

**Using coral farming for restoration of areas affected by the
MV Wakashio grounding**



30th April 2026

Final Report

Using Coral Farming for Restoration of Areas Affected by the MV Wakashio Grounding

a. Project Results

The project “Using Coral Farming for Restoration of Areas Affected by the MV Wakashio Grounding” was initiated following the ecological degradation caused by the MV Wakashio oil spill in Mauritius. The main objective was to restore impacted reef ecosystems through coral farming, transplantation, scientific monitoring, and community engagement while simultaneously strengthening national awareness on marine conservation and climate resilience. The project focused on the propagation and transplantation of ecologically important coral species including *Acropora tenuis*, *Acropora selago*, *Acropora muricata*, *Millepora* sp., *Pocillopora damicornis*, *Pocillopora eydouxi*, and *Porites lutea*. These species were selected due to their structural complexity, ecological importance, and resilience potential. Coral fragments were mainly sourced from “Corals of Opportunity” (COOs), which are naturally detached coral colonies collected after storms, wave action, or human disturbance, thereby avoiding damage to healthy donor reefs. In addition, 52 mature coral colonies from *Acropora selago*, *Acropora muricata*, *Millepora* sp., and *Pocillopora damicornis* were relocated and transplanted from Pointe-aux-Feuilles to Pointe D’Esny using spider-frame restoration methods and concrete block structures (over 2.5 tons each) to accelerate reef framework recovery. The project also integrated continuous environmental and ecological monitoring.

b. Numerical goal achieved

The project achieved significant progress toward the numerical goals initially proposed:

- More than **100,000 individuals** were reached through awareness campaigns, sensitization programs, educational outreach, workshops, conferences, school activities, social media dissemination, and online awareness initiatives targeting fishers, NGOs, women, youth, students, and coastal communities.
- Around **10,000 coral fragments** were successfully cultured and transplanted across nursery and restoration sites.
- Some **7 coral species** were conserved, cultured, and maintained within coral nurseries and restoration structures at Pointe-aux-Feuilles and nearby impacted lagoon systems.
- A total of **75 mature coral colonies** from key reef-building species were successfully transplanted to accelerate reef recovery and habitat restoration.
- Biodiversity assessments recorded:
 - more than **37 fish species** associated with the nursery systems;

- recurrent populations of herbivorous fishes such as parrotfish and surgeonfish;
- multiple echinoid species including *Tripneustes gratilla*, *Diadema* sp., *Echinometra* spp., *Astropyga radiata*, and *Stomopneustes variolaris*.

c. Status of Social Impact Achievement and Contribution

The project generated substantial ecological, educational, and socio-economic impacts within Mauritius, particularly among coastal communities. One of the major achievements of the project was the strengthening of environmental awareness and marine stewardship among local communities. Fishermen, NGOs, students, women groups, volunteers, and coastal residents actively participated in sensitization programs, coral farming activities, and environmental outreach campaigns. Community members gained practical knowledge in coral reef monitoring, nursery maintenance, marine conservation, and restoration techniques. Educational activities targeting children and schools played an important role in introducing younger generations to coral reef ecology and climate change awareness. The project promoted long-term environmental responsibility and encouraged stronger public engagement in marine conservation efforts.

d. Media Exposure, Including Online

The project received extensive national and international visibility through traditional media, scientific dissemination, and digital outreach platforms. Project activities were featured through many platforms:

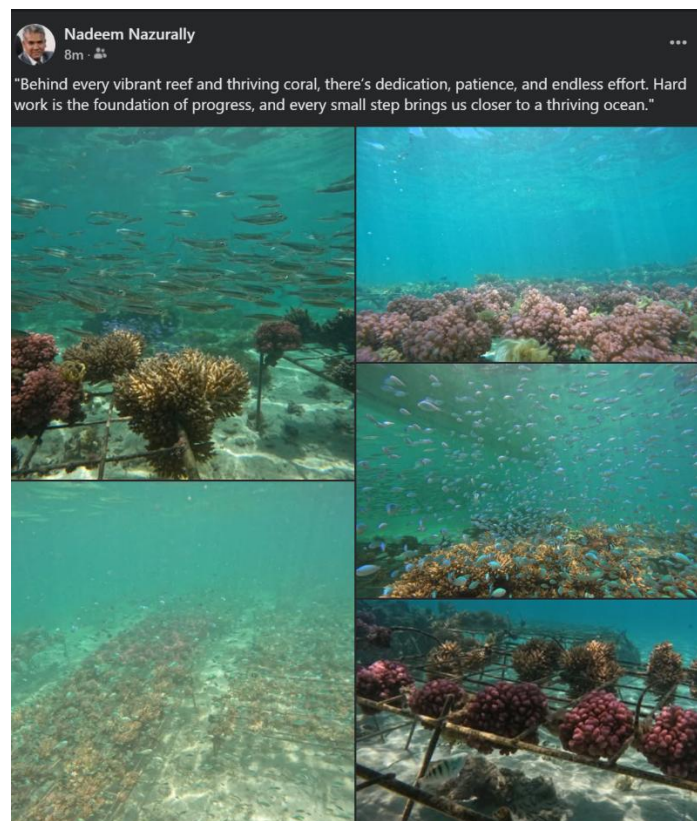


Figure 1: Posted on facebook

Underwater videos and photographs documenting coral growth, transplantation activities, fish colonization, and biodiversity recovery were widely shared online, significantly increasing public engagement and awareness regarding coral reef restoration in Mauritius.

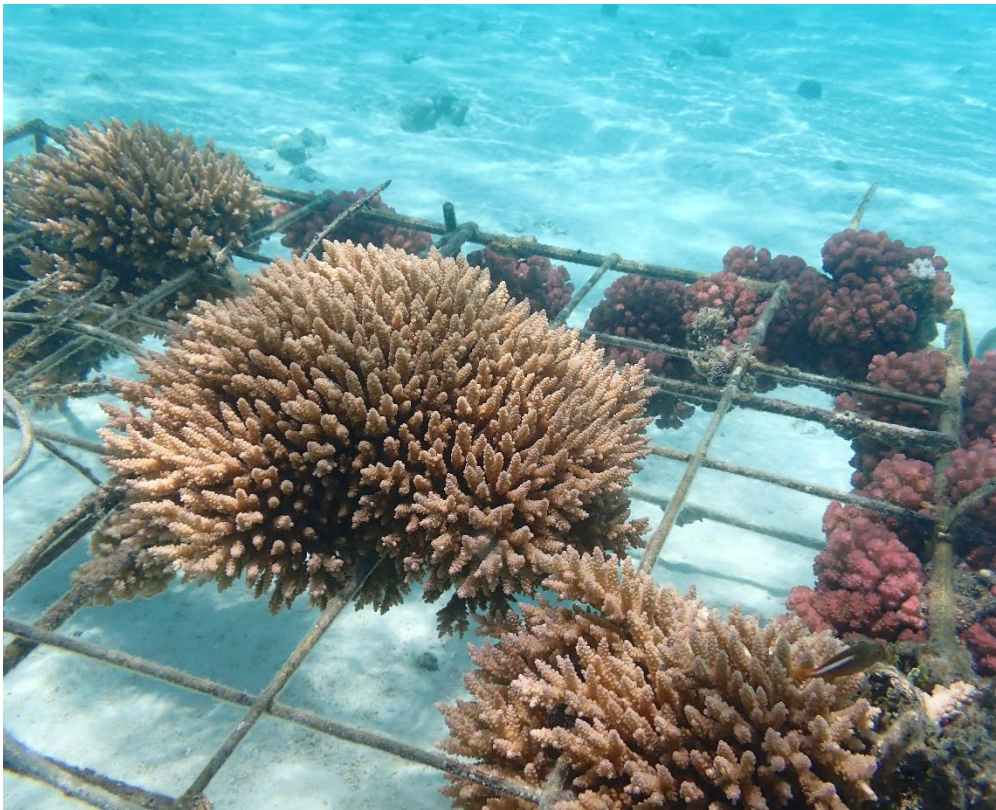


Figure 2: Pictures from Pointe-aux-Feuilles Nursery



Picture 3: Awareness campaigns



Picture 4: Coral Colonies at Pointe D'Esny

e. Status of Strengthening the Foundation of the Organization

The project substantially strengthened the technical, scientific, operational, and collaborative capacity of the implementing organizations and partners. Through the project, expertise was enhanced in: coral farming and transplantation; coral micro-fragmentation; underwater ecological monitoring and biodiversity assessments;

f. Issues and Points of Reflection

Despite the positive outcomes, several challenges were encountered during implementation. Environmental stressors including cyclones, sedimentation, coral bleaching events, elevated sea temperatures, strong hydrodynamic conditions, and fluctuating water quality occasionally affected coral survivorship and nursery maintenance. The global bleaching event of 2025 further highlighted the vulnerability of coral ecosystems to climate change. Predation by

Crown-of-Thorns Starfish (COTS) was periodically observed around the nursery systems. Continuous camera monitoring and rapid response interventions were therefore essential to reduce coral tissue loss and maintain nursery health. Logistical and financial limitations also constrained the expansion of restoration activities, long-term maintenance, and monitoring operations. Coral restoration remains labor-intensive and requires sustained funding, technical expertise, diving operations, and long-term ecological monitoring.

Nevertheless, the project successfully demonstrated that climate-smart coral farming combined with scientific monitoring and strong community participation can significantly contribute to reef recovery, biodiversity enhancement, environmental awareness, and long-term marine conservation in Mauritius.