

Rethinking Sustainable Public Transport for Zanzibar

Our shared commitment: A Community-Driven Approach



Ahadi yetu ya pamoja means 'our shared commitment' in swahili, the path we have chosen to follow in order to build a better future for Zanzibar.

A future built by and for its citizens.



The Study of the Reorganization and Electrification of the Public Transport System in Zanzibar is a project supported by the Spanish State Secretariat of Commerce under the non-reimbursable FIEM funding mechanism for the internationalization of enterprises, under the NextGenerationEU funds. IDOM, a Spanish multinational Consulting Engineering Architecture firm, partnered with the Government of Zanzibar to secure this prestigious funding, presenting an unparalleled opportunity to transform public transportation in Zanzibar.

This initiative aims to elevate the quality of life for the people of Pemba and Unguja, offering improved mobility, greater connectivity, and a brighter future for the entire community.

The following pages address the first phase of the project, which focused on data collection and processing. This phase was conducted in collaboration with students from the Karume Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) after an intensive training and knowledge transfer session. This initiative not only ensured accurate data but also contributed to local capacity building. The results were then shared with the community in partnership with KUKUA, targeting institutional capacity development. KUKUA, an Zanzibar-base Spanish NGO specializing in community engagement, designed and led the Stakeholder Engagement process to strengthen local expertise and ensure that voices from all groups of society were integrated into the process.



A KIST student conducting boarding and alighting surveys.
March 21, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



Above: A daladala stop for passengers.
Below: Karume Road, Urban Unguja.
February, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Study of Reorganization and Electrification of the Public Transport System in Zanzibar

This study comes at a pivotal moment for Zanzibar, aligning with recent mobility analyses and national objectives that emphasize the urgent need for a future Daladala network, one that genuinely meets the needs of Zanzibar's citizens and serves as a cornerstone for the Zanzibar National Transport Masterplan.

The study is centered around key goals: Public Transport—to elevate service quality by prioritizing accessibility, reliability, punctuality, and safety; Economy—to enhance the operational, institutional, and regulatory capabilities of all public transport entities; and Environment—to improve emissions and introduce a progressive fleet renewal plan to support a greener Zanzibar. The ultimate aim is to uplift the quality of life for Zanzibar's residents, maximizing environmental benefits and moving towards a more sustainable, energy-independent transportation future for the island.

Additionally, ongoing community and stakeholder engagement efforts will be undertaken, including institutional-strengthening workshops on urban planning and sustainable mobility. This initiative is made possible through the vital support of Kukua and KIST, who bring invaluable local insights and expertise to the project.



Above: Surveyors from Team Kaskazini supervised by Eng. Aladdin Attieh from IDOM.
Below: KIST students collecting information from male citizen.

February, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

On the ground with KIST students

In early 2024, IDOM launched a key phase of the project, collaborating closely with students from KIST to design and execute an in-depth, two-week survey campaign across Unguja and Pemba. This phase centered around robust data collection, critical for establishing a foundation of actionable insights for the project's next steps.

Prior to fieldwork, 44 KIST students participated in extensive training and knowledge transfer sessions, ensuring they were well-prepared with the skills and resources needed for both qualitative and quantitative data gathering. These students were then divided into four specialized teams, with each assigned to a specific region—Kaskazini, Kati, Kusini, and Pemba—to conduct detailed, region-specific surveys.

This phase not only contributed valuable data but also strengthened local capacity, fostering a deeper understanding of survey methodologies and sustainable transport planning among KIST's students.





Above: Eng. Inigo Imaz presenting the study to students at KIST, as a lead-in to the training sessions to prepare them for conducting surveys .
 Below: On the left, KIST surveyor gathering insights from a citizen (Pemba); on the right, Hon. Nadir Abdullatif Yussuf Al-Wardy, Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport (MoICT), awarding a participation certificate to a student from KIST.



“This is the first time someone presented a project to us before building it, and we want to thank IDOM and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communication and Transport for that. It means a lot that someone is here, wanting to listen to our opinions and understand our reality. We truly appreciate it and hope this will be the first of many times we are consulted. Thank you.”

— Representative of drivers and conductors during the Transport Sector session in Unguja.

Dotmocracy is an engagement method used to pinpoint priority areas from the SWOT analysis findings of the study.
August 21, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



Above: Drivers and conductors participating in a focus group discussion.
 Below: A participant taking a photo of a slide showing the benefits of the new public transport system.
August 21 & 29, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

The power of community engagement

By directly involving the community, The Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP), designed by Kukua, directly involves the community as it aims to create a transport system that is efficient, modern, sustainable, and responsive to the realities of everyday life in Zanzibar. This inclusive approach helps to build a system that improves living conditions, reduces risks, and fosters a sense of ownership among residents, ensuring that development projects positively impact their lives in the long term.

Stakeholders are given a crucial platform to voice their experiences, insights, and suggestions, actively shaping the future of Zanzibar's public transport. Engagement activities like "Mapping My Daladala Journey," "SWOT Dotmocracy," and focus groups were tailored to capture the unique perspectives of each group, ensuring that the input received was comprehensive and representative of the broader community. These sessions empowered participants to participate actively in the project, fostering a shared vision for a safer, more accessible, and community-centred public transport system.



Dr. Josephine Kimaro, Deputy Chief Executive Officer from the Presidents Office Zanzibar, and Ms. Khadija Khamis Rajab, Principal Secretary from the Ministry of Land, Water, Housing and Energy providing an insight on electric buses during the Steering Committee session.

August 19, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



Above: Mr. Makame Haji, Deputy Principal Secretary from the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport , warmly welcoming the public during the study's launch.
Bellow: Government representatives attentively listening to the presentation of the Study.

August 19, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Steering Committee

August 19, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



The Steering Committee discussed the evolution of Zanzibar's public transport system, highlighting its transition from a limited network to the current daladala system. While recognizing daladalas' feature in facilitating mobility, they expressed concerns about its disorganization, safety issues, and inefficiencies. The committee underscored the impact of inadequate infrastructure on urban planning and economic activities. Optimistic about electrification and alternative energy solutions, participants called for improved infrastructure, new transport modalities, and policy reform. Concerns about employment and cultural impacts were raised, focusing on preserving jobs while modernizing transport.

This committee is crucial in developing policies that drive public transport reforms. Their coordination ensures that regulations, funding, and implementation align to create a cleaner, more efficient transport network for all residents. This session showcased the potential for cross-sector collaboration to drive lasting improvements.



Representatives from different government agencies voting during the SWOT Analysis Dotmocracy activity.
August 20, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



Above: Group portrait featuring participants from Government Agencies, Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport, IDOM and Kukua.
Below: Participant providing anonymous feedback during the Stinky Fish & Juicy Chicken exercise.

August 20, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Government Agencies

The session brought together Executive, General, and Administrative Secretaries, along with Directors from numerous municipalities and government agencies.

August 20, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



During the stakeholder engagement session with government agencies, participants shared vital insights on Zanzibar's public transport system, recognizing its role in promoting tourism while addressing significant challenges. They highlighted the need for 24/7 transport availability, increased bus numbers, and better road infrastructure to reduce congestion and improve accessibility. Concerns over reckless driving and unsanitary conditions underscored the necessity for stricter regulations and a modern fleet. Exciting prospects included eco-friendly vehicles and enhanced bus stops. Collaboration with daladala investors was proposed to ensure a successful transition to a more efficient public transport network that serves all residents effectively.



Daladala drivers and conductors casting their preferences during the SWOT Analysis activity.
August 21, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



Above and below: Participants engaging in a focus group discussion on the current public transport system challenges.

August 21, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



Transport Sector, Unguja

The transport sector was represented by drivers and conductors, commonly referred to as 'kondas'.

August 21, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

The Transport sector session in Unguja revealed a complex reality for daladala drivers and conductors. While they take pride in their role, evident frustrations—such as long waits, traffic jams, poor infrastructure, and safety risks—shape their daily experiences. The pressure to fill the daladalas to meet daily quotas that affect their wages influences their behaviour with passengers and other drivers on the road. Their primary focus is on generating profit each day, with other priorities following behind. Concerns about the transition to electric buses reflect deeper uncertainties regarding job security and readiness for change. Participants questioned whether proposed improvements, like better bus stations and stricter enforcement, would genuinely address systemic issues. Their reflections underscore the critical need for thoughtful adaptation to balance progress with the realities faced by those on the ground.



Above: Shehas reviewing the SWOT analysis results during the dotmocracy activity.
Below: Group portrait featuring shehas and representatives from MoICT, IDOM and Kukua.

August 22, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Shehas

A Sheha is a community leader or village chief who represents the most local level of government.

August 22, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Shehas reflected on the daladala system's strengths and challenges. While they appreciated its wide availability and affordable fares, long waiting times, the poor condition of the vehicles and the frequent practice of exceeding passenger capacity were sources of discomfort and frustration. Navigating rough roads and traffic jams further complicates their commutes. Despite these challenges, daladalas remained essential for daily transport and were viewed as the only affordable option for locals. They saw potential in electric buses and online ticketing to improve accessibility, especially for vulnerable groups. However, concerns about safety, electrical faults, and community adaptation to new bus stops highlighted the need for thoughtful infrastructure improvements and community-centred solutions.

Above: Shehas sharing feedback, concerns and questions on their existing and future public transport systems.
Below: On the left, a Sheha reviews Dotcracy material; on the right, a sheha expressing his opinions on the proposed proposals.
August 22, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



Person with disabilities sharing ideas on how public transport can be improved during the mix session with Raudhat Said from Kukua.
 August 23, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



Above: Participants reflecting on their preferences from the SWOT analysis voting results.
 Below: Participants during the focus group discussion.
 August 23, 2024
 Unguja, Zanzibar

Mix Group, Unguja

The session featured representation from the Education sector, religious organizations, local NGOs, and traffic enforcement.

**August 23, 2024
 Unguja, Zanzibar**



One of the sessions brought together representatives from various sectors to stimulate discussions that would help identify contrasts, convergences, and divergences among the different realities represented. The mix community group in Unguja included religious leaders, educators, NGOs, and traffic officers, who were also invited to participate in this engagement process. They voiced concerns about narrow roads, traffic jams, environmental pollution, and the rising number of accidents that have left many disabled.

While they appreciated the accessibility and affordability of public transport, they envisioned a future with direct routes, electric vehicles, and a more inclusive, organized, and well-regulated transport infrastructure that is respected by all. The group emphasized the importance of driver education, bridge connections, and integrating eco-friendly alternatives like electric and gas-powered vehicles to build a safer, more inclusive system. This session stimulated contrasting debates from which revealing and enriching reflections emerged, reflecting the participants' various backgrounds, experiences, and interests.

Above: Group portrait featuring drivers, conductors, and representatives from MoICT, IDOM and Kukua.
Below: Daladala drivers expressing their concerns about the existing public transport system.

August 26, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar



Transport Sector, Pemba

As in Unguja, this session included participation from both drivers and conductors.

August 26, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar

The transport sector session in Pemba exposed a mix of hope and apprehension among drivers. While they recognized their critical role in supporting the community, concerns about road safety, overcrowding, and the economic impacts of modernization loomed large. Drivers advocated for extended service hours and clearer road signage to improve daily operations, yet fears of job losses persisted, with concerns that these might result in their replacement by drivers from Unguja. Their questions highlighted a desire for transparency in proposed changes and a need for community-focused solutions, ensuring that modernization efforts genuinely address local needs and realities.



Person with disabilities sharing ideas on how public transport can be improved during the mix session with Raudhat Said from Kukua.
August 26, 2024, Pemba, Zanzibar

Above: Participants voting on their preferences during the SWOT analysis activity.
 Below: Participants voting on their preferences during the dotcracy activity.
August 26, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar



People with Disabilities, Pemba

August 26, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar

Participants with disabilities in Pemba shared feelings of exhaustion and frustration, not just from overcrowding and long waits but also from the lack of empathy and mistreatment by drivers and conductors. Many spoke of physical strain due to poorly maintained roads and inaccessible bus stops, making every journey challenging. Despite these hardships, their hope remains firm: they envision an inclusive transport system that dignifies them with accessible vehicles, fair treatment, and routes that truly serve Pemba's diverse and dispersed communities.



Above: Participants reflecting on their preferences from the SWOT analysis voting results.
 Below: Participants during the focus group discussion.
August 27, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Mix Group, Pemba

August 27, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar

The Mixed Group in Pemba brought together stakeholders from district, regional, and municipal administrative secretaries and directors and representatives from the religious, education, and commerce sectors. Participants shared their frustrations with long wait times and inadequate bus conditions, especially overcrowding, emphasizing the urgent need for improved discipline among drivers and fair pricing. While acknowledging the collective adaptation challenges to a new system, they also recognized the potential for modern buses and new routes to enhance service efficiency. Advocating for upgraded infrastructure and sustainable electricity generation, participants underscored the importance of addressing the needs of vulnerable groups, paving the way for a more equitable and efficient public transport system in Pemba.

Above: Group portrait featuring women and representatives from MoICT, IDOM, and Kukua.
 Below: Women casting their votes on preferences during the dotmocracy activity.

August 27, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar



Women, Pemba

August 27, 2024
Pemba, Zanzibar

The women of Pemba shared their struggles with daladala delays, overcrowding, and discomfort. Long waits, often in rural areas, and chaotic conditions during boarding and exiting made daily commutes challenging. Safety concerns included reckless driving and instances of harassment in crowded spaces. Yet, they valued the affordability and conductors' assistance with luggage. Looking ahead, participants stressed the need for safer, wider roads and better transport regulations. They advocated for modern buses and ticketing systems, emphasizing that these improvements must be paired with robust public education for a safer and inclusive transition.



Above: Members from international organizations, both in-person and online, listening and participating in a focus group session lead by Eng Laith from IDOM.
 Below: Lorenzo Carapellese, Public Transport Consultant from BIG-Z and Iñigo Imaz Castro, Transport Planner from IDOM.

August 28, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

International Organizations

August 28, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Participants highlighted the disorganization and safety concerns challenging the current system, underscoring the need for improved regulation and infrastructure. Insights revealed how these issues impact development projects, emphasizing the importance of understanding the socio-economic dynamics of daladala operations.

Suggestions for collaborative solutions included integrating coordinated infrastructure into urban designs and ensuring existing stakeholders are involved in planning. These discussions shed light a path towards a more efficient, regulated, and inclusive public transport system that serves the needs of all residents.

Above: Group portrait featuring women and representatives from MoICT, IDOM, and Kukuia.
Below: A woman completing the session survey.

August 29, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Women, Unguja

August 29, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

The women of Unguja expressed mixed feelings about their daladala experiences, echoing many other groups in highlighting long waits and overcrowding but emphasising safety concerns. They felt unsafe and vulnerable to additional risks, as the chaotic nature of the buses created opportunities for inappropriate behaviour and abuse from male passengers. These experiences and the challenges of managing their luggage and ensuring their children's safety during journeys reflected their daily struggles with the only transport mode they could afford. They called for stronger protections and more space to avoid situations of excessive contact, along with a collective call to action for drivers and conductors to reject such behaviours. Despite these discomforts, they recognised the potential for modernisation, suggesting the introduction of safer, modern buses and community education to facilitate smoother transitions. They envisioned a more equitable, secure, and accessible transport system that addresses passengers' needs and economic realities.



"Evenings on the daladala are the worst! It's not just the overcrowding - men take advantage of the chaos to touch us inappropriately. And it's not just us; children suffer when conductors push and shove, showing no mercy for women travelling with children. The whole environment is unsafe."

— Participant during the women's session.

A woman expressing her concerns about safety issues related to the daladala service.
August 29, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar

Above: Children from rural Unguja sharing their harassment experiences in public transport.
Below: Group portrait featuring children alongside representatives from MoICT, IDOM, and Kukua.

August 30, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



Children, Rural Unguja

August 30, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Children in rural Unguja shared their challenges with daladalas, from long waits and overcrowded rides to frequent mistreatment by drivers and conductors. They described their frustration when they are pushed aside, forced to board last, left standing for the entire journey, insulted, and overcharged—an unfair treatment compared to other passengers. Despite these difficulties, they appreciated the chance to travel and connect with friends. They envisioned a future with safer, modern buses designed for students, where respect and comfort are prioritized, calling for designated seating, cleaner transport, and a more inclusive system that values their needs.



Above: Children selecting their preferred mode of transport.
Below: Children collectively mapping their daladala journey; on the right, a girl illustrating common means of public transport in Zanzibar.
August 30, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar

Above: Group portrait featuring children alongside Eng. Riziki Salim, Project Coordinator at Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport, and Valentina González, Sharifa Hamad Makame and Raudhat Said from Kukua.
 Below: Children mapping their daladala journey with Sharifa Hamad Makame from Kukua.

August 30, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



Children, Urban Unguja

August 30, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Children in urban Unguja shared mixed experiences with daladalas, highlighting long waits, overcrowding, and frequent mistreatment from conductors. They faced challenges boarding, especially without correct fare, and often felt overlooked compared to adult passengers. Inside, the rides were uncomfortable, with loud music, bad smells, and safety concerns. Despite these frustrations, they valued the accessibility of daladalas for reaching essential places. They envisioned larger buses, student-friendly ticketing systems, and safer journeys, calling for a transport system that respects their needs and ensures their safety.



From being refused rides to facing overcharged fares, children advocate for a respectful experience in public transport.

August 30, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

"As children, we're supposed to pay less, and that's why they (daladala drivers) don't pick us up. When the police are around, they are forced to stop. Once we're inside the daladala, they refuse to give us change if we don't pay the EXACT amount! It's very unfair!"

— Student during the children's session in Urban Unguja.



Children from Unguja express their frustration about being marginalized by drivers and conductors.

August 30, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

Above: Persons with disabilities discussing the systemic marginalization they experience as daladala users.
Below: Modern buses adapted to special needs was the primary focus of the group discussion.

September 2, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar



People with Disabilities, Unguja

September 02, 2024
Unguja, Zanzibar

People with disabilities in Unguja shared unique challenges when navigating the daladala system, highlighting a lack of accessible infrastructure and the frequent disregard from drivers. Overcrowding and poor road conditions made journeys uncomfortable and difficult, especially when standing for long periods. Despite these obstacles, participants valued the social connections and affordability daladalas offer. Their vision for improvement includes modern, buses adapted to persons with disability, with designated wheelchair spaces, accessible toilets at stations, and a transport system that prioritizes dignity and ease for all passengers.



Group portrait featuring participants with disabilities alongside representatives from MoICT, IDOM, and Kukua.
September 2, 2024, Unguja, Zanzibar



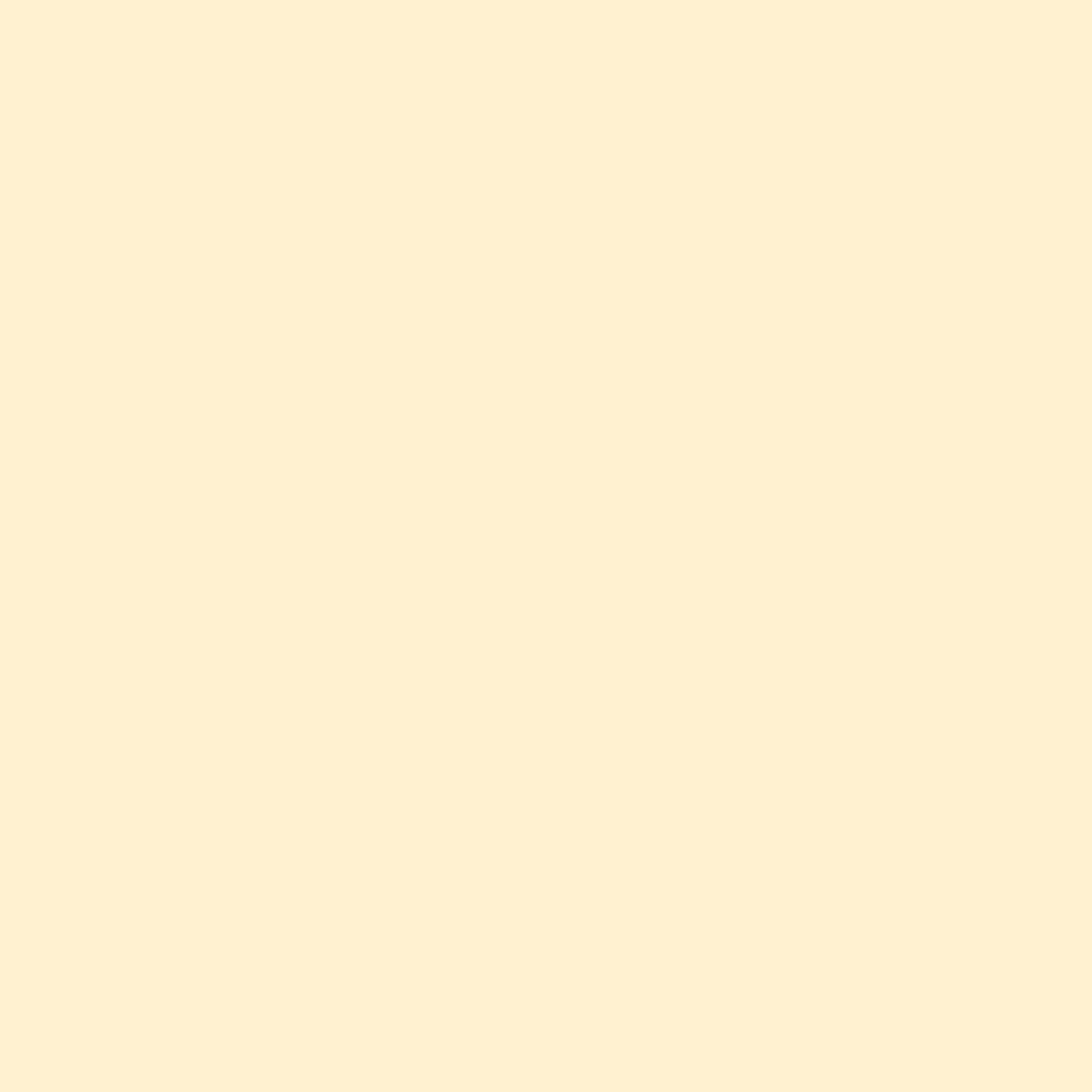
Launch of the study Reorganization and Electrification of the Zanzibar Public Transport System. From left to right: Dr. Khamis Khalid Said, Deputy Principal of Academic, Research, Innovation, and Consultancy at KIST; Dr. Mahmoud A. Alawi, Principal of KIST; Dr. Mngereza Mzee Miraji, Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communication, and Transport, Zanzibar; H.E. Mr. Jorge Moragas, Spanish Ambassador to Tanzania; Mr. David Moncholí, Director of Mobility & Transport at IDOM; Mr. Iñigo Alemany, Project Manager Assistant at Kukua; Mr. Aitor González, Regional Manager for Africa at IDOM; Mr. Yussuf Ibrahim, Commissioner of External Finance, President's Office & Ministry of Finance and Planning, Zanzibar.

April 14, 2024, Unguja, Zanziba

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