



RESCCUE

ACTIVITIES IN NEW CALEDONIA'S SOUTHERN PROVINCE

In New Caledonia's Southern Province, [RESCCUE](#) was implemented under the dual supervision of SPC and the Province through Bio eKo consultants, ONF International, Vertigo Lab and several individual consultants.

The activities were completed in April 2019 following a participatory lessons-learned workshop held in October 2018. [The Final RESCCUE Report for New Caledonia's Southern Province](#) provides a summary of project activities and outcomes on the [Great South pilot site](#). All project reports are available [here](#).

As on its other pilot sites, RESCCUE conducted its activities in New Caledonia's Southern Province in an integrated management and climate change resilience perspective. In line with its overall rationale, the project endeavoured to reduce non-climate stressors on ecosystems so as to increase ecosystem resilience and, in that way, the resilience of the communities that depend on them. The activities were based around several complementary areas.



MADELINE FALLS, GREAT SOUTH

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DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING THE RAMSAR GREAT SOUTH LAKES AREA INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Great South lakes area was listed in 2014 under the Ramsar Wetlands Convention, which required implementing a management plan for the listed sites. RESCCUE provided support in developing the integrated management plan at the Southern Province’s behest by setting up a monitoring committee, carrying out a baseline study and holding participatory workshops in 2016 and a broad public hearing in 2017. [The plan's final version](#) contains 5 long-term objectives, 18 ten-year operational objectives and over 60 activities for achieving them. It is currently pending political approval by the Provincial Assembly’s Environment Commission.



LAKE IN THE GREAT SOUTH

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PROTECTING THE GREAT SOUTH’S FORESTS FROM FIRE

Forest fires, together with mining and invasive alien species, are among the main pressures on ecosystems in the Great South. In response, the project supported the Southern Province’s firefighting efforts by [equipping fire spotters](#), [installing two fire tanks](#) in open brush-land for fire engines to refill at and developing a firefighting plan for the Great South’s forests (PPFF).



MOBILE SPOTTING TEAM

©SOUTHERN PROVINCE

The PPF, which played a significant part in Ramsar-area integrated-management implementation¹, was developed in a participatory way based on [a baseline study](#) under the oversight of a technical committee made up of the various stakeholders, i.e. provincial departments, territorial government, the relevant municipal authorities and associations. The PPF listed 25 operational activities divided into four areas, namely improving fire management governance and partnership work, enhancing knowledge of forest-fire hazards, strengthening preventive action and improving fire control. A [cost-effectiveness analysis](#) was carried out for the plan based on a benchmarking of experiences in France. The findings are in favour of the PPF's approval by the provincial executive.

DEVELOPING A PROTECTED-AREA-NETWORK STRATEGY FOR 2025

At the project's inception, the Great South already had a network of 13 terrestrial and coastal protected areas, which was significant but clearly inadequate in terms of their representation and connectivity. Following an [ecological diagnosis of the network](#) and a [management cost assessment](#), RESCCUE developed a strategy for making it more effective by 2025 while also including the Côte Oubliée. Developing the strategy was another keystone in implementing the RAMSAR-area integrated-management plan².



CAP N'DUA RESERVE, GREAT SOUTH

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In practice, the project first developed in a participatory way a green and blue corridors framework in order to describe and map out all the instances of connectivity and ecological continuity on Great South and the Côte Oubliée. Several protection scenarios were developed for the Great South and the Côte Oubliée and compiled in a [strategic document](#) setting out the principles governing the network's deployment and the stages this will follow in the coming years.

¹ Action sheet ID 2.2.2 "Drawing up a fire management plan for the Great South"

² Action sheet FA 1.5.1 "Developing a protected-area-network strategy for the Great South"



SIGN IN A PROTECTED AREA

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Through the process, RESCCUE enabled the province to consider and approve a new provincial park on the Côte Oubliée in early 2019. With its 93,000 ha of land, 29,000 ha of sea and 90 km coastline, this park has doubled the land area protected by the Southern Province. The province has yet to take ownership of the scenarios proposed for the Great South, but they form a solid basis on which to set up an efficient ecosystem protection network for the region by 2025.

DEVELOPING AN ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION STRATEGY FOR THE GREAT SOUTH

Many environmental restoration operations have been carried out in damaged areas by various stakeholders at the Great South as elsewhere in the province to reduce harmful effects on the public and property, as well as to biodiversity. The many stakeholders and funding sources however result in piecemeal efforts that are less than ideal when resources are scarce. The provincial executive sought to develop and implement a multi-stakeholder strategy aimed at maximising such restoration work in the short, medium and long terms. This is another major plank of the RAMSAR-area integrated-management plan³.



REVEGETATION IN THE GREAT SOUTH

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The Southern Province requested that RESCCUE assist in prioritising sites requiring restoration in terms of local issues, erosion and the need to preserve and reconnect the Great South's ecosystems. A [strategic document](#) was developed under the guidance of a technical steering committee and with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders. It maps priority areas in terms of erosion and habitat fragmentation and is a genuine blueprint for restoring damaged sites in the Great South. Once ownership of this strategic document has been fully taken, it could be extended throughout the province.

³ Action sheet ID 2.3.1 "Defining and implementing a damaged-site restoration strategy"

INNOVATIVE FUNDING MECHANISMS

RESCCUE examined the [feasibility](#) of five economic and financial mechanisms to help with sustainable integrated management of the Great South. These included a collective trademark for those economic stakeholders who comply with particular specifications, fundraising through species adoption and sponsorships, entrance fees to protected areas, payment for ecosystem services (PES) for hydroelectricity generation on Lake Yate and reviewing the public-land occupancy-fee computation. The latter two were the only mechanisms thought to be appropriate in terms of their revenue-generating potential. In the end, the province did not wish to move forward with the PES proposal. However, they requested that the option of including ecosystem services values in the public-land occupancy-fee computation [be more fully investigated](#) as well as a modus operandi for allocating revenue from such usage and other fees.



YATE LAKE, GREAT SOUTH

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ECOSYSTEM SERVICES VALUATION AND ECONOMIC ANALYSES

The Southern Province Department of the Environment asked RESCCUE to economically quantify and assess the Great South's ecosystem services with several aims in mind, namely to:

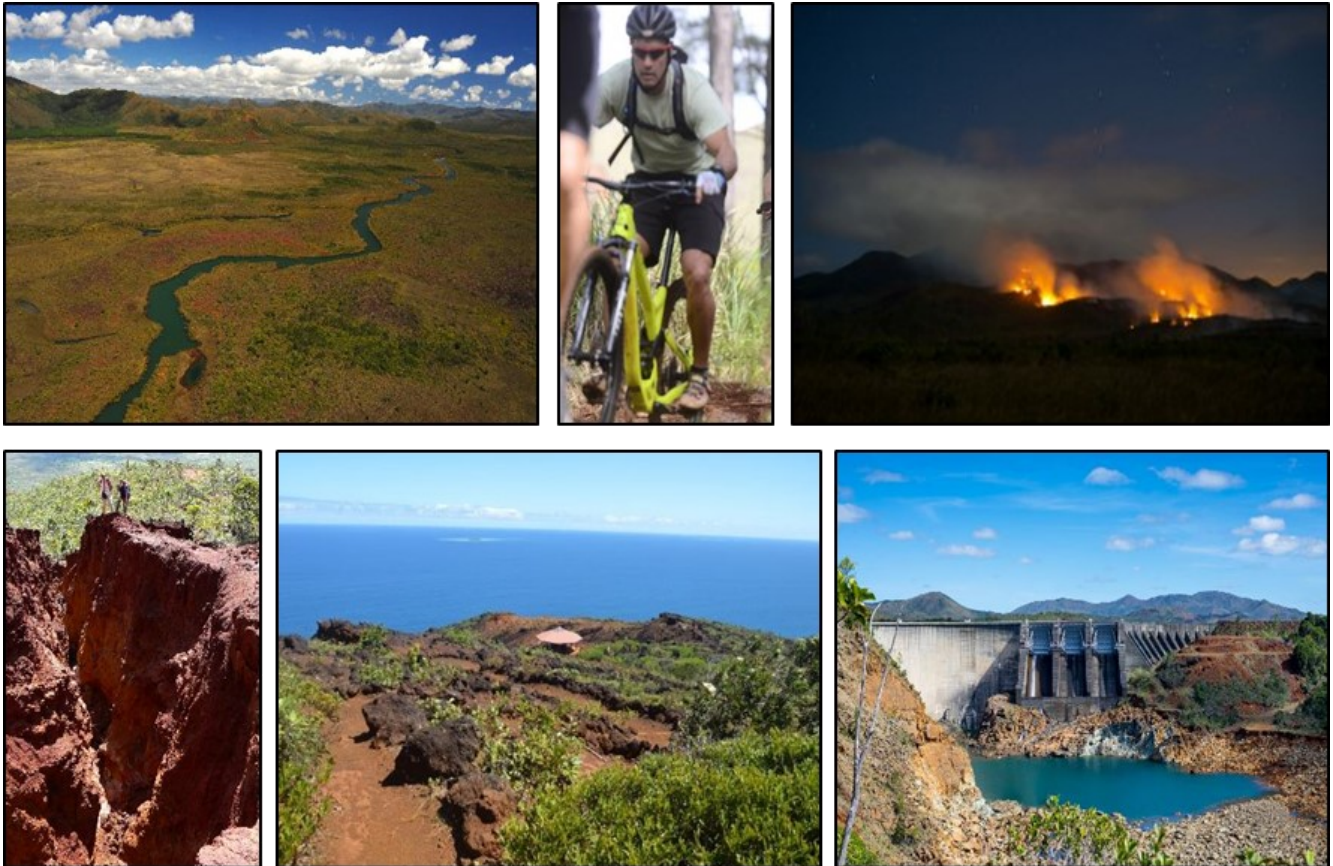
- support advocacy for more biodiversity protection from the main threats, including mining and fires;
- provide information for comparing the various mining development and biodiversity protection scenarios; and
- help develop innovative funding mechanisms (cf. above).

The project conducted an [economic valuation of the Great South's ecosystem services](#) (summary available [here](#)), an assessment of [ecosystem services losses due to mining](#), an assessment of services losses owing to fire as part of a broader [economic analysis](#) and an [analysis of the use](#) of such assessments in decision-making.

Other types of economic analysis, such as cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit studies, were also carried out while developing the various strategic-planning documents mentioned above. The extent to which all the economic analyses contributed to ICM was closely [examined](#), and the issue of profitability measurement discussed.

OUTLINING A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE GREAT SOUTH

When RESCCUE started, there were no intermediate-level planning documents available, i.e. between the municipal-area (urban planning) and territorial levels (Nouvelle-Calédonie 2025). The Southern Province wished to trial the feasibility and added value of a document that would not be legally binding but would define strategic policies and multi-use planning on the Great South.



SNAPSHOTS FROM THE GREAT SOUTH

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RESCCUE hence developed [a sustainable development plan for the Great South](#). The plan is based on and consolidates the above-mentioned planning documents, economic analyses as well as [a study on ecotourism](#) carried out by the project, plus the existing plans (such as the mining plan). As it was only produced at the very end of the project, it is premature to take stock of its use at this stage.

AUTHORS

Raphaël Billé and Jean-Baptiste Marre

EDITION

Mélanie Farman

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