

Establishing Locally Managed Marine Areas in Kenya

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Coastal communities in Kenya have adopted the use of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) since the mid-1990s, to protect fisheries and marine resources but also to securing alternative livelihood activities. However, these LMMAs have been established in a somewhat adhoc manner due to a lack of guidelines for their development and implementation. In this review we sought to define generic guidelines for the establishment of LMMAs that are accessible to coastal communities. Information on ten coral reef-based LMMAs was reviewed and Key informants interviews conducted. LMMAs in Kenya go through five phases: i) Conceptualization, ii) Inception, iii) Implementation, iv) Monitoring and management, and v) Ongoing adaptive management. This contrasts with LMMAs in Pacific Island countries where four stages are reported, with the first Conceptualization phase not mentioned. Our results illustrated the need for full acceptance of the LMMA concept by local communities and other stakeholders before progressing beyond the first phase, a mistake that was made during the establishment of most LMMAs, causing them to stagnate between the 1st, 2nd and part of 3rd phase. Four LMMAs in Kenya are in the fifth phase, though their financial sustainability is weak. Across all LMMAs there no strategies for education and awareness, marketing, long term financing and monitoring. We recommend that establishment of LMMAs in Kenya focus on these four areas. Most importantly the lack of sustainable financing means that most LMMAs are heavily dependent on outside aid and communities are unaware of the costs involved in implementing their LMMA. In conclusion, two phases require attention if LMMAs are to be effective in Kenya: the first Conceptualization phase that ensures all stakeholders are committed, and the final Ongoing adaptive management phase which will ensure monitoring, enforcement and implementation of a detailed management plan are funded and ongoing.