



FONDATION POUR LES AIRES PROTÉGÉES ET LA BIODIVERSITÉ DE MADAGASCAR

Foundation for the Protected Areas and the Biodiversity of Madagascar

NEWSLETTER

May 2020

A message from the President of the Board of Trustees



Dear readers,

Today, Madagascar, as the entire world, keeps on fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. What was expected to be a super year 2020 for biodiversity is becoming a year of change in our lifestyles and a redefinition of humanity's priorities.

At FAPBM, we are mindful of our responsibility to bequeath the biodiversity we inherited from our ancestors to future generations. This leads us to stand by protected areas in these times of crisis. In this regard, the Foundation has been in constant contact with the managers since the beginning of preventive health measures. A questionnaire designed to find out the impacts of measures related to the health crisis on both the management of protected areas and the conservation of biodiversity has been sent to each protected area manager. The responses will enable the FAPBM to issue recommendations aimed, on the one hand, at protecting men and women and, on the other hand, animals, biodiversity in general and the protected area.

The Foundation also intends to remain committed to its mission of ensuring sustainable funding for the conservation of protected areas. As of March 31, 2020, our portfolio had lost 6.7% of its value compared to the situation at the end of 2019, due to the financial market downturn. However, our portfolio kept perform well and we have been able to limit our losses in value. How did we manage with it? **FAPBM has always adopted a long-term financial investment policy in order to limit our risks.** For this year, our consolidated financing for protected areas amounts to a total of 10,107,439,920 MGA, or 2,806,973 USD in 2020, broken down as follows :

- MGA 7,804,789,731 on capital income;
- MGA 98,192,500 from the Lemurs Portal project;
- MGA 297,000,000 from the Qit Minerals Madagascar offset project;
- MGA 1,906,957,689 from the KFW Sinking Fund.

We wish to reassure our partners that we will keep our engagements. As the Foundation is aware of the important issues at stake for biodiversity and protected areas, we are and will stay attentive to the repercussions of this difficult context on protected areas. FAPBM is therefore working tirelessly and will continue to mobilize our partners so that the Foundation can continue to effectively support the conservation of protected areas and the preservation of Madagascar's unique biodiversity.

FAPBM wishes us all the best for getting through these difficult times with courage, serenity and, above all, excellent health.

Sahondra Rajoelina
Chair of the Board of Trustees

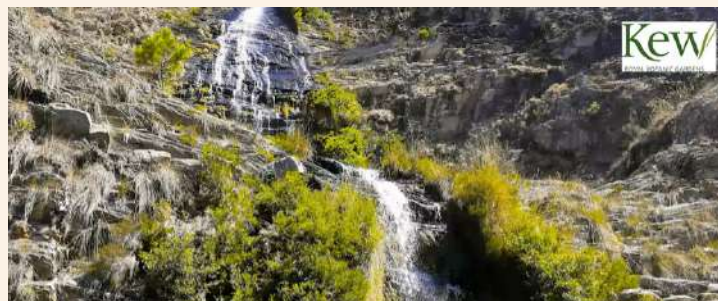
The Itremo protected area facing COVID-19

An increase of artisanal crystal mining exploration activities is currently being recorded in Itremo, a site funded by the Foundation since 2013, reports the Royal Botanical Garden Kew in its responses to the questionnaire sent by the FAPBM on the situation of protected areas in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regular patrols in the buffer zone are carried out to prevent illegal entry into the park.

The pandemic is also affecting the protected area's own resources: Itremo is equipped with ecotourism infrastructure - including trails and tent shelters funded by the Foundation - to support the financial autonomy of the site. Nevertheless, ecotourism activities are currently at a standstill since, on the one hand, the park is closed to the public and, on the other hand, planned visits are all cancelled due to global containment.

However, the RBG Kew team continues to carry out its field activities at Itremo, as no cases of COVID-19 have been reported in the area.



Waterfall of Itremo protected area

Extract from the interview with the Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development



In her interview for the Mongabay news website, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Mrs. Vahinala Baomiatotse Raharinirina, spoke about the impacts of COVID-19 on conservation funding in Madagascar and the role of the Foundation in this context. She also underlined the impacts that the situation caused by the pandemic could have on FAPBM:

"In terms of funding, protected areas in Madagascar can be primarily categorized into two types: Protected areas established before 2005 (...) currently in co-management with MNP; all protected areas in Madagascar remain nationally owned (...) the "new protected areas" (NPA) established under the 2003 Durban Vision, which, from 2007, began to benefit from support from the Madagascar Biodiversity Fund (Fondation pour les Aires Protégées et la Biodiversité de Madagascar, or FAPBM). (...) Some protected areas managed by MNP also benefit from FAPBM support.

The capital of FAPBM is placed on the financial market, from which income is generated. Any lethargy in the international financial market will, sooner or later, have repercussions on income and consequently have harmful effects on the resources that FAPBM can allocate to protected areas".

Read the full article in English at <https://news.mongabay.com/2020/04/covid-19-will-hurt-madagascars-conservation-funding-qa-with-minister-vahinala-raharinirina/>.

Focus on the Maromizaha protected area

Since 2018, Maromizaha, a protected area managed by the Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur les Primate (GERP) and financed by FAPBM since 2015, has become a "zero cut and zero fire" protected area. According to the GERP technical coordinator, an increase in the surface area of the humid forest has even been recorded: the surface area of the protected area has, in fact, increased from 1063 Ha (in 2015) to 1228 Ha by the end of 2019.

In 2019, the National Office for the Environment gave GERP a satisfactory rating for the management of the NAP Maromizaha after a mission to monitor the environmental specifications. This effort to conserve and protect the exceptional biodiversity of the protected area has always involved local communities. They are 3, composed of 2646 inhabitants living around the NAP, to collaborate with GERP in the management of the NAP.

Dolimon Randrianantenaina is part of the local communities and strongly supports the idea of preserving the protected area. *"We are very strict about the protection of this forest. Our involvement, awareness raising and the introduction of fines have paid off, as there are currently no more fires in Maromizaha,"* he says proudly.



A range of activities have been put in place to promote the economic and social development of these local communities. In its objective to promote human development through conservation, the Foundation has funded some of these activities. Among them, ecotourism, beekeeping and contour farming, for which the beneficiaries testify that the absence of fire in Maromizaha benefits their activities and, consequently, the increase in their income.



Etienne Miandriharison, a tourist guide, relates: *"I was one of those who used to do coal mining and exploit the forest in the protected area. But I stopped doing that in 2016, when I started my internship as a tourist guide in Maromizaha. Over time, I have come to understand that my income depends on the preservation of the protected area"*.

Tribute to Dr. Guy Suzon Ramangason



On April 30, Dr. Guy Suzon Ramangason passed away. Managing Director of Madagascar National Parks from 2003 to 2019, he was much more than that.

Madagascar's protected areas and biodiversity are today mourning one of their most ardent defenders.

The world of ecology has indeed suffered the loss of the founding father of the system of protected areas of Madagascar and one of the driving forces of the inscription of the Tsingy of Bemaraha as the first Malagasy site on the World Heritage List.

The Foundation is respectfully bowing down before this great nature lover who put his experience and expertise at the service of the protection of Madagascar's environment and with whom, over the years, FAPBM has forged a special bond.

Additional policies at the Foundation

As an organisation accountable to its capital contributors and the communities surrounding the protected areas it finances, FAPBM complies with international environmental management standards. To this end, the Foundation is currently working on the implementation of various policies:

1. **Gender policy:** FAPBM is committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women.
2. **Environmental and Social Safeguard Management Policy** aimed at establishing a framework to ensure that FAPBM's funding take into account the 3 pillars of sustainable development: environmentally friendly, socially equitable and economically efficient.
3. In parallel with the implementation of the above policies, the FAPBM is currently developing a **complaints and grievances management mechanism** to ensure the integration and social acceptance of its funding. This mechanism describes the implementation of one part of the Environmental and Social Safeguard Management Policy. But given its importance, the Foundation has been particularly keen to develop it in order to listen to all stakeholders, from beneficiary communities to state entities and protected area managers.

Reflections on the situation of the protected areas of Madagascar National Parks



The Foundation, Madagascar National Parks and the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development are currently working together to address the difficulties encountered by MNP protected areas.

The PAs are hindered by the lack of income from ecotourism, a situation that results from the current absence of visitors in 2020 and the probably limited number of tourists in 2021.

A first technical meeting was held at MNP's headquarters on 28 April 2020 with the presence of the Secretary General of the MEDD, Mr Indriamanga Rakotoarisoa, the Managing Director of MNP, Mr Mamy Rakotoarijaona, the Executive Director of the Foundation, Mr Alain Liva Raharijaona, and several members of MNP's Board of Directors.

The situation of environmental funds in the context of the COVID-19

The Foundation participated in online discussions between the Conservation Finance Alliance and member Foundations of RedLAC (the network of environmental foundations in Latin America and the Caribbean) and CAFE (the network of environmental foundations in Africa). Discussions focused on the situation of environmental funds in the current crisis context.

Environmental funds are presently facing different challenges: social (increased pressure on protected areas due in part to reduced income for communities living around protected areas), financial due to the disruption of the global crisis in the financial markets, and in mobilizing additional financial resources as donor priorities tend to focus on other sectors. However, they are maintaining their conservation funding and activities.

Despite this difficult and unusual context, the Foundation will remain committed to the 36 protected areas that benefit from its funding. Moreover, the Foundation will provide technical and management support wherever protected area managers express a need.

More information on :

