

Process Framework for Involuntary Restrictions

Date

26/04/2017

CEPF Grant 66369

Grantee

Ecosystem Restoration Alliance Indian Ocean

Project Title

Mauritian Fruit Bat (*Pteropus niger*)- An Umbrella Species for Forest Restoration

Project Location

Mauritius

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization.: Ecosystem Restoration Alliance Indian Ocean
2. CEPF Application Code 66369
3. Title: Mauritian Fruit Bat (*Pteropus niger*) - An Umbrella Species for Forest Restoration
4. Grant amount (US dollars) \$143630
5. Proposed dates of grant 1/07/2017-30/06/2020
6. Location: Mauritius.
7. *Date of preparation of this document 26/04/2017*

The Process Framework will describe the project and how restrictions of access to natural resources and measures to assist affected communities. Affected communities should have the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the Process Framework. Typically, the Applicant will prepare a draft Framework that will then be shared and discussed with local communities and other relevant stakeholders. Based on the consultations, a final Framework will be prepared. CEPF may provide guidance on development of the Framework and will review and approve the final Framework prior to approving the final project proposal application. The Process Framework should include the following elements:

A. Project background

Both Yemen-Takamaka and Longue Mountain are identified as priority areas in Mauritius because they are home to many endangered plants and may shelter presumed extinct plant species. Both areas are poorly studied in Mauritius and the forest is being degraded, with many invasive species taking over. Additionally, both areas are home to endemic and threatened Mauritian fruit bats (*Pteropus niger*; currently listed as Vulnerable but during a revision and considered for Critically Endangered status by IUCN) which are blamed for being a major pest in litchi and mango plantations. The Mauritian fruit bat is the only animal on the island able to disperse endemic plant seeds over large distances and provide genetic exchange between the remnant forest patches. Mauritian forest, apart from being highly invaded and degraded, lacks other seed dispersers crucial for proper function of the forest ecosystem and plant regeneration. In 2015 a major government cull was undertaken in Mauritius with over 30,000 bats killed followed by 2016 cull of additional 10,000 bats to minimize their impact on fruit farms. Both Yemen-Takamaka and Longue Mountain are next to major litchi orchards in which bats cause significant damage. A two-year study conducted by Dr Oleksy about the impact of bats on fruit orchards and their feeding and movement behavior indicated that for most of the year bats rely on forest food sources and feed on native and endemic plant species. High deforestation and degradation of Mauritian forest limits bat food resources and forces them to feed on commercial fruits. It is essential to educate the local community about the feeding behavior of bats and their important role in forest maintenance and regeneration and involve them in forest regeneration activities in the priority areas by removing invasive species and planting endemic bat-preferred plants (and other endemics). The removal of invasive species will increase productivity (fruiting) of established native and endemic trees while planting of established saplings such as fast growing and very resilient *Ficus* spp. (essential calcium source for bats and the most preferred fruit) which fruits asynchronously several times a year, will ensure food supply in longer term. That will provide a reservoir of food for bats during the commercial fruiting season and reduce their impact on commercial fruits. At the same time, it will ensure vital seed dispersal by bats in the areas and passive regeneration of the forest. It is a long term solution to human-bat conflict which will ensure the survival of the species, forest regeneration and maintenance and involve local communities in conservation activities so that they can understand the importance of the forest and the ecosystem services it provides. Currently, both Yemen-Takamaka and Longue Mountain

is largely unmanaged and has become degraded. This project provides an opportunity to turn these areas into conservation sites and future reserves managed by local communities (under ERA supervision) with clear benefit to both nature and humans. Many planters and local people have positive attitude towards bats and expect solution to ongoing fruit damage problem. While deterrence methods will be tested in the next fruiting season (2017/18), local people can help in forest maintenance and understand better where is the root of the problem. If no action is taken, the areas will remain unsurveyed and will continue to be invaded by alien plant species while the bat population will face future culls.

B. Participatory implementation

The Longue Mountain area is a common roosting area of bats. Ecosystem Restoration Alliance Indian Ocean (ERA) was working closely in the area monitoring bats and previously conducting trial tracking of the bats. ERA has approached several fruit growers asking about their attitude towards bats and whether they would be willing to collaborate and conduct trials to test non-lethal methods of bat deterrence. The general response was positive and farmers as well as back yard growers are keen to collaborate. Generally, local community has positive attitude towards the project which implements forest protection and aims to help resolve ongoing human-bat problem.

C. Expected restrictions of access to natural resources

The 'Mountain Reserve' status officially prevent from alternations of the area or tree cutting etc. However, it is not monitored nor managed as NPCS or FS have not enough resources to manage all the forest. The access to the area will not change drastically, we will ensure that appropriate signs are placed to ensure people know this is protected area and any alternations to the land cannot be made.

1) Access to Land/cultivation

The current 'Mountain Reserve' status officially prevents from alternations of the area, and this will not change with 'Managed Protected Area' status. Forest is scarce in Mauritius and majority of arable land is already cultivated. There is no pressure on the mountainous forested area on Longue Mountain for agriculture purposes. The land is of limited to no agricultural value, and as property of the State, is not considered for agriculture expansion.

2) Access to timber or forest products

Local people do not rely on forest resources that much. Occasionally it is seen that trees are being cut (generally invasive species). The local population do not rely on wood for energy, or construction. From discussions with local communities, when timber is taken out from the forest, it's more for opportunistic reasons, by people who do not know where the limit of the "Mountain Reserve" is, and because the land is seen as unmanaged. From consultation with locals, there is no real demand for timber and they do not see limitation to take timber as a problem. Shodl the case arise, arrangements might be sought with forestry service to take out some invasive species of trees. In the current situation, local inhabitants do no consider this project to imply any additional limitations for the timber or forest product access.

3) Hunting

Hunting in Mauritius is not a livelihood activity but a recreational activity. Nobody relies on hunting for proteins etc. Generally, hunting takes place in "chasses" (private land designed for this purpose, often with introduced game species such as pheasants, deer).

From interviews with local communities, there is currently no such hunting activities occurring on Montagne Longue.

Some fruit farmer do shoot at bats in the area, as a result of the human-bat conflict the project aims to mitigate. These killings, illegal unless organized by the government, happen generally in the orchards or close to human settlements, and occasionally in the reserve itself. They are not related to livelihood activities (the bats are not eaten). Strengthening the interdiction of killing of bats in the reserve is not seen as a restriction of access to natural resources, as the bats are not taken out for any human purpose and are listed as a protected species in Mauritius.

4) Recreational activities

The change of status will not affect recreational activities - it will rather improve it in the future as a good example of forest restoration. The sites will not be close to public. The 'Managed Conservation Area' will be a refuge for bats and endemic animals and plants within to ensure their protection and conservation. In a long term this area will be suitable for reintroduction of endemic birds which until now are mostly present in the Black River Gorges National Park and 'Managed Conservation Areas' in the south-west and south-east of the Mauritius. Thus, it will be a big step to establish a new population of endemic birds in the central part of Mauritius, and the area is expected to become a tourism attraction, with enhanced recreational use and job creation for the local communities.

D. Criteria for eligibility of affected persons

Following section C, the project will not result in any restriction of access to natural resources that would affect the livelihood of inhabitants of the neighboring communities.

E. Measures to assist the affected persons

Following Section D, no specific measures have been considered, as the project won't affect local communities.

F. Conflict resolution and complaint mechanism.

All projects that trigger a safeguard are required to provide local communities and other interested stakeholders with means by which they may raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank.

Potentially affected local communities should be informed of the objectives of the grant and the existence of a grievance mechanism. Contact information of the grantee, the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director should be made publicly available, through posters, signboards, public notices or other appropriate means in local language(s). Grievances raised with the grantee should be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response. If the claimant is still not satisfied following the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the CEPF Executive Director via the dedicated email account (cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Secretariat, the grievance may be submitted to the World Bank at the local World Bank office.

During the initial phase of the project, local communities will be approached by organizing a general meeting, and informed about the aims and activities of this project.

Additionally, leaflets and posters will be distributed in the area to highlight the project and make people aware of its aims and activities.

The posters and leaflets will include contact of the ERA Project Manager and Forestry service, to whom grievance should be addressed in the first place.

Should any grievance be raised to the ERA project manager and/or Forestry service, the RIT and CEPF grant director will be informed within a week. Project manager and Forestry service will look for solutions with the claimant, and will provide to the claimant contacts of the RIT and grant director, and to CEPF Executive Director and World Bank office, so that claimant can raise the issue to them in case the claim has not been solved satisfactorily by ERA and Forestry service.

G. Implementation Arrangements

Describe how you will continue to follow up this safeguard

As part of the project, regular meetings with local communities are scheduled for educational purposes and to keep them up to date with the project progress.

National Park and Conservation Service as well as Forestry Service and Ministry of Agro-Industry will be regularly updated about the project progress. At least quarterly meetings will be conducted at the NPCS office.

Every six months, ERA will send a report to CEPF about project progress and safeguard implementations.