

Activity report

Acronyms

AEECL: Association Européenne pour l'Etude et la Conservation des Lémuriens

ESSA : Ecole Supérieure Scientifique Agronomique

DREF: Direction Régionale de l'Environnement et des Forêts

JME : Journée Mondiale de l'Environnement

MNP: Madagascar National Parks

SCC: Structure de Concertation Communale

USFWS: US Fish and Wildlife Service

The present report describes the activities that the AEECL conducted and participated from March to the beginning of August 2011. The report represents both of the activity that was undertaken at headquarter and in the field.

1. March 2011: Reporting of activities to partners

Every year, the AEECL tables a progress report to its partners in order to communicate the achievement and to present the activities that he will carry out. The report passes to different stage from the national level to the village involved in the project. These partners include the ministries, the regional committee of NGOs, the region of Sofia, DREF and the municipalities concerned by the project.

2. March 2011: identification of a project to Seacology

As part of the implementation of the Seacology project, a meeting was conducted in the camp in Ankarafa on 31st of March, 2011. The purpose of the meeting is to identify the community project with the representatives of each village surrounding in the Ankarafa forest.

The main objective of the project is to control forest clearing and wood cutting and to abandon any form of exploitation that might harm the biodiversity in and around the forest of Ankarafa.

The specific objective is to implement a community project which responds with the daily needs of the villagers.

The participants to the meeting came from the four villages around the forest of Ankarafa such as Marovato, Ampasimirehoka, Antsatsaka and Amboloboza. According to these people the villagers would give up any activity that may harm the natural environment but in return they need tools that help them to improve their yields. Such as the allocation of fishing gear (nets and motorized canoes), and promoting agricultural intensification such as the construction of micro-dams and farm machinery and management of rice fields.

3. April 2011: grant application for USFWS

A grant application was made for USFWS. The title of the project is "Reinforcing Conservation Activities and Monitoring Sustainable Resource Use to Protect Critically Endangered Lemurs in the Sahamalaza-îles Radama National Park, NW Madagascar". The goal is to contribute to the conservation of the protected forest zones of the Sahamalaza Peninsula, for the benefit of the country's people, wildlife and ecosystems.

4. May 2011: training of tourist guides

This is the second training of tourist guides. The goal is to prepare somebody to be able to communicate and accompany the tourists, this year they were 19. At the end of training, the participants got a certificate.

Compared to the last year, there was a third training, focussing on capacity building of knowledge of the ecology of the Sahamalaza Peninsula. The participants to this training are selected from both of the participants of last year and these of this year. In total, they were 12, but only 9 of them did finish the training. They received a certificate.

The capacity building includes a theoretical course in Antsohihy followed by a visit and practice in the forest of Ankarafa. The purpose of this training is to practice the knowledge that participants acquired during the theoretical training.

5. June 2011: participation in JME to Maromandia

Almost every year the SCC Maetsamalaza Miray celebrates JME. The AEECL representative was unable to attend physically the festivity because he was retained in Antananarivo to renew the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the association and Malagasy government. The AEECL also contributed to the purchase of a zebu and some prizes for the quiz. To represent the AEECL, Jolijn Geels assisted the JME in Maromandia.

6. Since June 2011

The implementation of MoU between the MNP and the AEECL is again revived. The MoU proposal was established last year but nothing was concluded so far. Each contracting is still rectifying the content of the MoU before signing. The MoU can be signed according to the MNP Managing Director but the DOP did not give his opinion.

The purpose of the MoU allows the AEECL to stay in the research camp and to upgrade it so that more researchers can get profit. In compensation, the AEECL continues the conservation activities and report to the MNP about the ongoing research.

7. July 2011: The preparation of the research permit

Previously, researchers working with the AEECL relied on an agency to handle the research permit. As from 2011, the AEECL itself takes care of the application for the research permit, i.e. contact MNP to gather the necessary documents; prepare and post the research proposals. The establishment of the MoU between the AEECL and the MNP would facilitate the issue of the research permit.

8. From June to July 2011: Renewal of the Headquarters Agreement

Every two years, the headquarter agreement should be renewed to allow the continuation of the activities of the AEECL as an international NGO. To do so, 10 copies of multiple folders should be provided. Since March 2011 the local responsible has begun to raise these issues but at the time of filing, more documents should be produced from another department. It was in July that all records have been assembled and submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They will reply after one and a half month.

10. August 2011: (Re)Establishment of a firebreak

Almost every year fires occur in and around the forest of Ankarafa and often this causes substantial damage. The establishment and maintenance of a fire break is one of the ways that the AEECL uses to stop and control these fires. With its partners (MNP, CSC and the villagers) the AEECL carries out a fire break session in the Ankarafa forest. The idea is to invite the villagers to come to the forest and cut any vegetation that grows on the old fire break or even clear some new openings if necessary. The (re)establishment of the fire break normally lasts 3 days but this time it is extended to 4 days. One group of villagers assists for one day only (6 hours) and is replaced by a different group of villagers the next day. The SCC Volamaitso has informed the villagers about the programme through a written notice.

10.1. Realization

During these four days of work, a fire break 2200m long of 7 m has been cleared of vegetation. It took place in the area in which fire mostly occurred, namely in the Northern part of the forest between points S14 ° 22' 18.8; E 47 ° 46' 04.7 and S14 ° 52' 53; E47 ° 58' 59.8.



Photo. Villagers during the establishment of the fire break

10.2. About the participants

MNP staff was present. There were 112 villagers from 15 villages in the Ambolobozo district, and one person from Maromandia.

For Subsidized teachers, 16 of the 42 were physically present, while 7 had notified they would be unable to assist and are considered to be present.

10.3. On the decline of participants

Compared to last year, there was a reduction of 50% of participants. The following reasons might be the responsible for this decline:

- the organization of a ball at Ambolobolozo by the Mayor on the day of the fire break;
- the death of one person in Marovato. Because of that the villagers from Marovato, Ampasimirehoka and Ambalahonko could not assist the (re)establishment of the fire break;
- a teachers' training which coincided with the day of the fire break;
- the Ramadan, people do not have enough strength to work;
- villagers may not have received the notice in time.

An evaluation with the participants took place at the end of each day of work. In the future, in order to improve numbers of participants and achieve a better result, it would be better:

- to ask a receipt for each notice;
- to respect the working time, that is in the morning from 8:00 to 12:00 and from 14:00 to 16:00 in the afternoon, rather than start too late and pull out early;
- to arrive the evening before the day of work;
- to limit the number of persons to prepare food;
- to provide more materials (such as rakes or shovels) in case some participants did not bring theirs;
- to better manage the handles of shovels so that future participants can reuse them, since participants tend to cut young trees to make new handles.

Also according to participants, it would be useful to strengthen the motivation of participants through:

- organizing of a ball at the last day of the work;
- distributing of T-shirts specially designed for the occasion;
- renovating the school in the village that has gathered the most participants.

Some teachers signalled that other subsidized teachers did not participate, which was considered irresponsible and unfair. In view of is, the others would suggest the following:

- to well examine the excuses of these teachers by the organizers (the AEECL, the MNP and the SCC) and to reject them if they seem to be questionable;
- to subtract per day the third of the salary of the person who does not come. If that person does not show up during the three days of work, he will not get his salary. This salary will be then shared with the participants to buy some drinks.

Others have even proposed that different sections of the fire break could be assigned to specific teachers, so they would be able to programme the work individually or in smaller groups. This was quickly discarded by the organizer because they might come alone to the forest and they may not be able finish the work, which would disrupt the organization.

As for Maromandia, the lack of transportation may have prevented the teachers to come. In fact, they do not have to come to Ankarafa. Instead, they are invited to clearing weeds around all planted seedlings in the reforestation sites in their villages. If they accept this proposition, the SCC will organize and monitor the progress of work.

10.4. The preparatory meeting of the Lemurs Fair

The organizers used the occasion of the establishment of fire break to anticipate the preparation of the Lemurs Fair to hold their meeting. They decided that it will be held again in the village of Antafiabe on the 24th and 25th of September. They chose the following topic: "Yesterday is gone, today is difficult and what about tomorrow?". The topic focuses on education and invites villagers to be more careful about the use of natural resources.

Apart from the usual activities, a documentary about climate change (the Malagasy version) will be shown. The preliminary meeting with the villagers has been held on August 11th, 2011 and another meeting will be held on September 11th.

11. From March to August 2011: Student assistance

To improve the results of forest restoration, two students from the ESSA (forest section) got funding from the AEECL to carry out research on the forest restoration. A simple collaboration is developed between the AEECL and the department where these students are registered.

One of them is about to finish the writing up and he will defend his dissertation soon. The AEECL representative is invited as part of the examiner committee. As a result, he works closely with the student for the dissertation.

12. August 2011: Construction of tent shelters

The research camp in Ankarafa is modest. Sometimes it is difficult to work there in presence of many researches and during the rainy season. Therefore, 6 tent shelters will be built to receive these research and to make better their stay.

The roof of these tent shelters will be made of corrugated iron (so it will last longer) and the floor will be made of branches of raffia locally called "ketikety".

Ten corrugated irons and 25 "ketikety" are now gathered. We are still looking for some woods for pillars.