

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE OCEANS

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SESSION TWO: PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Photo credit: Nick Hall

MIHARI: Networking coastal communities to manage small-scale fisheries sustainably

Madagascar

1) What is the focus of this project?

The MIHARI – which stands for “*Mitantana HAREna an-dRanomasi-na avy eny Ifotony*” – Network is a platform aimed at bringing together coastal communities involved in marine resource management, and the organizations that support them. Created as a way to link up isolated coastal communities throughout Madagascar, the network allows community leaders to share ideas and successful models through peer-to-peer learning, as well as to represent the interests of small-scale fishers in national policy development.

2) Which organizations and other partners are involved?

The network currently includes over 100 individual Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) located in seven regions of Madagascar (namely: Atsimo Andrefana, Anosy, Diana, Boeny, Analanjirifo, Melaky and Menabe) and covering more than 12,000 km², which is over 12% of the island’s seabed. The Network’s partners are composed of: Blue Ventures, WWF, the **Wildlife Conservation Society** (WCS), Conservation International, SAGE, Aquatic service, Azafady/Seed Madagascar, the **Development and Environmental Law Center** (DELIC), Fanamby, Asity Madagascar, Reef Doctor, Honko Mangrove conservation, Madagascar National Parks – Nosy Hara, Community Centred Conservation, PAGE-GIZ, Cetamada, the Missouri Botanical Gardens, and Gret. Government Ministries, training institutions, and research organizations are also involved with the network.

The roots of the MIHARI network can be traced to 2003, when, in response to community needs, NGOs working with fishing communities began developing the concept of LMMAs in Madagascar. LMMAs are areas of near-shore waters that are fully or largely managed by coastal communities, and which are empowered to create and implement management rules. However, it became clear that, as they are located in remote coastal areas, the majority of LMMA implementing communities in Madagascar had limited opportunities for communication with other LMMA managers. Inspired by the Pacific LMMA network, Madagascar’s first national LMMA forum was held in June 2012, bringing together community representatives from 18 LMMAs with the aim of addressing these isolation problems through peer-to-peer learning and sharing experiences. This event resulted in the creation of MIHARI, Madagascar’s national LMMA Network.

3) What activities or tools have proven successful in building capacity?

The core activities of the network are to coordinate exchange visits between fishing communities and organize forums of LMMA managers. Fisher exchanges are a powerful tool in the spread of fisheries management practices and governance, and also help in building leadership and engagement in management efforts. In addition, MIHARI’s regular forums bring together community leaders representing LMMAs from all around Madagascar’s coast. These forums are being held both at the regional and national level. They allow leaders

to share their experiences, success stories and challenges encountered, and foster a sense of community spirit and solidarity between LMMA communities. Attending forums also provides community leaders with the opportunity to meet with Government authorities to discuss their issues and expectations, and to get advice on how to manage their resources better. Three annual national forums and five regional forums have been organized so far. This year, four new regional forums will be organized to group communities with a similar context. Ongoing communication tools through local radio and local newspapers are also being developed to maintain regular communication and sharing of stories outside of these events.

At the national policy level, the MIHARI Network has contributed to new national fisheries policy and protected area policy that represents the interests of small-scale fishers. The network is also working with Government ministries to develop legislation that reinforces the legal status of LMMAs.

4) What challenges have been experienced, specifically related to maintaining a focus on capacity building and/or replicating the project in other areas?

Among the challenges faced by the network in terms of maintaining capacity building are:

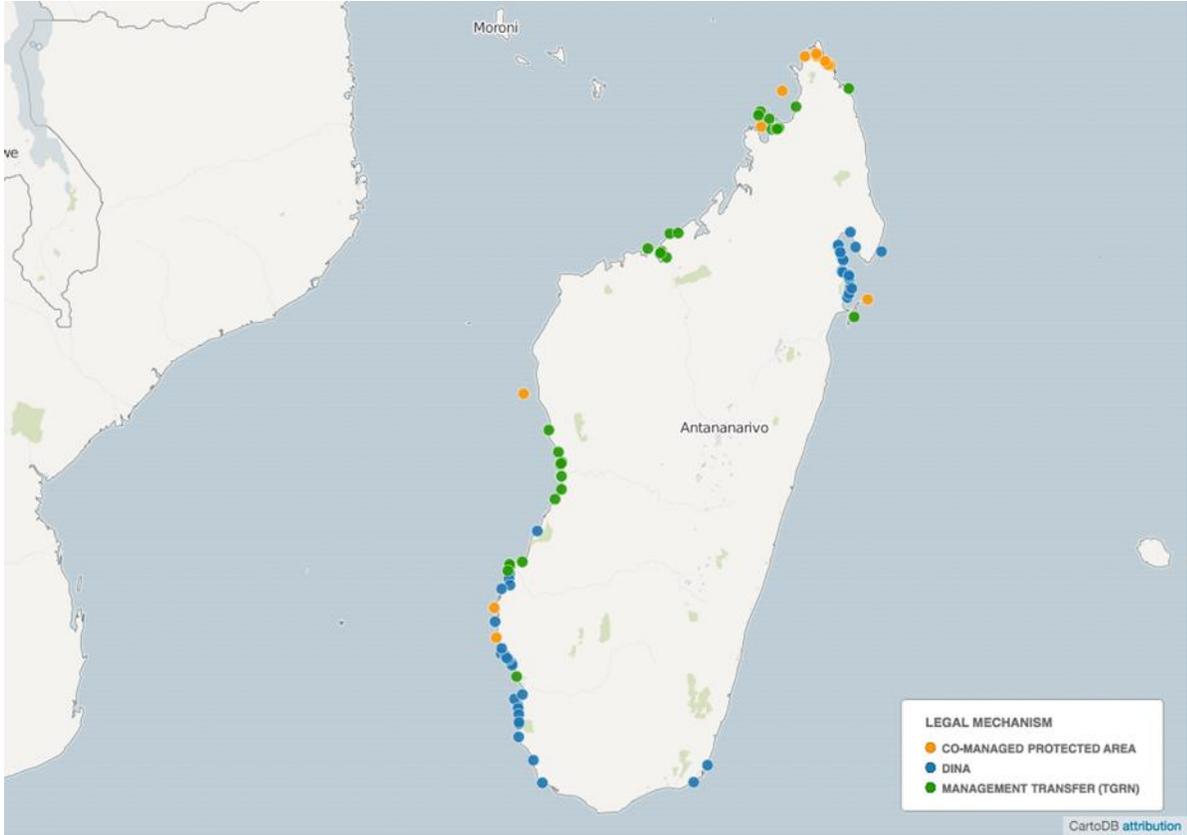
- The low level of education of some LMMA communities, which limits their capacity to learn sophisticated/technical subjects.
- Limited effective information exchange: after attending MIHARI forums or exchange visits, not all LMMA representatives are able to share and report back what they learned to their community.
- The high dependency of LMMA communities on supporting organizations.
- The lack of sustainable funds for LMMAs, which does not allow all LMMA communities to participate in forums and exchanges, and hinders the process of helping them to replicate lessons learned from other LMMAs.

5) What are the next steps for the project?

The priorities for the MIHARI network in the next phases of its development are to continue to increase engagement and ownership of the network among community managers, and to facilitate networking and learning exchanges between LMMA associations, while building the network's capacity and sustainability in the long term. To do this, a strategy has been developed that includes:

- Focusing on capacity building of community leaders by commissioning specialist trainers in priority subjects such as: fishery management measures, conservation, engaging with the private sectors, governance and leadership; communication, legislation, and climate change.
- Organizing long-term training of LMMA leaders, who will go on to become trainers in their own communities.
- Providing support for "orphan" LMMAs and sites with less support from technical partners.
- Engaging with the LMMA movement worldwide, learning from experiences in other areas.
- Ensuring the active participation of communities in the network and in LMMA development.
- Engaging closely with the Government of Madagascar to ensure a strong and supportive legal framework for local marine management.
- Building the MIHARI network's presence in key regions through regional hubs that will be able to maintain momentum at a local level and facilitate coordination and communication.
- Reinforcing the structure and sustainability of the network by increasing community ownership, independent fund raising and raising the profile at the national level.
- Exploring options to secure the financial sustainability of LMMA and the MIHARI Network over the long-term.

www.mihari-network.org



Map of LMMAs in MIHARI Network