



Madagascar Marine Biodiversity Training Project



What is the Darwin Initiative?

The Darwin Initiative (DI) for the survival of species is an award scheme within Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, UK Government. It provides funds to contribute to achieving the objectives of the Convention for Biological Diversity (CBD). DI provided support to establish and run a one year long training programme implemented through the *Frontier Madagascar*, a collaboration between the Society for Environmental Exploration (SEE), London and the Institut Haieutique et des Sciences Marines (IH.SM), Toliara.

The aims of the project

Madagascar Marine Biodiversity Training Project targeted local people, students and fisheries officers of the region of Toliara considered as key players in the future development of sustainable management plans. Twenty four participants were trained through the project.



Throughout their training, the participants acquired comprehensive knowledge of the ecology of the different marine and coastal ecosystems and their interactions. Their awareness of the various existing threats to ecosystems and consequences of habitat degradation was increased. The trainees also gained an understanding of the importance of the role of local communities in environmental protection plans and in the integrated sustainable management of natural resources.

The training emphasis for Fisheries Officers was with regard to fisheries issues and environmental management aspects treating subjects that were unlikely to have been undertaken previously but that are crucial to the understanding of coastal zone issues, within the national and international legal system.

For IH.SM trainees, the aims were to create a core group of expertise in survey and monitoring techniques of tropical marine and coastal ecosystems. A sustainable management approach was emphasised. The students were also involved in development a Habitat Monitoring Plan for coral reefs of the Anakaio region .



The plan aims to contribute to the National coral reefs initiative, within the South West Indian Ocean monitoring network.

Time was allocated to discussions and constructive debates. In addition, four workshops were held throughout the year for the purpose of information dissemination.

So, what next?

This training project has come to an end. However, *Frontier Madagascar* believe that the project provided a solid first step in building capacity for the benefit of the region. Documents emanating from a the project provide an example for future training initiatives. Furthermore, the skills acquired by the trainees should assist various monitoring plans and sustainable development initiatives to ensure that the marine resources of today are still there for the generations of tomorrow and that biological diversity is conserved.

All students were awarded an certificate of participation for their work and their individual project reports are available. The Habitat Monitoring Plan and the Training Manual will soon be published. For more information, contact:

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