

FORENA

Fondation Ressources et Nature



REFORESTATION INITIATIVE AT THE CITADEL OF PORT LOUIS

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
BACKGROUND	2
AIMS OF THE PROJECT	3
OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT	4
PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES	4
BENEFICIARIES	5
HOW CAN YOU HELP?	5
CONCLUSION	6

INTRODUCTION

The project of creating a native green space at the Citadel of Port Louis started in 2009, with a plan to restore the vegetation cover of Petite Montagne where the Citadel is located. The aim was to start with a pilot phase by re-instating the native plant cover in an area of 1 hectare (out of a total of 11 hectares) on the flanks of Petite Montagne.

The project stems from an urgent need to actively counteract damage done to Mauritius biodiversity and to create meaningful change in the conservation field. It should be highlighted that Mauritius has one of the most threatened island floras in the world (*Fourth national report on the convention on national biodiversity, 2010*).



BACKGROUND

The pilot phase benefited from part funding from the UNDP GEF Small Grants Program and the rest of the needed funds was obtained from various sponsors, including the Rotary Club of Port Louis-Citadel, the Lions Club of Curepipe and the National Parks and Conservation Service among others.

In addition to being one of the rare instances of reforestation on mainland Mauritius, this conservation project differentiates itself by adopting a holistic approach of connecting conservation solutions to social issues. Indeed training in plant propagation was provided to vulnerable groups and the plants needed for the re-vegetation were procured from these groups, thus supporting their livelihood.

With the successful completion of the pilot phase, which actually resulted in an area of 2.5 hectares being replanted with native species, it is essential to plan the reforestation of the remaining 8.5 hectares. Indeed continuity is essential in order to restore the damaged ecosystem.



AIMS OF THE PROJECT

With the success of the pilot phase, the primary aim of the project is to ensure continuity in order to have a sustainable model and achieve the desired results of reforestation:

1. The re-creation of a native woodland to restore damaged ecosystem
2. The establishment of a new population of rare and threatened endemic plants to help in conservation of Mauritian native Flora

Another aim is to link up people and conservation by:

1. Proposing a model of conservation embedded in notions of sustainable development and livelihood, thus connecting conservation and assistance to people in vulnerable situations
2. Spreading much needed awareness on conservation among Mauritians by using Petite Montagne as a show case

Conservation projects often receive attention and funding at the beginning stages but to be able to make a difference, continuity is essential. With the reforestation of the pilot area of Petite Montagne having been successfully completed, all the structures of this initiative are set up and in place. This, together with the valuable lessons learnt during the pilot is an advantage which will greatly facilitate a smooth restoration of a native cover for the rest of the area. Re-vegetation of Petite Montagne needs to be continued for its impact to be significant. It can then become a concrete example to showcase, spread awareness and encourage further conservation initiatives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The objectives of the project are:

1. Applying the lessons learnt from the reforestation on the 2.5 hectares to ensure that the best techniques are applied in the replanting of the remaining area of Petite Montagne
2. Planting endemic species which need more humidity and shade now that the pilot phase has enabled species which grow fast to provide a ground cover
3. Reduce risks to people, property and nature from the yearly sporadic fires which sweep through the Petite Montagne slopes by establishing a fire resistant cover
4. Developing local skills in plant propagation
5. Reduce soil erosion and desertification
6. Provide a public green metropolitan area in the heart of the capital city for healthy living
7. Involve the public through a sensitisation campaign which shows the concrete actions being carried out on Petite Montagne to conserve Mauritius native biodiversity

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project is managed by FORENA and Friends of the Environment, both key players in the sustainable conservation field.

Other key stakeholders include the Municipality of Port Louis, the Tourism Authority and Discover Mauritius who have provided workers and volunteers for the planting and will continue to do so for the remaining restoration. The National Parks and Conservation Service is also on board and are willing to participate with the donation of seeds and seedlings. The State Property Development Co. has also expressed interest in providing a landscaper to design a nature trail.

Project activities include:

- a. Holding sessions with the relevant stakeholders to ensure all lessons learnt are captured and to ensure a smooth roll out of the reforestation on the remaining area
- b. Removal of alien species on the remaining area using different techniques
- c. Further training in plant propagation to increase outreach to socially vulnerable groups
- d. Procurement of plants from vulnerable groups
- e. Preparing the land for re-planting
- f. Replacing fire-prone alien plants with non-fire prone shady native grass
- g. Application of the irrigation systems which worked best during the pilot
- h. Control of pests (use of green insecticides like garlic oil)
- i. Monitoring the progress and reporting of results
- j. Encouraging visits to the site to promote awareness

BENEFICIARIES

There are beneficiaries from this project at several levels:

- **The population at large** will benefit from the restoration of a damaged ecosystem
- Successful growth of rare and threatened endemic plants will enable the conservation of Mauritius native wildlife for **the current and future generations**
- The restoration of Petite Montagne will enable **the public** to have a green space in the capital city for exercise and a healthy living
- **Vulnerable groups** having developed skills in plant propagation will have an alternative livelihood
- Promotion of **eco-tourism** with visits of this restored green area alongside the Citadel, a historical monument
- Awareness of the **Mauritian population** of conservation will be heightened through the concrete example of work carried out at Petite Montagne

HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Become part of this reforestation initiative

- Sponsor various activities involved in reforestation e.g. training, land preparation
- Fund the procurement of plants
- Adopt an area of the citadel and involve your employees in the replanting and maintenance of that area

Cost : MUR 1000 per plant, inclusive of transport as shown in the table below.

Description	10m ²
Plant	Rs. 300
Weeding	Rs. 165
Preparation of the holes	Rs. 160
Herbicide	Rs. 20
Maintenance	Rs. 65
Transport	Rs. 50
Loss of plant	Rs. 30
Cost of coordination	Rs. 126
Administrative cost	Rs. 84
Total	Rs.1000

CONCLUSION

FORENA is looking for sponsors to contribute in this reforestation initiative. With the success of the pilot, many techniques have been tested and the structures are already in place. Therefore, the implementation of this phase is expected to be smoother. The expected impact of this project, once completed, is highly significant in terms of being a rare initiative of reforestation in mainland Mauritius which will contribute to a restored ecosystem. The proposed holistic model of this project also has key impacts on awareness and eventual acceptance of conservation in the daily lives of Mauritians.