

# **The role of m-Meso Institutions in governance of community-based mangrove conservation in Zanzibar**

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In most developing countries, centralized institutional and governance systems often compromise the local arrangements for community-based conservation of natural resources. This ethnographic study was designed to assess the role of national and sub-national institutions in supporting community-based mangrove conservation in Zanzibar. Three state departments: Department of Forestry and Non-Renewable Natural Resources (DFNR), Department of Environment (DoE) and Department of Fisheries Development (DoFD) were studied. Primary data were collected through focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) and shadowing. Review of policies, laws and other instruments relevant to mangrove management was undertaken. The results show that departments experience in adequate funding, infrastructure, staff and expertise. Jurisdictional complexities coupled with weak institutional decentralization often results in conflicts in sectoral mandates. Variations in the organizational structure both vertical and horizontal is a challenge for communication and coordination to support collaborative arrangements in mangrove conservation. Mangroves are not clearly addressed as critical ecosystems in key policies and legislations. Existing collaborative arrangements such as Community Forest Management Agreements (CoFMAs), Shehia Fisheries Committees (SFCs) and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Committees provide opportunities that can adequately be grasped by meso institutions to leverage institutional, policy and legal reforms for better coordination of power relations, accountability and knowledge flow crosswise sectoral operations to enhance community-based conservation of mangrove ecosystems in Zanzibar.