

## **Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions**

**Project:** Strengthening Community Management of the Indian Ocean's Largest LMMA

**Applicant:** Blue Ventures

**Ref:** MAD-66073

The long term goal of this project is to obtain permanent protected area status for the Barren Isles as a category VI MPA, ensuring biodiversity conservation and sustainable local user rights.

One of the issues the project will be dealing with is managing access to marine resources for both traditional and industrial fishers, whose activities will be targeted by the regional fishery management processes that will be put in place, and the development of the Barren Isles Marine Protected Area. Blue Ventures has been advised that this triggers the CEPF Restriction of Access to Natural Resources and hence this process framework is set out to address this specific issue.

The process framework aims to demonstrate that the project works to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potentially adverse effects of restrictions of access to natural resources, and ensure that affected communities are consulted with and participate in meaningful ways in project activities affecting them.

### **Project background**

The Barren Isles archipelago, a Key Biodiversity Area within Madagascar and the broader Mozambique Channel ecosystem, is one of the few remaining strongholds of exceptional marine biodiversity in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO). The Barren Isles face two broad categories of direct anthropogenic threat to the resilience of the marine ecosystems underpinning local fisheries.

Firstly, unprecedented fishing effort, related to lucrative markets for shark fins and sea cucumbers, rapid population growth and increasing migration to the region are driving resource overexploitation, and growing conflict between small-scale and industrial fishing sectors. These pressures are compounded by illegal and destructive fishing practices, including beach seine fishing, industrial sea cucumber fishing, poison fishing, and “barrage” shark nets several km in length.

Secondly, growing interest in mineral resource exploration and extraction threatens to disturb the marine environment and the archipelago’s fragile low-lying island ecosystems. In particular, commercial extraction of phosphorite (petrified seabird guano) within the protected area currently threatens the viability of the islands, nesting marine turtle and ground-nesting seabird populations, also damaging surrounding shallow-water coral reefs. This practice is of grave concern to the region given the very high vulnerability of the Barren Isles’ reef and island ecosystems to climate change and for the many fisher families relying on that ecosystem.

While the Barren Isles protected area currently benefits from broad multilateral support from Government and civil society via its temporary protected area status, completion of procedures towards definitive protection, and management of the zone – Indian Ocean’s largest LMMA – faces practical challenges given the region’s geographic isolation and highly dispersed migratory population, the vast scale of the LMMA (over 4300 km<sup>2</sup>), and the low technical capacity of the Vezo Miray Nosy Barren (VMNB) Association, the community management association that will be joint co-managers of the LMMA with Blue Ventures.

In the long term, Blue Ventures expects the Barren Isles to obtain permanent protected area status as a category VI MPA, ensuring biodiversity conservation and sustainable local user rights. Our strategy is to work towards effective small-scale fisheries management and the protection of key marine habitats within the LMMA undertaken by traditional fishers through the management structure of the VMNB Association, with Blue Ventures’ sustained technical support. The project prioritises capacity building of the VMNB Association, enabling LMMA leaders to take an increasing lead in the protected area’s coordination and strategic direction.

### Participatory Implementation

The project explicitly promotes local leadership and participation in fisheries management, to ensure that the needs, perspectives, interests and food security of coastal communities and other stakeholders affected by the MPA are properly addressed.

By empowering communities with legal rights to manage their fisheries, the project will ensure that traditional ecological knowledge will be utilised wherever possible, for example through participatory zoning of the timing and placement of temporary and permanent fishing restrictions.

The MPA’s management strategy will be developed and managed by local beneficiaries, creating a solution that is led by communities in partnership with state authorities. Although reinforced by legal protection, the governance frameworks promoted by the project rest on customary social conventions, and so any restrictions will have strong local legitimacy. Empowering communities for fisheries management strengthens social capital by promoting environmental stewardship and community cohesion, creating positive social and ecological synergies, which both enhance the effectiveness of local management and support other areas of community development.

The project values stakeholder participation and will be consulting with a wide range of parties that include:

- Centre de Surveillance des Peches (CSP), government entity in charge of national fisheries surveillance
- Ministere de l’Environnement de l’Ecologie, de la Mer et des Forets (MEEMF), government ministry with the responsibility for protected areas, in particularly through the Oceans Directorate. The Barren Isles is a high priority for this Directorate.
- Ministere des Ressources Halieutiques et de la Peche (MRHP) / Direction Regionale des Ressources Halieutiques et de la Peche (DRRHP), ministry in charge of fisheries
- Region Melaky & Chef de Region
- WWF
- GAPCM (*Groupement des Aquaculteurs et Pecheurs de Crevette de Madagascar*), that represents industrial shrimp trawlers fishing within the region

### Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

No involuntary restrictions will be placed on activities which are not clearly illegal, unsustainable and destructive.

The Barren Isles MPA currently forbids industrial fishing within its perimeters, aside from a corridor between Maintraino and the MPA that will be a sustainable use area, where industrial fishers would be allowed to fish under specific rules which will be designed in consultation with traditional fishers and authorities. The project is creating a platform for fisheries management through an MPA management committee and reinforcing it with a Regional Fisheries Management Plan. Without an intervention to involve local communities in resource management and to restrict industrial and IUU fishing, the Barren Isles coral reefs risk facing the same degradation and overexploitation that has plagued the fisheries of the West coast of Madagascar.

### Measures to assist affected persons

Because no involuntary restrictions will be placed on activities which are not clearly illegal, no affected persons are considered eligible for mitigation/compensation measures.

### How potential conflicts will be resolved

The VMNB Association will receive training on effective fishery management that includes training on maintaining and up-to-date logbook of infractions and resolutions with reports submitted to relevant local authorities.

The project's support of the implementation of the Melaky regional fisheries management plan (FMP), including the Barren Isles MPA as a pilot site will document roles and responsibilities for FMP between the Melaky region stakeholders and deliver outreach and communication tours and workshops to ensure broad understanding of these roles and responsibilities.

Part of our conflict mitigation plan is to make sure stakeholders such as Region Melaky and the GAPCM are involved in the project from the start. The active participation and buy-in of the Melaky regional administration is important for local conflict resolution in implementing the MPA and the fisheries management plan. Blue Ventures will hold regular consultations with the Chef de Region, and ensure the regional administration is included in all formal processes. As an important user of marine resources and having sometimes conflictual relationships with traditional fishermen on common fishing zones, GAPCM which represents industrial shrimp trawlers in the region will regularly be consulted in order to develop conflict resolution and sustainable management of regional marine resources.

### Arrangements for implementing and monitoring the process

BV will work to empower community representatives to undertake most of the management decision-making on the ground, and provide a sense of true local ownership of the MPA, as well as strong and technically competent representation by community members on the management committee alongside government co-managers (DRPRH and DREF), with minimal dependence on NGO support.

In addition, we are proposing the following deliverable to monitor safeguard issue:

- A 6-monthly report that contains:

- Update on the list of infractions and resolutions recorded by VMNB Association in their logbooks and a brief report by the on-site programme manager.
- Update on the number, content and results of consultation meetings.