

Case 14: MAURITIUS

Ebony Forest at Chamarel

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The Forest cover in Mauritius is about 47,159 Ha which represents nearly 25% of the total land area, out of which 22,159 Ha are state owned and the remaining 25,000 Ha are private forests. Our native forest covers only 2% of the forest land.

In Mauritius, the Community is not involved in Forest Management as there are no indigenous communities directly depending on forest resources such as in African countries.

However, the Mauritian Forestry Service would like to propose one Participatory Forest Management (PFM) project activities as below:

Ebony Forest at Chamarel

Ebony forest is a private property of about 38 Ha of forest land located on the slope of a mountain, commonly known as Piton Canot at Chamarel in the South West of Mauritius. The native forest was invaded by exotics such as *Psidium cattleianum* (commonly known as Chinese Guava) and other noxious growth thus decreasing the chance of regeneration capacity of indigenous species. Since 2006, the owner of the private forest has embarked on a restoration project by exterminating the exotic species and introducing the native ones. The Forestry Service and National Parks and Conservation Service under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro-Industry & Food Security is collaborating in the project related to biodiversity conservation whereby native plants are being issued free of charge to the private forest land owner as well as technical assistance for planting appropriate species on the mountain reserves and slopes. It is to be noted that no direct financial contribution on behalf of Government is involved and no local community is benefiting from the project. The project is also proposing for an Eco-tourism and related activities to raise funds to be used for conservation and restoration of the site.

In light of the above, in case these two mentioned proposals are favorably considered as PFM, the approval of Mauritian Government and the NGO and Private forest land owner need to be sought prior to submission as a case study for the proposed templates in the Regional PFM Guidelines. It is also suggested that the Expert Working Group could advise whether these two projects could be considered as PFM as no communities are involved in the management of the forest. Mauritius as a member state and part of the project could also improve and explore possibilities to involve communities or local people to get involved in these projects for a sustainable management of our forests.

