

Building the capacity of artisanal shark fishers to participate fully and effectively in the Seychelles National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks



Artisanal shark fisher, Seychelles © MFF Seychelles

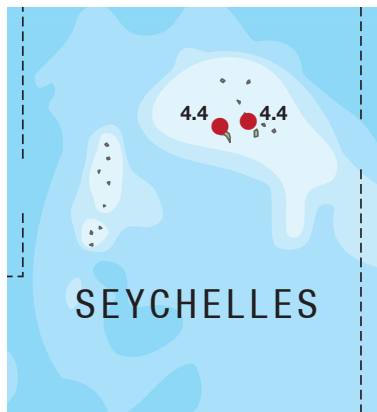
the shark catch, but that their lack of capacity poses an obstacle to implementing the plan successfully. This project was launched to remedy this deficiency and engage the ASF in achieving the NPOA's goals.

Target beneficiaries

Artisanal Shark Fishers (ASF), the Artisanal Shark Fisher's Association (ASFA), and the NPOA steering committee.

Outputs

- ▶ Formation and registration of the ASFA to facilitate information sharing and full ASF representation on the NPOA steering committee.
- ▶ Development of a Creole language shark identification key and a standardized shark catch data form.
- ▶ Purchase and distribution of data collection equipment to ASF. The resulting data are compiled and managed by fishery authorities.
- ▶ Media coverage of the project, as well as the NPOA and MFF.
- ▶ Enhanced public awareness of the important ecological role played by sharks through media coverage, posters and pamphlets.



LOCATION

Central Archipelago, Seychelles

PRIORITY POWS

- Knowledge for Management
- Civil Society Engagement
- Coastal Governance

DURATION

Fifteen months beginning in July 2009. Activities were temporarily halted after the GIF general manager resigned in October 2009 but resumed in May 2010. The project ended in May 2011.

MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$7,165

Objectives

This Green Islands Foundation (GIF) project aimed to support implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (NPOA) by building the capacity of Artisanal Shark Fishers (ASF) to fulfil their role under the plan, thereby safeguarding their livelihoods and ensuring a healthy and productive coastal ecosystem for the broader artisanal fishery industry, local dive operators and other stakeholders. The project also sought to enlist the cooperation of ASF in gathering shark catch data, and to promote public awareness of the ecological importance of sharks and wise use of marine resources.

Background

A healthy shark population in the 32,000 km² expanse of the Seychelles mid-oceanic plateau is central to maintaining a balanced and productive coastal ecosystem that benefits all stakeholders, both consumptive and non-consumptive. To this end, the government of the Seychelles launched the NPOA in 2007 to ensure sustainable fishing practices. The NPOA recognises that ASF play a key role in

Accomplishments and challenges

The ASF are now equipped to collect catch data essential for informed shark stock management, and have a formal presence in the NPOA enabling them to voice their opinions and concerns.

Over time, trust was built between the project and ASF, who played a role themselves in developing the project. This collaborative approach reassured them that their interests would be represented and that

they would be an integral part of any marine resources management plan.

Challenges

The main challenge was the resignation of the GIF's general manager to take up a full-time post with an international agency. He later agreed to resume his GIF work voluntarily.

Another challenge was that the creole shark identification key could not be completed within the project period. In some cases, fishers from different areas use different names for the same shark species, and it takes time to catalogue and reconcile these local variations.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Communications

An active blog (<http://greenislandsfoundation.blogspot.com>) published news of the project's progress. *The Nation* newspaper and national television in the Seychelles also covered the initiative. Educational posters focusing on sustainable shark management and shark facts were produced.

Gender equality

The ASF are exclusively male but support their families directly. In future, ASF spouses

will be involved in co-managing ASFA activities.

Climate change

The project contributed to maintaining an ecologically balanced and productive coastal ecosystem, which should in turn be more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Lessons learned

The project has shown how a small amount of seed money can be used to realize (and support further) national objectives. Project sustainability needs to be a priority. In this case, the ASFA is already forming partnerships with other agencies, is looking to secure funding, and is fully engaged with the NPOA.

Partners and their contribution

The Seychelles Fishing Authority and NPOA Steering Committee of the Seychelles government provided in-kind support. From civil society, the Praslin Fishers Association provided in-kind support and GIF provided administrative and logistical support. From the private sector, the Indian Ocean Lodge Hotel supplied discounted accommodation on Praslin Island. Mr John Nevill acted as volunteer project manager.



Shark fishers discussing project progress with GIF project manager, Mahé, Seychelles © MFF Seychelles

“The MFF project helped us to form an association so that we can work together to protect our fishing rights and use our knowledge to better manage our fishery.”

– CLIFFORD BAMBOCHE
THIRD-GENERATION ASF AND
MEMBER OF ASFA

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