

FRANCE

Biodiversity restoration, preservation & enhancement

Location

Mayotte

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P4 – Ecosystems
management

Measure

M16 - Cooperation

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 110 241

EAFRD 99 216

National/Regional 11 025

Project duration

2016 – 2018

Project promoter

IUCN – International Union
for the Conservation of
Nature, Comité français -
Antenne de Mayotte

Contact

anne.caillaud@uicn.fr

Website

<https://uicn.fr/outre-mer/mayotte-2/>

Organising a series of awareness raising and capacity building activities for environmental NGOs in Mayotte.

Summary

This project is a two-year scheme carried out in Mayotte, an overseas department and region of France located in the Comoros archipelago (Indian ocean), aiming to provide support to several environmental civil society organisations. It aimed to increase their ability to ensure environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.



Approximately 50 environmental NGOs participated and benefited from a series of awareness raising and capacity building activities. Five of these were provided with tailored and continued support following a call for expressions of interest.

Results

Two NGOs received facilitation support for the organisation of a public debate on mangrove protection.

The 'ATM' NGO from Acoua municipality received advisory services for wetland protection.

Supported the 'lagoon ambassador' winning NGO, in their communication activities around the Djarifa marine park and the creation of a new canoeing nautical base with the Local Action Group 'Ouest Grand Sud'.

Helped the project prepare an NGO for the recruitment of two environmental facilitators to work at the Ambato lagoon.

Through the project, people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) contributed to coastal management by cleaning beaches.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ There is always a risk when working with small NGOs who operate on a voluntary basis (often with one driving person) that the organisation's priorities can change due to changes in personal circumstances or finances. Seeking transformative solutions is a challenge in itself.
- ❑ There is a need to balance the legislative requirements for EAFRD administration with the need to simplify procedures in order to make the process easier for small organisations.
- ❑ The snowball effect of networking can be observed with new partners and supporting entities becoming more involved and offering support (i.e. the agricultural college now offers training on the creation of plant nurseries and replanting techniques).

Context

Located in the Mozambique Channel in the Indian Ocean, Mayotte is a small archipelago of volcanic origin. It consists of two main islands and about thirty islets scattered throughout the second largest lagoon in the world.

It became a European outermost region in 2014 and now benefits from support received from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESFI).

The entire territory is classified as rural. Mayotte requires more basic infrastructure and has a fast growing population. It is heavily dependent on imports (55% of food consumption by volume) which results in a high-cost food supply chain.

Approximately 32% of the territory is covered by different ecosystems of high natural value (humid, mesophilic and dry forests, saltmarshes, mangroves and wetlands). These areas also have places of cultural and religious interest (zyaras). The forest produces fodder for livestock, aromatic and medicinal plants and firewood, which are in demand by Mayotte communities.

Biodiversity loss is however a major issue for the lagoon. The ecosystems are often ill managed and impacted by increased immigration. This has an impact on local resources.

Objectives

The main objectives of this project are to:

- Raise awareness and boost local ownership of biodiversity challenges.
- Promote Mayotte's strategy for preserving and promoting the island's biodiversity (Stratégie biodiversité pour le développement durable de Mayotte - 2013-2020).
- Facilitate exchanges between civil society organisations engaging in environmental protection, and between biodiversity professionals and members of these organisations.
- Identify capacity and funding needs, and support fundraising endeavours.
- Design a roadmap to develop further activities in the field.

Activities

Prior to 2016, most actions carried out by local environmental civil society organisations in Mayotte were

devoted to waste management, river and beach clean-ups, environmental education and information campaigns. These actions to a large degree were implemented without coordination. However, local civil society's engagement is crucial to ensure that locals are involved in addressing biodiversity protection challenges.

In light of this, the French Committee of IUCN, established in Mayotte in 2012, decided to join forces with two local environmental organisations' federations (Mayotte Nature Environnement and Fédération Mahoraise des Associations de l' Environnement) to launch and facilitate a civil society scheme.

The two-year project was carefully planned. It started with a series of local needs assessment workshops. The questions raised were collected and prioritised as follows:

- How to raise awareness of elderly people regarding waste and nature protection?
- How to create and maintain a discovery trail focusing on education to environment?
- How can biodiversity (fauna and flora) be best monitored and accounted for?
- How to set up and manage a non-for-profit entity (bank account, office management and administrative procedures)?
- How to access funding to carry out such activities?

This was followed by training and capacity building workshops:

- March 2017: training on administrative tasks - tools and methods for community development management techniques, financial management, project management (23 participants).
- June 2018: technical workshop focusing on wetlands, including a field trip to the Ambato lagoon and covering species identification, monitoring techniques, compliance aspects (20 participants).
- July 2018: training on how to design a communication campaign, how to share and archive local news, data protection rules, IT tools and apps, etc. (20 participants).
- July 2018: technical training linked to Mangrove International Day. The training focused on the identification of mangrove seedlings, opportunities and threats linked to restoration techniques (25 participants). This event was also an opportunity to meet with coastguard representatives and other marine science specialists, and establish links with the marine park's 'Lagoon Ambassadors' scheme.

- September 2018: training course on ecological restoration delivered by IUCN French Committee, with support of local and regional authorities (36 participants, among which staff from nine local NGOs); The course featured experts from Mauritius, La Réunion and Comoros; it combined participatory workshops with field visits of a plant nursery and a forest plot under restoration.

In addition to these workshops, technical assistance and dedicated facilitation was delivered to small-scale entities.

The final results of the scheme were presented during a seminar in September 2018.

Main results

The two-year scheme has successfully carried out a series of awareness raising and capacity building workshops as described above.

Video footage from the scheme is online <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHlRnP8FwY>

In addition, the following project promoters received dedicated coaching:

- July 2017: a field visit gathered representatives from small environmental NGOs and local public services (forestry, police, transport, municipality) around the topic of water preservation and the creation of a mangrove interpretation trail near the Kitouloulou water source.
- Two NGOs received facilitation support for the organisation of a public debate on mangrove protection.
- The 'ATM' NGO from Acoua municipality received advisory services for wetland protection.
- February 2018: an entrepreneurship scheme dedicated to a green jobs project was carried out with the technical assistance of the local 'Boutique de Gestion', a national network for business creation and social inclusion, involving several project promoters.

- Supported the 'lagoon ambassador' winning NGO, in their communication activities around the Djarifa marine park and the creation of a new canoeing nautical base with the Local Action Group 'Ouest Grand Sud'.
- Helped an NGO recruit two environmental facilitators who are in charge of organising outdoor visits and awareness raising actions for the preservation of the Ambato lagoon.
- Through the project, people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) contributed to coastal management by cleaning beaches.

Key lessons

Several difficulties were encountered:

- There is always a risk when working with small NGOs who operate on a voluntary basis (often with one driving person) that the organisation's priorities can change due to changes in personal circumstances or finances. Seeking transformative solutions is a challenge in itself.
- There is a need to balance the legislative requirements for EAFRD administration with the need to simplify procedures in order to make the process easier for small organisations.

On the positive side:

- Small NGOs gained in visibility and participated in capacity building workshops.
- Links between local NGOs and other environmental practitioners were strengthened.
- The snowball effect of networking can be observed with new partners and supporting entities becoming more involved and offering support (i.e. the agricultural college now offers training on the creation of plant nurseries and replanting techniques).

Additional sources of information

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/fr/factsheet-mayotte_fr.pdf

www.iucn.org/