



Engagement Communautaire  
pour le Développement Durable

Komori ya leo na meso



## Summary of the final report of the ECDD Project

*January 2010 – April 2013*



Bristol Conservation  
& Science Foundation

### **A propos du projet ECDD**

Le projet ECDD a été mis en œuvre par la Bristol Conservation & Science Foundation (une unité opérationnelle de Bristol, Clifton & West of England Zoological Society Ltd.), en partenariat avec Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, le Gouvernement de l'Union des Comores et l'Administration de l'île d'Anjouan, et avec l'appui d'Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières.

Le financement extérieur venait, entre autres, du Gouvernement du RU par l'intermédiaire de la Darwin Initiative, l'Agence Française de Développement et le Fonds pour l'Environnement Mondial (à travers le projet PoWPA).

Le projet a travaillé avec des consultants de l'Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature et de l'Université de Cranfield.

Le Projet ECDD a débuté en 2008 et s'est terminé en avril 2013. Ce rapport traite de la période de 2010 à 2013, les années 2008 et 2009 étant une période « pilote » avec des financements limités.

### **About the ECDD project**

The ECDD project was run by Bristol Conservation & Science Foundation (an operating unit of Bristol, Clifton & West of England Zoological Society Ltd.) in partnership with Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, the Government of the Union of the Comoros and the Administration of the Island of Anjouan, and with the support of Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières.

External funding came from the UK government through the Darwin Initiative scheme, the French Development Agency and the Global Environment Facility (through the PoWPA project), amongst others.

The project worked with consultants from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Cranfield University.

ECDD began in January 2008 and ended in April 2013. This report treats the period 2010 to 2013, 2008 and 2009 being a pilot phase.

### **Citation**

ECDD, BCSF & Durrell (2014). Rapport final du Projet ECDD. [www.ecddcomoros.org](http://www.ecddcomoros.org)

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## Summary

The Union of the Comoros is among the poorest countries in the world, with 46% of the population not exceeding the threshold of \$1.25 a day<sup>1</sup>. Exacerbating this poverty is an alarming environmental degradation: according to the latest statistics from the United Nations, the rate of deforestation in Comoros reached 9.3% a year between 2000 and 2010, the highest rate in the world<sup>2</sup>. This deforestation, brought on by, among other factors, a lack of alternatives to agriculture, population pressure, the lack of land availability, and poorly-adapted agricultural systems, has led to soil erosion, a decline in agricultural yields, and the loss of water resources. Of the 45 permanent rivers on the island of Anjouan, around 30 have become intermittent since 1975. The challenges linked to the 'terrestrial environment' for Comoros are huge: at least 80% of the population depends on agriculture, the birthrate is at an average of more than six children per woman and land is very limited; today Anjouan has a population density of more than 500 people per km<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>.

Indeed, the needs of the human population and biodiversity, intrinsically linked, are at risk. Sustainable land management, which comprises both increasing agricultural revenues and the sustainable management of the remaining natural resources, will allow the living conditions for the population of Anjouan to improve in the long-term.

It is within this context that the Project 'Engagement Communautaire pour le Développement Durable' (ECDD) worked between January 2008 and April 2013 in nine villages close to the Moya forest on the island of Anjouan. The project's objective was to contribute to an improvement in the population's standard of living through agricultural development and the sustainable management of natural resources, namely land, water, forest and biodiversity. The main sources of funding were the British Government's Darwin Initiative (£241,000), the Agence Française de Développement (€750,000), the Global Environment Facility through the PoWPA Project for Comoros (\$40,000), and Airbus UK (£38,000), as well as contributions from the partners of the Project.

Improvements in standard of living being the gateway to reaching the causes of environmental degradation, ECDD concentrated its efforts on agricultural intensification close to the villages, supporting revenue-generating activities and promoting soil conservation techniques. Through this the project has, over the last three years, supported more than 1800 farmers in the nine target villages.

ECDD not only promoted techniques that had already proved their worth in Comoros, like hedging and the facilitation of access to high-quality agricultural inputs, but the Project also developed pilot outreach models and agricultural techniques innovative for the Comoros. The heart of the project's approach lay in providing intensive support and advice to farmers through the implementation of Farmer Field Schools, complemented by individual monitoring by the agricultural technicians that resided in the target villages. The installation of more than 150 high quality demonstration plots helped farmers to improve on their standard techniques, as well as introducing them to new techniques that have had an impact in the region, notably

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<sup>1</sup> Country Profiles for Population and Reproductive Health', United Nations Population Fund and Population Reference Bureau, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010 Main Report', Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, 2010

in Madagascar. These techniques, perfectly adapted to the Comorian context, include no-till agriculture (direct-seeding mulch-based cropping systems), the construction of low-cost cattle farms with feed close at hand, and micro-irrigation. Following successful trials, these techniques are already being promoted by other institutions in Comoros, and will therefore have an impact beyond the target area attended by ECDD.

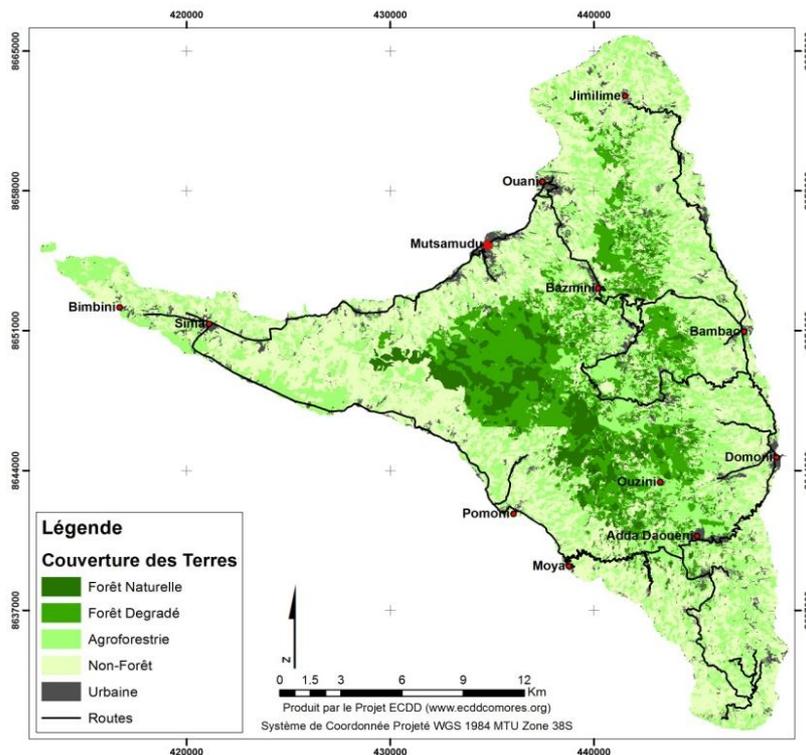
*Number of beneficiaries of ECDD's agricultural work*

Activité	Indicateur	total
		1845
Support to the development of demonstration plots	N plots installed	163
Support to the improvement of field structure	N plots hedged	646
Support to food crop production integrating soil conservation techniques	N beneficiaries for bananas	150
	N beneficiaries of improved soil conservation techniques	131
Support to market gardening production integrating soil conservation techniques	N beneficiaries for market gardening	423
	N beneficiaries for potatoes	168
Support to cattle-rearing and integration of livestock management and agriculture	N beneficiaries for cows under guardianship	9
	N beneficiaries trainings in composting, and livestock-agriculture integration	128
	N beneficiaries of improved cattle stables	17

Unlike agricultural intensification, which was an activity targeted at individuals, sustainable management of natural resources concerns entire communities. For this collective aspect of the work, the project accompanied the target communities and their management groups with activities concentrated on the problem of water management. To this end, ECDD created a model of collective work based on non-paid work by the villagers, and improved water infrastructure in five villages, reaching over 8000 beneficiaries.

In order to go even further in terms making local communities' responsible for taking control of sustainable management of natural resources, the Project initiated the lengthy process of support to these communities surrounding integrated landscape management. This approach, which began mid-2012, seeks to support the communities to identify and implement solutions themselves.

One of the aims of the landscape approach is to ensure the conservation of the forests and their biodiversity, which necessitates basic data to help targeting of activities. The project therefore conducted several ecological studies which will allow the Comoros to develop effective conservation interventions, notably thanks to the creation of high-resolution habitat maps based on satellite images (see the figure below), and maps of the distribution of endangered species across the three islands. This work has been presented to the authorities for integration into the country's conservation policy and to inform the creation of protected areas. Other studies were also performed on the agricultural and environmental problems; the results are all made available through the website.



*Forest map of Anjouan, completed in 2012*

The agricultural and environmental issues targeted by the ECDD Project do not, naturally, have short term solutions. In order to achieve real change, to build on the project's efforts, the dynamic created within the team and with its national and international partners, the project adopted the objective of creating a new national NGO. This NGO, Dahari ('sustainable' or 'long-term' in Comorian), created in February 2013, aims to support local communities in agricultural development and the sustainable management of natural resources, for the benefit of the people and biodiversity of the Comoros.

To achieve that goal, by building on the results of ECDD, Dahari's priorities are clear: integrate measures to protect habitat and biodiversity to create a holistic intervention model, continue to improve and expand the support to agricultural development, implement an effective monitoring and evaluation system in order to measure the impact of activities on the livelihoods of beneficiaries and on biodiversity, build the capacity of the local management committees to take decisions and implement actions, and improve the management of the NGO to build its independence from external support.

Dahari, built from a team that has more than five years of experience, and already supported by an array of international and local technical and financial partners, seeks to galvanise the agricultural and environmental sectors which currently suffer from a real lack of specialised and professionalised civil society institutions. The members of the NGO represent the three islands, and include important actors from the Comorian authorities and other civil society institutions. The end of the ECDD Project is in reality the start of a Comorian structure which hopes to contribute sustainably to the development of the islands: Komori ya leo na meso.