



Risk Assessment and Audit Madagascar 2026

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation and Assessment Measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Travellers stomach problems	L	M	Ensure only bottled water is drunk. Do not clean teeth in tap water. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated by staff members assisting with transfers.		
Mosquito bites leading to malaria or dengue fever	L	M	All participants to be instructed to cover up in the early morning and late afternoons, sleep under mosquito nets in areas where the insect populations are high and wear insect repellent. If taking anti-malaria tablets, then participants advised to complete full course. All participants to be warned of specifics of each disease and symptoms to look out for. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated by staff members on-site.		
Theft, mugging, violence & personal security	L	L	Participants will stay in a hotel whilst in the city and will be briefed on how to reduce the risks. Valuables should remain “off display” at all times, and participants should not walk out alone at night and avoid remote areas of the city. Participants will be briefed on ensuring they lock their room doors overnight and when they leave the room. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated by staff members assisting with transfers.		
Dehydration	M	M	All participants are informed that dehydration is a significant risk at all times when in the expedition country. They should be informed that they should drink 2 litres of water per day. For any treks, participants should carry sufficient water supplies for the duration of the trek and the trek leader should stop regularly to rest and check for signs of dehydration. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated by staff members assisting with transfers.		

Being injured from traffic	L	M	All participants told of dangers of the busy city roads. Everyone should walk on sidewalk rather than road. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated by staff members assisting with transfers.		
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Transfers & vehicles: Cars, buses, trucks – Completed by Date.....

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Lack of management control increases risks of collision or other incident	L	M	Ensure there is an English-speaking transfer supervisor for each journey. This person should have a mobile phone and be able to contact each of the drivers travelling on any transfer. They should also ensure the drivers are always briefed (see below), and that vehicles travel in convoy with at least one transfer supervisor per group of vehicles.		
Vehicles attacked	L	H	Travel to take place on main roads wherever possible and always in convoy with an English-speaking supervisor with a mobile phone to contact each of the drivers.		
Participants unprepared for length of journey or relevant risks	L	M	Ensure transfer briefing is given before any transfer. This should include as a minimum: The length of the journey, the approximate times of any breaks, what to expect during breaks in terms of relevant risks and where is “off limits” (e.g. browsing other shops or leaving without telling a chaperone).		
Lack of insurance	L	L	Ensure supplier holds relevant motor insurance. This is a contract requirement with Madagascar Tour Consult.		
Inexperienced driver increasing risk of accident	L	H	Ensure driver has more than 3 years’ relevant experience. This is a contract requirement with Madagascar Tour Consult.		
Driver fatigue	L	M	Ensure there is a second driver if the journey is longer than 10 hours on any given day. This is a contract and safety requirement with Madagascar Tour Consult.		

Driver unaware of safety requirements	L	M	Ensure the driver has committed to meet their obligation to comply with national vehicle regulations relevant to the journey e.g. for licensing, speed limits, weight of vehicle, number of passengers etc. and have been briefed on our safety requirements (see below). This is a contract and safety requirement with Madagascar Tour Consult.		
Tyres not able to support emergency braking	L	H	Ensure that each tyre has visible tread in the central part of the tyre all the way round, and that there are no clear irregularities such as bulges. This is a contract and safety requirement with Madagascar Tour Consult.		
Lack of comfort on journey	M	L	Ensure that all passengers have a seat (not including floor space) if the journey is longer than 1 hour. Ensure that luggage is stored in a separate area of the vehicle or does not prevent passengers from being in a comfortable sitting position on journeys longer than 1 hour.		
Participants becoming lost during travel	L	H	If using multiple vehicles, ensure that they travel in convoy or there is one transfer supervisor (who has a mobile phone and can contact each of the drivers) per group of vehicles.		
Driver not following safety requirements	L	H	Ensure that the driver drives carefully and within the speed limit, does not use their phone whilst driving, and stops at least once every 4 hours in order to prevent fatigue.		

Transfers and vehicles: Boats – Completed by..... Date.....

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Lack of management control increases risks of incidents	L	M	All journeys to be accompanied by a transfer manager who should make sure that the vessel is not overloaded, and that all participants are fully briefed on where they can travel or sit within the boat, location of lifejackets and toilets (if any), and expected journey time.		
Vessel sinking or capsizing	L	H	All boats used for transportation to be registered with the relevant port authorities. Captain to have method for communication with rescue services. Lifejackets to be available for all participants (except on dive or snorkel trips). Passenger boats to have radio communications or mobile phone communications with the shore.		
Passengers suffering sunburn, dehydration, or heat-stroke	M	M	Transfer manager to make sure that sufficient drinking water is available, and that participants are told to wear sun block if outside.		
Passengers suffering from sea sickness	M	L	Participants to be advised to bring travel sickness medication and are reminded to take it, if desired, prior to the journey. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated by staff members on-site.		
Falling whilst boarding or whilst travelling	L	L	Participants to be advised to board one person at a time. Ensure that there is an option for participants to board without their belongings and it be passed on to them once they are on board. All volunteers are instructed to stay seated whilst boats are moving, unless otherwise stated and agreed by transfer manager.		

Water margins – Completed by..... Date.....

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Inappropriate supervision	L	H	Complete assessment pro-forma to establish level of supervision required.		
River crossings	L	M	Do not enter water where the current/flow could cause the participant to be moved to a deeper or more dangerous area of the water. Staff member to enter first in order to test the depth and terrain under the water. Any slippery sections should be highlighted. Use a rope if appropriate over sustained slippery terrain. This must be completed for all transects being used by groups, as well as journey to and from Matsedroy.		
Beach/lakeside activities (including leisure time on the beach)	L	H	Ensure appropriate supervision is in place (see pro-forma). Do not enter water if there are strong tides or current that could cause participants to be drawn out to sea or to a dangerous area (e.g. rocks or coral). Give a safety briefing to highlight any out-of-bound areas. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing.		
Swimming pools	L	H	Ensure participants are told never to use the Nosy Lodge pool alone. Brief participants on any slippery areas around the pool and on any banned activities e.g. diving in the shallow end. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing.		

Terrestrial risks – Completed by Date.....

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Participant becoming lost	L	H	All groups must sign out when leaving the camp using whiteboard system and if the group does not return on time, then contact will be attempted with the group and if this is not possible a search and rescue team will be organised. No participant to leave the camp site area unaccompanied. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing as well.		
Safety and security of participants and personal belongings	L	H	Valuables should not be left lying around. Guards or Opwall staff members will always be present in the terrestrial camps. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing as well.		
Participants poorly equipped or with a lack of fitness to cope adequately with the forest conditions	L	M	Participants are fully briefed prior to the start of any walks and check they have the appropriate equipment with them. New participants will be watched carefully for signs of exhaustion and to adjust the distances covered according to the fitness levels. Training sessions given to students prior to expedition to ensure they are fully prepared for conditions on site.		
Lack of hygiene increasing risk of disease	L	M	Hands should be washed regularly before eating using hand washing facilities provided on site. Kitchen facilities whilst on site should be kept clean and food categories (e.g. meats, vegetables etc.) are prepared separately. All tables on site are cleaned with bleach at least once a day and dishwashing bucket water changed frequently.		

Allergic reaction to food	M	H	All participants to submit dietary and allergy information prior to the expedition. Where allergies are serious (e.g. severe nut allergies), no trigger foods to be prepared or served whilst the relevant participant is on-site (e.g. a total nut ban).		
Medical problem for participant	M	M	All medical details are provided by all participants before the expedition and reviewed by country manager and expedition medics. Medical staff are always available during the expedition or always within proximity of medical facilities. Sites have adequate medical supplies for stabilizing any patients needing to be transferred to a hospital.		
Dehydration	H	H	Students to be briefed on importance of drinking water often. Rehydration salts to be available on site. Check with all students pre-survey that they have a minimum of 2 litres on their person. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated in site-welcome lecture and by staff members before every single survey.		
Need for emergency evacuation	L	H	Vehicles always available for emergency evacuation from field sites. Full evacuation plans in place for extraction to local medical facilities.		
Tripping or falling in camp or in the forest	M	H	All volunteers to be given a full safety briefing and tour of the camp on arrival which will include advice on taking care in slippery areas such as the shower, and always watching your footing around the camp and in the forest, particularly at night.		

Attack by animal	L	H	Potential dangerous animals are the fossa, wild boar, and crocodile. All participants to travel in groups in the forest and keep safe distances from large water bodies that could contain crocodiles. Chance of this type of incident is extremely low.		
Reaction or disease from insect, arachnid, or scorpion sting/bite	L	M	Participants with strong reactions to insect/arachnid bites identified prior to expeditions and instructed to carry epi-pens with them. Participants to wear long trousers and closed-toed footwear whilst in forested areas and long grass.		
Local fauna and flora	M	M	Trek leaders to walk at front of group and identify any major insect hives and ensure groups avoid these areas. All participants should check their shoes before putting them on. Participants will be briefed on any risks from flora or fauna.		
Fire	L	VH	Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the forest except in designated areas. All participants should be fully briefed on this regulation and are trained in evacuation procedures. No smoking allowed in any tent, hammock, building or local houses.		
Inappropriate consumption of alcohol	L	H	No alcohol to be consumed by any participants under the age of 18 years old. No surveys or activities to be carried out under the influence of alcohol.		

Negative interaction with local people	L	M	Groups to be accompanied by local guides and an English/Malagasy speaking staff member to translate at all times.		
Bite or scratch from local cat or dog – a potential rabies carrier	M	M	Participants must stay away from all cats and dogs and are not permitted to stroke them. The location of the nearest post-exposure vaccination is confirmed at the start of the season and evacuation procedures in plan if required. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated in site-welcome lecture.		
Injury to feet while wading through water in rice paddies or during walk to Matsedroy	L	M	Participants must wear reef booties or sandals with straps and a strong sole to mitigate risk of sharp roots injuring feet. This is to be included in the welcome briefing, and reiterated in the briefing before the walk.		

Marine risks – Completed by..... Date.....

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Need for emergency evacuation	L	H	Vehicles always available for emergency evacuation from field sites. Full evacuation plans in place for extraction to local medical facilities.		
Injury or danger encountered when wandering around the town	L	M	Camp manager must be informed of any groups leaving site and they are due to return. All trips off site should be in groups of at least two people, and they must use the sign-out board.		
Fire	L	H	No smoking is allowed within buildings and only in designated smoking areas. All participants should be fully briefed on evacuation procedures. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing.		
Lack of hygiene increasing risk of disease	L	M	Participants sleep in dorm rooms with flushing toilets and showers and will be briefed on the importance of washing hands thoroughly before mealtimes. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing.		
Allergic reaction to food	M	H	All participants to submit dietary and allergy information prior to the expedition. Where allergies are serious (e.g. severe nut allergies), no trigger foods to be prepared or served whilst the relevant participant is on-site (e.g. a total nut ban).		
Insufficient communication facilities	L	H	Emergency phone charged and kept with a copy of emergency numbers.		

Safety and security of participants and personal belongings	L	H	Valuables should not be left lying around. Opwall staff members will always be in and around the on-site accommodation. Gate surrounding the accommodations will be locked every evening with a security guard at the entrance. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing.		
Medical problem for participant	M	M	All medical details are provided by all participants before the expedition and reviewed by country manager and expedition medics. Medical staff are always available during the expedition or always within close proximity of medical facilities. Sites have adequate medical supplies for stabilizing any patients needing to be transferred to a hospital.		
Inappropriate consumption of alcohol	L	H	No alcohol to be consumed by any participants. No alcohol to be consumed whilst in the water. No participants to enter the water whilst under the influence of alcohol. This is to be included in site-welcome briefing.		
Bite or scratch from local cat or dog – a potential rabies carrier	M	M	Participants must stay away from all cats and dogs and are not permitted to stroke them. The location of the nearest post-exposure vaccination is confirmed at the start of the season and evacuation procedures in plan if required. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated in site-welcome lecture.		

Diving & Snorkelling – Completed by..... Date.....

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigation measures	Assessment Method	Compliance (Action to be taken if not compliant)
Injury caused by falling tank	L	M	All tanks should be laid down when they are not being held at the pool. On boats. tanks are placed vertically in the tank holes and secured with rope.		
Inappropriate pre-dive check	L	H	Buddy dive equipment checks to be done for all divers prior to entering the water and these to be checked by supervising dive staff.		
Becoming separated whilst diving	L	H	All divers receive a full briefing about the times, dive profile, possible currents and what to do in the event of becoming separated.		
Lack of supervision during dive training	L	M	All dive trainers in the water at a ratio of 1 Dive Instructor and 1 Dive Master per 8 students. Dive instructor or dive master to remain close to group and monitor group at all times.		
Lack of supervision during dives	L	M	All qualified divers in the water with a Divemaster per 6 students. Dive instructor or dive master to remain close to group and monitor group at all times.		
Injury or Illness during diving	L	H	All divers to be wearing a wetsuit or rash vest and short to protect from the sun. All participants briefed on dangers of local flora and fauna. This is to be included in pre-arrival briefing material sent to students and reiterated in site-welcome lecture.		

Injury during diving from boats	L	H	Clear briefings on designated diving areas and need to stop and check for boats before coming to the surface.		
Lack of cover for divers	L	H	For boat dives: boat to maintain visual contact with dive groups on the surface and to have sufficient oxygen, trained personnel in oxygen delivery and a First Aid kit. All dive professionals to be briefed to make every effort to surface as near to the boat as safely possible.		
Decompression sickness	L	H	Are all divers checked to ensure they have not exceeded 18m depth, maximum dive time of 50 minutes, stopped at 5m for 3 minutes and have 50 bar/700psi remaining in the tanks at the end of the dive. The boat roster is completed pre- dive with starting air and post-dive with final air, time, safety stop checks and max depth for all dives.		
Barotraumas	L	H	All staff and volunteers informed of risk of barotraumas when diving and safe equalization procedure, which includes aborting the dive if equalization is not possible. All staff and volunteers to be informed that they should not dive with an upper respiratory tract infection. All staff and volunteers to be informed of the dangers of using decongestants when diving. Relevant information included in training of students.		
Lack of understanding signals	L	H	Some dive professionals will use different signals, so it is important that a standard is kept for all. Briefings given prior to dive.		

Injury or illness during snorkelling	L	H	All snorkelers to be wearing a wetsuit or rash vest and shorts to protect from the sun. All participants briefed on dangers of local flora and fauna.		
Injury during snorkelling from boats	L	H	Clear briefings on designated snorkelling areas and need to stop and check for boats every few minutes.		
Becoming lost while snorkelling	L	H	All snorkelers must sign in and out and be covered by a staff member (see below). All snorkelers receive a full briefing what to do in the event of becoming separated and possible strong currents.		
Lack of supervision for snorkelling groups	L	H	Depending on the location this may be shore cover / boat cover / in-water supervision. All snorkelers must be in groups of two or more and the group or supervisor (who should have an appropriate water rescue qualification) must carry an SMB.		
Injury to feet while wading to and from the boats at the marine site	L	M	Participants must wear reef booties or sandals with straps and a strong sole when walking to and from the boats, to mitigate risk of sharp objects such as sea urchins injuring feet. This is to be included in the welcome briefing, and reiterated by staff at the dive equipment room.		