



# AMBOSELE ECOSYSTEM TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN

2018 – 2023



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As one of the region's critical conservation landscapes, the Amboseli ecosystem encompasses roughly 5,700 km<sup>2</sup> that stretches across the Kenya-Tanzania border. With Kenya's Amboseli National Park as its epicenter – one of the country's most popular tourism parks – the system is dependent on the wider pastoral rangelands, and the long history of co-habitation between wildlife and Maasai necessitates a holistic conservation approach that integrates biodiversity and human livelihoods.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) was formed with the mission to secure the sustainable management of the Amboseli landscape. As a trust formed by and composed of community institutions, government representatives, and partner NGOs, AET is uniquely positioned to serve as a coordinating body to facilitate and mobilize the sustainable and participatory management of the Amboseli Ecosystem.

While these stakeholders' possess varying interests in the area, they all want to see a reduction in land fragmentation, degradation, and habitat loss across the Amboseli Ecosystem.

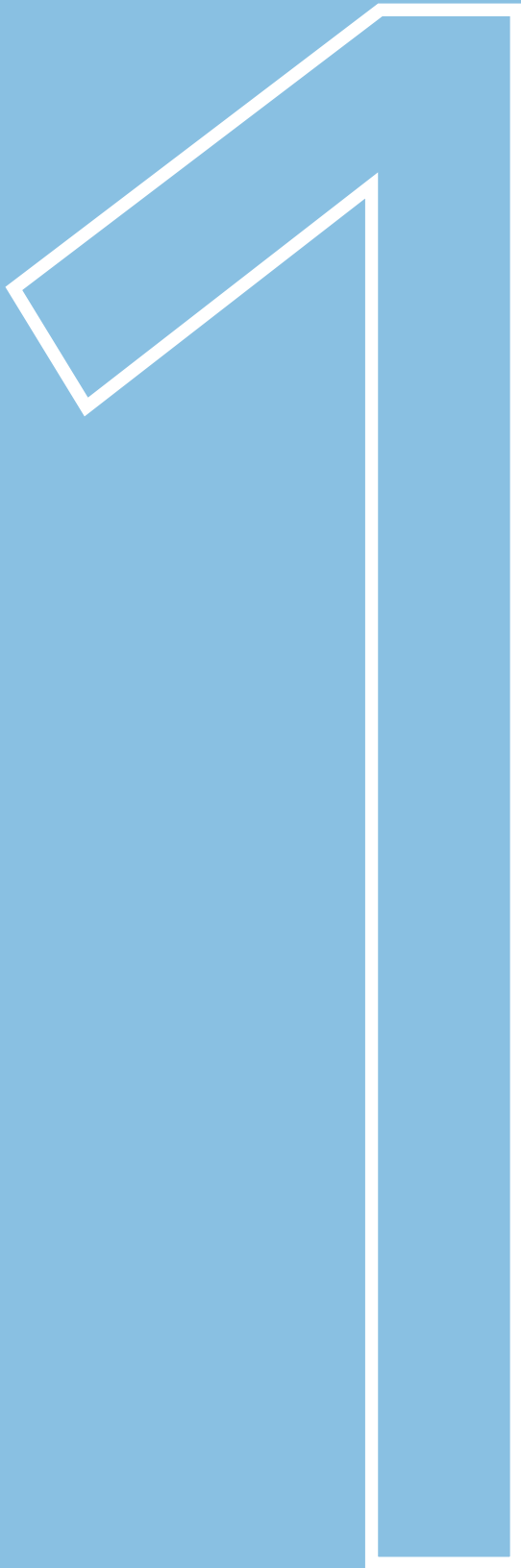
This strategy will guide AET's efforts to ensure an intact and thriving ecosystem that benefits both people and wildlife across the Amboseli landscape.



# 2018 – 2023 GOALS

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- GOAL 1:** Develop effective mechanisms for planning, stakeholder coordination, and collaboration across the Amboseli ecosystem.
- GOAL 2:** Strengthen and support local institutional capacity to manage land and resources and conserve landscapes
- GOAL 3:** Influence key policies, decisions, and governance processes at national and county level.
- GOAL 4:** Grow and strengthen AET into a high-performing organization capable of implementing this strategy and advancing its mission



CHAPTER ONE

# CONTEXT





## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

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The Amboseli ecosystem covers an area of approximately 5,700 km<sup>2</sup> stretching between Mt. Kilimanjaro, Chyulu Hills, Tsavo West National Park, and the Kenya-Tanzania border. Administratively, the ecosystem consists of Amboseli National Park and six surrounding group ranches: Kimana/Tikondo, Olgulului/Olararashi, Selengei, Mbirikani, Kuku, and Rombo. These Group Ranches are a mechanism for the roughly 85,000 mainly pastoralist families in the area to jointly own and manage their land. The arid/semi-arid ecosystem is rich in biodiversity, earning it international recognition as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Amboseli has a complex history characterized by the interaction between formalized conservation and Maasai pastoralist livelihoods. What was once a communally-managed landscape that supported the co-existence of Maasai pastoralists and wildlife, became an early colonial-era game reserve, then a district reserve meant to generate more local revenue, and finally a national park excluding Maasai from use and limiting benefit sharing. Today, Amboseli National Park is one of Kenya's most visited parks thanks to its proximity to Mount Kilimanjaro; its wildlife diversity, including an elephant population of roughly 1400; and the rich cultural heritage of the Maasai living just beyond the park boundaries.

While the Maasai live just outside of the park's borders, it is their land— comprising the vast majority of the the greater Amboseli ecosystem – that is critical for conservation and development purposes. In Kenya, 70% of wildlife is found outside of national parks and reserves, depending on community and private land for water, food, and for migratory habitat. At the same time, most tourism revenue in Kenya is generated inside national parks, providing few incentives for the people living with wildlife outside of the parks to protect it or the land it needs to survive .

The challenge for long-term conservation in the Amboseli system, as elsewhere in most of Kenya's key wildlife areas, is to maintain wildlife movements and other key ecosystem functions at the landscape scale.

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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In recent years, Amboseli has seen a breakdown of communal pastoral land tenure arrangements as well as changes in land use from livestock production to agriculture. In turn, the rangelands that both people and wildlife depend on in southern Kenya is increasingly fragmented, threatening the mobility of both livestock and wildlife.

The six group ranches surrounding the park have played an important role in keeping much of the landscape intact and open through joint ownership and management, yet the threat of subdivision is real and could have significant consequences for the ecosystem. Already one of the six group ranches has sub-divided its land into smaller holdings of 60 acres each, which undermines opportunities for communal management and use and breaks up the landscape. Further, there is growing pressure in the region from development activities and private interests such as roads, mining, extraction, and tourism, as well as a more general trend across the country in urban expansion.



Recognizing both the serious challenges facing the Amboseli ecosystem as well as the potential opportunities for integrating conservation-related interests with livelihood development, a group of government and non-government stakeholders, including representatives from communities and group ranches, joined together to develop a holistic management plan for the ecosystem. The 10-year Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan (2008-2018), focuses on ways to reduce fragmentation and degradation while providing incentives to keep land intact and settlements and infrastructure well-planned. It provides a framework for integrating the activities of various institutions and organizations living in and working across Amboseli, zoning the ecosystem into areas for certain types of land uses, and identifying key projects and programs needed to address prevailing challenges.



# AET - HISTORY AND TRACK RECORD

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## HISTORY

The Amboseli Ecosystem Trust (AET) was formed to coordinate and oversee the implementation of the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan (AEMP), and more broadly to promote coordination of stakeholder actions across this landscape. Formally established in 2009, AET is a trust that includes members from group ranches, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the county government of Kajiado, and a number of conservation organizations.

While AET was originally founded to coordinate the implementation of the AEMP, its identity and role has evolved, taking it in new directions beyond only the ecosystem plan.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1. AEMP GAZETEMENT:** Collaborated with communities, government and other stakeholders to gazette the AEMP in a legally binding document for the management of the Amboseli ecosystem – the first ever of its kind in Kenya.
- 2. STOPPED THE AMBOSELI RESORT CITY:** Mobilized stakeholders and used the AEMP to stop the development of a city at Meshanini that would have had detrimental impacts on wildlife and local pastoral livelihoods.
- 3. HALTING UNPLANNED AND DETRIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT:**
  - A.** Facilitated an environmental review of 36 development proposals along the Amboseli-Kimana road. 35 of these developments were stopped because of potential impact on the ecosystem.
  - B.** Facilitated the removal of a shantytown outside Kimana gate.
  - C.** Prevented a tarmac road planned to be developed through Amboseli and across the ecosystem that would have further fragmented the ecosystem.
- 4. CAPACITY BUILDING OF GROUP RANCHES:** AET has provided support to group ranches in the development of land management plans.
- 5. NONGOTIEK COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER:** AET has acquired one hundred acres of land that will be its base of operations and be developed into a resource center for Amboseli communities.

## SOME OF THE DATES RELEVANT TO AET'S GROWTH INCLUDE:

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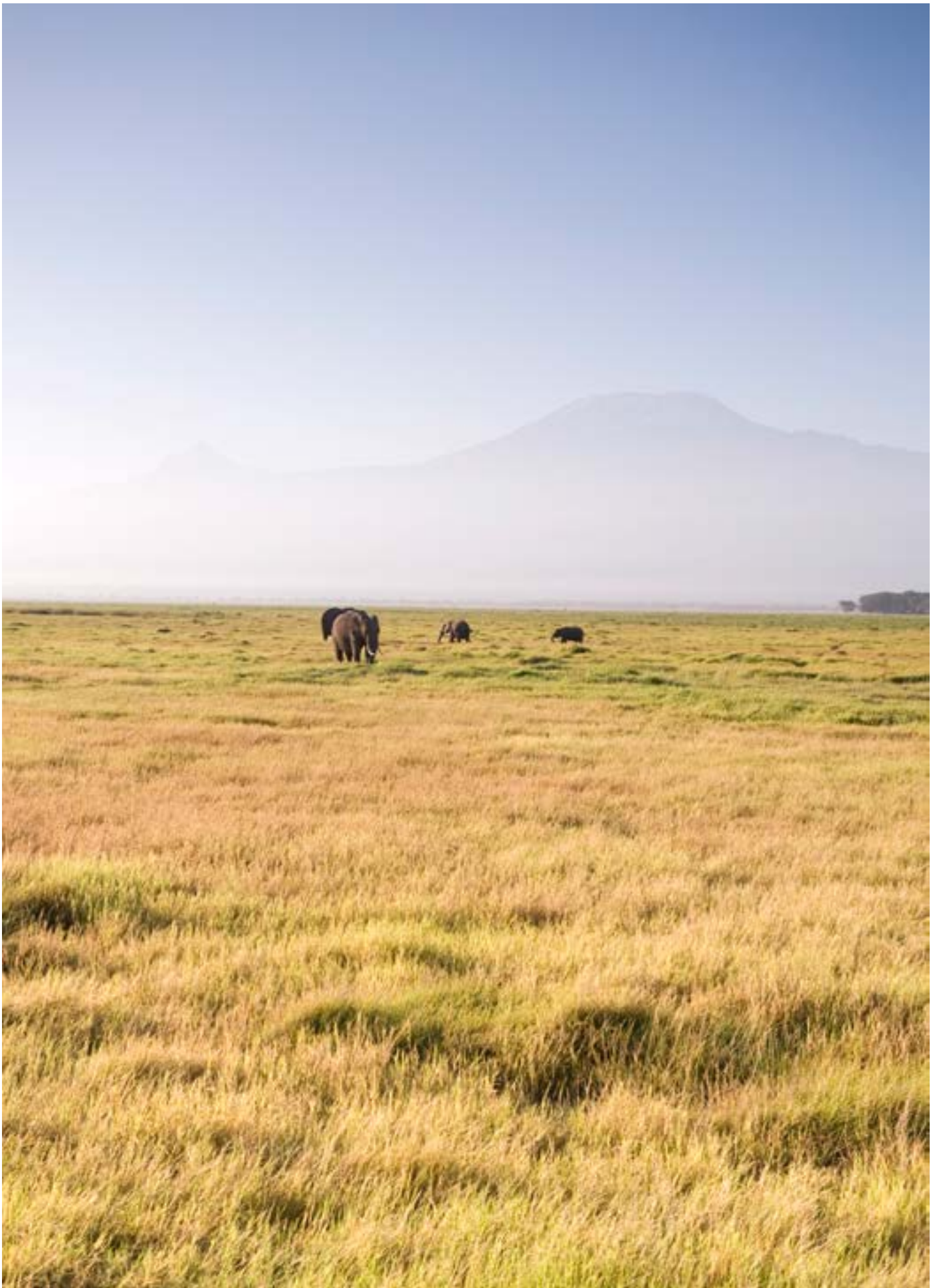
- 2008** Ten-year ecosystem management plan for Amboseli developed.
- 2009** AET established as a Trust.
- 2011** First review of the AEMP, highlighting key challenges and leading to a visit by the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) to discuss how development can be coordinated and guided by the ecosystem plan.
- 2012** AET's first year of operations, where among other activities, it explored the possibility of strengthening the AEMP through formal gazettelement.
- 2013** With the support of NEMA, a moratorium declared on new development in Amboseli until the gazettelement of the AEMP. AET required to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment as a key step towards gazettelement.
- 2014** Strategic Environmental Assessment completed and approved. Three-year activity plan for the implementation of the AEMP put in place. AET developed its first strategic plan based on the objectives of the AEMP.
- 2015** AEMP gazetted.
- 2017** Review of AET strategy and direction as AEMP comes to an end in 2018.



## CHAPTER TWO

# SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS: SHAPING AET'S DIRECTION







## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

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The following situational analysis provides important context that will shape AET's strategy. The organization should seek to build upon its strengths, address its challenges, optimize opportunities, and minimize and avoid risks.

### EXTERNAL RISKS

There are many competing interests in the Amboseli ecosystem, a lot of different actors, and a range of challenges placing pressure and demands on the ecosystem that threatens its viability and health.

- **WEAK GOVERNANCE:** The strength of management agreements such as the AEMP depend on strong governance organs and institutions that can enforce those agreements, and integrate feedback from stakeholders and processes on the ground.
- **DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE:** Development activities and private interests such as roads, mining and extraction, and urban expansion pose a threat to the integrity of the Amboseli ecosystem.
- **RANGELAND SUBDIVISION:** The subdivision of rangelands into smaller parcels that are then fenced, sold, or converted to other land uses severely fragments the ecosystem.
- **SEDENTARIZATION AND POPULATION GROWTH:** Pastoral sedentarization accompanied by population growth and a breakdown of mobility patterns fragments and degrades the landscape, limiting the space and mobility for livestock and wildlife.
- **LIMITED NATURAL RESOURCE BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES:** Where pastoralism does not provide enough livelihood incentives to maintain intact and well-managed land, or where community members are confined to smaller and smaller spaces, incentives must come from elsewhere. Benefits from wildlife are minimal, and often these do not trickle down to all community members, affecting tolerance and exacerbating conflict. This is contributing to the breakdown of traditional communal systems of land tenure and rangeland management.

- **HABITAT CONVERSION AND LAND-USE CHANGE:** Related to subdivision and sedentarization is a shift in land-use and the conversion of habitat as pastoralists engage in other activities or lease or sell that land to others (e.g. agriculture). The increase in boundaries (i.e. fences) leads to further fragmentation, and increases incidences of human-wildlife conflict.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE:** Increase in spatial and temporal variability and unpredictability, changing seasonal dynamics.
- **POLICIES AND REGULATIONS:** A number of new policies and regulations that are being developed such as the Community Land Act and the conservancy regulations, have the potential to either enable or hinder local-level engagement in natural resource governance and management.

## EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Amboseli and the collective interests living and working there offers an exceptional opportunity to both conserve biodiversity and support local livelihoods.

- **RICH ECOSYSTEM:** A diverse, charismatic ecosystem that attracts national, regional, and international attention.
- **PASTORALISM:** While pastoral livelihoods are rapidly changing, pastoralists' dependence on intact and healthy landscapes is compatible with large-scale ecosystem management. The goals of pastoralists and conservation can align and even reinforce each other.
- **GROWING COLLABORATION:** An increasing recognition that ecosystem-level challenges can only be addressed by engagement of diverse stakeholders and the pooling of resources. This principle underlies AET's creation and is central to its value proposition.
- **COMMUNITY GOODWILL:** In its short history, AET has represented and advocated for communities and there is a growing sense of trust and goodwill that can be built on going forward.

- **STRUCTURE OF AET:** The diverse stakeholders involved in AET, including community members, organizations, and government, provide a unique platform for collaboration, information sharing, and goal alignment.
- **PLANNING:** New and ongoing planning processes such as the renewal of the AEMP, group ranch land use and management plans, and county land-use and development plans present strong opportunities to shape agendas and resource allocation towards ecosystem management needs in Amboseli.
- **DEVOLUTION:** The process of devolving governance in Kenya has the potential to provide more opportunity for engagement and participation by local communities and groups like AET, and opportunities for shaping government priorities and resource allocation.
- **GROUP RANCHES:** Six of the seven Amboseli group ranches are still intact and subdivision has been put on hold. This provides cohesive land management units and key entry points for ecosystem management activities and community linkages. Intact ranches also maintain open landscapes for pastoralists and wildlife.
- **CHANGING POLICIES AND REGULATIONS:** Ongoing processes to develop policies and regulations related to community land tenure, conservancies, and wildlife and natural resource management present the opportunity to shape these in ways that respond to and help address the needs for effective community-based natural resource management.
- **TOURISM AND RESEARCH PRESENCE:** A long history of tourism and research presence raises the profile of Amboseli, provides underlying knowledge useful to ecosystem management, and presents the opportunity for engagement and collaboration with diverse stakeholders.
- **TRANSBOUNDARY COLLABORATION:** Spanning the Kenya-Tanzania border, Amboseli is critical to regional wildlife conservation and sustainable ecosystem management. This provides the opportunity for diverse partnerships and a local-level actor within broader goals.

## INTERNAL STRENGTHS

AET's successes over the last few years in maintaining ecosystem integrity and facilitating local capacity building illustrates its growing recognition in Amboseli and across wider circles. This is reflective of a number of organizational strengths:

- **ROOTED:** With many staff and board members coming from the region, AET has grown from within Amboseli and represents and is inclusive of a range of stakeholders, including community members and group ranches.
- **PLANNING AND COORDINATION:** Positioned as an intermediary between diverse stakeholders, AET has a unique opportunity to plan and coordinate among different interests and take a leadership role in collaborative processes such as the renewal of the AEMP.
- **MOBILIZATION AND ADVOCACY:** In its representative, diverse, and inclusive structure, AET has legitimacy across a number of circles. It can build on these relationships and catalyze engagement around critical issues, such as countering development that may have detrimental impacts on the ecosystem.
- **REPRESENTATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING:** While AET is rooted in Amboseli, it acts as a bridge between local communities and wider issues and processes. It effectively is a representative conservation organization for Amboseli, illustrated by its position as a regional association under the wider Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) umbrella. This bridging position enables AET to build the capacity of local-level institutions while also shaping wider processes and policies that will impact Amboseli.

## INTERNAL CHALLENGES

AET is a relatively young and lean organization that has a big mandate. In turn, it faces a number of challenges at the organizational level, including:

- **COLLABORATION:** While a key strength is AET's coordination potential, the diversity of interests, projects, and stakeholders involved in Amboseli can create a collaboration challenge, especially at the ground level, where many groups are involved with the same communities.
- **CAPACITY AND RESOURCES:** With a small staff of three, AET is under-resourced in the goals it hopes to accomplish.
- **AUTONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF AET:** AET has been incubated and developed within the African Conservation Center, but as it grows and develops a wider mandate, it is overly dependent on this single organization for funding and support. AET is at the point in its development where it needs to further develop its own identity and autonomy as an independent organization. This is financial, administrative, and in terms of implementation.
- **STRATEGY AND DIRECTION:** AET's previous strategy and activities were oriented very closely to the AEMP. As the AEMP comes to an end in 2018, the AET faces the challenge of considering its own strategy independently of the AEMP while future ecosystem plans may overlap with aspects of organizational strategy.
- **COMMUNICATION AND RECOGNITION:** The significant work AET has accomplished and its central role in the Amboseli ecosystem is little known in Kenya and beyond.
- **AEMP MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION:** Since the implementation of the AEMP has been done by diverse organizations and stakeholders, it has been challenging for AET to monitor implementation and impact. There needs to be an improved system of monitoring and tracking the plan without exerting pressure or control on the partner stakeholders.
- **TECHNICAL EXPERTISE:** In the role of providing capacity building to local institutions (group ranches, conservancies, community game scout association) AET needs certain technical skills and knowledge.

## CHAPTER THREE

# PURPOSE, VALUE PROPOSITION & IMPACT MODEL



# VISION

A healthy and thriving Amboseli ecosystem with intact landscapes that link community livelihoods and wildlife conservation.



## MISSION

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To secure intact and healthy landscapes that support local livelihoods and conservation.

## VALUES

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ACROSS ALL OF ITS WORK, AET IS GUIDED BY THESE CORE VALUES:

**COLLABORATION:** To foster an inclusive culture where communities, government, and other ecosystem partners are participating and engaged.

**TRANSPARENCY:** To be trusted by different stakeholders, accessible, and work openly.

**EQUALITY:** To work for a just society where diverse views and backgrounds are respected and included.

**DYNAMISM:** An ability to grow and change.

**ADVOCACY:** To work on behalf of the Amboseli ecosystem and those that live there.

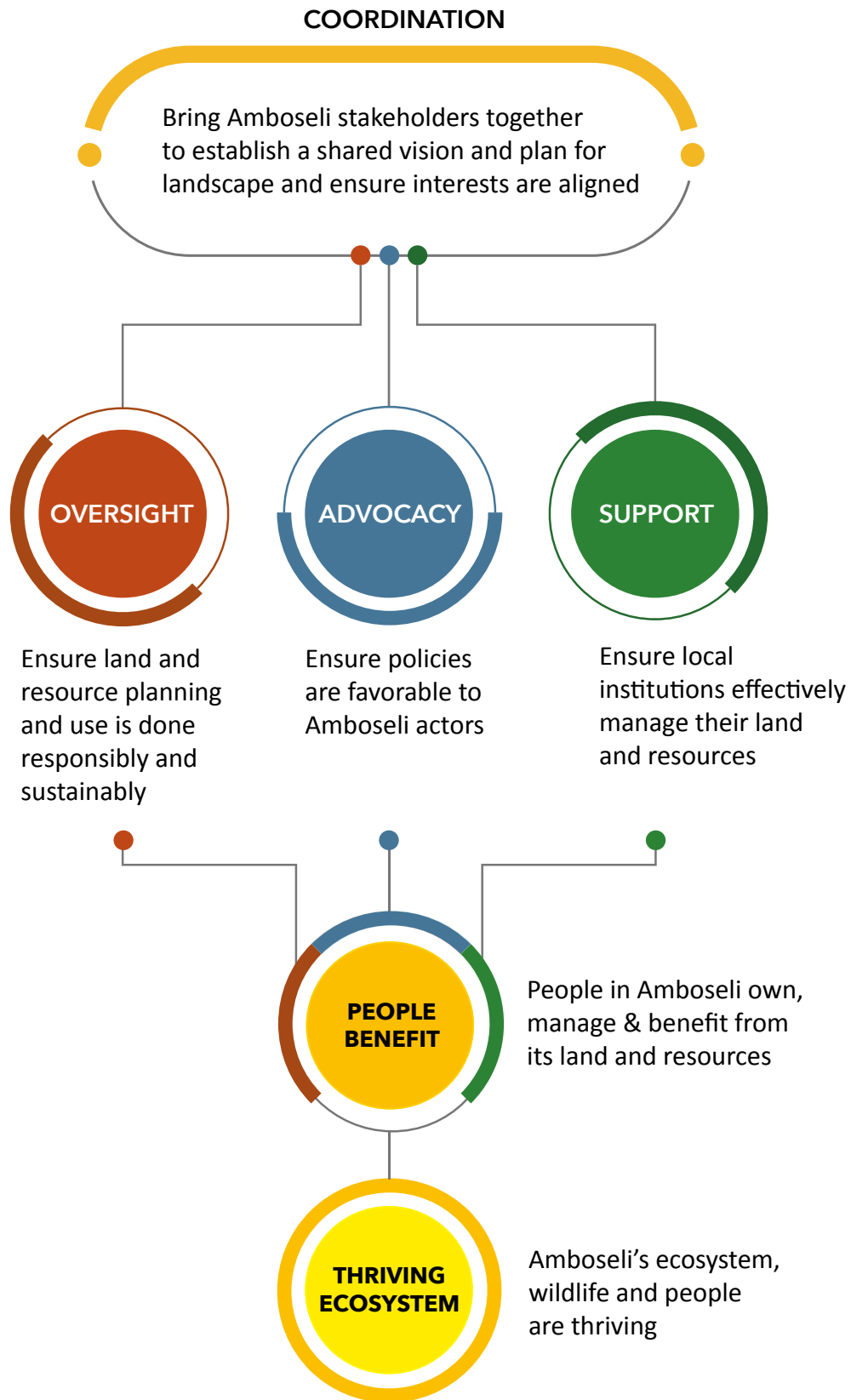
**FAIRNESS:** To believe in legal rights and processes.

## VALUE PROPOSITION & IMPACT MODEL

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As a trust formed by and composed of community institutions, government representatives, and partner NGOs, AET is uniquely positioned to serve as a coordinating body to facilitate and mobilize the sustainable and participatory management of the Amboseli Ecosystem. While these stakeholders' possess varying interests in the area, they all want to see **a reduction in land fragmentation, degradation, and habitat loss across the Amboseli Ecosystem**. Coordination across the landscape will be key to achieving this outcome, and AET will take on this role ensuring harmony in activities, plans, and agreements, such as the AEMP. AET also acts as a critical advocacy and information link across communities, organizations, and government.

# IMPACT MODEL



## AET ACHIEVES IMPACT THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

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### **COORDINATION:**

To provide a link between different stakeholders in the Amboseli system, ensuring interests and actions are aligned, coordinated, and in the best interest of local resident communities and the ecosystem's sustainability.

### **ADVOCACY:**

To be a 'mouthpiece' ensuring Amboseli community and conservation interests and needs are considered in national and county level discussions and policy decisions.

### **SUPPORT:**

To facilitate or directly support local institutions to effectively manage their land and resources by building capacity, providing resources, and assisting with technical support.

### **OVERSIGHT:**

To serve as a 'watchdog,' ensuring land use planning and management as well as potential investment and development in the area is done responsibly and sustainably and seeks to keep the ecosystem intact.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRATEGIC  
FRAMEWORK



The following strategic framework will guide AET's work and efforts over the next five years in service of its mission.

## **GOAL 1: DEVELOP EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS FOR PLANNING, STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION, AND COLLABORATION ACROSS THE AMBOSELI ECOSYSTEM.**

AET seeks to promote more collaborative land and resource management across the Amboseli ecosystem. By bringing together local communities, partner organizations, government, and other stakeholders, AET strives to catalyze impact through collaborative planning, knowledge sharing, and improved coordination of work on the ground. A key part of achieving this goal will be to ensure the participatory and inclusive development, implementation, and monitoring of a new and effective Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan (AEMP).

**STRATEGY 1.1:** Strengthen the effectiveness of ecosystem scale planning as a tool for regulating and guiding land use decisions and coordinating stakeholder interventions.

- Develop and gazette the new AEMP
  - Analyze and assess previous AEMP, including successes and what could have been done better
  - Develop an outline plan for developing the new AEMP
  - Fundraise for the process
  - Identify and engage the consultant who will lead the process
  - Ensure that types of development not covered under previous AEMP are well captured in the next version
  - Develop the AEMP and publicly validate
  - Sign by relevant stakeholders (group ranches, KWS, AET, ATGSA)
  - Begin process of gazettelement
- Establish a monitoring process for AEMP that systematically tracks goals and progress
  - Ensure an M&E plan is outlined in the AEMP, including clear goals and targets, and progress indicators
  - Review and evaluate the implementation of the AEMP every three years

**STRATEGY 1.2:** Establish and facilitate effective forums for stakeholder coordination and collaboration

- Identify what consultative meetings should occur annually
  - Create committees and/or working groups to tackle key issues
  - Establish a clear and documented structure for holding these meetings, with responsible personnel and an outline of meeting plans and goals.
  - Organize and hold meetings based on the topics and needs identified (e.g. board, human-wildlife conflict, etc.)
  - Document and share information, key decisions, and action points from meetings

## **GOAL 2: STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO MANAGE LAND AND RESOURCES, AND, CONSERVE LANDSCAPES**

The long-term sustainability of Amboseli depends on intact, productive landscapes that support both biodiversity and local livelihoods. In particular, this means collaborative management that spans the national park, community-owned group ranches, and private land holdings. It also means ensuring real benefits get to people involved in sustainably managing the land. As such, there is a need for collaborative and dynamic approaches to land use planning across multiple levels, including: maintaining connectivity through corridors, promoting landscape level conservation on community land through establishing institutions such as conservancies, promoting economic and social development opportunities, and restoring degraded land and habitat.

While AET will mainly serve as a knowledgeable facilitator and coordinator in this process – supporting the capacity development of local institutions – there may be times when it identifies a gap in stakeholder implementation and may need to fill that role itself or identify a partner to take it on.

**STRATEGY 2.1:** Facilitate group ranches and conservancies to effectively plan and manage their land

- Support all Amboseli group ranches to develop land-use and grazing management plans that integrate with the AEMP
  - Help complete the Eselenkei and Mbirikani land-use plans
  - Commission and support the Rombo land-use plan
  - Ensure that all group ranches have land-use and grazing management plans by 2023
  - Develop evaluation process to measure whether land-use plans are being implemented
  - Ensure group ranches and partners are effectively implementing these plans
  - Oversee enforcement of group ranch management plans, in collaboration with group ranch committees, as part of larger AEMP
- Build the capacity and effectiveness of conservancies
  - Complete a conservancy status report, articulating the current state, needs, and compliance levels of the various conservancies within Amboseli
  - Build community awareness on conservancy regulations and enforcement
- Create a program to educate communities on conservancy functions and potential benefits to ensure expectations are realistic
  - Ensure that all conservancies have valid conservancy management plans as outlined in the Wildlife Act 2013, and provide support to develop plans where they don't exist
  - Help fast-track implementation and enforcement of conservancy management plans
  - Verify that any proposed conservancies are in line with the AEMP
- Develop an overarching ecosystem restoration plan, and ensure local institutions (group ranches and conservancies) have the capacity to implement
  - Facilitate the restoration of 10 sq km of grassland (through grazing committees in three group ranches—Eselenkei, Mbirikani, and Olgulului)
  - Facilitate the restoration of 5 sq km of woodland (through grazing committees in three group ranches—Eselenkei, Mbirikani, and Olgulului)



- Maintain and protect migratory corridors
  - Facilitate data collection and stakeholder input to develop a map of migratory corridors within the group ranches and across the ecosystem
  - Ensure proposed corridor boundaries are clear and approved through community consultation
  - Complete a survey to identify any development ongoing in these areas and to document potential approaches for securing these corridors
  - Engage with relevant government institutions that can support in securing corridors
  - Ensure that conservancies and corridor areas are well communicated, including effective and visible signage
  - Through ATGSA, to enforce any rules and regulations agreed by landowners with regard to habitat protection and securing of livestock and wildlife corridors within the ecosystem

**STRATEGY 2.2:** Facilitate agreements between investors and community

- Develop standards and systems to ensure fair interactions and dealings between investors and communities
  - Develop a framework for assessing and engaging with investors (both tourism and business), and a process for establishing contractual agreements
  - Ensure agreements between investors and community receive adequate professional review to ensure that maximum benefits are directed to local community rather than flowing out of ecosystem
  - Develop mediation process for managing conflict between investors and local communities

**STRATEGY 2.3:** Support natural resource related enterprises

- Explore opportunities for sustainable enterprise development
  - Identify areas feasible for tourism enterprises and fit these into planning processes
  - Identify eco-friendly income generating activities, and complete a stakeholder mapping process of who is engaged in and supporting these activities
  - Identify a collaborative process for scaling up these activities through stakeholders

#### **STRATEGY 2.4:** Support community education programs to improve literacy

- Explore opportunities to develop and enhance education programs in Amboseli
  - Carry out stakeholder mapping of who already supports education and assess their interest in working in the Amboseli ecosystem
  - Identify opportunities for expansion of a children’s education program (in partnership with KWS and other local partners) that includes environmental film screenings, park visits, and other relevant activities
  - Engage the Ministry of Social Services to support adult education through the stakeholder frameworks

### **GOAL 3: INFLUENCE KEY POLICIES, DECISIONS, AND GOVERNANCE PROCESSES AT NATIONAL AND COUNTY LEVEL.**

A number of new policies are in development that AET will engage on behalf of its stakeholders. It will play an active role in shaping these policies to ensure they include community views, and will communicate their meaning to its stakeholders. Some of these include the new Wildlife Policy and the corresponding regulations that will guide its implementation (such as those guiding conservancy development and management), as well as legislation like the Community Land Act that have the potential to impact pastoral livelihoods and resource tenure. At the county level important processes are also occurring that AET will influence to better reflect ecosystem planning and conservation needs, such as County Integrated Development Plans of which land-use management plans are a critical component. As a regional representative to the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, AET has a strong platform and position to engage in these processes.

#### **STRATEGY 3.1:** Policy advocacy and mobilization

- Identify policies and regulations needing input and hold stakeholder forums to discuss amendments
  - Propose amended document to relevant bodies.
  - Engage a legal expert through the KWCA umbrella to operationalize.

- Lobby the relevant parliamentary committee.
- Work to harmonize policies and legislation
- Ensure AET is represented in the county government’s relevant committees that deal with land use planning, wildlife management, and conservation

## **GOAL 4: GROW AND STRENGTHEN AET INTO A HIGH-PERFORMING ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING THIS STRATEGY AND ADVANCING ITS MISSION**

AET is a small organization, with only three full-time staff, and in order to operationalize its goals over the next three years it needs to grow the internal capacity and effectiveness of the organization. It needs to focus on growing its management and leadership capacity by identifying key staff needs and growing the relevant skills, establishing a communication strategy that provides more visibility and shares the unique work it is doing while mobilizing stakeholders, become more effective at fundraising and financial management, having relevant technical knowledge and skills related to its goals, and improving its infrastructure and resources in order to work effectively.

### **STRATEGY 4.1:** Increase AET’s management and leadership capacity

- Recruit and grow the skills of key staff. Priorities include:
  - Bring on a dedicated communications and fundraising staff member
  - Bring on team members as necessary to support development of Amboseli conservancies, and improved land management within the ecosystem

### **STRATEGY 4.2:** Develop and implement a strong communication strategy

- Effectively communicate its work and impacts
  - Develop a strategic communication system, reflective of its various target audiences (e.g. local communities, ecosystem stakeholders, broader Kenya stakeholders, and the wider international conservation and development community).

**STRATEGY 4.3:** Effective human-resource and financial management systems are in place and help the organization stand on its own

- AET aims to become more independent financially, with the internal skills and capacity to manage its own financial resources and become less reliant on partner organizations that have been supporting it.
  - Develop its in-house financial management capacity by recruiting relevant skill sets (certified public accountant).
  - Develop financial management policy document, including audit schedule and procedure
  - Develop human resource policy document
  - Establish and secure a core budget for daily operations.

**STRATEGY 4.4:** Enhance AET’s technical knowledge and skills to effectively support its capacity-building work.

- In its support to build the capacity of local institutions such as group ranches and conservancies, AET will need some specific technical and knowledge skill-sets that will effectively help these institutions plan and manage their resources.
  - Enhance legal knowledge to strengthen AET’s ability to engage in planning frameworks such as the AEMP and county-level plans, and support its work in advocacy and policy harmonization.
  - Enhance its land-use planning and resource management skills so that AET can be an asset to local institutions as they plan and manage their resources, as well as ensuring harmonization across the ecosystem.
  - Develop project management skills internally among its staff, increasing their ability to manage and execute grants and projects.

**STRATEGY 4.5:** Improve infrastructure and resources to effectively carry out its work

- AET functions in a tough field environment that puts a lot of strain on infrastructure such as vehicles and equipment.
  - An assessment of current equipment and infrastructure and identifying its needs to achieve the goals set out in this strategy.
  - Expanding its vehicle and transport fleet.
  - Establishing a plan for the development of the resource center, along with various equipment and infrastructure needs.

**STRATEGY 4.6:** Establish Community Resource Center and Info Hub

- Develop a clear plan and purpose for the Center and Hub
  - Identify resource and infrastructure needs
  - Build and equip the center
  - Open and operationalize
  - Relocate AET activities to the center, which will be the operational AET headquarters

## IMPLEMENTATION

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### KEY TO IMPLEMENTING THIS STRATEGY WILL BE TO PRIORITIZE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1.** Gain stakeholder support for AET's strategic direction, ensuring the strategy is owned and supported by the entire Trust
- 2.** Identify near-term targets (2018).
- 3.** Develop an actionable work plan for 2018 to achieve those targets.
- 4.** Gain clarity around AET's resourcing needs and options to support this strategy and ensure creation of annual budgets aligned with AET's work plans.
- 5.** Develop a monitoring and evaluation system based on these goals and targets that will provide data about impact as well as feed into any necessary revisions of this plan.
- 6.** Place an emphasis on strategies in Goal 4, developing a clear plan to build up AET's team ensuring it has the resources and skills it needs to be an independent organization.

## Board of Trustees

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