

**REPORT OF MID-TERM EVALUATION**

**August 2008**

**GEF ECW**

**PRACTICAL MIDTERM REVIEW EXERCISE**

**Project Name:**

**PARTNERSHIPS FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS IN MAURITIUS  
AND RODRIGUES**

**Government of Mauritius, Rodrigues Regional Assembly,**

**UNDP GEF**

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## Acronyms

AFRC	Albion Fisheries Research Centre
APR	Annual Progress Report
BWA	Bad Weather Allowance
CAC	Community Advisory Council
CO	Country Office
CPC	Community Participation Campaign
CRC	Community Resource Committee
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DH	Departmental Head
FPS	Fishery Protection Service
FRTU	Fishery Research and Training Unit
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIS	Geographic Information System
GOM	Government of Mauritius
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MB	Management Board
METT	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
PMU	Project Management Unit
QPR	Quarterly Progress Report
RRA	Rodrigues Regional Assembly
ReCoMaP	Regional Programme for the Sustainable Management of the Coastal Zones of the Indian Ocean Countries
SEMPA	South East Marine Protected Area
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Tri-partite Review
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## Executive Summary

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) took place over a period of 10 days from 4-14 June 2008 and was undertaken by one international consultant. It involved:

- Review of project materials and other relevant documentation
- Interviews with key stakeholders in Mauritius (GEF Focal Point/Ministry of Finance; Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) and ICZM Division, Dept of Environment) and on Rodrigues (personnel of the Project Management Unit (PMU), Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA), and Shoals Rodrigues, and community and tourism representatives)
- Participation as an observer at two project meetings (Community Advisory Council and SEMPA Management Board)
- Completion of the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) with project staff
- Analysis of the findings and preparation of a report

The project document was signed in January 2004, and the project has a planned duration of 54 months. It was due to end in June 2008, but since the first disbursement was not until March 2005, the closing date has been extended to December 2009. The project got off to a very slow start, with no recorded activities in 2004, relatively few in 2005, an acceleration in 2006 when the CTA was appointed, and a decline at the beginning of 2007 with the change of government in Rodrigues. Since mid-2007 there has been an increase in implementation rate.

The goal of the project is: *to improve the management and conservation practices for MPAs within the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, and the equitable sharing of benefits to the local communities and economic operators on a sustainable basis.*

This is to be achieved through two broad objectives:

1. Develop an enabling policy and institutional framework for the sustainable co-management of MPAs throughout the Republic of Mauritius. This involves a series of activities on the main island of Mauritius, building on the lessons learned from Objective 2.
2. Develop innovative co-management arrangements for MPAs and adapt them at a representative demonstration site in Rodrigues. This is to be achieved through the establishment of an MPA on Rodrigues (the South-East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA)), using the participatory approach, and providing the necessary capacity building to enable sustainable management in the future.

Activities under Objective 1 have not yet started, partly because of the delay in implementation of Objective 2 activities. As there have been many developments on Mauritius since this project was initiated, in terms of new projects on related subjects such as environmental tourism and integrated coastal management, the Objective 1 activities now need revision to ensure that they are relevant. It is also now seen that the idea of applying models developed on Rodrigues, highly dependent on fishing and with its small homogenous community open to the idea of participatory natural resource management, to Mauritius with its large population, a more diverse economic base including large-scale tourism, and long established Marine Parks, is not valid. In addition, the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998, which allows for the establishment and management of MPAs, has been recently revised, the new Act coming into force in 2007, and it would be unrealistic to propose further revision of this so soon. The approach will therefore be to disseminate general ideas and concepts on co-management to both islands, and to develop the activities under Objective 1 so that they respond specifically to the need for a better enabling policy framework for MPAs, greater public awareness of the role and benefits of MPAs, and greater political will for the effective management of MPAs.

Objective 2 has four outputs:

- 2.1: Establish an integrated marine protected areas management board and infrastructure
- 2.2: Develop an integrated marine protected area management plan
- 2.3: Develop the capacity to implement the integrated marine protected area management plan

## 2.4: Increase marine conservation awareness

Good progress has been made with Output 1, in that a Management Board has been established for SEMPA with representation of all stakeholders, including government, communities and private sector, and extensive work has been undertaken to establish a co-management mechanism that fully involves the nine fishing communities dependent on the area that will be designated as the MPA. Community Resource Committees have been established at each landing station, and a Community Advisory Council set up, with representation of each committee and with the remit to channel the views of the communities to the Management Board, and *vice versa*. There is evidence that these bodies are working well. A Community Participation Campaign (CPC) is underway, contracted out to the NGO Shoals Rodrigues, to run a series of consultations with the communities in order to reach consensus on boundaries, the zonation scheme and other management aspects of the future MPA. There appears to be good community support for the general concept of the MPA, although there is some evidence that this is declining because of the slow progress of the project. Long-term community support will largely depend on whether the project, and ultimately the MPA itself, can have a positive economic impact on the livelihoods of local people. The project has been making strenuous efforts to identify suitable income generation activities (for example, an aquaculture feasibility study has been undertaken and a proposal submitted for training in environmentally sound farming). Less progress has been made with developing the organisational arrangements for the MPA, although a number of options have been identified. Similarly, although TOR have been developed for a ranger system, a staffing plan for the MPA has yet to be prepared.

Some progress has been made with Output 2 particularly in terms of gathering the baseline information needed for production of the management plan for SEMPA. Surveys have been undertaken of the biophysical environment and of the fishery resources, and a socio-economic survey is underway. The outer boundaries of the MPA have been determined and agreed by all stakeholders, and plans made to include part of the watershed as a terrestrial component, although further consultation with individuals living within this terrestrial area is needed. A draft regulation for gazetting the outer boundaries of the MPA has been submitted to the RRA for further work by a legal expert. It is proposed that the zoning plan and regulations for the MPA be developed subsequent to gazettment of the boundaries. Potential no-fishing areas have been identified and will be discussed with the communities. Other activities under this Output (enforcement, development of a tourism plan, identification of financial instruments to generate revenue, management of the terrestrial components of the MPA, development of an M&E strategy for the MPA) are at preliminary planning stages. The overall process for development of the management plan has not been considered, and the lack of capacity within the project for writing and producing this needs to be addressed (see recommendations).

Output 3, concerning capacity development, is critically important for the project, but very few activities have been initiated. A comprehensive training needs assessment has not been carried out and the specified training activities are not yet underway. Some progress has been made with Output 4, with a variety of awareness-raising activities having been undertaken since the early stages of the project. These include production of posters, radio broadcasts, and the work underway through the CPC, which includes awareness raising work with the communities, and environmental education activities in primary schools.

Key concerns with the project are the slow implementation rate and, in some areas, lack of strategic planning (e.g. failure to prepare training needs assessment and strategies for tourism development and management). Both poor implementation and lack of strategic thinking are largely attributable to the lack of capacity and the small pool of expertise on Rodrigues for effective natural resource management. This has resulted in slow recruitment of project personnel and high staff turnover (two Project Managers have resigned). There is also poor communication between some of the individuals and agencies involved. Of major concern is the poor documentation, inadequate filing of project reports and other materials, poor quality work plans and reports, and in some cases failure to report on meetings or trips undertaken at project expense.

Given the relevance of, and urgent need for, the project, if the decline in marine and coastal resources in Mauritius is to be halted, and the good progress being made on Rodrigues in developing a co-management approach to MPA establishment and management, it is recommended that the project should continue on condition that the capacity issue is addressed immediately. Delayed implementation has meant that it is still too early to see any real achievements in terms of the objectives, and the project is therefore rated as MU (Marginally Unsuccessful) at this point in time, in terms of achieving its two objectives. Similarly, given the delays due to slow past implementation which have led to a large backlog of activities still to be undertaken, and the serious concerns about the capacity of project personnel, project implementation can be rated only as MU.

The Recommendations are as follows – a more detailed explanation of these can be found in Section 4 of the report:

## **1. Immediate: to be undertaken by December 2008**

### ***1.1. Strengthen the PMU and overall project management***

- Finalise recruitment of the Project Manager; and recruit a new Project Assistant if the current assistant is promoted.
- Establish a new position within the project to support the work of the PMU and provide training and capacity building of the existing personnel. This individual should be recruited by UNDP as soon as possible, for the remaining duration of the project.
- Increase supervision by UNDP, the NPD and others in authority to ensure that the recommendations of the audit, PIR and MTE report are implemented and that project procedures are followed correctly.
- Prepare a work plan for the CTA's remaining time on the project that is realistic and feasible to implement
- Finalise the M&E plan for the project: this should involve a workshop with all project personnel, relevant staff from the UNDP CO, and contractees such as Shoals Rodrigues at which the logframe indicators would be reviewed and revised where necessary, and data and information needs identified.
- Consider holding a workshop of all project personnel (Mauritius and Rodrigues), perhaps prior to or following a PSC, to improve commitment to and ownership of the project, and to improve morale.

### ***1.2. Initiate Objective 1 activities***

- Revise activities for Objective 1 for approval at the next PSC, taking into account the current context and making the activities achievable in relation to the available time left on the project
- Prepare a work plan for Objective 1

### ***1.3. Initiate the process for preparing the draft management plan for SEMPA***

- Hire a consultant to write and facilitate production of the management plan.
- Lay-out a consultative and participatory process and a structure, for the management plan, using guidelines and regionally/internationally accepted approaches and examples from other MPAs in the region
- Finalise the goals and objectives of SEMPA and review these at a workshop to ensure that they are agreed by all stakeholders
- Clearly identify the different options for the institutional structure and staffing, laying out the advantages and disadvantages of each and using a participatory process to reach agreement on the final choice; prepare an agreed organigram on MPA staffing structure and draft TOR for each position.
- Finalise and agree on the enforcement system ensuring that all relevant agencies are appropriately involved

- Prepare a tourism strategy as a component of the management plan
- Finalise monitoring programmes ensuring that they are harmonized with regional monitoring initiatives so that data and results can be shared with other MPAs.
- Develop a participatory M&E plan for the MPA that will measure the progress of the MPA in meeting its objectives, and its impact in ecological and socio-economic terms, using an accepted 'assessing management effectiveness' methodology.

#### ***1.4. Training and capacity building***

- Undertake a comprehensive training needs assessment, to show clearly the specific needs of different groups, identify the priorities, and draw up a time frame.
- Strengthen linkages and actively seek opportunities to collaborate with relevant national, regional and international initiatives in order to exchange ideas, develop new approaches etc.
- Identify training sources in the region, and consultants/trainers who can provide appropriate services.

### **1.2. Longer term: January 2009 – end of project**

#### ***Objective 1***

- Undertake and complete activities

#### ***Objective 2***

- Gazette SEMPA
- Hire staff
- Train staff and stakeholders
- Develop the visitor centre and activities for visitors and tourism
- Develop management arrangements for terrestrial component of MPA
- Continue seeking opportunities for alternative livelihoods
- Identify long-term support and partnerships for SEMPA (e.g. with international organisations such as WWF, WCS)
- Prepare an exit strategy.
- Document lessons learned and prepare publications

### **1.3. Long term**

- Consider the feasibility of designating SEMPA as a coastal-marine UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve.
- Consider the potential for a 'twinning' (jumelage) arrangement with another MPA in the region or elsewhere
- Develop a research policy and programme for SEMPA.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of the evaluation and issues addressed

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) policy for UNDP/GEF projects has four objectives: i) to monitor and evaluate results and impacts; ii) to provide a basis for decision making on necessary amendments and improvements; iii) to promote accountability for resource use; and iii) to document, provide feedback on, and disseminate lessons learned. The purpose of mid-term evaluations (MTEs) reflects these objectives: MTEs are expected to help to validate, or fill gaps, in the initial assessment (at the stages of project preparation and inception report) of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and provides an opportunity to assess early signs of project success or failure and prompt necessary adjustments. In promoting accountability for resource use, MTEs are intended to:

- identify potential project design problems,
- assess progress towards the achievement of objectives,
- identify and document lessons learned (including lessons that might improve design and implementation of other UNDP/GEF projects), and to
- make recommendations regarding specific actions that might be taken to improve the project.

## 2. The project and its development context

The Republic of Mauritius is located 800 km from southeast Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. It consists of the main island, Mauritius (1,852 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 1,260,696 in 2007) and a group of small islands scattered throughout the Mascarenes, including Rodrigues which lies some 650 km further east. Rodrigues (109 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of about 40,000 in 2006) previously the tenth administrative district of Mauritius, is now a dependency, having obtained limited autonomy in 2001 under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act. Protection and management of marine resources is one of the sectors for which the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) now has responsibility and for which it is mandated to appropriate legislation in consultation with the state law office.

Both Mauritius and Rodrigues are surrounded by fringing reefs enclosing shallow lagoons that play critical roles in the national economy and provide livelihoods on both islands through tourism and fisheries. The importance of these reef systems is widely recognised in the scientific and conservation literature and Rodrigues has been considered to have the best reef development in the Mascarene group of islands. Studies of the Rodrigues lagoon by the Shoals of Capricorn Programme in 2000/2001 resulted in the identification of over 1000 species from nine phyla, including species potentially new to science. Monitoring by Shoals Rodrigues in 2007 indicated that there is good coral cover on the reef slopes, but less so in the lagoon, and overall there has probably been a decline in reef health since the 1980s. This is not surprising given that an estimated 40% of the reefs and associated ecosystems in the lagoon are severely impacted by destructive fishing practices, siltation from up stream erosion, and to a lesser degree, pollution from agriculture and other sources.

The tourism industry is a key sector on Mauritius, but still in its infancy on Rodrigues. However, in the 2008 budget speech, the Chief Commissioner referred to tourism as the 'principal engine of growth' for Rodrigues, with 8 new hotel/resort proposals approved, and room capacity on the island expected to double in the next three years; following a three-year decline in visitation, tourist arrivals increased from 42,833 in 2006 to 48,497 in 2007, with a nearly 20% increase in foreign visitors.

Fishing is one of the largest employment sectors on Rodrigues, with many communities dependent on the lagoon; in 2006 there were 2,024 full-time, registered fishers (13% of the total workforce) with a further 2,000 people fishing on a casual basis. The two major fisheries are for lagoon fin-fish (including the large-net fishery, the basket trap fishery and the line fishery) and octopus, which is

practised by hand collection on foot or from a boat, using harpoons and spikes. Other less important fisheries are the 'off-lagoon' fishery for pelagic and demersal fish species outside the barrier reef (less than 20% of fishers), a small net fishery for shrimps in the lagoon, a lagoon fishery for sea cucumbers, which was previously unregulated, banned in 2006, and which re-opened in 2007 as a regulated fishery (meaning that fishers must be registered in order to participate in it) and will in future be managed through rotating 3-month periods of opening and closure.

## **2.1. Objectives and anticipated results**

The goal of the project, as defined in the logframe, is: *to improve the management and conservation practices for MPAs within the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, and the equitable sharing of benefits to the local communities and economic operators on a sustainable basis.*

The purpose of the project is defined as: *Develop and test a model for co-management, between government, local communities and the private sector, and build an enabling environment for its replication throughout the Republic of Mauritius.*

The project has two broad objectives:

*Objective 1: Develop an enabling policy and institutional framework for the sustainable co-management of MPAs throughout the Republic of Mauritius.*

This involves activities on the main island of Mauritius and was to be implemented in parallel, but starting later than Objective 2 activities, since it is dependent on the lessons learned from the latter. At the time the project was designed, the activities for this objective were selected by stakeholders to target specific gaps in the policy and institutional environment. As described later, some of these gaps are now being filled through other initiatives and there is a need to revise the activities for this Objective.

*Objective 2: Develop innovative co-management arrangements for MPAs and adapt them at a representative demonstration site in Rodrigues*

This Objective is designed to develop a model of co-management for a proposed MPA at a demonstration site, which was selected in the south east of the Rodrigues lagoon. Under this Objective, a management plan is to be prepared, using the participatory approach, and implementation of the MPA is expected to start. The logframe allows for a comprehensive range of training activities to ensure that all those involved in the future management of the MPA have the necessary skills and capacity. There is also a substantial component on awareness-raising to ensure that all stakeholders fully understand the purpose of the MPA, the benefits it may bring, and the responsibility that it places on those participating in its management.

## **2.2. Problems that the project seeks to address**

The fundamental problem that the project is aimed at is the need to institute an effective system of MPAs in the Republic of Mauritius that will not only conserve marine biodiversity, but also generate equitable benefits for those dependent on marine resources.

At the time the project was designed (2001-2003) it was recognised that there were a number of limitations to the successful implementation of MPAs. Under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998, three types of MPAs can be gazetted:

- Marine Parks: multiple use MPAs with zoning plans that allow for strict conservation zones in which fishing is prohibited, as well as zones for swimming and other regulated permissible

activities; the objectives are primarily conservation through regulation of activities, public appreciation and enjoyment, and research.

- Fishing Reserves: areas where net fishing is prohibited; there is no zoning; these are primarily aimed at protection of fish breeding and nursery areas
- Marine Reserves: MPAs in which all extraction is prohibited, including fishing and searching, extracting or drilling for oils or minerals.

On Mauritius, certain areas in the lagoon were declared as Fisheries Reserved Areas in 1887 with the aim of preventing depletion of stocks. Six of these areas were designated as Marine Protected Areas and Fishing Reserves in 2000, covering mangroves and habitats important for fish spawning and nurseries. There are also two Marine Parks (Blue Bay and Balaclava), gazetted first as National Parks in 1997 under the Wildlife and National Parks Act of 1993, and then declared as Marine Protected Areas and Marine Parks in 2000 under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998. At present there are no Marine Reserves on Mauritius. The Marine Conservation Division of AFRC, the technical arm of the Ministry of Fisheries, is responsible for managing MPAs. The approach is the traditional 'top-down' one, with little participation of other stakeholders, and it is generally recognised that enforcement by the Fisheries Protection Service (FPS) is inadequate, and compliance with the regulations is poor, due to limited capacity in terms of personnel, facilities and equipment.. Thus although there is appropriate legislation and a suitable management structure, MPAs on Mauritius are considered by many to be ineffective.

On Rodrigues, five Fisheries Reserved Areas were gazetted in 1984 in which seine net fishing is banned but these are also poorly enforced. Four Marine Reserves were gazetted in 2007 covering larger areas of the reef on the northern side of the island, following technical and consultation work supported through a donor-funded initiative led by the NGO Shoals Rodrigues. These are the responsibility of the Departmental Head (DH) of Fisheries (under the Chief Commissioner). Three of these are still to be demarcated and are not yet enforced; implementation work is underway in the fourth and the importance of these areas is recognised by the RRA, as indicated by the reference to them in the Chief Commissioners 2008 budget speech. The MPA to be established through the project, SEMPA, will be the third Marine Park in Mauritius and will cover an estimated 62 km<sup>2</sup> (42 km<sup>2</sup> marine - or 17% of the lagoon - and 20 km<sup>2</sup> terrestrial). The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure and Marine Parks is responsible for Marine Parks.

On Rodrigues, support for the concept of MPAs is comparatively high, and the idea of participatory – if not fully collaborative – management is broadly understood. The key issue here is how to ensure sustainable livelihoods for fishers currently dependent on the lagoon, in the face of failing fishery stocks and future curtailment of their activities in order to restore the natural ecosystems. The prevailing winds and lack of suitable boats mean that fishing is almost entirely restricted to the sheltered habitat of the lagoon. As identified in the fishery expert's report for the project, there has been intensive fishing in the Rodrigues lagoon for at least two hundred years, and the various efforts at management have met with only limited success. Excessive fishing effort and removal of juveniles, combined with damage to the marine ecosystem from destructive fishing practices (e.g. trap fishing and methods used to catch octopus), has led to a decline in the fin-fish and octopus fisheries (both are now yielding below their full potential), and a gradual shift in catch composition from high-value, high trophic level species to low-value herbivores in the fin-fish fishery. In fishery independent studies, there are signs of decline in the coral cover, and the fish fauna is now dominated by small damselfishes with few carnivores such as snappers and trevallies.

An additional problem is the threat to the reefs of high sediment loads from inappropriate land use in the catchment, an issue that will need to be addressed if the MPA is to be ultimately successful. Threats from tourism activities and coastal development are currently relatively low but are expected to increase significantly in the near future with numerous plans in the pipeline, mainly tourism and waterworks development. There is currently one hotel (Ebony Mourouk Hotel), with a further two hotel projects planned at Graviers. The proposed MPA provides an opportunity to ensure that any threats these new initiatives may impose are contained.

## **3. Findings**

### **3.1. Project formulation (Concept, Design, Relevance)**

In accordance with the UNDP/GEF guidelines, this section of the report reviews the extent to which the project concept and design is appropriate, in the light of any changes that have taken place since the project originated.

Objective 1, involving taking lessons learned on co-management and experience from a demonstration site on Rodrigues to improve national policy and legislation in the country as a whole, is now seen as an inappropriately formulated aim for the project, for several reasons.

First, the political, legal and administrative context will make it very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve this objective. Rodrigues is autonomous for the management of its natural resources and is able to develop its own approach within the context of the framework national legislation. The relatively small and homogenous community on the island, the lack of any long-established Marine Park, and the recent initiative to establish Marine Reserves with a participatory approach, means that the introduction of the co-management approach is likely to be a much simpler process than would be the case on Mauritius. On Mauritius, Marine Parks have been in place for a decade and there is a well entrenched approach to management that involves little community participation. Also, on Rodrigues, the fisher communities are the primary stakeholders, with tourism playing a very small role at present. The reverse is the case on Mauritius, where recreational use by local people and foreign tourism are the dominant uses of the coastal zone. Furthermore, the institutional structure differs on the two islands, with the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fisheries responsible for MPAs on Mauritius, and the Commission on Public Infrastructure and Marine Parks responsible for Marine Parks (but not the Marine Reserves, which come under the Commissioner of Fisheries) on Rodrigues. Thus although it will be possible to transfer general ideas and concepts between the two islands, the more detailed processes and management arrangements will need to be island-specific. With the delay in implementation of project activities on Rodrigues, it will however, be difficult to undertake this within the time frame of the project, and it may be best to focus on introducing best practices and strengthening MPA policy and management approaches in general on Mauritius.

Second, Output 1.1. was to involve the establishment of a team or Task Force to review existing policies and legislation and based on the results of this, lessons from the 'demonstration site', and consultation with relevant stakeholders, develop proposals for new policies and reform of the legislation in order to better ensure the financial sustainability of MPAs. In fact, the legislation relating to MPAs has undergone revision since the project started: the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 22 of 1998 has been revised and the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 is now in place. It would be unrealistic to expect that this piece of legislation could be revised again in the near future.

Third, the Project Document description of Objective 1 referred to the need to strengthen coastal management in general and to promote environmentally sound tourism, initiatives that are now underway through other national programmes. For example, Output 1.3. was aimed at identifying a mechanism to bring together different organizations to make decisions in a collective manner, and was intended to include activities such as a review of the different mandates of the various agencies responsible for marine issues, stakeholder consultation and the development of a consultation mechanism. These are activities that are now underway through the national ICZM Strategy project, led by the Department of Environment, under the Ministry of Environment, which will result in a national ICZM strategy that is expected to be completed by January 2009. Output 1.4. required the establishment of a working group with the main Mauritian tourism institutions, awareness raising activities, and development of principles for environmentally sound tourism, along with a mechanism to ensure their uptake, activities which will be addressed in the process to prepare the National Tourism Strategy.

Objective 1 therefore needs to be redesigned, and focused specifically on MPAs, whilst retaining the existing structure of six outputs:

- 1.1: Strengthen policy and legislation for the sustainable management of marine resources*
- 1.2: Develop tools and codes of practice to facilitate the practical application of existing policies and legislation*
- 1.3: Identify mechanisms for strengthening institutional arrangements for the sustainable management of marine resources*
- 1.4: Develop tourism outreach and reform in support of implementing marine environmental management principles in the tourism sector*
- 1.5: Develop mechanisms for fisheries outreach and reform*
- 1.6: Develop mechanisms to increase marine conservation awareness within key sectors of society.*

This has been agreed with Desk Officer for AFRC, the executing agency for this component of the project.

In contrast, although the concept of ‘demonstration site’ now seems inappropriate, the underlying design of Objective 2 – to establish a co-managed MPA on Rodrigues – is still highly relevant. The choice of the selected pilot site at Mourouk is still appropriate (rich marine biodiversity, as identified in earlier research work; the Grande Passe channel is the largest natural channel in Rodrigues, the islands within the proposed MPA have a unique flora; the area is already popular with tourism; an important fishery area etc). Furthermore, the substantial components on capacity building – aimed at all levels (individual learning, organisational development and enabling environment) - and awareness-raising are still as important now as when the project was designed.

Commitment to Objective 2 of the project, which is focused on Rodrigues, is generally high. Marine conservation is one of the core values of the 2006 Rodrigues Fisheries Sector Strategy and Action Plan and is an immediate priority. The project was specifically mentioned in the 2008 Budget speech, where it is stated that the RRA is “planning to gazette the boundaries of the MPA shortly”. Although there are recognized problems in implementation (discussed below) almost all those interviewed on Rodrigues showed enthusiasm for having a functioning well managed Marine Park on the island.

Objective 1 activities are aimed at the national level, and ownership of and commitment to these was difficult to judge. However, the general impression was that commitment was fairly low. Several factors led to this conclusion including: the difficulty of obtaining interviews with key individuals during the MTE mission; the lack of involvement to date in the project by the Objective 1 executing agency other than participation in Project Steering Committee meetings; and the fact that related activities have been underway during the project without involving project personnel or taking advantage of the availability of project funds (e.g. revision of the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act). The difficulty in scheduling meetings during the MTE was in itself an indication of lack of commitment to the project, and/or a lack of capacity to deal with what perhaps appear to be ‘externally-driven’ initiatives.

A key problem with the project design is the fact that the implementation arrangements for the project, as in many other GEF projects, do not take into account the lack of capacity at all levels for managing a project of this size. In particular, the lack of a full time Technical Advisor has been a major impediment as discussed below; the recruitment half way through the project of a part-time CTA meant that both the executing agencies and the project personnel have had inadequate support, although the CTA has devoted extensive time to the project.

## **3.2. Implementation**

This section assesses whether the activities and outputs have been completed within budget and on

schedule and involves an analysis of the project in terms of (a) progress in implementing project activities and (b) project management. There had been no comprehensive overview of the work undertaken by the Project, and the evaluator therefore collated this material from a range of sources. This review of progress uses the Activities from the work plan developed after preparation of the Draft Inception Report, rather than the Activities identified in the log frame and Project Document.

### *3.2.1. Progress with implementation of project activities (effectiveness)*

#### ***Objective 1: Develop an enabling policy and institutional framework for the sustainable co-management of MPAs throughout the Republic of Mauritius.***

None of the activities under the six Outputs of this Objective has been initiated and, as discussed earlier, these need revising to take account of developments in ICZM and the tourism sector since the project started. The Project Document recommends that Objective 1 should be undertaken only after Objective 2 activities are well underway. The Inception Report wisely recommended initiating some activities in parallel, to ensure that sufficient time is available to achieve this Objective, and this recommendation is supported by the MTE.

Although it had been suggested in the revised project plan and budget that all activities under Objective 1 should be carried out through a single contract, this recommendation has been revised and a number of contracts for specific technical assistance will be necessary. Draft TOR are being prepared by the CTA. A first priority is to identify exactly what activities are needed, then to determine which are the priorities for the project, and then to identify the best implementation method and thus the contracts required.

#### ***Objective 2: Develop innovative co-management arrangements for MPAs and adapt them at a representative demonstration site in Rodrigues***

There are 4 Outputs for this Objective:

- 2.1: Establish an integrated marine protected areas management board and infrastructure
- 2.2: Develop an integrated marine protected area management plan
- 2.3: Develop the capacity to implement the integrated marine protected area management plan
- 2.4: Increase marine conservation awareness

### *3.2.2. Review of Project management (efficiency)*

The very poor implementation rate, shown in section 3.2.1, demonstrates that there are fundamental problems that must be resolved. Delays in implementation were being expressed as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> PSC meeting in August 2005 (see copy of minutes), are recognised by all stakeholders and were discussed in detail in the 2006 and 2007 PIRs.

An additional problem is that some Outputs are being addressed in a rather piece meal fashion. For example, Output 2.3 concerning capacity building required an initial needs assessment to be undertaken, and Output 2.4. required the development of an awareness raising strategy; there is also an activity aimed at developing a tourism plan. Such plans and assessments help to ensure that all issues are considered and appropriate priorities identified, that tasks are undertaken in a logical order, and that monitoring and evaluation is undertaken appropriately. A strategy need not be a complex document, but should lay out clearly what the overall needs are, what the priorities are, and the timeline within the project for achieving them.

## **3.3. Project Results**

The previous section has described activities undertaken in relation to the outputs and activities. This section of the report requires the assessment of how successful the project has been (and is likely to be) in terms of achieving its objectives, and of the sustainability of the project and its contribution to upgrading the skills of the national staff.

### **3.3.1. Overall Assessment**

Given the relevance of, and urgent need for, the project, if the decline in marine and coastal resources in Mauritius is to be halted, and the good progress being made on Rodrigues in developing a co-management approach to MPA establishment and management, it is recommended that the project should continue. However, delays in implementation have meant that it is still too early to see any real achievements in terms of the Objectives, where progress is assessed for each project output in relation to the indicators identified in the logframe. Only three of the ten project outputs are sufficiently far advanced for progress to be seen in relation to the indicators, and these have all been rated MS (Marginally Successful). The other seven outputs have either not been started or are still at the planning stage, and if rated would merit either U (Unsatisfactory) or MU (Marginally Unsatisfactory). Overall, in terms of meeting its two objectives, the project can therefore be rated as only MU.

Similarly, given the delays due to slow past implementation which have led to a large backlog of activities still to be undertaken, and the serious concerns about the capacity of project personnel, project implementation can be rated only as MU (Marginally Unsatisfactory) at this point in time. Slow implementation has, however, led to significant under-expenditure, which may be considered advantageous in that it would allow for an adjustment of the budget to take on additional assistance for the final phase of the project. It is recommended therefore that continuation of the project, should be made conditional on the hiring of further personnel in order to (a) ensure that project activities are implemented at an appropriate speed and that appropriate project management procedures are introduced and maintained and (b) provide training and capacity building of the individuals and organizations that will be responsible for maintaining activities once the project ends. More detailed recommendations are provided in Section 4.

### **3.3.2. Achievement of Objectives**

For Objective 1, as discussed earlier, the plan now is to relate this more closely to MPAs, since the national ICZM strategy will address MPAs and tourism in general only. In the case of MPAs, this strategy is likely to include recommendations for the location of new Marine Parks, designed on a larger scale than Balaclava and Blue Bay, and thus potentially more like the planned SEMPA on Rodrigues. The experiences on Rodrigues may thus help to inform the development of such new MPAs. Although it may not be possible to replicate a co-management tool as originally intended, some of the approaches developed through the project may prove valuable. Furthermore, the awareness raising components of Objective 1, aimed at promoting and explaining the benefits of effectively management MPAs to different sectors, could if successful have a major impact. The recommendation, made in the 2007 PIR that an cost-benefit analysis of MPAs in Mauritius be undertaken, should be followed up.

Some success is starting to be visible under Objective 2, in particular the installation of a feeling of collective ownership of the lagoon resources, and the development of meaningful participation in decision-making processes. This is primarily due to the apparent initial success of the CRCs, CAC and SEMPA MB, through which collective decisions are being taken and the key stakeholder group – the fishers – are being involved. Part of the rapid involvement of the communities may be due to the previous consultations that were carried out with some of the SEMPA communities in the course of

the Shoals Rodrigues project to establish Marine Reserves<sup>1</sup>. The committee structure resembles that used to involve local communities in MPA management in Tanzania and in the Comores and it would be useful for the project personnel to share experiences with these countries. If this process continues for the formulation and implementation of the Management Plan, which will include the development of the zoning system, regulations, and financial instruments to generate revenue to sustain conservation operations, there is a strong likelihood that an effective co-management approach will be developed by the end of the project.

IUCN has defined four main 'governance types' of protected areas<sup>2,3</sup> of which co-management or collaborative management is one. This governance type involves a variety of options for involving stakeholders in management ranging from active consultation to consensus-seeking, negotiating and sharing responsibility to, in some cases, transferring management responsibilities to another body. It includes protected areas where the:

- Management authority and responsibility are shared among two or more organisations that may include national or local government agencies, indigenous and local communities, user groups, private entrepreneurs and land-owners.
- Formal decision-making authority, responsibility and accountability rest with one agency, that is required by law or policy to collaborate with other stakeholders (often called collaborative management), or
- Various actors sit on a management body or board that has decision-making authority, responsibility and accountability (may be called joint management).

Those involved in establishing SEMPA now need to decide which of these options is most suitable in the Rodrigues situation; as described earlier, a number of options have been proposed reflecting these possibilities. It will be important to establish the arrangements as soon as possible as there is evidence that fishers, and even some tourism operators, are 'losing faith' in the process. The report of the Fisheries Expert states that communities and fishers are positively disposed to the establishment of marine reserves and towards fisheries management measures and considered that they were at least partly responsible for helping find solutions to the problems faced. However, as noted in the inception report in 2006, delays in the implementation of the project have resulted in a loss of enthusiasm among many of the fishers in the area; and during the mid-term evaluation, several interviewees reported that fishers were less supportive of the project than they had been, and the work underway through the CPC has shown that only 4 of the 9 villages are now fully supportive. There are various reasons for dissatisfaction, including expectations being raised too high at the beginning of the project and the spread of misinformation (e.g. that fishers would be moved off the lagoon, or that they would be offered compensation by the MPA).

During the mid-term evaluation it became clear that for some people – project personnel and stakeholders alike - there is confusion between 'project' which is essentially a package of funding and technical assistance that will come to an end, and the MPA itself, which will be a permanent Rodriguan institution once legally established. Over the remaining life of the project, it will be important to ensure all involved understand this difference. Initiating the process to prepare the management plan will help to clarify this. A first step should be careful evaluation of the 'values' of the MPA (i.e. the characteristics of the location that have led to it being proposed as an MPA), which will provide the basis for developing the Goal and Objectives of the MPA. A Goal for SEMPA has

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1 Gell, F.R., Lynch T.L., Meunier, M.S., Blais, M.E.I. and Hooper, T.J. 2003. *Marine Reserves for Sustainable Fisheries and Conservation in Rodrigues*. Shoals Rodrigues

2 Borrini-Feyerabend, G., Kothari, A. and Oviedo, G. 2004. *Indigenous and Local Communities and Protected Areas: Towards Equity and Enhanced Conservation*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. 111 pp.

3 Dudley, N., Mulongoy, K.J., Cohen, S., Stolton, S., Barber, C.V. and Gidda, S.B. 2005. *Towards Effective Protected Area Systems. An Action Guide to Implement the Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas*. Technical Series no. 18, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Montreal, 108 pp.

been proposed in the Technical Gazettement document: *Natural capacity of the ecosystems within the SEMPA to deliver goods and services is maintained*, with two outcomes:

- *Ecosystem and habitats conserved for the regeneration of fish stocks and biodiversity within the lagoon*
- *Socio-economic base strengthened through diversification*

These are good initial proposals (particularly the introduction of the concept of ecosystem goods and services) but they need to be reviewed, fully understood and endorsed by the all stakeholders. At present neither the draft goal nor the draft outcomes specifically refer to the need for local communities to have some level of ownership or control over the management of the resources of the area. The objectives/outcomes need to be checked to ensure that they will contribute to achieving the goal, and that they are 'SMART' (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely). Indicators for the M&E programme for the MPA should be based on the objectives/outcomes; indicators are being developed by the MPA regulatory expert but without clearly defined and agreed MPA goals and objectives in place. Advice on establishing goals and objectives and on developing a management plan is available from a number of sources, including WIOMSA (see the *MPA Managers Toolkit*, and *A Workbook for Assessing Management Effectiveness*).

The planned inclusion of a significant terrestrial component is highly innovative, and if successful this will be one of the few MPAs in the region where the watershed is managed as an integral part of the MPA itself. However, consultations must be held with individuals and communities living within the proposed terrestrial component, and it needs to be recognised that a similar process must be used for terrestrial zones as for marine zones to ensure that stakeholders understand what the designation will mean and how it will affect them, and to gather the necessary baseline data. The draft regulation for gazettement of SEMPA proposes that the designated terrestrial area will be used for the demonstration of benign community environmental activities and appropriate agriculture and fresh water harvesting techniques that could be applied more widely. The type of planning and development regulations appropriate to such a zone should be discussed further and appropriate expertise brought in.

The gazettement of the MPA will be a major achievement for the project. The Project Document does not refer specifically to this as a 'milestone' and there is no guidance as to what stage in the project gazettement should take place, perhaps intentionally as the process for this is beyond the control of a project, being dependent on legislative procedures. At present, there is a major push on the part of project personnel for the gazettement to take place. It is generally agreed that the regulations and zoning plan need further work and should be excluded from the gazettement of the MPA's boundaries. There are, however, several legislative aspects of the MPA that have not been fully considered (e.g. the need for all users of the MPA to have permits once the gazettement is in place) and the draft gazettement document refers to various issues (particularly inclusion of the watershed area) that do not appear to have been discussed and agreed by all stakeholders. It might therefore be wise to make a full review of all the implications of gazettement before rushing into it. This would not delay any other activities: for example, the management plan can still be worked on (in many countries a management plan has to be produced before an MPA is gazetted), and staff could still be hired as they will need to be trained before they can enforce the MPA. The benefits to be obtained from gazetting the MPA as soon as possible (which will reassure stakeholders that progress is being made, and will demonstrate the reality of an MPA) must be carefully weighed against a later gazettement with a fuller consideration of all legislative issues.

### **3.3.3 Sustainability and development of capacity**

Objective 2 is aimed, through Output 2.2., at building the necessary capacity for managing SEMPA and this is essential if SEMPA is not to become another paper park. Since much of this work has yet to be undertaken, no results are yet visible. The capacity needs assessment must be completed and more thought given to the priorities for training, to ensure that SEMPA ultimately has adequate capacity for management. As described earlier, for example, it is not clear how the proposed GIS training programme will directly benefit the management of either SEMPA or other MPAs in

Mauritius. The report of a GIS scoping mission undertaken through ReCoMaP<sup>4</sup> concludes that countries in the region, including Mauritius, have sufficient skills in GIS mapping for the basic needs of coastal management, but that these skills are not adequately used because of poor co-ordination and data-sharing between organisations (Shoals Rodrigues is specifically mentioned as an exception). It would therefore be more appropriate to focus on skills specifically needed in the management of SEMPA, such as programme management, office administration, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation, and well as basic understanding among key RRA personnel of the roles, functioning and benefits of MPAs in general.

Objective 1 and some of the activities under Objective 2 correctly identify the need to ensure financial sustainability of MPAs in Mauritius, and of SEMPA in particular. The Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 2007 allows for the establishment of a Marine Protected Area Fund for the management of MPAs. The Fisheries and Marine Resources (Marine Protected Areas) FMR(MPA) Regulations 2001 and FMR (MPA) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 set fees to be charged for permits for access, carrying out of permissible activities and use of equipment and services etc. The MPA Fund has reportedly not yet been established, although fees are being charged in Blue Bay Marine Park for various permits, and for 'interference' permits in the other MPAs<sup>5</sup>. Some people interviewed were of the view that the current funding situation, with limited, largely government sources, creates major constraints to effective management and capacity, contributing to poor enforcement and monitoring and the lack of innovative management approaches.

The PMU has estimated the annual running costs of SEMPA to be approximately Rs7.5 million (US\$275,000). This includes salaries for a Manager, Assistant Manager, Finance Officer, Secretary, Driver, Cleaner, Chief Ranger, 2 Deputy Chief Rangers, 4 Senior Rangers and 9 Field Rangers, running costs for vehicles and boats, maintenance costs for all equipment (field, enforcement and administrative) and equipment depreciation costs over three years. It does not include some other current costs (e.g. allowances for community attendance at meetings - currently Rs 150 per person) that will need to be considered for phasing out or for accessing from other sources. There are many other potential funding mechanisms<sup>6</sup>, particularly through tourism and the private sector, and advantage should be taken of the support available through this project to look at these and identify means of increasing the financial resources for SEMPA and potentially for other Mauritian MPAs.

## **4. Recommendations**

### **4.1. Immediate: to be undertaken by December 2008**

#### **4.1.1. Strengthen the PMU and overall project management**

- Finalise recruitment of the Project Manager; if the current Project Assistant is promoted to Project Manager, it will be essential to recruit a new Project Assistant as quickly as possible, to ensure that capacity is indeed increased.
- Establish a new position within the project (title to be determined) to support the work of the PMU and provide training and capacity building of the existing personnel. This individual (preferably originating from Rodrigues, with strong project management skills and preferably international experience) should be recruited by UNDP as soon as possible, for the remaining duration of the project.
- Increase supervision by UNDP, the NPD and others in authority to ensure that the recommendations of the audit, PIR and MTE report are implemented and that project procedures are followed correctly.

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4 Marchesi, N. 2007. Final Report. GIS Scoping Mission. September 2007. ReCoMaP.

5 Information from the AFRC Desk Officer

6 See for example Spergel, B. & Moye, M. 2004. *Financing Marine Conservation: a Menu of Options*. Center for Conservation Finance, WWF, Washington D.C., USA.

- Prepare a work plan for the CTA's remaining time on the project that is realistic and feasible to implement (given his new base in Australia)
- Finalise the M&E plan for the project: this should involve a workshop with all project personnel, relevant staff from the UNDP CO, and contractees such as Shoals Rodrigues. It could be facilitated by the MPA regulatory specialist (already preparing the M&E programme for the MPA). The workshop should be used to clarify the difference between the M&E plan for the project and the one being developed for the MPA; review the logframe indicators, revise these where necessary, and ensure that all involved understand them, know what data has to be collected, and that there is a mechanism for storage and analysis of the data.

#### **4.1.2. Initiate Objective 1 activities**

- Revise activities for Objective 1 for approval at the next PSC (September 2008) taking into account current context (e.g. other activities underway and proposed through related projects, current government policy etc) and making it more realistic in relation to the available time left on the project
- Prepare work plan for Objective 1
- Initiate activities in Jan 2009

#### **4.1.3. Initiate the process for preparing the draft management plan (combines several activities under Objective 2)**

- Hire a consultant to write and facilitate production of the management plan, as is done in many other MPAs and projects (staff and project personnel rarely have time for this)..
- Lay-out a consultative and participatory process, and a structure, for the management plan, using guidelines and regionally/internationally accepted approaches (e.g. IUCN guidelines, WIOMSA Toolkit), and examples from other MPAs in the region (e.g. management plans were prepared through UNDP/GEF projects for MPAs in the Comores and Tanzania)
- Finalise the goals and objectives of SEMPA and review these at a workshop to ensure that they are agreed by all stakeholders
- Clearly identify the different options for the institutional structure and staffing, laying out the advantages and disadvantages of each and using a participatory process to reach agreement on the final choice; prepare an agreed organigram on MPA staffing structure, that includes the ranger system and other essential staff positions; draft TOR for each position and review existing drafts where available

#### **4.1.4. Training and capacity building**

- Undertake a comprehensive training needs assessment, to show clearly the specific needs of different groups, identify the priorities, and draw up a time frame.
- Strengthen linkages and actively seek opportunities to collaborate with relevant national (e.g. MPAs and MPA projects), regional (COI-WWF, ReCoMaP etc) and international initiatives. For example, the GEF Lessons Learned Project ([www.reefbase.org/gefl/](http://www.reefbase.org/gefl/)) is documenting the experiences and lessons learned from GEF and major non-GEF projects involving coral reefs and associated ecosystems, with the aim of translating lessons into good practices. This will allow exchange of ideas, development of new approaches, and help to identify training and other capacity building activities.
- Identify training sources in the region, and consultants/trainers who can provide appropriate services.

## **4.2. Longer term: January 2009 – end of project**

### **Objective 1**

- Complete activities

### **Objective 2**

- Gazette SEMPA
- Hire staff
- Train staff and stakeholders
- Develop the visitor centre and activities for visitors and tourism
- Develop management arrangements for terrestrial component of MPA
- Continue seeking opportunities for alternative livelihoods
- Identify long-term support and partnerships for SEMPA (e.g. with international organisations such as WWF, WCS)
- Prepare an exit strategy (add this as a numbered Activity to the work plan): this should focus on the sustainability of SEMPA, its funding sources, and any needs for technical support and capacity development.
- Document lessons learned and prepare publications

### 4.3. Long term – end of project and beyond

- Consider the feasibility of designating SEMPA as a coastal-marine UNESCO MAB Biosphere Reserve. This would provide international recognition of the efforts underway on Rodrigues and can help attract additional funding from different sources. Biosphere reserves serve as pilot sites to explore and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development, providing lessons that can be applied elsewhere, as is intended with SEMPA. The benefits are detailed on the UNESCO site ([www.unesco.org/mab/faq\\_br.shtml#benef](http://www.unesco.org/mab/faq_br.shtml#benef)) and in a leaflet that can be downloaded from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001424/142453e.pdf>. The Macchabee/Bel Ombre protected area (part of Black River Gorge National Park) is a biosphere reserve on Mauritius. Other coastal-marine reserves in the region include Malindi-Watamu and Kiunga, both in Kenya, and Sahamalaza-Iles Radama in Madagascar.
- Consider the potential for a ‘twinning’ (jumelage) arrangement with another MPA in the region or elsewhere – this is an increasingly common practice with protected areas, and leads to sharing of experiences and lessons learned, and in some cases support from the more well established site to the less well developed protected area.
- Develop a research policy and programme for SEMPA: several topics have already been identified such as experimental trials are also needed within the proposed octopus no-go area, and possibly within the proposed community no-go areas, to ascertain the effectiveness of octopus habitat enhancement in further building stocks of breeding adults and continued octopus potting trials to develop a less destructive method of fishing for these animals (see fisheries expert’s report).

## 5. Lessons Learned

This Section is primarily for the benefit of UNDP/GEF, in that it identifies lessons learned from this project that may be useful to other GEF projects. The consultant has had management experience with two other UNDP/GEF projects concerning MPA establishment (the Comores Biodiversity Project and the Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park project in Tanzania) and was on the evaluation team for MTE of the project *Conservation and Management of Eritrea’s Coastal, Marine and Island (CMI) Biodiversity*. This experience was useful in drawing some general conclusions as follows:

### **Recognition is needed of the difficulty in starting up UNDP/GEF projects of this nature**

The project demonstrated that, like other UNDP/GEF projects, a long start up period is required, to take account of the length of time to recruit personnel and technical assistance, and to put the necessary procedures in place. A very slow start-up phase can lead to ongoing negative impacts on project implementation, as the activities initially proposed become irrelevant or need increasing revision as the wider context changes, and the implementation time becomes increasingly short,

putting additional pressure on project personnel. This is such a widespread problem, that it is something that UNDP should take up with the GEF.

**Importance of an adequate inception report and revision of the logframe if required**

Given that there is often a considerable delay between finalisation of the project document and initiation of a project, greater importance should be attached to ensuring that an adequate inception report is produced. This must take account of any changes in circumstances and should be required to make any necessary changes to the log frame or implementation arrangements to reflect improved understanding of the project situation.

**Training of project staff in both UNDP/GEF procedures and general project management**

The provision of manuals and guidelines on UNDP/GEF procedures and a single initial training or induction course is often insufficient to ensure adequate project management. UNDP staff should work through the guidelines with the staff in the context of the project itself; projects inevitably vary in detail which means that the generalised guidelines need adaptation. Periodic training or revision workshops would be useful. Furthermore, UNDP CO staff should ensure that they stay up to date with any changes in procedure and pass this information directly on to project staff.

**Importance of adequate oversight and support by UNDP CO and UNDP/GEF Task Manager**

Mechanisms for oversight exist in the UNDP/GEF procedures, but are not always fully implemented. Adequate staff time and resources must be allocated to this. This is particularly important in projects where, as is increasingly the case, there is no technical agency (such as IUCN or WWF) to provide capacity building in project management, technical support to TAs, and general technical and managerial backstopping in situations where there is a lack of capacity.

**Scope and scale of biodiversity projects**

This project, like the Comores Biodiversity project and the Eritrea Coastal and Marine Biodiversity project, clearly demonstrates the difficulty of implementing large-scale projects that address biodiversity conservation at both national and local levels. In this case, the work needed on Rodrigues, to develop a framework for effective establishment and management of MPAs, merits a GEF project in itself. The addition of a component addressing national MPA policy, which involves a different set of stakeholders, makes unrealistic demands on the project personnel, given the existing capacity on both Mauritius and Rodrigues.