

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	Missouri Botanical Garden
Project Title:	Promoting the Self Sufficiency of Reserves in the Ramena Complex, Antsiranana, by Conceiving, Developing, and Testing New Tourism Products
Grant Number:	65861
CEPF Region:	Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands
Strategic Direction:	2 Enable civil society to mainstream biodiversity and conservation into political and economic decision-making.
Grant Amount:	\$92,452.00
Project Dates:	January 01, 2016 - June 30, 2018
Date of Report:	September 20, 2018

Implementation Partners

List each partner and explain how they were involved in the project

Our main partners for this project included:

Region DIANA (help in coordination of partners, lead communication among State partners, organise and host formal workshops, validate work program)

Direction du tourisme DIANA (provision of advice and facilitation of work)

Office du Tourisme Diego (promotion of tourism products)

Commune Ramena (animation of work with local community)

Region Militaire N7 (provision of advice, facilitation and validation of work at Oranjia)

Direction des Eaux, Environnement et Foret (provision of advice, facilitation and validation of work)

SAGE (implementing agency at Montagne des Francais)

In addition, the following institutions provided advice: PAGE/GIZ; CD29; Hotels in Diego, Ankorihely, Ramena and Baie de Sakalava; Tours Operators in Diego and Tana

Conservation Impacts

Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile

In this project we successfully created two participative tourism products, one associated with the Oronjia New Protected Area (NPA) and the other associated with the Ambohitr'Antsingy Montagne des Francais NPA. At Oronjia, volunteers have been provided with the opportunity of joining two local animators in work to conserve the critically endangered and locally endemic tree *Delonix velutina*; and at Ambohitr'Antsingy Montagne des Francais the volunteers can join two local animators in work to conserve a selection of useful but over-exploited locally endemic trees. While the work revolves around two specially-constructed tree nurseries, the volunteers may also join in associated activities away from the nursery including seed collection, planting young plants as part of forest restoration and monitoring seedlings. The two nurseries have high specifications including protection with shade cloth - which provides shaded conditions for both the seedlings and those working in the nursery, and the use raised tables for the propagation of the the seedlings. Six local people were trained over 6 months to animate participative tourism product: four of these people continue to work in this capacity, while one works as a community animator for Conservation International at the Ambodivahibe Reserve. The sixth animator has taken unrelated work elsewhere.

Unfortunately, for reasons described and discussed elsewhere in this report, the two products were not launched until the very end of the project in June 2018 and thus we are unable to report on their impact in terms of number of volunteers that they have hosted nor the income generated. However, prior to the official launch at Oronjia we were able, at different times, to host four young foreigners seeking work experience. Each of these people volunteered for 3 weeks and paid a total sum of 92,500 MGA per week.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
The long-term viability (in particular financial autonomy) of three protected areas in Madagascar - the Oronjia Forest (1,648 ha), Montagne de Francais (6,049 ha), and Ambodivahibe (39,794 ha) - will increase by developing similar tourism products to those conceived, developed and demonstrated in the Ramena Complex.	To date the financial impact of this project is very modest because the products only became operational at the very end of the funding period. However, the protected area managers are dedicated to continuing this work and expect that financial rewards will be forthcoming within the next year. The work completed during this project hugely increased the visibility of the protected areas in the eyes of local and regional stakeholders and therefore increased the credibility of the protected area managers.


Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Short term impacts: 1) New options for strengthening the financial autonomy of the NPAs within the Ramena Complex are identified and tested.	To date the income generated by this project is modest (1,110,000 MGA) but we believe, on the basis of feedback from travel agencies who participated in the eductours or taster events that we organised in June 2018, that the concept is viable and the products attractive, and that in the forthcoming months significant funds will be generated for the management

	of these protected areas
2) Local communities (people of three fokontany) living adjacent to the NPAs within the Ramena Complex are further convinced of the potential socio-economic benefits to be derived from the designation and management of these sites for conservation.	In general, tourism to Diego is on the increase and local people living around Oronjia and Montagne des Francais are very aware of the potential of this activity to improve their livelihoods. Prior to this project they solicited help to develop tourism adjacent to the villages where they live and thus they are aware that nature can bring them direct economic benefits. This project helped us to respond to these requests and thereby enhance the credibility of our conservation work. The 6 animators recruited and trained by this project and the 15 guides trained by funds from other donors are members of the local community and, although few tourists have yet to volunteer for our participative tourism opportunities, these young people remain confident that ultimately these protected areas will yield benefits for them. As part of the training the animators and guides learned about the importance of the protected areas, how these sites are threatened and how they might be conserved: this information they have shared with the people in the villages where they live - in effect they have become village-level advocates for these protected areas.
3) Foreign visitors to Madagascar's nature reserves visit NPAs within the Ramena Complex and gain profound insights into the realities of conservation in the country and establish relationships with Malagasy conservationists and local communities that serve all parties well in the future.	To date the project has hosted 4 volunteers: Kim, Amanda, Lydia and Fernando. For each their period of volunteering had a huge impact. Kim has already returned to Oronjia to study for his PhD on lemur ecology, Fernando has also returned to Madagascar to conduct ecological research close to Mahajanga, and Lydia has recently informed us that she is seeking voluntary work in the country. Three of the four volunteers remain in contact with certain members of the local community and certain members of staff.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives

The progress of this project was much slower than anticipated which ultimately led to the very late launch of the products in June 2018. The slow progress had a number of causes including a) the need to research and seek validation for Environmental and Social Impact Assessments prior to the construction of the nurseries; b) difficulties in finding all the materials we needed to construct the nurseries while avoiding using resources (e.g. timber) that had not been sourced sustainably; c) the complexity of working with State partners who had not included our work in their annual work plans; d) the challenge of achieving consensus among a diverse set of sometimes competitive State institutions. With respect to the last two issue listed, our work ultimately was greatly assisted through the intervention of the Region DIANA whose staff became convinced on the importance of the work and helped us to win the engagement of other parts of the State apparatus.



Another major challenge of achieving the anticipated short term impact was that most of the local people we selected for training as experience animators made little or no progress in improving their skills in communicating in English and French despite significant investment in language tuition over 6 months. This failure is a major disappointment, and sadly this failure seems to be a frequent issue of community-based tourism projects throughout Madagascar. While those managing conservation projects wish to maximise the employment benefits associated with ecotourism for local people, these important primary stakeholders frequently acquire the necessary language skills only after years of exposure to visitors and there is no quick fix.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

An unexpected positive impact of this project was that all of the four young foreigners (Kim, Amanda, Fernando and Lydia) who sought work experience with the team at Oranjia are all committed to returning to Madagascar. Kim, who spent 3 weeks at Oranjia in 2017, returned to the site in 2018 to begin his doctoral study on habitat use by the crowned lemur (*Eulemur coronatus*). Kim's presence at the site has numerous benefits including: a) acting as informal police to prevent lemur hunting; b) providing study opportunities for the Malagasy student biologists who have joined him in this research; 3) providing local employment opportunities for cooks and guides; and d) providing information that can inform management of this new protected area. A second unexpected positive impact was that the presence of an active tourism project at this site enabled us to access additional support from two other donors.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
2	Three environmentally-themed, short-duration, participative tourism products are defined and planned with reference to the market research and inputs from all stakeholders.	2.1	Three product development plans produced each including a description of the product, an evaluation of the market for the product, and a plan for creating the product.	Two plans researched, validated and implemented. With the approval of CEPF the product proposed for implementation at Ambodivahibe was abandoned because of the uncertainty of Conservation International's tourism plans at this site.
3	Three environmentally-themed, short duration, participative tourism products created and fit for purpose	3.1	Human capacity and infrastructure in place to enable the three products to be delivered to the required standards	Six animators trained and two nurseries installed. Capacity is thus available to deliver two products. The third product proposed for Ambodivahibe was not pursued, with the approval of CEPF, due to uncertainty in the tourism plan for this site.
4	Tourism operators, hotel staff, guides, and tourists are aware of the products on offer and how they can be accessed	4.2	Most foreign tourists arriving in Diego are exposed to either an informative website, poster or brochure presenting the product and how they can be accessed	Two attractive websites, one for the Oranjia and one for Montagne des Francais were conceived and launched (see: http://mobot-mg.org/oronjia/ ; http://aamdf.mg/aamdf-tourisme/) and two brochures were conceived, printed and distributed to hotels and travel agencies in in Diego and Ramena CR. As part of this process MBG-Diego became a member of the Office Regionale de Toursime Deigo (ORTD) and the website of this platform contains information concerning the two products. In 3 June the Project Manager installed and manned a stand at International Tourism Madagascar Fair 2018 during which he was able to present our products to around 200 visitors including 10 tourism agencies based in france and 3 freelance operators from Hungary, China and Italy.

5	The project team is aware of the success of the project in achieving gains for reserve management and local development and have a plan defining how best to proceed with the project in the future	5.2	Sustainability Plans available for each NPA manager	These plans will be based on the evaluation studies that will be completed and published in June 2019.
1	Identify market for short-duration, participative tourism products and assess potential contribution to the financial autonomy of the NPAs in the Ramena Complex	1.1	Report describing the potential market for short-duration, participative tourism products in the Ramena Complex published and validated by CEPF, and local and national stakeholders	Study completed, report published, validated locally and regionally, and submitted to CEPF
4	Tourism operators, hotel staff, guides, and tourists are aware of the products on offer and how they can be accessed	4.1	Representatives of all the major tourism operators in Diego and secondary centers of tourism have experienced at least one of the products and/or been informed of the product through workshops	Two eductours or taster events were organised: one on 19 June 2018 for the product developed at Oronjia and the other 28 June for the product developed at Montagne des Francais. 33 and 20 people participated for the two events respectively including representatives of stakeholders, tour operators, and hotel managers. The feed back from those working in the tourism sector was very encouraging including a comment from the Director de Tourisme Diego that products such as those developed at these two sites are the new fashion in tourism. The operators also appreciated the fact that the products are novel and represented a diversification of the products available in the region.

			and face-to-face meeting with project staff	
5	The project team is aware of the success of the project in achieving gains for reserve management and local development and have a plan defining how best to proceed with the project in the future	5.1	Report produced and shared, that evaluates the three tourism products in terms of the contribution to reserve management and local development, and associated negative environmental or social impacts	This activity was not completed because the products were only launched at the very end of the project funding period. However we remain dedicated to this activity and will complete this work using our own resources in June 2019, 12 months after the launch of these products. We would be pleased to submit a report at this time.

Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

The project has a number of key elements which we consider to be of key importance to its successful implementation, these include: a) investment in research to describe the market for a novel product; b) investment in developing clear concepts for the proposed products that could be examined and then approved, improved, or rejected by others (note: the initial product proposed for Oronjia concerning joining researchers in a study of the ecology of crowned lemur but this rejected due to negative feedback concerning possible risks to the lemurs); c) use of a consultants to guide the development of a model nursery and to identify the target plant species for the product proposed for Montagne des Francais; and d) investment in consultation with the full array of local and regional stakeholders.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building.

Consider lessons that would inform:

- Project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community



The lessons learnt by the project team are as follows:

1. Successful partnerships require significant investment in developing personal relationships and care must be taken to assure excellent communication: partners have not to be fully informed!
2. Despite our desire to develop local people as animators and guides the slow acquisition of adequate language skills is a major obstacle to this goal. Despite investing 6 months of intensive training in French and English during this project, the language skills of only one guide seemed to evolve significantly during this period.
3. A good understanding of local cultures can hugely influence the conception and implementation of a project such that approaches that have worked well in one particular social context may fail in another.
4. There may be a significant opportunity for conservation projects in Madagascar to generate funds and accomplish worthwhile tasks by hosting young adults seeking work experience.

Sustainability / Replication

Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

As will be evident from other parts of this report, we have yet to fully demonstrate the success of participative tourism for generating income for the management of Oronjia NPA and Montagne des Francais NPA. Thus, although CEPF funding for this work has now finished, the Project Director is personally invested in ensuring that the activity receives adequate support for at least the next 12 months thereby providing the time required to demonstrate the value of the approach. At a minimum the products will be considered successful if they generate sufficient income to ensure that their on-going provision is self-sustaining and requires no further financial inputs. However, we are hopeful that these products will be more successful than merely covering their cost and will make a net financial contribution to the management of these two protected areas.

Safeguards

If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental, or pest management safeguards

The provision of the participative tourism products at both Oronjia and Montagne des Francais required the installation of a small tree nursery within the buffer zone of the protected area. In the measures of attenuation proposed for this work we dedicated ourselves to: 1) installing the nurseries at locations where the vegetation was already very degraded; 2) during installation, not cutting any stems of native plants having a diameter greater than 2 cm; 3) avoiding the use of timber originating from native trees; and 4) protecting the soil from erosion by means of a layer of gravel. All these safeguards were respected except for the use of a layer of gravel which was found to be necessary due to the naturally sandy or gravelly nature of the soil. Contrary to our expectations it was not

possible to find eucalyptus posts in Deigo and therefore we used metal poles to support the shade cloth in the nurseries rather than resort to posts made of native trees. During the installation of the nursery at Oronjia several stems of invasive plants were cut. This was erroneously done without requesting a permit from the local management committee and consequently we were asked to pay a fine. This fine was paid from personal funds by the Project Director. Although this incident was embarrassing it also provided a good opportunity to demonstrate that everyone has to respect the rules within the protected area.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF

i would like to thank the decision-makers at CEPF for their flexibility during the implementation of this project. On three occasions I requested modifications to the implementation of the project as originally proposed and on one occasions I requested a change to the budget. These requests were considered in a timely manner and thoughtful and useful replies provided. Such flexibility is of great importance to those implementing conservation or development projects in Madagascar, because even with best of intent, those developing a project proposal cannot fully anticipate the issues arising during its implementation. This unpredictability is particularly challenging for multi-partner projects.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of CEPF investment


Total additional funding (US\$)
\$6,000.00

Type of funding

Please provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of the following categories:

- A Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner Leveraging (other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project)*
- C Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

Grantee and Partner Leveraging: 1) In October 2017 the Project Manager was able to access \$6,000 from Conseil Departemental de Brest to develop ecotourism at Oronjia. The activities funded by this grant included: training 15 local guides over 6 months; the installation of a trail including the



conception, production and installation of 10 interpretive signs; and the improvement of a small ticket office; 2) In May 2017, the local community living around Oranjia were the beneficiary of training provided by GIZ concerning the creation of village associations to provide a range of services for visitors including the provision of meals and the creation and delivery of cultural events such as dance and story-telling.

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

1. Please include your full contact details (Name, Organization, Mailing address, Telephone number, E-mail address) below

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