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Madagascar / West Indian Ocean

IMPROVING LOCAL STEWARDSHIP OF RAIN FOREST IN SOUTH EASTERN MADAGASCAR

General context

The Corridor between Andringitra National Park, and Ivohibe Peak (Special Reserve) is very rich in various habitats for Madagascar fauna and flora. The most striking features are dense rain forests of the East, the lakescapes and marshlands and open spaces. These habitats host vegetal and faunic species with a high rate of endemism. Just for the fauna, the last inventories carried out in the various sites of Andringitra Ranomafana have revealed the existence of 13 species of lemurs, 50% of non-flying mammals in Madagascar are occurring in the corridor, 106 birds, a high range of reptiles and batrachians.

The different functions of the Corridor (ecological function, watershed protection, economic function by producing both wood and water for the crops) are already internationally acknowledged. The Corridor is part of the whole of the large Corridor called Fandriana-Vondrozo, which has already been the object of a temporary protection order as part of the new System of Madagascar Protected Areas

The District of Ivohibe, the main town along the corridor is situated at about 100 km East of this road from the town of Ihosy. Populations are very poor (income less than 1 USD a day) and their livelihood depends on agriculture and direct exploitation of natural resources, the land, the forest and water.



Although located in the Eastern wetland ecoregion, the climate in the region of Ihorombe is also classified as a climate of transition tropical sub-humide especially in its South and Southwestern parts. The District of Ivohibe being at the foot of the Forest Corridor, it enjoys thus a tropical climate of altitude (more humid climate). However, the distribution of rainfalls during the year is very unequal and for the populations have to organize dykes to cater for watering their crops from natural water springs in natural forests. The relief is also very varied and form groups of hills in the area around the corridor.

The Project

The implementation of the corridor Conservation Project started in 2003. WWF is the principal in the activities aiming at the conservation of this corridor with the support of WWF-DE, WWF US, and WWF SE. The activities developed have been focused in such a way to focus on the fight against two main pressures on the forest, including fire and non sustainable logging (even illegal ones) in the West part of the Corridor, and slash-and-burn farming on the East part.

Since its creation in 2003, the Project has not yet been able to reach full maintenance level for various reasons, including non-secured funds, slow reception of messages by farmers; influence of various climate, social and political factors that are rather special for this area. By conducting this Project, WWF will address in two folds lack of environmental awareness of and misuse of natural resources. It is obvious that in remote area like Ivohibe, main issues for conservationist are slash and burn cultivation, fuel wood, and livestock fire. Local population livelihood depends totally on natural resources, and as around 50% of people living in these remote areas are illiterates, the way they log the resources is archaic and unsustainable.





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Achievements

- ◆ The main functions of the Corridor are known and owned by all the categories of people living in the peripheral areas

- ➔ A document of the main functions of the corridor has already been drawn up and distributed to the field agents. They have learned this material well, and at every field trip information and awareness-raising actions are conducted for the local populations.

- ➔ Radio programs were also broadcasted weekly in the Region to supplement the messages conveyed by the agents on the ecological (high biodiversity), economic (source of water), and social (source of fibers and non-fibrous forest products for the local populations) importance of the Andringitra Ivohibe forest corridor.

- ➔ The various types of materials used in the activities to raise awareness were prepared and approved by the main stakeholders.

- ◆ The targeted communities through the support provided by the Project implement environment-friendly agricultural practices.

- ➔ A portion of the population (Andongodongo locality) could benefit from the use of the micro-dam that carried water to the fish farming pools. In the future, it is expected that the farmers will benefit from these pools to increase their source of income and their sustainable practice of activities that contribute to the protection of the environment.



Challenges

- ▶ Developing with stakeholders a vision for sustainable use of natural resources in the Corridor;

- ▶ Finalizing the document on the conservation strategy of the Ivohibe Forest Corridor;

- ▶ Spreading the environmental education tools while continuing to implement agricultural activities that protect the environment;

- ▶ Finding other funding sources to continue the activities and the priorities that are defined within the framework of the Conservation Strategy for the medium term for at least the next three years.



Duration: January 2008 – December 2008

Funding: WWF Sweden and WWF Germany

Execution Agency: WWF MWIOP in partnership with The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Tourism, Région Ihorombe, Ihosy and Ivohibe Districts, Mayors, Fokontany, local population.

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