



GEF-Satoyama Subgrantee Highlights Report

Organization Name:	EPCO
Country:	Mauritius
Reporting Quarter:	FY19 Q1 (July to September 2018)
Person submitting Report:	Estelle DEJA

<Highlight 1>: **Week of activities for local children**

Five days of environmental education activities have been organized for the local children. The cooperative members, interns and project manager have collaborated to design and plan the program between August 6th and 10th, 2018. A total of 53 children participated to the program. Many activities, implemented by local associations, NGOs and companies, were conducted including: (1) a visit to the project site learning about surrounding biodiversity and project's scope; (2) Snorkelling lessons with professional divers from Lapat Kanar; (3) a visit to Aigrettes Island by guides from the NGO Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF); (4) a glass bottom boat trip to Blue Bay Marine Park and environmental course by the team from the NGO EcoSud (Lagon Bleu Project); (5) a visit to the Valley of Ferney discovering the endemic biodiversity of Mauritius and; (6) an initiation to the plantation and seedlings by SensiBio. All the costs for the transport, activities, prices, certificates and snacks have been entirely covered by donations from the partners and others local companies. Eleven residents, including 10 women from the local community, implemented, on a voluntary basis, the educational program.





Pictures illustrating the various environmental education activities conducted with the local children @ EPCO / Marie HEYL (intern)

<Highlight 2>: **Walking tracks rehabilitation**

The rehabilitation of the existing walking tracks has been carried out during this quarter. It consisted in weeding and IAS removal on and along the walking tracks. Volcanic rocks were collected and disposed on both sides of the track for delimitation. A total of 60 hours of work were carried out by local residents with the help of volunteers from abroad.



Walking tracks rehabilitation in the coastal wetland @ EPCO / Estelle DEJA

<Highlight 3>: **Bridges renovation**

As part of the hydrological restoration of the coastal wetland, a bridge has been restored by local residents with technical expertise. The bridge has been made only using volcanic rocks collected on site. It will facilitate access across the mangrove ponds.



Bridges renovation, by local residents and interns, in the targeted coastal wetland @ EPCO / Estelle DEJA

<Highlight 4>: Consolidation workshop

A request from the GEF-Satoyama Project team was to plan and design various activities, during the consolidation workshop, including: (1) a visit to the project site; (2) a pirogue trip with traditional fishers; (3) a traditional lunch; (4) a discussion between the international guests and local residents and; (4) a cultural festival. A local woman, with the help of the local cooperative members, has the responsibility to design, plan and implement the activities. A total of 33 local residents, including 19 women and 15 cooperative's members took part in the initiative and work together in a collaborative manner. A lot of support and equipments have been offered by local residents for this initiative.



Pictures illustrating the project site's visit and the initiatives organized by the local residents during the consolidation workshop @ EPCO/Marie HEYL (intern)

<Highlight 5>: **Benches installation**

Three benches, made of strawberry guava wood (Invasive Alien Species) and previously created by local residents, have been installed in the coastal forest. They are located near the walking tracks and will provide resting facilities for ecotourism and recreation.



Benches installation, by local residents and interns, in the coastal forest @ EPCO / Marie HEYL (Intern)

<Highlight 6>: **Hydrological restoration**

A total of 322 hours of work was conducted to restore the natural circulation of water in the marine coastal wetland. The work consisted in restoring the existing wall between each mangrove ponds and opening waterways through the creation of canals along each of them. Only local residents have conducted this activity with the help of volunteers.



Wall restoration between mangrove ponds @ EPCO / Estelle DEJA

<Highlight 7>: Access road renovation

The renovation of the main access road can be considered as completed by the local residents. Only filling work still need to be conducted by local companies. Indeed, the completion of the road will depend on the dropping of material, on a voluntary basis by local companies. During this quarter, a lot of material (mixed earth) has been dropped on site. The company of Beauvallon also provided a bell cane loader to the team over a two days' period for flattening the road. Some clean-up have been also been conducted during a community-based event by the local residents and volunteers.



Main access road of the marine coastal wetland @ EPCO / Estelle DEJA

<Highlight 8>: Volunteer program

A total of 9 volunteers came to help the local residents on day-to-day activities, including walking tracks rehabilitation, solid waste collection, Invasive Alien Species removal, endemic and native flora species plantation, community-based events organization, and conduction of activities for the local children. They came from various part of the world with the AIESEC program. AIESEC is an International non-governmental non-profit youth run organization that provides young people the opportunity to volunteer for many projects around the world. Moreover, a total of 10 volunteers from Ecomode Society came also for a day to help on the rehabilitation of the walking tracks. Finally 6 students from the University of Mauritius came also over few days to help with the IAS removal and control program. Considering the amount of labor work that needs to be done in the wetland to achieve project's objectives, collaboration with volunteer organizations was critical.





Pictures illustrating activities conducted by volunteers from abroad @ EPCO / Estelle DEJA.

<Highlight 9>: **Community meetings**

The conduction of continuous and constant community-based meetings is now an ongoing process during the project implementation. The meetings are planned and lead by the cooperative members for awareness raising at local level and are part of the decision-making process for designing, planning and implementing project's activities. This process ensured that the project actions fulfill local vision, opinion, needs and wants. Nine meetings were conducted at various locations and a community-based event was planned on August, 17th before the consolidation workshop.