



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



©FAO Mauritius

SUPPORT TO FOREST CODE REVISION AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM IN MAURITIUS

July 2019

SDGs:



Countries:

Mauritius

Project Codes:

TCP/MAR/3602

FAO Contribution:

USD 298 000

Duration:

1 November 2016 – 31 March 2019

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Mauritius

FAO-MG@fao.org

Implementing Partner

Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries.

Beneficiaries

Public bodies in charge of rural development and local farmers and landowners.

Country Programming Framework

Priority Area B: “Promote sustainable agriculture for food and nutrition security”. Outcome 2 – Improved enabling institutional environment – land use management and early warning system for animal and plant diseases, pests and agricultural statistics, for improved evidence-based decision-making.



BACKGROUND

Mauritius is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) in the Eastern Indian Ocean with a population of 1.3 million. Its main resources are tourism, sugar cane production and fisheries. It faces the typical constraints of a SIDS, namely small area and population, limited skilled human resources, diseconomies of scale, remoteness from major markets, scarce natural resources and vulnerability to natural disasters, especially in the context of climate change.

The economy of Mauritius, which was once based on the monoculture of sugar cane, shifted at the start of the 1970s towards the development of offshore banking services, real estate, ICT, textiles and tourism, with the country welcoming around a million tourists each year. With the Government's attempts to promote both business tourism and ecotourism, a clear focus has been placed on the conservation of biodiversity.

Although the National Forest Policy document, issued in 2006, explicitly details the necessary elements for an enabling context for the full implementation of the policy, its directions have not been adequately implemented due to major gaps and inconsistencies in the national legal and regulatory frameworks and in the current institutional setting.

The National Forestry Policy of 2006 was undertaken by the Forest Service under the direction of the then Ministry of Agro-Industry and Fisheries. The document was the result of intense discussions and consultations between key stakeholders in government, civil society and other interested parties, and was based on a detailed study and review of the relevant documents concerning the forest sector. International assistance for the formulation of the policy was provided by the FAO under its technical programme.

The objective of the present project was therefore to support the Government of Mauritius in the revision of forest legislation/regulations and institutional reform in order to create a context that might be favourable to the correct implementation of the National Forest Policy. The project benefited from its earlier concrete experience of working in cooperation with stakeholders in a participatory process.

IMPACT

The expected impact of the project was the correct implementation of the National Forestry Policy in Mauritius following a revision of the juridical and institutional contexts surrounding the application of the necessary measures.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

The outcome of the project was the improvement in the regulatory and institutional background for forest policy implementation.

The project had three major outputs. The first was to bring about changes brought in legislation and regulations related to the sustainable management of forests, in order to ensure consistency of national legal frameworks and the compliance of sector-specific legislation with the Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT), as well as to remove existing barriers to policy implementation in order to promote new forms of association between the public and private sectors in conservation and effective use of forests. As part of this output, a proposal for a revised Forests and Reserves Act was submitted to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.

The second output was to bring about changes in the institutional arrangements needed for the effective implementation of the National Forest Policy. Under this output, a proposal for the organizational structure of the Forestry Service of Mauritius and Rodrigues was submitted to the Government.

The third output, meanwhile, was to enhance the capacity of actors and raise general levels of awareness regarding the correct implementation of the National Forest Policy. Under this output, a learning programme in support of National Forest Policy implementation, a guideline on agroforestry and a guideline on forest management planning were submitted. Meanwhile, 20 officers from public and private institutions involved in policy implementation benefited from a training of trainers (ToT) course. Ten forestry officers also took part in a training course on native plant identification and propagation.

IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

The project had a scheduled duration of two years and was due to be completed by the end of July 2018. However, a number of setbacks – including the late recruitment of national consultants, the unavailability of key stakeholders for bilateral consultations in December and January 2018 due to extreme weather events and the delayed mission of consultants to Rodrigues – meant that a request was made to extend the project's end date until 31 March 2019. All project activities were completed by this date.

All project activities were implemented within the planned budget. Only one project activity – a training session on the legal aspect of the reform – was not implemented due to the unavailability of the FAO consultant (a specialist in legal reform). The project funds were spent conservatively, with some of the project costs (provision of conference room for bilateral meetings, transport, printing, etc.) provided by the Forestry Service as co-financing. As a result, some project funds remained and these were used to fund additional activities (training session on native plant identification and propagation, design and printing of posters for the sensitization and awareness campaign, as well as a consultative mission to Rodrigues island).

The risks faced by the project were adequately managed and addressed. When required, project activities were rescheduled (e.g. adverse weather conditions, unavailability of stakeholders). In order to manage these risks effectively, a range of key stakeholders from the public and private sectors were incorporated into the Project Steering Committee and capacity development programmes under the project.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The proposal for the revised legislation needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security and passed through Parliament.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project proposed a reform of the Forestry Service's organizational structure and highlighted the tasks and responsibilities of the different units under the structure. Following a training needs assessment, the project put forward the training requirements for all staff grades. Some of the priority training areas identified during the assessment have been included in the syllabus of the Forestry Diploma Course followed by forest officers.

The Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reform has been mandated to facilitate the continuous professional development and growth of human resources in the civil service and to support the creation of the necessary conditions and a conducive work environment.

Partnerships between the Forestry Service, other public departments (Environment and Sustainable Development, Housing and Lands, Water Resources Unit), private actors (Ebony Forests, Mauritius Meat Producers Association, *La Vallée de Ferney*) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Mauritian Wildlife Foundation, Eco Sud) were initiated through the activities carried out under the project. These partners benefited from the trainings under the project and are in regular contact with the Forestry Service over related issues (environmental protection, land degradation, deer ranching, agroforestry and ecotourism, among others).

2. Gender equality

Equal consideration and opportunities were given to male and female participants for all of the consultative workshops and for the training provided under the project.

Mauritius has a fairly advanced gender equity (a Gender Development Index of 0.968 in 2018, according to the report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)). The project's activities also addressed the needs and priorities of women and men. In addition, the Equal Opportunities Act of 2008 (amended in 2011) makes provisions to promote equal opportunities between persons, to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of status and by victimization and to establish an Equal Opportunities Commission.



3. Environmental sustainability

All of the sensitization and awareness-raising material prepared/disseminated under the project was aimed at increasing public awareness of the productive and protective functions of forests and the important role played by the forest sector in national development and human well-being. This will enhance the protection, restoration and sustainable use of forests.

4. Technological sustainability

Twenty representatives of public and private institutions were actively involved in policy implementation, benefiting from a ToT course in the following areas: (i) standard operating procedures, (ii) forest policy development and evaluation, (iii) environmental economic evaluation, (iv) research methodologies and survey techniques and (v) formulation of awareness raising programmes.

Most of the beneficiaries of the ToT course occupy senior positions in organizations actively involved in the implementation of the Forest Policy. They were asked to transmit the knowledge acquired to their junior officers. Additional capacity building will be required in future.

5. Economic sustainability

The Government of Mauritius made contributions in kind to the project, in terms of office facilities, transport and other logistics.

Some of the thematic areas highlighted for capacity-building, such as the report on the Learning programme in support of National Forest Policy implementation, were included in the Forestry Diploma Course followed by forest officers – this course is being sponsored by the Government of Mauritius.

The Forestry Service issues plants free of charge to public institutions, NGOs and socio-cultural organizations as part of the national tree-planting campaign. Plants are also issued free of charge to private land owners for the rehabilitation of mountain and river reserves.

The rehabilitation of forests and degraded land is relatively expensive. The proposal for legal reform made a provision to capture additional funds (e.g. Forest Fund). This will be used to provide incentives to private forest owners and for the rehabilitation of forests.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Report on current situation of forestry sector in Mauritius including the existing institutional framework and capacity building. C. Cyparsade (National principal consultant). May 2017. 62 pp.
- ❑ Report on restructured goals and objectives of the NFP. C. Cyparsade. August 2017. 6 pp.
- ❑ Report on analysis of tasks of the restructured Forest Policy goals and objectives. C. Cyparsade. November 2017. 15 pp.
- ❑ Report on the need for institutional reform. C. Cyparsade. November 2017. 11 pp.
- ❑ Legal Consistency Report. P. Bunwaree (National legal consultant). November 2017. 73 pp.
- ❑ Learning program in support to the National Forest Policy implementation. B. Ramamonjisoa (International consultant on capacity-building). August 2018. 61 pp.
- ❑ Proceeding of the training of trainers. B. Ramamonjisoa. August 2018. 39 pp.
- ❑ PowerPoint presentation on forest goods and services. C. Cyparsade. November 2018.
- ❑ PowerPoint presentation on the importance of forests. C. Cyparsade. November 2018.
- ❑ Guideline for Agroforestry. B. Ramamonjisoa. December 2018. 39 pp.
- ❑ Poster on forest ecosystems in Mauritius. C. Cyparsade. February 2019.
- ❑ Poster on forest and water conservation in Mauritius. C. Cyparsade. February 2019.
- ❑ Poster on the importance of trees in Mauritius. C. Cyparsade. February 2019.
- ❑ Final report on the institutional reform of the Forestry Service. C. Cyparsade. March 2019. 72 pp.
- ❑ Report on legal gap analysis. P. Bunwaree. March 2019. 112 pp.
- ❑ Law Reform Proposal. P. Bunwaree. March 2019. 52 pp.
- ❑ Developing and modernizing the forest sector in Mauritius: A policy brief. Four-page summary. Inputs by project team, reviewed and edited by E. Kilawe (Forestry officer, FAO Subregional Office for Southern Africa). 2019.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	The National Forestry Policy in Mauritius is correctly implemented after a revision of the juridical and institutional contexts of applying measures		
Outcome	Regulatory and institutional background improved for Forest Policy implementation		
	Indicator	Number of legislation and regulation texts changed.	
	Baseline	Forests and Reserves Act of 1983 and outdated institutional arrangement for Forest Policy implementation.	
	End Target	Forest and Reserves Act of 1983 and Forestry Service organizational structure reviewed and capacity of actors enhanced for improved Forest Policy implementation.	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	Achieved. The project produced concrete proposals for legal and institutional reform, as well as for capacity-building. These proposals will still need to be approved and endorsed in order to achieve the expected impact. The proposal for the revised legislation needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and passed through Parliament.	
Output 1	Changes brought about in legislation and regulations related to the sustainable management of forests, in order to ensure consistency of national legal frameworks and the compliance of sector-specific legislation with the Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security (VGGT), as well as to remove existing barriers to policy implementation in order to promote new forms of association between the public and private sectors in conservation and effective use of forests		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of legislation and regulation texts changed.	Legislation reviewed.	Yes
Baseline	No legislation reviewed.		
Comments	A proposal for a revised Forests and Reserves Act was submitted to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security. The proposal needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and passed through the Parliament.		
Activity 1.1	Evaluate the internal consistency of the existing legal framework in relation to tenure and forestry aspects and assess the forest legislation against the forestry-related international convention, agreements and guidelines to which the Government of Mauritius has committed, and against the existing Forest Policy, in order to develop a legal gap analysis and identify barriers to implementation of policy, including insufficiencies and incoherencies in the legal text		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Legal Consistency Report and Legal Gap Analysis Report submitted. No impediments.	
Activity 1.2	Formulate concrete proposals for the adaptation of legal texts in order to promote a complete implementation of the Forest Policy directions		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A proposal for a revised Forests and Reserves Act was submitted to the Government. This needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and passed through the Parliament.	

Output 2	Changes are brought about in the institutional arrangements needed for an effective implementation of the National Forest Policy		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	New institutional arrangement.	Institutional arrangement of the Forestry Service reviewed.	Yes
Baseline	Institutional arrangement not reviewed.		
Comments	A proposal for the organizational structure of the Forestry Service of Mauritius and Rodrigues was submitted to the Government. This proposal needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.		
Activity 2.1	Carry out a functional analysis of the institutions involved in forestry		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 2.2	Comments	Situational and functional analysis report submitted.	
	Formulate concrete proposals for the reorganization of some tasks/institutions in relation to forestry development		
Activity 2.2	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The proposal for the reorganisation of the organizational structure of the Forestry Service in Mauritius and Rodrigues has been submitted to the Government and needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security to be effective.	
Output 3	The capacity of actors is enhanced and popular awareness raised for good implementation of the National Forest Policy		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of training courses and number of people trained. Number of reports and guidelines	Capacity of actors enhanced.	Yes
Baseline	Capacity of actors not enhanced.		
Comments	A learning programme in support of the National Forest Policy implementation was submitted. One guideline on agroforestry and one on forest management plan was submitted. 20 officers from public and private institutions involved in policy implementation benefited from a ToT course. Ten forestry officers benefited from a training course on native plant identification and propagation. The proposal for the learning programme in support of the National Forest Policy implementation needs to be approved and endorsed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security.		
Activity 3.1	Elaborate a functional analysis of the various public (ministries, public agencies) and private positions (NGOs, local communities and private sector representatives)		
	Achieved	Yes	
Activity 3.2	Comments	The functional analysis of the various sectors were successfully completed and a proposal for a learning programme in support of the National Forest Policy implementation was submitted.	
	Develop capacity-building and awareness-raising for a better implementation of the National Forest Policy		
Activity 3.2	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Three posters were designed on thematic areas related to the National Forest Policy. Two PowerPoint presentations were prepared for the ongoing sensitization campaigns in schools and community centres.	

Outreach, Marketing and Reporting Unit (PSRR)
Business Development and Resource Mobilization Division (PSR)

For more information please contact: Reporting@fao.org