

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a person in a blue outrigger canoe on the ocean. The person is seen from behind, paddling. The water is a deep blue-green, and the sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white clouds. In the distance, a low-lying coastline is visible. The overall mood is serene and active.

MIHARI

Mitantana Harena and Ranomasina avy eny Ifotony

Strategy

2022-2026

Situational analysis

MIHARI is a national network of Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs)¹ in Madagascar with over 200 communities in its membership. Since its establishment in 2012 its overall purpose has been to bring LMMAs leaders together in order for coastal communities to gain increased access to the management of marine resources. During this time, MIHARI has increasingly become an advocate for the rights of coastal communities as well as developing the capacity needed for LMMA leaders to become stewards of sustainable use of marine resources in their communities. MIHARI became a formally registered Malagasy association with a new governance structure in 2020.

The LMMA Context in Madagascar

Madagascar is the fifth largest island in the world and one of the most important biodiversity hotspots with more than 80% of land species endemic to the island. Madagascar's coastline has a variety of rich ecosystems including seagrass beds, coral reefs, and extensive mangroves stretching over 5,600 kms. The marine biodiversity of Malagasy waters is more diverse than any other country in the Western Indian Ocean, home to 159 species of fish, 66% of which are endemic to Madagascar.



The country is also one of the poorest in the world. Madagascar is ranked 164th out of 189 countries according to the Human Development Index. Coastal communities are heavily dependent on marine resources, with up to 500,000 coastal people depending on the ocean for their livelihoods. In some areas, such as the southwestern part of Madagascar, up to 99% of animal protein intake comes from fish, with small-scale fishing accounting for up to 82% of household income. 90% of Madagascar's fishermen live in or near mangroves, making coastal populations highly dependent on coastal resources. These are some of the highest fishery dependency rates in the world intertwined with chronic poverty which highlights the importance of good management and governance of coastal resources for food security and alternative livelihoods.

99%



OF ANIMAL PROTEIN INTAKE
COMES FROM FISH

82%



OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME COME
FROM ARTISANAL FISHING

90%



OF MADAGASCAR'S FISHERMEN
LIVE IN OR NEAR MANGROVES

Coastal resources have come under unprecedented pressure in recent years due to many interrelated pressures. First of all, Malagasy fisheries, whose small-scale fisheries account for about 72% of catches, have become integrated into international seafood markets, significantly augmenting pressure on previously subsistence fisheries. Secondly, Madagascar is experiencing a population boom. Half of the population is under twenty years old and the total population could double in the next fifteen years. In addition, there is a growing internal migration of people, mainly from the famine-stricken south of the island, who are travelling to coastal areas to benefit from coastal resources for food and shelter. Thirdly, the abundant sedimentation from rivers is increasingly impacting on the deterioration of marine habitats.

To address this decline, which was already evident in 2003², The Durban Vision was declared at the Fifth World Congress of National Parks, with the aim of increasing the spatial coverage of marine protected areas (MPAs) by fifty to address the decline of coastal resources. While these initiatives are highly commendable, they did not take into account the socio-economic and political realities of the country. Indeed, denying coastal communities access to their livelihoods is highly problematic and successive governments (especially since the 2009³ political crisis) have been too weak and corrupt to guarantee the rule of law required to manage such areas.

In response to these realities, NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Conservation International (CI), and Blue Ventures (BV) began to focus on grassroots communities as a solution to marine biodiversity decline. Inspired by the success of LMMAs emerging from Fiji, the first LMMA in Madagascar was set up in 2004 in the southwest with positive results. The concept developed rapidly, with a growing number of LMMAs. It became clear that community-based coastal management initiatives had the potential to fill the gaps of a weak state. In order for these emerging LMMAs to come together and share good local management practices, Madagascar once again looked to the Pacific to build on the LMMA Network initiative and create the MIHARI network.

MIHARI Background

MIHARI was born in 2012 and developed into a network of more than 200 LMMAs spreading across every coastal region of Madagascar. This quick growth was due to several factors. Firstly, MIHARI responded to the intrinsic and empowering value of people meeting together to share experiences. For the first time, MIHARI offered an equal platform where fisherfolk were able to raise their voice to decision-makers invited to meetings. Secondly, NGOs already had a culture of collaboration and trust. Indeed, an informal 'Tana Marine Group' was set up with NGOs such as Blue Ventures (BV), Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Conservation International (CI) to meet on a regular basis in an initial attempt to coordinate LMMA activities in the field. This was the first stepping-stone towards the MIHARI we know today. Additionally the funding landscape was (and still is) favorable to the development of LMMAs, allowing NGOs to support capacity development initiatives at the local level. Lastly, MIHARI was established thanks to a backbone of strong and committed leaders working within supporting NGOs that housed MIHARI operations, financial management and fundraising.

As the network has grown, MIHARI's organizational and governance structure has evolved in order to remain responsive to the needs of the LMMA communities and

to foster increasing advocacy work at the government level. Within a few years, MIHARI's team has grown from a single person to an executive secretariat composed of about 15 people, including field staff. After considerable capacity building efforts for LMMA leaders, part of MIHARI's governance structure is now made up of community representatives who are frequently consulted on advocacy issues and strategy. The recent formalization of MIHARI into an associative structure will allow it to have a more flexible and responsive internal governance system⁴.

The MIHARI network has become the go-to organization to support community-based marine resource management and defend the rights of coastal communities in Madagascar. In 2018, MIHARI successfully countered the agreements reached by the government with China to bring 330 fishing vessels into Malagasy waters. The network also negotiated the signing of a decree appointing a joint commission dedicated to coastal fisheries zoning in order to solve conflicts between industrial and small-scale fishermen. Thus, the current board president, and former founding coordinator of MIHARI, Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy, won the prestigious Whitley Award in 2019, bringing the network into the global arena of marine conservation.

MIHARI is also a network in a phase of important evolution and transition. MIHARI became an autonomous Malagasy association in October 2020, which gives it the necessary legal foundation to engage in the lobbying and advocacy work it has become known for⁵. However, in breaking away from supporting NGOs, MIHARI faces many organizational challenges which will be explored below. The coming years will be crucial for the network to maintain its relevance and influence.



Methods Used to Feed this Situational Analysis

Two main methods were used to collect the data for this situational analysis.



1

23 national and international stakeholders were interviewed in a semi-structured interview format. The sample included a balance between national and international NGOs, donors, projects, government officials, representatives of MIHARI's National Bureau, and its executive secretariat.



2

Field surveys were also conducted in twelve LMMAs covering three of the five zones where MIHARI works⁶. The sample was designed to include people directly involved in LMMA governance and people from the general public of coastal communities. Focus groups of eight people each were then triangulated in anonymous surveys to balance power dynamics within the focus groups. The research was designed to understand challenges and barriers for LMMA management and gauge perceptions of empowerment.



MIHARI's Organizational Strengths and Successes



ADVOCACY AND RAISING THE VOICE OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES

MIHARI is the first Malagasy organization to advocate for the rights of coastal people, achieving unprecedented results while operating in a challenging environment. MIHARI has prioritized two main areas of ongoing advocacy work, while remaining flexible in responding to volatile political decisions. The first advocacy issue is the legal recognition of LMMAs, aimed at giving local communities the right to responsibly manage coastal resources. Currently, coastal communities rely on legal regimes and legal texts that are often difficult to access by the general public, that are overlapping, and that do not guarantee the legal recognition necessary for communities to carry out local management. An LMMA commission was therefore created to draft a motion for the legalization of LMMAs. This legalization gave rise to an inter-ministerial discussion in late 2020.

The second major part of the advocacy work is based on three motions proposed by coastal communities at a national MIHARI forum in 2017. These urge the Malagasy government to consider i) simplifying the legal recognition of the Dina, the local customary law used (among others) to govern LMMAs², ii) the legal recognition of inshore fishing zones for small-scale fishers, and, iii) the abolition of destructive fishing gears. One of MIHARI's major achievements following the forum was to facilitate a dialogue between a consortium of industrial shrimp fishers and small-scale fishers. A decree was subsequently issued by the Ministry of Fisheries in 2018, announcing the creation of a joint commission to implement the zoning measures necessary to end conflicts between fisheries. MIHARI has also taken initial actions for Motion 2 by collaborating with the Population Health and Environment Network to solve the problem of mosquito nets used as fishing gears, resulting in highly destructive consequences.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES THROUGH NETWORKING

Since the development of MIHARI, LMMA communities in extremely remote areas of Madagascar have been able to meet on a regular basis to exchange ideas on coastal management. Before that, fishermen had never had the opportunity to collectively address high-level decision-makers. These interactions appear to have had an intrinsic effect of empowering LMMA leaders, resulting in the above-mentioned motions. According to the survey conducted for this study, LMMA leaders are now three times more likely than other villagers to feel that they know their rights and can be agents of change. This is directly related to their relationship with the MIHARI network and their increased LMMA management skills.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR BETTER LMMA MANAGEMENT

Capacity building for LMMAs is at the heart of MIHARI's work. LMMA representatives made it clear from the beginning, during the forums held from 2012 onwards, that they would need increased skills to ensure LMMA success. Training in priority areas such as association management, alternative livelihood development projects, legal rights and responsibilities, and conflict management were identified and delivered. Through a total of 17 different trainings, LMMA representatives have increased their knowledge, know their rights, and feel empowered to lead change. As the elected president of the National bureau says, "Since I was elected, my advocacy skills have been strengthened. As a result, we have been able to take the grievances of LMMA communities to decision-makers, in particular on the price of products, the illegal exploitation of resources by industrial fisheries, and migration."

In October 2020, MIHARI also launched a two-year leadership program for fisherwomen in order to increase women's representation and participation in LMMA governance and management as well as in the MIHARI network.

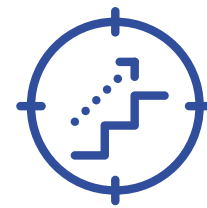
SCALING UP AND GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCE

The MIHARI network has grown exponentially as a result of peer-to-peer exchange visits demonstrating the benefits of LMMAs, and through the above-mentioned meetings and forums. Geographic expansion, combined with advances in advocacy, has made MIHARI an important strategic partner for organizations from all sectors in the field of coastal resources. This has been especially true for local NGOs that support LMMAs. They see MIHARI as an important platform for dialogue between the grassroots and state institutions. One of the member organizations said, "We strongly believe in the network. The local and the national must work together. Our organization would be weaker without MIHARI". The success of MIHARI is also seen as a model to be replicated on a regional scale. Its influence will expand through the creation of the WIOMPAN (Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Network), launched by WIOMSA, which will begin in the second half of 2021 and encompass ten countries in the region.

COMMUNICATIONS

Like most successful networks, MIHARI has been a great communicator. It has a regularly updated website and brochure that is distributed to stakeholders. Newsletters are shared with partners twice a year, and MIHARI has been very proactive internally, sending weekly updates to its members to ensure inclusion and participation. MIHARI is also active on social media with approximately one Tweet per day and weekly Facebook posts that are well liked and shared. The network also uses YouTube and other social media for communications to a lay audience. MIHARI is currently piloting radio broadcasts covering 32 LMMAs that are proving to be successful. Recent feedback from LMMAs suggests that many more coastal communities are aware of MIHARI's work and that outreach through regular radio shows is effective. MIHARI has a communication strategy, knows its different audiences, and knows where it needs to improve.

MIHARI's Challenges and Weaknesses



AUTONOMY PRESENTS RISKS TO LEADERSHIP AND OPERATIONS

While most respondents who were interviewed for this study found that autonomy presented one of MIHARI's biggest opportunities, they all agreed that this is one of its biggest risks. The transfer of operations and leadership from strong and established NGO structures to a fully independent one will have to be addressed quickly and thoroughly without compromising delivery of its mission to its stakeholders.

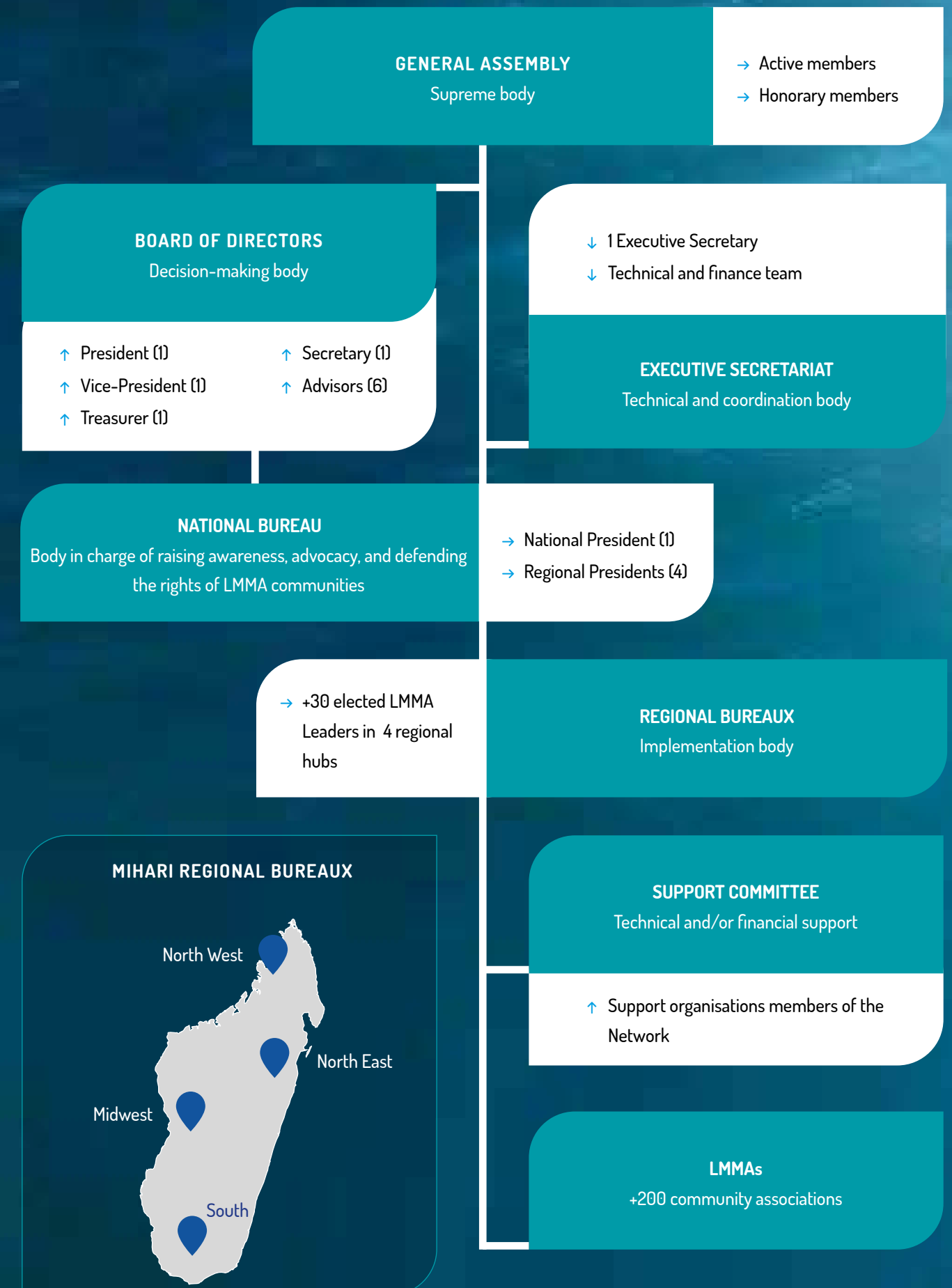
The priority is to put in place an adequate financial system so that the supporting NGOs can gradually transfer their funds for MIHARI activities to the network. The same will apply to human resources, and MIHARI will have to develop its own procedures in line with Malagasy labor law. Additionally, MIHARI will need to urgently build a management team with the necessary skills to implement these operational frameworks and pursue fundraising essential to MIHARI's mission.

A NEW TRANSITIONAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

In order to achieve autonomy and become a national organisation, MIHARI became a legally recognised association in October 2020. The general assembly is the supreme authority of the association. It is composed of honorary members with a consultative voice for technical and financial matters and active members (LMMA representatives) eligible to sit on the board. At present the board is a 'transitional board' composed of a team of five external experts and five LMMA representatives. This is a transitional board that was set up with a mandate to ensure a strategically sound and operationally robust transition with the assistance of the executive secretariat, but it has several weaknesses:

- The tenure period of the current board is not entirely clear to all stakeholders.
- Roles and responsibilities between the executive secretariat and the board will have to be ironed out in terms of financial management and fundraising in order for the network to operate smoothly.
- The status of the NGOs previously involved in the governance of MIHARI has yet to be clarified.
- The MIHARI network is a complex and sophisticated structure that requires technical skills for its good management and governance. It is important that the General Assembly recognizes this, pays attention to it, and builds its capacity in this regard.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE MIHARI NETWORK



AN AMBIGUOUS ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

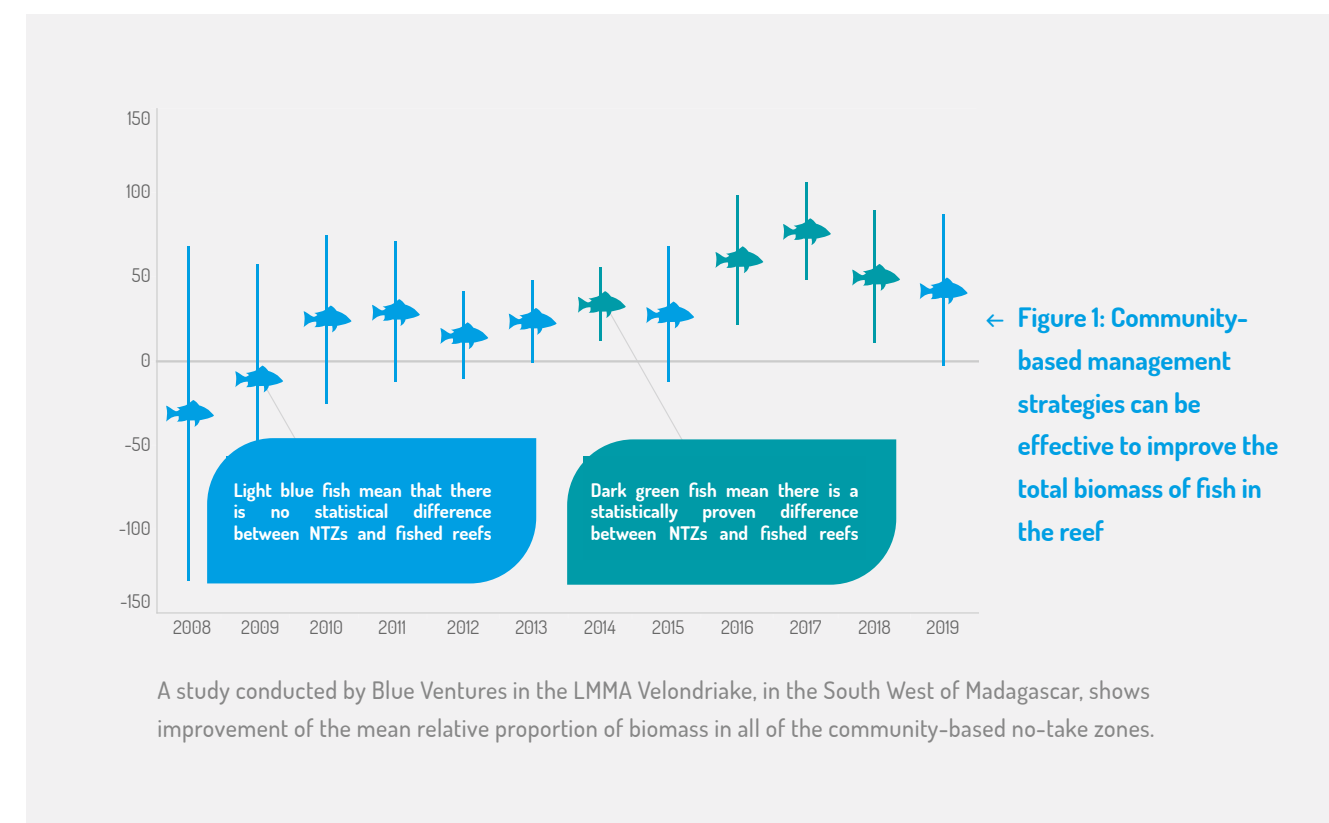
Most staff in the executive secretariat, some partner NGOs and a donor shared that they struggle to understand what beneficiaries and natural resources MIHARI is targeting. While MIHARI has long been vocal about its support to small-scale fisheries, this has caused an identity issue. An interviewee said, “MIHARI fundraises for LMMAs but in its communication with coastal communities it speaks about small-scale fishers. This creates confusion in the field between LMMAs and fisher associations. MIHARI needs to clarify what LMMAs do and who they represent.” That clarification will be even more important with more exclusive funding towards the creation of artisanal and traditional fishers’ associations coming⁸.

Ninety percent of communities in MIHARI’s focal field sites think that fisheries are in decline (Maliasili, 2020). Generally LMMAs are not just made up of fisheries but are composed of several different marine resources such as mangrove, reefs and seagrass beds which offer different livelihood opportunities to a variety of people (including women who are often excluded when speaking about fisheries). Many LMMAs and their supporting NGOs have been responding to these ecological realities through integrated activities for some time. Furthermore, during the course of MIHARI’s strategic planning process, a meeting was held and stakeholders decided that MIHARI’s LMMA beneficiaries would be named LMMA communities. This has yet to be simply and effectively communicated by MIHARI.

LIMITED PROOF OF CONSERVATION IMPACT

MIHARI is working in a highly data-deficient context in terms of coastal resources⁹. To counter this problem, MIHARI set up a database aimed at centralizing the main characteristics of LMMAs, including the total surface areas and the main target species of fisheries and their governance mechanisms. Some NGOs have published evidence that LMMAs increased fish biomass in no-take-zones, and there is emerging anecdotal evidence that LMMAs that have obtained a TGRN (Transfert de Gestion des Ressources Naturelles¹⁰) are having a positive impact on mangroves in the northwest. Yet many NGOs supporting LMMAs don’t have the funds required to run expensive environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) programmes, and others have issues regarding intellectual data. Additionally, there is a lack of harmony between NGO indicators and data collection methods adding further complications in the development of a robust MEL framework.

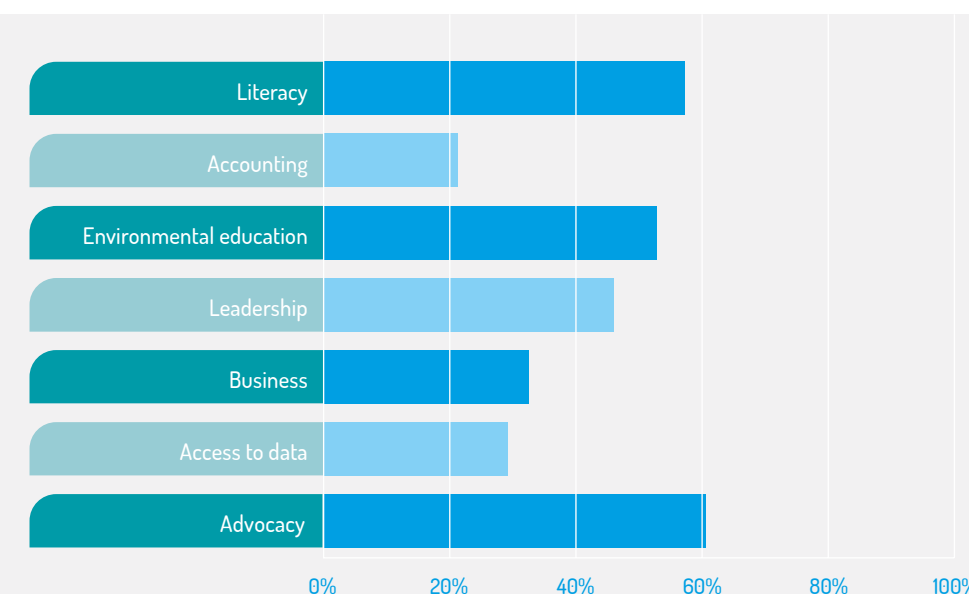
A manual for monitoring, evaluation, and learning for LMMA environmental impact measures is in the early stages of design but has yet to be developed and disseminated by MIHARI. Increased coordination among stakeholders to gather data will be crucial to prove the impact of LMMAs on marine ecosystems, whether in terms of increased biomass or biodiversity.



LOW CAPACITY OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES TO MANAGE LMMAS

Coastal communities in Madagascar face various challenges, making the management of LMMAs difficult. Maliasili field research confirmed that illiteracy is perceived as the main challenge for coastal communities, making it extremely difficult for people to engage in regional/national level grievance mechanisms and/or understand data to engage in adaptive management. The only literate people in villages are often selected for positions of power in LMMAs but are not necessarily equipped with the leadership skills required to manage them.

→ Figure 2 : Most important competencies for LMMA management identified by local communities





Opportunities

A BROADER FUNDING BASE THROUGH ORGANIZATIONAL AUTONOMY

By becoming autonomous in 2020, MIHARI is now able to play an important role in lobbying and advocacy, which international NGOs are not legally allowed to do. Furthermore, by becoming independent of international NGOs, funders have mentioned that MIHARI will also be able to access funding that is earmarked for coastal projects in Madagascar that it couldn't otherwise access by remaining tied to the administration of international NGOs.

MOTIVATED STAKEHOLDERS

Many stakeholders are very willing to invest time and money in MIHARI. Donors and coastal management projects in Madagascar see MIHARI as an extremely effective approach to achieving marine resource protection goals. Local NGOs also see MIHARI as an important partner that has the potential to strengthen their actions through the network by lobbying for common causes and building partnerships beyond their usual reach. "MIHARI is one of the only networks in Madagascar dedicated to putting the voice of communities forward and actively promoting peer learning." In the future, these organizations also hope that MIHARI will manage small grants to support their on-site work. Expectations are high. Driven by this enthusiasm, expressed through stakeholders' needs, MIHARI has great potential to strengthen its impact.



↑ Stakeholders making decisions together

Another capacity barrier identified by the communities in the research was the lack of social cohesion in villages which is known to be one of the key factors needed to manage common property resources. Indeed practitioners working on the ground have found that villagers find it very difficult to enforce their own by-laws intended to manage LMMA sustainably because of complex power dynamics in villages and extended family relations.

Furthermore, communities are often extremely isolated and have very few alternative livelihoods and/or investment opportunities to add value to their production, especially for seafood. Fishers often do not have access to their own tools of production and depend heavily on collectors to get products out of enclaved areas as soon as possible. This dependency makes it difficult for communities to negotiate how resources should be managed and at what price. Financial incentives for sustainable management of coastal resources are scarce, which poses a further challenge for LMMA.



External Threats

WEAK GOVERNANCE AT THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

According to a majority of respondents, the general political context in Madagascar is difficult for work in the field of sustainable resource management. Changes in government are very frequent, and the legal framework for coastal resource management is opaque. This lack of clarity is compounded by the lack of law enforcement. Monitoring, control, and surveillance units are ill-equipped and linked to fragile institutions where opportunities for personal gain trump public good. Fostering the decentralization of power required to encourage local resource management becomes extremely complex in this context. Thus, more than half of the LMMA communities consulted during our situational analysis feel disconnected from the state and are unaware of their rights and responsibilities. Added to this is the fact that there is a culture of open access to marine and coastal resources in Madagascar (unlike in the Pacific Islands where the LMMA concept initially took off), and it can be argued that communities lack informal institutions to control the access to marine resources.

GROWING DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

Growing demographic challenges are putting immense pressure on marine and coastal resources, with an exponentially growing population and an increase in the number of migrants coming from the hinterlands to exploit the already declining coastal resources. An LMMA leader explains that "migrants often do not respect the 'Dina' which negatively impacts the state of marine and coastal resources. This demotivates LMMA leaders and causes conflicts between them. State intervention is necessary to remedy this".

Recommendations



✓ The Need for Committed and Passionate Leadership

MIHARI has benefited from the support of a very strong group of world-class leaders in marine conservation in order to achieve its current success. Networks are notoriously hard to keep afloat, with leaders having to contend with multiple stakeholders with sometimes highly diverging agendas. This requires strong negotiation and communication skills in order to rally constituents and partners around a common, well-communicated mission. During this period of transition, it will be critical for MIHARI to equip itself with the human resources required to fill the gap which will be left by supporting NGOs.

✓ A Clearly Communicated Mission

MIHARI needs to clarify its mission in order to generate a common understanding and clear objectives and activities. As one interviewee put it 'MIHARI needs to do what it says on the tin'. Henceforth, this means that MIHARI assembles and federates LMMA communities and not specifically small-scale fishers. Of course, LMMAs are largely populated by small-scale fishers, however they also manage a full range of other coastal resources. While this decision was taken by members at a workshop, this crucial point will need ongoing, broad communication to avoid risks of further confusion.

✓ MIHARI Strengthens its Role as a Catalyst

The needs of coastal communities are vast, and many LMMAs are considered as "orphans" as they are not associated with a technical partner who could help them thrive and grow. The temptation for MIHARI to fill these gaps to support NGOs is obvious. But MIHARI is advised to remain a catalyst, which strengthens coastal communities through peer learning and develops methods to build the capacity needs of LMMA leaders through peer learning and capacity building of LMMA leaders rather than MIHARI moving into implementation at field level. The network will have to remain careful about not over-stepping its mandate with implementing NGOs and will have to make its intentions clear to funders.

✓ Communicating Tangible Impacts to Communities

It is strongly recommended that MIHARI build on the strength of the network to reach audiences in remote areas and stay connected to its beneficiaries as well as to its NGO partners and donors. There seems to be a considerable rift between the knowledge of LMMA leaders and village lay-persons concerning the rights and responsibilities accorded to LMMAs. Being innovative and exploring different ways to ensure LMMA leaders disseminate information to villagers will be an important aspect of MIHARI work moving forward. Feelings of empowerment that cannot be directly quantified in monetary terms are not necessarily viewed as useful by economically disadvantaged LMMA communities. It is thus important that MIHARI seeks to strengthen buy-in from beneficiaries to communicate how the network has a direct and positive impact on LMMA community members.

✓ Measuring the Impact of LMMAs

Working with partners in order to harmonise data collection is a priority for MIHARI. MIHARI should favour simple and low-cost approaches so communities can understand and participate in the MEL process. Data can be used by communities to inform advocacy campaigns to secure LMMA management rights as well as a tool for adaptive management. MIHARI will also need to invest in multidisciplinary expertise to analyse and communicate data for all stakeholders to understand LMMA impact over the long term.

Strategy

Value Proposition

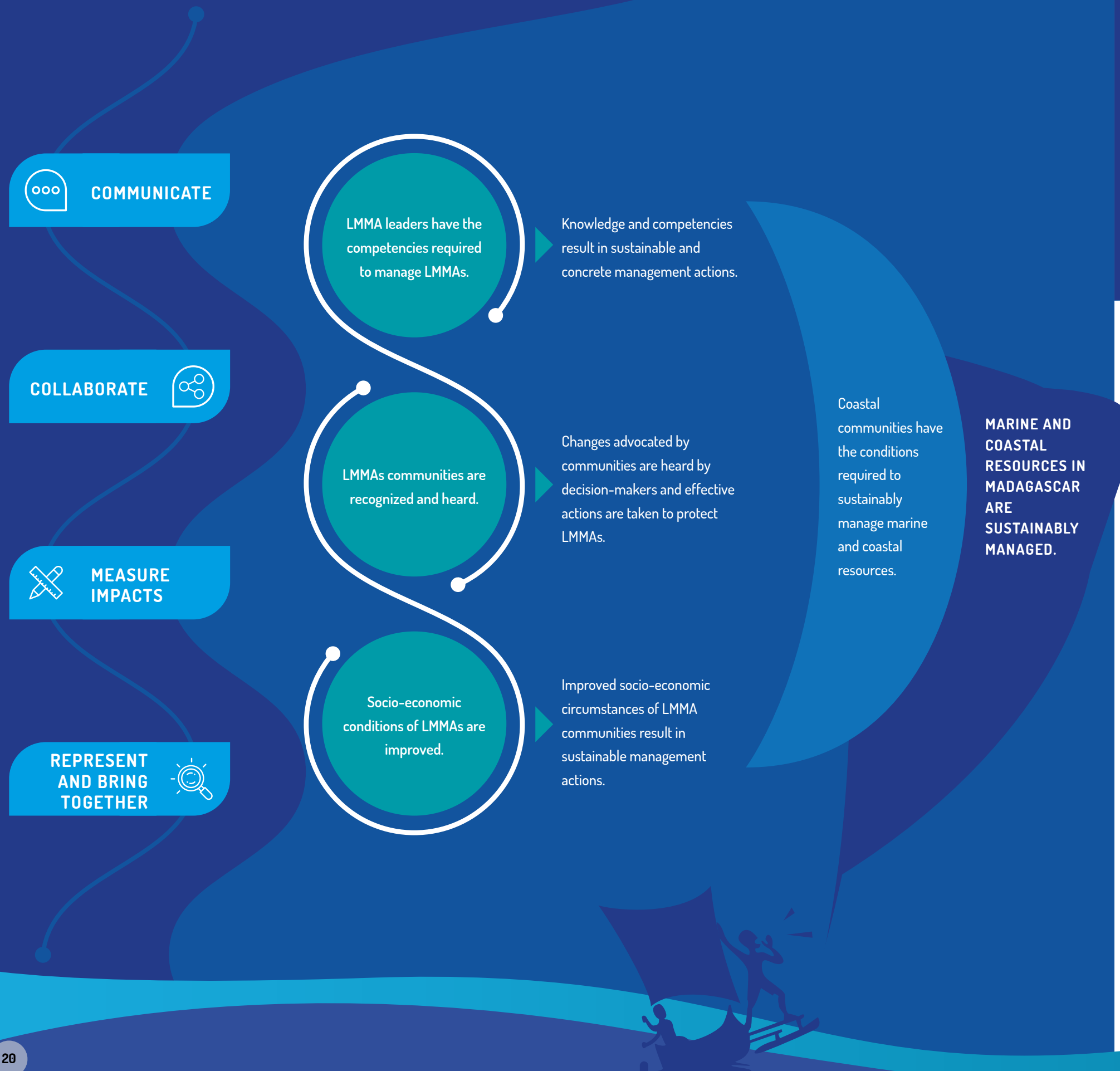
MIHARI is the only network of LMMA coastal communities in Madagascar with national influence while facilitating experience sharing and capacity building at the local level.

Problem Statement

Madagascar's marine and coastal resources are in decline, but the local coastal communities depending on them lack the capacity to manage them and are too far removed from central government to make their voices heard in order to bring about the effective required change.

Madagascar currently lacks technical, financial and human capacity for the proper management and governance of marine and coastal resources at the local, regional and national levels. This lack of capacity impacts on coastal communities who are poorly represented and too isolated to make their voices heard, in a national governance context that is ill-equipped to listen to local communities.

Theory of change



Vision

Marine and coastal resources are sustainably managed for the well-being of LMMA communities and their future generations.

Mission

To support the networking of LMMA communities for the long-term management of marine areas through capacity building, welfare enhancement, advocacy and effective sharing of experience.

Values

SOLIDARITY

Our goals are not easy to achieve. Solidarity within communities and among stakeholders gives us the strength, wisdom and thoughtfulness needed to properly manage marine and coastal resources.

SHARING

Sharing is intrinsic to the proper functioning of the network. Transparency, mutual aid, exchange of ideas and experiences ensure that we continue to innovate and be committed to the cause of LMMAs in Madagascar.

LEADERSHIP

The characteristics of good leadership are present in all aspects of the network's work. The network's leadership gathers LMMAs in Madagascar around a common vision and enables the members to make collaborative decisions based on well-communicated information.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is at the heart of MIHARI's identity. We are always looking for complementarity and synergy between MIHARI members in order to implement actions to carry out the work required for the development of LMMAs.

Five Main Thematic Priorities

Over the next five years, MIHARI will focus on the main thematic priorities below, which will then be broken down into objectives.

1

ADVOCACY

MIHARI network partners will engage in increased advocacy to:

- Adopt a legal framework to protect LMMAs and ensure access to legal texts is made easier.
- Encourage increased transparency in government decision-making in terms of marine and coastal resource extraction.

2

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

To address the lack of alternatives to marine and coastal resource extraction, MIHARI will work in coordination with partners to:

- Encourage the scaling up of successful and sustainable community investments projects.
- Communicate best practices for communities to benefit from sustainable and tangible economic development.

3

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

A collaborative monitoring, evaluation and learning system will be put in place to:

- Create low-cost data collection methods to develop an open database based on simple indicators.
- Communicate data to LMMA communities so they can engage in adaptive resource management.
- Use the data collected to better advocate for the rights of coastal communities.

4

CAPACITY BUILDING AND SOLIDARITY

In order for the above priorities to be achieved, MIHARI will build capacity and solidarity among LMMA community leaders and develop:

- Competency standards that will guide LMMA leaders in coastal resource management and governance.
- Learning methodologies to equip leaders to address these priority areas of intervention.
- Peer-to-peer learning to strengthen the links between LMMA communities that form the intrinsic strength of the network.

5

THE ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In order for MIHARI to evolve into a national and autonomous structure, an emphasis will be made on organizational development. There will be a specific focus placed on developing the following:

- Robust financial management and fundraising systems.
- Human resource policies that are adequate to the network.
- A governance system that is clear to all stakeholders.
- A communication strategy.



Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1:

ADVOCACY FOR THE RIGHTS OF LMMA COMMUNITIES

To advocate for the rights of LMMA communities and ensure their effective integration into the negotiation mechanisms for good local governance of marine and coastal resources.



THE RATIONALE:

At present there is no adequate legal framework for coastal communities to manage coastal and marine resources¹¹. This leaves communities exposed to opportunistic licensing of fisheries and other coastal resources. A legal framework is one of the essential components for communities to properly manage coastal resources. With technical support from the MIHARI Secretariat and related partners, LMMA leaders and especially the MIHARI National bureau will play a critical role in advocating for a clear and responsive legal framework for new government proposals related to marine and coastal resources.

- **Indicator 1** : Communities contribute to advocacy for the legal recognition of LMMAs.
- **Indicator 2** : Ministerial decrees reinforce the implementation of the three motions.

1. **Objective** : LMMAs obtain legal recognition through the establishment of an effective commission working to this effect.

- ✓ **Milestones:**
- Identify suitable organizations and individuals to resuscitate the existing LMMA committee to be effective.
 - Review existing LMMA text by the LMMA commission.
 - Provide tangible evidence of the environmental impact of LMMAs to the Malagasy government.

2. **Objective** : The three flagship motions of MIHARI listed below are used as an advocacy tool to support the legal recognition of LMMAs. The 3 motions are: i) Formalization and implementation of 'dina' in natural resource management; ii) Regulation of fishing gears and; iii) Creation of an exclusive community fishing right on the coastal strip.¹²

- ✓ **Milestones:**
- Renewed effective collaboration between the services responsible for fisheries monitoring services and the communities to implement the monitoring and control measures required to address the problem of destructive fishing gear.
 - Research results are presented to the government to highlight the problem of destructive fishing gear.
 - The roadmap initiated by the ministry responsible for fisheries for the implementation of a zoning for small scale fisheries is accelerated with the collaboration of MIHARI.

3. **Objective:** MIHARI is an essential partner for governmental decision making for the management of coastal resources.

- ✓ **Milestone:**
- MIHARI sets up a communication system in order to establish an effective dialogue between the governmental decision-makers and LMMA leaders.

4. **Objective:** MIHARI is an agile and flexible organization that provides tools to coastal communities to meet their advocacy needs.

- ✓ **Milestone:**
- In line with capacity building goal 5, LMMA leaders will be trained to respond rapidly to governmental decision-making that could adversely affect the sustainability of LMMA marine and coastal resources.

GOAL 2:

PROMOTE SOLIDARITY

To strengthen solidarity among LMMA managers to generate a common vision for the governance of marine and coastal resources at the local, national and international levels.



THE RATIONALE:

MIHARI's greatest successes have been rooted in MIHARI's ability to bring LMMA leaders together to speak out freely about their experiences as marine and coastal resource managers. These gatherings have helped to identify and apply one of the intrinsic values of the network, i.e. solidarity between members, as well as to propose the three flagship motions mentioned in Objective 1 on Advocacy. MIHARI will continue to bring its members together in order to maintain and strengthen the spirit of sharing and learning between communities that, without the network, are isolated. In the longer term, MIHARI will be more inclusive of women and will use these experiences to encourage this spirit of solidarity further in the Indian Ocean.

- **Indicator 1:** The level of communication and collaboration between LMMAs is improved, and measured by the number of meetings held.
- **Indicator 2:** Proportion of LMMA leaders who have participated in regional, national and international events organized by the MIHARI network.

1. **Objective:** Improved collaboration exists between LMMA communities to promote good management practices.

✓ **Milestone:**

- Regional conferences will be held every two years, culminating in a national conference every three years, so that LMMA leaders can share their strengths and weaknesses in a setting that is responsive to their challenges.

2. **Objective:** MIHARI works for an increased inclusion of women and their associations in the management of LMMAs.

✓ **Milestone:**

- Capitalize on the implementation of the Fisherwomen Leadership Programme.

3. **Objective:** MIHARI is positioned as a leader at the international level, through its influence and strategic input, in major forums such as the Western Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas Network to promote LMMAs for other coastal communities in the Indian Ocean.

✓ **Milestone:**

- Promote the importance of LMMA communities across the Indian Ocean.

GOAL 3:

PROMOTE PROMISING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

The MIHARI network facilitates and encourages the effective collaboration of LMMAs communities with partners for the development and diversification of viable value chains, allowing them to sustainably manage marine and coastal resources, and to improve their living conditions.



THE RATIONALE:

One of the biggest challenges faced by LMMA communities is the lack of alternatives to the extraction of coastal natural resources such as coastal fisheries and/or mangrove wood. Several projects have already attempted to address these issues with mixed results. MIHARI's strategy will therefore be to inventory these initiatives and to promote high-potential value chains that can

quickly meet the economic needs of LMMAs in order to catalyze increased motivation to undertake sustainable coastal resource management actions.

- **Indicator 1** : Proportion of LMMA communities that have improved their well-being and the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources through access to viable economic sectors.
- **Indicator 2** : Proportion of LMMA communities that put in place good practices for the implementation of community investments in alternative sectors.
- **Indicator 3** : Proportion of LMMA communities that have established a contractual link between community investments in alternative sectors and the sustainability of marine and coastal resources.

1. **Objective:** MIHARI collaborates with partners to scale up well-established promising sectors and involve a pragmatic balance between affordable investment costs for supporting NGOs and benefits for the communities.

✓ **Milestones:**

- MIHARI's priority will be to carry out an inventory of community investment projects in sustainable alternative sectors that have brought about significant economic changes in LMMAs.
- This study will be widely communicated to LMMA partners and communities so that LMMA communities can benefit from investments with a pragmatic cost-benefit ratio.

2. **Objective:** Communities are protected against the hazards associated with the new sectors (smuggling, aquaculture technical complications, etc...) through the development of best practice guides with the network stakeholders.

✓ **Milestones:**

- Best practice guides are established by working in collaboration with the partners.
- MIHARI encourages support for LMMAs by collaborating with on-site technical partners on the basis of the good practice guides.

3. **Objective:** In order for communities to achieve desired environmental impacts, conservation contracts are established between LMMAs and economic actors interested in sustainable development.

✓ **Milestone:**

- MIHARI initiates and develops a dialog on this topic in order to develop a best practice guide to document the hypothesis of a link between the establishment of community investments in alternative sectors and the sustainability of marine and coastal resources.

4. **Objective:** MIHARI coordinates the collection of data on community investments in alternative sectors to measure desired environmental and social impacts.

✓ **Milestone:**

- The link between the implementation of community investments and the sustainability of marine and coastal resources is included in the MIHARI database (see Goal 4).

GOAL 4:

WORK TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION, RESTORATION, AND PRESERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The health of marine and coastal ecosystems managed by LMMA communities is improved. Fish biomass is high with restored biodiversity, and degraded areas are restored.



THE RATIONALE:

The problem that MIHARI is trying to solve is the depletion of coastal and marine resources related to the needs of the communities that depend on them. In order for communities to better establish their impact, MIHARI proposes to focus on building a robust database to support the above objectives. The establishment of this open, national database will serve as a basis for informing MIHARI's advocacy efforts and building the capacities of communities for the adaptive management of their LMMAs. In collaboration with partner NGOs, this database will gather data and quantified results of the various initiatives taken on the ground in terms of coastal resource management.

- **Indicator 1:** Increased areas of ecosystems (mangroves, seagrass beds, etc...) protected in LMMAs.
- **Indicator 2:** Proportion of LMMAs that have at least maintained their Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE).
- **Indicator 3:** Proportion of LMMAs that have maintained or improved the number of species associated with their ecosystems.
- **Indicator 4:** By 2025, at least 25% of orphan LMMAs (or emerging LMMAs) have a partnership with technical partners.

1. **Objective:** A nationwide, open database is established to measure the impact of LMMAs in collaboration with stakeholders.
 - ✓ **Milestone:**
 - Workshop are organised with technical partners and LMMA leaders in order to establish an open access database based on common indicators and data collection methods.
2. **Objective:** MIHARI integrates emerging LMMAs in the network, which are accompanied by NGOs for the implementation of activities dedicated to promoting the sustainable management of marine and coastal resources.
 - ✓ **Milestone:**
 - Partners are identified to support the integration of emerging LMMAs into the network.

GOAL 5:

BUILD THE CAPACITIES OF LMMA COMMUNITIES

LMMA communities have mastered their rights and responsibilities, have the capacity to manage marine and coastal resources sustainably, and have strengthened skills to engage in the development of fair and equitable value chains.



THE RATIONALE:

MIHARI and its partners have already done a fair amount of work in this area; however, this new strategy proposes that capacity building of LMMA communities be intentionally and closely linked to the success of each of the above objectives as well as to the good governance of the network itself. Thus, themes such as good local governance¹³, economic benefit management, and advocacy will be promoted so that communities can benefit from the competencies necessary to manage LMMAs and contribute to the collective objectives identified here.

→ **Indicator :** Proportion of LMMA leaders mastering the skills required to sustainably manage marine and coastal resources.

1. **Objective:** Partnerships in the field of pedagogy and environmental education are developed to create skill-building modules that can be used in cascade training for LMMA communities.
 - ✓ **Milestone:**
 - A standard is developed for the competencies required to manage LMMAs.
2. **Objective:** Capacity building campaigns are monitored, analyzed, and evaluated to remain attentive and responsive to the needs of LMMA communities.
 - ✓ **Milestones:**
 - Data is collected.
 - Monitoring and evaluation work is carried out to present results to partners and LMMA communities.

Organisational development: Implementation and Resources

MIHARI is in a delicate phase of transition. Indeed, the network benefits at the same time from characteristics proper to an already well established institution (MIHARI as a key network of LMMAs) but also from characteristics of a new operation on the starting point. The governance structure, financial management, and fundraising will be areas of work to be developed urgently. In this phase, MIHARI will have to continue to capitalize on the strengths of the network, i.e. communication and strong leadership.



Governance

MIHARI has a new governance mechanism with a transitional board mandated to support the executive secretariat in developing the necessary procedures for smooth empowerment.

The transitional Board will support the implementation of the network strategy and will work closely with the Executive Secretariat to ensure that the roles and responsibilities between the two entities are clear and effectively communicated to partners. In addition, it will be important to focus on building the capacity of the national bureau and that of the active network members so that they can play an increased role in decision-making, especially in advocacy.

Financial Management

The establishment of a robust financial system is a top priority for MIHARI, so that funds that are currently housed by supporting NGO's can be transferred to MIHARI as safely as possible. MIHARI will collaborate with partners to ensure that MIHARI is endowed with a financial system consistent with the needs of the network, Malagasy law and due diligence criteria of donors. The establishment of a financial system is the corner stone for MIHARI to be able to engage in both its strategic and operational activities.

Fundraising

MIHARI must gradually manage its own fundraising and recruit a specialist for this purpose. Particular emphasis must be put on the 'unrestricted funding' so that the organization can benefit from a rational cash flow. MIHARI will receive external support so that the network can benefit from a fundraising strategy and grant management system. MIHARI will also receive support in order to connect the network to potential funding opportunities.

Human Resources

LEGAL PROCEDURES

MIHARI staff members who are currently under the management structure of supporting NGOs will have to be switched to MIHARI management. This will entail ensuring that employment contracts abide to Malagasy law and are in synergy with future funding opportunities.

CREATION OF A SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

A senior management team including the positions of executive secretary, technical program coordinator, and administration and finance coordinator will be established to make key strategic decisions on the direction of the network. This team will consist of senior profiles with a proven track record in the effective management of sustainable management of marine resources programs in Madagascar. This team will be able to implement the above-mentioned financial procedures while taking into account the importance of communication and collaboration to ensure the development of the network.

CONSOLIDATING A FIELD PRESENCE

While MIHARI does not implement activities in the field such as other supporting NGOs, MIHARI has a significant role to play in terms of building the capacity of LMMA leaders and regional bureaux. Regional coordinators from the executive secretariat will increasingly work alongside leaders for them to gain increased skills to participate in MIHARI's governance structure and to contribute to the roll out of MIHARI's strategy. Particular attention will be paid to areas such as advocacy and coordinating data collection in the field.

Strengthening of partnerships

COMMUNICATION

Communication is intrinsic to the success of the network. MIHARI will develop a communication strategy to strengthen sharing and collaboration among partners. It will be essential for MIHARI to communicate regularly with its technical and financial partners, but also with its beneficiaries who are often located in isolated places with very little access to computer technology.

Notes

- 1 Locally Managed Marine Area or “Aire marine gérée localement” in French or “Lamina enti-Mitantana, Morontsiraka sy Andranomasina” in Malagasy is a term developed in the Pacific meaning, ‘An area of nearshore waters and coastal resources that is largely or wholly managed at a local level by the coastal communities, land-owning groups, partner organizations, and/or collaborative government representatives who reside or are based in the immediate area.’ (Govan, 2008)
- 2 Commitment made by the Malagasy Government in 2003 at the Fifth World Congress on National Parks in Durban, South Africa, to triple the network of protected areas in order to preserve the island’s natural resources and biodiversity.
- 3 The political opposition party, led by Andry Rajoelina, mayor of Antananarivo at the time, ousted incumbent President Marc Ravalomanana. An interim government was put in place until an election was finally held in 2013. Many analysts consider this political crisis to have deeply exacerbated the link between corruption and natural resources.
- 5 Until recently, the system also consisted of a Task Force made up of WCS, WWF, BV, and CI, which provided crucial support for the development of the network; but also set up a complex management system for decision-making, administration, and strategic direction. A steering committee composed of national NGOs has also in charge of leading MIHARI towards its current autonomy.
- 6 According to its legal status in Madagascar, Blue Ventures, like other international NGOs, does not have the mandate to conduct advocacy or lobbying activities.
- 7 The COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to cover all five sites. Strong correlations were found between the three regions covered, suggesting conclusions are robust.
- 8 The dina is traditional Malagasy customary law which establishes rules and regulations based on the will of a given community.
- 9 The National Bureau raised the concern that coastal communities often do not understand donor/ NGO interventions on the ground and the differences between the associations they set up in villages.
- 10 The Sea Around Us Project and Blue Ventures reconstructed data from the 1950s to 2008 and found that more than half of the fish catches were not counted. This was particularly true in the true in the small-scale fisheries sector and could have dramatic impacts on food security management.
- 11 GELOSE Law 96-025 allows transfer of management of natural resources to communities (TGRN). This is established through tripartite contracts between local communities, the municipality and the Water and Forestry Services. TGRN was widely developed between 1997 and 2004 with a focus on forests but was not modified for marine resources (Ramamonjisoa et al, 2012).
- 12 There are a few texts that could be used for LMMA governance but these texts overlap and respond poorly to the integrated nature of coastal management. At present, the current texts allow for community-based management of forests and fisheries resources, but poorly reconcile the two, which is essential for the proper management of marine habitats such as mangroves that shelter a large portion of the coastal population in Madagascar
- 13 These first two objectives are intrinsically linked because some elements of advocacy actions of the 3 motions will be necessary for the legal recognition of LMMAs.
- 14 Good local governance: decision-making mechanisms among local stakeholders so that marine and coastal resources are well managed. Local stakeholders include LMMA governing associations.

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