

Enhancing the capacity of Civil Society Organizations to create and contribute towards a unified marine turtle database in Cameroon

Programme:BID

Project ID: BID-AF2020-138-INS

Project lead organization:Reseau des Acteurs de la Sauvegarde des Tortues Marines en Afrique Centrale

Project implementation period:2/5/2021 - 2/3/2023

Report approved: 11/3/2022

Narrative Midterm report

Executive Summary

From May 2021 to January 2022, RASTOMA has collaborated with stakeholders in marine turtle conservation in Cameroon to compile all data on these animals in the country's beaches and at sea. Activities included:

a) A Multi-Stakeholder Workshop organized in Yaoundé involving representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Research, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, academic researchers, five civil society organizations (ACBM, TUBE AWU, KUDU A TUBE, AMMCO, WWF Cameroon), and GBIF representative from Cameroon. The general aims of the workshop were to define: (1) which parameters should be included in the national marine turtle database; (2) the minimum data standards to feed into the national database as well as biodiversity strategies; (3) the terms of sharing and use of the data produced by the various stakeholders; and, (4) to train the project team on the data mobilization through GBIF.

b) Two major onsite capacity-building sessions were organized to enhance the capacities of the participating CSOs to digitize and publish the marin

Progress against milestones

Has your project published at least one dataset through GBIF.org?: Yes

Dataset published:

Dataset	DOI
Donnée de suivi des tortues marines au sud et littoral Cameroun	https://doi.org/10.15468/phjz9r
Données des tortues marines d'Ebodjé	https://doi.org/10.15468/85tu6z

Has at least one member of your project team received certification following the BID capacity enhancement workshop?: No

Rationale: The project coordinator, Ursula Koumbo, attended the online GBIF DATA MOBILISATION courses (the final exam and certification from the GBIF secretariat are still pending).

Report on Activities

Activity progress summary

Multi-Stakeholder Workshop: This workshop took place in Yaoundé between the 14 - 16 of July, and involved representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Research, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, academic researchers, O5 Civil Society Organizations (ACBM, TUBE AWU, KUDU A TUBE, AMMCO, and WWF Cameroon) and GBIF of Cameroon. The general aims of the workshop were to use existing tools and standards to define:

1. Which parameters should be included in the database
2. The minimum data standards to feed into the national database and biodiversity strategies
3. The terms of sharing and use of the data produced by marine turtles actors by the various stakeholders;
4. Train the project team on the data mobilization through GBIF

All the objectives of this workshop have been met, and the report is available in French.

Capacity building session I (National database structuration and management) and GBIF database: The first capacity building session was organized immediately after the workshop with stakeholders. We clarified the interest in data sharing between project team members and databases such as Cameroon's biodiversity information system database during this session. Some results obtained during the session:

- It was agreed that the purpose of the data collected is to protect the species on a global scale;
- The participants went through the IUCN standard indicators and agreed on the different data fields that Cameroon's biodiversity database should be included to enable them to publish their data efficiently.
- A data format to feed Cameroon Biodiversity Information System information (CBIS) and GBIF has been established and harmonized with the marine turtle's platform structure.
- RASTOMA has proposed new fields to the GBIF node to allow the marine turtle's platform to contribute marine turtles data to the Cameroon Biodiversity Information System.

After this exchange session, the project team members and other researchers (from the University of Yaoundé, the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation) were trained on data mobilization through GBIF. This training included Introduction to Data Mobilization, Foundation on Data Mobilization, Planning and Data Capture, Data Management, and Publication.

Capacity Building Session II (GBIF database): This session was organized online from case to case at the request of the project members to assist them in data capture according to the Darwin standard, which is used both by GBIF and AfrOBIS. A meeting was organized with the project team members to support them in the publication process on the GBIF so that each project member could publish their data on the GBIF.

Data digitization through CBIS and GBIF: After the capacity building session, a) the data format (Excel file) following GBIF and CBIS guidelines to digitize the data was shared with the project team, b) the contract that defines the terms of the data digitization was elaborated and signed by each CSO member of the project, and c) each of the CSO designated a person to be responsible for the data digitization for their organization. The digitization process has been launched and was ongoing until 11th December 2022.

We worked closely with the Head of GBIF Cameroon Delegation, the node manager, and the Ministry of the Environment. Our organization has been registered on the Cameroon IPT to become a data publisher.

During this phase, we have contacted a GBIF contractor sent by the GBIF Secretariat, who is supporting us in the publication process of the data and other technical aspects.

Monitoring and Evaluation meeting: A WhatsApp group dedicated to this project was created with the project team to facilitate the monitoring process and provide support when any difficulty was encountered during the digitization process: members could share their problems with the group and find peers support.

In mid-December, the project team organized an evaluation meeting to evaluate the level of achievement of each organization, provide support in the process, and fix the deadline to publish the first data set through GBIF.

Completed activities

Activity: Multi-Stakeholder Workshop

Description: From 14th to 16th July, a workshop has been organized in Yaounde involving

representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Research, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife, academic researchers, 5 Civil Society Organizations (ACBM, TUBE AWU, KUDU A TUBE, AMMCO and WWF Cameroon) and GBIF representative from Cameroon. The general aims of the workshop were to use existing tools and standards to define: (1) which parameters should be included in the database; (2) the minimum data standards to feed into national database and biodiversity strategies; (3) the terms of sharing and use of the data produce by marines turtles actors by the various stakeholders; and, (4) train the project team members on the data mobilization through GBIF. All the objectives of this workshop have been met and the report is available in French.

Start Date - End Date: 1/7/2021 - 20/7/2021

Verification Sources: - Workshop terms of reference plus agenda
- Workshop report

Activity: Capacity building session I (National database structure and management) and GBIF database

Description: The first capacity building session was organized immediately after the workshop with stakeholders.

During this session, we clarified the interest of data sharing between the members of the project team and Cameroon's Biodiversity Information System database and others. It emerged from these session that:

- The purpose of the data collected is to protect the species on a global scale;
- The participants went through the IUCN standard indicators and agreed on the different data fields that should be included on the Cameroon biodiversity database to enable them to publish their data easily
- A data format to feed Cameroon Biodiversity Information System information (CBIS) and GBIF has been established and harmonized with format of marine turtle platform
- New fields have been proposed by RASTOMA to GBIF node to allows the Cameroon's marine turtles platform to contribute marine turtle data to Cameroon's Biodiversity Information System.

After this exchange session the project team member and other researchers (from university of Yaounde, Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation) have been trained on the data mobilization through GBIF. This training included Introduction to Data Mobilisation, Foundations on Data Mobilisation, Planning and Data Capture, Data Management and Publication.

Start Date - End Date: 14/7/2021 - 17/7/2021

Verification Sources: - Workshop report
- Capacity building evaluation survey

(<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M6CBJaKOskvZ7C5ZZtS5WLS5LdsqgUe7dZAc5kfEur8/edit?resourcekey#gid=321654583>)

Activity: Capacity Building Session II (GBIF database)

Description: This session was organised online on a one-to-one basis at the request of the project members to assist them in data capture according to the Darwin Standards, which is used both by GBIF and AfrOBIS.

Start Date - End Date: 16/12/2021 - 18/12/2021

Verification Sources: Meeting report including attendance sheet plus AGENDA attached (Compte rendu Atelier plateforme_Dec2021)

NB: please consider the text underlined in yellow color in this report because this meeting was co-financed and other activities occurred during this workshop

Report on Deliverables

Deliverables progress summary

During the data digitalization meeting, the organization members of the project highlighted that all the data collected are occurrence data on marine turtles and must be harmonized to a single dataset, which is "occurrence." The 1473 occurrences data published to date include:

- Observation of marine turtles (reproductive females),
- Observations of marine turtle nesting events,
- Observation of marine turtle bycatch,
- Observation of marine turtle strandings, Opportunistic observations.

National marine turtle database: We discussed this with the Ministry of the Environment, which is in charge of Cameroon's biodiversity database, a format that can match the needs of Cameroon's

biodiversity database. Currently, the biodiversity database is undergoing an update, and for this reason, we have to wait for it to be ready before publishing there.

Reports delivered to SWOT and MTSG: The data has been submitted to the SWOT and MTSG databases for 2021.

Digitized marine turtle data available on CBIS and GBIF: The data digitized during this period has already been published on GBIF.org and is available for CBIS

Marine turtle national report: this activity is ongoing; the format of this report has been defined, and we are collecting the information to feed this report.

Progress towards deliverables

Dataset deliverables

Observation of nesting marine females

Dataset type: Occurrences

Dataset scope: Three species of sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Dermochelys coriacea* and *Chelonia mydas*) are recorded nesting along the 300 Km of coastal area of Cameroon, mainly between Campo in the South to Rio del Rey in the South West.

Number of records: 144

Data holder: TUBE AWU

Data host institution: RASTOMA

% complete: 14%

Status update: Published on the GBIF.org

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15468/85tu6z>

Expected date of publication:

Observations of marine turtle nesting events

Dataset type: Occurrences

Dataset scope: Three species of sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Dermochelys coriacea* and *Chelonia mydas*) are recorded nesting along the 300 Km of coastal area of Cameroon, mainly between Campo in the South to Rio del Rey in the South West. The nesting season occurs each year from September until February.

Number of records: 1,329

Data holder: KUD'A TUBE

Data host institution: RASTOMA

% complete: 53%

Status update: Published on the GBIF.org

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15468/phjz9r>

Expected date of publication:

Observation of marine turtle bycatch

Dataset type: Occurrences

Dataset scope: Five species of marine turtles occur in Cameroonian waters (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Eretmochelys imbricata* and *Caretta caretta*); observations may occur all year round

Number of records: 0

Data holder: TUBE AWU, KUDU A TUBE, ACBM, AMMCO

Data host institution: RASTOMA

% complete: 0%

Status update: Partially digitized

DOI:

Expected date of publication: 2022-02-03

Observation of marine turtle strandings

Dataset type: Occurrences

Dataset scope: Five species of marine turtles occur in Cameroonian waters (*Lepidochelys olivacea*, *Dermochelys coriacea*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Eretmochelys imbricata* and *Caretta caretta*); observations may occur all year round

Number of records: 25

Data holder: TUBE AWU, KUD'ATUBE, ACBM, AMMCO

Data host institution: RASTOMA

% complete: 0%

Status update: Partially digitized

DOI:

Expected date of publication: 2022-04-16

Opportunistic observations

Dataset type: Occurrences

Dataset scope: These observations include any of opportunistic encounters of live or dead marine megafauna species (such as sharks and rays, marine mammals) found in Cameroon waters or coast as recorded by CSO and citizen science; observations may occur all year round

Number of records: 100

Data holder: TUBE AWU, KUD'A TUBE, ACBM, AMMCO

Data host institution: RASTOMA

% complete: 0%

Status update: Digitized

DOI:

Expected date of publication: 2022-01-08

Other deliverables

Events

ATELIER DE FORMATION A LA MOBILISATION DES DONNEES SUR LA BIODIVERSITE: « Renforcer les capacités des organisations de la société civile à créer et à contribuer à une base de données unique sur les tortues marines au Cameroun »

Dates: 2021-07-14 - 2021-07-16

Organizing institution: RASTOMA

Country: Cameroun

Number of participants: 28

Comments: A short film was produced during this event and is attached to this report.

A social media post allusive to this event can be read on our project webpage:

"RASTOMA is collaborating with the environmental authorities and civil society organizations (CSOs) members of the Marine Turtle Platform of Cameroon to establish a reliable and functional national database of marine turtles that matches the national and Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) standards.

These CSOs have been collecting data on marine turtles synchronously and homogeneously since 2016, contributing actively, but independently, towards the world database of marine turtles (SWOT) and the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG), reports to feed the IUCN red list database. To harmonize and valorize data collection efforts, a 3-day workshop (14-16 July 2021) took place in Yaoundé at the Centre of Information and Documentation on the Environment (CIDE), with the support of GBIF Cameroon.

The general objectives of the workshop were to:

Use available data and tools to propose minimum standard data on marine turtles for inclusion in the national and global biodiversity database, and

Provide capacity building to the actors of the Cameroon marine turtle platform and other partners (IRAD, MINEPDED, UY1, GBIF CAMEROON, GSAC Alliance) on biodiversity data mobilization for GBIF.

The workshop counted with the participation of the various stakeholders as CSOs (ACBM (Cameroonian Association of Marine Biology), KUDU A TUBE, AMMCO (African Marine Mammal Conservation Organization), and TUBE AWU), the representative of government (Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Research, Ministry of Forests and Wildlife), WWF and OFAC."

Website or sources of verification: https://web.facebook.com/seaturtleafricanteam/?_rdc=1&_rdr

Communications and visibility

The workshop organized in Yaounde involved each representative of the Ministry of Environment, Research, Forests and Wildlife, and the OFAC (Observatoire des Forêt d'Afrique Centrale (organization in charge of the data on biodiversity in Central Africa. Several CSOs participated, including WWF, KUD'A TUBE, TUBE AWU, ACBM, and AMMCO. This activity was promoted on our social media platforms (e.g., Facebook), reaching more than 1,000 people. Some of the social media content can be watched here:

<https://www.facebook.com/seaturtleafricanteam/videos/3841108032666044> and here

<https://www.facebook.com/seaturtleafricanteam/videos/203288355048455>

An article of the workshop has been published on our October Newsletter 2021 (https://www.rastoma.org/newsletter/?email_id=11)

All the links provided here, the photos and videos attached to this report, can be published on our project page.

"Rapport Final_Atelier_GBIF_RASTOMA_Aout2021" can be also be added to our project page.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation findings

A WhatsApp group was created specifically for this project and with all project members to facilitate the process of monitoring and peer support when a member reported any difficulty encountered during the digitization process.

In mid-December, the project team organized a monitoring and evaluation meeting in Yaoundé to evaluate the level of achievement of each organization, provide support in the process, and fix the deadline to publish the first data set through GBIF.

Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation

No major impact of covid-19 on the project implementation, we prioritized online meetings.

All presence meetings followed the Covid-19 guidelines set by the Cameroonian government.

GBIF leads the Biodiversity Information for Development (BID), a programme funded by the European Union. The programme provides supplementary support for activities addressing the needs of regional researchers and policymakers through mobilization and use of biodiversity data.

