COMMUNITY CONSERVATION IN NORTHERN KENYA

5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2012 – 2017

APPROVED BY THE NRT COUNCIL OF ELDERS AND NRT BOARD
APRIL 30th 2012
The Northern Rangelands Trust has been growing since its inception in 2004 and has now completed its first Strategic Plan (2008-2012) period.

The assessment of its impact in the early years shows a level of community drive, and indications of social, environmental and economic impacts way beyond expectation. NRT and member conservancies are having a positive impact on community livelihoods, on wildlife conservation, on the condition of the rangelands, and on peace and security in northern Kenya.

To build on these early successes, to consolidate and expand the reach of the community conservancies, and to increase their impacts in the next five years, NRT undertook a structured process of consultation with its members to develop its new 5-year strategy.

The resulting Strategic Plan (2012 – 2017) is set out here.

It draws from three critical sources of information: (i) the views of the people living in the member conservancies; (ii) data on the social, environmental and economic impacts of NRT to date, collected by NRT staff and by independent researchers from outside organizations; and (iii) the collective thoughts of the conservancy chairmen and managers, NRT staff and partners in government and non-government organizations on the priorities for the next 5 years. These were brought together at a planning retreat on 15-17 February 2012.

The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) remains the umbrella organization for community conservancies in northern Kenya, currently with 19 member conservancies covering a population of 212,000 people over an area of 20,000km2 within 7 counties (Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Laikipia, Marsabit, Meru and Samburu). The Northern Rangelands Company Ltd (NRCL) is the registered not-for-profit company implementing the mandate of the NRT, providing the services of facilitation, training, fund-raising and mentoring for the member conservancies.

We are proud of our special partnerships with the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Fauna and Flora International, Ol Pejeta Conservancy and with the Government of Kenya through the Kenya Wildlife Service, and the strong financial support we have received from USAID and a wide range of private and public donors. We aim to strengthen and extend these partnerships over the next five years, to better serve and support the NRT member conservancies.

Chairman of the NRT Council of Elders -

Chairman of the NRT Board –

Chief Executive Officer –

28th April 2012
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NRT’S CURRENT MEMBER CONSERVANCIES
NRT’s Mission
To develop resilient community conservancies that transform lives, secure peace, and conserve natural resources

NRT’s Core Values
- Respect for traditional pastoral and other community values
- Coexistence of livestock, people and wildlife
- Community-led decision making
- Meaningful livelihoods through wildlife conservation
- Competent governance and financial accountability
- Equitable distribution of benefits
- Environmental, social and economic sustainability in all our work
- Apolitical, without allegiance to any political party, creed, or race
- Credible, measurable results
The NRT member conservancies conducted their own assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A synthesis of the main findings from this consultation (summarized here), together with evidence of impact (next), provides the context for the development of this strategic plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Well-being:</strong> recognition that conservancies bring direct support to improving human well-being</td>
<td><strong>Education:</strong> low level of education and understanding of environmental issues and how to solve them</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Good-will:</strong> community good-will towards conservation of wildlife and natural resources</td>
<td><strong>Inequity:</strong> social benefits are not equitably distributed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement:</strong> engaged internal stakeholders</td>
<td><strong>Grazing:</strong> weak understanding of the need to improve grazing management</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Partnerships:</strong> strong external partnerships</td>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong> women are not well represented in conservancy structures</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Security:</strong> improved security in most conservancies</td>
<td><strong>Rangers:</strong> limited capacity of game rangers</td>
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<td><strong>Balance:</strong> adequate land and natural resources to balance needs of people and wildlife</td>
<td><strong>Funds:</strong> lack of sufficient funding to increase impact of existing programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Governance:</strong> good governance structures in place</td>
<td><strong>Communication:</strong> poor communication and transportation systems between and within conservancies</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Enterprise:</strong> potential to expand enterprise and diversify the local economy</td>
<td><strong>Climate:</strong> vulnerability to climate change impacts</td>
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<td><strong>Government:</strong> increased support from the government of Kenya, particularly the Kenya Wildlife Service</td>
<td><strong>Degradation:</strong> degraded rangelands continue to be a major threat to wildlife and livelihoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protected area network:</strong> strong and expansive system of protected areas and private reserves to build upon</td>
<td><strong>Insecurity:</strong> insecurity is starting to escalate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism:</strong> support within communities to do more, including cultural tourism</td>
<td><strong>Poaching:</strong> increase in poaching, particularly for elephant ivory (dramatic increase in 2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social development:</strong> conservancy governance structures provide good opportunities for partnerships with social development organizations</td>
<td><strong>Sustainability:</strong> most conservancies are far from achieving financial sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Development projects:</strong> large regional development projects threaten weaker conservancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Misconceptions:</strong> misconceptions about the role of conservancies threaten public support and are used to incite ethnic tensions</td>
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EVIDENCE OF NRT’S IMPACT

Over the past few years, external partners have conducted numerous studies of specific aspects of NRT and its member conservancies. In addition, NRT has gathered its own data on key issues to help inform its management decisions. These two sources of information provide evidence that NRT member conservancies are having a significant positive impact on community livelihoods, wildlife conservation and the condition of the rangelands.

Social Impacts:

- Non-financial benefits of conservancies are higher than direct financial benefits
- Conservancies are providing a ‘safety net’ to communities: coping mechanisms for times of drought, including planned grazing to build dry season grass reserves, and access to jobs, small enterprises and education bursaries
- Democratic governance of conservancy institutions has increased significantly, with more transparent and accountable decision-making
- Peace and security has increased: communities cite improved security as the major benefit of conservancies
- Assets are being built up: water supplies, transport, infrastructure have been developed
- Conservancies are providing legal recognition of communal ownership which has secured community rights to management of land and wildlife: 7 conservancies are legally registered as Trusts, 9 are registered as Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), and 3 as Not-for-Profit Companies
- Support for education has increased: 1033 bursaries were issued in 2011

Economic Impacts:

- Employment is increasing in areas with few alternatives: 537 people had full-time jobs in conservancies and tourism in 2011, up from 426 in 2008
- Commercial revenue to communities in conservancies has trebled in 4 years, to Ksh79m in 2011 (see box)
- Increasing numbers of people are seeing direct and indirect economic benefits: from 1,250 people in 2008 to 16,700 people in 2011

Conservation Impacts:

- Land with significant biodiversity under improved conservation management has increased: from 5,400 km² in 2008 to 16,000 km² in 2011
- Wildlife populations are either stable or increasing, with increasingly positive attitudes amongst community members
- Rangeland health is improving where grazing management is practiced

![NRT CONSERVANCY REVENUES (2008-2011)](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Bead sales</th>
<th>Cattle sales</th>
<th>Tourism fees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
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NRT'S VISION

Climate change, economic shocks, political developments

NRT's mission is to develop community conservancies that transform lives, secure peace and conserve natural resources across the rangelands of northern Kenya. These arid areas are in the front-line of climate change impacts, with increasingly frequent and severe droughts that are likely to bring hardship and conflict over resources if communities are not resilient.

They are also areas that are opening up to oil exploration, the LAPSSET corridor, new road networks, new devolved county governments, and investments that are likely to bring significant change. These changes can bring important economic and development benefits to marginalized areas, but can also bring exclusion, conflict and degradation of a fragile environment, depending on how they are anticipated and managed.

Building resilience

The vision of the conservancies is to build resilient communities that are better able to cope with an uncertain future of droughts, economic shocks and political change, by strengthening governance and social development, diversifying economies, improving management of water, rangelands and wildlife, and building peace and security.

This resilience will allow more self-determination in the face of the changes coming. In particular, the long-term vision of NRT is to see:

People in the region

- **Good governance**: vibrant community conservancies that are well governed, promoting pastoralism as a viable economic livelihood and ensuring equitable development for all
- **Peace**: peaceful coexistence among all people, and between people and wildlife, with conservancies providing a bridge across ethnic boundaries and security for all
- **Partnerships**: strong and effective partnerships with the government, support organizations and private enterprises, which help to expand education, health and economic growth
- **Gender**: greater gender balance with equal opportunities for active engagement of women and men in the development of conservancies

Natural resources

- **Natural resources**: productive water, rangeland and livestock management systems that underpin pastoralist livelihoods
- **Wildlife**: wildlife populations stable or increasing, with free movement across the landscape
- **Mobility**: a connected suite of community conservancies that promote wildlife and livestock movements across the landscape in response to changing resources
- **Land**: secure land tenure that lets people invest in sustainable management of the rangelands

The Northern Rangelands Trust

- **NRT umbrella**: NRT as an effective umbrella organization supporting member community conservancies which share this common vision and mission
- **Recognition**: global recognition of NRT as a viable model for community conservancies
## NRT’S GOALS FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS (2012-2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Well governed conservancies</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will show representative, transparent, equitable and accountable conservancy governance, and be legally registered institutions.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Resilient livelihoods</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will help to improve the education, health and infrastructure of their constituent communities (to complement peace-building, economic development, good governance and natural resource management as cornerstones of resilient pastoral livelihoods)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Peace and security</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will build peace between and within conservancies, and increase safety for people and wildlife</em></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Productive rangelands</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will improve the condition of rangelands and other natural resources through development and implementation of land use plans and practices that ensure the sustainable management of natural resources</em></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Stable wildlife</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will host key wildlife populations that are stable or increasing, and when necessary, individual species that are re-established in unoccupied areas within their historic range</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Growing enterprise</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will develop increased wealth, jobs and diversified economic opportunity to their communities</em></td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Sustainable and expanding conservancy model</td>
<td><em>In the next 5 years, NRT will expand the number of community conservancies in a stable growth path, reduce the burden of NRC support, and increase the ability of conservancies to meet their operational costs and provide community benefits</em></td>
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## WHAT SUCCESS WILL LOOK LIKE BY 2017

### 1. Well-governed conservancies

*In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will show representative, transparent, equitable and accountable conservancy governance, and be legally registered institutions.*

Success will be measured by:

**Indicators of good governance**

- **Conservancy institutions** are endorsed by minuted community meetings and are legally registered.
- Conservancy constitutions ensure **gender and ethnic representation** and good standards of corporate governance, and are endorsed and implemented.
- Community support for conservancy is maintained through **effective AGMs**.
- Election of boards is transparent and rotation of **board members** ensured.
- MoUs with NRT are signed, and active **5-year management plans** are in place.

**Indicators of sound financial management**

- Bank accounts are in place, **budgets** are approved and tracked by the board.
Budget execution is good, and **annual audits** are done by accredited audit firms

Revenue sharing by-laws are established, and all **revenue distribution** is published and accessible to all members

Progress is **effectively reported** quarterly by managers to boards

**Indicators of effective partnerships**

- Conservancies independently **raise funds**
- Increasing % of operational **budgets are sustained** by self-generated revenue
- **Donor relations** are well established and maintained
- **Operational partnerships** are effectively maintained (e.g. with KWS, County Governments, NGO development partners)

**2. Resilient livelihoods**

*In the next 5 years,* all NRT conservancies will help to improve the education, health, access to clean water and infrastructure of their constituent communities (to complement peace-building, economic development, good governance and natural resource management as cornerstones of resilient pastoral livelihoods).

**Indicators of conservancy support to education**

- Significant total values of conservancy **revenue are disbursed for student bursaries**, matched by NRT education funds raised through a joint Lewa-NRT education programme
- Growing **numbers of students** complete key stages of education with support from conservancy bursaries and matching NRT funds
- **Key schools** are directly supported through conservancy and matching funds

**Indicators of conservancy support to health and infrastructure**

- Significant total values of conservancy **revenue are disbursed for health care**, and significant numbers of people benefit
- Conservancies have established strong **partnerships** with public-private health service providers to address community health needs
- **Key water infrastructure** is directly supported through conservancy and matching funds
- **Water management** improves through engagement with water users associations and other partners
- Better business models are used to maintain critical **roads and airstrips**
- Conservancy infrastructure such as **HQs and ranger outposts** are developed

**3. Peace and security**

*In the next 5 years,* all NRT conservancies will build peace between and within conservancies, and increase safety for people and wildlife through community policing.

Success will be measured by:

**Indicators of conservancy support to education**

- Significant total values of conservancy **revenue are disbursed for student bursaries**, matched by NRT education funds
Success will be measured by:

**Indicators of effective conflict resolution**

- Conservancies have an increased capacity to resolve conflict through better techniques, tools and communication networks
- There are improved ratios of incidents of ethnic hostility to numbers of functional peace committees, numbers of conflict resolution events, and numbers of inter/intra-conservancy conflicts peacefully resolved
- Multi-ethnic conservancies show multi-ethnic representation on conservancy boards
- There are declining numbers of incidents of human-wildlife conflict and conflicts over access to water

**Indicators of improved security**

- Adequate numbers of skilled conservancy rangers are deployed, and adequate numbers are armed as police reservists
- The ratio of area of conservancy (km²) per ranger is shown to be effective through appropriate training and equipment
- There are declining numbers of incidents of livestock theft, road banditry and tourist attacks
- There are improved ratios of number to people arrested to number of successful prosecutions, numbers of weapons recovered and numbers of trophies (elephant tusks) recovered
- Elephant poaching is reduced from 77% to 30% of all elephant mortality per year (PIKE)
- Numbers of illegally killed wildlife reported inside conservancies is reducing

**4. Productive rangelands**

*In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will improve the condition of rangelands and other natural resources through development and implementation of land use plans and practices that ensure the sustainable management of natural resources.*

Success will be measured by:

**Indicators of rangeland and forest productivity**

- Vegetation monitoring systems are in place and informing adaptive management
- Grazing bylaws are established and widely enforced
- Areas under active grazing management are increasing
- Ground vegetation cover and diversity is increasing (and bare or eroded areas reducing) in core and buffer areas, and in managed grazing blocks
- Forest cover and condition in closed-canopy forests stabilizes or improves

**5. Stable wildlife**

*In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will host key wildlife populations that are stable or increasing, and when necessary, individual species that are re-established in unoccupied areas within their historic range.*
Success will be measured by:

**Indicators of wildlife stability**
- Ecological monitoring systems (CoMMS) are in place and informing adaptive management
- Areas under active wildlife conservation are increasing, in total conservancy area and patrolled area, and in appropriate core/buffer zone areas
- Populations of key wildlife species are stable or increasing, including measures of all species combined, as well as measures for indicator species (hirola, elephant, Grevy’s zebra, giraffe, oryx, eland, lion and wild dog)
- Populations of highly endangered species are secured in protected sanctuaries (including black rhino in Sera Conservancy, hirola in Ishaqbini Conservancy, Rothschild’s giraffe in Ruko conservancy)

6. **Growing enterprise**

*In the next 5 years, all NRT conservancies will develop increased wealth, jobs and diversified economic opportunity to their communities.*

**Indicators of growing enterprise**
- Numbers of tourist **bed-nights** (lodge & camping) increase and
- Total revenues to conservancies from **tourism fees** increase
- Total values of **handicraft sales** from women’s conservancy-based businesses increase
- Total profits and numbers of beneficiaries from women’s **handicraft businesses** increase
- Total revenues to conservancies from **handicraft levies** increase
- Numbers of **livestock** purchased increase, as do the total value of sales and numbers of beneficiaries
- Total revenues to conservancies from **livestock levies** increases
- Value of **CESS taxes** paid to County Governments increases
- The number of sustainable **new enterprises** (notably bio-enterprises) increases
- **Carbon markets and payment for environmental services** is assessed and developed where feasible across NRT conservancies

**Indicators of improved financial services**
- Total values of **micro-credit loans** increase, as do numbers of beneficiaries
- Increasing % of conservancy-related business sales are paid into **bank accounts**
- Increasing % of individuals use **bank accounts**
- **Livestock insurance** in widely used in conservancies, if successfully developed nationally

7. **Sustainable and expanding conservancy model**

*In the next 5 years, NRT will expand the number of community conservancies in a stable growth path, increase the ability of these conservancies to meet their operational costs and provide community benefits, and reduce the burden of NRC support.*
Success will be measured by:

**Indicators of stable growth**

- The growth of NRT conservancies is phased and managed within four semi-autonomous regions of community conservancies in northern, Marsabit, coastal and Rift Valley regions of Kenya.

- Government policy support is secured in Kenyan laws and policies that support common property land rights, tax incentives, wildlife usage and self-determination, and that protect conservancies against exploitation by outside commercial, social or political forces.

- A conservancy performance assessment system is developed and increasing numbers of conservancies are ranked in the top category.

- A national community conservancy umbrella organization is developed, with significant support from NRT.

**Indicators of sustainable financing**

- The diversity and scale of donor and commercial funding is increased, through better communications, confidence-building, partnerships and fundraising by conservancies and NRT.

- A conservation trust fund is established to capture international contributions for biodiversity conservation in northern Kenya, to cover core conservancy costs.

- Government financial support increases by anchoring conservancy activities into central and local government programs.
ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF NRT MEMBER CONSERVANCIES

Each conservancy is an autonomous entity governed by a legally established institution (usually a Trust, with Articles of Association, under the traditional Group Ranch or Trustland structures) representing a constituent community. Each is a member of the NRT umbrella organization, under a signed Memorandum of Understanding.

The roles of the conservancies are:

Conservancy governance

- Good governance and organizational management of the conservancy (board management, accountability and transparency, staffing, representation)
- Maintaining good communications with all conservancy members
- Securing land tenure (with title deeds for group ranches)
- Ensuring equitable distribution of benefits to the community (job opportunities, bursaries, business investments, profit sharing)

Peace and conflict resolution

- Providing security (rangers, communications, enforcement of bye-laws)
- Providing mechanisms and opportunities for conflict resolution (conflict resolution teams, peace meetings, events)

Conservancy management

- Sound financial management
- Well-informed natural resources management (wildlife, rangeland, water)
- Monitoring of resources and impacts (environmental, social and economic)
- Infrastructure development (roads, lodges, communications, water)

Economic development and financial support

- Maintaining good stakeholder relations (government, neighboring communities, donors, development partners)
- Developing jobs and enterprises (lodges, women’s groups, livestock marketing)
- Fundraising from government, philanthropic NGOs, donors

Education, health and infrastructure development

- Raising awareness of the benefits of wildlife and rangeland conservation
- Infrastructure and bursary support to education through partners
- Promotion of health and social development
- Development of water infrastructure, maintenance of keys roads and airstrips
ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE NORTHERN RANGELANDS TRUST

NRT is an umbrella organization for establishing and nurturing community conservancies. It is headed by a Council of Elders and run by the not-for-profit Northern Rangelands Company Ltd., which has a Board of Directors, an executive office and 49 staff (in 2012). Structures will change during the next 5 years to reflect the growth of NRT. The roles of NRT are:

Facilitating development and building capacity

- For good governance in conservancy boards: leadership in transparency, accountability, equitable representation and distribution of benefits, communication, developing byelaws
- For strong conservancy management: operational planning, management and monitoring, technical leadership, financial and staff management, informed decision-making
- For support to education through a joint Lewa-NRT education programme

Raising funds

- For NRT core support to conservancies
- For conservancy operational and development budgets
- Promote independent and direct conservancy-donor relationships
Building partnerships
- With county and national governments
- With supporting institutions, NGOs and individuals for technical support and financing

Promoting business
- Attracting investment and supporting enterprise development
- Negotiating tourism agreements between operators and conservancies
- Engaging conservancy communities in social enterprises

Facilitating peace building and security
- Facilitating conflict resolution within and between conservancies, and with others
- Supporting conservancy rangers and security operations

Policy advocacy
- Advocating for recognition and protection of community conservancies in Kenyan policy and law
- Engaging in regional and national policy dialogue to promote NRT’s goals

Promoting community conservancies in Kenya
- Maintaining the vision and standards of NRT conservancies
- Supporting structured and sustainable growth of new conservancies
- Representing the interests of conservancies nationally and internationally
- Communicating widely the benefits of conservancies for development and conservation

Measuring impact
- Assessing the economic, social and environmental impacts of the member conservancies
Council:
Council of Elders
Board of Directors
Executive Committee

NRC CEO’S office:
Chief Executive Officer
Chief Operations Officer
Communications
Grants management

Wildlife and Security:
Security
Translocations
Wildlife monitoring

Natural Resources Management:
Planned grazing
Water management
Land use planning
Carbon storage
Rangeland monitoring

Community Development:
Governance
Social development
Peace-building
Infrastructure
Social monitoring

Regional coordination and support

Ngare Ndare Region
Ngare Ndare FT
Il Ngwesi T
Lekerruki CT
Naibunga CT
Leparua CC

Ewaso Ngiro Region
Maibae CC
Wesgate CC
Kalama CWC
Nakuprat CC
Mpus kuktuk CC
Nasuulu CC

Greater Sera Region
Sera CT
Melako CC
Biliqo-Bulesa C

Matthews Region
Namunyak WTC