

CES hit the ground running at the start of the 2020 new year; when a team of nine specialists travelled to Mozambique for site-based field work. The purpose of the trip was to collect quantitative baseline data to determine the existing conditions in order to develop a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP), and associated monitoring programmes, for a large infrastructure project.

The purpose of the BMP is to provide detailed management measures aimed at reducing the environmental impacts associated with the development, while maintaining the biodiversity, natural resource base and ecosystem services within the project area to the benefit of the proponent as well as the surrounding local communities. The associated monitoring programmes described the methodology for assessing changes to the baseline conditions of the ecosystem studied and to determine the effectiveness of the mitigation measures contained within the BMP.

An integral part of the BMP was the selection of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). KPIs are quantifiable and meaningful measures that are used to evaluate the success and effectiveness of management strategies and should enable the scientific team to differentiate between fluctuations in biodiversity that are within the natural range versus those that have been induced by the project. In addition, KPIs need to be cost-effective and measurable.

CES aligned the BMP for this project with the requirements of the International Finance Corporation's (IFC) Performance Standards (PS), particularly PS 6 (Biodiversity Conservation & Sustainable Natural Resource Management) and the associated Guide Notes (GN). The aim of PS 6 is to protect and conserve biodiversity, maintain ecosystem services, and promote the sustainable management and use of natural resources through the adoption of practices that integrate conservation needs and development priorities (Performance Standards on Environmental & Social Sustainability, 2012).

The CES team also recognized the importance of aligning the objectives of the BMP with the legislation, policies, guideline and standards of the country in which the project is based, thereby contributing to the country's biodiversity targets and priorities on a local, regional and national scale. In this case, alignment with the Mozambican National Biodiversity and Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) was essential.

The specialist studies undertaken as part of the development of this BMP included an assessment of the fauna, terrestrial vegetation and mangrove forest biodiversity, as well as comprehensive estuarine benthic and wetland surveys. The specialists were assisted by local community members in the collection of data, ferrying across the estuary and providing local insights into their surrounding natural environment. The survey was completed successfully.

Please see below for a few photographs from the trip.



