



CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION, DE RECHERCHES ET DE FORMATION INDIANOCÉANIQUES
CENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION, RESEARCH AND TRAINING ON THE SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN

Sandwatch in Mauritius

1.0 Introduction

Coastal zone is one of the most complex ecosystem and most productive of the planet. Mauritius, as an archipelagic State, faces serious challenges in the management of its coastal zone. Indeed, the coastal zone is under intense pressure, on one hand, from the sea with tourism activities, water sports and fisheries, and on the other hand, through land-based activities such as agriculture, industry, construction, sewage disposal and the urbanisation of the coast. The damaging effects of the activities on the coastal zone are beach erosion, poor water quality, the lost of biological diversity (in the sea and on the coast), and construction and reconstruction works which do not take into account the functions and interactions of the ecosystems. Moreover, the impact of natural disasters and that of global warming and sea level rise on the exigencies of sustainable development and the welfare of the people must be taken into consideration. If making the enforcement of laws and regulations more efficient is a must but it is not enough. Education and communication followed by an engagement of the stakeholders especially the community are fundamental initiatives if we want to develop knowledge, values, attitudes, wise practices and know-how that allow their active participation in the sustainable development of the coastal areas in Mauritius. This is the reason why the *Centre for Documentation, Research and Training on the South West Indian Ocean (CEDREFI)* is engaging itself in Sandwatch which is in line with the provision of the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

2.0 Description of Project

Sandwatch is a process, based on the critical evaluation of beach problems and conflicts, to develop sustainable approaches with the active participation of the community to address issues of the beach environment. The emphasis will be to put together the joint efforts of knowledge and experiences drawn from natural sciences, social sciences, culture, communication and education on coastal issues. The project will cover the sustainable development of the coast, sustainable life style in coastal zone, coastal zone management and the sustainable use of coastal resources. The duration of the project will be of a minimum duration of two years.

2.1 Aims

- To contribute in the understanding of the beach ecosystem, climate change, impact of human activities on the ecosystem and developing new attitudes of beach users.
- To empower the local stakeholders in wise practices in coastal and beach management
- To identify beach problems and monitor changes of the beach over time
- To develop policy dialogue and contribute in the transparency of the decision making process with government and local authorities on the issue of coastal zone

2.2 Pilot Activities

Two coastal villages namely Flic en Flac and Le Morne on the west coast of Mauritius have been chosen for the pilot activities.

3.0 Description of Project Activities

3.1 Phase I

Phase I will be two months duration and the following tasks will be undertaken:

- Identification of stakeholders in each village and organisation of a briefing in each village on the programme.
- To have qualitative interview with four different stakeholders in each village on problems of the village and other related issues to coastal management. This will give a better understanding to the CEDREFI team on the realities of each selected village.
- Take stock of the nature of the beach ecosystem and take footage and digital pictures for further use at a later stage. Footage and digital pictures will be done throughout the project.
- Identification of available infrastructures
- Identification of economic operators present in the area, size of business and nature of activities.
- Organisation of a participatory session, based on the techniques of planning through objectives, for the identification of the developmental problems with the stakeholders in each village. Prior to the exercise, the participants will be provided with cameras in order to take pictures of what they like most and what they dislike in their village. Also, they will be asked to make a sketch map of the beach to prioritize issues. The pictures and the sketch map will be used as materials for the participatory sessions.
- Identification of drivers/animators to take charge of the implementation of the project. Ten persons from each village will be identified to undertake activities in the context of the programme. At the outset, the ten drivers from each village will be subjected to an evaluation of their coastal zone management knowledge. At the end of the project, the same exercise will be conducted to order to measure the progress made. In this context, a questionnaire will be prepared for this

- evaluation exercise. The drivers will be associated with the activities of phase I and these activities will constitute an awareness raising exercise in themselves.
- Survey on the motivation of people coming to the beach

3.2 Phase II: Capacity Building Workshop

A capacity building workshop of three days will be organised for the drivers and representative of stakeholders, on the coastal ecosystem, the factors contributing to the degradation of the coastal zone and development and implementation of remedial measures, and also techniques of social mobilisation and motivation. Also demonstration sessions will be organised on the beach for the participants. The capacity building is a process that will cut across at various stages and phases of the project. A calendar of training activities will be finalised at the first capacity building workshop. Thus the drivers will take charge of the community mobilisation and the transfer of knowledge and ignition of actions at community level. A specific restitution session will be organised for the transfer of knowledge by the drivers and support team of CEDREFI to a bigger group in each village. The whole exercise of Phase II will be completed within a period of 4 months.

3.3 Phase III: Implementation of Micro-Projects

The implementation process is based on participatory methodologies and empowerment of the community as the process moved forward. At the end of the day, members of the community, as a group or in their individual capacity, should be in a position to take initiatives and develop actions around coastal issues in the village in a sustainable development perspective. Consequently, specific groups in each village will be targeted for specific actions such as the primary school, women, economic operators and other civil society organisations at local level. This will contribute in a greater mobilisation at the local level of the community. Common actions for the whole village will also be conducted.

3.3.1 The micro-projects

Phase I and II will feed into the implementation of the micro-projects. Three micro-projects are being planned in each village:

1. Time line history of the beach and the village

Participants will be provided with an introduction on the methodological tools and potential sources of information. This exercise will require 'micro-research', qualitative interview of the elderly and data collection on any type of changes in the village (including biodiversity and traditional coastal plants) will be recorded. Any environmental destruction and traditional activities that have been impacting on the ecosystem will be documented. Also the legacy of these ecological impacts will be highlighted. A sketch map of the coastal zone prior to its transformation will be reconstituted as far as possible.

2. Activities on the beach and behind the beach

Certain priority problems that were identified on the beach in Phase I will be addressed. The main focus will be around the beach changes that is already visible and within the capacity of the community to handle by itself. This may cover the beach measurement, monitoring of changes and the use of the data collected to dialogue with the authorities and to further develop community actions such as tree planting.

3. Activities at households level

The households in the village will be mobilised around the use of resources such as electricity and water consumption and the generation of domestic waste and their impact on climate change and sea level rise. The focus will be on how reduction in electricity and water consumption and reduction and recycling of domestic waste can contribute in the decreasing of greenhouse gases and maintaining a healthy marine environment.

3.3.2 Cross Cutting Activities

1. Training

Training will be a cross-cutting activity throughout phase III in order to empower both the drivers and the participants to engage themselves in the community to address the various problems identified. Specific training sessions between one hour to two hours will be organised on a regular basis and as the need is felt throughout phase III.

2. Workshops

Two one-day workshops will be held as a mid-term review and at the end of the first year respectively

3. Open-day

Provisions are being made for an open-day for the villagers and beach users at the time of the mid-term review and at the end of the first year. It will be an opportunity to show case of the work being done through an exhibition awareness raising activities on the beach for the general public and to publicise Sandwatch

4.0 Outcomes

The micro-projects intend to create a conducive environment for arousing the curiosity of the villagers on the beach and marine ecosystem, assist them in constructing their social relationship and develop an experimental approach in addressing problem areas of their coastal village.

More specifically, the project will contribute to the following outputs:

- Enhanced knowledge about beach management, climate change and related issues among residents of two coastal communities.
- One 3-day capacity building workshop held for residents of two coastal communities
- Two 1-day workshops held to review and evaluate progress
- Governmental and non-governmental organizations from Mauritius involved in project implementation
- Three micro-projects implemented by coastal communities
- Final report prepared together with digital photos and video footage of the activities
- Evaluation of project impact

5.0 Equipment/Materials

- Simple computer programming
- Simple kits for community monitoring and testing of water quality
- Simple instruments such as poles , measurement tapes for beach measurement measuring waves and beach monitoring
- Materials for mobile exhibition, training and workshops

6.0 Project Team

- Project coordinator: Pynee A.Chellapermal, Director CEDREFI
- Resource person for project implementation: Sachuda Ragoonaden, Meteorologist by training and resource person for climate change
- Specialist Input: Two additional resource persons will be co-opted for the workshops and training sessions
- Drivers: 10 from each village