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Implemented by:



Nature conservation – Madagascar

Sustainable ecotourism helping fight poverty

Madagascar's globally unique nature and biodiversity are at risk, and thus so is the economic potential, the benefits of which remain untapped. KfW Development Bank promotes environmental and nature conservation and helps alleviate widespread poverty. Sustainable ecotourism is at the heart of these efforts. KfW is also supporting Madagascar in its aim to effectively manage and protect conservation areas.

Context

Ankarafantsika National Park is one of Madagascar's 52 declared protected areas. The 130,000-hectare tropical forest is home to rare types of birds, lemurs and crocodiles. They enjoy the country's highest protection status: hunting and tree felling are prohibited. Yet the protected area is under pressure. The population is growing and the economic stagnation since the 2009 coup is driving more and more people into the forests, who nonetheless are cutting down trees, poaching or looking for gold. Mafia-like associations are shipping valuable tropical wood and protected species out of the protected areas and in the direction of Asia.

The connection between nature conservation and economic development is particularly important at parks like Ankarafantsika. Tourism is at the centre of this, as it represents one of the most important sources of foreign currency on the industrially less developed island. Tourists open up sources of income and thus create an incentive to keep nature intact, since they come for the national parks and their unique flora and fauna species.

An environmental plan of action resolved by the gov-

ernment in 1990 is slow in its implementation, with the coup five years ago also contributing to the delay. The conservation areas with the highest protection status, for example the national parks, are overseen by the organisation Madagascar National Parks (MNP). Tropical forests, dry forests and savannahs with unique flora and fauna are preserved on a total of some 2.7 million hectares, which amounts to nearly 5 percent of the country's land area.

However, MNP is faced with a large number of problems: The rather small protection areas in some parts are distributed across the entire country, and the park's management is understaffed and underfunded, leaving it unable to counter the threat to the country's nature.

Project name	Investment Fund Madagascar National Park
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country/Region	Madagascar
Lead executing agency	Madagascar National Parks





Madagascar has species of plants and animals not found anywhere else.
Photographer: Michaela Pawlicezki

The park's own income, for example from park entrance fees, barely makes up 10 percent of the annual budget.

Project approach

KfW Development Bank advises and finances the organisation Madagascar National Parks (MNP). Germany is MNP's most important bilateral partner. Structural improvements are of the utmost importance. Consultants support MNP in establishing more efficient management of the protected areas. The intention here for example is to invest in the operation and infrastructure of the parks and to lay the foundation for touristic opportunities. Electricity and water need to be supplied in some parks, while park administration buildings must be restored in others. Park rangers often lack the necessary off-road vehicles to reach remote areas. Access roads must be checked and repaired every year after the rainy season. New environmental information centres are being built to document rare flora and fauna species for the park's visitors. All of these measures increase the value of the parks for tourism and attract private entrepreneurs.

Neighbouring populations are especially important. They should benefit directly from the existence of the parks and thus see that nature conservation does not come at their expense, but rather is an important protective measure. On the one hand, park administration and tourism offer jobs for the residents there. On the other hand, the woodlands offer an important reservoir for the cultivation of rice, the staple food of the poor. Income from the parks is invested in the local development on a pro-rata basis. Farmers receive higher-grade

seed or are trained to use medicinal plants sustainably. Schools are repaired and teaching materials are acquired. The more visitors there are, the greater the motivation to attend school. This lies in the fact that children living near the parks know that if they want to become tour guides, they'll have to be proficient in foreign languages.

Impact

The more successful the parks are, the better they can support themselves, thus lowering their dependence on financial aid from abroad. The parks still lack the visitor numbers needed to cover their costs. For this reason, KfW Development Bank, together with other international organisations, has co-financed the establishment of the "Madagascar Foundation for Protected Areas and Biodiversity". Interest income from the foundation's assets already covers some of the operating costs for managing individual parks. In the long run, some of the revenues, grants by the government of Madagascar and income from the foundation should be combined to ensure the preservation of the country's nature.

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