



BLUE FOREST FINANCE

Financing the protection
and restoration of blue
forests and meadows

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Voluntary carbon markets: *Tahiry Honko*, community-led mangrove conservation and restoration

Madagascar has experienced some of the highest rates of mangrove deforestation in recent decades, largely to supply food, building materials and cooking fuel for poor rural communities. The not-for-profit Blue Ventures has been deeply involved in efforts to restore mangroves, through a suite of activities that include not just reforestation, but also development of alternative sources of fuel and livelihoods to allow communities to transition to more sustainable use of their coastal ecosystems. In the south-west of Madagascar, the *Tahiry Honko* project (meaning ‘preserving mangroves’ in the language of the Vezo who live there), located in the Velondriake Locally Managed Marine Area (LMMA), involves conservation and reforestation of over 1,200 hectares of mangroves. Around 200 consultations and workshops have been held with the 10 villages since the first one in 2014, culminating in the certification of 1,371 tCO₂-e in June 2020. These credits are verified according to the Plan Vivo Standard.

To get to the milestone of certification, multiple steps needed to be completed. These steps included collection of the data needed to quantify carbon mitigation, and approval of several formal documents, including a Project Idea Note (in 2015) and Project Design Document (in 2019). All this effort takes money, and it can take time for the income received from selling the certificates to cover those expenses. Like many such projects, this has been possible in *Tahiry Honko* because of grants provided by other not-for-profit organisations and governments.



The local people are formally represented in this process by the Velondriake Association, which is comprised of individuals elected from 33 villages located within the LMMA (2 to 4 per village, depending on the size of the village). The association plays a variety of roles including helping local communities to demonstrate rights to the carbon, approving the benefit sharing arrangements and managing and disbursing the communities' share of financial benefits. Annual revenue from sale of the credits is primarily (80%) allocated to support continuation of activities on the ground that result in emissions reductions (such as forest patrols, mangrove reforestation, and establishment of alternative fuelwood plantations) and activities that aim to improve the lives of people in the communities (such as subsidised school fees for all village children within the project area or building schools where there are none). Of the remainder, 20% goes to the Government of Madagascar, to finance the activities related to the governance of the REDD+ which are ensured by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development through the Bureau National des Changements Climatiques, et de la REDD+ (National Bureau of Climate Change, Carbon and REDD+).