

Amboseli Integrated Master Plan Initiative

Kajiado-Amboseli Vision 2050:
Creating Opportunity for People and Nature



LIVESTOCK AND GIRAFFES GRAZING IN AMBOSELI NATIONAL PARK

The Amboseli ecosystem is one of Africa's most iconic landscapes, home to globally significant wildlife—including the world-famous elephant populations that have been studied for over 50 years, making them among the best-researched wild elephants on Earth. Known for their impressive tusks and complex social structures, these elephants have become global symbols of conservation—and they share this land with the Maasai pastoralist communities who have lived alongside them for generations. Since the 1970s, Amboseli has served as a living example of community-engaged conservation. AWF's historical involvement helped pioneer community conservancies and shape national policy on inclusive conservation governance.

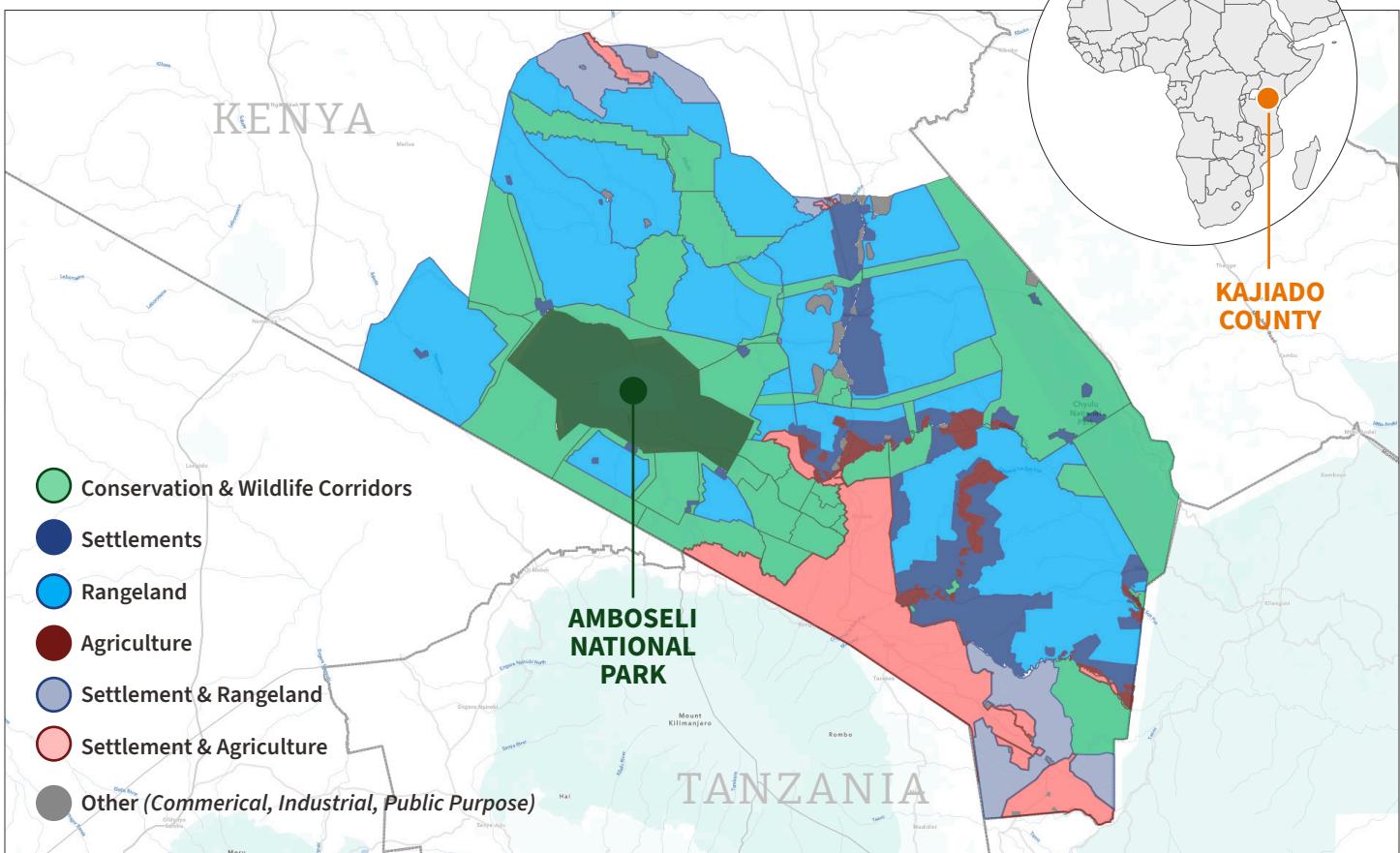
In June 2024, the President of Kenya issued a directive initiating a formal pathway for Amboseli National Park to be transferred from the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) to the County Government of Kajiado, with a Cabinet-

appointed transition committee tasked with developing operational guidelines and public participation forums to gather community input and ensure an inclusive, transparent transition process.

AWF was then invited to partner with the County Government of Kajiado to develop the Amboseli Ecosystem Integrated Master Plan (AEIMP)—a comprehensive blueprint that aligns ecological integrity with economic opportunity. This multi-stakeholder initiative seeks to guide land-use planning, attract sustainable investment, and ensure equitable development rooted in African leadership.

In July 2025, the Cabinet formally approved the handover, making Kajiado the first county in Kenya to assume management of a national park, while KWS continues to oversee wildlife protection and ensure compliance with national standards.

Kajiado County Land Use



Why a Master Plan Now?

The Amboseli landscape faces mounting pressures:

- Expanding settlements, unsustainable and incompatible land conversion are fragmenting habitats.
- Human-wildlife conflict is rising due to shrinking dispersal space.
- There are competing land uses in the ecosystem
- Climate change is intensifying resource scarcity and disrupting traditional pastoralist systems.
- Economic opportunities remain limited outside of tourism, which itself is vulnerable to shocks.

The Amboseli Ecosystem Integrated Master Plan addresses these by:

- Guiding land-use zoning and tenure clarity to protect corridors and reduce fragmentation.
- Identifying diversified value chains—such as dairy and meat processing—as engines of local livelihoods.
- Promoting infrastructure and education investments that align with conservation.
- Embedding benefit-sharing, transparency, and inclusive governance at every level.



Key Components of the Master Plan

Land Use Planning: Zoning that secures conservation areas, migration corridors, and buffers while safeguarding pastoralism and regulated agriculture.

Economic Diversification: Support for SMEs and value chains in livestock, dairy, tourism, and conservation-compatible enterprises.

Infrastructure Investment: Planning for roads, digital access, healthcare, water access, and vocational education centers.

Ecological Connectivity: Strengthening and protecting community conservancies and elephant migration corridors.

Community-Led Development: Policies and mechanisms for equitable benefit-sharing, FPIC, and community capacity-building and improved governance.



Community Participation and Multi-Stakeholder Engagement

- Over 100 stakeholders, including local landowners, group ranches, youth, women, and private sector representatives, have been engaged.
- The process is coordinated by the County Government with AWF as a technical facilitator.
- A transition committee is in place to guide the governance shift, with provisions for shared management models.

Economic Significance

Based on the 2023 Amboseli Ecosystem Economic Impact Survey, the ecosystem generates an estimated KES 3.6 billion annually through tourism, livestock, and ecosystem services. However, communities receive limited direct benefit.

- Annual Economic Output: Approx. USD 55 million
- Tourism: Generates USD 26 million annually and supports 3,100 direct and indirect jobs
- Livestock: Core livelihood for over 80% of households; ecosystem supports 380,000 livestock units
- Dairy Sector: Growing formal and informal dairy economy, valued at over USD 9 million
- Conservation Infrastructure: 23 community-owned conservancies, over 10 operational lodges, more than 10 active NGOs

The Amboseli Ecosystem Integrated Master Plan is designed to bridge the disconnect between ecological value and community benefit by ensuring:

- Local participation in tourism and conservation enterprises
- Market access for livestock and dairy producers
- Integration of natural capital into county development planning
- Improved participatory decision-making in land use planning and governance



Looking Ahead

The Amboseli Master Plan offers a model for African-led, landscape-scale conservation that integrates biodiversity, economic resilience, and community leadership. It will serve as a reference point for donors, investors, and policymakers seeking to support holistic conservation approaches that are rooted in local ownership and long-term sustainability.

AWF's Legacy in Amboseli

AWF has worked in the Amboseli landscape for over five decades, shaping conservation through lasting partnerships and locally led models:

