

Project number: 3

Project applicant: Madagascar Fauna Group

Project Name: Ivoloina Conservation Training Programme

Funds provisionally allocated: €17,880

Summary

Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) have worked for 17 years with local Malagasy government and environmental groups to help conserve critically endangered species through captive breeding programs, research, environmental and alternative agriculture education, and capacity building. The local authorities have requested help from the international community, and specifically MFG, to provide more sustainable alternatives to tavy and for training to be provided in those alternative techniques. As a result the MFG's Environmental Education Centre (CEE) and the Agricultural Model Station based at Parc Ivoloina have evolved over recent years to meet these needs through provision of training in environmental education and sustainable agricultural methods. The training targets a diverse audience ranging from school children to local government leaders.

Over the past few years demand for the MFG training sessions has exceeded the capacity of the modest infrastructure already in place at Ivoloina and a project has been started to construct a purpose-built training centre to meet the ever-growing local needs. The first phase of construction is already completed composing of a meeting room able to hold 100 people, a teaching laboratory and a small computer room. The second phase is now underway to provide a dormitory, which will accommodate 24 people allowing groups from further afield to come for training and to lodge at Ivoloina at minimal cost. The majority of the funding for this venture has already been secured but there is an outstanding amount left to raise to complete the construction and equip the dormitory with basic furniture to make it fully functional. Additionally funds are required to cover the basic costs of running the Ivoloina Conservation Training Centre (ICTC) for the year of 2007 and to facilitate an increase in number of people trained.

The main goal of this project is to build local capacity for natural resource management in Toamasina through training of farmers and village leaders in sustainable agriculture approaches and methods. As well as the practical agricultural subjects there will be training sessions for local school teachers and school district chiefs to improve environmental education in local primary schools in order to promote understanding of the need to conserve Madagascar's precious biodiversity

The specific project aims are to:

- Ensure the completion of building and furnishing of a dormitory that is already under construction, which will provide accommodation for visiting groups at the ICTC and facilitate longer training sessions and groups coming from further afield.
- Ensure a year's effective functioning of the ICTC (payment of maintenance, administration and personnel costs).
- Provide 300 local villagers with training in sustainable agricultural techniques with the aim of reducing the practise of tavy in the areas immediately surrounding Parc Ivoloina and the Betampona Natural Reserve.
- Provide follow-up support visits for villagers showing interest in adopting the promoted techniques, offering technical assistance on the ground.
- Provide a second phase of training for all of the 17 mayors of the province of Toamasina reinforcing the importance of promoting sustainable agriculture at the commune level and increasing practical and technical knowledge of a range of improved agricultural techniques.
- Provide a third phase of training for the 16 local school chiefs (Chef ZAPs) of Toamasina province reinforcing the importance of promoting environmental education in primary schools and increasing technical knowledge in a range of environmental subjects.