

CONSERVATION ENTERPRISES



INTRODUCTION

In Madagascar where 75 percent of the population is rural and dependant on natural resources to meet their subsistence needs, a particularly precarious link exists between human beings and the environment. Human demands –from slash-and-burn agriculture, bushmeat hunting, and unsustainable fishing– challenge the integrity of the country’s intact forests and reefs, in turn jeopardizing the human and wildlife communities they support.

Conservation enterprises are typically small, community run enterprises that use natural resources found in and around protected areas in a sustainable manner. The development of conservation enterprises is a key pillar of WCS’s integrated conservation strategy for protected areas. They are essential to achieving the goal of supporting communities to adopt alternative, sustainable and tangible economic activities, and to incite engagement in park management and conservation activities. As part of its integrated conservation strategy for Makira Natural Park in the northeast of the country, WCS works with 75 local community associations who manage forests and natural resources in the park’s buffer zone. WCS also works closely with communities and private sector partners in the Toliara Seascape in southwest Madagascar to develop sustainable value chains based around sea cucumber and seaweed farming that increase household incomes and reduce pressure on fish stocks.

Promotion of Fairtrade Cocoa

Initiated in 2012 by Zoo Zurich, a long time partner of WCS, and following positive results of a feasibility study realized by CacaoTree, a FairTrade and organic cocoa production project was put in place covering the low-altitude area of southeastern Makira. Two cooperatives are in place in the rural municipalities of Voloina and Ambinanitelo. A fermentation and transformation center was constructed in Voloina and farmers and cooperative members have benefitted from technical and administrative training sessions. 600 households are involved in activities and have 50,000 cocoa trees amongst them, covering an area of 60 hectares. WCS is currently working in partnership with Helvetas and Halba to develop phase 2 of the project that would expand the cocoa production area.

GOAL

WCS’s conservation enterprise program aims to reduce pressures on natural resources, improve human wellbeing, and fight poverty by developing resilient sustainable value chains based on natural resources found in and around protected areas.

INITIATIVES

WCS selects natural-resource based value chains for conservation enterprises that meet the following criteria :

- communities are motivated and have traditional knowledge of the value chain
- there is an identified private sector partner who is willing to support value chain development and purchase products as a competitive price
- the value chain can be developed in a way that sustainably exploits natural resources
- the value chain is relatively economically stable and does not create risks for communities because of significant investment needs, price volatility, or security concerns
- the value chain is resilient to climate change and where possible, contributes to reducing the climate vulnerability of participants

Promotion of cloves farming

WCS started working with 1,200 households in the southeast watershed of Makira to promote clove production through technical capacity building with our partners Lafaza Trading Company. One clove farmers' cooperative is in place and farmers have benefitted from training sessions on clove nursery and plantation techniques. To date 70,000 clove seedlings have been produced in the project target villages.



Promotion of raffia based products

WCS supports 14 women's associations in the west of Makira Natural Park to produce raffia and to manufacture raffia-based products. This initiative aims to enhance women's economic empowerment and strengthen the climate resilience of Madagascar's raffia sector. The Raffia transformation market in Madagascar supplies both local and international clients ranging from basic woven goods to high-end luxury goods.



WCS is actually fostering links with a national raffia export company and international fashion houses that have expressed interest in sourcing a sustainable supply of raffia from women's associations based around Makira Natural Park.

Promotion of ecotourism

Ecotourism activities focus on the promotion of a "base-camp" - the Simpona Ecolodge (<https://www.facebook.com/simponaecolodge>) - in the Antsahabe forest in Makira. This site houses a simple ecolodge and allows viewing of the rare and spectacular Silky sifaka (*Propithecus candidus*) and Red ruffed lemur (*Varecia rubra*), as well as twelve other lemur species, and 61 species of birds. The site, which is managed by the local community association, is located partly in the core zone of the park and partly in a community-managed forest that forms part of the park's buffer zone. It currently consists of two bungalows and two tent shelters. Local community members have participated in training sessions on campsite management and the hosting of visitors and guests. In 2017, around 2,500USD in direct incentives were generated for the local community association.

PROGRAM PARTNERS AND DONORS

Union des associations de Voioina – 13 farmers associations – Zoo de Zürich (ZZ) – Lafaza Trading Company – Friends of Masoala (FOM) – International Trade Centre (ITC) – GEF Satoyama – Eben!holz – Conservation Enterprises Development Fund (CEDF) – Halba – Helvetas – Projet Pôles Intégrés de Croissance et Corridors (PIC2) – Indian Ocean Trepan (IOT) – Ocean Farmers (OF)

Promotion of seaweed and sea cucumbers

In October 2017, WCS commenced support to the promotion of aquaculture in Soariake Marine Protected Area (MPA) following a "farmer-villager" model in partnership with private sector partners – Ocean Farmers (OF) for seaweed culture and Indian Ocean Trepan (IOT) for sea cucumber farming. WCS supports the socio-organization of farmers of the MPA involved in aquaculture activities. Through this activity, the aim is to create associations or organizations of at least 240 farmers in seaweed farming and 34 farmers in sea cucumber farming, provide technical support to farmers, and ensure that the aquaculture practice contributes to sustainable management of natural resources.

A graphic showing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) logo at the top. Below it are six icons representing goals 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 14 (Life Below Water), 15 (Life on Land), and the overall SDGs logo. The text "WCS supports the SDGs" is written at the bottom of the graphic.

WCS supports the SDGs



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