

The Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility (BNCFF) supports the development of sound, investable Blue Natural Capital (BNC) projects with clear ecosystem service benefits, multiple income streams and appropriate risk-return profiles.

This score card is part of the final assessment of the projects supported by BNCFF (2019-2021). Each score card provides an overview of a particular project, details its achievements, its success and challenges, before presenting the way forward.

Community Biodiversity Conservation Area of Bouche du Roy, Benin

**BNCFF**

Blue Natural Capital Financing Facility

Project in a snapshot

Title	Community Biodiversity Conservation Area of Bouche du Roy
Country	Benin
Project Developer	Benin Ecotourism Concern (EcoBenin)
Vision	Using ecotourism initiatives and climate change adaptation practices as an economic pillar for the development of local communities.
Overall Project goals	Reverse the trend of degradation of the mangrove ecosystem and improve the socio-economic standard of living of the population by the conservation and sustainable use of mangroves and promoting environmental education and ecotourism.
BNCFF supported activities	Support the certification under the Verified Carbon Standard through the delivery of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An historical land use study• A baseline study• An environmental impact assessment of the project
Main stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EcoBenin• Municipalities• Local communities• Wildlife conservators• CO₂ logic for the carbon component of the project.
BNC focus	Blue carbon and mangrove restoration
Duration	5 months (2021)
Type of funding	Grant
Proof of concept	EcoBenin has experience coordinating and managing various projects, including the Gold Standard-registered 'Efficient cookstoves in Benin and Togo' Project, under which EcoBenin developed different activities through private finance.
Links/synergies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributes to UN SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land)• Contributes to climate adaptation and mitigation• Biodiversity conservation

1. Project summary

EcoBenin oversees a project aimed to reverse the trend of degradation of the mangrove ecosystem and to improve the socio-economic standard of living of the population through the conservation and sustainable use of mangroves while promoting environmental education and ecotourism. In the project area, a zoning was done in three parts with specific objectives:

- Central areas (395ha): full conservation of natural resources through restoration and research
- Buffer zone (8,305ha): reforestation and development of socio-economic activities compatible with conservation

- Transition zone: Promotion of responsible fishing and development of socio-economic activities compatible with conservation

To achieve this, different activities were defined such as restoration with local species, establishment of tools and infrastructures to enhance the ecotourism potential, surveillance of the protected area, support for the development of fish farming areas and a fishing regulatory activity, planting coconut trees and fast-growing species.

2. Purpose of the engagement with BNCFF

The carbon reductions obtained through the project will be monitored, verified and reported as a tradable carbon credit and certification according to the VCS Standard. To pursue this certification, BNCFF has provided support to deliver a historical land use

study, a baseline study and an environmental impact assessment of the project.

The above components will be used to put together a project design document to get the project registered under the VCS standard.



3. Main outputs and results achieved with BNCFF support



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE BENEFITS

Baseline study completed

- Carbon balance in the inventoried mangrove sites assessed
- Carbon sequestration rate in inventoried mangrove plantations assessed
- Additionality of the emissions reductions was assessed



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE BENEFITS & SOCIAL AND LIVELIHOOD

Environmental & social Impact Assessment study completed

- Preparatory and construction phases of the project assessed:
 - Positive aspects identified include the creation of jobs and income, stimulation of commercial and income generating activities, creation of social links;
 - Negative aspects identified include air pollution from dust and gas emissions, soil pollution from solid waste, the increase in noise levels, the disturbance of ecosystems and the disruption of population mobility.
- The operation phase of the project was assessed, and positive aspects include the creation of direct and indirect jobs, the improvement of the socio-economic situation of the local communities in particular and contribution to the implementation of the NDP and the development of the Republic of Benin, the improvement of interpersonal exchanges and job creation, the improvement of ecotourism activities and increase in the revenues of the riparian communities and the increase in the carbon sequestration capacity and contribution to the respect of Benin's international commitments in the reduction of greenhouse gases.



GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

Historical land use study completed

- Study highlighted that the mangrove coverage increased between 2015 and 2021 from 9,452.52ha to 9,888.26ha thanks to conservation and reforestation efforts undertaken by some local NGOs such as EcoBenin.



4. Success and challenges

All deliverables were completed and will help support the development of the Project Design Document paving the way to access carbon credit certification.

Several challenges still need to be addressed, including:

- Clarifying identified land tenure rights;
- Ensuring proper water management; and
- Involving women and youth in the various phases of the projects.

5. Looking beyond BNCFF



BIODIVERSITY AND NATURE BENEFITS

- Promote additional mangrove reforestation endeavours.
- Conserve zones with heavy presence of herbaceous plants.
- Produce a map of the spatial distribution of carbon stocks in the mangrove area.
- Secure and protect the transects and undertake periodic measurements to assess the dynamics of the mangrove ecosystem in the face of anthropogenic disturbances.



SOCIAL AND LIVELIHOOD

- Sustain engagement with all stakeholders.



LEGAL AND FINANCIAL

- Address identified mangrove land tenure conflicts.
- Choose appropriate carbon and benefits sharing models.



GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

- Involvement of key stakeholders of the area of the Project in the valorisation of carbon credits.



Disclaimer: The BNCFF provides assistance to projects on their path to becoming sound, investable Blue Natural Capital (BNC) businesses with clear ecosystem service benefits, multiple income streams and appropriate risk-return profiles. Beyond the support provided, IUCN and the BNCFF donor(s) bear no responsibility for the development of these projects, their ultimate bankability or sustainability, their investors, donors, and funding arrangements, unless otherwise noted.

Photo courtesy by the Project Developer.

Since its launch in 2018, the BNCFF has become a global brand name in Ocean Impact Finance. After screening over a hundred proposals, it has supported a suite of blue Nature-based Solutions (NbS) pioneer projects with grant funding.

<https://bluenaturalcapital.org/supported-projects/>

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