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**MADAGASCAR**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Conserving Biodiversity

### Conserving extraordinary flora and fauna in Madagascar



Photo: USAID/Daniela Reik

New trails and signs like this one in protected areas and national parks have boosted tourism, benefitting both local people and the environment they live in.

***USAID helped Madagascar turn an additional one million hectares of wild landscapes and seascapes into national parks and protected areas.***

In September 2003, Madagascar's president, Marc Ravalomanana, announced the "Durban Vision," an effort to preserve his island's exceptional biodiversity. The goal was to triple the size of Madagascar's protected land from 1.7

million to 6.0 million hectares over five years. In addition to conserving the island's extraordinary flora and fauna, the project takes into account economic and agricultural factors that endanger the environment. This vision was truly a unique opportunity for Madagascar to improve management of its own ecosystem, fully benefit from the island's biodiversity, and move beyond unsustainable and environmentally unfriendly practices.

Working with USAID, the government of Madagascar assembled an impressive group of representatives, donors and international conservation organizations to lead the initiative. The group first determines conservation priorities and then takes action. It also addresses problems such as logging that are threatening the environment.

Moreover, a new approach that allows national, private, co-managed, and community-managed lands to be classified as protected means that many more Malagasy are participating in the conservation effort. Representatives from local communities also help make decisions, which means they are invested in making sure the final outcome is good.

The project has been a success — one million hectares of wild landscape and seascape were put under legal protection in 2005, increasing the amount of protected land by over one third. This significant accomplishment in so little time proves that Madagascar is committed to ensuring that future generations of Malagasy and visitors can enjoy the island's astounding biodiversity.

Telling Our Story

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