



## GEF-Satoyama Subgrantee Highlights Report

Organization Name:	EPCO
Country:	Mauritius
Reporting Quarter:	FY18 Q1 (July to September 2017)
Person submitting Report:	Estelle Deja

### <Highlight 1>: **Baseline study on terrestrial plant species.**

A baseline study has been conducted by our intern, Giles Atkinson, between July and September, 2017. It contains a catalogue of terrestrial plants (embryophytes) which are currently present in the site or will be introduced in subsequent project phases. The study is split into two parts: alien and native/endemic species.

A map of the project site has been provided alongside the report to divide it into zones. These are intended to break up the study area into sections to which the distributions of plants included in the study are assigned for ease of locating them in the field.

For endemic and native species, where possible, information included worldwide distribution, distribution and abundance in the study area, English and local name as well as IUCN conservation status. A description has been added, containing morphological, ecological and ethno botanical information. This information will be used for the creation of interpretative panels which are to be established in the project site for educational purposes.

For the second catalogue, information regarding all exotic plants included abundance and distribution in the study area, English and local name, IUCN conservation status as well as local use. It was not deemed necessary to create a full description for each species as interpretative panels will not be erected for these species. For exotic plants the study instead focuses on documenting local usage to inform future management of the project area and to bolster understanding on the connection between the community and the local environment.

This study has been based on scientific information and traditional knowledge collected through interviews with local people of residences La Chaux. Moreover, a collaboration with the Mauritius Herbarium has been created to help the identification of the species and provide feedback and review on the present study.



Giles Atkinson preparing the species for identification, Mauritius herbarium, Reduit @EPCO/Estelle DEJA

### <Highlight 2>: **Endemic and native species donated by a local NGO.**

A total of 30 plants have been given by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF), a local environmental NGO on August 24th, 2017.

The plant lot, from Aigrettes Island, included 6 bois d'ebene (*Diospyros egrettarum*), 6 bois Chandelle (*Dracaena concinna*), 3 bois Clous (Eugenia species) and 15 bois de rat (*Tarenna borbonica*). They will be introduced in the study area under technical expertise.



Pictures of some endemic and native plant species in Mauritius @EPCO/Giles ATKINSON (intern)

<Highlight 3>: **Walking track rehabilitation.**

The walking track, located in the mangrove area, has started to be rehabilitated between July 17 and September 12, 2017. In total, 66 man/ half days were conducted by local residents including local fishers. Boots and gloves were given to the participants for security purpose. The activity occurred in the morning, mainly between 7 am and 12 pm. Approximately 90 % of the track was rehabilitated. The permeability of the structure had been taken into consideration through the creation of many water canals along the tracks. The structure still need to be consolidated in order to mitigate the potential risk of extreme climatic events such as cyclones, hurricanes and storm surges.



Rehabilitation of the walking track across the mangrove area, by local residents @EPCO/Antoine RIVIERE (Intern).

<Highlight 4>: **Access road renovation.**

The renovation of the access road was carried out between July 10th and September 5th, 2017. A total of 39 man / half days were conducted by local residents, including fishers. Boots and gloves were given to the participants for security purposes. The advancement of the renovation strongly depends on the materials (waste construction rocks and mud) that the local companies bring on site, on a voluntary basis. Approximately, 75% of the road was rehabilitated. The access road renovation is expected to be achieved during the next quarter.



Renovation of the main access road by local residents at Residences La Chaux @EPCO/Antoine RIVIERE (Intern).

<Highlight 5>: Invasive Alien Species Removal

The invasive Alien Species (IASs) removal programme is ongoing and was conducted between July 10 and August 25, 2017 during the Q1 period. A total of 130 man / half days were carried by local residents, including 14 men and 9 women. The activity was conducted in the morning and consisted in IAS cutting and roots removal. Equipments and gloves were provided to the participants. The first targeted species for removal include Acacia (*Leucaena leucocephala*), Campeche (*Pithecellobium dulce*), Bois d'oiseau (*Litsea glutinosa*) and Coqueluche (*Milletia pinnata*), which are very common in the study area. Approximately, 5 km<sup>2</sup> was cleared from IASs.



Pictures illustrating the removal of IASs by local residents, Residences La Chaux@EPCO/Lisa WERKMEISTER (AIESEC).

<Highlight 6>: Existing building clean-up

The main building of the area, which is expected to be turned into the future visitor centre based on the information collected through various consultation strategies with the adjacent local community, has been entirely cleaned. The clean-up was conducted, on a voluntary basis, by interns and local residents including women and youth. This activity was considered as necessary in order to properly measure the existing infrastructure as well as developing the design and planning of the future the visitor centre.

Moreover, a collaboration was created with **Engineering Change** society, from the Civil Engineering Department of the Imperial College London, England. A team of engineers will be responsible for: (1) conceptually and structurally redesigning the main building of the study area based on community wants, needs and visions; (2) finalising the project; (3) fundraising and; (4) renovating entirely the building with the help of local residents in July, 2018.



Pictures illustrating the main existing building cleaned by local residents and interns @EPCO/Lisa WERKMEISTER.

<Highlight 7>: **Community-based exhibition day.**

An exhibition day was conducted on the 27th August, 2017, from 11 am to 5 pm within the study site. The aim of the event was to make the local residents aware of what have been achieved by the local participants over the last months in order to increase local satisfaction and influence positively local perceptions and attitudes towards the project. Approximately, 180 games and accessories as well as pencils, modeling pastes, and many snacks and drinks have been donated by local shops and companies to the project. The preparation of the event was conducted with the help of 6 AIESEC students, 2 interns and 8 local residents, including women. The event was successful as it attracted 80 local residents including 34 women and 46 men.



Pictures illustrating the community-based exhibition day in the study area, Residences La Chaux @EPCO/Lisa WERKMEISTER (AIESEC).

<Highlight 8>: **Intern and volunteer programmes.**

The barachois Project welcomed many interns and volunteers during the Q1 period. Indeed, 3 students from the University of Mauritius came to help on the field over a period of 1 month. A student from Reunion island conducted the identification of birds species and created the monitoring programme over a period of 2 months. A student from England conducted a baseline study on terrestrial plants over a 3 months' period. A student, from France helped with the eco-tourism strategic plan and the pilot training programme.

A collaboration with the "Association Internationale des Étudiants en Sciences Économiques et Commerciales" (AIESEC) was also set up during Q1. Six students, from different nationalities, helped with many activities on the field, between July 17th and August 27th, 2017. Such activities included IASs removal, clean-up, creation of the community-based event and benches creation.

<Highlight 9>: **Community-based meeting**

On July 7th, 2017, a meeting was conducted with the local residents in order to plan the various activities that will be implemented during the Q1 period. A PowerPoint presentation has been provided with the contribution of our intern, Giles Atkinson to give more explanation about the plant species in the area and the IASs removal and control programme. Moreover, others management activities, including access road renovation, walking track rehabilitation, the creation of an exhibition day and ecotourism planning, was designed and planned with the collaboration of the participants including women and youth.



Picture of the meeting with local residents @ EPCO / Giles Atkinson.

<Highlight 10>: **Training programme**

The training programme was conducted between August 2nd and 21st, 2017. All community members were welcomed to participate. In total, 9 sessions were conducted, 3 times a week, in the evening mainly between 6 and 8 pm. This short term program was considered as pilot in order to guide the implementation of the long term training programme of the implementation phase. Eight participants were involved in the program and included interestingly only men. The main aim of this training was to evaluate the literacy level of the participants who are willing to participate in the project over the long term. Effort will have to be made to involve more women within the context of gender mainstreaming. Consequently, another strategy will have to be considered during the Q2 period in order to attract local women based on their visions and opinions.



Pictures illustrating the training programme with local youth at Residences La Chaux @EPCO/Estelle DEJA.

<Highlight 11>: **Gathering of historical information**

Key-informant interviews were conducted between July 3rd and August 4th, 2017. Five informants, from Residences La Chaux and Mahebourg, were advised by local community members. The main reasons were their age and family relationships with the actors of the site history. Strong similarities resulted from the information gathered from the interviews revealing accuracy of the information. Although these consultation strategies provided a better idea of the site history, more interviews will have to be conducted to enhance the quality of the information before disseminating the site history to all stakeholders and create information tools on site.

<Highlight 12>: **Creation of a fishers' cooperative.**

After consultation with local fishers, the need to create a fishers' cooperative for developing the mariculture project has been highlighted. Indeed, creating a partnership with a fishers' cooperative will allow the project to gain ground by enhancing funding availability and consolidating interaction with governmental agencies and others stakeholders. As a result, two focus group interviews with fishers representatives have been conducted in order to plan the necessary steps to be followed. To date, a total of 20 fishers have been willing to participate. The cooperative is expected to be officially created in Q2.

<Highlight 13>: **Development of the global strategic plan.**

The global strategic plan of the project has been completed. It encompasses all strategies that have been designed and developed in constant collaboration with the local community. Indeed, it is based on community needs, wants, opinions and visions stated by the local people during the various consultation strategies and on the information collected during the various baseline studies carried out during the first phase of the project (Planning & Design).

All management activities will be implemented by the local community promoting natural, cultural, historical and aesthetic values. Such activities include wetland restoration and conservation, ecotourism, recreation, education and extensive mariculture. The co-management approach is also highlighted and is critical to ensure that the present project will be effective, viable and sustainable.