



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

**Darwin Initiative Main/Post/D+ Project
Half Year Report
(due 31 October 2016)**

Project Ref No	21-011
Project Title	Securing livelihoods and conserving marine biodiversity through rights-based fisheries management
Country(ies)	Madagascar
Lead Organisation	Blue Ventures Conservation
Collaborator(s)	Direction Régionale de l'Environnement et des Forêts (now DREEF) Melaky; Direction Régionale des Ressources Halieutiques et de la Pêche (DRRH) (formally DRPRH) Melaky
Project Leader	Alasdair Harris
Report date and number (e.g., HYR3)	HYR3
Project website/Twitter/Blog/Instagram etc	www.blueventures.org
Funder (DFID/Defra)	DFID

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

OUTPUT 1

The proposed Barren Isles MPA, with a zoning plan which protects traditional fishing grounds, is gazetted as a protected area by the government of Madagascar

Activities worked on during this reporting period:

1.1 Consultation of local/migrant fishers

From April to July, 13 communities (out of 15) participated in identifying management measures they want to implement in their fishing areas. These management measures address three kinds of issues: destructive fishing practices, habitat degradation and high fishing effort. They will be integrated first in the PAG (MPA management plan) and then in the existing Barren Isles marine *Dina* (local legislation), after the creation of the monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) programme.

More specifically, the process of identifying management measures in each village followed a field methodology that ensured 1) wide understanding of resources management advantages and responsibilities for small-scale fishers, and collecting observations and management suggestions among every households' representatives, through focus group discussions, and 2) validating or rejecting the management suggestions on the list one by one through community consultations and validations.

We are also working with the Vezo Miray Nosy Barren (VMNB) Association Management Committee to support registration of fishers' membership and their fishing gear. Registration with the association had already been introduced and discussed with the communities that are eager to have it. Most of them will take the opportunity to become a member of the VMNB association so that they can get a professional fisher card which is mandatory by Malagasy law, but also some of them already see the importance of the registration for population regulation and fishing gear control.

This process has already started in one village (Soahany), out of the 13 villages in the VMNB, and work will continue in the remaining villages in the following months.

These consultations will also update the structure of the Dina committee, which enforces the local Dina (currently five members per village, and one central committee) as it is currently difficult for communities to fulfil these commitments e.g. it is very hard, almost impossible in some villages, to fill the five positions as requested by the current structure (lack of literate people, Vezo's migration patterns, etc). After finalising the consultations in each village, they will choose two representatives, who will then participate in the central Dina committee election. It is very important to finalise this before the MCS programme begins.

1.2 Community exchange visit

For two weeks in July, Samba Roger, former President of the Velondriake LMMA Management Committee (SW Madagascar), shared his experiences with nine communities of the Barren Isles MPA. His mission had two aims: raising awareness and explaining the advantages of implementing temporary and permanent marine reserves, which are still an unclear concept for most Vezo in this region; and to clarify BV's, the VMNB Association's, and the wider communities' roles and responsibilities in the management of their local resources. Thanks to his visit many of the issues that the team has struggled with have been alleviated, including unhelpful rumors and reluctant attitudes, generated mostly fuelled by fear of the unknown.

At the end of July, four VMNB Association representatives assisted in the MIHARI regional forum in Belo-sur-Mer. This four-day conference brought together LMMA, NGO and local authority representatives. The VMNB Association representatives especially showed interest in the training session with CITE (a Malagasy information and training center) on simplified management, and in seaweed production during the field visit.

After the forum, we took the opportunity to stay with BV Belo-sur-Mer community representatives to facilitate closer exchanges. The host communities were able to share quite extensively on temporary reserves in mangrove and the application and reinforcement of their Dina.

1.3 Workshop with all MPA stakeholders to determine management plan, zoning and management association

At the beginning of April, we organized a three-day workshop which aimed to identify preliminary management measure suggestions per village, as part of the creation of the MPA management plan. We also took the opportunity to invite DR-EEF and DR-RHP Representatives for presenting the national laws and regulations. This was to help remind the fishermen about the existing governmental laws that the community local regulation (Dina) have to comply with. VMNB association representatives from 12 villages worked in groups. They were asked to answer questions regarding destructive practices, habitat degradation, decline of key species, and common fishing ground conflicts: what are the problems, what do you observe in your environment, and what solutions would you propose to solve or mitigate the problems?

As a result, the VMNB Association representatives were able to share their observations on the environment and the changes in their fishing activities, and think of solutions, that they understood to be called "management measures", a new concept for them.

After conducting these extensive activities - focus group discussions, public consultations and validations on management measures - described in section 1.1, we were able to “close the loop” with the validation workshop of the management measures with the DR-EEF and DR-RHP representatives on August 17, 2016. The VMNB representatives from the 13 communities presented their list of validated management measures. The local authority representatives shared their comments and suggestions. Common regulations in most of the villages were extended to all of them (harmonization), but relevant particular measures were kept. Management measures that were seen as difficult to apply were discarded e.g. time restraints/slots for fishing were discussed but deemed unenforceable.

1.5 Creation of MPA management committee:

The MPA management committee was created in April 2015 (see the last annual report). We have spent the last year and a half building capacity with its members during training sessions (see 1.6) and field work activities in their village, as well the structure (see 1.1). We also often integrate explanations on the VMNB management committee role and function for the MPA during outreach activities, to strengthen the legitimacy and leadership role of the VMNB representatives in terms of resources management, among their communities. They indeed still need assistance in sharing complete information and training reports with the communities

Furthermore, the migration habits of Vezo are challenging the stability of the committee. We quite often have to follow-up with replacing the members who are no longer living in the village. We are in a constant pursuit of stability and reinforcement of the management committee.

1.6 Training and work planning sessions with newly formed MPA management committee

Training sessions with the VMNB Association representatives were held in April, June, August and September. We developed the content of these sessions according to the requirements and timing of the MPA process for gaining the definitive status of protection. For example, the last six months were very busy identifying management measures that would be constituent of the MPA management plan (PAG), as described above in sections 1.1 to 1.3. We consider the VMNB representatives as the starting point for each step we need to undertake to define the MPA objective, structure and management in a participatory way. The representatives then share the information and news with their communities, to prepare for the field work - e.g. information sharing, awareness raising, public consultations and validations that we’ll undertake with them in their village. We also have more technical training for the committee members, to build capacity.

In April, their training was about identifying preliminary ideas of management measures for the MPA per village (see 1.3). In June, the committee representatives presented a first round of management measures, and our guest, Samba Roger, presented the activities of the Velondriake Committee in the SW (see 1.2). In August, we had a one day validation of the management measures with the local authorities representatives (see 1.3). The second day of that training session was about preparing the next steps: reviewing the Dina committee structure and preparing for the registry of VMNB membership and fishing gear census (1.1).

OUTPUT 2

A fisheries management plan is developed and implemented by the fishing communities in collaboration with the regional fisheries authorities (DRPRH)

2.4 Develop implementation plan with DRPRH and Barren Isles MPA management committee

Last August we held a technical meeting to validate the draft of the ministerial ruling (projet d’arrêté ministériel) for The Regional Fisheries Plan at the MRHP. We are following up on its signature, which will open the way to the national and regional approval and official status, as well as the implementation phase.

In terms of the agenda, we are at the whim of the MRHP's will to act and go ahead with the project. But, we are working ahead on related topics to its implementation, such as the MCS programme and the MPA procedure to obtain the definitive status of protection. Indeed, the Regional Fisheries Plan will be implemented as a pilot within the MPA, where management measures relevant for both the Regional Fisheries Plan, and MPA management plan, such as law enforcement strategies and the system of professional fisher cards, are interrelated activities to both.

OUTPUT 3

A system of community-based monitoring, control and surveillance of illegal fishing activities in the Barren Isles MPA is developed with the local community and in partnership with the CSP

3.1 Liaise with regional authorities, CSP and other stakeholders to develop plan for improved community-based MCS

From September 19, 2016, we started the consultancy on the development of the MCS programme (see 2.4). We shall be able to give a full account of its outcomes in the next report.

3.2 Conduct regular trainings in Dina enforcement and infraction management

We have included Dina committee representatives in the training sessions with the VMNB management committee (see 1.6), where we always plan an hour for the exchange of news between the representatives from the 13 villages of the MPA. Most of the time, they report loss of fishing gear by industrial trawlers disputing the same fishing zones. They often report illegal crews of scuba divers collecting sea cucumbers in common areas close to the isles too. Finally, they also frequently report mangrove deforestation close to their village by strangers. Those are all infractions that go beyond the Dina committee's power, but we encourage them to take notes of these kind of events, in order to create a database of these infractions, for future use when the MCS programme will be implemented.

Formal trainings will be conducted with the implementation of the MCS programme. In the meantime, we are aiming to strengthen and consolidate the Dina committee, by reducing the structure to two representatives (see 1.1).

3.3 Support community in following up on any infractions (Dina & writing up illegal fishing activity)

The Barren Isles Dina (local rule), validated by the regional court in 2014, did not contain many resource management measures, but some basic destructive fishing practice bans. The process of identifying and validating management measures for each village (described in sections 1.1, 1.3, 1.6) is complementing the current Dina, as they will be translated into articles with established sanctions (that will also be decided in a participatory process).

So far, some communities (Nosy Lava, Nosy Maroantaly, Manombo) have already acted informally when fishermen use destructive fishing gears in their area, for example poison fishing, by explaining during community meetings that they do not allow such practices in their village. The offenders have then given up on those practices. Once the MCS programme is in place, these meetings will be more formalised.

3.4 Develop process for transferring reports by community members on illegal fishing from industrial and sea cucumber vessels to CSP

This process will be one of the key aspects of the MCS programme we have just started developing, and should have a validated MCS strategy by November. The next phase of the implementation of the MCS programme, which will include formal training on regulation enforcement, will take place in February 2017.

OUTPUT 4

Community-based monitoring of the key fisheries within the Barren Isles MPA is carried out, enabling reliable stock estimates and providing a basis for sustainable management and improvement of the fisheries

4.1 Fisheries monitoring in five villages

In June 2016, we expanded our FFM (finfish monitoring) programme to another coastal village, Ampandikoara, and three most populated isles, Nosy Lava, Maroantaly and Nosy Marify.

Ampandikoara is situated 35 km south of Maintirano, inside the MPA. No trawlers are theoretically allowed to work in its waters, which would give us a good comparison point with two villages next to Maintirano, where industrial fisheries frequent nearshore waters. In those three villages, fisheries monitoring is ongoing the whole year.

The monitoring in the islands is seasonal, starting in May or June and ending in November or December, depending on the fishermen's agenda. During the rainy season, most of them live on the coast.

4.2 Community-based turtle nest monitoring at priority sites, and education and awareness-raising activities on importance of keystone species

The results of this last season (December 2015 - April 2016) were good in terms of number of nests, compared to last year. Among all of the nesting turtles monitored (56), two islands had more nests recorded than previously: Nosy Abohazo (36 nests compared to 14 in the 2013-2014 season) and Nosy Mboro (18 nests, no comparison data).

With this success, we will keep building on the feedback and our experiences to improve future turtle nest monitoring activities.

4.3 Zoning plan for MPA established with community, and plan developed and implemented for monitoring impact on fisheries and habitats

The zoning and management plan for the MPA is currently being developed (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.6). Fishermen in seven villages have decided to create temporary or permanent reserves in their village fishing zone. These sites will be piloted and might attract other communities to do so in their own areas if they see good results. We will establish fisheries monitoring in these reserves, mostly in mangroves, in order to establish concrete figures on the effectiveness of these management measures.

4.4 Stock assessments on priority fisheries carried out

From March, a consultant was hired to establish a fisheries profile for the Barren Isles MPA. The first draft, presented in August 2016, is currently being reviewed. The data and recommendations from this study will allow us to develop the next steps to improve fisheries in the MPA including the temporary and permanent reserves habitats (see 4.3) (and whether a stock assessment is possible/valid with current data).

4.5 Disseminate monitoring results to communities and stakeholders (presentations, resource status dashboard, etc.)

On August 3-4, 2016, we organized FFM data dissemination sessions summarising data collected from August 2015 to September 2016 in Ampasimandroro and Ambalahonko. The programme included raising awareness on current topics, such as local management measures, and key learning points were adapted into a quiz format for the communities.

Fisheries monitors were also trained on shrimp monitoring in August 2016, a key fishery that until now was unmonitored. It was also a chance to correct some aspects of their work that generate inaccuracies in the data collected, and improve their measuring techniques.

At the end of September 2016, we conducted FFM data dissemination in Nosy Lava, Nosy Maroantaly and Nosy Marify, where teams of monitors are working, and Ampandikoara, a coastal village south of Maintirano.

Generally, we have improved the data dissemination format to make it more attractive but also more pedagogical and linked with current project activities. The goal of fisheries monitoring in an MPA is very challenging to explain to the communities, but we keep on adapting our approach to make this particular activity more accessible.

4.6 Incorporate results of fisheries monitoring into MPA and fisheries management planning

Fisheries monitoring data has not yet been incorporated into management planning. Indeed, it is scientifically difficult to claim at this stage that monitoring data truly reflect what's happening in the MPA waters (4,317 km²). It needs to be combined with other sources as well. Perceptions and observations of fishers about their resources collected during focus group discussions (see 1.1) gave us valuable insights on key species' status today. Out of 43 groups, 35 claim that their resources have diminished or collapsed. It was the starting point for introducing a process of collective participatory decision-making on resources management. It is crucial for us that they see management as a solution and not a threat to their livelihood, and as their own responsibility and decision and not BV's.

With the implementation of specific management measures, such as permanent and temporary reserves (see 4.3), BV will assist communities to establish fisheries monitoring programmes in those sites, while continuing the FFM in the three current coastal villages and three islands.

A new and competent (Malagasy) Fisheries Scientist was finally recruited in September. This person will be able to work full time on fisheries monitoring data analysis and programme improvements, to properly advise communities on management decisions and assess management measures being implemented. This way, results of fisheries monitoring will truly be incorporated in the participatory fisheries management planning.

Fisheries monitoring data has not yet been incorporated into management planning, as analysis on fisheries data is currently being completed, as is the final PAG. However, during the elaboration of the PAG with communities, perceptions and observations of resources, and management measures, were incorporated.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

- We discussed many of the major issues with Darwin after their review of our annual report. In particular: the status of the renewal process for temporary protection: It is still being processed by the Secretariat of the State in charge of the Sea (SEMER) even though the deadline has already passed (10th October). This delay is due to slower than normal processes as the new departments are still in their induction period. Created in June 2016, they have been mandated to administer MPAs previously managed by the PA Department at the Ministry of Environment. They don't have enough experience to deal with such situations, especially as they need to coordinate this with other sectoral Ministries (Ministry of Mining and Ministry of Fisheries). Fortunately, this delay doesn't interfere with the legitimacy of getting a further two years to create the BI MPA (stipulated in the current temporary protection status order), as the other ministries concerned have been involved in the process since the beginning. According to the last discussion with the SEMER, the renewal is supposed to be complete by November but realistically it could take longer.

In line with discussion with LTS/Darwin earlier this year, we are focusing on the following priorities in

our grant in our last 6-12 months of Darwin funding:

- An MCS programme validated by all the communities in the MPA
- A stable management and Dina committee structure, with committed representatives
- A final version of the PAG
- A Comité de Pilotage created for the implementation of the PAP (Regional fisheries plan) at the MPA level, and develop the implementation plan
- Further monitoring activities (turtle nesting and finfish monitoring)

As part of this prioritisation, as well as unexpected delays discussed with LTS/Darwin, we are aware that the training and implementation of the MCS programme may be behind schedule. We want to ensure that the communities 1) understand fully the aim of MCS and 2) “are ready” and very much involved and supportive. We also need to make sure we have community surveillance agents that are committed. We might need some time to adjust the programme if we see that there are aspects that will be difficult to implement in practice.

2b. 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**

Formal change request submitted: **Yes/No**

Received confirmation of change acceptance **Yes/No**

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.

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

None at present.

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 send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at 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: 22-035 Darwin Half Year Report**