globally significant biodiversity while supporting a pastoral and ranching heritage with deep ties to the land. Home to over 95 species of mammals, 540 species of birds, and

private and community
conservancies collectively
manage

3500 sq km

of wildlife habitat

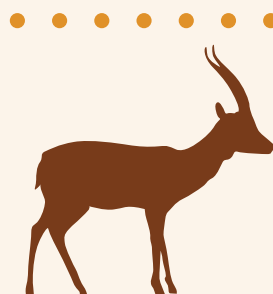
over 700 plants, these conservancies represent an experiment in human-wildlife coexistence, sustaining a conservation ecosystem that supports wildlife while trying to meet the needs and aspirations of people.

The dual goals of conserving biodiversity and supporting thriving human communities is foundational to the conservancy concept in Laikipia. These are institutional structures where landowners—whether a community, a family, or an organization—can organize, control, and make decisions about their land, with conservation being a primary goal alongside other compatible activities.



What are conservancies?

Conservancies are defined in Kenyan policy as an area of land set aside by an individual land owner, body corporate, group of owners, or a community for the purposes of wildlife conservation. We recognize that there is no single approach to a conservancy, and that conservation can be achieved alongside other compatible uses. Conservancies are living experiments where people and wildlife coexist.



Laikipia has some of Kenya’s oldest and strongest conservancies. Collectively they manage 40% of Laikipia, and sustain a unique and thriving tourism market, generate economic and social benefits to the region as key partners in local development, and are critical to conservation in the landscape and act as model examples for other regions of Kenya. This holistic approach is exemplified by the integration of livestock-wildlife systems across most Laikipia conservancies, sustaining pastoral and ranching cultures and producing Kenya’s highest quality, grass-fed beef, while also having key conservation impacts. While wildlife has declined across the country over the last three decades by 68%, for example, in Laikipia it has been 11%. This highlights the national importance of Laikipia’s conservancies.



40%

of Laikipia is managed by some of the oldest and strongest conservancies in Kenya

While wildlife has declined across the country over the last three decades by 68%, in Laikipia it has been

11%

WE ARE HOME TO:



Rhino: 60% of Kenya’s rhinos. 356 critically endangered black rhino in Laikipia conservancies.



Elephant: 22% of Kenya’s elephants.



60% of Kenya’s endangered Grevy’s Zebra





Kenya has committed

17%

of its land area to be under conservation.

Like other human-wildlife landscapes across Kenya, Laikipia is undergoing transformative change. Increasing land pressure on conservancies threatens the biodiversity, cultures and livelihoods that are associated with them. Demographic change accompanied by rapid land speculation, agricultural expansion, and infrastructure development is transforming habitat and fragmenting the ecosystem. In addition, wider issues such as population growth, climate change, habitat degradation, insecurity, and policies and perspectives that hinder landowner commitment to conservation threaten conservancies and their critical role in sustaining the ecosystem. Recognizing these pressures, Laikipia conservancies have formed the association as a platform to strategically engage them.

This development in Laikipia is part of a wider process around Kenya where the conservancy movement is galvanizing landowner-led conservation. With over two thirds of Kenya's wildlife populations living and ranging outside national parks and reserves, conservancies are critical to sustaining the wildlife that drives Kenya's tourism economy, and are also vital to meeting national and international commitments Kenya has made. Under Kenya's own long-term national development plan known as Vision 2030, for example, political, social, and economic development goals all depend on a sustainable natural resource base and the ecosystem services that biodiversity and healthy habitats provide. Furthermore, under the international Convention on Biological Diversity, Kenya has committed 17% of its land area to be under conservation.

The Conservancy Movement, KWCA, and Regional Associations:

Conservancies have been around in Kenya for the last few decades, but their growth into a collaborative and coordinated movement has occurred more recently. In 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution that has devolved governance broadly and across a range of sectors, including of wildlife and natural resources. This opened the door for formalizing the role of landowners and communities who sustain the 65% of Kenya's wildlife that lives outside parks and reserves. Conservancies are integral, managing 11% of Kenya. To recognize and catalyze this role, the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) was formed in 2013 as a national umbrella organization. Through advocacy and capacity building support, KWCA supports conservancies by creating an enabling environment and connecting conservancies with the tools and resources that they need to thrive. This was given further legitimacy in 2014, when the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act came into effect that officially recognizes conservancies.

With the diverse conservancy models around Kenya, and recognizing that landscapes and regions around the country differ in terms of their needs and opportunities, Regional Conservancy Associations are being established. These associations, such as the Laikipia Conservancies Association, are independent organizations that work to support their member conservancies in particular landscapes. At the same time, they play an important governance role within the KWCA and national conservancy movement structure, acting as the technical and policy link between individual conservancies and wider national activities and goals embodied within KWCA. Establishing and growing the capacity of these Regional Associations is critical to the conservancy movement broadly, and in particular landscapes such as Laikipia.

Conservancies are vital to Kenya, yet at their core are fundamentally a commitment by landowners to devote the areas they own and manage to conservation. This is a decision to be honored and supported. Conservation is formalized as a land use in national policies and laws, and conservancies are a legally recognized

stakeholder group across Kenya. Here in Laikipia, where conservancies are already having important ecological and social impacts, there is urgent need to reinforce and strengthen their work, and to collectively and strategically engage the challenges ahead.

Landscape Threats and Opportunities:

THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES:
 <p>Social: Population growth, increased settlement, and expanded pressure on land and resources; land speculation and subdivision fragmenting the landscape; habitat conversion for agricultural expansion; infrastructure development and lack of land-use planning or an ecosystem plan; insecurity.</p>	 <p>LCA Members: Laikipia has some of the strongest and most successful conservancies in Kenya, and are well positioned to support younger conservancies through knowledge transfer and technical support.</p>
 <p>Environmental: Climate change; loss of landscape connectivity; habitat degradation; invasive species; water stress and scarcity.</p>	 <p>Conservancy movement: Conservancies are recognized legally and the national conservancy movement is growing more robust, developing an identity, and establishing a collective voice. The Laikipia Conservancies Association will be a Regional Association linked to the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA), and through this structure Laikipia conservancies can participate in and shape national processes and dialogues that affect them.</p>
 <p>Political: Hindering policies and regulations, and lack of incentives for conservancies; conservancies and conservation land not seen as important.</p>	 <p>Devolution and County Government: The devolution of decision-making and governance to a more local level provides opportunities not only for conservancies to participate in county level processes, but also to work with local government as key partners in planning and development.</p>
 <p>Tenure: Group ranches still to transition to community land; vulnerability of some private conservancy ownership models; absentee landowners in critical corridor areas.</p>	 <p>Legal reforms: A number of reforms strengthen devolved, participatory engagement in conservation and the decision-making rights of landowners and communities such as the Constitution, the Wildlife Act, and the Community Land Act.</p>
 <p>Conservancy capacity: Poor communication between conservancies and with other stakeholders; need for more scientifically informed management; financial vulnerability; transparent and accountable governance; clear management plans and goals at individual and landscape level.</p>	 <p>Tourism: Laikipia conservancies provide the opportunity for further tourism investment, presenting a unique product and strong complement to established circuits in national parks and reserves. They also present the opportunity to scale-up a local wildlife tourism market.</p>
	 <p>Livestock: The holistic management of livestock and wildlife across Laikipia conservancies provides opportunity for scaling up a conservation beef product, contributing to food security, providing jobs, and establishing expertise in commercial livestock production alongside conservation.</p>

The Association



Value Proposition:

Laikipia conservancies are already having significant conservation and social impacts, and across the landscape these institutions are managing habitat and successfully conserving wildlife, having positive impacts on neighboring communities, and are finding ways to contribute to local economies. The association will amplify these impacts by aligning efforts at the landscape scale and providing a platform to address the immense challenges that span conservancy boundaries. Collaboration is critical, and the association provides a way to formulate a guiding vision and strategy, promote unity, grow the identity of Laikipia conservancies, build capacity and provide

technical support, develop partnerships, and enable better communication and knowledge transfer.

At the same time, Laikipia conservancies are part of a wider stakeholder group across Kenya, and collective engagement is vital to ensuring the conservancy model continues to grow and thrive. As a representative body, the association will promote recognition of conservancies locally and nationally, and will ensure Laikipia conservancies are involved and harmonized with local and national efforts to ensure that landowner-led conservation is recognized and valued.





Establishment Process: Conservancy-Led and Participatory

The creation of the Laikipia Conservancies Association has been a participatory process owned by the conservancies themselves, establishing a sense of ownership and trust that is foundational to the future success of the organization:

March 2019

01

Laikipia representatives articulated the need for the association during the annual general meeting of KWCA, where the regions highlighted conservancy challenges and needs in their respective landscapes.

02

March/ April 2019

Situational analysis carried out with conservancies to explore further need and value of the association.

03

May 2019

The Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association assisted in leading a workshop with Laikipia conservancies to discuss the opportunity further. Agreement to establish working group composed of conservancy leaders formed and tasked with developing an initial design for the association.

October 2019

Conservancy-led resolution workshop to establish the association. 18 conservancies signed resolution to form, governance structure confirmed, office bearers selected, visioning exercise, and next steps defined as formal registration, strategy development, creation of financial plan, and finding support for secretariat.

06

September 2019

05

The working group takes the initial design back to the conservancies for feedback, input, and to refine.

04

June-August 2019

Working group produces draft concept and structure for the association through a series of workshops.

07

November- December 2019

Registration documents submitted. Draft strategy developed.

08

January 2020

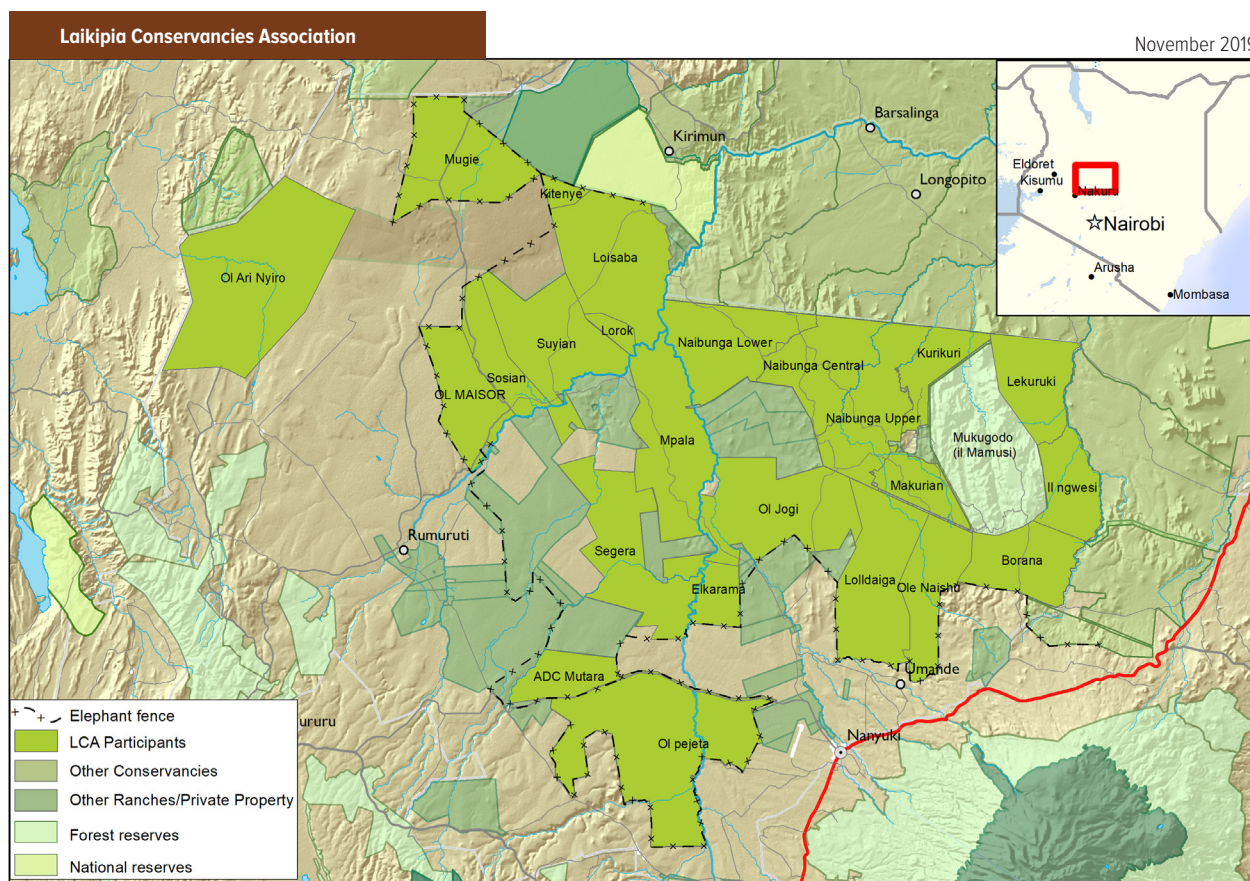
Strategy and draft plan taken back to members for revision and approval. Association begins activities.

Founding Membership

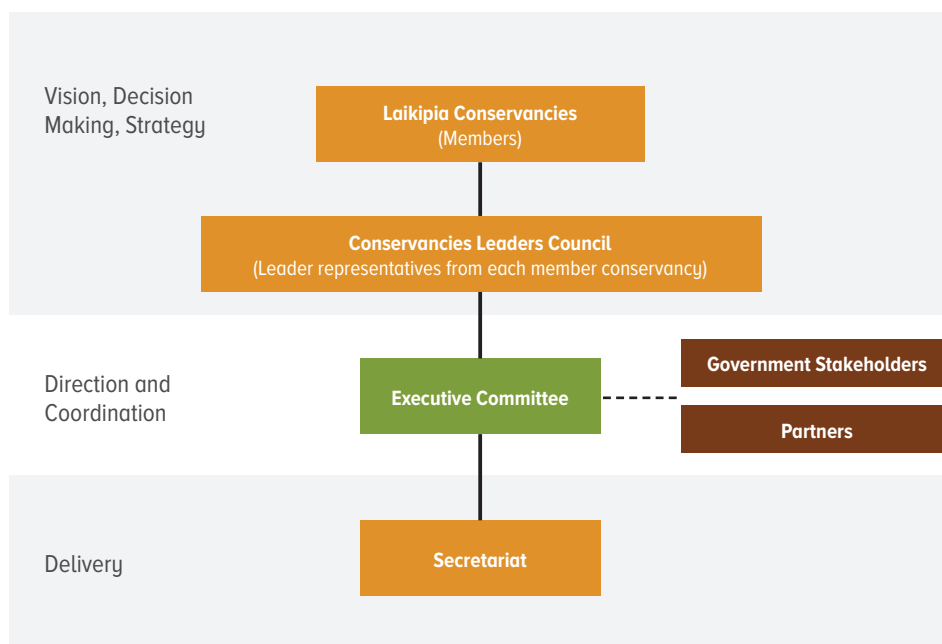
The founding conservancies are a diverse group, collectively managing over 3500 sq km of conservation land. Laikipia is unique in that it has both community and private conservancies, and this diversity is a foundational strength of the association. The community conservancies are Laikipiak Maasai conservancies, and are established along former group ranch boundaries, or in some cases amalgamations of

group ranches, representing varied governance and management structures that integrate pastoralism with conservation. The private conservancies are similarly diverse, with some owned and managed by individuals or families, and others by organizations. This creates a diverse composition of histories, identities, and strengths that working together form a robust and exciting association.

Borana | **El Karama** | Il Ngwesi | **Il Mamusi (Mukugodo)** | Kuri Kuri (GR) | **Lekurruki** | Loisaba | **Lolldaiga** | Makurian (GR) | **Mpala** | Mugie | **Naibunga Upper** | Naibunga Central | **Naibunga Lower** | Ol Ari Nyiro | **Ol Pejeta** | Ol Jogi | **Ol Maisor** | Ole Naishu | **Segera** | Sosian | **Suyian**



Our Governance Structure



The association is owned and driven by its conservancy members who are the ultimate decision-makers and beneficiaries. The key decision-making platform is the Conservancies Leaders Council, composed of the leader representative of each member conservancy, and this council is responsible for articulating the ultimate vision and strategy for the association. A small Executive Committee, selected from the Leaders Council by the members,

provides guidance, management direction, and partnerships and fundraising support. Two separate groups, the Government Stakeholders and Partners, have no decision-making role, but are important for coordination, advice, and harmonizing activities in the landscape. Delivery and implementation is done by the Secretariat, who are accountable to and act on behalf of the conservancy members.

VISION

A connected and well-managed Laikipia landscape that conserves nature and improves people's lives.

MISSION

To support and strengthen Laikipia conservancies.

VALUES

- **Member owned and governed:** the association reflects the ideas and vision of its members, and decisions are made in a collective and inclusive manner.
- **Diversity:** values diversity among conservancy members as a strength and foundation.
- **Collaborative:** promotes collaboration and builds trust among members and with partners.
- **Proactive:** forward looking and is an active voice for its members.
- **Holistic:** people and nature are connected.

10-Year Landscape Vision Of Success:

Working together, we will create a connected conservation area that delivers tangible ecological, economic, and social benefits:



Ecological: intact and connected habitats that are well-planned and managed by conservancies through compatible land-uses that support healthy biodiversity, restores endangered species, provides a wildlife source for other regions of Kenya, and creates a living example of human-wildlife coexistence.



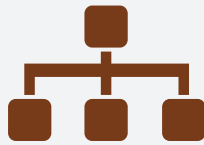
Economic: Laikipia conservancies are collectively seen as key partners in local development, contributing to local economies through tourism and other conservation-compatible activities, and conservancies are recognized and valued as an important economic land use for Laikipia.



Social: Through conservancy support of Laikipia cultures, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and collective contributions to local challenges such as food security, improved security, and ecosystem services, Laikipia residents will value wildlife and see land managed by conservancies as an important land-use.



We see a successful conservancy as:



Governance/ management:

A strong and effective institutional structure with clear management plans, goals, and systems that links the conservancy with others in the wider landscape to create mutually beneficial relationships with neighbors and other stakeholders.



Environment:

Healthy and intact land area that supports biodiversity and thriving wildlife populations, improves habitat and controls invasive species, and reinforces landscape connectivity.



Tenure:

Conservancy land is secure and committed to long-term conservation.



Finances:

Financially prosperous through diverse revenue streams, participates in wider financial activities with other conservancies, and contributes to economies of scale through collaboration.



Social impact:

Generates social and economic impact and contributes to local livelihoods, and continually reflects on its own social footprint.

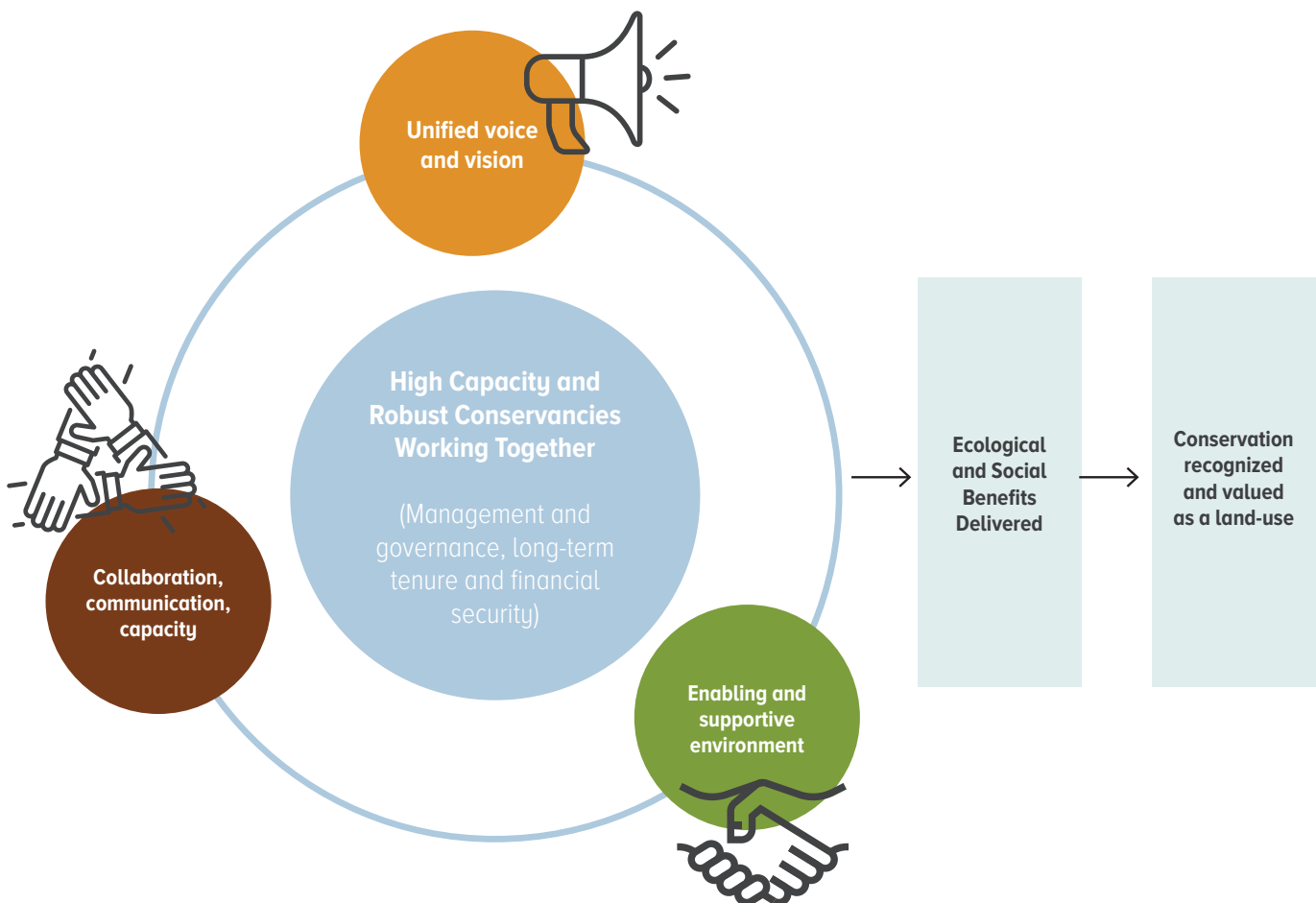
Strategic Framework: Achieving the Vision

To achieve the 10-year vision and create the conditions for Laikipia conservancies to thrive beyond that horizon, a clear strategic framework will guide the association as it gets established and begins activities. Our impact over the next five years is guided by our theory of change and oriented around six strategic goals.

Theory of Change:

Through a unified voice and vision, facilitating collaboration and communication, and creating an enabling environment, we will support and grow an intact landscape network of high capacity and robust conservancies across Laikipia. Working together, this network will deliver

long-term social and ecological benefits, support healthy habitats and wildlife, and establish conservation as a relevant, respected, and viable land-use option both in the landscape and as an example for other regions of Kenya.



Our Approach:

We take the view that our conservancy members are our strongest partners, many of whom are well-established and effective organizations. We provide them with additional support in order to help them thrive individually and collectively. We try to

work through our conservancy members in order to realize our vision, recognizing that they are the best placed to implement our collective goals, and in the process this strengthens their own capacity and impacts.

Our Strategic Goals:

01

Laikipia conservancies are recognized and valued

02

Effective and well-managed conservancies

03

The Laikipia conservation landscape is collaboratively planned and managed

04

Supportive policies and regulations enable and incentivize conservancies

05

Conservancies are secure through long-term conservation tenure

06

Conservancies are financially prosperous and economic contributors to Laikipia



Goal 1:

Laikipia conservancies are recognized and valued



We will support our members to better understand, document, and communicate their environmental and social impacts in order to grow into a valued stakeholder group in Laikipia. While the conservancies are having important environmental and social impacts, these are not always well communicated or understood by the wider public. Through improved communication, information sharing, and impact monitoring, we will better tell the story of Laikipia conservancies and promote their recognition locally, nationally, and globally. This, in turn, will support our members to learn and grow, and strengthen relationships and partnerships with local communities, government, and other conservation and social development stakeholders.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES/ GOAL:

1. Develop a communication strategy to raise the profile of Laikipia conservancies
2. Create an information hub for member conservancies and assist with marketing
3. Compile annual impact reports to show and communicate the ecological, social, and economic impacts of Laikipia conservancies
4. Facilitate social impact assessments of member conservancies

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

- Laikipia conservancies have a strong and well communicated identity and brand
- Increased public and government support for Laikipia conservancies

10-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- Laikipia conservancies are globally recognized and are considered key partners in local and national conservation and development goals

Goal 2:

Effective and well-managed conservancies



We will grow the management capacity of our member conservancies by supporting the decision-making, leadership, and processes that are critical to highly effective organizations. Through clear and representative internal processes, we will support conservancies to identify their goals and priorities, create management plans to guide their impact and work, and create a cohort of strong conservancy leadership that collaborate across the landscape. This will not only enable conservancies to better achieve their goals and be responsive to their diverse stakeholders, but will provide coordination and alignment across conservancies for elevated impact at the landscape level.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES/GOAL:

1. Assist conservancies to create management plans, articulate goals, and develop strategic plans
2. Develop and support a leadership training and governance strengthening program for member conservancies



5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

1. All conservancies have management plans and clear goals
2. Governance and management capacity built



10-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- All conservancies have high capacity and effective management and governance structures

Goal 3:

The Laikipia landscape is collaboratively planned and managed



In addition to supporting our individual conservancy members, the association is in the unique position of fostering dialogue and collaboration among the conservancies in order to address the large-scale landscape challenges that span conservancy boundaries. This includes things like maintaining connectivity for wildlife and ensuring strong conservancy coverage across the landscape. We will facilitate this landscape approach through developing an ecosystem plan and participating in other land use planning processes in Laikipia, securing corridors and improving connectivity between conservancies, establishing new conservancies in critical areas, promoting common monitoring approaches to improve conservation decision-making at the landscape level, and supporting habitat restoration. This will not only strengthen relationships and collaboration between conservancies, but will integrate individual conservancy goals and activities into a wider landscape vision and approach.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES/GOAL:

1. Develop a landscape-level conservancy management and ecosystem plan (integrate it into county spatial plan and include national species recovery targets)
2. Secure corridors and support management approaches that enhance connectivity
3. Support the establishment of new conservancies in critical gap areas
4. Expand common monitoring practice, support data collection, and develop a conservancy management data hub
5. Support ecological/habitat management and restoration

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

1. Laikipia conservancies are recognized in land use, species recovery, and development plans (local and national)
2. Ecosystem connectivity and integrity is enhanced by securing key corridors and land areas, and fostering collaborative management
3. Ecological management across conservancies is scientifically informed and grounded

10-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- Conservancy habitats are connected, healthy, well-managed, and key species are thriving.

Goal 4:

Supportive policies and regulations enable and incentivise conservancies



While significant work has been achieved to create supportive policies and regulatory frameworks to enable and incentivize conservancies in Kenya, much of this is not being implemented in practice and the principle of devolved governance and management is not fully being realized. Furthermore, the lack of clarity between the roles and responsibilities of local and national government, and other stakeholders, creates confusing and sometimes contradictory set of policies, regulations, and disincentives such as taxes for conservancies and natural resource management more broadly. Given the important conservation and social development role of our member conservancies, we seek to create an environment that incentivizes and enables conservancies in Laikipia and across Kenya as a whole, and promotes better harmonization between the local and national.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES/GOAL:

1. Support the development of legislation in Laikipia County that recognizes and provides incentives for conservancies
2. Support to KWCA to promote enabling national policies and regulations

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

1. County legislation and policies recognize and support conservancies
2. National regulations and policies incentivize and support conservancies

10-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- Laikipia conservancies operate in a strong enabling environment, with supportive policies and regulations

Goal 5:

Conservancies are secure through long-term conservation tenure



Secure land tenure is an important foundation for the success of conservancies, and without strong tenure it is difficult for conservancies to plan and manage habitat and wildlife over the long-term. Lack of tenure also makes it harder for conservancies to resist competing land uses and pressures that threaten wildlife and habitat, and it can also be a source of conflict. Given the diversity of conservancies in Laikipia, we seek to support our community conservancy members to transition and obtain community land titles, and seek to strengthen the conservation tenure of our members more broadly through conservation easements.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES/GOAL:

1. Provide financial and technical assistance to community conservancies for community land transition
2. Provide financial and technical assistance to establish conservation easements across conservancies



5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

1. Community conservancies have secure tenure under the community land transition
2. Conservation tenure of all member conservancies is increased through additional conservation easements



10-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- All conservancies have robust and long-term conservation tenure arrangements in place.

Goal 6:

Conservancies are financially prosperous and economic contributors to Laikipia



Financial sustainability is a significant challenge that can hinder the conservation and social impact potential of conservancies. Diverse financial options are important to avoid over-reliance on certain sectors (such as tourism), and to buffer conservancies in times of stress. Working collaboratively across the membership, we will explore and develop financing mechanisms to support our members collectively. Developing opportunities and models at the landscape scale has the potential to attract investment and business planning that may be beyond the reach of individual conservancies. By strengthening the financial resilience of our member conservancies, we also strengthen their ability to be economic contributors and catalysts for Laikipia.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVES/GOAL:

1. Create a landscape conservancy fund to channel public, private, and donor funds to member conservancies and landscape activities
2. Prepare conservancies for investment readiness and assist members in negotiations and agreements with investors
3. Explore management and procurement support services for members collectively
4. Explore and develop plans for landscape-level business models to support conservancies collectively and generate wider economic benefits:
 - a. Tourism
 - b. Livestock
 - c. Carbon
 - d. Energy

5-YEAR OBJECTIVES:

1. Conservancies have increased access to public, private, and donor funds to support plans and goals
2. Robust business models support conservancies at landscape scale

10-YEAR OBJECTIVE:

- Conservancies are financially prosperous generating diverse economic benefits to Laikipia



Implementation Priorities: Growing the Association

As we get established and begin to grow as an organization, there are a few key areas we want to focus on in order to deliver our strategy, achieve our goals, and support our members over the long term.

Membership/governance: Partnerships:

We would like to engage with and support the development of new conservancies in Laikipia, ensuring an intact and connected landscape for conservation. As a member-owned and driven organization, we also need to continually revisit and grow our governance structure, ensuring that the member conservancies are all able to participate in the decision making process and ensure that the association's direction is representative and responsive to our diverse membership.

achieving our goals will depend on identifying and developing strategic partnerships with diverse stakeholders such as conservation organizations, relevant partnerships in the development and business sectors, and with government. We also recognize that our member conservancies have their own diverse partnerships, and we seek to connect them and support new relationships that can support their individual goals.

Organizational capacity:

As a young organization, we need to develop the systems and structures to become an impactful organization, and grow an effective secretariat capable of delivering the goals, mission and vision of the association on behalf of the members. This includes leadership, technical capacity, organizational systems, and administrative management.

Financing:

For the association to be successful over the long term, we need to develop an innovative financial model to run the association and provide the resources to implement our strategies and goals. During the establishment of the association, the members reiterated the importance of a financial model that allows the association to become independent and avoid donor dependency over the long term. Some donor and philanthropic funding is necessary in the near term, however outlining and developing this longer-term model will be a focus over the next few years.



LAIKIPIA
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ASSOCIATION

