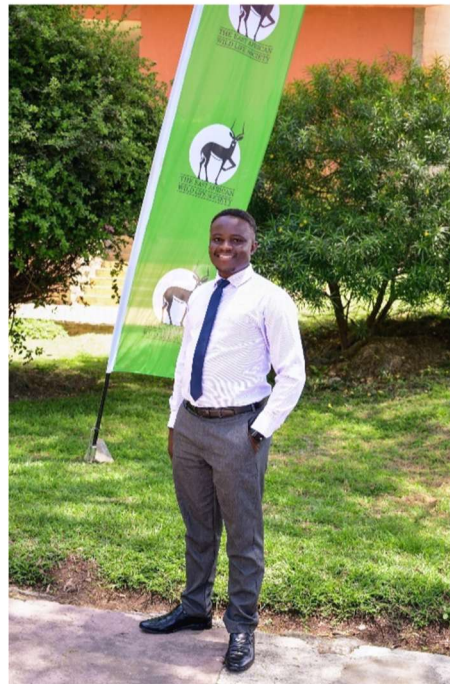


Final Career Placement report



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BC	Blue Carbon
CFA	Community Forest Association
CIDPs	County Integrated Development Plans
CLP	Conservation Leadership Programme
EAWLS	East African Wild Life Society
FAO	Food And Agriculture Organization of The United Nations
FC	Forest Challenge
ILP	International Lawyers Project
JKUATES	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Enterprises Limited
KEFRI	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
KFS	Kenya Forest Service
KFWG	Kenya Forest Working Group
KWF	Kenya Wetlands Forum
LOCCOG	Lake Ol Bolossat Community Conservation Group
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NRT	Northern Rangelands Trust
ODK	Open-source mobile Data Collection
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
WMI	Wangari Maathai Institute
WRTI	Wildlife Research and Training Institute
YONA	Young for Nature

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and foremost, I extend my sincere gratitude to Ms. Nancy Ogonje, Executive Director of the East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS), for granting me this invaluable internship opportunity. Working within the Programs and Advocacy Department under the supervision of Mr. Jabes Okumu, alongside esteemed colleagues Ann Mukaindo, Theresa Aoko, Kevin Lunzalu, and Anthony Owino, has significantly broadened my perspectives and deepened my understanding of the intricate processes involved in project conceptualization and implementation. I am particularly grateful for the unwavering support of the EAWLS team across the Communications, Membership & Marketing, Administration, Human Resource, and Finance departments. The knowledge and skills I have gained throughout this experience will be instrumental in my future professional endeavours.

Secondly, I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation to representatives from EAWLS project partners, including FAO, KFS, KEFRI, NEMA, WRTI, JKUATES, Kenya Forest Working Group, Kenya Wetlands Forum members, Ilmamusu Mukogodo Community Forest Association, Mount Kulal Biosphere Reserve Community Forest Association, Suswa, Ol Kinyei, and Enonkishu Conservancies, Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies, International Lawyers Project, Lake Ol Bolossat Community Conservation Group (LOCCOG), as well as the County Governments of Nyandarua, Laikipia, Kajiado, Narok, Nairobi and Marsabit. Their collaboration and commitment to conservation efforts have greatly enriched my experience and provided valuable insights into multi-stakeholder engagement in environmental conservation.

I would also like to extend special thanks to Ms. Eleanor Glass, Programme Officer at Fauna & Flora, for her continuous guidance and support. Her availability, mentorship, and efforts in organizing virtual placement induction sessions and conservation narratives storytelling group calls have been invaluable.

Lastly, I am deeply grateful to the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) management team and its partners—BirdLife International, Fauna & Flora(F&F), and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)—for their exceptional coordination and funding of the program. Their support has facilitated a highly enriching experience that has strengthened my skills and reinforced my commitment to environmental conservation.

INTRODUCTION

The East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS) is a prominent conservation organization committed to safeguarding East Africa's diverse biodiversity. With over 60 years of experience, EAWLS diligently promotes sustainable development practices and preserves the region's natural heritage for future generations. EAWLS focuses on addressing five strategic issues: climate change, environmental pollution, deforestation, environmental governance, and the impacts of infrastructure projects on the environment and natural resources. This Career Placement, therefore, aimed to develop and implement a focused, well-structured climate change portfolio, with a particular emphasis to support alignment of EAWLS's work with climate change initiatives and help the organization identify a niche within the climate change landscape.

Vincent Brotry Fibanda joined the East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS) as a climate change support intern under the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) to support the development of a climate change portfolio and support new and ongoing climate change initiatives from 3rd June 2024 to 4th February, 2025. Working for the East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS) has provided me with a deep understanding of the multifaceted approach required for effective conservation. EAWLS operates with a clear mission to promote the sustainable use of natural resources through advocacy, conservation programs, scientific research, environmental education, and capacity building. The organization's work spans critical areas such as wildlife protection, forest rehabilitation, marine resource management, and wetland restoration. A key takeaway has been the importance of evidence-based advocacy in shaping environmental policies and ensuring the enforcement of laws.

1. What have you learnt about working for your host organisation? (100-200 words)

Orientation and on-boarding process at EAWLS

The orientation and onboarding process was smoothly facilitated by Fridah, the Human Resources and Administration Manager, and My supervisor Jabes, the Advocacy and Programs Manager at the East African Wild Life Society. The administration supported me in setting up my official email address, workspace and I had the opportunity to receive EAWLS's strategic plan and human resource policy documents, which provided an in-depth understanding of how EAWLS operates. The strategic plan provided a clear roadmap for EAWLS, ensuring that all my efforts and resources are aligned towards a unified vision, enhancing efficiency, focus, and the ability to measure progress and adjust strategies as needed. At the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS), I have had access to daily newspapers and daily news roundup from the communications department, which helps me stay abreast of developments related to conservation, this is something I did not have the advantage of accessing before.

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) employs three approaches to achieve its vision and mission:

- 1) Project Implementation: EAWLS implements conservation projects that enhance ecosystem health and improve their capacity to support community livelihoods. In turn, these communities help protect wildlife and their habitats.
- 2) Inspire: The Society inspires behaviour change and encourages non-state actors to adopt responsible environmental practices, fostering collective action to address environmental challenges.
- 3) Influence: Through advocacy, EAWLS influences legislators and other key stakeholders to review, formulate, enact, and implement environmental laws and policies, ensuring better management of nature and natural resources

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) focuses on policy advocacy to enhance environmental governance. This involves working collaboratively with various stakeholders to promote policies, laws, and practices that ensure sustainable management of natural resources. EAWLS achieves this through;

- a) Conservation Forums/Dialogue: The Kenya Forest Working group and The Kenya Wetlands Forum are two platforms for stakeholders to discuss pressing conservation issues. These forums facilitate open dialogue between government agencies, local communities, non-state actors, and conservation experts to identify solutions and build consensus.
- b) Policies and Legislation: EAWLS engages in reviewing, drafting, and advocating for policies and legislation that promote sustainable environmental management.

- c) **Petitions:** Files petitions to challenge practices or decisions that threaten environmental integrity. Mobilizes public support to demand legislative and policy changes.
- d) **Establishment of Institutions & Capacity Building:** Supports the establishment of local and regional institutions to enhance environmental governance. Provides training and resources to build the capacity of stakeholders, including community members and organizations, to actively participate in conservation and policy advocacy.
- e) **Media Advocacy:** Utilizes various media platforms to raise awareness of environmental issues. Advocates for policy change by amplifying the voices of affected communities and bringing attention to critical conservation topics.
- f) **Litigation:** Pursues legal action to hold individuals, corporations, or governments accountable for environmental degradation. Uses the courts to enforce existing environmental laws and policies, protecting natural resources and habitats.

2. What activities have you accomplished in the entire period of your internship? (100-200 words)

A) Training on International Best Practices in Legislative Drafting and Public Participation

From 4th to 6th February 2025, I had the privilege of participating in a three-day workshop in Naivasha, organized by the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) in collaboration with the International Lawyers Project and Ropes & Gray LLP. The workshop targeted technical staff from various Senate and Parliamentary Standing/Departmental Committees, focusing on international best practices in legislative drafting and public participation.

One of the key takeaways from the training was that policy formulation in Kenya is highly formalized, requiring cabinet and parliamentary approval before publication. The process shares similarities with the rulemaking framework in the United States.

Public participation is a fundamental constitutional principle in legislative drafting, ensuring a two-way exchange of ideas between the government and the public. However, the effectiveness of public participation is often hindered by low levels of civic education, which limit meaningful engagement. Additionally, some public consultation processes involve highly technical language and complex documentation, discouraging participation and resulting in minimal or no feedback from the public.

Feedback Mechanisms:
Currently, the committee report serves as the only formal feedback mechanism. However, this report is not readily accessible to the general public, limiting transparency and accountability.



Figure 1: Group photo of workshop participants and trainers during the parliamentary training at Burch's Resort in Naivasha



Figure 2: Workshop session photo

To address this gap, it is recommended that clearer, more accessible feedback channels be established. Furthermore, capacity-building initiatives should be undertaken to equip local communities with key advocacy skills—including effective communication, negotiation, and memorandum drafting—to enable them to engage meaningfully in public consultation processes.



B) World Wetlands Day 2025 Advocacy Walk at Lake Ol Bolossat, Nyandarua County

The East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS), in collaboration with the Lake Ol Bolossat Community Conservation Group (LOCCOG) and the County Government of Nyandarua, successfully organized the World Wetlands Day 2025 Advocacy Walk at Lake Ol Bolossat on January 31, 2025. The event aimed to raise awareness on the importance of wetlands, engage the community in conservation efforts, and advocate for the protection of Lake Ol Bolossat.

Event Highlights

Webinar

Theme: Conserving Our Wetlands for Our Common Future

Date: Thursday, 30th January 2025

Program overview: The World Wetlands Day webinar, hosted on 30th January 2025 by the East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS), focused on the critical theme of conserving wetlands for sustainable futures. The event featured a diverse agenda of presentations and discussions aimed at highlighting challenges, innovations, and collaborative efforts in wetlands conservation. The World Wetlands Day Webinar 2025, themed *Conserving Our Wetlands for Our Common Future*, brought together various stakeholders committed to wetland conservation. First and foremost, the webinar commenced with an opening session led by Vincent Fibanda, who guided attendees through housekeeping rules, and an overview of the day's agenda, effectively setting the tone for the discussions ahead. Shortly after, Jabes Okumu delivered the welcoming remarks, emphasizing the importance of wetlands conservation and the need for collaborative efforts to protect these ecosystems.

The next session was dedicated to insightful presentations. Dr. Benjamin Kyallo from the State Department of Water, presented *The Fresh Water Challenge: Themes and Targets for Conserving Our Wetlands*, shedding light on conservation goals and strategic initiatives aimed at protecting freshwater ecosystems. Ms. Mariam Ali Fadhili from the Earthlungs Restoration Foundation took the floor to discuss *Technology Use in Coastal Wetlands Conservation: Lessons from Earthlungs*, where she highlighted innovative approaches and technologies being applied to restore and sustain coastal wetlands. In conclusion, the World Wetlands Day Webinar 2025 served as a vital platform for exchanging knowledge, fostering dialogue, and reaffirming commitments toward the protection of wetlands. The discussions underscored the significance of integrating innovative approaches and strengthening partnerships to safeguard these critical ecosystems for future generations. Moving forward, participants and organizations are encouraged to implement the insights gained from the webinar in their conservation efforts, promoting sustainable practices and resilience in wetland management.



Figure 3: World Wetlands Day 2025 Poster

Main event

Over 400 participants, including local community members, students, conservation champions, and government officials, took part in a 3.5 km advocacy walk. The walk served as a platform to emphasize the urgent need to protect the lake from encroachment and pollution, as well as to call different stakeholders to action. As part of the initiative, volunteers conducted a clean-up exercise along the shores, collecting plastic bottles, discarded fishing nets, and other



pollutants. This activity demonstrated the community's commitment to maintaining a clean and healthy wetland ecosystem

Speakers from EAWLS, LOCCOG, and the County Government of Nyandarua highlighted:

- The ecological significance of wetlands and their role in biodiversity conservation.
- The importance of wetlands as carbon sinks in climate change mitigation.

Additionally, participants planted 50 tree seedlings around the lake to enhance biodiversity and stabilize the wetland ecosystem. In a symbolic gesture, guests signed a canvas board to pledge their ongoing commitment to conservation efforts.

My Contributions to the Event

I actively supported various preparatory and coordination activities, including:

1. Event Coordination – Assisted in planning and executing the advocacy walk, clean-up exercise, and stakeholder engagement forum.
2. Administrative Support – Facilitated imprest requests, memo submissions, and vehicle authorizations for the event.
3. Design & Branding – Coordinated with the EAWLS designer to finalize the event banner, T-shirt designs, and webinar poster.
4. Communication Planning – Collaborated with colleagues to develop advocacy messages published during the event.
5. Procurement & Logistics – Arranged for placard stands and confirmed hotel reservations.



Figure 4: Cattle grazing along the shores of Lake Ol Bolossat



Figure 5: The East African Wildlife Society Staff team at Lake Ol Bolossat for the World Wetlands Day celebration 2025 (Vincent Fibanda (far left), his supervisor Jabes Okumu (far

Recommendations for Future Conservation Efforts

- a) Conduct regular community education sessions on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Overgrazing remains a significant challenge for the wetland.
- b) Establish tree nurseries for indigenous species to support afforestation efforts.
- c) Strengthen stakeholder partnerships to ensure the sustainable management of Lake Ol Bolossat.
- d) Monitor and document the lake's ecological changes to inform future conservation strategies.



Figure 6: Participants watch during the flag off session of boats in Lake Ol Bolossat



Figure 7: Community members around Lake OL Bolossat hold a peaceful procession with placards

C) Distribution of tree nursery equipment's to Mt. Kulal Community Forest Association (CFA) and Two Sisters school.

I led the distribution exercise of assorted tree nursery tools and materials to the Mt. Kulal Community Forest Association (CFA) and Two Sisters Primary School. The EAWLS team successfully handed over the equipment, with Ms. Esther, the CFA Vice-Chair, receiving the items on behalf of the CFA, while the school head teacher received them on behalf of the institution.

During the handover, we carefully sorted the items one by one, ensuring transparency in the process. Witnesses verified and confirmed the agreement, after which I read aloud and explained the obligations outlined in the agreement. All recipients affirmed their commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities as stipulated.



Figure 8: Vincent Fibanda, wearing EAWLS safari hat, hands over tree nursery equipment to Mt. Kulal CFA members.

D) Training on tree nursery establishment and Management

I joined the EAWLS team on a field mission from 13th to 22nd December 2024 in Marsabit County to facilitate a tree nursery establishment training for 25 representatives from the Mt. Kulal Community Forest



Figure 9: Vincent Fibanda, wearing EAWLS safari hat, hands over tree nursery equipment to Two Sisters Primary School head teacher Mr. Philip

Association (CFA) and Two Sisters School. The training covered key aspects of tree nursery management, including: site selection; Seed preparation; Soil mixing and potting; Record keeping and Grafting techniques. As climate change continues to impact livelihoods, agricultural extension services play a crucial role in equipping farmers with essential knowledge. In Kenya, the ratio of agricultural extension workers to farmers is 1:5,000, significantly higher than the recommended ratio of 1:400.

Through this training, EAWLS is bridging the gap by empowering the 25 trained representatives with technical skills in tree nursery establishment. These representatives can, in turn, share their knowledge and provide extension services to other farmers, enhancing climate resilience and sustainable forestry practices in the region.

During this mission, community monitors were also trained on data collection and the use of ODK collect app to ensure they were well-acquainted with the platform. The training session

included app installation, form downloading, and a test run of the data collection process prior to the official commencement of the exercise.

My Key Contributions:

- Photography and documentation of all activities.
- I developed a detailed step-by-step guide that provided information on how to install the app, access the form, and use it to submit data.
- Shared beneficiaries' lists with the community monitors for referencing.

The goal of the monitoring mission was to assess the planting rates, understanding farmers' tree species preferences, to evaluate the effectiveness, impact of the agroforestry training on farmers' knowledge, skills, and practices and to understand the challenges faced and the coping mechanisms deployed by farmers.



Figure 10: Mount Kulal community monitors pose for a photo after the data collection training

E) Agroforestry Monitoring Report.

I cleaned and analysed the data collected by community monitors using excel and presented the findings in tables and charts. The findings revealed that the overall planting rate across the landscapes was 97% and most farmers in both landscapes showed a strong preference for fruit-bearing species like Mango, Orange and Guava, likely due to their direct contribution to food security and livelihoods. The primary reasons for not planting appear to be logistical and environmental, such as lack of space, water, and poor handling. There is a noticeable percentage of trees being destroyed or dried out before they were planted, suggesting the need for better seedling management and transportation practices. Protecting trees from livestock and ensuring their survival until planting are additional factors that need attention.

F) Distribution of seedlings to trained institutions and farmers at designated seedling collection centres proximate to the farmers across the Mukogodo and Mt. Kulal landscapes.

East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) with funding from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Kenya, under The Restoration Initiative Project (GEF 6), is implementing a project dubbed, “**Strengthening the Conservation and Management of Mukogodo and Mount Kulal Forests through agroforestry and Important Bird Area Listing**” in Mukogodo and Mt. Kulal landscapes. The overall objective of the project is to enhance the conservation of the two landscapes through strengthening agroforestry systems, seeking to designate Mt. Kulal as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and developing a single species action plan for the conservation of the endangered *bothriocline nyiruensis* an endemic plant species in Mt. Kulal ecosystem.



Figure 11: Farmers posing with tree seedlings at Upper Forest in Mount Kulal

A field mission was conducted from 5th to 21st November, 2024. This field mission included distribution of seedlings to the trained institutions and farmers at designated seedling collection centres proximate to the farmers across the two landscapes. Community barazas were organized at four sites adjacent to Mt. Kulal Forest (Gatab, Losikiriachi, Upper Forest, Arapal) to sensitize the local community and leaders on the intent to designate Mt. Kulal as an IBA. I also joined a one-day workshop in Marsabit Town with local stakeholders to sensitize them on the intent to designate Mt. Kulal as an IBA and to define roles and responsibilities in management of the ecosystem if designated as an IBA



Figure 12: Farmers receiving tree seedlings

My key contributions:

- Assisting the programs officer in coordinating seedling distribution activities and managing field casuals and workplan.
- Organizing the one-day stakeholder workshop in Marsabit town and ensuring stakeholder engagement.
- Photography and documentation of all activities.
- Reviewing co-finance forms to ensure farmers' details are captured in the co-financing agreement
- Oversee the allocation of seedlings efficiently to farmers and beneficiaries.
- Taking detailed notes and capturing feedback from farmers and other stakeholders.

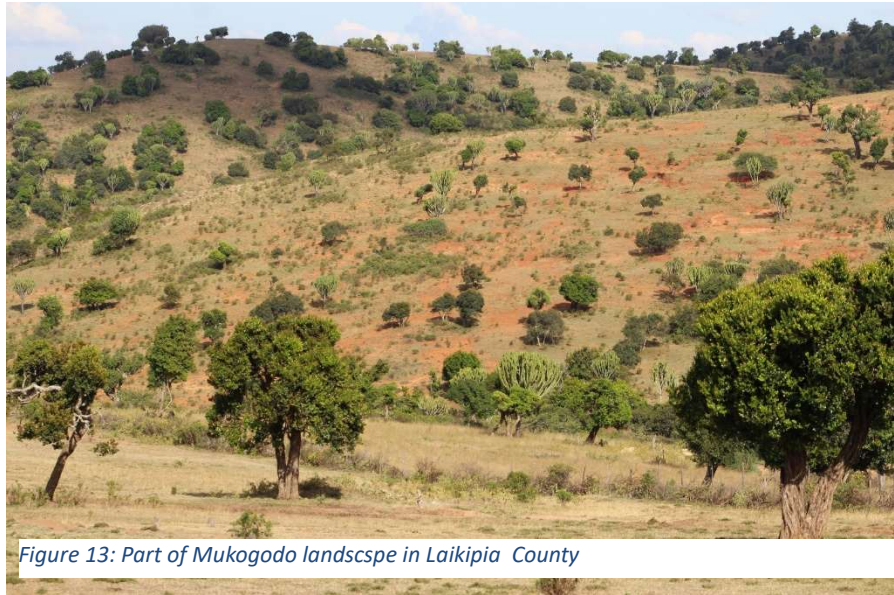


Figure 13: Part of Mukogodo landscape in Laikipia County

Key outcomes from the mission:

- Enhanced community awareness and stakeholder commitment towards the designation of Mt. Kulal as an IBA.
- Distribution of seedlings to the trained institutions and farmers at designated seedling collection centres proximate to the farmers across the two landscapes.



Figure 14: Part of Mount Kulal landscape in Marsabit County

G) Presentation of draft YONA Programme Proposal during a Staff meeting

I had the privilege and honour of delivering a PowerPoint presentation on the **Young for Nature (YONA)** programme to the staff during our meeting that was held on 16th October, 2024. The purpose of the presentation was to gather their inputs and insights to improve the program ahead of its launch.

The YONA programme targets students aged 12 to 18 years from international schools and aims to inspire, spark interest, and increase youth engagement in

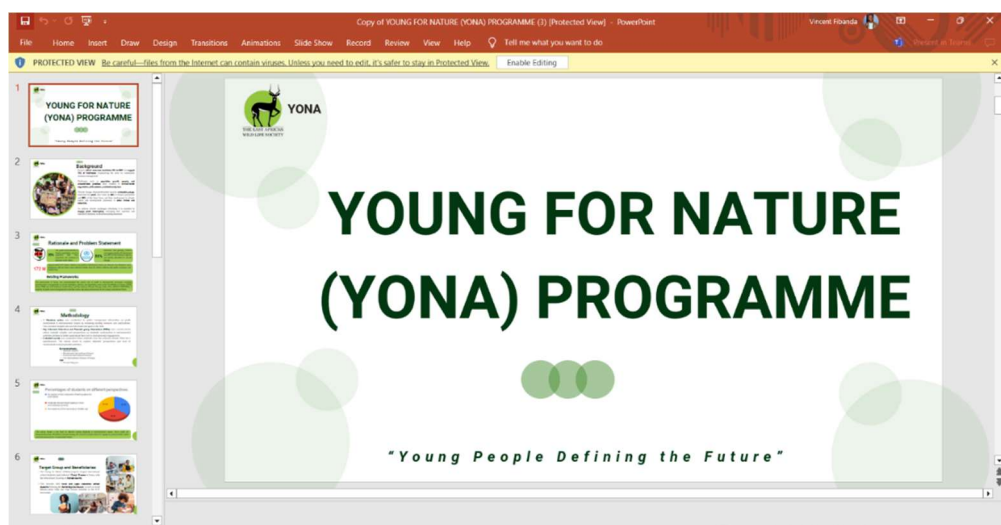


Figure 15: YONA presentation

environmental action

and advocacy. The program provides a platform for young people to actively participate in

shaping the future they desire by empowering them to advocate for issues related to climate change, deforestation, and environmental pollution, particularly plastic pollution.

H) The Forest Challenge 2024 planning meeting.

During the 5th Forest Challenge planning meeting, held at the EAWLS boardroom on Thursday, October 17, 2024, I led the technical team in delivering a presentation on 10 proposed obstacles for the Forest Challenge and 3 main arena fun games. With minor adjustments, the obstacles were approved. I also assisted with minute-



Figure 16: The Forest Challenge 2024- Obstacles

taking during the general Forest Challenge 2024 planning meeting, ensuring thorough documentation of key decisions and discussions.

I) Kenya Forests Working Group 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

I joined the Kenya Forests Working Group (KFWG) Management Committee at the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS) boardroom on the 7th of October 2024. During the meeting, we finalized discussions on the KFWG Strategic Plan 2024-2029, focusing on strengthening forest advocacy, addressing key legal and policy challenges impacting forest conservation and management in Kenya.



Figure 17: Kenya Forests Working Group Management Committee Members

During the meeting the committee also discussed the planned launch of the KFWG Strategic Plan considering the following critical aspects:

- Stakeholder engagement: Ensuring that key stakeholders from the forestry sector, government, civil society, and private sector are actively involved in the event.
- Media and communication strategy: Developing a robust media strategy to create awareness and promote the strategic plan, including press releases and social media campaigns
- Event logistics: Securing a suitable venue, coordinating invitations, and preparing visual presentations and materials that effectively communicate the plan's objectives such as printing of the dummy copy.

J) Pre-Launch of the KFWG 2024-2029 strategic plan

I joined the Kenya Forests Working Group (KFWG) committee members and other stakeholders at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies for the KFWG Strategic Plan pre-launch on 31st October 2024. The meeting marked a key step towards finalising the plan and official launch for new strategic plan. The pre-launch event was an opportunity to reflect on KFWG's journey, celebrate its achievements,



Figure 18: KFWG pre-launch participants at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies

and introduce the priorities outlined in the new Strategic Plan. The event provided an overview of the Strategic Plan's focus areas and engage partners, members, and supporters for the official launch and future implementation. 21 stakeholders attended the pre-launch and the program conclude with a ceremonial tree planting, honouring Prof. Wangari Maathai's legacy in forest conservation.



Figure 19: Tree planting session at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies by Njeri Kabeberi former Greenpeace Africa Executive Director and the current President & CEO of the Wangari Maathai Foundation

K) Conservancy Rangers Program

I was part of the East African Wild Life Society team that was on a mission in Maasai Mara from 4th – 7th September, 2024, where we distributed equipment to rangers in the Suswa, Ol Kinyei, and Enonkishu conservancies, all located within the Mara landscape in Narok County. The overall objective was to explore opportunities for strengthening and upscaling the



Conservancy Rangers' programme. During this trip, I learned that women, who are most vulnerable to climate change effects and interact a lot with our natural resources, are still less involved in the management of these resources, including working as rangers, conservancy management, and board positions. I was able to observe the link between climate change and

human-wildlife conflicts. I also learned that the Conservation Leadership Programme supported the conservation of the globally threatened Harrison's Giant Mastiff Bat (*Otomops harrisoni*), which roosts in the caves of Mt. Suswa Conservancy, Kenya. Moving forward, we intend to work with the programmes team to recast the program to promote gender and social Inclusion by ensuring that more women are engaged in the management of conservancies.

Figure 21: Vincent Fibanda making a presentation on the needs assessment of rangers in Narok



Figure 23: Vincent Fibanda at Mt. Suswa Conservancy posing for a photo next to a CLP-supported project banner

L) Carbon credit training¹

To address the growing impacts of climate change, Kenya is positioning itself as a critical player in the

Figure 24: A screenshot of legal expert Wilf Odgers facilitating a session.

¹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZuSE5CRCxI&list=PL97DaLUvjw1PQ0RSiW_sHUrB6oAUauw7

global carbon market—an essential tool for advancing environmental sustainability. Despite the recent Climate Change Amendment Act 2023 and the Climate Change (Carbon Market) Regulations 2024, many stakeholders still face significant knowledge gaps in carbon trading. Recognising the need mentioned above, the East African Wild Life Society (EAWLS), in collaboration with A&O Shearman and the International Lawyers Project (ILP), organised a Carbon Credit Training Series aimed at equipping conservationists, environmental stakeholders, and community leaders with the tools and knowledge required to engage in carbon trading and contribute to Kenya's sustainability goals.

A total of 710 participants took part in the series. The first session on August 22, 2024, introduced the



legal frameworks governing carbon markets. Led by legal experts Elias Allahyari and Nicholas Ormondroyd, it focused on the Climate Change Amendment Act (2023) and the Climate Change (Carbon Market) Regulations 2024. Participants explored topics such as carbon certification, offsets, and international compliance standards, gaining valuable insights into how carbon markets can play a key role in protecting Kenya's ecosystems and wildlife.

On September 11, the second session focused on compliance and risk Carbon Credit Training Empowers Kenya's Conservationists management within carbon trading. Presenters Alexander Marcopoulos and Elise Edson discussed market trends, risks, and opportunities, emphasising the importance of compliance strategies to enhance local conservation efforts and support global climate solutions.

The final session, held on September 18, offered practical insights into carbon accounting mechanisms and the role of carbon offsets in reducing emissions. Facilitators Wilf Odgers and Ned Walker shared global best practices and case studies, guiding participants in applying carbon trading in their conservation initiatives. The session highlighted the value of using carbon offsets to promote community conservation, help reduce emissions, and foster local action. Through the Carbon Credit Training Series, EAWLS demonstrated its commitment to addressing knowledge gaps and empowering Kenya's conservation community to combat climate change. We received positive feedback from participants,

underscoring the demand for ongoing capacity-building efforts that EAWLS is eager to explore beyond these virtual sessions. You can access the training recordings on:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZuSE5CRCxI&list=PL97DaLUvjw1PQ0RSiW_sHUrB6oAUauw7 and share this knowledge with your networks to further support Kenya's climate goals.

2.0 About the climate change portfolio (My initial thoughts towards the development of EAWLS climate change portfolio)

The Climate Change Unit to be positioned within the Programs and Advocacy Department. This division will be overseen by the Climate Change Program Officer, who will report directly to the Programs and Advocacy Manager. This structure will enhance coordination and strengthen EAWLS climate initiatives within the organization.

2.1 Strategic focus

- Climate Governance
- Blue Ecosystem Restoration
- Climate Resilience

2.1.1 Climate Governance

Climate governance refers to the framework through which we ensure the needs of those most affected by climate change are addressed, that various parties to international climate agreements fulfil their responsibilities and interact effectively, that decisions are made transparently and decision-makers remain accountable, and that policies, plans, and actions developed by the state and its citizens to combat climate change are implemented fairly and effectively.

The adoption of the 2015 Paris Agreement marked a shift in the global climate framework towards a more inclusive governance model, embracing the principle of shared but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities. The Agreement enables national governments to establish their own emissions reduction and adaptation goals through

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In the initial round, 176 countries submitted their NDCs for the period extending to 2025/2030, with updates to these targets scheduled every five years from 2020 onward, aiming to gradually increase ambition.

As the Paris Agreement enters the implementation phase, the emphasis is shifting from international negotiations to national, regional, and local governments that must translate the Paris goals into local climate action. Opportunities for advancing climate action increasingly involve a wide range of state and non-state actors. Over the past 20 years, research has underscored the crucial role of sub-national governments in curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Many of the sectors with high potential for emission reductions such as housing, transportation, land use, urban planning, infrastructure, and waste management are often managed at the sub-national level.

2.1.1.1 Opportunities for the East African Wildlife Society

This report identifies possible entry points in translating national policies to the county level:

- *Supporting the Integration of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs):* Assist counties in aligning their climate initiatives with national NDC goals. This could involve capacity-building sessions for county officials on setting realistic, localized emissions and adaptation targets.
- *Collaborating on County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs):* Work with county governments to incorporate climate change goals into their five-year CIDPs. Support the alignment of these plans with national frameworks such as Vision 2030, ensuring climate initiatives are embedded in county-level planning and budgeting processes.
- *Strengthening Sector-Specific Climate Action Plans:* Many climate-sensitive sectors (e.g., agriculture, livestock, fisheries, water, and waste management) fall under county jurisdiction. The East African Wildlife Society can provide sector-specific guidance and resources to enhance climate resilience and avoid mal-adaptive practices.
- *Engaging in Public Participation Processes:* Since county planning and budgeting processes legally require public participation, the EAWLS could support counties in engaging stakeholders and local communities, civil society, and private sector partners to ensure inclusive and transparent climate planning.
- *Assisting the County Executive Committee (CEC):* Help counties set up climate-focused roles within the CEC, where a designated member coordinates climate action. This includes training CEC members on effective climate action reporting and monitoring to improve annual reporting to the County Assembly and the Climate Change Directorate.

- *Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms:* Help counties in establishing reporting systems for tracking the progress of climate initiatives. These systems could improve transparency and accountability, enabling more effective feedback loops for ongoing policy adjustments.
- *Facilitating Cross-Level Coordination:* Since certain climate-related sectors (like water resources management, wildlife, and mining) remain under national jurisdiction, EAWLS could foster coordination between county governments and national agencies. This would enhance coherence across levels and ensure that county efforts complement national climate policies.

2.1.2 Blue Carbon Ecosystem Restoration.

In 2019, the UN General Assembly declared that 2021 to 2030 will be the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. It is a recognition of the problem and it is a great opportunity to restore ecosystems and connectivity while advancing job creation, food security and addressing climate change. Restoration and the rise of more large-scale rewilding approaches give hope that fragmentation and its impacts can be reversed both on land and in the ocean. Since 2009 a growing array of international efforts have been directed at recognising the blue carbon stored in mangroves, seagrass meadows and salt marshes and taking measures to integrate it into carbon action through the policy routes offered under the UNFCCC.

Increasing attention is being given to the climate mitigation potential of ‘blue carbon’ in coastal and shelf-sea ecosystems. The ecosystems currently recognised for blue carbon are seagrasses, salt marshes (sometimes referred to as tidal marshes) and mangrove forests. These ecosystems provide a host of benefits, from supporting the livelihoods of coastal communities, protecting them from the impacts of storms, and providing important habitat for fish, birds, and a variety of other species.

2.1.2.1 Opportunities for the East African Wildlife Society

Here are some of the possible entry points for EAWLS on restoring blue carbon ecosystems:

- Community engagement and involvement:
 - Incorporate Traditional Knowledge: Partner with local communities to integrate their traditional knowledge into restoration practices, ensuring culturally appropriate and effective interventions.
- Capacity building and education:
 - Community Training: Provide training for local communities on restoration techniques and long-term monitoring of blue carbon ecosystems.
 - Youth and School Programs: Implement programs that educate younger generations about blue carbon ecosystems to encourage future participation and stewardship.
- Sustainable management practices:

- Resource-use guidelines: Develop guidelines to ensure sustainable use of restored areas, balancing conservation with local livelihoods.
- EAWLS to focus on restoring Mangroves, seagrass meadows, and tidal marshes which are key BC ecosystems and exceptional carbon sinks, capable of sequestering and storing large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- Technical solutions and monitoring:
 - Carbon Sequestration Monitoring: Establish monitoring systems to quantify carbon storage, which can enhance fundraising and support through carbon credits.

2.1.3 Climate Resilience

EAWLS strengthens Climate Resilience by enhance long-term resilience of communities and enable them to thrive in the face of devastating climate shocks through:

- *Capacity Building:*
 - Developing and disseminating IEC materials on Climate Adaptation and Mitigation. Creation and distribution of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials to promote awareness and actionable insights on climate adaptation and mitigation strategies.
 - Training Corporate Members on Emissions Management and Sustainability. Providing training to EAWLS corporate members to enhance understanding of corporate emissions—greenhouse gases released due to business operations. These emissions significantly impact climate change, and their management is crucial for corporate sustainability and social responsibility. EAWLS will assist in assessing environmental impacts, formulating carbon reduction strategies, and supporting organizations in achieving their sustainability goals. EAWLS to facilitate carbon accounting by giving an organization an estimate of its carbon footprint.
 - The YONA program. The YONA program has the potential to significantly increase youth awareness and engagement in environmental advocacy, inspiring the next generation to take proactive roles in combating climate change, deforestation, and pollution.
- *Nature-based Solutions:*
 - Are actions addressing key societal challenges through the protection, sustainable management and restoration of both natural and modified ecosystems, benefiting both biodiversity and human well-being. Approach cooperates to invest in EAWLS restoration efforts to minimize pollution and carbon footprint. i.e. Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR),

Indigenous community-led reforestation and agroforestry, wetlands restoration and marine ecosystems restoration.

2.1.3.1 Opportunities for the East African Wildlife Society

The program will not only address environmental sustainability but also uphold social justice and community rights, which is crucial. For example, In Kenya, the Environment and Land Court ruled that the establishment of conservancies by the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) in Cherab and Chari wards in Isiolo County was unconstitutional². Capacity building topics for this section will include:

- **Community engagement and public participation:** Develop training programs that emphasize inclusive and meaningful engagement of local communities in climate initiatives. This includes understanding community rights, conducting effective consultations, and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes.
- **Land rights and governance:** Collaborate with other networks of civil society organisations and individuals who are committed to advocating for the reform of policies and laws governing land in Kenya, championing the rights of Kenyans to access, use and manage their lands like the Kenya Land Alliance to offer workshops on land tenure systems, legal frameworks (such as the Community Land Act), and governance structures related to community-managed lands and conservation areas. This will help ensure that conservation efforts respect and uphold local land rights.
- **Carbon finance and sustainable development:** Provide knowledge on carbon markets, carbon offset projects, and mechanisms like REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) that promote sustainable development while mitigating climate change impacts.
- **Monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV):** Equip stakeholders with skills in monitoring greenhouse gas emissions, tracking climate impacts, and reporting on progress towards climate goals. This supports transparency and accountability in climate actions.

² <https://new.kenyalaw.org/akn/ke/judgment/keelc/2025/99/eng@2025-01-24>

3. What are the results and impacts of these activities for conservation? (100-200 words)

Results and impacts of these activities for conservation

- A) Increased Youth Engagement: The YONA program has the potential to significantly increase youth awareness and engagement in environmental advocacy, inspiring the next generation to take proactive roles in combating climate change, deforestation, and pollution.
- B) Mentorship for career paths: Providing mentorship opportunities will guide students interested in environmental careers, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled advocates and professionals dedicated to conservation.
- C) Improved event execution: Comprehensive planning is a skill I have mastered including logistics and material preparation. These skills will ensure the successful launch of the strategic plan, setting a strong foundation for its adoption and implementation.
- D) Enhanced visibility: Hosting the pre-launch at a prestigious institution reinforces the importance of the plan and garners more attention and support from stakeholders.
- E) Enhanced community awareness and stakeholder commitment towards the designation of Mt. Kulal as an IBA.

Increased engagement and participation of local communities in conservation efforts: Distribution of seedlings to the trained institutions and farmers at designated seedling collection centres proximate to the farmers across the two landscapes

4. What skills and knowledge have you learnt? (100-200 words)

Skills and knowledge learnt

- a. Increased professional networking: Being part of the KFWG, which brings together over 700 members from various sectors, allowed me to broaden my professional network. It also deepened my understanding of the collective efforts required to address forestry challenges and exposed me to diverse perspectives and expertise from government, civil society, academia, and the private sector.
- b. Time management: I have learned to allocate my time efficiently to various tasks, ensuring that deadlines are met and am able to balance multiple responsibilities.
- c. Communication skills: As a member of the technical and communications team for the Forest Challenge 2024, I have developed skills in drafting communication messages that have featured on EAWLS's social media handles. This experience has also enhanced my ability to work effectively in teams and manage multiple tasks simultaneously.

- d. Knowledge Enhancement: Access to EAWLS's strategic plan and human resource policy documents has provided me with a clear understanding of the organization's objectives and operations. This has enabled me to align my tasks and projects with EAWLS's vision, thereby enhancing my efficiency and focus.
- e. Enhanced strategic planning and analytical skills: By contributing to the redesign of the Theory of Change (ToC), problem tree, and editing the first chapter of the KFWG Strategic Plan, I improved my ability to critically analyze complex problems and develop effective strategies. This experience sharpened my strategic thinking and planning skills, which are essential for addressing challenges in the conservation sector.
- f. Teamwork and collaboration: In the departmental meetings, I actively engaged with my team to brainstorm ideas, set priority tasks, and align my responsibilities with the department's objectives. This collaborative approach allowed us to pool our diverse skills and perspectives.
- g. Report Writing: I have developed the skill of report writing, ensuring that back-to-office reports clearly and accurately describe the event, including key details, outcomes, and recommendations, making them easily understandable.
- h. Collaboration: Developing work plans often involves working with others. I have collaborated with my fellow team members in developing and reviewing our departmental work plan.
- i. Research skills: By analysing and identifying funding opportunities, I've enhanced my research skills, which is essential for resource mobilisation in conservation and climate change initiatives.
- j. Networking: Engaging with civil society organizations (CSOs) and stakeholders in workshops has improved my ability to network, collaborate with diverse groups, and strengthen partnerships.

5. Have you been in contact with any alumni from the CLP network? (100-200 words)

Yes, I have had direct contact with alumni from the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) network. I have proactively established connections by identifying and following several CLP alumni on LinkedIn to stay informed about their work and initiatives. Additionally, I have joined the CLP WhatsApp group and a private LinkedIn group for alumni to maintain and strengthen these connections.



6. Proposed future projects based on my experience

- a) Collaborating on County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs):* Work with county governments to incorporate climate change goals into their five-year CIDPs. Support the alignment of these plans with national frameworks such as Vision 2030, ensuring climate initiatives are embedded in county-level planning and budgeting processes.
- b) Strengthening Sector-Specific Climate Action Plans:* Many climate-sensitive sectors (e.g., agriculture, livestock, fisheries, water, and waste management) fall under county jurisdiction. The East African Wildlife Society can provide sector-specific guidance and resources to enhance climate resilience and avoid mal-adaptive practices.
- c) Engaging in Public Participation Processes:* Since county planning and budgeting processes legally require public participation, the EAWLS could support counties in engaging stakeholders and local communities, civil society, and private sector partners to ensure inclusive and transparent climate planning.
- d) Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms:* Help counties in establishing reporting systems for tracking the progress of climate initiatives. These systems could improve transparency and accountability, enabling more effective feedback loops for ongoing policy adjustments.

- e) Community engagement and public participation: Partner with local communities to integrate their traditional knowledge into restoration practices, ensuring culturally appropriate and effective interventions. Develop training programs that emphasize inclusive and meaningful engagement of local communities in climate initiatives. This includes understanding community rights, conducting effective consultations, and ensuring transparency in decision-making processes.
- f) Capacity building and education:
 - a. Community Training: Provide training for local communities on restoration techniques and long-term monitoring of blue carbon ecosystems.
 - b. Youth and School Programs: Implement programs that educate younger generations about blue carbon ecosystems to encourage future participation and stewardship.
 - c. Carbon financing: Educate communities on carbon markets, carbon offset projects, and mechanisms like REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) that promote sustainable development while mitigating climate change impacts.
- g) Sustainable management practices:
 - a. Resource-use guidelines: Develop guidelines to ensure sustainable use of restored areas, balancing conservation with local livelihoods.
 - b. EAWLS to focus on restoring Mangroves, seagrass meadows, and tidal marshes which are key BC ecosystems and exceptional carbon sinks, capable of sequestering and storing large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- h) Technical solutions and monitoring:
 - a. Carbon Sequestration Monitoring: Establish monitoring systems to quantify carbon storage, which can enhance fundraising and support through carbon credits.
- i) Land rights and governance: Collaborate with other networks of civil society organisations and individuals who are committed to advocating for the reform of policies and laws governing land in Kenya, championing the rights of Kenyans to access, use and manage their lands like the Kenya Land Alliance to offer workshops on land tenure systems, legal frameworks (such as the Community Land Act), and governance structures related to community-managed lands and conservation areas. This will help ensure that conservation efforts respect and uphold local land rights.
- j) Monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV): Equip corporate stakeholders with skills in monitoring greenhouse gas emissions, tracking climate impacts, and reporting on progress towards climate goals. This supports transparency and accountability in climate actions.