

Comparative Assessment of Management Effectiveness in Locally Managed Marine protected Areas in the Kwale County, Kenya

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Local coastal communities have increasingly adopted designation of specific critical marine habitats as locally managed marine protected areas (LMMAs), which are also referred to as Community Conservation Areas (CCAs). This designation is a management tool to protect fisheries and marine resources from continued degradation and loss due to human activities and climate induced stressors. A comparative assessment of 8 LMMAs was conducted in Kwale County, Kenya. These LMMAs are adjacent to the Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Protected Area (MPA), which is managed by a government agency. The LMMAs together with Kisite-Munguti MPA forms a network of protected areas, which falls, within the proposed trans-boundary marine conservation area between Kenya and Tanzania. This assessment was conducted using the Management Effectiveness Assessment Tracking Tool (METT) used by the World Bank. The aim of the assessment was to establish the status of management effectiveness of the LMMAs. We specifically established the various management interventions and governance structures in place; determined the impacts of the interventions on the marine resources; established the challenges hindering effective management; identified the factors leading to success or failure of the LMMAs. The results indicate that the LMMAs are at different stages of development. The LMMAs are not gazetted and therefore not legally recognized. Fisheries exploitation, conservation and management seems to be the key objective behind the formation of the LMMAs, since most of them are managed within the framework of Beach Management Units (BMUs). However, there is potential for using LMMAs to support livelihoods related to ecotourism and mariculture. Ineffective management of the LMMAs were due to inadequate financial resources, equipment and human capacity to implement work plans; ad-hoc monitoring of performance; lack of education and awareness; weak institutional linkages; and, weak governance structures.