The Blue Economy

Bahati, a client of the BlueBiz program, at Uyumbo Beach in Kenya after picking up plastic waste from the seashore. (Image: TechnoServe / Ruth Epwoka)

QUICK FACTS

3 billion
people are dependent on the ocean for their livelihoods

$2.5 trillion
Amount coastal and marine-based industries contribute to the global economy each year

WHY IT MATTERS

Over 3 billion people are dependent on the ocean for their livelihoods. Coastal and marine-based industries contribute $2.5 trillion to the global economy each year. Coastal communities hold the power to protect, manage and restore marine environments through sustainable fishing practices, alternative livelihoods and enterprises that sustainably use and regenerate aquatic resources. These communities are also the most vulnerable to climate change and often lack the necessary capacity and resources to adapt and build resilience. The loss of biodiversity in coastal ecosystems significantly impacts the blue economy by reducing the availability of marine resources for fisheries and tourism, resulting in decreased income and job losses.

TECHNOSERVE'S APPROACH

Our teams on the ground are working closely with local communities, enterprising individuals, businesses, and governments in Africa, Latin America, and India to support a sustainable blue economy for climate mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity conservation. TechnoServe utilizes its decades of experience supporting entrepreneurial individuals to start and grow blue micro- and small-enterprises, build the capacity of existing blue entrepreneurs to expand their businesses, and analyze opportunities in the value chain for their environmental and economic potential.

TechnoServe recognizes the need to also improve local policies (such as fishing limits and locations) and the need to build the capacity of community groups to protect and restore coastal ecosystems and marine areas. We partner with local and international conservation organizations to combine complementary skill sets and develop holistic project designs that leverage market opportunities for blue economy development while improving the enabling environment for ecosystem protection and restoration.

*Sorting plastics at KIC Cleaners in Nigeria
(Image: TechnoServe)*

BLUEBIZ | MASTERCARD FOUNDATION | KENYA | 2023-2027

BlueBiz is creating pathways to dignified, fulfilling work for young people in Kenya's coastal communities by responding to the challenges they face when starting and growing blue businesses. We partner with five local organizations to facilitate capacity-building and enhance business opportunities. BlueBiz provides technical assistance, training, and access to finance to seaweed farming, recycling, and waste management MSMEs. By strengthening MSMEs' capacity to adapt to changing market conditions and adopt sustainable practices, the program contributes to the long-term development of Kenya's SME sector.

RESTORING FISHERIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN LAKE MALAWI (REFRESH) | USAID | MALAWI | 2019-2024

TechnoServe is facilitating the establishment and growth of conservation enterprises that provide alternative livelihoods to fishing in Lake Malawi, creating opportunities for women to enter the local market. These enterprises include a diverse range of regenerative agribusinesses, eco-tourism operators (generating funds for the National Park's conservation activities), and businesses in the fish value chain, such as solar fish drying, fish processors, and sustainable fishing input providers. Using a business accelerator model and an Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management approach, we supported 5,000 enterprises to develop and implement growth plans that counter unsustainable practices. The percentage of income from alternative sources among fishing communities moved from 51% to 55%. Regenerative agribusinesses around the lake benefit the surroundings, including restoring 234 hectares of degraded land.

CARGILL RED SEAWEED LIVELIHOODS & SUSTAINABILITY | CHILE | 2024

TechnoServe supports Cargill in its algae value chain including traceability, good cultivation/harvest/post-harvest practices, improvement of farmers' living and working conditions, support to communities, and environmental preservation. TechnoServe is developing and adapting a seaweed collector training program to promote regenerative best practices and improve seaweed yields. We will also work with project partners to conduct a digital messaging campaign to promote the adoption of good safety measures and sustainable seaweed harvesting practices nationwide.

NIGERIA PLASTIC SOLUTIONS ACTIVITY (NPSA) | USAID & COCA-COLA FOUNDATION | NIGERIA | 2024 - 2027

NPSA tackles the critical challenge of plastic waste management in Nigeria through innovative recycling solutions. The project will recover approximately 49,000 metric tons of plastic waste in Nigeria.

NPSA will also upscale the collection capacity of over 24 aggregators and 9,500 collectors. In addition, the program aims to create over 10,000 green jobs, driving circularity in plastic waste management and promoting a cleaner, healthier environment.

BLUE ECONOMY STUDIES
Kenya & Zanzibar | International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association | 2021

TechnoServe conducted blue economy studies in Kenya and Zanzibar to identify activities within priority value chains with potential to increase income and positively impact gender equality, inclusiveness, and climate and ocean biodiversity. In Kenya, we identified seaweed farming, sea cucumber farming, and finfish farming as key opportunities. In Zanzibar, we supported the government in developing a roadmap to have the leading Blue Economy fisheries sector. We selected three priority value chains that will support the livelihoods of 150,000 households, generate beach-level revenue of $4M, and a broader sector-wide value of $12M.

Mozambique, Madagascar, Comoros And Tanzania | International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Mission Inclusion | 2023-2024

We carried out blue value chain studies as part of the Regenerative Seascapes Program in Mozambique, Madagascar, Comoros, and Tanzania. The studies aimed to identify nature-based value chains within specific seascapes, considering their potential for biodiversity conservation, climate mitigation and adaptation, market viability, as well as barriers that may hinder the involvement of women and youth. Our recommendations identify opportunities for attracting investment and emphasize strategies for fostering inclusive impact within these sectors in terms of expanding initiatives that positively influence people, climate, and biodiversity.