

## POLICY BRIEF

# Towards Gender-Transformative Blue Economy Governance in Tanzania

*Addressing Structural Inequalities in the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) and the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy (2022)*

Prepared by: Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT-T) under ReSea Project

## I. THE POLICY CHALLENGE

Tanzania's blue economy spanning fisheries, aquaculture, seaweed farming, marine tourism, and maritime transport holds transformative potential for employment creation, food security, and climate-resilient growth. Yet a systematic gender analysis of the two principal governance frameworks reveals a critical misalignment between policy aspiration and institutional practice.

The Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) and the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy (2022) both acknowledge women's roles in coastal economies, yet neither provides enforceable representation quotas, gender-responsive financing instruments, sex-disaggregated monitoring requirements, or protection mechanisms against documented forms of exploitation in blue economy supply chains. Women who constitute approximately 80% of seaweed and sea cucumber farmers in Zanzibar alone (Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Pemba, 2025) remain concentrated in the lowest-value segments of marine value chains while men dominate licensing, governance, and capital-intensive activities.

### Evidence from Community Consultations (Pemba & Tanga, November 2025):

*"Women's participation in blue economy has increased, yet women continue to be excluded from more profitable sectors due to cultural norms, gender-related barriers, and gaps within guiding frameworks particularly the absence of clear sanctions for failing to prioritise women's inclusion." Coordinator, Ministry of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Pemba–Zanzibar*

Primary data collected through 47 semi-structured Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and one Focus Group Discussion (FGD) across Pemba (Zanzibar) and Tanga (Tanzania Mainland), combined with systematic desk review of both policy instruments, document the following structural failures:

- ▶ Women hold only 26–33% of leadership positions within Beach Management Units (BMUs), Shehia Fisheries Committees (SFCs), and Blue Economy Entrepreneur (BEE) groups, against a membership majority in many of these bodies.
- ▶ 91% of sampled groups reported having no Person with a Disability (PWD) representation whatsoever.
- ▶ 57% of BEE groups make decisions exclusively through a male-dominated leadership tier, bypassing membership participation.
- ▶ 73% of women in Pemba report unequal access to training opportunities, due to invitations being directed to chairpersons (predominantly male).
- ▶ Zero functional SGBV reporting mechanisms were identified across all 47 visited sites, despite documented prevalence of sexual exploitation ('sex for fish') in sardine supply chains.
- ▶ Production costs for seaweed frequently exceed market returns (e.g., TZS 50,000+ in labour costs per cycle against a buyer price of TZS 7,000/kg), with no government-issued indicative pricing to protect women producers.

## II. GOVERNANCE GAP ANALYSIS

---

The following analysis maps the most critical governance silences against specific policy provisions, drawing on both article-level desk review and field evidence. The gaps cluster into five institutional domains:

### 1. Participation & Representation

Section 3.5.1 of the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) calls for gender mainstreaming and equal participation, yet specifies no enforceable quota, no monitoring framework, and no corrective mechanism for non-compliance. Section 4.3.2 of the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy (2022) similarly invokes 'community participation' without operationalising women's or youth's share of governance seats. As consultations confirmed, policy language limited to 'special groups' without numerical targets creates structural loopholes that allow patriarchal norms to govern de facto representation.

### 2. Financial Inclusion & Economic Empowerment

Section 5.1.7 of the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) mandates the Ministry of Finance to mobilise resources from innovative sources, including Blue Bonds and Carbon Trading mechanisms, yet establishes no gender-equitable investment provision, no ring-fenced sub-fund for women-led enterprises, and no gender-disaggregated reporting requirement on investment disbursements. The absence of dedicated financing windows perpetuates women's confinement to low-capital, low-return activities.

### 3. Safety, Care, and Working Conditions

Neither the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) nor the Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy (2022) establishes minimum gender-responsive infrastructure standards for blue economy activity sites. 29% of women and youth surveyed reported persistent insecurity at coastal worksites. None of the frameworks mandate adequate lighting, separate sanitation facilities, childcare provision, or protection mechanisms at landing sites or aquaculture zones.

### 4. Protection Against Exploitation in Supply Chains

Despite documented prevalence of sexual coercion as a structural condition of access to sardine catches, Section 3.5.2 of the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) contains no provision prohibiting or criminalising this practice. The Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy (2022) similarly contains complete silence on the 'sex for fish' dynamic, which is compounded by sea-level rise pushing fishing boats into deeper waters inaccessible to women who cannot swim or reach offshore docking points.

### 5. Data, Monitoring, and Accountability

Section 6.0 of the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024) provides for annual monitoring reports and five-year evaluations but specifies no mandatory sex-disaggregated data requirements. At the district level in Pangani, data continues to be compiled in aggregate form, rendering gender disparities statistically invisible and impeding evidence-based intervention. Only 33% of government officers surveyed could identify any policy provision relevant to women's participation, indicating critical dissemination failures.

### III. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS & WAY FORWARD

The following recommendations are grounded in article-level analysis of both policy frameworks and directly linked to the evidentiary gaps documented through community consultations. Implementation responsibility is assigned to specific institutional actors identified within existing governance architecture.

Priority Area	Policy Gap	Recommended Action
<b>Governance &amp; Representation</b>	No enforceable quotas in Section 3.5.1 (NBEP 2024) or Section 4.5 (ZBEP 2022). Men hold 67–81% of chairperson and secretary roles.	Amend Section 3.5.1 (NBEP) and Chapter 4.5.1 (ZBEP) to mandate minimum 40% women and 20% youth representation across all BMUs, SFCs, BEEs, and blue economy governance bodies. Annual Gender Compliance Audit to be published by the Blue Economy Coordination Office / Zanzibar Planning Commission.
<b>Gender-Responsive Financing</b>	Section 5.1.7 (NBEP 2024) and Section 5.2 Blue Fund (ZBEP 2022) lack ring-fenced financing for women- and youth-led enterprises.	Establish a Blue Economy Gender Financing Window under Section 5.1.7 with minimum 30% allocation to women- and youth-led enterprises. Develop eligibility criteria within 12 months of policy adoption. Ministry of Finance to publish gender-disaggregated disbursement reports annually.
<b>Value-Chain Equity &amp; Market Access</b>	No indicative pricing system for seaweed or sea cucumber. Women sell 1 kg seaweed for TZS 7,000 against production costs exceeding TZS 50,000+ per cycle.	Develop government-issued indicative price guidelines for seaweed, sea cucumber, crab, and sardines (Section 3.3 NBEP; Section 4.1.2 ZBEP). Mandate gender-disaggregated value chain mapping. Reserve a defined proportion of processing zone licences for women-led enterprises through Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority.
<b>Gender-Responsive Infrastructure</b>	Sections 5.1.8.1 and 5.1.8.4 (NBEP 2024) promote fisheries infrastructure without gender-responsive standards. 29% of women report insecurity at coastal worksites.	Amend Section 5.1.8.1 (NBEP) to require gender-responsive infrastructure standards adequate lighting, separate sanitation, and hazard-mitigation features at all publicly funded landing sites and aquaculture zones. Standards to be developed jointly by Ministry of Fisheries and Ministry responsible for Gender within 18 months.
<b>Protection Against SGBV in Supply Chains</b>	Zero SGBV reporting mechanisms identified across all 47 sites. No provision in either policy framework addresses 'sex for fish' exploitation, documented as structural in sardine supply chains.	Insert new Section 3.5.3 (NBEP) and new bullet under Section 4.5.1 (ZBEP) explicitly prohibiting and criminalising sexual exploitation as a condition of supply chain access. All blue economy licences to require confidential SGBV reporting mechanisms. Annual monitoring reports (Section 6.0 NBEP) to include data on reported cases and responses.
<b>Sex-Disaggregated M&amp;E</b>	Section 6.0 (NBEP 2024) mandates monitoring reports but requires no sex-disaggregated indicators. Gender disparities remain statistically invisible in all routine district-level data.	Expand Section 6.0 (NBEP) to mandate sex- and age-disaggregated data on participation rates, governance representation, investment access, and gender-targeted outcomes. Standardise gender indicators across all sector reporting templates within 6 months of policy adoption. National Bureau of Statistics to provide technical oversight.
<b>Accessible Capacity Building</b>	73% of women in Pemba excluded from training. No disability-inclusive training clauses in either policy. Technical language in both frameworks inaccessible to community-level actors.	Mandate gender- and disability-responsive training standards in all blue economy capacity-building programmes (Section 4.1.1 ZBEP; Section 3.5.1 NBEP). Allocate minimum 20% of total training expenditure to women and youth entrepreneurs. Develop a Blue Economy Entrepreneurship Certificate Programme in Kiswahili using oral and visual formats, delivered at community/shehia level within 24 months.
<b>Climate-Gender Nexus</b>	Rising sea temperatures, sea-level rise, and species migration compound women's exclusion from supply chains, yet neither framework integrates a climate-gender vulnerability protocol.	Develop a biennial Climate-Gender Vulnerability Assessment covering all coastal blue economy communities. Establish alternative supply access mechanisms where sea-level rise restricts women's access. Integrate GBV prevention into all climate adaptation programmes under both policy frameworks (Section 4.5.1 ZBEP cross-referenced with Blue Fund Section 5.2).

## IV. WAY FORWARD: IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

Realising gender-transformative blue economy governance requires a sequenced implementation strategy. The following priorities reflect the institutional capacity and timeline considerations identified through stakeholder consultation:

### Immediate Actions (0–12 months)

- ▶ Initiate article-level amendment process for Section 3.5.1 and Section 3.5.3 of the Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (2024), led by the Office of the Vice President in consultation with the Ministry responsible for Social Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups (Section 5.1.8.16).
- ▶ Gazette interim SGBV prohibition guidelines applicable to all licensed blue economy operators pending formal policy amendment.
- ▶ Establish a Technical Working Group comprising gender specialists, blue economy sector ministries, and civil society representatives to develop standardised sex-disaggregated monitoring indicators for integration into Section 6.0 M&E frameworks.
- ▶ Commission gender-disaggregated value chain maps for seaweed, sea cucumber, crab, and sardines in Pemba and Tanga as an evidence base for indicative pricing development.

### Medium-Term Actions (12–36 months)

- ▶ Operationalise the Blue Economy Gender Financing Window under Section 5.1.7 (NBEP 2024) and Section 5.2 Blue Fund (ZBEP 2022), with eligibility criteria, disbursement procedures, and impact metrics jointly developed by Ministries of Finance and Gender.
- ▶ Develop and enforce gender-responsive infrastructure standards at all publicly funded landing sites, processing facilities, and aquaculture zones, prioritising the Tanga–Pemba seascape.
- ▶ Launch the Blue Economy Entrepreneurship Certificate Programme in Kiswahili, piloted across Pangani (Tanga) and Pemba, with a target of reaching 500 women entrepreneurs in the first cohort.
- ▶ Conduct the inaugural biennial Climate-Gender Vulnerability Assessment across all coastal communities in the project seascape, informing climate-smart aquaculture adaptation protocols.

### Structural Reforms (36+ months)

- ▶ Full integration of mandatory 40%/20% representation quotas into BMU and SFC election guidelines, with independent Gender Compliance Audits institutionalised as a standard function of the Blue Economy Coordination Office and the Zanzibar Planning Commission.
- ▶ Formal government-issued indicative price guidance for primary blue economy commodities, backed by coordinated enforcement mechanisms to counter exploitative broker pricing practices.
- ▶ Establishment of a harmonised cross-jurisdictional gender monitoring architecture linking Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar blue economy data systems, enabling evidence-based policy iteration on a five-year cycle aligned with Section 6.0 evaluation timelines.

### Conclusion

*The ReSea Project analysis confirms that Tanzania's blue economy frameworks provide an important structural foundation but require substantive revision to fulfil their inclusive development mandate. The recommendations presented here are technically precise, institutionally anchored, and grounded in primary evidence from coastal communities in Pemba and Tanga. Meaningful transformation demands movement beyond broad policy statements toward explicit, enforceable provisions that dismantle gendered barriers, institutionalise accountability, and ensure equitable participation in and benefit from the full breadth of Tanzania's blue economy. A gender-responsive blue economy is not merely a justice imperative: it is a prerequisite for long-term resilience, productivity, and inclusive prosperity across Tanzania's marine and coastal communities.*

## KEY REFERENCES & DATA SOURCES

---

### Primary Data Sources

Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT-T) / ReSea Project. (2025). Community Consultations: Key Informant Interviews (n=47) and Focus Group Discussion, Pemba (Zanzibar) and Tanga (Tanzania Mainland), November 2025.

IUCN. (2026). Capacity Assessment Report: Leadership Positions by Gender in BMUs, SFCs and BEE Groups across Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar. February 2026.

### Policy Frameworks Analysed

Government of the United Republic of Tanzania / Office of the Vice President. (2024). Tanzania National Blue Economy Policy (Sera ya Taifa ya Uchumi wa Buluu ya Mwaka 2024). Dar es Salaam: Office of the Vice President.

Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar / Zanzibar Planning Commission. (2020). Zanzibar Blue Economy Policy. Zanzibar: Zanzibar Planning Commission.

Government of Tanzania. (2015). Tanzania Fisheries Policy. Dar es Salaam: Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries.

Government of Tanzania. (2003). Fisheries Act (Tanzania Mainland). Dar es Salaam.

Government of Tanzania. (2017–2022). National Plan of Action to End Violence Against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC).

### Supporting References

African Union. (2003). Maputo Protocol: Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.

World Bank. (2023). The Blue Economy: Growth, Opportunity and a Sustainable Ocean Economy. Washington D.C.: World Bank Group.

World Health Organization. (n.d.). Gender. Geneva: WHO. <https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender>

FAO. (2023). The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture: Sustainability in Action. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

UN Women / FAO / WorldFish. (2023). Engendering the Blue Economy: Gender-Responsive Policies for Sustainable Ocean-Based Livelihoods. Rome.