

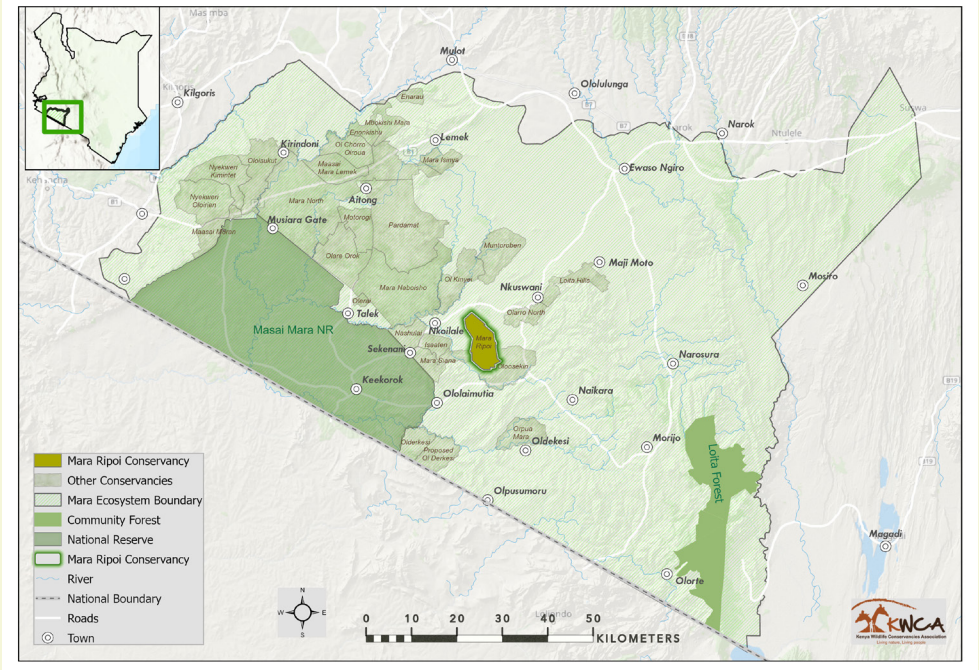
Site Assessment on Governance and Equity (SAGE), Mara Ripoi Conservancy.

Mara Ripoi Conservancy lies within the iconic Maasai Mara landscape in Southern Kenya. A critical wildlife corridor linking the Maasai Mara National Reserve to the Loita Hills and Loita Forest.

Mara Ripoi is one of Kenya's most biodiverse conservancies and a premier tourism destination. Its thriving wildlife populations-the Maasai giraffes, lions, cheetahs, elephants and other herbivores roam freely across its open plains. Established through a community land lease model, the conservancy receives benefits through lease fees, employment, education support, and pasture through improved grazing management

As a young conservancy, Mara Ripoi faces a myriad of governance challenges, including leadership wrangles, biodiversity threats such as bushmeat poaching, wildlife snaring, fencing, human–wildlife conflicts and livestock losses from wildlife diseases.

KWCA through the Scaling up Equitable Governance in Area-Based Conservation (SEGA) is supporting Mara Ripoi Conservancy to build its capacity on governance and equity by implementing SAGE to address the above threats.



Site Profile

Land size: 9,102.38 Ha

Year of Establishment: 2023

Registration Type: Limited company by guarantee

Zones/Clusters/Villages: 6

Ecosystem: Terrestrial-Savanna

No. of Landowners: 2,404

Governance Structure: 15 trustees elected by landowners from the 6 clusters.

Management: 3 Management, 33 Rangers.

Conservation Significance: Natural Wildlife Habitat. Hosts endangered species lions, cheetahs, giraffes, jackals, leopards.

KWCA
Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
Living nature, Living people

MARA RIPOI CONSERVANCY

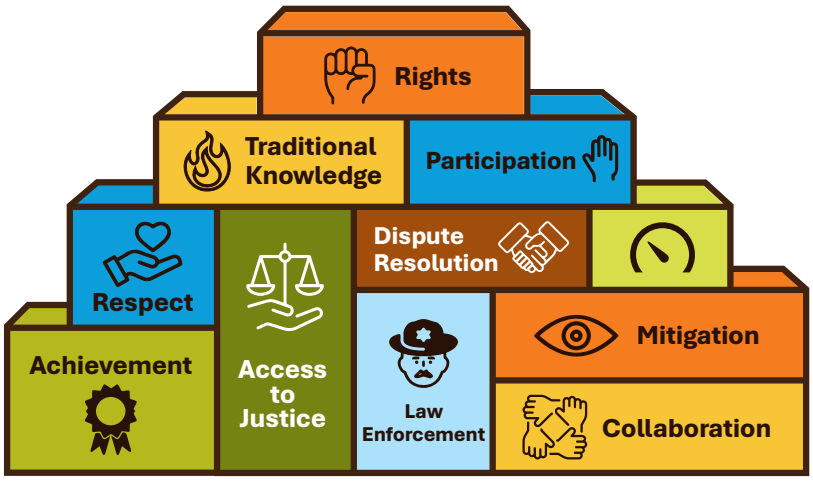
About SAGE

The Site-level Assessment for Governance and Equity (SAGE) is a participatory self-assessment tool that help actors to explore governance and equity at their sites in a structured and inclusive way. SAGE puts the people who know the site best-communities, managers, board members and other actors in the lead to reflect on how governance works in practice, identify strengths and weaknesses and use their shared understanding to inform action.

Early evidence shows SAGE strengthens local ownership of governance, improves information sharing and brings diverse perspectives into decision making.

SAGE assess governance and equity using a framework of 10 principles of effective and equitable governance as follows;

10 Principles of Effective and Equitable Governance



Steps undertaken through the SAGE Process



2. Assessment
(Co-facilitators Training, Actor Group Assessments, Data Collection, Synthesis Workshop & Report)



1. Preparation
(Training, Stakeholder Analysis, FPIC, Translation, Adoption)

Improved Governance



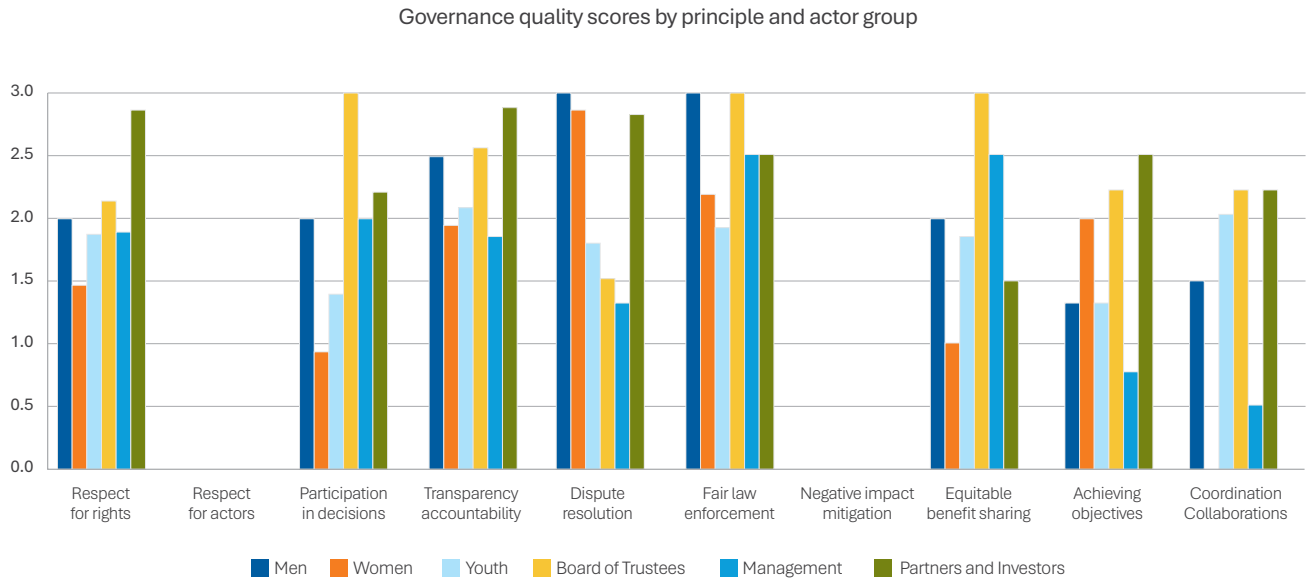
3. Action Prioritization
(Actions Review, Refinement and Action Planning)



4. Action Implementation
(Financial and Technical Support, Monitoring Progress)



Main SAGE Findings



The assessment identified significant gaps

- There is a lack of awareness among women and youth on their rights to information and participation in the conservancy decision-making processes. Formal participation is limited to cluster members who access the conservancy meeting points.
- The conservancy relies on by-laws to regulate grazing however, these rules are undocumented and only available to the board, management, and a few community members. These increases misunderstandings and conflicts between the youth and rangers, reinforcing perceptions of unfairness and inconsistent application of the by-laws. The management lacks the capacity to regulate grazing schedules and control of the livestock carrying capacity.
- There is evidence of conservation successes; high wildlife densities and calving of endangered species such as lions and cheetahs. However, the conservancy lacks essential wildlife monitoring tools and equipment, including efficient patrol vehicles, which limits rangers' ability to track wildlife and poaching activities.
- There is limited coordination among tourism partners, government and conservation partners on engagement with the conservancy management. Lack of structured coordination platforms and formalized arrangements limits support for and participation of women and other marginalized groups from partner supported initiatives.

Proposed Ideas for Action

- Establish a women forum to increase effective participation of women in conservancy decision making.
- Establishment of a bulk sms platform to increase timely and effective communication to members.
- Develop a grazing management plan and undertake sensitization sessions targeting the youth and herders on the existing grazing by-laws.
- Increase awareness on human rights based approaches and dispute resolution.
- Review, update and disseminate the conservancy management plan to all landowners as part of awareness creation.
- Seek partnerships to support rangers equipment including procuring wildlife monitoring systems and a ranger's patrol vehicle.
- Institutionalize regular multi-stakeholder coordination forums for the conservancy stakeholders to share updates and information of each partner's action and develop a joint action plan.

Impact

> For years, women rarely received information or attended any conservancy meetings. SAGE helped us understand our rights to participate in decision making. At the recently held AGM elections, more than 200 women attended, the highest number ever, and six women out of the 15 trustees competitively elected, up from just three appointed women in the previous board.

Sarah Lepore,
Conservancy Member

> SAGE helped us understand our gaps that we may never have thought about. We had unintentionally locked out women and youth from conservancy activities, our grazing plan was undocumented resulting in misunderstanding and conflicts and we lacked a clear conflict resolution process. SAGE gave us space to collectively listen to everyone's views and their solutions. As a result, we experienced a smooth leadership transition process during our last AGM reflecting maturity from both the leaders and communities.

Daniel Kaura, Mara Ripoi
Conservancy Manager







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