

Protect and Restore the Dry Forest of the Coast of New Caledonia

Targeted territory: New Caledonia

Total project budget: 416,301 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 377,435 Euros

Duration: May 2016 – April 2019 (36 months)

Lead organisation: Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Nouvelle-Calédonie (CEN)

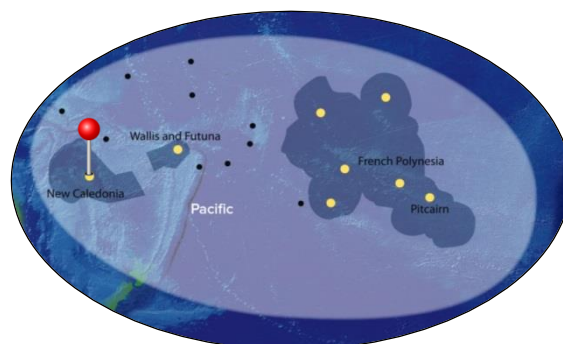


Background:

New Caledonia hosts one of the most threatened tropical biotopes in the world, the dry forest, which is home to 456 plant species including a large number of endemics.

Today, about 98% of the dry forest of New Caledonia has disappeared; around 4,500 hectares remain within a fragile and fragmented environment. Almost half of the remaining dry forest is on private land, the other half occurs on public land. The main threats are of human origin and include overgrazing by introduced herbivores, clearance for agro-pastoral activity and urbanization, invasive species, wood cutting and fires.

Preservation of this habitat is urgent and the demonstration of approaches for its efficient restoration and to foster resilience and connectivity of relict forests is very much needed.



Description of the Project:

The project will implement actions to protect and restore the dry forests. A 400 hectare area will be protected from grazing and suitable areas for restoration activities identified. Plantations will be established in areas previously deferred to grazing to trial new forest restoration techniques and assess their success. Through this work the project hopes to demonstrate the feasibility of restoration of dry forest from nothing. A booklet on dry forest restoration methods will be produced on the basis of the learning from this work.



A significant component of the project is to raise awareness of the need to protect and restore the threatened dry forest ecosystem through the production of promotional flyers and signs.

Intended results:

- Around 400 hectares of the largest dry forest of the coast of New Caledonia is physically protected and areas conducive to future restoration are identified
- Effective dry forest restoration techniques are identified and documented
- Increased awareness within the general public of New Caledonia of the issue of the protection and restoration of the threatened dry forest



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