

Empowering Community Roles in MSP

Madagascar is known for its rich biodiversity, and the conservation of its natural resources is largely dependent on nationally adopted Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Locally Managed Marine Areas. Unfortunately, only a small percentage (1-2%) of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is officially protected as MPAs, whereas most coastal areas are informally regulated or managed as legitimate multiple-use zones. Weak law enforcement, competing use, ineffective management, and poor coordination between management bodies hinder effective marine biodiversity conservation.

Successful marine conservation efforts heavily depend on the involvement and empowerment of coastal communities. Working closely with communities, this innovation encourages them to take ownership of their role as stewards of the ocean while also developing effective Marine Spatial Plans (MSP). This will ensure ecosystem services' sustainability and provide equitable user benefits for all. The approach involves integrating communities into a broader MSP framework and utilizing tools developed over the past five years of work in Madagascar -- currently applied at Nosy Be Island, at a scale that is appropriate for the local community and placing a significant emphasis on the crucial role and voice of communities in the framework.



Innovative and transformational

Madagascar is paving the way for a new era in marine conservation governance in the country. This innovation project is developing Madagascar's first MSP. This MSP framework is focused on the community – socially equitable and inclusive. The project involves engaging stakeholders and scaling MSP to an island level in Nosy Be. Local communities will undergo training and engagement to emphasize their significant role and the benefits they can derive in planning the sustainable use of shared marine space. The University of Rhode Island and local partners aim to expand this approach to the entire DIANA Region and serve as a model for developing MSP in the remaining 12 coastal regions of Madagascar. The success of this pilot will be shared widely with other coastal countries in the future.

Key achievements so far

- ⇒ Published the **Stakeholder Analysis and Governance Report on Interest and Influence Power and Authorities**.
- ⇒ Published **MPA and LMMA Baseline assessment reports**.
- ⇒ Produced the **Community Baseline Capacity Profile**.
- ⇒ Finalized the **Steering Committee membership list**, validated Terms of Reference, and distributed the Steering Committee Meeting Report.

Sustainability beyond OIC

The aim of this innovation is to continuously empower and capacitate community stakeholders by establishing permanent local structures such as Steering Committees, management tools, funding mechanisms, capacity building of actors, regional orders, and legal framework. Once fully developed, this innovation will provide Madagascar with a tangible example to draw from when developing a Marine Spatial Plan to cover the nation's coastal and marine regions. These set of references and structures will be useful for an upcoming Marine Spatial Plan Implementation Regional Order that has been submitted to the government for approval and authorization.

The final product of this innovation will include a comprehensive report on the completed work, and an expansion plan co-designed with stakeholders to replicate the approach for all coastal regions of Madagascar. The scaling plan will build on existing MIHARI networks and BATAN communities of practice to ensure its longevity.



Ending Ensuring community roles in complex multiple use areas in Madagascar

University of Rhode Island
February 2023 – December 2024

OIC financing \$248,255

Innovator co-financing \$15,788.43