

GO BLUE TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE COMPONENT NEWSLETTER

News from a component of the Go Blue Project Kenya



A few of the crafts that have been produced through the 'Commercial Crafts for Industrial Development' project by Common Interest|Blue22-061

ABOUT US

Tourism and Cultural Heritage(TCH) is a component of the Go Blue project, a partnership between the European Union(EU) and the Government of Kenya to advance the blue economy agenda through coastal development.

Camões, I.P., the Portuguese Cooperation Agency, is the TCH component Implementing Partner responsible for contributing to strengthening the value chains of these sectors in an inclusive and sustainable way in Kenya.

With the funding entrusted by the EU, Camões, I.P. is contributing to advancing inclusive employment in the TCH cross-sector in Jumuiya ya Kaunti za Pwani(JKP) - Kenya's coastal counties economic bloc by:

- Increasing JKP's capacity to plan inclusive TCH through Integrated Governance, which should result in 1 Regional blueprint(BP) approved, implemented and monitored by relevant stakeholders;
- Generation of new employment and new dynamics in value chains cross-sector through innovative small projects and businesses in TCH, by awarding around 16 small grants to private, public and civil society entities, resulting in the creation of 161 new jobs, targeting specially youth and women;
- Support young job seekers to become social entrepreneurs through the flagship project Ubuntu Leaders Academy, where at least 118 participants were able to create their own businesses or secure employment.

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GO BLUE TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE (TCH) ROADMAP

2023

- TECHNICAL MENTORSHIP OF GRANTEES ON GRANT CONTRACT MANAGEMENT
- 1BP CHANGELAB WORKSHOP IN JANUARY
- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING OF GRANTEES
- 1ST BENCHMARKING EVENT AT CRABSHACK IN WATAMU
- TRAINING OF TCH COMPONENT ON MONITORING & EVALUATION
- GRANTEES TRAINING ON MONITORING & EVALUATION
- MIDLINE SURVEY & SITE VISIT MENTORSHIP
- 3RD CAMÕES, I.P. PMU FIELD MISSION
- 2 VALIDATION MEETINGS IN SEPTEMBER
- APPROVAL MEETING IN OCTOBER
- LAUNCH OF THE BLUEPRINT
- EU HEAD OF MISSION (HOM) VISIT

2025

- 2ND BENCHMARKING EVENT AT KAYA KINONDO IN KWALE
- 5TH CAMÕES, I.P. PMU FIELD MISSION
- 1 REGIONAL ONLINE MEETING IN JANUARY
- TCH VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS BY TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF MOMBASA
- TCH CLOSURE EVENT

2021

- CALL FOR PROPOSALS

2022

- ANNOUNCEMENT OF CALL FOR PROPOSALS (CFP) RESULTS
- RECRUITMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- PRODUCTION OF GRANT AGREEMENT MANAGEMENT MANUAL
- CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED
- DRAFTING OF BLUEPRINT AND VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS
- DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSAL TO MARKET JUMUIYA TCH
- 1ST CAMÕES, I.P. PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT(PMU) FIELD MISSION
- REVISION AND INITIATION OF THE TCH COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY (C&V) PLAN
- HARMONIZATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING (IMC) STRATEGY, INCLUDING THE GO BLUE VISUAL IDENTITY NORMS
- 2ND CAMÕES, I.P. PMU FIELD MISSION

2024

- BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING OF GRANTEES
- ENDLINE SURVEY FOR GRANTEES
- 4TH CAMÕES, I.P. PMU FIELD MISSION
- 6 COUNTIES MONITORING & STEERING MEETINGS IN MAY AND JUNE



Msambweni Beach Operators Curio Stall

DEVELOPMENT OF A MIJIKENDA CULTURAL AND HERITAGE RESOURCE CENTRE AND LIBRARY

by World Student Community for Sustainable Development | BLUE22-077

Project Title: Development of a Mijikenda Cultural and Heritage Resource Centre and Library

Implementing Organization: World Student Community for Sustainable Development

Location: Kwale County

Project Summary:

This project aimed to preserve and promote the Mijikenda cultural heritage while creating economic opportunities for youth and women. By establishing a Cultural and Heritage Resource Centre and Library, it sought to transform traditional knowledge into a valuable tourism product and create sustainable employment in the region.

Key Achievements:

- Sub-grants were provided to youth and women-led groups to launch tourism-related enterprises.
- Employment created through initiatives like curio shops, mangrove safaris, and cultural village tours.
- Supported the purchase of traditional costumes for cultural performers.

Impact:

The project has facilitated both direct and indirect employment while preserving cultural identity. It strengthened tourism offerings in Kwale and promoted cultural pride.



A few of the crafts that have been produced

COMMERCIAL CRAFTS FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

by Common Interest | BLUE22-061

Project Title: Commercial Crafts for Industrial Development

Implementing Organization: Common Interest

Location: Mombasa County

Project Summary:

This initiative focused on preserving traditional craft-making skills by linking them to modern value chains. It targeted local artisans, especially youth and women, aiming to commercialize heritage crafts as tourism products.

Key Achievements:

- Established a creative hub and design studio.
- Produced a pilot collection of 38 culturally inspired products and formed partnerships with retailers, schools, and exhibitions.
- Received approval to use the 'Made in Kenya' label.

Impact:

Led to employment creation and increased product sales, positioning Mombasa as a hub for creative tourism merchandise.



A recording session

IMANI

by Baruu Collective Ltd. | BLUE22-058

Project Title: IMANI

Implementing Organization: Baruu Collective Ltd.

Location: Kilifi County

Project Summary:

IMANI focused on documenting Mwanzele music faith systems through audio-visual media. It aimed to preserve cultural knowledge and create employment opportunities through heritage media production.

Key Achievements:

- Trained 80 students in heritage media production.
- Produced 3 songs, 8 documentaries, and a podcast.
- Conducted original research on indigenous faith systems.

Impact:

The project bridged generational knowledge gaps and enabled young people to engage with culture in new, modern, creative formats.



One of the CBTEs takes a picture with members of the APTDC and STTA team and during a field visit

SUSTAINABLE RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH UTILIZATION OF TOURISM AND CULTURAL HERITAGE SECTOR

by African Pro-Poor Tourism Development Centre | BLUE22-076

Project Title: Sustainable Rural Economic Development Through Utilization of Tourism and Cultural Heritage Sector

Implementing Organization: African Pro-Poor Tourism Development Centre (APTDC)

Location: Kwale County

Project Summary:

This project supported 5 community-based tourism enterprises (CBTEs) in Kwale, focusing on product development, market access, and capacity building.

Key Achievements:

- Supported and funded 5 CBTEs.
- Delivered training and developed business plans.
- Constructed tourism facilities and created visibility tools.

Impact:

Created jobs and improved tourism services in Kwale, enhancing sustainability and income for local groups.



Tourist enjoying a stay at one of the local experiences

KARIBU LOCAL EXPERIENCES

by Hospitality Group East Africa Ltd. |
BLUE22-022

Project Title: Karibu Local Experiences

Implementing Organization: Hospitality Group East Africa Ltd.

Location: Kwale County

Project Summary:

Focused on digitalizing and promoting local tourism experiences to increase visibility and bookings for activities based in Kwale.

Key Achievements:

- Developed and marketed diverse tour experiences.
- Trained local providers and partnered with global platforms.
- Generated over USD 1,000 in bookings.

Impact:

Empowered local tourism providers and expanded Kwale's visibility as a cultural tourism destination.



Studio Belabela, a benefactor of the tourism innovation lab

MOMBASA TOURISM INNOVATION LAB

by Global Development Incubator with
Swahilipot Hub Foundation | BLUE22-057

Project Title: Mombasa Tourism Innovation Lab

Implementing Organization: Global Development Incubator with
Swahilipot Hub Foundation

Location: Mombasa County

Project Summary:

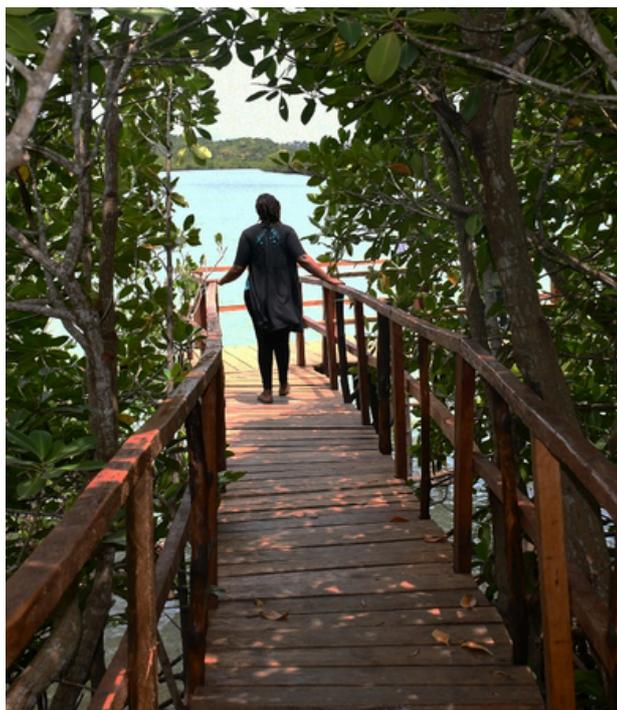
Established an innovation lab to support grassroots tourism entrepreneurs and diversify tourism products in Mombasa.

Key Achievements:

- Selected 6 subgrantees from 109 applicants.
- Provided training and mentorship programs.
- Supported innovative tourism ventures in food, arts, and culture.

Impact:

Revitalized Mombasa's tourism offerings and created new job opportunities for youth, strengthening the local tourism ecosystem.



Part of the Kwetu Boardwalk

MTWAPA CREEK – AN INNOVATIVE ECO-TOURISM DESTINATION

by KWETU Training Centre for Sustainable Development | BLUE22-013

Project Title: Mtwapa Creek – An Innovative Eco-Tourism Destination

Implementing Organization: KWETU Training Centre for Sustainable Development

Location: Kilifi County

Project Summary:

This project transformed Mtwapa Creek into a model eco-tourism site by improving infrastructure, building local capacity, and integrating nature-based tourism approaches.

Key Achievements:

- Funded 3 local CBOs and upgraded eco-tourism facilities.
- Trained 54 members in entrepreneurship and conservation.
- Developed modular tour packages and launched a tourism social enterprise.

Impact:

The project diversified local income, improved mangrove conservation, and positioned KWETU as a key player in regional eco-tourism development.



Members of the Kaya Kinondo Group take a picture with members of the Camões, I.P. and STTA team during a field mission.

IMPROVING KAYA KINONDO HERITAGE SITE

by Kaya Kinondo Forest Conservation Group | BLUE22-020

Project Title: Improving Cultural Tourism in Kaya Kinondo Heritage Site

Implementing Organization: Kaya Kinondo Forest Conservation Group

Location: Kwale County

Project Summary:

This initiative aimed to develop inclusive tourism offerings around the Kaya Kinondo sacred forest, enhancing visitor experience while protecting cultural heritage.

Key Achievements:

- Created and promoted new cultural tourism products.
- Produced tourist information materials.
- Involved a broad range of community members in project activities.

Impact:

The project increased local incomes, improved tourist engagement, and strengthened cultural preservation within the Digo community.



The team from Camões, I.P. getting a tour of the cultural centre

EQUIPPING AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF GARSEN CULTURAL CENTRE

by Tana River County Umbrella Organization of Persons with Disabilities | BLUE22-016

Project Title: Equipping and Operationalization of Garsen Cultural Centre

Implementing Organization: Tana River County Umbrella Organization of Persons with Disabilities

Location: Tana River County

Project Summary:

This project established a cultural centre to support exhibitions, training, and tourism development in Tana River County.

Key Achievements:

- Equipped the Garsen Cultural Centre and hosted exhibitions.
- Trained artists and conducted mentorship programs.
- Created a cultural practitioner register and supported digital promotion.

Impact:

The centre enhanced visibility for local artists and contributed to cultural tourism growth in the county.



A cultural dance being performed at one of the facilities

APPLICATION OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

by TanAfrik Initiative | BLUE22-091

Project Title: Application of the Concept of Cultural Tourism in Cooperative Societies

Implementing Organization: TanAfrik Initiative

Location: Tana River County

Project Summary:

The project integrated cultural tourism into cooperative societies to promote environmental conservation and create income-generating opportunities.

Key Achievements:

- Supported 4 cooperative societies with facilities and promotional tools.
- Developed cultural centres and 3 nurseries.
- Conducted marketing and community engagement campaigns.

Impact:

The initiative created employment opportunities, increased cultural pride, and formalized cultural tourism as a cooperative activity.



Tourist being shown the tree nurseries as part of the experience

INTEGRATED ECO-TOURISM AND AGRO-BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

by Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance | BLUE22-089

Project Title: Integrated Eco-tourism and Agro-biodiversity Conservation

Implementing Organizations: Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance with Rabai Cultural Village and Rabai Youth Information Centre

Location: Kilifi County

Project Summary:

This initiative linked environmental restoration with eco-tourism to create sustainable livelihoods in the Kaya Mudzi Muvya region.

Key Achievements:

- Planted over 2500 trees and sensitized more than 2500 individuals.
- Formed 3 active self-help groups, launched a SACCO and a marketing website.
- Developed cultural tour products and strengthened cultural centres.

Impact:

Created 273 jobs, enhanced forest conservation, and supported long-term knowledge transfer and cultural revitalization.



Artisans work on their cultural designs in a workshop

IBUKA CULTURE DESIGNERS

by TANA Action Initiative | BLUE22-028

Project Title: Ibuka Culture Designers

Implementing Organization: Tana Action Initiative

Location: Tana River County

Project Summary:

The project revived local cultural practices and empowered youth and women to participate in artisan and tourism activities.

Key Achievements:

- Organized Culture Day and set up artisan markets.
- Established tourism training centres.
- Trained 39 beneficiaries and facilitated job placements.

Impact:

The project promoted cultural revival and provided sustainable livelihoods, particularly in areas with limited traditional tourism activity.



MSME owners in one of the training sessions

STIMULATING SUSTAINABLE COASTAL ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH CULTURAL HERITAGE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DIGITIZATION (SECGED)

by Moi University, Kenya | BLUE22-042

Project Title: Stimulating Sustainable Coastal Economic Growth through Cultural Heritage Entrepreneurship and Digitization (SECGED)

Implementing Organization: Moi University, Kenya

Location: Kilifi County

Project Summary:

This project was designed to strengthen TCH entrepreneurship by building the capacity of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and unemployed youth to participate meaningfully in the blue economy, by combining cultural heritage, innovation, and digital transformation.

Key Achievements:

- The project trained 47 MSE owners (50% female) and 65 youth (30% female) in entrepreneurship, innovation, digital marketing, and sustainable business practices.
- Developed and launched the Kuza Blu e-commerce platform (www.kuzablu.com) to connect coastal artisans and tourism operators with wider markets.
- Created 50 social media business accounts (Facebook, WhatsApp) and trained participants on effective use of online marketing tools.

Impact:

The project has enhanced the business and digital skills of local entrepreneurs, improving their access to new markets and sources of income.



The curio shop at the Pongwe Circuit Tourism Centre being set up

CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PONGWE CROCODILE-BIRD WATCHING, THREE GIANT SISTERS CAVE AND MARINE RESERVE TOURISM (PONGWE-CIRCUIT)

by Mwazaro BMU Self Help Group | BLUE 22-045

Project Title: Conservation and Development of Pongwe Crocodile-Bird Watching Three Giants Sisters Cave and Marine Reserve Tourism (Pongwe-Circuit)

Implementing Organization: Mwazaro BMU Self Help Group with Bahari CBO Network, Timiza Utafiti and Organization for United Africa

Location: Kwale County

Project Summary:

The Pongwe-Circuit project aimed to promote sustainable coastal livelihoods through the conservation and development of three key nature heritage sites, the River Ramisi crocodile and bird-watching area, the Three Giant Sisters Cave and the Kibuyuni Marine Reserve into an integrated tourism circuit.

Key Achievements:

- Cleared and opened access routes to 4 key tourist sites and installed directional signage.
- Trained 25 local tour guides developed and distributed 100 brochures.
- Set up 1 Curio Shop for visitors, artisans, and local enterprises.

Impact:

The project has helped communities around Mwazaro, Kibuyuni and Fikirini rediscover the value of their natural and cultural heritage as engines for sustainable development.



A local cultural performance experience

NJAMA MIZANGO CULTURAL AND ECOTOURISM CENTRE PROJECT

by Njama Mizango Dawida Group | BLUE 22-074

Project Title: Njama Mizango Cultural and Ecotourism Centre

Implementing Organization: Njama Mizango Dawida Group (NMDG)

Location: Taita Taveta County

Project Summary:

The Njama Mizango Cultural and Ecotourism Centre to promote inclusive and sustainable employment through cultural and ecotourism activities. Its goal was to create decent livelihood opportunities for community members — including women, youth, and the elderly by developing, packaging, and marketing authentic cultural heritage products and services.

Key Achievements:

- Generated 7 direct jobs and 147 indirect employment opportunities, benefiting local youth, women, and artisans.
- Trained 50 participants in leather crafting, crocheting, beadwork, basketry, and tour guiding, with 6 women already establishing small businesses.
- Constructed and equipped a traditional cultural house, gift shop, craft centre, now operational and welcoming guests.

Impact:

The project has transformed Njama Mizango into a vibrant cultural enterprise that celebrates the traditions of the Taita community while empowering its people economically.



A presentation being given at the cultural centre

THE KIJUMWA CULTURAL CENTRE – ESTABLISHMENT OF A HERITAGE HUB AT LAMU FORT NATIONAL MONUMENT

by National Museums of Kenya – Lamu Museums | BLUE 22-037

Project Title: The Kijumwa Cultural Centre – Establishment of a Heritage Hub at Lamu Fort National Monument

Implementing Organization: National Museums of Kenya – Lamu Museums

Location: Lamu County

Project Summary:

The Kijumwa Cultural Centre sought to establish a fully equipped Heritage Hub at the historic Lamu Fort. The hub was envisioned as a dynamic platform for youth, women, and people with disabilities to develop creative and digital skills, access production facilities, and engage in cultural entrepreneurship.

Key Achievements:

- The Kijumwa Cultural Centre at Lamu Fort was fully rehabilitated, furnished and equipped.
- Young people trained in creative and digital skills, including calligraphy, craft making and eco-product development.
- 15 local organizations and schools sensitized on reducing illegal mangrove harvesting and unsustainable fishing, linking conservation with livelihoods.

Impact:

The Kijumwa Cultural Centre has transformed Lamu Fort into a living hub of creativity, knowledge exchange, and heritage preservation. Youth and women now have access to digital tools and collaborative spaces to produce, market, and showcase cultural innovations.



Trainees take a picture with STTA members after a training session

CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRANTEES

by STTA

As part of the Go Blue project's TCH component, capacity building has played a central role in strengthening the foundations of community-led initiatives. In addition to training sessions, grantees benefited from early capacity needs assessment meetings. These were instrumental in helping grantees align their projects with the broader objectives of the TCH component, the requirements of the Call for Proposals, and the Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) framework. These sessions also served to strengthen collaboration between grantees and county government officials, with an emphasis on developing interventions that are resilient, scalable, and replicable.

Over the implementation period, grantees across the 6 coastal counties received tailored technical assistance, designed to equip them with the knowledge, tools, and strategies needed to sustain and scale their projects.

The technical support was coordinated by Sustainable Travel and Tourism Africa (STTA), the Technical Assistance team for the TCH component, and included both virtual and in-person sessions covering:

- Business development planning.
- Marketing strategies.
- Communication and visibility planning.
- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

These were delivered through structured training sessions, hands-on workshops, and follow-up engagements in the counties where the grantees operate.

In 2023, STTA also organized a dedicated training series facilitated by experts in the tourism and culture sector. These included sessions on:

- Operational efficiency for small tourism enterprises (facilitated by Catherine Gachie).
- Digital marketing (delivered in two sessions by Stephen Maina).
- Marketing of cultural and heritage products (Anthony Ochieng).
- Product innovation in cultural and heritage tourism (Catherine Gachie).
- Climate change and tourism in coastal destinations (Lina Mkoji).

To support peer learning, STTA facilitated benchmarking events where grantees could engage directly with one another, share experiences, and learn from best practices across counties. The technical team also conducted site visits to monitor progress and offer project-specific guidance.

The training sessions attracted strong engagement from the grantees, with more than 80% of them participating in the virtual sessions. Many reported gaining practical knowledge that has since helped them refine their project activities, particularly in areas such as marketing, operational planning, and digital outreach.



Celebrations during the launch of the blueprint

KENYA COAST TCH BLUEPRINT

by Camões, I.P., JKP and Instituto Padre António Vieira (IPAV)

The Kenya Coast TCH Blueprint 2030 is a strategic roadmap for transforming the coastal region into a globally competitive, sustainable cultural tourism destination. Developed through a consultative process under the Go Blue Programme, the blueprint provides a shared framework for coordinating public, private, and community efforts in the TCH sector across all 6 coastal counties.

Launched in October 2023 in Mombasa, following a series of key stakeholder engagements, including a validation meeting with industry leaders and an approval meeting attended by County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) for Tourism, with technical expertise from STTA, Camões, I.P. and IPAV, working closely with the JKP Secretariat and county representatives, the blueprint is the first in the country.

The blueprint was co-created through a participatory process involving county governments, national agencies, communities, and experts from Kenya and Portugal. It envisions “a globally competitive and sustainable Kenya coastal tourism and cultural heritage destination by 2030.”

Core Focus Areas of the Blueprint

The document outlines four key strategic objectives:

- Strengthening TCH policy frameworks.
- Improving tourism-related infrastructure.
- Safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural sites.
- Scaling up TCH enterprises and community-based tourism.

Each area is supported by operational goals and performance indicators, offering a coordinated structure for counties and stakeholders to plan and track progress.

Implementation

Under the Go Blue Programme, the TCH component has supported early-stage implementation of the Blueprint by:

- Facilitating grantee projects that align with the Blueprint's strategic goals.
- Conducting capacity-building sessions to help stakeholders integrate the Blueprint into county planning frameworks.
- Supporting technical visits, awareness creation, and collaborative design of cultural tourism products and services.

Several grantees have already contributed to the Blueprint's ambitions by focusing on community-based tourism, cultural preservation, and capacity development, key pillars within the strategic plan.

Roll-out and Future

A series of integrated governance meetings were held at the county level since 2024, bringing together diverse actors across the tourism and culture sectors. The concept of integrated governance encourages open collaboration and problem-solving across institutional lines. Participants have included officials from county governments, representatives from national and regional TCH institutions, the Kenya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Kenya Maritime Authority, and the National Museums of Kenya. Universities and research institutions have also taken part, alongside tourism businesses and community-based organizations.

These forums have allowed stakeholders to openly share challenges faced within their organizations, identify common goals, and develop coordinated solutions. They have also helped build momentum for the Blueprint by fostering a sense of shared ownership across public, private, and community sectors.

With integrated governance structures taking root and county-level awareness steadily growing, the Blueprint now serves as both a strategic tool and a shared vision for unlocking the full tourism potential of the Kenyan coast.

Several counties have adopted sections of the Blueprint in their County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP). To ensure continued implementation of the Blueprint, a monitoring process has been established, led by JKP and the County CECs for tourism. Through regular review meetings, in collaboration with JKP, the CECs will monitor implementation of the Blueprint by each county.

Two other key documents related to the Blueprint, the TCH Value Chain Analysis and the TCH Marketing Plan, will complement the implementation of the Blueprint.

Combined, these documents present a comprehensive long-term guideline for development of tourism and cultural heritage in JKP, to drive inclusive economic growth, create jobs, strengthen community-led stewardship of cultural assets, and safeguard coastal ecosystems. It will take ongoing capacity building, coordinated marketing, targeted investment facilitation, and a results-focused monitoring framework to ensure benefits reach grassroots enterprises anchored in culture and heritage.

Overall, continued collaboration between counties, JKP, national agencies, private partners, and community stakeholders will be essential to translate the Blueprint into sustained livelihoods, equitable value chains, and a living cultural legacy for future generations.



TCH Blueprint writing team in Portugal

THE UBUNTU LEADERS ACADEMY (ULA)

by IPAV

The ULA is a non-formal education programme developed by IPAV, aimed at equipping young people with leadership skills grounded in empathy, self-awareness, service, and social responsibility. The Academy targets youth aged 13 to 35, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds or working in underserved communities. Its approach draws inspiration from global figures like Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi, encouraging participants to lead by building trust, listening, and promoting reconciliation.

As part of its expected outputs under the Go Blue Kenya Project's TCH component, the ULA trained 196 unemployed young people, including 93 women, in social entrepreneurship and values-based leadership, with the aim of helping them build sustainable livelihoods.



Some Ubuntu participants participate in a group activity

Since the programme's introduction in 2022, several milestones have been achieved. These include a "train-the-trainers" session, which introduced the Ubuntu methodology to trainers and participants from all 6 coastal counties. From these participants, 118 were able to create their own business and/or are currently self-employed. There was a digital tourism training for industry personnel, among other certified learning sessions. Each phase of the programme built on the core Ubuntu values of empathy, inclusion, and servant leadership.

From the skills gained through the programme, many youths started their own small businesses, while others became dependable community figures, actively contributing to local initiatives and setting an example for their peers. The programme was also rolled out at Taita Taveta University, reinforcing its reach through an academic anchor and expanding its impact within institutional settings.

CAMÕES, I.P. FIELD MISSIONS

by Camões, I.P.

Since 2021, Camões, I.P. has conducted 5 field missions under the TCH component of the Go Blue Kenya Project. The main aim of each mission is to visit grantee sites, review project progress, and assess the impact of the 16 initiatives supported by the TCH component.

These projects funded by the EU, co-funded and managed by Camões, I.P., and supported technically by STTA, span all 6 coastal counties: Kwale, Mombasa, Kilifi, Taita Taveta, Tana River, and Lamu.

The field missions are guided by Terms of Reference, developed in coordination with the mission team and local stakeholders. Their expected outcomes are aligned with the overall Go Blue project objectives, more specifically, with the goals of the TCH component to create enabling conditions for sustainable and inclusive employment in the region's tourism and cultural heritage sector.

During each mission, the TCH Project Manager from Camões, I.P. works closely with grantees to update project reports, document milestones, and identify areas for support.



Camões, I.P. team on their visit to the Kwale County Government offices

The Finance Expert addresses financial management issues on-site, ensuring accountability, resolving budget-related queries, and offering guidance on compliance and documentation. Alongside them, STTA provides hands-on technical support, helping grantees refine business plans, strengthen their monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and improve marketing and communication strategies.

Beyond site-level engagements, the Camões, I.P. team also holds meetings with the Directorates of Tourism in each county, with coordination support from JKP Secretariat. These discussions create a space for strategic alignment between grantee projects and county-level planning. They also provide a platform to monitor the progress of the inclusive employment in the region's tourism and cultural heritage sector.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS FOR TOURISM & CULTURAL HERITAGE

by Technical University of Mombasa, coordinated by Camões, I.P. – Portugal, in collaboration with JKP Secretariat

As part of efforts to unlock the full economic potential of Kenya's coastal region, a comprehensive Value Chain Analysis (VCA) is underway under the Go Blue Project's TCH component. The study spans the 6 Jumuiya counties — Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, Tana River, Lamu, and Taita Taveta, and seeks to strengthen the TCH value chains that underpin the region's blue economy.

The VCA will explore ways to diversify tourism offerings, promote sustainable job creation especially for youth and women and increase income opportunities for local communities.

The coastal region contributes nearly half of Kenya's tourism economy and draws about 65% of international visitors. While known for its beaches, the area is rich in cultural heritage, from UNESCO World Heritage Sites like Lamu Old Town and the Mijikenda Kaya Forests, to Swahili culture, traditional arts, and historic architecture. This study aims to reposition cultural and heritage tourism as a central driver of regional growth.

Using a combination of desk reviews, stakeholder consultations, site visits, and value chain mapping, the analysis will assess current gaps, identify opportunities for value addition, and propose business solutions that are inclusive, sustainable, and locally driven. It will also recommend strategies for marketing, infrastructure, governance, and environmental resilience.

Though the consultancy is in its early stages, the groundwork is being laid for a participatory and evidence-based process. The findings will feed into the Jumuiya 2030 strategy and provide concrete guidance for future investment, programming, and policy, ultimately enhancing the region's competitiveness as a culturally rich, globally attractive tourism destination.



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