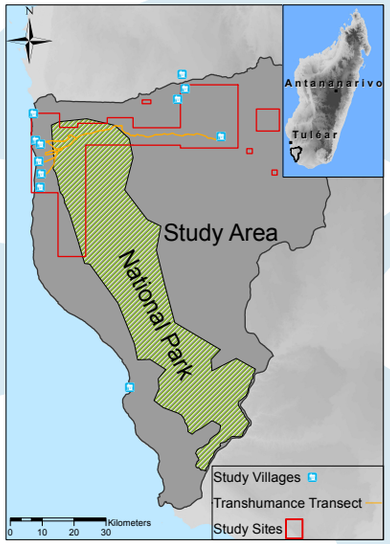

The model region Mahafaly Plateau includes areas east and west of Tsimanampetsotsa National Park.

Project partners and sub-projects

SuLaMa consists of seven sub-projects that each represent a different discipline: agronomy, animal husbandry, natural ecosystems and their functions, socio-cultural aspects and governance, economics, and agricultural economics. The project coordinators ensure the implementation of standard methods and database consistency, facilitate interdisciplinarity, and organise meetings and workshops.

The project partners include two Malagasy and six German universities (Antananarivo and Toliary as well as Hamburg, Cottbus, Greifswald, Kassel, Marburg, and Göttingen), several Malagasy NGOs (Vahatra, Madagasikara Voakajy, and Madagascar National Parks) and the WWF.

SuLaMa

Participatory research to support sustainable land management on the Mahafaly Plateau in south-western Madagascar

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Madagascar National Parks
WWF
Universität Hamburg
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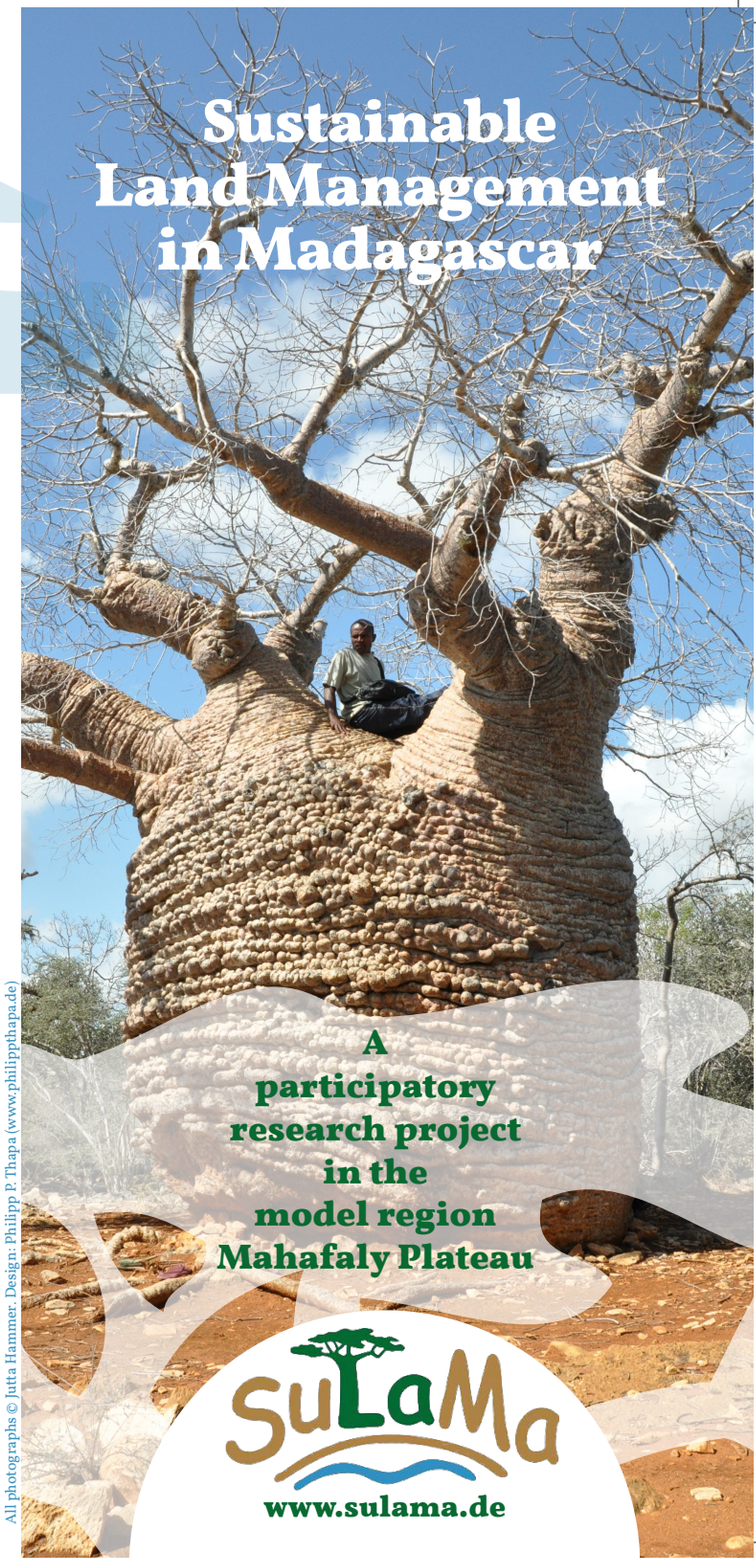
Sustainable Land Management in Madagascar



A participatory research project in the model region Mahafaly Plateau

SuLaMa
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Madagascar: Protecting nature to survive

Madagascar is the fourth-largest island and one of the poorest countries in the world. Population growth, poverty, lack of education and the effects of climate change threaten both people and environment.

This is because, on the one hand, the majority of the Malagasy depend directly on natural products (such as wood, fruits, tubers, or meat) for their livelihood. On the other hand, the island's natural resources are dangerously overexploited. Even just to secure people's survival, it is therefore necessary to use local ecosystems and their services in ways that preserve them permanently. To this purpose, the SuLaMa Project is developing alternative land-use methods in a model region.

The model region Mahafaly Plateau

The Mahafaly Plateau is located in south-west Madagascar. It is a unique, highly diverse, arid region harbouring many animal and plant species that are found nowhere else.

Centre: Traditional agriculture shapes the lives of the people on the Mahafaly Plateau.
Left: The radiated tortoise is one of the many endangered species at home on the Mahafaly Plateau.
Bottom: SuLaMa fait de la recherche ensemble avec la population sur place.

At the same time, it is also one of Madagascar's most disadvantaged regions in terms of economy and climate. The population is ever growing, and the current forms of land use cause increasing ecological damage. The people of the Mahafaly Plateau suffer from recurring droughts and persistent poverty. As long as there are no alternative forms of land use, no additional sources of income, and as a result little economic development, the people in the region face a highly uncertain future.

Diverse know-how for a land-use plan

SuLaMa develops a far-reaching, sustainable land management plan for the Mafaly Plateau Region. The stakeholders collaborating in the project come from the region, Madagascar, and other countries, and they link scientific know-how from various disciplines: ecology, socio-economics, landscape planning, and natural resource management. As a participatory project, SuLaMa pays special attention to the needs, rites, and customs of the local people.

The methods of the project range from experimental research in agriculture, animal husbandry, and forestry through public presentations, interviews, and workshops to scenario development and modeling. Geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing are used to classify land use and cover, to create an environmental information system, and to evaluate ecosystem services and functions. The aim is to put together a toolbox with scientific instruments that can also be applied to other, similarly structured regions.