**ANJOZOROBE**

**Executive Summary**

The project is guided by a comprehensive view of the corridor and its peripheral area, including the area in which land use and population activities influence the dynamics of the forest corridor ecosystem. The 4 years of the project allowed mobilizing and building the capacities of communities, local authorities and administrative agents in charge of forest management, so that pressures on the forest corridor due to fires, illegal logging and clearing are reduced by comparison with forests outside the protected area. An attitudinal change towards taking ownership over the forest by stakeholders is observed at all levels, including local communities, regional and district authorities, mayors, heads of communities and technical services. The whole system stems from an eminently participatory approach of development democratization that requires, to be effective, successive stages of information, raising awareness, capacity development and accompaniment to insure that all the actors of this vast participatory worksite, particularly the local communities, be able to play their role autonomously beyond the life of the project.

The final evaluation of this project shows that it has been able to put the elements of the system in place, but a further phase of accompaniment is necessary to attain autonomy.

The rate of overall assessment of the level of achievement of the project objective and results is “Satisfactory”.

**Lessons learned**

Bringing change – Expected results may prove elusive when dependant on change in behaviour, or even in the sharing of perceived advantages to be derived from new practices, all within the limited time span of a project life cycle.

Bringing change is particularly challenging where the local population’s poverty is such that there is little or no tolerance of risk.

Multi-Level Management – The participatory processes involving interested actors and stakeholders at different levels of management, from the *fokontany* to the Region, require appropriate leadership and relevant capacities at each of these levels, just as it requires well defined communication mechanisms between levels, permitting the accurate transmission of concerns and priorities in both directions.

Communication – Building a trusting relationship with the partners is a key factor of success in the establishment of processes which require actors’ adherence from various levels. This is accomplished by maintaining a presence and good quality communications all through the project’s execution, in which all parties are informed of the stakes, advantages and constraints of specific interventions, and of every work phase in order to be able to participate actively.

Management – An operational and financial monitoring system updated every month enabled the team to answer - in a timely manner - to a multitude of requests for reports according to varied formats and periods (quarterly, trimestrial, bi-annual, annual) that changed during the project.

Tax Mechanism for Generating Funds for the Management of the Protected Area – In order to increase producer households’ revenues while contributing to a fund for the management of the protected area, efforts should target the development of cash crops meeting existing organic and fair-trade markets, while maintaining subsistence crop production destined mainly to local and self-consumption to ensure household food security.

Execution Entrusted to a National Non Governmental Organization – Entrusting project execution to a national NGO that already has its personality and that develops a specific expertise through opening paths in line with its vision, had several advantages as compared to a situation where the personnel is recruited for the period of the projects’ execution, then dispersed, or an implementation dependant on a series of consultant interventions:

* Entrusting project execution to a NGO gave access to a structure whose personnel could give opportune and specific support to the project execution team.
* The stability of the institution responsible for the project is a factor favouring the development of a trusting relationship with partners.
* Entrusting project execution to a NGO has fostered the coherence of the messages, the interventions and the approach all through the project.
* The accumulation of experience, learning and know-how within a national institution reinforces its pertinence as a partner in the implementation of the Government’s programmes and policies.

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A few lessons mentioned in the midterm evaluation report remain valid and are summarized in the following:

Signing voluntary agreements. The project sought the voluntary adhesion from each *fokontany* community which land is touched by the protected area through the signing of a voluntary agreement. This had the benefit of allowing discussion, the expression of needs, constraints, and concerns from communities and other owners, and the understanding of the subsequent steps in which they will be involved. This step is of particular importance in this co-management system which rests on developing a sense of accountability among communities regarding the conservation and sustainable management stakes.

Land tenure Security. The acquisition of a high definition satellite image facilitated the identification of landmarks (cultivation fields, forests, villages, etc.) by the communities to produce local land occupation plans and to resolve conflicts during community meetings.

Biological and Ecological Inventory Studies. These studies allowed the identification of appropriate impact indicators and the determination of a baseline situation to assess the project’s impact. Such valuable information would have been more useful if it had been collected before the start of the project, with the support of a GEF PDF or other small size financial support.

Demonstrative value for farming production intensification. The demonstrative value of improved cultivation techniques and varieties which the project absolutely needs must not be attained at the small farmers’ expense who, following their wise risk management approach, are obviously reluctant to allocate their good cultivation plots to test the new techniques and varieties.

Support to communes. The small development projects conducted to the benefit of communes (such as contributions for school rehabilitation) resulted in favorable attitude changes and trust development with local authorities, communes, and with local populations. As they understood that the project was in their interest, they were more inclined to listen to the project team’s proposals about environmental conservation aiming at improving their livelihood.

Plan de suivi des recommandations:

| **Objective and expected results** | **To be completed to achieve expected result** | **To achieve to contribute to the sustainability of results and impacts** |
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| Project Objective:The Anjozorobe–Angavo Forest Corridor habitat and biodiversity are conserved and used in a sustainable manner in partnership with, and to the benefits of, women and men living there. | * Safeguard Plan: socioeconomic baseline * It is difficult to distinguish the impacts related to law enforcement from those related to the establishment of the protected area | * Monitoring of impact indicators: * Income of the households affected by the intervention * Ecological monitoring (illegal activities, fires, water, lemurs, surface of the natural forest) * Creation of a sheltered foundation (technical management unit and generation of revenues to ensure the protected area managements as well as the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits raised from the use of biodiversity) |
| R1 A reliable and updated socio-economic and ecological database on the forest corridor is used as a decision-making tool by local and regional authorities | * Socioeconomic baseline for communities income from activities other than agriculture and cattle breeding (data needed for the EIA and the safeguard plan) * Handing over the database to the 3 POIC * Production and handing over maps and information booklets to *fokontany* | * Development of the capacities needed to use the tools derived from the database and to update the database * Adjustment of the database structure to allow updating it while keeping previous years information * Setting up and building the capacities of the network for collecting the information that makes up the database (rural newspaper) * Adjustment of the database structure to produce various versions relevant and accessible to the different users according to their capacities, interests and management responsibilities |
| R2 Creation of the First Regional Forest Reserve to serve as a model that may be adapted to other regions.  *Reformulation by the project*: The protected area is created to serve as model to be adapted to other regions | The definitive creation depends on:   * Officialization of the legal provisions governing the new protected areas (including the IUCN category V), * Finalization of the development and management plans (Officialization of administrative boundaries, final participatory delimitation of the protected area and of the zoning) in accordance with the newly adopted legal provisions, * Identification of land owners by the Topographic department in 2 districts, * Compliance with the latest instructions regarding the creation of new protected areas (based on the preliminary version of procedures):   + Presentation and acceptance of the EIA (including the environmental and social management plan which is part of the development and management plans),   + Preparation, presentation and acceptance of the Safeguard Plan,   + Participatory selection of the local criteria to identify the PAP,   + Social census of the PAP, vulnerable populations and eligible communities,   + Compensation plan and budget, * Preparation, presentation and adoption of the decree for gazetting the protected area. | * Elaboration of a document to capitalize on the practical experience and knowledge built-up through setting up the Anjozorobe – Angavo protected area to facilitate the adaptation to other sites. |
| R3 An adaptable model for a three-tier participatory natural resource management plan is set-up and operational at local and regional levels | * Participatory decision on the composition of the *fokontany*-level structures in charge of implementing the development and management plans upon their finalization * Decision on the composition of the 3rd level operational structure * Preparation of the terms and conditions on the basis of the responsibilities of each level of the management structure and decision on the coordination and communication mechanisms between levels | * Capacity building to ensure that every level of the management structure is able to carry out their functions on their own:   + Assessment of capacity needs,   + Identification of capacity gaps and constraints to capacity development,   + Planning and implementation of the capacity development plan |
| R4 A strategic plan for securing land tenure, alternative income-generating activities, and control of slash and burn agriculture practices developed and tested in at least 15 *fokontany*. |  | * Strenghtening of the capacities and means of producers’ associations (organizational capacity, market information, planning, certification, negotiation with the private sector, management of revenues and financing) |
| R5 Developing and testing an adaptable and innovative tax system model for long-term sustainable revenue to finance the structures in charge of managing the resources of the protected area at the local level | * Establishment of rules at the level of communes and POIC to ensure the allocation of part of the revenues generated by special taxes, taxes and levies to the *fokontany* bordering the protected area for the management of natural resources and other *fokontany* priority development activities | * Management of revenues generated by special taxes, taxes and levies by the sheltered foundation and raising additional funds |
| R6 Sustainable harvesting techniques, alternative income-generation activities and intensive sustainable agriculture developed and tested |  | * Carrying on with efforts targeting cash crops which fit existing fair trade and organic markets to increase producers households’ income and contribute to the fund for the protected area management |