Community participation in restoration and management of degraded and deforested mangrove forest in Mafia Island, Mainland Tanzania

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Mangrove forests are important source of livelihoods of communities in Mafia Island in terms of food, income, coastal protection, prevention of erosion and filtering runoff from land. Despite their importance, they face alarming threats from commercial interests and high demand from local communities due to growing populations. About 4300 ha of mangroves are found in Mafia Island. However, more than 200 ha of mangroves in Mafia Island have been cleared over the past two decades to establish shrimp farms and due to unsustainable utilization of the resources. Therefore, a global fear of disappearance of mangroves in 100 years is reality if appropriate measures are not in place. In response to this concern, a project was designed to facilitate local communities in the Mafia Island in mangrove forest rehabilitation and restoration for biodiversity conservation and livelihoods improvement. This will be achieved through planting mangrove forest in the deforested and degraded areas, creating no take zone within the rehabilitated and restored mangrove areas, developing plans for ecological monitoring within the rehabilitated and restored mangrove areas and, training local communities and government staff in the project site on the implementation of the developed plans. Major activities to be undertaken include organizing meetings with key stakeholders to introduce the project and plan on how to implement project activities, review documents that are relevant to the project, training, planting of mangroves and developing ecological monitoring plan. These activities are expected to promote management of mangrove forests as well as livelihood improvements.