

ADD/SADC/GIZ West Indian Ocean Project on Transboundary Use and Protection of Natural Resources in the SADC Region

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Project title: Engaging youth and community in coral reef restoration and beach monitoring

Background:

Mauritius and Seychelles are both small developing islands. The coastal areas are very vulnerable to the adverse effects of global warming that causes an increase of surface sea water temperature and sea level rise. The main impacts being addressed are coral bleaching/dead reefs in Mauritius and coastal erosion due to increased storm surges in Seychelles. It is reckoned that 22 sites representing 23% of beaches have experienced storm surge/flooding / coastal erosion which affects the ecosystem, food chain (decrease in total fish catch from 9,318 tons in 2002 to 5,270 tons in 2011) and livelihood for community members and tourism industry.

Main problem: Some adaptation measures to coral reef depletion and coastal erosion are being taken. These measures are fragmentary as different organisations work according to their own plans. The challenges are:

- insufficient sensitisation about the issue - while the climate change impacts may be visible, the causes are often not well understood
- little (active) involvement of youth as future adult citizens and the community, lack of bottom-up information and indigenous knowledge from the community to the authorities and relevant institutions are left out.

This joint project therefore **aims** at engaging school students and local community namely women, skippers and fishermen in coral farming to address to coral reef depletion in Mauritius and in beach monitoring in eroded coastal areas in Seychelles and sharing expertise and knowledge on these issues between the two countries.

The objectives of the project are:

1. to exchange expertise/consultancy e.g., Seychelles is already implementing large scale coral farming / capacity building (trans-frontier)//training of community members e.g., skippers and fishermen in scuba diving and students in measuring techniques for beach monitoring
2. to enhance dissemination of information to relevant authorities/institutions: exchange across school in Mauritius and Seychelles and bottom-up communication – indigenous information from community members in both countries and results of beach monitoring by students in Seychelles.

Activities: Beach monitoring and coral reefs restoration

Gathering indigenous information

- students to carry out Interviews to gather indigenous information about the visible changes (in terms of sand stretch, coral status in reefs) over twenty/thirty years, sand profiling

measurement of sand stretch from land to sea, status of coral bleaching, coral species existing and reduced

- **Hands-on:**

activities at school level to produce materials/models for simulation of real situation and trans-frontier sharing

-small mitigation actions at school and at home to reduce emissions/global warming in the long term to ensure continuity of project

- Hands-on involvement of students and community members esp. women in coral farming to restock the reefs /help in preparation of land-based nurseries, training of skippers/fishermen in scuba diving to place nurseries and observe coral status placed back in reefs

Outcomes:

- Sense of ownership of a wider community to make them more responsible and value our environment
- Positive impacts on marine environment/ ecosystem/ livelihood/tourism/country's economy
- Lifelong learning of twenty-first century skills by the students

Participating stakeholders (up to date) and their contributions.

- Ministry of education/ Fisheries/Environment to facilitate implementation, hands-on experience and training- Mauritius and Seychelles
- NGOs – ADD-GASAT – sensitisation program and hands-on experience
- School and community – to implement and provide indigenous knowledge and results of beach monitoring

What has already been done:

1. Permission from relevant authorities to implement the project, commitment of the Min of Fisheries to provide support and acceptance of the supervisor to monitor the progress
2. Setting up of our committee at school to participate in the project

The way forward:

1. Sensitisation at school level and the local community – brainstorming by project coordinator, talks by resource persons from the Ministry of Fisheries, ADD and probably Mauritius Oceanography Institute and the National Coast Guard
2. Visit to Blue Bay Marine Park to be organized by the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources.
3. Visit of school students and local community members to Min of Fisheries for briefing on land-based nurseries. Interviews by students
4. Preparation of nurseries, growing of polyps (by students and women from local community under the guidance of Min of Fisheries technicians).
5. Monitoring of growth of corals by Min of Fisheries technicians, skippers and fishermen (and National Coast Guard – to be confirmed)
6. Restocking of coral reefs by cultured corals by Min of Fisheries technicians.
7. Production of brochures/ posters/ flyers and Compilation of data by school committee to be handed to relevant authorities.