



**Darwin Initiative/Darwin Plus Projects
Half Year Report
(due 31st October 2021)**

Project reference	27-006
Project title	Developing an incentive-based model for community-led marine conservation in Comoros
Country(ies)/territory(ies)	The Comoros
Lead organisation	Blue Ventures Conservation
Partner(s)	Dahari, Mohéli National Park, The National and Regional Fisheries Directorate
Project leader	Dr Alasdair Harris
Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)	1st April - September 2021 - HYR1
Project website/blog/social media	https://blueventures.org/

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).

Output 1 - Locally-led fisheries management measures piloted in two new coastal areas (Z2 & Z3) and continued by communities in one coastal area (Z1) on Anjouan (ten communities in total), preserving marine resources.

Overall good progress. In Zone 2 (communities of Moya, Maweni, Kowe), to initiate discussions on management, 13 focus groups were conducted across three villages (total 162 participants, 66 women) to get participants' perceptions on marine resources, challenges and potential management solutions. Four theatre performances were delivered in Zone 1 (communities of Vassy, Dzindri, Salamani, Imere) and three in Zone 2 on sustainable fishing techniques and the benefits of the octopus reserve, where 664 participants attended (400 female (F), 264 male (M)) (1.1a - target of 2000 participants by EOP). In Zone 1, a further 14 fishers (all women) were trained in sustainable fishing techniques - using a wooden stick to replace the more destructive rebar (1.1b).

In Zone 1, a repeat temporary closure was put in place on the 18th of July, and in Zone 2 the first temporary closure has been in place since the 31st of May (1.2). Both closures are due to re-open in October and November and three formal and informal meetings have been conducted during this reporting period (30 F, 1 M) to determine the date of the reopening and management strategies. In addition, the permanent no-take zone has been put in place in Zone 1 since 19 of March, and was officialised in September with local and regional authorities (1.2c), following community workshops mentioned in the last report. Outreach materials such as posters and flyers have been distributed in communities to raise awareness about the no-take zone location and accompanying measures, during the theatre performances and community outreach. Baseline Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) (1.3) and livelihood surveys (1.4a) have been completed for Zone 1 (901 surveys) and are ongoing in Zone 2 (577 surveys to date), Results of the surveys will be shared in the annual report.

Output 2 - Ten communities from three coastal areas of Anjouan have access to data and improved knowledge for identifying key biodiversity hotspots and guiding adaptive management of local marine resources.

In Zone 2, fisheries monitoring training commenced in September for four men from two communities (boat catch monitoring), and 16 community members (14 F, 2 M) in reef gleaning monitoring (2.1). Following this, participatory monitoring will start in Zone 2 in October, and continue in Zone 1 with 14 F and 1 M from seven communities involved (2.2a). Rapid reef assessment surveys were conducted in three sites in Zone 2. Following this, results were shared with fishers during a participatory mapping session (12 participants, 2 women) to identify key biodiversity areas (2.2b). A [blog](#) has been published to document the participatory process. Training on understanding data, and presenting and using it in management (2.3a/b) has commenced with one association (1 F, 8 M) from Zone 1, focusing on boat monitoring data. In addition, three associations will hold their Annual General Meetings in Zone 1 in October to review and discuss the annual catch monitoring data to improve the past management initiatives (temporary closures) (2.4).

Feedback sessions for the Zone 1 February 2021 closure reopening were held in June following easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Six sessions across four villages gathered a total of 497 participants to discuss the closure results and improvements to implementation, such as banning the catch of octopuses smaller than 500g. [A report \(in French\)](#) has been shared with local and regional partners.

Output 3 - The livelihoods of 400 fishers (200 women) from six communities are improved through the adoption of value-addition activities for marine products and/or complementary sustainable agriculture activities.

The baseline study into catch-value addition activities has been completed by our international consultant (3.1). If COVID restrictions allow, the consultant is planning to facilitate participatory workshops at the end November to discuss the study results with communities and implement recommendations through a pilot project. We will deliver business skills training for 15 women in October to increase capacity in running small businesses. In addition, an exchange visit to

the neighbouring island of Grande Comore was held in July for five participants from two fisherwomen associations of Zone 1, Maecha Bora and Fika Njema.

The fisherwomen met with representatives from various associations involved in fish drying and smoking to discuss successes and challenges they have experienced, and generate ideas to grow their business. Support for agricultural practices as an alternative to fishing has been ongoing, with 84 fishers taking part in training in the last six months, including market gardening skills, as well as using biopesticides as composting, and food crop rotation and multiplication (See [GIPR](#) and [ARCV](#) curriculums in supporting document).

Output 4 - The first LMMA in the Comoros is established in one coastal area, with the foundations laid for additional LMMAs in two further areas, as a result of governance structures that are created and supported to design, implement and enforce adaptive fisheries management

The first community-led permanent no-take zone was put in place in Zone 1 in March and officialised in September 2021.

In Zone 2, support work has started on association administration and governance with 14 members of a fisherwomen's association in Moya. In another community, Kowe, the creation of another women's association was facilitated via discussions and organisation of their first General Assembly (30 women).

Surveillance structures have been established for patrolling the temporary closure areas and the no take zone in Zone 1 through a committee encompassing members of the three associations involved in fisheries management. In brief, the women's associations patrol during the day, and the men's association during the night, recording infractions on logbooks (4.1). Thus far, one infraction has been penalised which is 25% of identified (4.2). In Zone 2, surveillance is informally conducted by the Moya fishers' association, with plans to introduce similar tools than in Zone 1 to strengthen their procedures.

Output 5 - A network of fishing communities and implementing partners in the Comoros shares best practices in local fisheries management and community conservation.

Regular meetings with regional authorities have taken place and email exchanges with the Marine Park in Mayotte continue. The annual partner workshop has been delayed due to COVID restrictions and logistical issues (missing equipment to conduct training), however, we aim to complete this before the end of the calendar year to share monitoring techniques and best practice with the Moheli National Park and the association AIDE from Grande Comore.

Two exchange visits have taken place during this reporting period (5.2): five fisherwomen from associations in Zone 1 have taken part in an exchange to Grande Comore to learn about value addition techniques (smoking and drying), marketing and fisheries management ([report available in french](#)). 97 members from three communities in Zone 2 visited associations in zone 1 (44 F, 53 M) to discuss successes and challenges in governance and fisheries management.

Our activities are regularly updated on social media through Dahari channels ([blog on participatory mapping](#) was published in September through Blue Ventures website (5.3a).

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The baseline KAP and livelihood surveys have proven challenging to conduct and were delayed, partly due to the length of the questionnaire, time required to train surveyors, and the sampling requirements. Sampling size had to be reduced slightly as a compromise, and based on analysis results the questionnaire might be adapted.

2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

Progress in developing good governance in Zone 2 has been slower than expected, exacerbated in part by the impact of COVID-19 and related restrictions on holding group events, which can be a key activity to strengthening collaboration with the fishing communities. This delay will not impact on project outcomes and most indicators, except the indicator 2.2a related to participatory monitoring. This has been raised in a change request.

We have also experienced a delay in the value addition consultancy due to travel restrictions preventing the consultant from visiting Comoros from Madagascar. This had been raised in a previous change request, and the activities were adapted to occur remotely in close collaboration with a Dahari technician. The first phase of the consultancy is now complete thanks to this arrangement, and borders are planned to reopen in October, at which point the consultant will be able to travel to Comoros and complete their work before the end of this calendar year.

2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS:	Yes/No
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Formal change request submitted:	Yes/No
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Received confirmation of change acceptance	Yes/No
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3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No Estimated underspend: £

3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully. Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

No.

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk. The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: 25-001 Darwin Half Year Report**