

PRÍNCIPE ISLAND (Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe)



THE SADA PROGRAM

Sustainable Conservation of the **Hawksbill** Breeding Population at the Príncipe Island



The **SADA Program** is a participative initiative. It ensures an environmental resources management with a sustainable approach and with the involvement of several stakeholders and community members.

The **key-resource** is the **hawksbill** (*Eretmochelys imbricata* - a sea turtle species which local name is **SADA** or *tartaruga-de-caco*), a “Critically Endangered Species” (IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2009). The Príncipe Island’s SADA nesting population is one of the last rookeries at the occidental coast of Africa. The world’s biggest genetic stocks are concentrated in Central America, where nowadays the species presents signs of restoration after

years of well succeeded measures of protection.

At the occidental coast of Africa, between Morocco and Cape Agulhas (South Africa), the Gulf of Guinea islands (Bioko or Fernando Pó, Príncipe, São Tomé and Annobón) are the only known hawksbill nesting locations. The Príncipe Island and the south of the São Tomé I. hold the most important nesting beaches. This breeding population is surely a differentiated genetic stock, unique in the world and an invaluable heritage of the Planet Biodiversity. According to the SWOT Report III, in the Bioko I., during the 2005-06 nesting season, only two clutches were laid. In the Príncipe Island 36 were laid, and 38 clutches in São Tomé I. The nesting season begins in October and finishes in April; December and January are the main nesting months. Around the Príncipe I. another hawksbill genetic stock occurs: the neritic juveniles that forage and grow in the coastal grounds and waters.

The main **stakeholders and community members** engaged in the SADA Program are the regional authorities, the snorkelers and fishers, the scholars (students and teachers) and the touristic promoters, agents and actors.

The **SADA Program** is a multi-annual initiative that had its starting time in January 2009. Activities in **four strategic working guidelines** are and will be carried out simultaneously:

- ◉ *technical training and education*
- ◉ *direct sea turtle protection*
- ◉ *knowledge improvement*
- ◉ *information spreading*

The **SADA Program** is coordinated by the **CBioP - Centre for the Biodiversity Conservation of the Príncipe Island**, an international research centre managed by the University of Algarve (Portugal), the CCMar - Centre of Marine Sciences of Algarve, and the Regional Government of Príncipe. The **Lisbon Oceanarium**, the **University of Algarve**, the **Praia Boi Nature Resort**, and several private donors are the main sponsors of the initiative.



1. **Technical Training and Education**

Technical training and education activities are mainly focused on the improvement of the knowledge and skills of people, if possible born and/or living in the Príncipe Island, to allow them to cooperate and work to the SADA Program.

Examples of technical capabilities are, for example, to be able to make a beach and/or in-water census, to install and manage a hatchery, to guide tourists during a turtle watching activity and to do data collection to international research teams. These activities will provide jobs and direct incomes to local people, and will reduce the needs and motivations to capture, kill and sell sea turtles.



2. **Direct Sea Turtle Protection**

Direct sea turtle protection activities are focused on the end of the slaughtering of hawksbills (and green turtles, and leatherbacks) during their different live phases (eggs and hatchlings, neritic immatures, sub-adults and adults), the main cause for the extirpation of sea turtles in the coastal waters and beaches of the Príncipe Island.

*Examples of unacceptable slaughter are the capture in coastal waters, made by snorkelers and fishers, the capture of nesting females in the beaches, the poach of eggs during incubation and the unintentional capture by fishing nets. A **regional law** to prohibit and punish sea turtle capture, killing, selling and consume is a goal of the direct protection working guidelines.*



3. **Knowledge Improvement**

Knowledge improvement efforts and activities are focused on the study and accurate description of the ecology, biology and behavior of the sea turtle species, their population demographic dynamics, and on the anthropological details of the interaction between men and sea turtles.

Examples are the coordination and/or participation in research projects, as well as the involvement in international specialized networks. The estimation of the size of the hawksbill population, the matriarchal lineage, the reproductive dynamics, and the migratory routes are some of hot-research topics. Another very hot-research topic is the GTFP - green-turtle fibropapillomatosis.



4. **Spreading Information**

Spreading information activities are focused on the release of information to diversified publics. Subjects of spread information are related to the importance of the sea turtle genetic stocks of Príncipe I., the urgent need for a sustainable management to avoid extirpation, and the new opportunities that will arrive to the island and to the stakeholders and community members if the SADA Program is adopted.

Examples at local level are the environmental sensitization and education activities with scholars, snorkelers, fishers, policers and lawyers. Examples at national level are related to the spread of the success of the SADA Program itself, having in mind the challenge that will be to enlarge the activities to the São Tomé I. Examples at global level are the SADA Program website (www.tartarugasstomeprincipe.org), the mentions and links from international thematic webportals and websites (like the www.seaturtle.org), the participation in international symposiums, and the promotion of the Príncipe I. as a touristic destination for turtle watching.



The ATLAS of SEA TURTLES at the PRÍNCIPE ISLAND

The edition of an **Atlas of Sea Turtles at the Príncipe Island** is a goal of the **SADA Program**. It will be a compilation of the **improved knowledge**, an output of the participation and support of **involved people**, a result of the **direct sea turtle protection** and an important tool for the **spreading information** activities.