



GEF-Satoyama Subgrantee Highlights Report

Organization Name:	EPCO
Country:	Mauritius
Reporting Quarter:	FY18 Q2 (October to December 2017)
Person submitting Report:	Estelle Deja

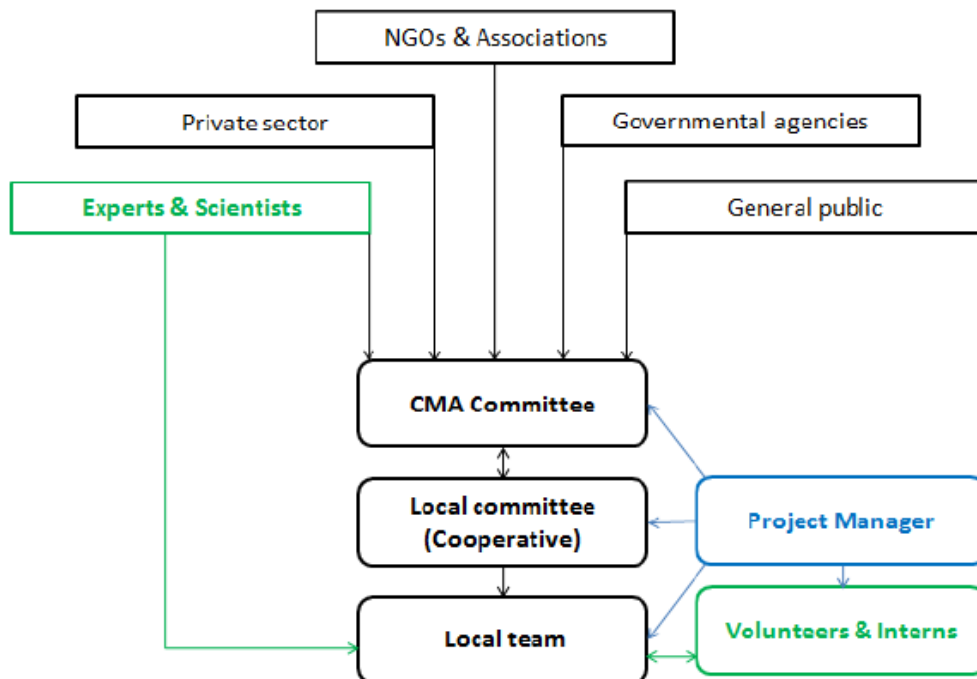
<Highlight 1>: **Creation of the local committee (cooperative)**

During the last quarter, the need to create an aquaculture cooperative was emphasized by local fishers in order to allow the project to gain ground by enhancing funding availability and consolidating interaction with governmental agencies and others stakeholders.

During quarter 2, some women raise their willingness to be part of the cooperative as they would like to participate to mariculture activities especially those related to post-harvest operations and marketing strategies. As a consequence, a local cooperative has been created, including different group's representatives of the local community .Such groups include local women, fishers, youth and elders.

Indeed, face-to-face discussions have been conducted with the local residents, the most involved and supportive towards the project since the beginning of the design & planning phase. A total of 52 local residents became members of the cooperative. In addition, a community-based meeting was conducted on December 13th, 2017 or order to elect cooperative's representatives, through a voting process.

After consultation with local residents, it has been decided that the cooperative will form the local committee which is part of the management structure of the project as explained in the figure below. The local committee members will represent the local community in the decision making process and will meet once a month.



<Highlight 2>: **Hydrological restoration of the mangrove ponds**

The consolidation of the structures facilitating waterways in the coastal marine wetland has been completed by two local fishers over a working period of one week. They worked in the afternoon from 1 to 6 pm every day between December 18th and 22nd, 2017. A total of 10 man / half days were conducted to complete the consolidation of the existing structures.

At a later stage, bridges will have to be created to facilitate access to the mangrove ponds. Indeed, the ponds will be used for starting the development of community-based aquaculture of the mud crab (*Scylla serrata*) in April 2018, the first month of the peak harvesting season of this targeting species, in Mauritius.



Pictures illustrating the consolidated structures, carried out by two local fishers, facilitating waterways between mangrove ponds in the coastal marine wetland @EPCO / Estelle DEJA.

<Highlight 3>: **Invasive Alien Species removal**

The Invasive Alien Species removal and control programme is ongoing. During the quarter 2, a total of 87 man / half days were conducted in order to clear the coastal wetland from Invasive Alien Species (IASs).

Seven local women and eight men participated to the activity. The activity consisted in cutting stems and removing roots of four selected terrestrial invasive plant species, very common in the zone. The work was conducted in the morning, between 7 and 11 am.

As a consequence of this activity, new seedlings of endemic and native plant species are observed in the zone and grow without stress caused by the presence of invasive species.



Pictures illustrating the IASs removal and control programme in the coastal wetland @EPCO/Estelle DEJA.

<Highlight 4>: **Consultation strategies with local residents including women and youth**

Constant and continuous consultations strategies with local residents were conducted during the quarter 2. A total of three community-based meetings, one focus-group interviews with local fishers, observational walks, key-informant interviews as well as many face to face discussions, were undertaken with local residents in order to plan and design the management activities through a collaborative approach. These strategies ensured that the project's activities fulfill local needs, wants, opinions and visions.

Attendance lists and minutes of proceedings were recorded continuously as part of the governance monitoring programme. This strategy will be critical for evaluating local participation and involvement in project management design and planning.



Pictures illustrating community-based meetings in The Barachois Project Office, Residences La Chaux @EPCO / Sandy MONROSE.

<Highlight 5>: **Building' s measurements by experts**

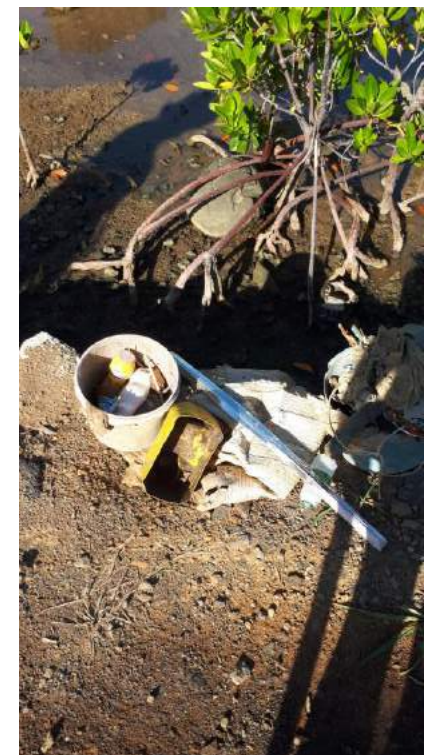
On October 21st, 2017, two experts came to the wetland in order to take measurement of the main existing building to guide the planning and design of its renovation. The resulted building's plan will be submitted to Engineering For change from the Imperial College of London. Indeed, some students and a firm of engineer will come in Mauritius, in July 2018 to renovate the building into a visitor centre, in collaboration with the local residents.

Building's measurement for plan creation @ EPCO/Estelle DEJA



<Highlight 6>: Clean-up of the mangrove areas

At the end of the IASs removal and control programme, a clean-up of the working areas was conducted over a period of one week, by local residents including 1 man and 4 women. The activity was conducted in the morning between 6 and 9 am from December 18th to 22th, 2017. The activity consisted in solid waste collection in the mangrove area, the coastal forest and along the main access road.



Solid waste collection by local residents @ EPCO / Estelle DEJA.

<Highlight 7>: Access road renovation

The renovation of the main access road of the marine coastal wetland was carried out between October 4th and December 29th, 2017. A total of 40 man/half days were conducted by local residents, particularly fishers. All the road's length was rehabilitated. However, both sides of the road still need to be consolidated, at a later stage, to cope with extreme weather events and fill it up with soil to ensure a flat surface. The advancement of the filling will strongly depend on the support of local companies which transport materials, on a voluntary basis.



Renovation of the main access road by local residents @EPCO/Estelle DEJA.

<Highlight 8>: Design of the phytosociological monitoring programme for native and endemic terrestrial plants

An intern, from Reunion Island, came over a period of one month in order to design the phytosociological monitoring programme that will be conducted once the seedlings of endemic and native terrestrial plant species will be planted out in the coastal forest. The endemic and native species planting programme will start at the end of February 2018, ensuring adequate weather conditions.

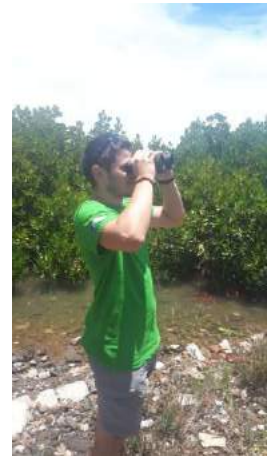
The results of the monitoring will provide information regarding the impacts of the competition between the endemic and native seedlings and the IAS species. Quadrats will be used to collect information on biological and ecological parameters and monitor not maintained and maintained areas to conduct comparison. The results of the monitoring will be critical to evaluate programme effectiveness and adjust the IAS control programme if necessary, within the context of adaptive management.

<Highlight 9>: Bird species monitoring

The collection of data and information regarding sedentary and wader birds, observed in the project zone is ongoing. Bird count and identification by line transects and observation points are carried out by our intern from The University of Reunion Island.

The objectives of this monitoring programme are to understand how the sedentary bird population evolved in the barachois and adjacent mangrove forests and identify and assess population size of wader bird species coming to the area.

The Barachois Project 's intern , Antoine RIVIERE, collecting data on bird species in the marine coastal wetland @EPCO / Estelle DEJA



<Highlight 10>: Design and planning of nursery creation in the coastal wetland

Considering the size of the targeted coastal forest (6 ha), the creation of a nursery has been considered as necessary in order to reintroduce effectively and sustainably endemic and native plant species. The process will consist in different steps including: (1) planting seeds in terrines with all necessary required nutrients; (2) transferring seedlings into larger pots based on their growth rate; (3) gradually decreasing nutritional intake by reducing the amount of water, and the richness of soil nutrients; (4) recreating the natural environment in which the growing plant will be subsequently replanted and; (5) planting the plant out into its natural habitat when it has reached suitable size and is able to grow without added nutrients and water.

The creation of a nursery will provide many advantages as the sensitive seedlings will be followed throughout their growth, will receive specific needs, will be protected from harsh weather and animals. A protocol was developed by a student, from the University of Reunion island and will guide the project team in this process.

<Highlight 11>: Meeting with the Director of Fisheries of Mauritius.

On December 4th, 2017, a meeting was requested by the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fishing and Shipping. The EPCO team met the Director of Fisheries, the Vice-director of fisheries and three representatives of the Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC). The aim of the meeting was to provide updates on project's advancements and future plans. Moreover, the possibility to create a cooperative with fishers as well as other members of the community, including women, was approved by the Ministry as well as the request to obtain a permit for crablets collection from the wild.