

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES FROM RIDGE TO REEF

World Wildlife Fund

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

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Introduction

Negotiations on the cooperative agreement for \$1,150,000 were undertaken in October. FY04 funding of \$300,000 was granted. The work plan was submitted in January and revised in February; approval has just been obtained for both Madagascar and Kenya components (with some questions pending for Madagascar). A vehicle waiver has been requested for Kenya.

We are in the process of recruiting a Population-Environment Fellow for the project, to work on the learning component and provide technical assistance to the ecoregion population-environment components. A third country is being identified for population-environment activities in years two and three of the project.

The project is therefore still very much in start-up mode. Details of early activities in individual components are given below.

Madagascar

ASOS initiated discussions with WWF Ala maiky, both in Tuléar and in Fort-Dauphin, in order to prioritize the areas of intervention for ASOS. The Tandroy Conservation Trust (TCT) and the "Libanona Ecological Center", both partners of WWF, participated in the discussions in order to agree on common and integrated actions, and also to determine the areas where ASOS should concentrate its efforts.

In the meantime, discussions were also held with the "Madagascar Green and Healthy Communities Project", a JSI and Voahary Salama project funded by Packard Foundation. This project is being implemented in the peripheral zones to some of the Ala maiky conservation areas in southern Madagascar by ASOS and its local partners. The Mahafaly Plateau and the Ifotaka natural forest are particularly targeted by ASOS and WWF for this ongoing program.

Priority areas determined for the new project, extending the ongoing work, are north of Tuléar, including the "Seven lakes forest"; the eastern side of the Mahafaly Plateau; the Mikea forest; and west of Fort-Dauphin the Androy forest of Tranomaro and Behara.

ASOS recently undertook recruitment of new staff both in Tuléar and in Fort-Dauphin for the USAID-funded project.

WWF and ASOS sent representatives to the Population Reference Bureau and Voahary Salama training in Antananarivo and Moramanga, which was a good opportunity to strengthen their capacities to address issues related to population and migration integrated with sustainable use of natural resources. The training helped WWF and ASOS enhance their mutual understanding through the Voahary Salama initiatives. It was especially valuable for WWF who was participating for the first time in a Voahary Salama workshop where there was a good opportunity for exchange of experiences.

Lessons learnt from this training will be shared with other ASOS personnel at ASOS's quarterly coordination meeting, which gathers all agents from different projects implemented by ASOS in the south. This occasion is also used to train new agents, providing basic knowledge about their duties and planning activities.

The formal launch of the new project by ASOS and WWF will take place in the first week of April 2004.

Kenya

WWF has been forging a partnership with the African Medical Research Foundation (AMREF) for this project. AMREF is expanding into the Kiunga area, and is in the process of recruiting staff for this purpose. WWF has separate funding for more general health work from Johnson and Johnson in the Kiunga area, and AMREF will implement both this and the reproductive health work. Extensive discussions on the project have also been held with Ministry of Health officials in the district.

WWF has undertaken detailed planning to integrate health aspects into its existing education program, particularly linking environmental and reproductive health awareness. This helps not only to save resources but also to reinforce the respective messages and to emphasize the connection between community and environmental welfare. Plans include:

- short-term activities such as meetings with teachers, production of education materials, assessment of feasibility to integrate health education into local school curricula, competitions on environment and community health issues, and development of school information boards
- medium-term activities including capacity building for teachers and health workers, youth health groups, women's groups, and incorporation of health aspects into ongoing work with groups
- long-term activities including visits, and work with Village Health Clubs.

Now that the project work plan is approved the work in Kenya will move forward in earnest. While still waiting for the new project vehicle, environment-reproductive health work will focus on more accessible areas and the islands (WWF has boats to reach the latter).

Learning component

Initial work has been undertaken on researching background for the key learning issues, and establishing contacts in the US and the field. Discussions have been held with other population-environment projects in WWF and partner organizations with a view to involving them as case studies in the analysis and/or sharing results with them. Several meetings have been attended on monitoring and evaluation, including meetings organized by USAID's Population Office, and the Community Conservation Coalition. Population-environment publications and other information have been disseminated to WWF personnel in the field; the profile of population-environment work is being raised in WWF US.

Early planning has been undertaken for a workshop to plan the learning component in detail, once the Population-Environment Fellow is recruited; field staff will be invited, along with other organizations and projects working in this field.

WWF and Woodrow Wilson Center cohosted a presentation by Professor Jared Diamond on population, security and environment in January. Inputs have been provided to planning of a population-environment session at the upcoming World Conservation Congress.

Support was provided to the Community Conservation Coalition for facilitation of strategic planning for the next five years; the strategy is nearly complete.