

Good Practices – EAFRD projects' template

Project name/title

Support to civil society organisations for the preservation and promotion of biodiversity in Mayotte

(in French: *Mise en place d'un dispositif de renforcement des capacités des associations environnementales de Mayotte*)

Summary description of project / scheme

The two-year scheme carried out in Mayotte, an overseas department and region of France - and outermost region since 2014 - located in the Comoros archipelago (Indian ocean), aimed at providing support to a several environmental civil society organisations in order to raise their capacity and professionalism in terms of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

These environmental NGOs participated and benefited from a series of awareness raising and capacity building activities, targeting around 50 local NGOs. Five of these were provided with tailored and continued support following a call for expressions of interest. Despite many constraints including a long social crisis, the project concluded with many positive responses from the civil society groupings.

Context

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

European outermost region since 2014, Mayotte is experiencing its first programming of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESFI).

The entire territory is classified as rural. Mayotte has very high needs in basic infrastructure, accentuated by strong population growth. It is heavily dependent on imports (55% of food consumption by volume) for a high-cost food supply.

A number of different ecosystems of high natural value, representing 32% of the territory, constitute an integral and important part of the territory's riches (humid, mesophilic and dry forests, saltmarshes, mangroves, wetlands, etc.). Natural environments host places of cultural and religious interest (zyaras). Forest products are in demand by the Mayotte communities: fodder for livestock, aromatic and medicinal plants, firewood.

Biodiversity loss is however a major issue for the lagoon (one of the most beautiful in the world) and for Mayotte sustainable development; ecosystems are often ill managed and devastated by the increase of illegal immigration settlements from neighbouring Comoros population, having a negative impact on local resources and creating social tensions.

Objectives

- 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 into 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, and largely occurred opportunistically and without any coordination. However, local civil society's activity is crucial to ensure locals' proper ownership of biodiversity protection challenges, and its structuration, professionalism, proper funding and technical capacity is key to safeguarding the island's natural heritage and ensuring a counter-voice to development choices.

In light of this, the French Committee of IUCN, implanted in Mayotte since 2012, decided to joint 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 2-year project was carefully planned. It started with a series of local needs' assessment workshops. The questions raised were collected and prioritized:

- 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, administrative procedures, etc.)?
- How to access funding to carry out such activities?

This was followed by training and capacity building workshops:

- March 2017: administrative training: 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: 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 on the occasion of the Mangrove International Day, with identification of mangrove seedlings, opportunities and threats linked to restoration techniques (25 participants). This event was also an opportunity to meet with coastguards 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 9 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, as described below.

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

Results

The 2-year scheme has successfully carried out a series of awareness raising and capacity building workshops as described above.

The Facebook account created in January 2017 has 331 followers and shows 310 likes¹.

Video footage from the scheme is also online https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_zHlInP8FwY

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

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/uicnmayotte/> - figures from 03/09/2019 – 17:00 CET

and the creation of a mangrove interpretation trail near the Kitouloulou water source.

- Two NGOs² got 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'³, a national network for business creation and social inclusion, involving several project promoters.
- Supporting the 'lagoon ambassador' winning NGO, for 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'⁴.
- Supporting project preparation of one NGO⁵ for the recruitment of 2 environmental facilitators in charge of organising outdoor visits and awareness raising actions for the preservation of the Ambato lagoon.
- Accompanying the social enterprise⁶ hosted by the first social economy incubator, providing integration work to NEET⁷ people through coastal management (cleaning beaches, etc.)

Lessons

Several difficulties were encountered:

- Small NGOs working on a voluntary basis often operate with one driving person and can suddenly give up and jeopardise ongoing projects, or lose their initial impetus. Seeking transformative solutions is a challenge in itself.
- Mayotte social riots and complete territorial blocking due to mass arrival of undocumented migrants from Comoros lasted six weeks at the beginning of 2018 and had negative consequences on the scheme as all offices were closed.
- The administrative burden of the EAFRD contractual agreement was considered excessive and time-consuming.

On the positive side:

- Small NGOs gained in visibility and engaged into capacity building workshops.
- Linkages between local NGOs and other environmental practitioners were strengthened.
- The snowball effect of networking can be observed with new partners and supporting entities pursuing their involvement and support (i.e. the agricultural college now displays training on the creation of plant nurseries and replanting techniques).

Project general info

Name (project title or short name)	Community development for environmental preservation
Dates ¹ (Indicate both start and end dates)	September 2016 – September 2018 (2 years)
Member State (or region if regionalised RDP)	France (Mayotte)
Type of beneficiary (public/SME/farmer/NGO etc.)	Environmental NGO
Measure ² (or measures)	16.5.1
Priority & Focus Area ³	4A / 4B / 4C + transversal objectives (innovation, environment, climate)

Funding in EURO⁴

² AMASE & ASDM

³ <https://www.bge.asso.fr/>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GALouestgrandsud/>

⁵ Association Jardin De Mtsangamouji

⁶ <https://m.facebook.com/lesgardiensdulittoral/>

⁷ NEET = Not in Education, Employment or Training

Total project budget (i)+(ii)+(iii) =	€110,241
+ (i) Rural Development Programme support (a)+(b)	€110,241
+ (a) EAFRD (EU) contribution	€99,216
+ (b) National / Regional contribution	€11,025
+ (ii) Private / Own funds	/
+ (iii) Other funding sources	/

Contact details

Project beneficiary name/organisation	International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature) Comité français - Antenne de Mayotte
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Other contact details	

Further information

Website	https://iucn.fr/outre-mer/mayotte-2/
Additional info sources, links	https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-development-2014-2020/country-files/fr/factsheet-mayotte_fr.pdf
	https://www.iucn.org/

Quotes from beneficiaries/participants

'Civil society is beginning to structure itself and projects are emerging; it is increasingly receptive to biodiversity issues for their island.'

Anne Caillaud, IUCN French Committee

2-3 Project/Scheme photos with information on copyrights (sent separately)

A number of 2-3 photos, as available, would be sufficient. Copyrights maybe the name of the photographer, or in general the owner of the photos' copyrights as indicated by the provider of the project's content.

1. Aerial view of Mayotte – credit: Jérôme Spaggiari
2. School visit to the Ambato area – credit: Jérôme Spaggiari

Additional note

¹ Both a starting and end date are needed.

² Always indicate which measure(s) were used.

³ Both the Priority & Focus Area are needed.

⁴ In case more than one measures were used then please provide the above financial data for all measures involved.

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Anne Caillaud