CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

Organization's Legal Name:	Wildlands Conservation Trust
Project Title:	Build Knowledge of Marine Biodiversity in Comoros Archipelago, and Improve Support and Action for Conservation
Grant Number:	CEPF-103821
Hotspot:	Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands
Strategic Direction:	2 Enable civil society to mainstream biodiversity and conservation into political and economic decision-making.
Grant Amount:	$299,902.25
Project Dates:	July 01, 2018 - June 30, 2021
Date of Report:	August 31, 2021

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

- CORDIO: Fish biodiversity knowledge generation and science capacity-building, interpretation and reporting of results, advice and recommendations to decision-makers
- SAIAB: Provided equipment and technical support through the ACEP research platform as well as interpretation and reporting of results
- IRD: Training and distribution of the marine awareness program using the MARECO toolkit, and facilitation and participation in high-level meetings with decision-makers and stakeholders.
- University of Oxford: Mesophotic biodiversity knowledge generation and science capacity-building, expert scientific information, and interpretation and reporting of results
- University of Comoros: Students participating in capacity building including the WILDOCEANS Ocean Stewards Project as well as interpretation and reporting of results, co-ordination and organisation of meetings with communities, managers and decision-makers.
- AIDE and UMAMA are non-governmental organisations that facilitated the involvement of coastal communities in the project through the coordination of stakeholders and stakeholder workshops. AIDE has strong links with local communities in Grande Comore and Moheli and UMAMA in Anjouan, and have networks available to bring relevant stakeholders together. They were responsible for the organisation, facilitation and translation of stakeholder meetings on the 3 Comoros islands. They also received training in the use of the MARECO toolkit for use in their existing educational activities. In the extension year of the project, they supported the coordination of the final stakeholder feedback workshops held online and were recipients of a series of capacity-building activities, including life-long English online learning memberships.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Planned Long-Term Impacts: 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Emergence of enabling conditions for advances in biodiversity conservation created by instilling understanding, at community level, of the differences in biodiversity condition and fish abundance under different management regimes, and the value of fishery spill-over effects	This project has laid a foundation in communities on all three islands in terms of understanding biodiversity condition, fish abundance and the impacts of destructive fishing methods, as well as the different management regime impacts (inside and outside MPAs). Feedback sessions, and the development of posters to communicate the findings and recommendations have been produced
Two (2) marine science students from Comoros are enabled to complete their marine science PhD degrees, by training and mentorship to produce reports in content and format suitable for inclusion as a thesis chapter	Two marine scientists at the Comoros University were given the opportunity to join the research cruise in 2018 and were aided and mentored throughout the project providing them with the skill to analyse the data and also to prepare reports suitable for a chapter in a thesis. One of these students, Ramadhoine Ali, has completed her report, whereas the other person, Youssouf Eddine, has been unable to achieve this within the time frame. It should be noted that the CEPF project scientists will be continuing to work with the University through a new project, which will allow the appointment of a Comoros Biodiversity research and Monitoring Co-ordinator, and the establishment of a functioning resources small marine biodiversity laboratory.
Two (2) regional non-governmental organisations, Wildlands Conservation Trust and CORDIO, participate in a CEPF project in the WIO region for the first time, improving networking and organisational capacity in the region.	The WILDTRUST and CORDIO have built a strong relationship through the implementation of this project together and have succeeded in obtaining funding to continue to work together in Comoros, with the other local project partners involved in the CEPF project. This CEPF project has certainly improved networking for Comoros organisations with others in the region. WILDTRUST has also partnered with AIDE to submit a successful Concept Note to the EU for a new Comoros project. Strong relationships with IRD, the University of Oxford, the South African Association for Aquatic Biodiversity and NEKTON have also been built.
Reduction of isolation and better regional integration of Comoros scientists (and their work) through individual and inter-organisational relationships established during the project, and the ongoing inclusion of young students and scientists from the Comoros University in a growing regional Ocean Stewards Fellowship program's activities.	This CEPF project has certainly improved networking for Comoros organisations with others in the region. WILDTRUST has also partnered with AIDE to submit a successful Concept Note to the EU for a new Comoros project. For Comoros individuals also participated in the Ocean Stewards Fellowship Programme, attending activities in South Africa, and remaining on the communication network receiving updates and news about marine biodiversity in the region.

Planned Short-Term Impacts: 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Knowledge and awareness built in coastal communities by 2020 about the biodiversity of deeper reefs, their value for coastal livelihoods and the importance of marine protected areas (MPAs) to mitigate threats and improve fishery yields.	Coastal communities were engaged with through workshops, children training and results feedback sessions, raising the knowledge and awareness about the biodiversity of the deeper reefs and marine conservation. Local NGOs have been instrumental via this project in supporting the successful proposal for a new project focused on improving the effectiveness of the 4 MPAs in Comoros.
Capacity built in two (2) local organisations by 2020 for survey and on-going monitoring of state of fish species diversity and abundance (University of Comoros and Fisheries Resources Department)	Training provided to Comorian colleagues from University of Comoros for mesophotic surveys using BRUVs and ROV technology during the 2018 cruise (see Cruise report) and additional training in data analysis (fish and benthos - video processing and analysis) and write up (benthos only)
Local scientific knowledge and capacity built at the University of Comoros by 2020 for the study of the nature and status of the biodiversity of mesophotic ecosystems	Increased skills and knowledge in identifying benthic mesophotic organisms and especially sponges have been developed at the University. The University has also initiated a small marine biodiversity laboratory with key technical books as resource, and WILDOCEANS will be assisting to equip this laboratory during the next 3 years in a new funded project that arose from the successes of the CEPF project. Improved understanding of the process required collect data from deeper mesophotic ecosystems, and to analyse this data and generate reports has been developed in members of the University.
Capacity built in 2 local community development organisations (UMAMA and AIDE) by 2020 to communicate biodiversity conservation and fisheries sustainability principles to school children and local community stakeholders.	In December 2019, UMAMA and AIDE were trained in biodiversity conservation and sustainable fisheries principles this was primarily achieved via the training in the use of the MARECO Toolkit which is an educational aide to teach reef conservation to school children and community stake holders. The training ensured that AIDE and UMAMA are able to host and deliver MARECO toolkit workshop days in their communities across the three islands.
Improved marine biodiversity knowledge of the biodiversity of mesophotic ecosystems through baseline surveys in 2018 of the 3 islands, and production of a species inventory and 2 reports by 2020.	A baseline marine biodiversity survey was completed in 2018 and planned, and has resulted in a fish species inventory and a benthic biodiversity morphotype catalogue, both of which are valuable resources for the ongoing study and conservation of these ecosystems and species. Benthos of Comoros is very rich, particularly the sponge fauna. we saw a graduate shift in communities across the depth zones surveyed with the greatest morphotype turn-over at 90m Results correlate with the rich diversity of life know from the shallow waters and suggests that there is much more to learn.

Impact Description	Impact Summary
An understanding of the role of deeper mesophotic reef ecosystems in supporting the health and resilience of shallow reefs is gained by surveys of biodiversity (ROV) and fish (BRUVS) of shallow reefs and adjacent mesophotic reefs in 2018 and is communicated at a report-back workshop with biodiversity and fishery management decision-makers in 2019 and in 1 published paper in 2020.	The first ever understanding of the deeper mesophotic reefs, and their linkages and comparisons with the shallow photic coral reefs, as gained through this project. The results were reported back at 2 feedback sessions (a 1-day high level meeting in 2019, and a 2-day Feed-back Workshop in 2021). In addition the manuscripts for the following relevant papers have been completed, and are due for submission to journals over the next few months: • Paper 1 - Mesophotic benthic communities of Comoros • Paper 2 - Fish diversity of mesophotic and shallow coral reefs in Comoros
Knowledge about the importance of marine protected areas (MPAs) gained by biodiversity and fish surveys of reefs inside and outside of a Marine Protected Area (MPA) in 2018 and communicated at a report-back workshop with biodiversity and fishery management decision-makers in 2019 and in 1 published paper in 2020.	The first ever understanding of the deeper mesophotic reefs, and their linkages and comparisons with the shallow photic coral reefs, as gained through this project. The results were reported back at 2 feedback sessions (a 1-day high level meeting in 2019, and a 2-day Feed-back Workshop in 2021). In addition the manuscripts for the following relevant papers have been completed, and are due for submission to journals over the next few months: • Paper 3 - Photic and mesophotic reef assemblages in the Comoros • Paper 4 - Mesophotic Fish Species Inventory for the Union of Comoros
One (1) national academic institution, the University of Comoros, gains greater capacity to facilitate collaborative research processes and protocols, and to organise relevant meetings with biodiversity and fishery management decision-makers in 2018 and 2019.	The University of Comoros participants in the CEPF project have been instrumental in assisting with the arrangement of the meetings with decision-makers in both 2019 and 2021. They have been assisted as well with training in English, Zoom skills and social media. With the help of the University a full list of participants in the project, and a valuable contacts list has been prepared which is an extremely useful resource going forward and has been shared with others to facilitate engagement with the Comoros.
Two (2) local non-governmental organisations, UMAMA and AIDE, have higher capacities for facilitation of engagements with local community stakeholders (fishers, tourism operators and school children) through organising workshops (venues, catering) and providing translation at these gatherings in 2018 and 2019.	The AIDE and UMAMA participants in the CEPF project have been actively involved in assisting with the arrangement of the meetings with decision-makers in both 2019 and 2021. They have been assisted as well with training in English, Zoom skills and social media. Furthermore, AIDE has been very helpful in arranging meetings with the Director General of Fisheries and the Planning Commissioner, to report the results and discuss future possibilities. AIDE and UMAMA have also assisted in preparation of a full list of participants in the project, and a valuable contacts list has been prepared which is an extremely useful resource going forward and has

Impact Description	Impact Summary
	been shared with others to facilitate engagement with the Comoros.

Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?
There are 3 notable positive outcomes that can be attributed directly to the successful implementation of this CEPF project, resulting from both the knowledge built about the marine biodiversity, capacity built in the local Comoros organisations, positive relationships built, and the regional networks created that have connected Comoros organisations with partners in the region:

1. WILDOCEANS in partnership with CORDIO, and cost of this CEPF project partner organisations (AIDE, UMAMA, University of Comoros, IRD) were invited to submit a project by Oceans 5 and have been successful in securing a 3-year project ($ 1000 0000) to work to improve management effectiveness of Moheli Marine Park, and the 3 newly established marine protected areas. This project will provide training to MPA Managers, enable the setting up of a small marine biodiversity Laboratory at the University of Comoros, engagement with communities living around the MPAs to improve their awareness of the value pf marine biodiversity and to improve fisheries sustainability, and to identify mechanisms to improve benefits for their livelihoods and their involvement in management. This project is supported by the National Parks Agency, and will be provided office facilities, and access to boats and vehicle for the project work. See attachment A2a - Oceans 5 Comoros MPA management Effectiveness Project Document
2. WILDOCEANS was asked by Comoros local NGO AIDE to partner with them to submit a Concept Note for a call for Proposals from the European Union. The Concept Note was successful, and the team is in the process of finalising the Full Proposal application which is due 10 September 2021. This project will also include CORDIO (for fisheries aspects) and is aimed at work at the Coelacanth Marine Park, to deliver benefits to communities, improve the tourism potential, improve the protection of biodiversity inside the marine protected area and to enhance fisheries adjacent to the Park . See attachment A2b- EU Concept Note for Coelacanth Marine Parc Project.
3. In early 2020 the CEPF project team hosted representatives of the Blue Prosperity Coalition in Comoros and introduced them to senior government officials including the Planning Commissioner. Subsequent to this the Planning Commissioner has indicated that Comoros would like to join the High Ambition Coalition (HAC), which includes support for 30x30 ocean protection, ahead of the Convention For Biological Biodiversity COP 15. The project team thus recently facilitated a meeting between HAC representatives and the Commissioner, and the process for Comoros to join is now in process.

PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

Overall results of the project:
During the expedition of RV Angra Pequena to the Comoros Archipelago, the first visual surveys of the benthic biodiversity and fish of the mesophotic reefs, were conducted at depths between 40m and 200m. These surveys were undertaken for the project as planned and was a collaboration involving WILDOCEANS, The University of the Comoros, the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB), Coastal Oceans Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), the Comoros Directorate of Fisheries and Nekton/ University of Oxford. During the 20 days that the 72ft research vessel was in the waters of Comoros, Scientists and students deployed a Remotely Operated Video (ROV) and sampled with Stereo Baited Remote Underwater Videos (SBRUV), equipment provided by the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP) as part of the research platform managed by SAIAB. The expedition was led by Chief Scientist Dr Melita Samoilys, a Director

of CORDIO. The team also repeated shallow surveys around three islands of the Archipelago (Anjouan, Grande Comore and Moheli) using scuba diving to compare the condition of the areas over time, and to understand the difference between the shallow habitats and the deeper habitats.
Research undertaken during the cruise included sampling at three separate sites on the western side of each of the three islands (Ndzouani, Ngazidja and Mwali). Visual surveys of mesophotic reefs were done between 40 m and 200 m using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and stereo-baited remote underwater vehicles (S-BRUVs). The South Africa Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) provided equipment and technical experts from the African Coelacanth Ecosystem Program (ACEP) for the surveys and members from the University of the Comoros, CORDIO, Comoros Directorate of Fisheries and Nekton/University of Oxford participated, including several post-graduate students.
Fishers and villagers were hosted aboard the vessel during surveys to allow them to witness first-hand the research activities, to view imagery and to engage with the scientists. In addition, meetings were held with villagers, tourism operators and fishers, as well as fisheries and MPA managers to introduce the project and create awareness about the marine biodiversity. As a follow-up, in 2019 the CEPF project team arranged a series of meetings across 3 islands of the Comoros Archipelago, including a meeting in Moroni with senior environment and fisheries government officials and University of Comoros science leadership, and with Marine Protected Area managers at Moheli Marine Park. These meetings aimed at reporting on the preliminary findings and allowing discussion of the implications. During this visit the local NGO's AIDE and UMAMA, hosted community meetings on Ngazidja, Mwali and Ndzouani islands, sharing results and imagery with fishers and tourism representatives.
Copies of images and videos from the surveys have been provided to the University, the Mohéli Park and UMAMA and AIDE. The CEPF project team also visited the Museum and Centre National de Documentation et de Recherche in Moroni and presented them with images and videos of Comoros mesophotic seascapes and species, to augment a display prepared by the Museum staff in 2019 after the first visit to highlight the mesophotic systems.
Key outputs of this project include four scientific papers, for publication in peer-reviewed literature, which describe the mesophotic marine biodiversity of the Comoros islands, both benthic reefs and fish communities, and comparing these with shallower photic reefs and across different management regimes (inside and outside an MPA). In addition, three Reports have been produced, including a Benthic Marine Biodiversity Morphotype Catalogue and a Fish Species Inventory, which will provide invaluable resources for ongoing research and monitoring by the University and the MPA Managers.
Activities aimed at increasing ocean literacy amongst children were also implemented. Coral reef awareness and capacity-building sessions dedicated to teachers and trainers were held in each of the three islands using the MARECO Toolkit to train the local NGOs partners (AIDE and UMAMA) and teachers on each of the islands. The Toolkits now remain with the NGOs for use with teachers in schools on each of the 3 islands.
An important aspect of this project has been the focus on building capacity on the local NGO partners (AIDE and UMAMA) and in the University of Comoros. Members of the University visited South Africa to attend an Ocean Stewards Science Session as well as to attend a taxonomy workshop led by experts from the Western Indian Ocean Region and organised by NEXTON. After a needs assessment with the local organisations, members of the University, AIDE and UMAMA were provided with training in speaking English, Zoom meeting attendance and etiquette, using social media (Twitter and Facebook) as professional net-working tools, report-writing and in preparation of grant proposals. Thus, the project has contributed significantly to increased capacity in Comorian partners; University of Comoros, AIDE and UMAMA. All participated in various capacity building interventions including training in social media, email functionality and use of outlook calendar invites, online

meeting platforms, online meeting etiquette, financial management, fundraising and in the use of the MARECO marine education toolkit. Nine individuals also received lifelong memberships to the RosettaStone online English training courses.
This project also resulted in establishment of a strong network within Comoros and across the region for biodiversity knowledge generation and sharing and networking between organisations. This has decreased the isolation of the organisations in Comoros and has connected them to regional and international experts that they were not previously in contact with (e.g., NEXTON, SAIAB and Oxford University). A full profile of all organisations engaged with during the implementation of the project, including contact details of key people, is a useful product (attachment X) of the project and is already proving invaluable for keeping organisations and experts connected, and to share with others keen to support work in Comoros. A1_WILDOCEANS Comoros Project Partners Contact List_08.30.2021

Results for each deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.9	The English verbal conversational communications skills of at least 6 individuals from 3 Comoros organisations improved by 50%, as determined by an assessment at the start and end of the year.	Nine individuals received lifelong memberships to the RosettaStone online English training courses. The focus of the RosettaStone platform is on listening and speaking skills which is demonstrated in the results of the pre-and post-course surveys. Participants reported 57.5% increase in confidence in spoken English, a 70% increase in confidence in listening English, 25% increase in confidence with writing English and an 18.2% increase in ability to use English to meet work requirements. The modules were completed by the participants at their own pace and they will be able to continue to learn from now onwards. This learning was also augmented through the regular engagements with mentor, Simone Dale, and through regular email communication throughout the project year where the teams made use of DeepL to communicate in both French and English which meant partners could also check the English used for professional email communications. See the Rosetta Online English Course folder (in the Capcity Building Folder) for more information on the RosettaStone platform and detailed participant survey results. Attached A6_CEPF Capacity Building - Training Materials referred to in 3.9 and 3.10

Component		Deliverable		
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3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.10	A 50% increase in the capacity of 3 Comoros NGOs to develop competitive project proposals, communicate effectively, and implement and report on projects.	Twenty-eight individuals from the three partner organisations participated in at least one or more of the training listed below: 1. Social Media. Two 2-hour Facebook training sessions. The training included personal feedback on current platforms as well as tips to increase reach and engagement. Social media photography and video guidelines were also provided. Additional training and guidelines were provided to AIDE to enable them to combine their two Facebook pages. 2. Online Etiquette. A short 1-hour session for each partner on professionalism while using online meeting platforms. This was identified as a need by the project team. 3. Online Essentials: 2-day training was provided for all partners on the use of different email accounts, online calendars and meeting platforms (Teams, Google Meet and Zoom) lead by an external provider, Coltek. 4. Financial Management: 3-day training provided on basics of financial management for NGO's, lead by external provider Grishta Beegun. 5. Bi-monthly meetings, planning and mentoring sessions to establish needs plan training and support the development of the Oceans 5 funding proposals (UMAMA and AIDE).

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				For all the training resources and participant feedback surveys please see the Capacity Building Folder in the supporting document
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science, management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros	5.6	A Key Findings and Recommendations document for decision-makers and NGOs, responsive to the questions and concerned raised by decision-makers and NGOs during meetings held to date.	A Key Findings and Recommendations Document has been produced and will be distributed shortly as a PDF document by end of August 2021. This document draws from the findings of the project, and the implications and recommendations that were distilled at the 2-day workshop with stakeholders and decision makers held in 2021 to discuss the projects results.
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science, management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros	5.7	Proceedings of an additional high-level meeting with relevant decisionmakers and NGOs in Comoros, with at least 5 key actions/solutions identified for biodiversity knowledge and conservation.	Proceedings of the 2-day workshop held in 2021 are available (as a recording and attached presentations A4a and attendance registers A4b) and the main findings and recommendations were circulated to all attendees after workshop and have been used to develop the Document in 5.6. This Document arising from the workshop are included as an attachment in a combined PDF identifying over 5 key actions and solutions for decision-makers.
1.0	Improve knowledge of biodiversity of important marine ecosystems in the Comoros Archipelago at a site at each of the 3 main islands	1.1	Research Cruise Report: A survey and inventory of benthic biodiversity and fish species of the mesophotic ecosystems of the Comoros Archipelago	Cruise report achieved as previously reported. In addition, a Report Catalogue of mesophotic benthic biodiversity morphotypes is now complete. This Catalogue serves as an identification guide and is, written in English

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				and French featuring all the morphotypes identified across the survey sites in Comoros
1.0	Improve knowledge of biodiversity of important marine ecosystems in the Comoros Archipelago at a site at each of the 3 main islands	1.2	Report on mesophotic benthic biodiversity of mesophotic ecosystems around the Comoros Archipelago	Report 1 - Mesophotic Benthic Sponges of Comoros has been produced by Ramadhoine Ali. In addition, Report 2 - Mesophotic Benthic Morphotype Catalogue has been prepared. This catalogue serves as an identification guide and is written in English and French featuring all the morphotypes identified across the survey sites in Comoros
2.0	Improve knowledge of target fish species composition and abundance on deeper mesophotic reefs, and the role of these reefs in sustaining inshore fisheries	2.1	Report on the distribution and abundance on deeper mesophotic reefs of fish species that are targeted for and important in inshore fishery catches	Two unpublished Reports are provided which describe all fish species and their diversity patterns found on mesophotic and photic reefs (Paper 2 Fish diversity of mesophotic and shallow coral reefs in Comoros), as well as Report 3 - Inventory of marine fish biodiversity of all reef fish species observed in Comoros. Both include species important for inshore fisheries. This data and information is contained in the manuscript of the paper described in 1.5.
1.0	Improve knowledge of biodiversity of important marine ecosystems in the Comoros Archipelago at a site at each of the 3 main islands	1.3	Report on mesophotic reef fish community structure and species abundance around the Comoros Archipelago	Report 3 - Inventory of marine fish species of Comoros has been prepared, led by Roxanne Juby, SAIAB, indicating species found across all islands including those found within the MPA. This report also includes observed depth range extensions compared to previous literature. This will be produced as technical paper for the country by December 2021

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Improve knowledge of biodiversity of important marine ecosystems in the Comoros Archipelago at a site at each of the 3 main islands	1.4	Paper submitted describing the benthic ecosystem distribution, community structure and species abundance of mesophotic ecosystems around the Comoros Archipelago	The manuscript for Paper 1 - Mesophotic benthic communities of Comoros, describing the benthic ecosystem distribution, community structure and species abundance of mesophotic ecosystems around the Comoros Archipelago has been prepared and will be submitted to the Journal for publication before the end of 2021.
1.0	Improve knowledge of biodiversity of important marine ecosystems in the Comoros Archipelago at a site at each of the 3 main islands	1.5	Submitted paper comparing deeper mesophotic reef biodiversity with that of shallow reefs	The mesophotic fish biodiversity manuscript for Paper 2 - Fish diversity of mesophotic and shallow coral reefs in Comoros has been prepared, and the analysis includes the complementary shallow reef data to provide a more holistic picture of biodiversity patterns in reef fishes in Comoros. The analysis also compares fish diversity inside and outside the Moheli Marine Park. We aim to submit this paper to a Journal for peer-review by December 2021. In addition Paper 4 has been prepared which is Fish Species Inventory for the Union of Comoros.
2.0	Improve knowledge of target fish species composition and abundance on deeper mesophotic reefs, and the role of these reefs in sustaining inshore fisheries	2.2	Submitted paper on the role of deeper reefs in supporting sustainability of inshore fisheries	The mesophotic fish abundance and community structure manuscript for Paper 3 - Photic and mesophotic reef assemblages in the Comoros is at an advanced stage of preparation, and focuses on the BRUV data only, to fully capture fish communities and how they change in relation to depth and habitat on the 3 islands of Comoros. We aim to submit this paper to the ICES Journal for peer-review by end of November.

Component		Deliverable		
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3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.1	2018 research Cruise report, including details of participation of representatives of local fishing communities, coastal tourism operators, and NGOs in mesophotic surveys, deploying both BRUVS and ROV aboard RV Angra Pequena	Achieved as previously reported
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.2	Minutes and participation lists for 3 meetings held in 2018 at the time of the research cruise with local community, tourism and fisher representatives, fishery & biodiversity managers and relevant local NGOs during the 2018 cruise - one per island	Achieved as previously reported
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.3	Proceedings & participation lists of 2019 workshops with local community, tourism & fisher representatives, fishery & biodiversity managers & local NGOs to report-back results & provide recommendations for conservation 1 fisheries management: 1 per island	Achieved as previously reported

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.4	Trained scientist and post-graduate student in mesophotic Comoros benthic biodiversity, as demonstrated by Report produced (Deliverable 1.2)	Nirina Rasoanandrasana (researcher) and Ramadhoine Ali (student and lecturer) were trained during the 2018 cruise in the data collection using an ROV, and Ramadhoine was trained in the analysis and writing of the "Report on Mesophotic Benthic Sponges of Comoros"
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.5	Trained scientist and post-graduate student in mesophotic Comoros benthic fish communities, as demonstrated by Report (Deliverable 1.3)	Ibrahim Toihir (researcher) and Youssouf Eddine (student and lecturer) from the University of Comoros were trained in data collection using BRUVs, and Youssouf was trained in the analysis and writing of the "Report on Mesophotic Fish Diversity of Comoros"
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.6	Capacity built (knowledge, skills and equipment) in Comoros to undertake fish surveys in shallow inshore habitats as well as the mesophotic zone), as demonstrated by 2018 Cruise Report (Deliverable 1.1)	Training provided to Comorian colleagues from University of Comoros for mesophotic surveys using BRUVs and ROV technology during the 2018 cruise (see cruise report) and additional training in data analysis (fish and benthos - video processing and analysis) and write up (benthos only)
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the	3.7	Two post-graduate marine science students and 2 researchers participate in 2018 Research cruise and the WILDOCEANS Ocean Stewards Fellowship	Achieved as previously reported

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	sustainable management of fisheries		Program, documented in theOcean Stewards 2018 and 2019 Annual Progress Reports	
3.0	Build civil society capacity for engaging in generating marine science knowledge, and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable management of fisheries	3.8	Capacity of 3 civil society organisations (University of Comoros, UMAMA and AIDE) strengthened as demonstrated by comparison between initial and final CSTT, and an additional CSTT assessment will be conducted at the end of the (3rd) extension year.	The CSTT's were completed by the three Comorian project partners; University of Comoros, AIDE and UMAMA in 2019 and again in 2021. The reason for the delay in the completion of the first CSTT's was due to a lack of understanding about the tool, which required training from Mentor, Simone Dale, when she visited Comoros - two hours were spent with each project partner reviewing both the GTT and CSTT to ensure understanding. The CSTT scores all increased over the duration of the project demonstrating increased capacity and were as follows: AIDE: 50 in 2019 – 68 in 2021 UMAMA: 33.5 in 2019 – 42.5 in 2021 University of Comoros: 43.5 in 2019 – 71 in 2021 The project team also recognised increased capacity in general administration, communication, budgeting, technological savvy and professionalism. See Attached: A9a_CSTT's Summary2019-2021_FINAL, A9b_2021_Civil Society Tracking Tool_French_AIDE, A9c_2021_Civil Society Tracking Tool_French_UniComoros, A9d_2021_Civil Society Tracking Tool_French_UMAMA

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4.0	Create knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy deeper mesophotic reefs for enhancing social and economic resilience of coastal communities to threats such as climate change and over-fishing of inshore fisheries	4.1	Media articles in local newspapers during the 2018 cruise and 2019 stakeholder report-back workshops (1 on each island) and article published in the regional WIOMSA Newsletter in 2020	Achieved as previously reported
4.0	Create knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy deeper mesophotic reefs for enhancing social and economic resilience of coastal communities to threats such as climate change and over-fishing of inshore fisheries	4.2	Awareness material in form a Brochure highlighting mesophotic ecosystems and value, and a Video compilation of ROV and BRUV footage to illustrate the nature of the habitats, available for dissemination in 2019 during the stakeholder report-back workshops	Achieved as previously reported
4.0	Create knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy deeper mesophotic reefs for enhancing social and economic resilience of coastal communities to threats such as climate change and over-fishing of inshore fisheries	4.3	Two information briefs and associated presentations to inform policy for marine protection and sustainable resource use, for dissemination and presentation to to decision-makers	2 presentations were prepared and presented to policy-makers and decision-makers, one at the end of 2019 at a high-level meeting in Moroni, the other in 2021 at the 2- day feedback meeting. Information products in the form of 1) a Brochure setting out the main findings and recommendations for decision-makers and 2) Poster with the findings and recommendations have been prepared. These latter products will be distributed as soon as

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				the project team is able to travel to Comoros (when COVID lockdowns lift).
4.0	Create knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy deeper mesophotic reefs for enhancing social and economic resilience of coastal communities to threats such as climate change and over-fishing of inshore fisheries	4.4	At least three oral/poster presentations prepared for submission to the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Symposium	The team presented at WIOMSA in 2019 Title: Building knowledge of marine benthic biodiversity and fish in Comoros Archipelago to support improved capacity and support for conservation action. Due to COVID the 2021 WIOMSA Conference was postponed. The team has subsequently presented at the Conservation Symposium in 2020 Title: Remotely operated video surveys of the Comoros Archipelago, to assess the mesophotic reef biodiversity and increase ocean protection. The team have also submitted an abstract to present at the 2021 Conservation Symposium in October Title: Study of the diversity of sponges in the mesophotic zone of three islands of the Comoros Union. Please see attached abstracts and presentations for Symposia A5_CEPF Symposia abstracts and presentations We do plan to present at the next WIOMSA symposium as well .
4.0	Create knowledge and awareness of the importance of healthy deeper mesophotic reefs for enhancing social and economic resilience of coastal communities to	4.5	Provide Reef Biodiversity and Fisheries Sustainability Training Toolboxes, for use in training workshops at two schools per island in 2019	Achieved as previously reported

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
	threats such as climate change and over-fishing of inshore fisheries			
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science, management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros	5.1	Report comparing reefs inside Moheli MPA with adjacent reefs outside the MPA, in terms of the condition of the benthic biodiversity and fish species composition and abundance on shallow and mesophotic reefs	This information is included in Report 2 - Mesophotic Benthic Morphotype Catalogue and Report 3 - Inventory of marine fish biodiversity of Comoros Archipelago , the catalogue and inventory described in 1.2 and 1.3 and therefore a separate document has therefore not been prepared.
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science, management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros	5.2	2018 Cruise Report, including details of participation of Comoros scientists ans students, and fisheries managers and conservation practitioners in mesophotic surveys, deploying both BRUVS and ROV aboard RV Angra Pequena	Achieved as previously reported
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science,	5.3	2018 research Cruise Report, including details of participation of representatives of local fishing communities, coastal tourism operators, and	Achieved as previously reported

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
	management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros		NGOs in mesophotic surveys, deploying BRUVS and ROV aboard RV Angra Pequena	
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science, management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros	5.4	Summary Report on meetings held with local fisher and tourism stakeholders, fishery and biodiversity managers and local NGOs to introduce the project and aims - during the 2018 cruise.	Achieved as previously reported
5.0	Inform and promote action for marine biodiversity conservation, by creating common knowledge and experience amongst in-country science, management and resource use stakeholders about the nature, value and status of mesophotic ecosystems in the Comoros	5.5	Summary Report on 2019 workshops and meetings with fishing and tourism stakeholders, fishery and biodiversity managers and local NGOs to report-back results and recommendations for conservation of biodiversity and fisheries management	Achieved as previously reported
6.0	Management of Sub-grants by WILDTRUST and attendance CEPF Annual Project meeting	6.1	Sub-grant agreements signed with partner sub-grantees, defining scope of	Achieved as previously reported

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
			work and administrative and financial requirements	
6.0	Management of Sub-grants by WILDTRUST and attendance CEPF Annual Project meeting	6.2	Annual reports from partner sub-grantees reviewed and approved by WILDTRUST	Annual reports received by all partners recording activities and outcomes achieved. We also requested their feedback on all the training provided, as well as run a final feedback workshop with partners to provide our feedback to them, and to receive their feedback on the process and recommendation (all included in the Capacity Building folder).
6.0	Management of Sub-grants by WILDTRUST and attendance CEPF Annual Project meeting	6.3	Equipment and training provided to ensure capacity within Comoros University to continue mesophotic ecosyetm study and monitoring	Achieved as previously reported. University of Comoros members were trained in fish surveys using BRUVs during the 2018 cruise, and 3 compete BRUV surveys were left with the University to continue surveys.
6.0	Management of Sub-grants by WILDTRUST and attendance CEPF Annual Project meeting	6.4	Capacity developed within UMAMA and AIDE for Biodiversity Conservation and Fishery Sustainability training facilitation for coastal communities and schools	Achieved as previously reported
7.0	Community engagements and capacity-building facilitated by UMAMA on Anjouane Island	7.1	Minutes and participation list of local stakeholder workshop held on Anjouan Island in 2018	Achieved as previously reported
7.0	Community engagements and capacity-building facilitated by UMAMA on Anjouane Island	7.2	Minutes and participation list for 1 Community workshop organised on Anjouan Island in 2019 to report-back	Achieved as previously reported

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
			results and discuss recommendations	
7.0	Community engagements and capacity-building facilitated by UMAMA on Anjouane Island	7.3	Biodiversity conservation and fishery sustainability training sessions held at 2 schools on Anjouan Island in 2019, documented with photographs	Achieved as previously reported
8.0	Community engagements and capacity-building facilitated by AIDE on Moroni and Moheli Islands	8.1	Minutes and participation lists for 2 stakeholder meetings, one held on each of Moroni and Moheli Islands in 2018	Achieved as previously reported
8.0	Community engagements and capacity-building facilitated by AIDE on Moroni and Moheli Islands	8.2	Community workshop organised on each of Moroni and Moheli Islands in 2019 to allow report-back of results and to discuss recommendations	Achieved as previously reported
8.0	Community engagements and capacity-building facilitated by AIDE on Moroni and Moheli Islands	8.3	Biodiversity conservation and fishery sustainability training sessions held at 2 schools on each of Moroni and Moheli Islands in 2019, documented by photographs	Achieved as previously reported
9.0	Participation of University of Comoros - science capacity-building, knowledge generation and facilitation of meetings with decision-makers	9.1	Maritime permit for vessel to operate in Cormoros waters, and scientific permit to conduct marine biodiversty and fish studies	Achieved as previously reported

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
9.0	Participation of University of Comoros - science capacity-building, knowledge generation and facilitation of meetings with decision-makers	9.2	Report and attendance register for dedicated workshop with 1) fishery managers, and 2) biodiversity conservation and MPA managers to report and discuss implications of results from the research survey	Achieved as previously reported
10.0	CORDIO role in biodiversity knowledge generation and science capacity-building, and interpretation and reporting of results	10.1	2018 Research Cruise Report, confirming Chief Scientist role of Dr Melita Samoilys of CORDIO	Achieved as previously reported
10.0	CORDIO role in biodiversity knowledge generation and science capacity-building, and interpretation and reporting of results	10.2	Two (2) Comoros post-graduate students mentored and trained in mesophotic fish and biodiversity survey techniques and fish identification	Achieved as previously reported
10.0	CORDIO role in biodiversity knowledge generation and science capacity-building, and interpretation and reporting of results	10.3	Provision of specialist knowledge about tropical western Indian Ocean marine ecosystems and taxa, and related fisheries, as demonstrated by published papers	Specialist knowledge was provided by the University of Oxford, NEKTON, IRD, CORDIO and WILDOCEANS teams as can be seen from the authorship of all the reports and papers produced.
6.0	Management of Sub-grants by WILDTRUST and	6.5	Attendance of CEPF Annual Grantee meeting	Confirmed - Simone Dale and Nikki Chapman attended an online training workshop on the

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
	attendance CEPF Annual Project meeting			new procurement procedures in November 2020 hosted by CEPF
6.0	Management of Sub-grants by WILDTRUST and attendance CEPF Annual Project meeting	6.6	Gender Tracking Tool applied and filled up at beginning and end of project	This was completed by the three Comorian project partners; University of Comoros, AIDE and UMAMA in 2019 and again in 2021. The reason for the delay in the completion of the first GTT's was due to a lack of understanding about the tool, which required training from Mentor, Simone Dale, when she visited Comoros - two hours were spent with each project partner reviewing both the GTT and CSTT to ensure understanding. The GTT scores did not change over the duration of the project and were as follows: AIDE: 7 UMAMA: 6 University of Comoros: 9 Attached summary A10_GTT's Summary2019-2021_FINAL

Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:

- 2018 Cruise Report. Attached A7_CEPF Comoros 2018 Expedition Report
- Project Design Template shared with Comoros partners to assist them in writing reports. Attached A3_CEPF Template for writing reports
- Comoros Mesophotic Benthic Sponges (Report 1) see attached R1_CEPF Report 1 Mesophotic Benthic Sponges of Comoros
- Comoros Mesophotic Benthic Biodiversity Morphotype Catalogue (Report 2). Attached R2_CEPF Report 2 Mesophotic Benthic Morphotype Catalogue
- Comoros Mesophotic Fish Identification Guide (Report 3). Attached R3_CEPF Report 3 Inventory of marine fish biodiversity
- Paper 1 – manuscript Mesophotic benthic communities of Comoros. Attached P1_CEPF Paper 1 manuscript Mesophotic benthic communities of Comoros

- Paper 2 – manuscript Fish diversity of mesophotic and shallow coral reefs in Comoros. Attached P2_CEPF Paper 2 manuscript Fish diversity of mesophotic and shallow coral reefs in Comoros
- Paper 3 – manuscript Photic and mesophotic reef assemblages in the Comoros. Attached P3_CEPF Paper 3 manuscript Photic and mesophotic reef assemblages in the Comoros
- Paper 4 – manuscript Mesophotic Fish Species Inventory for the Union of Comoros. Attached P4_CEPF Paper 4 additional manuscript Mesophotic Fish Species Inventory for the Union of Comoros

PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
1.2	Awareness of the values of biodiversity and the nature of threats and drivers raised among local communities in at least 25 priority sites.			1	This project was implemented within one CEPF biodiversity hotspot, but across 3 islands where local communities were engaged with and awareness activities where conducted, including training of NGO's and teachers to role out a ocean literacy tool (MARECO) in schools.
1.7	Capacities of local community organizations in charge of conservation and local development improved in at least 20 sites, allowing for increased sustainability and efficiency of these organizations			3	The project worked at 3 islands where activities where implemented by 2 community organisations (AIDE & UMAMA) who both demonstrate clear increased capacity in the CSTT assessment.

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
2.1	Baseline studies, inventories and mapping of important biodiversity areas completed for at least six sites?with at least three sites in the Comoros.			1	This project at one CEPF Biodiversity hotspot site, sampling at 8 locations across the 3 islands and within 12 of CEPF KBA's
3.2	At least 15 students?including at least six from the Comoros?successfully achieve a degree in a field related to conservation.			0	No graduating students were planned for this project but two students were given the opportunity to collect data and prepare a report that would serve as a chapter in a thesis. One of these students has completed the report and is co-author on publications linked to these findings. The second student has been mentored using the data from the cruise for a report but unfortunately due to extenuating circumstance has not completed this yet

GLOBAL INDICATORS

Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion

*World Database of Protected Areas

**If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

*** This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management
Grande Comore coral reefs	COM10		2,000
Bimbini area and la Selle Islet	COM12		2,000
Mohéli coral reefs - outside of Marine Park	COM11		2,000
Ndroudé area and Ilot aux Tortues	COM18		2,000

Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention

Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training
66	38	Financial Management training Online Etiquette training Social Media training English lessons Mareco Tool Kit training (Marine Conservation Education Tool) Ocean Stewards Science Session Taxonomic workshop BRUV video data processing and analysis ROV video processing and analysis

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits

Benefits to Communities

View the **characteristics** column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the **benefits** column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	**Community Characteristics**							**Type of Benefit**								**Country**	**Number of Males Benefitting**	**Number of Females Benefitting**
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**a**	**b**	**c**	**d**	**e**	**f**	**g**	**h**	**i**			

Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the **topics** column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	**Name of Law**	**Scope**	**Topics**														
			A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**	**K**	**L**	**M**	**N**	**O**	**P**

"Other" Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:

No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment

Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Name of Company	Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice	Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted

Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose
CORDIO	2018	Kenya	Yes	CORDIO are a project partner with whom our relationship has strengthened. They are now a joint project implementer in our new Oceans 5 Comoros project and sub contractor in other projects with the organization.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose
SAIAB	2014	South Africa	No	This project has strengthened the partnership with SAIAB into the Western Indian Ocean region
IRD	2018	Reunion	Yes	This project has strengthened the partnership with IRD who will be working with us in our future projects in the Comoros region
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD	2018	United Kingdom	Yes	Built this partnership through this project and look forward to continued project partnerships
UNIVERSITY COMOROS	2018	Comoros	Yes	Through this project we have really strengthened our relationship with the University of Comoros - they have contributed to new project proposals and are official partners in our new project being implemented in the Comoros. This new project and strengthened relationship is due to the work done in the CEPF project.
UMAMA	2018	Comoros	Yes	This project has been hugely successful in strengthening NGO partnerships. UMAMA have submitted project proposals with the WILDTRUST are now project partners in the new Comoros project with us.
AIDE	2018	Comoros	Yes	This project has been hugely successful in building and strengthening NGO relationships an in particular our relationship with AIDE - We look forward to working with them on the new Comoros project that has now been funded and for which they contributed to the preparation of the proposal.
Assoc. pour la Preservation du Gombessa - APG	2019	Comoros	Yes	We built this relationship through this project
Centre de Documentation et de	2019	Comoros	Yes	We have built this relationship through this project and has been hugely beneficial

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose
Recherches Scientifiques - CNDRS				
Blue Ventures	2018	Madagascar	Yes	Through this project we have had positive engagements with this NGO
OPAS - Offensive Pour l'Action Social (Bimbini Women's Association, Anjouan Island)	2018	Comoros	Yes	We have built this relationship through this project and look forward to working with this NGO in future projects in the region. They are currently funded to work with us in out new project on effective management of MPA's in Comoros.
Association Femmes Actives - Anjouan	2019	Comoros	Yes	We have had positive engagements with this association through his project
Association Bahari of Itsandra	2019	Comoros	Yes	We have had positive engagements with this association through this project

Sustainable Financing

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/ Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?

Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
Urogymnus	granulatus	MacLeay's Coachwhip Ray	VU	Site/habitat protection - Species occur in a protected area, Moheli National Park	Unknown

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
				therefore accorded some protection. Compliance and enforcement - Benefits of MPA proposed to be included in education and awareness programmes hence the species will benefit from improved compliance. Species surveyed to understand their population status and distribution. Future monitoring will provide information on the population trends of these species.	
Sphyrna	lewini	Scalloped Hammerhead	CR	Site/habitat protection - Species occur in a protected area, Moheli National Park therefore accorded some protection. Compliance and enforcement - Benefits of MPA proposed to be included in education and awareness programmes hence the species will benefit from improved compliance. Species surveyed to understand their population status and distribution. Future monitoring will provide information on the population trends of these species.	Unknown
Lethrinus	mahsena	Mahsena Emperor	EN	Site/habitat protection - Species occur in a protected area, Moheli National Park therefore accorded some protection. Compliance and enforcement - Benefits of MPA proposed to be included in education and awareness programmes hence the species will benefit from improved compliance. Species surveyed to understand their population status and distribution. Future monitoring will provide information on the population trends of these species.	Unknown
Taeniurops	meyeni	Black-blotched Stingray	VU	Site/habitat protection - Species occur in a protected area, Moheli National Park	Unknown

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
				therefore accorded some protection. Compliance and enforcement - Benefits of MPA proposed to be included in education and awareness programmes hence the species will benefit from improved compliance. Species surveyed to understand their population status and distribution. Future monitoring will provide information on the population trends of these species.	

LESSONS LEARNED

During this project we spent significant time on building relationships with organisations in Comoros and meeting key individuals. We shared information about the project objectives and approach at the outset in 2018 with both government officials and managers as well as coastal communities and fishers in workshops and by inviting people aboard the research vessel during the cruise to witness the research first-hand. This resulted in the project was positively being received and we experienced good participation and interest in the findings at the subsequent preliminary feed-back meetings in 2019 and the 2-day Feedback Workshop in 2021. We feel that our approach of involving key stakeholders actively, communicating frequently, providing detailed feedback on the results, and co-crafting recommendations for decision-makers was important for the success of the project as it not only ensured acceptance and participation but also allowed good up-take of the results and interest from a broad stakeholder group in the recommendations.
We were also careful to build and keep updated "Master" list of the key contacts and important role-players from each participating organisation, which allowed us to communicate easily and regularly about the project as well as generating a valuable resource for initiating new projects and for other organisations to use.
It would be useful in the project development stage to undertake a rapid assessment of partner capacities (with respect to available resources, experiences, communications and technical skills) for project implementation. While the project aimed to create new partnerships and to build capacity within the partner organisations in Comoros, it would have benefitted from an assessment of these challenges before the start of the project. This would have altered the design slightly to place more emphasis on activities at the outset to over-come barriers so that all participants could engage effectively and benefit from the interventions maximally. We did not anticipate the level of capacity being as low as it was for the local organisations, particularly with regards to administration, resources and communication access, and the additional time this would take for the project team. We were however able to do an needs assessment with our local partners during the project and were able to proceed with targeted capacity building interventions which revealed encouraging results.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

A key success of this project is to demonstrate that it is possible to conduct high-technology science in previously under-studied areas using research platforms (equipment such as an Remotely Operated Underwater Video (ROV) and Stereo Baited Remote Underwater Videos (S-BRUVs)) in remote locations in the Western Indian Ocean using resources available in the region, rather than needing to reply on international agencies to come in and to do the work for organisations in the region. Furthermore, the work was carried out a fraction of the cost of a large Research Ship aboard the smaller (yet fully capable) 72ft RV Angra Pequena owned and operated by WILDOCEANS, which has a valuable partnership with the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) which provides both the research equipment and the technical expertise. This modus operandi also allowed the research team to fully direct the survey agenda instead of sharing ship time with other science disciplines or projects (as is the case in large research vessels) and resulted in hands-on participation by researchers in the Comoros and the retention of the video material collected and the data within the country. It also facilitated ongoing engagements with the researchers across the WIO region to jointly write up the results in manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals. This is a significant lesson to have learnt, and an important model to

pursue in future, especially for developing countries in the African region who have not often been able to direct the offshore research agenda.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

Given that the project was focused on building knowledge, garnering support for conservation action, and building capacity, there was very little triggered by the project in terms of international safeguards. WILDTRUST, being a recipient of Blue Action Fund funding, is most familiar with and aligns to the international safeguards found here: https://www.blueactionfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/01_ESMS_BlueAction.pdf. However, this has only been in the last two years and has been a learning process for the organisation, so these were not considered in the project design of this project.

The principles underpinning all these safeguards, however, are inherent in the work of the WILDTRUST and include principles addressing health and safety, stakeholder engagement, biodiversity protection, gender equality, grievance management, environmental and social risk management, and ensuring respect for human rights at all times.

This project did not trigger any safeguards relating to cultural heritage, indigenous people, livelihood and access restrictions, or human rights. However, the following principles required attending were considered carefully during the implementation of the project:

Health & Safety
Health and Safety was the most significant safeguard triggered due to the cruises on the R.V Angra Pequena, and the risks of staff and beneficiaries being out at sea. The Angra Pequena has strict safety protocols which are followed as per maritime law in South Africa, and these were adhered to, and are available on request. The other health and safety risks included COVID-19, for which the project adapted its actives accordingly in the final year of the project with permission from CEPF, by cancelling the planned stakeholder engagement in Comoros and hosting it online instead. WILDTRUST CEPT project staff in South Africa were also kept safe through organisational SOP's which ensured all COVID-19 safety protocols were followed by the teams.

Stakeholder Engagement
While this project had a strong stakeholder engagement component, this was coordinated by our local partners, AIDE, UMAMA and the University of Comoros, and they were encouraged to be as inclusive as possible within their network and resource capabilities. The stakeholder engagement was also informative not decisive, so no immediate decisions or actions were taken as a result of the information shared. A more intensive stakeholder engagement process has been written into the Oceans 5 funded project following on from this, as the information gathered from this project will now be used to inform policy and implementation.

Biodiversity Protection
The aim of the project was to understand the deeper reefs off the islands of Moheli, Anjouan and Grande Comoros. As such the R.V. Angra Pequena used underwater equipment to gather information about these sites. The equipment used was managed by trained professionals to avoid any risk to biodiversity in deploying them. The team also ensured that fuel kept on board is done so in a safe, locked storage space to ensure no risk of leakage.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This project allowed for one first deep surveys of the deep mesophotic reefs in the Western Indian Ocean region with only others having been done is South Africa prior to this. Working in the Comoros and with the Comorian partners has been such a pleasure they have been welcoming and with us every step of the way.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)	$255,778.00
Breakdown of Additional Funding	Research, training and facilitation team time portions not funded by CEPF - $175 133 Use of equipment at no cost -indicative rental value on site in Comoros - $41 935 Research vessel provided at reduced conservation rate - $38 387 Resources Gifted - $323 Please attached table with full breakdown on additional funding. A8_CEPF Additional Funding Report

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

WILDTRUST - info@wildtrust.co.za