

# **Grievance mechanism for WCS Madagascar project entitled “Integrated adaptive management to protect ecological integrity in the Socio-Ecological Production Landscape (SEPL) of the south-east watershed of Makira Natural Park”**

## **Project description**

The objectives of this project are to improve the ecological integrity of the Makira forests and the well-being of local natural resource dependent communities in and around the SEPL in the southeast of Makira Natural Park that suffers from a high level of anthropogenic threats. The three specific components that will contribute to the achievement of the project objective include the securing of ecological function and enabling of adaptive management of natural resources within the landscape; the empowerment of local communities and enhancement of their livelihoods based on a sustainable use of natural resources of the SEPL in partnership with private sector partners; and the promotion of good governance practices amongst all stakeholders.

This project will focus activities in the SEPL of the southeast watershed of Makira and will aim to protect the conservation importance of the landscape in a participatory manner with local communities, while simultaneously optimizing communities’ abilities to improve natural resource based livelihoods through increased diversification and resilience building. Livelihoods activities will involve private sector partners to build local capacity to implement improved agro-ecological techniques, thus decreasing land degradation and erosion, creating links to new markets for sustainable cash-crops through FairTrade clove production, a traditional crop in this zone – and promoting improved subsistence rice production techniques as an alternative to tavy. The project will also set the groundwork for future sustainability by building capacity of stakeholders on good governance of natural resources and also by involving youth and women in environmental actions and decision-making.

Strong and effective involvement of communities in conservation activities coupled with interventions to support improved livelihoods will facilitate behavior shifts by ensuring that the opportunity costs of continued destructive land use activities are outweighed by improved livelihood incentives. This will also reinforce community ownership and attitudes towards conservation actions and thus contribute to long-term sustainability of the project.

Almost if not all planned activities within this project were designed in consultation and will be carried out with local communities. Apart from the existing strategy of restrictions on local access to, and use of, natural resources within the Park, the proposed activities in this project should in no way have any negative impact on the local communities but in return, will only provide tangible benefit. However, if ever anyone considers that its interests have been prejudiced by the general implementation of this project, then the following grievances mechanism would be used.

## **Grievances mechanism**

Any comments, complaints, and requests on all aspects or in relation to the general implementation of the project could be reported and treated through four ways:

- The person could come and meet either with the Direction of the Makira Park in Maroantsetra or the sector Offices in Ambinanitelo (Sector I) and Beanana (Sector II);
- or the person could also go and talk to the representative of the Makira Project in the field at community level through the project animators that live amongst the

communities, or also through the management committee of each local community associations that are involved in the the co-management of the Park(COBA);

- or the person could use the complaints registry set at the District Office in Maroantsetra and at the communes Office;
- or the community also has the possibility – through their representatives at the Federation of COBA – to take the case for discussions during the “monitoring and orientation committee” (COE)<sup>1</sup>, which is the supreme authority for the Makira Natural Park. This committee should be able to deal and/or cut through difficult issues raised that could not be resolved at lower levels. All comments and conflicts will be documented along their resolution.

All these four options are set in order to help communities to communicate easily with the project managers and express any concerns they may have related to the implementation of the project activities. Conflicts and grievances are addressed differently depending on their nature. Some conflicts are handled at local/community level with local traditional or administrative authorities. In keeping with Malagasy culture, conflicts will be as much as possible resolved between the different parties involved by coming to an amicable agreement. This is done during a small private meetings or a gathering of community members depending on the nature of the different parties and the cause of conflict. This approach has proven to be successful in resolving problems at a community level.

As far as possible, the Direction of the Makira Park will take immediate action to address those grievances in consultation with the claimant, especially if any resource restriction has been caused by the project. In case of a more formal and written requests, written response to comments are provided within 30 days. Other conflicts may necessitate the involvement of higher authorities, or the mediation by a third independent body or even the courts if necessary. A conflict resolution committee has been established at the district of Maroantsetra. The committee is chaired by the “Chief of District” and comprises the Mayors of the communes concerned, representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, representatives of Community associations and representatives of the Makira Natural Park. At the commune level, the grievances registry books are quarterly consulted by representatives of the platforms of COBA and at the District level, it is checked by the District and the chief of sector of the Park. If there are any grievances / complaints recorded, the head of the District convenes a meeting of the committee to discuss and take decisions concerning the grievances and complaints. Claims, responses and actions taken to address grievances will be filed and included in project monitoring.

A series of information campaigns on the existence of such records were carried out in villages surrounding the Makira Park to inform local community members about these grievances and conflict reporting and resolution process. The park staffs, in collaboration with the platforms and Federation of COBA continue to inform communities about this grievance and conflict reporting system by integrating this topic as part of Information, Education and Communication campaigns.

All grievances reported or submitted to the Project manager will be documented with details regarding the name and contact details of the claimant, date of complaint and the detailed description of the complaint/ grievance, as well as any comments or suggestions of how to address the complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> The COE is the supreme authority and is the decision making body for the Makira project. As such, it provides orientation and ensures monitoring of the implementation of the project. The COE is presided by the Director of the System of Protected Areas in Madagascar and is composed by regional and national authorities, representatives of government agencies, representatives of communities, other local and regional partners and WCS as the delegated manager of the Park.

If the claimant is not satisfied with the response provided or the follow up action taken by the project manager to address his/her complaints by, the grievance may be submitted to Conservation International Japan (CI Japan), the chair of the Executive Team, directly at:

[GEF-Satoyama@conservation.or.jp](mailto:GEF-Satoyama@conservation.or.jp)

Conservation International Japan

6-7-1-507 Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0022 JAPAN

TEL: +81-3-5315-4790

For escalating a complaint, the complainant can file a report to CI using the following link:

<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/10680/index.html>

This grievance mechanism will be shared during initial awareness and all consultation meetings, and provided in writing to all village committees in all project villages.