



INTEGRATING COASTAL COMMUNITIES IN THE CONSERVATION OF DUGONGS & SEAGRASS IN SAHAMALAZA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

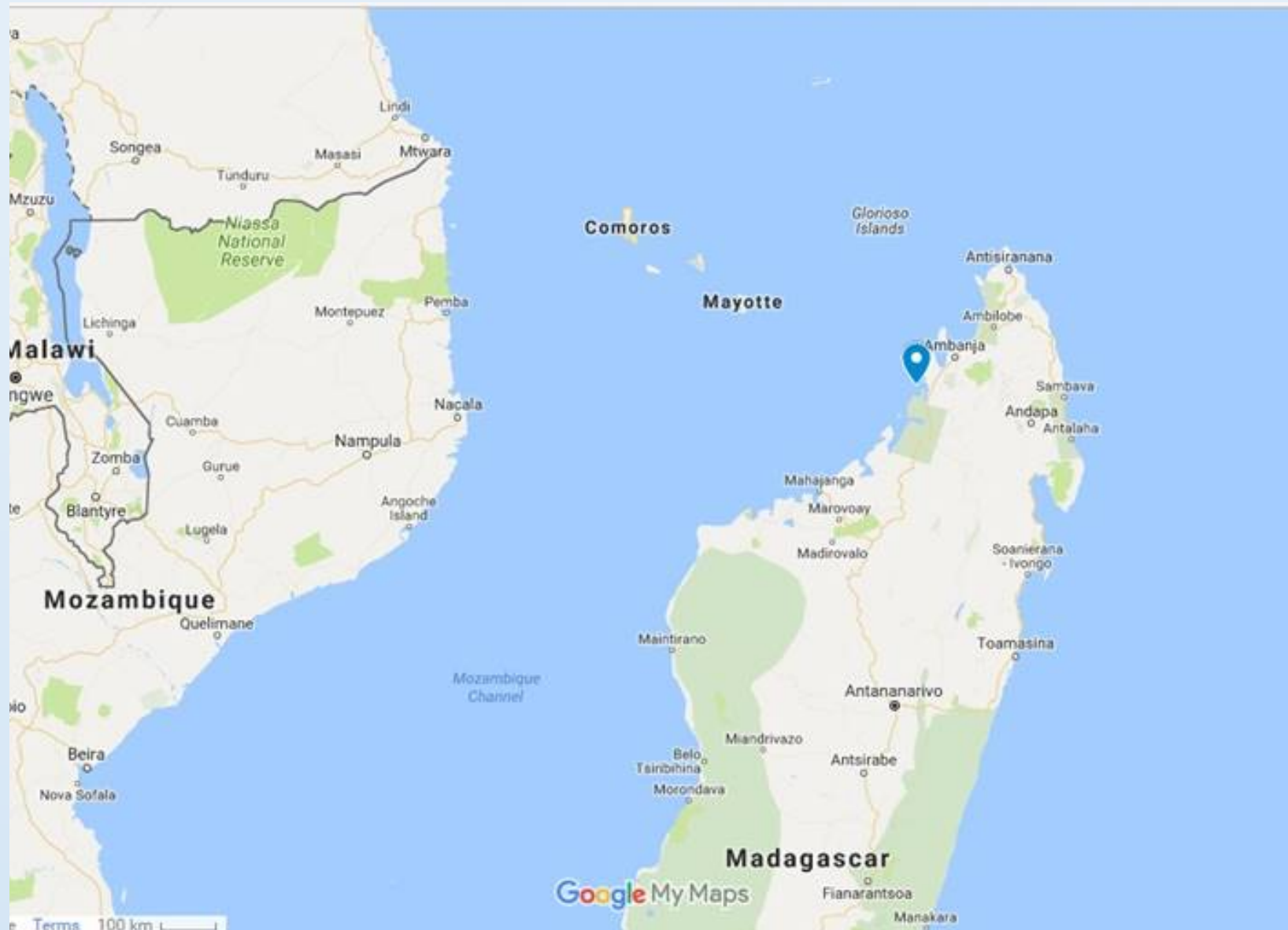
Isaia Raymond, Cosap Miaro Dugong Sahamalaza



Project Summary

The northwestern coastal zones where Sahamalaza Biosphere Reserve is located harbor the highest number of dugongs in Madagascar. Intensive hunting of dugongs had occurred in this site inhabited by important dugong population in the past. However, the lack of data on dugong population is compounded with the lack of public education and community-based awareness projects.

MG4 project is intended to enhance the conservation of dugong and seagrass through integrated approaches. It is implemented at 14 new coastal fishing villages where resource-dependent migrant communities from other coastal Regions have settled. Coastal communities and key stakeholders are actively involved in dugong and seagrass conservation through development of governance structures, establishment of participative monitoring and capacity building toward renewable marine resource management, development of public raising awareness program.



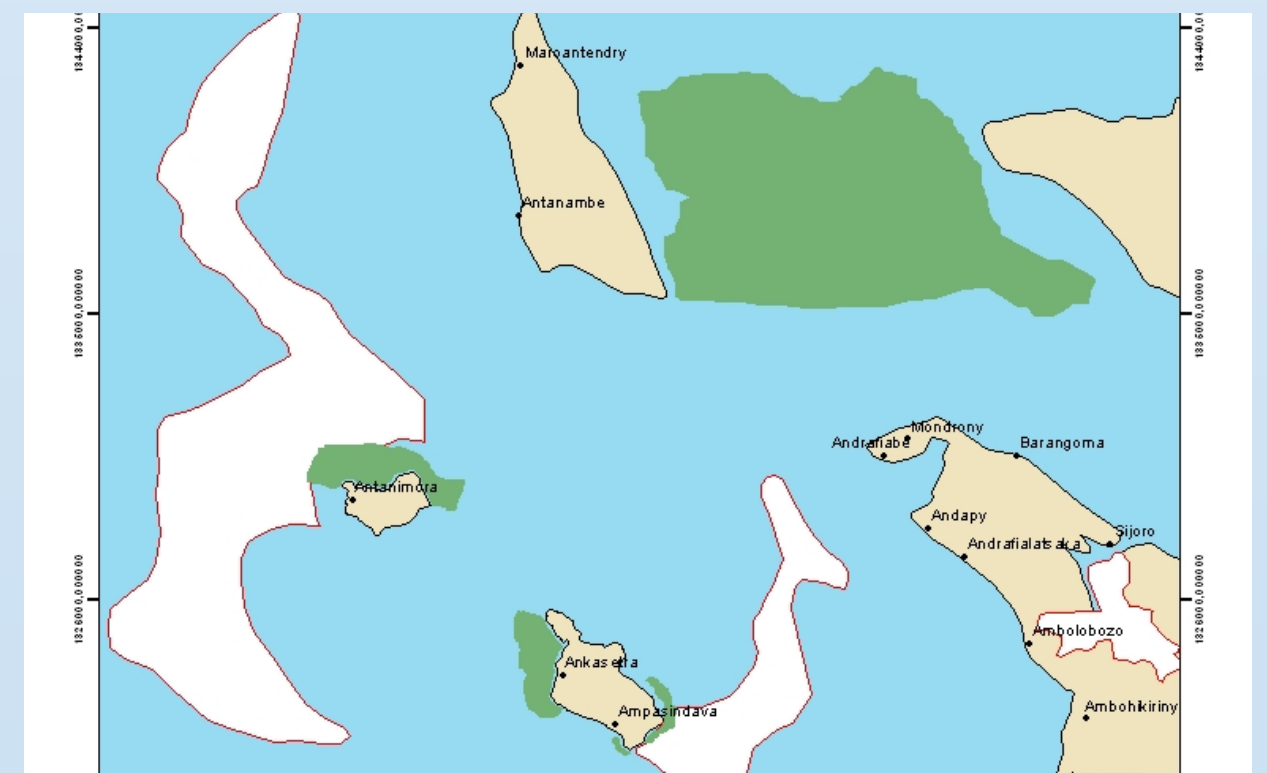
Main Activities

The following proposed activities should offer increased protection of dugongs and seagrass ecosystem:

- ✓ Establishing governance structures for managing the renewable natural resources through the establishment of local conventions at sites level ;
- ✓ Identifying knowledge gap on dugong and seagrass;
- ✓ Conducting community-based monitoring of dugongs and seagrass;
- ✓ Enhancing the source of funds identified by the coastal communities to support them who have limited access to alternative funding sources ;
- ✓ Combining these conservation initiatives to conservation-oriented public education and community-based awareness projects for enhancing the level of involvement of coastal communities towards sustainable practice.

Results

1. Establishment of 10 governance structures having their own local management convention - “Dina”;
2. Identification of dugong hotspots in Sahamalaza area (off Ambatobe, Nosy Valiha and Nosy Berafia) and preliminary assessment of seagrass status;
3. Observations of dugongs during monthly dugong monitoring (March – December 2016);
4. Celebration of the first edition of dugong festival in Berafia;



Seagrass repartition after collecting ground-truth data



Agriculture, common source of incentive identified by the community members



Members of Governance structure of Lanamena



Dugong mascot during the festival in Berafia



Traditional dance performed by women association during dugong festival

Next Steps & Lessons Learned

1. Establishing the four last governance structures;
2. Conducting the community-based monitoring of dugong and seagrass;
3. Working with local schools for developing environmental education;
4. Following up the production of thematic radio campaign;
5. Identifying and Developing incentives program;

The significant integration of local community members could be explained by the common decisions made about the project.

About Our Organization

COSAP is an existing platform of co-management of National Parks and Reserves with the integration of local communities. Its role is to guard systems of good governance concerning the sustainable utilization of resources by all partners. COSAP Sahamalaza has been involved in the co-management of Sahamalaza National Park since 2008. 68% of its members are from local management structure – the Local committee of the Park (CLP) and the other members are either local elected administrative authorities or economic operators.

