Background

“… Wood energy, sustainable economic development of forest resources…”

In South-West Madagascar, rapid deterioration of the forests has been observed due to uncontrolled removal of forest resources to meet wood energy needs. This resource, which is not subject to any management, covers nearly all household energy needs for cooking. Wood comes from natural forests made up of dry formations of calcareous plate and xerophytic thickets on sands of the Spiny forest eco-region, universally recognized for its exceptional biodiversity and endemism.

In view of the gravity of the situation, the WWF has undertaken to mobilize regional players for coordinated measures centred on reducing this anthropogene pressure on the forest ecosystems. Project SEESO/WWF has resulted from this, by taking into account the social and economic importance of the Wood energy production chain: the fuel most accessible to most households and the most popular, the livelihood of charcoal-producing families as well as charcoal hauliers and traders.

Objective

Project SEESO/WWF has the objective of introducing sustainable management of the wood energy production chain in the Atsimo Andrefana region.

Description of the project

Project activity is spread over 36 months and began on February 1st, 2008. It relates to the current zone of wood energy supply for the town of Toliara, that is, most of the rural communes of the Toliara II district.

The project includes four main lines:
- Assisting coordination of the implementation of the strategy for sustainable wood energy supply for Toliara, and in particular encouraging other players to contribute to reaching the objectives;
- Strengthening the capacities of administrative services and local authorities (“decentralized territorial collectivities”) to control the Wood Energy production chain,
- Carrying out planting of energy-useful species with village communities and the private sector;
- Assisting village communities in the sustainable management of forest areas used for charcoal production.

The project is implemented in close cooperation with the Forestry Department (DGF), the Regional Forestry and Tourism Department (DRFT), the Atsimo Andrefana Region, the urban District of Toliara and the rural Districts of the activity.
Achievements and impacts

- The project Steering committee has been set up and includes: the European Union, the National Centre for Industrial and Technological Research (responsible for the SEESO/CNRIT component), the WWF, the DGF, the DRFT, the Department of Energy, the Inter-regional Department of Energy and Mines, and the Atsimo Andrefana Region. A draft agreement between the various parties is in the process of being concluded.

- The strategy for supplying sustainable Wood Energy for Toliara (ABETOL) is being finalized following feedback from work by the service provider selected by the Forestry Department. The WWF has supported and assisted the DGF in developing this strategy.

- The setting up of a regional Forest Energy Commission has been approved by the Regional council of the Atsimo Andrefana Region, a regional decree will be issued on this subject. This Commission will be particularly responsible for coordinating and supporting activities in the Wood Energy chain.

- The mechanism for regulating the Wood Energy chain worked out with the support of the WWF is being finalized and approved by the Regional Forestry and Tourism Department and the Atsimo Andrefana Region.

The energy-useful reafforestation campaign for the 2008/2009 season is being prepared. An area of almost 650 ha is to be planted with energy-useful species, through partnerships with families, associations, communes, the army and the private sector.

Challenges

- The Forest Energy Commission is operational; it is coordinating and harmonizing the activities of the players in the Wood Energy chain with the objective of achieving the goals of sustainable management for the chain.

- The mechanism for regulating the Wood Energy chain is the subject of a regional decree and is being implemented;

- Approximately 650 ha have been successfully planted with energy-useful species with village communities, private operators and the army in the Atsimo Andrefana region;

- At least eight management contracts are evaluated by the project in participative local management of forest resources, the management contracts are renewed and re-orientated towards the sustainable production of wood energy;

- Several charcoal producers have been trained in improved carbonization technique with a view to improving techniques charcoal use and production.

Funding

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