



Conservation of the Natural Forest Remnants of Maraeti'a Plateau, Punaruu Valley, Tahiti

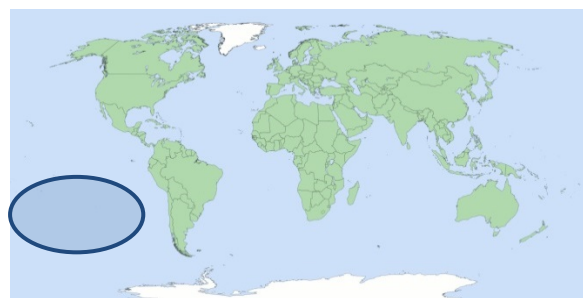
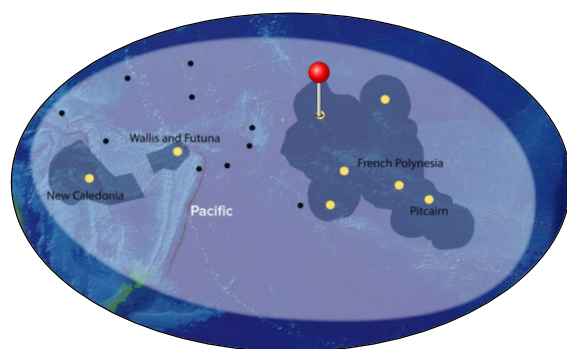
Targeted territory: French Polynesia

Total project budget: 49,955 Euros

BEST 2.0 grant awarded: 49,955 Euros

Duration: April 2017 – March 2018 (12 months)

Lead organisation: Te rau atiati a tau a hiti noa tu
(Union pour la sauvegarde de la nature)



Background:

This project will conserve and restore natural forests on the Maraeti'a plateau, a small plateau covering an area of 20 hectares located in the upper Punaruu valley on the island of Tahiti. The site is important from an ecological and cultural point of view; it contains a vestige of relatively well preserved natural forest in French Polynesia because of its structure and floristic composition (it has important populations of protected endemic species that are threatened with extinction), but also archaeological structures that are fundamentally interesting. Nevertheless, the environment is under pressure from introduced invasive species of animals and plants, and is threatened in the medium term. Of these, rats

in particular have an impact on the seedling recruitment of the species of interest through the consumption of fruits and seeds but also, in some cases, the attack of the stems of young trees.

Description of the Project:

The project will monitor rat populations on a plateau scale to reduce their impacts on endemic and native plant species. It is based on a combination of two types of control, chemical and physical.



Chemical control, through the use of raticides, will be used initially to significantly reduce the number of rats. It will eventually be replaced by physical control, involving the use of traps, in order to maintain the rodent populations at an acceptable level on the one hand, but also in order to prevent the development of resistance to the raticide as has happened in other rat populations. Monitoring of operations and abundance of rat populations will be carried out in parallel, making it possible to evaluate the project and adapt the method accordingly.

This project is part of a restoration program carried out by the association on a two-hectare forest area

on the plateau, containing a large proportion of the endemic species threatened with extinction and a marae (ceremonial structure). In addition to controlling rat populations, it includes fencing off the forest area to exclude goats and pigs and the management of invasive plant species within the fenced area.

Intended results:

The main objective of the project is to preserve and conserve endemic plant species threatened with extinction (classified in the IUCN Red List as VU, EN or CR) and classified as species protected by local legislation.



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