



Project GREEN-NC: Comprehensive management strategies for environment and natural areas: biodiversity and ecosystem services in New Caledonia

The value, uniqueness and vulnerability of the biodiversity of New Caledonia, one of the ten most important biodiversity hotspots identified throughout the world, are unarguable. However, the financing available does not match the scale of the management and conservation challenges facing the territory. Conservation activities are all-too-often fragmented due to the local institutional organization and biological knowledge is still lacking, scattered and not well utilized, which impedes the effective management of natural resources. The project provides the opportunity to develop synergistic, convergent and complementary actions on priority sites by notably improving essential knowledge, supporting management actions (protection, restoration and threat reduction) and strengthening collective governance authorities. This will contribute to strengthen foundations for the sustainable management of natural resources in New Caledonia and help to adapt to ecological and socio-economic changes.



Project description

The GREEN-NC project supports the development and the strengthening of a local network connecting the sites of major environmental importance, identified and managed by local competent communities. The global objective is to contribute to the conservation of the biodiversity and to the preservation of ecosystem services of New Caledonia.



Main achievements:

The implementation of the project is through a collegial process, under the coordination of the 'Agence de Développement Economique de la Nouvelle-Calédonie' (ADECAL) and of Conservation International: it brings together New Caledonia entities competent in environmental management (local communities and 'Conservatoire des Espaces Naturels' (CEN)) to co-develop strategies and land management measures that go beyond and above projects and institutional organizations' boundaries (for ex. synergies RAMSAR, Patrimoine Mondial de l'Humanité (UNESCO), INTEGRE (EU FP7), RESCCUE (AFD)).

Project GREEN-NC achievements fulfilled three aims:

- **Improve knowledge on biodiversity and ecosystem services:**

The implementation of a dedicated program materialized a need expressed by botanical experts from all horizons to study and to develop concrete conservation actions of rare and threatened New Caledonia species. Special attention is given to the study of flagship endemic species, notably conifer and palm trees.

38 out of 39 of the island's palm trees are endemic, with most of them occupying a very small range (12 species are known in only one site). With 44 endemic conifers (out of 45), New Caledonia holds the world record for this group as far as diversity is concerned.

- **Strengthen existing land management activities :**

After detailed inventories of Sandalwood (*Santalum austrocaledonicum*) on the archipelago of the Loyalty Islands, a proposal for regulations to sustainably manage this endemic

natural resource was submitted to the local authorities. Quotas by island and by district were revised and a specifications manual was developed detailing technical recommendations to follow before logging.

In the region 'Grand Sud', the boundaries of a site to submit to the RAMSAR list were finalized. The 44,000ha proposed site will feature and protect the exceptional biodiversity of that area.

The project also contributes to the implementation of management plan in some marine protected areas (MPAs) by i) financing associations to coordinate the co-management process, ii) setting up measures on small islands to direct visitors away from environmentally sensitive areas and limit the impacts of mass visitation and; iii) conducting specific wildlife inventories (bird surveys for example).

- **Strengthen collective governance for the management of natural resources**

The CEN has worked, since its creation in 2011, as a tool for cooperation, discussion and coordination to support environmental strategies defined by New Caledonia communities. The GREEN-NC project assisted the CEN in developing a territory-wide strategy to fight invasive species and in creating a common resource center.

By supporting the GREEN-NC project, the European Commission enables the project to act as a catalyst, accelerating the development and the implementation of public policies about environmental protection. The project serves as a 'label' allowing local communities to mobilize more easily the expertise, as well as the co-financing necessary for the implementation of the project's concrete actions.

Key numbers :

- Number of species the project will help better protect: 12 species
- Increased public awareness for 500 species
- Surface covered by the project: 573,000 ha (terrestrial and marine areas)



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