

Turning Madagascar's World Heritage sites into Agents of Positive Change

THE TROPICAL RAINFORESTS OF ATSIINANANA ACCELERATOR FUND

Call to action

Invest in Malagasy expert organizations which protect and manage tropical Rainforests of Atsinanana and their critical ecosystem services through a unique set of World Heritage Sites, so that these special places serve a bright future for Madagascar as well.

Objective

Together with partners, **Madagascar Protected Areas and Biodiversity Fund (FAPBM)** and **Madagascar National Parks (MNP)** will accelerate the readiness of 6 World Heritage Sites in Atsinanana to receive sustainable finance and serve as Agents-of-Change for rural communities in the South East of Madagascar.

Through this accelerator fund, local communities will receive support to strengthen co-management of these tropical rainforest areas and evidence the local benefits of living near World Heritage Sites.

Investment strategy

FAPBM has created a special fund to intensify efforts already underway by Malagasy experts of the Madagascar coalition for Protected Areas in six World Heritage Sites. The investment will support communities and their local authorities to manage their tropical rainforest landscape and accelerate readiness of the Sites to receive sustainable finance from FAPBM to secure these critical places into perpetuity.

In 2007, the Atsinanana Rainforest (N1257) was included in the World Heritage list, rightfully recognized amongst the most exceptional natural places in the world. UNESCO World Heritage Sites have Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs), which are defined as having **"cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of humankind"**.



The Atsinanana Rainforest, includes the National Parks of

Marojejy, Masoala, Zahamena, Ranomafana, Andringitra, and the rainforests parcels of Andohahela National Park.

They are connected by key protected areas: **Anjanaharibe Sud, Ambositra Vondrozo Corridor and the Ankeniheny Zahamena Corridor.** Their rate of endemism is between **80 - 90 %** and **all five families of Malagasy primates** are represented. The habitats contained in these sites have become critically important to maintain ecological processes necessary for the survival of Madagascar's unique biodiversity. Their importance is especially high, as deforestation in this eastern part of the country has left only **8.5 %** of original forest intact.

To fulfill its global responsibility, Madagascar must urgently improve the management of these World Heritage Sites. From experience this has significant impacts on rural communities which already face various challenges by the mere fact that they live in and near Madagascar's tropical rainforest areas.

Rural communities in Madagascar face:

- Impacts from illegal logging of valuable timber;
- Impacts on their livelihoods as productive agricultural land is stressed by clearing of timber and unsustainable harvest practices;
- Impacts from a collapsing tourism sector related to COVID travel restrictions and changing the profile of Madagascar as a positive destination.

By investing in **resilience** of communities and **effective sustainable management** over natural assets at local, regional, and national levels, the critical ecosystem services upon which many livelihoods and local economies depend will be secured. Integrating climate resilience planning into agricultural management policy as well as coordinating forest conservation with targeted investments in both soft and hard infrastructure around World Heritage Sites will significantly enhance conditions for durable economies and sustainable rural livelihoods. This way, barriers to effective co-management will be eradicated, paving the way to self-reliant rural communities, and World Heritage Sites that contribute to development of a durable Madagascar Economy.

Performance

MNP is a private association mandated by Government decree to manage the 43 national parks and nature reserves in the country. From 2010, MNP and their local partners have implemented efforts to ensure performance at these 6 World Heritage Sites and the surrounding landscape. Supported by international donor partners, previous efforts to secure these World Heritage Sites have not yet resulted in durable change at the scale required. While there are many successes of work by members of the Madagascar coalition for Protected Areas, acceleration of community development and alignment with corporate interest towards more sustainable economic development around these places is urgently needed.

Ranomafana National Park

is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site as part of Atsinanana rainforest. This site is one of the most valuable terrestrial protected areas in Madagascar with **13 million to 22 million USD/year** values of local and regional economic contribution by ecotourism, hydroelectricity and water protection. Local communities are proud of it. Under the supervision of **MNP**, local communities monitor about **70%** of the serial site of Atsinanana rainforest.

Marojejy National Park

Thanks to sustainable funding of **FAPBM**, threats on precious wood inside Marojejy Protected Area have been greatly reduced to its lowest level since 2009. The **FAPBM** grants fund not only the operation costs for effective and permanent presence on site, additional funds also ensure that extra rangers are mobilized when needed.

FAPBM plays an important role, for many of Madagascar's protected areas, in providing a stable and sustainable source of finance. FAPBM provides a trusted legal mechanism for the sustainable financing of operating costs of protected areas in the country.

To achieve Madagascar's commitment by the year 2024, more support is urgently required, especially to address the primary threat to the World Heritage Sites: unsustainable timber logging and unsustainable practices (e.g., poaching of lemurs and other wildlife) by communities living in and around these World Heritage Sites.

Distribution of the investment

Funds will be used to **1** complement efforts underway at World Heritage Sites, so that local collaborative management regimes will be durable and adequate to achieve community self-reliance and corporate compliance, as well as to **2** establish critical enabling conditions required for effective application of a durable co-management model for these World Heritage Sites.

Specifically, this includes:

1 Support managers of World Heritage Sites to:

- Render communities bankable, specifically for agricultural related livelihoods – building capacities of communities in money management/investment/financing literacy;
- Implement locally-relevant monitoring and control systems;
- Develop social enterprises targeted to provide solutions for community's primary needs as electricity, and sanitation;
- Develop adequate partnerships with the private sector to ensure durable access to the market of sustainable forest-agriculture products.

2 Support policy makers to:

- Develop legal frameworks required to strengthen legal basis for collaborative management, investment in carbon, facilitate conditions for social enterprises and sustainable rural development;
- Prioritise economic development strategies near World Heritage Sites to motivate transition to a green economy with local communities, local enterprises, and timber corporations.

Implementing team/organization

MNP will lead work with Malagasy experts (members of the coalition) and local communities to deliver lasting results in these critical places.

FAPBM will manage and invest the funds as a trusted Malagasy national sustainable finance institution and measure performance and impacts for communication to investors.



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