**Seychelles Conservation Climate Adaptation Trust (2019)**

23-LG Large Grant

Terrestrial Restoration Action Society of Seychelles (TRASS)



glaynPrl

# Applicant details

Applicant name Victorin Laboudallon

# Application details

Project Title

Community-based ecological wetland rehabilitation, Pasquiere, Praslin

SeyCCAT Strategic Objective – as listed in the Request for Proposals

 Promote the rehabilitation of marine and coastal habitats and ecosystems that have been degraded by local and global impacts;

Name of applicant Victorin Laboudallon

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Status of the lead applicant Non-governmental organisation,

Partner organisations (include country if not based in Seychelles)

Seychelles National Park Authority Praslin EBA Watershed Committee Wildlife club of Seychelles

Project location

The project will take place on one of the main island, Praslin at Pasquière, Anse Possession.. The site will encompass the Pasquière, Davidson and the Casimir rivers, the fragmented freshwater marshes and mangrove forests adjacent to the Curieuse marine park.

Duration – start and end dates 15 11 2019 30 10 21

Total budget requested 948,262

Indicative co-financing

SCR 965,688 from the following WIPSAP

TRASS

Ra½es Hotel SNPA

Personel sta"

Abstract

Wetlands are considered as the kidneys of the landscape for the biogeochemical and hydrologic functions that they provide. They prevent floods, cleans waters, protect shorelines and recharge aquifers. Wetlands provide haven for a wide variety of flora and fauna and o"er a unique habitat for many rare, endangered species as well as migrants. Lowland wetlands including mangrove are considered as the most threatened and critical habitats in the Seychelles. A loss of 90% of the area due to reclamation, sedimentation, pollution and drainage. In addition, Invasive Alien Species which ranks as the number one factor leading to biodiversity loss in tropical islands including the Seychelles further impacts onto the limited wetlands.

Encroachment and overgrowth by IAS reduces the sizes of wetlands, reduces hydrological flows, encourage excess sedimentation which transforms the wetland in raised islands and banks which further facilitates IAS encroachment and spread.

The riparians and coastal wetlands which were once connected to all rivers, marshes and mangroves have been reclaimed and greatly fragmented, and most wetlands are even gone from the landscape (90%). With their loss, and the degradation of the few remaining one, our wetlands have lost their ability to cleanse themselves and the lagoons, seagrasses and coral reef are no longer bu"ered from upland regions.

The proposed project addresses the degradation of critical wetland habitats at Pasquière within the Curieuse Marine National Park. There is a need for rehabilitation and management of degraded but critical coastal habitats (river, freshwater marsh, mangrove, beach crest) in this area by working together with communities, organizations and local government to encourage and ensure local community participation in restoration e"orts, as direct involvement may inspire better stewardship and a keener sense of project ownership by local communities.

Interest in the project site dates back to 2010 when there were concerns from local people who noticed that the mangrove patch was deteriorating especially after some development in the area, and hence wanted to take action to investigate the problems further, raise awareness amongst local communities, propose and implement management actions to remediate the problem. A project was implemented in 2010 by TRASS and funded by the Mangrove For the Future (MFF) to understand some of the issues particularly related to impacts of soil erosion and sediment deposition in the wetlands. Later, in 2014, alarm was raised by the community and TRASS because the mangrove dieback was persisting. Further investigation confirmed oil pollution of the mangrove from a nearby establishment. Actions were taken by the Department of Environment who requested the establishment to undertake the necessary measures to mitigate the impacts. TRASS did a monitoring of the mangrove to advise on rehabilitation of the a"ected mangroves and the Seychelles National Park Authority implemented some rehabilitation activities. Thereafter follow-up activities were discontinued. To date the site is not being maintained and there is a need to rehabilitate the mangroves together with the associated freshwater marsh, rivers and beach crest.

Outcomes and Impacts

Objectives, rational, outcomes and results

The project will take place on one of the main island, Praslin at Pasquière, Anse Possession.. The site will encompass the Pasquière, Davidson and the Casimir rivers, the fragmented freshwater marshes and mangrove forests adjacent to the Curieuse marine park.

The proposed project forms part of a greater vision which is to address the degradation of critical habitats by taking a landscape level ecosystem approach. It will focus manly on the rehabilitation of degraded mangrove and marshes and training of community members to undertake the activities.

Identification of the need of the project

Interest in the project site dates back to 2010 when there were concerns from local people who noticed that the mangrove patch was deteriorating especially after some development in the area, and hence wanted to take action to investigate the problems further, raise awareness amongst local communities, propose and implement management actions to remediate the problem. A project was implemented in 2010 by TRASS and funded by the Mangrove For the Future (MFF) to understand some of the issues particularly related to impacts of soil erosion and sediment deposition in the wetlands. Later, in 2014, alarm was raised by the community and TRASS because the mangrove dieback was persisting. Further investigation confirmed oil pollution of the mangrove from a nearby establishment. Actions were taken by the Department of Environment who requested the establishment to undertake the necessary measures to mitigate the impacts. TRASS did a monitoring of the mangrove to advise on rehabilitation of the a"ected mangroves and the Seychelles National Park Authority implemented some rehabilitation activities. Thereafter follow-up activities were discontinued. To date the site is not being maintained and there is a need to rehabilitate the mangroves together with the associated freshwater marsh, rivers and beach crest.

During the implementation of the GEF funded Ecosystem-based Adaptation through South-South cooperation (EbA-South, 2014-2019) it was recognised that invasive alien plant species (IAS) were posing a serious threat to the functioning and biodiversity of the Pasquière wetlands. The EbA-South project established IAS management as an e"ective tool to control IAS encroaching the wetland. IAS in wetlands were identified as important steps to enhance the functioning and health of ecosystems using a ridge-to reef, EbA approach. TRASS, being the only environmental NGO in the Seychelles focussing entirely on the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems, is thus committed to the rehabilitation and conservation of the ecosystems at Pasquière, Praslin.

Justification for project

There are several problems in the area which include the loss of wetlands in addition to soil erosion on degraded hills leading to sedimentation of critical wetlands downstream and the encroachment of these wetlands by invasive alien plant species, which reduces the ability of these wetlands to provide important ecosystem services. Praslin Island su"ered numerous forest fires. In the absence of rehabilitation, these burnt forests are subjected to severe degradation and red sediment-laden water is a common sight during rainfall events. Sediments are deposited into the wetlands or directly into the sea where they have other impacts such as reducing the water storage capacity, deposition of sediments into raised land, which facilitate IAS encroachment, silt deposition onto seagrasses and coral reefs that stresses these habitat-types. To date 40% of Praslin is degraded and 90% of lowland wetlands in the Seychelles have been lost, making lowland wetlands the most threatened and critical habitats.

The project addresses the degradation of critical coastal habitats at Pasquière adjacent to and within the Curieuse Marine National Park. A ridge to reef, landscape level approach is taken as a general vision to address the impacts of soil erosion, encroachment by invasive plant species etc onto important ecosystems. There is a need to rehabilitate the degraded foothills using anti-erosion measures to reduce erosion, bioengineering techniques and replanting to stabilise the slopes, removal of invasive alien plants (IAS) and replacement with appropriate wetland/coastal species, profiling of channels to enhance hydrological flows and a general improvement of the wetland to enhance its biodiversity and sustainable use e.g. eco- tourism. The rehabilitation and management of degraded hills and marsh will be done under another project founded by WIOSAP but the rehabilitation and management of the degraded mangroves and marshes next to the mangroves will be done under the Seyccat project by working together with communities, organisations and local government to encourage and ensure local community participation in rehabilitation e"orts during and beyond the project.

Furthermore, there are several benefits that will come from the rehabilitation of the mangrove and marshes. Wetlands are considered as the kidneys of the landscape for the biogeochemical and hydrologic functions that they provide. They prevent floods, cleans waters, protect shorelines and recharge aquifers. Wetlands provide haven for a wide variety of flora and fauna and o"er a unique habitat for many rare, endangered species as well as migrants. Situated in the Marine Park, means that the project will enhance the value of the park.

The project will provide training to interested participants and will equip participants with the skills needed to contribute to the implementation of activities during and beyond the project lifespan. The project will valorise and demonstrate the use of landscape-level, EbA approaches to ecological coastal rehabilitation, to guide replication in other areas.

Relevance to national and international strategies

On the national level, the project is directly relevant to the Seychelles Wetland Policy and Action Plan 2018-2022. The mission is ‘The conservation and sustainable use of wetlands as a fundamental contribution to Seychelles’ Sustainable Development’. The policy states that grass roots, non-governmental and private sector agencies should be encouraged to participate in and lead actions in this plan. The project meets the objectives under the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2020

(SSDS) which is a tool to adhere to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework for Climate Change (UNFCC) and the United Nation Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The SSDS emphasises the need for the country to become a knowledge-based society and to manage its natural resources in a sustainable manner. SSDS clearly states that endemic and rare species will continue to be threatened by natural and human related hazards such as environmental degradation from development, the spread of alien invasive species, land use change and e"ects of climate change. The strategy supports the rehabilitation of key degraded habitats through the use of the ecosystem approach. The Seychelles National Climate Change Strategy support the role and involvement of NGO’s, CBO’s and other organizations, including e"orts to build capacity in those institutions to manage our environment. It is thus envisaged that this project will be instrumental in building the capacity of TRASS and other participating bodies.

This proposal is also in line with the Seychelles Plant Conservation agenda 2007- 2015 and the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Additionally, this proposal makes reference to the Water Policy, which advocates for appropriate measures to rehabilitate, sustainably manage and protect catchment forests. It further states that forests should be rehabilitated by native species and managed sustainably to deliver multiple benefits for communities. Through close collaboration with the recently established EbA Watershed Praslin Committee, it is expected that more attention is given to the matter and that both groups support each other to highlight the importance of forest rehabilitation and water catchment issues.

In view of the fact that the sites included in this project is partially located in the Marine National Park, the project draws parallel to the specific objectives of the Protected Areas Policy which encourages the provision for the restoration of degraded habitats and ecosystems of historical important biodiversity areas The project is also in line with the Seychelles MFF Country Strategy and Action Plan in terms of ‘Improving the Knowledge Base for Coastal Planning, Policy and Management; Providing Decision Support for “Reef to Ridge” Approaches to Land and Resource Management; Promoting Adaptive Coastal Management Programmes that include ongoing Ecological and Socio-economic Assessment and Monitoring.

The project is also in line with the Wester Indian Ocean Strategic Action Plan (WIO-SAP): Sustainable management of critical habitats. Outcome A1: Appropriate tools and methodologies are used to manage critical coastal and marine habitats in order to enhance their resilience and long-term sustainability, and the 3 Rio Conventions.

SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICATION

TRASS has the mandate to restore degraded land and has since its creation in 2009 implemented a dozen project with active community participation through donor funding. TRASS will continue to seek further donor funding to sustain the project. The involvement of the communities since its creation has ensured continuous implementation of activities even in the absence of donor funds. These activities were and are being sustained through frequent voluntary works (as often as once a week in some cases). TRASS reputation and success with engaging communities in its programmes has lead to its success and this will surely continue to ensure the sustainability of the project in the long-term. Secondly, this project will be beneficial to SNPA whose sta" will benefit with skills development and hence will be able to support rehabilitation activities beyond the life of the project. This project will be supported by the upcoming Ridge to Reef project funded by GEF, which foresees the implementation of similar actions in the project area

I have read the exclusion list 

Checklist

 Have you read the Application Guidelines?

 Have you read the environmental and social safeguards policy?

 Have you referred to the glossary for explanations of di"erent terms used in the proposal application form?

 Have you used the correct Template for Stage II / Large Grant proposals?

 Have you checked the deadline time and date for the submission of the project?

 Have you indicated the correct SeyCCAT strategic objective for this call?

 Have you included a CV’s for all the key project personnel?

 Have you included a letter of support from the main partner organizations identified on the cover page?

 Have you provided actual start and end dates for your project (and checked they synchronize with when SeyCCAT would make grant monies available)?

 Have you provided actual start and end dates for your project?

 If required following your Stage 1 feedback letter, have you prepared and submitted here your supplemental environmental safeguards instrument(s)?

 Have you provided your budget and used the correct template provided for large / stage II proposals?

 Have you checked that your budget is complete, correctly adds up and that you have included the correct final total on the top page of the application?

 If you are supported by co-finance - have you included the value of, and supporting organization for the co-finance, and indicated if it is cash or in kind?

 Have you included a supporting document from the co-finance organization to stipulate the amount / support provided in terms of cash or in kind?

 Have you checked the SeyCCAT website immediately prior to submission to ensure there are no late updates?

I confirm I am eligible to apply for the 

Blue Grants Fund.