

AIDE MEMOIRE
MEETING ON THE WHALES EVENT in ANTSOHIHY – la LOZA BAY

Context

Since 31 May 2008, whales are found in the Loza bay and they have unusual behaviour while attempting to reach coastal zone and look for refuge at Antsohihy harbour.

Efforts coordinated by the Sofia Region have been carried by local communities and authorities to get them back to offshore, on June 4, 2008, unsuccessfully; the whales returned back to the bay.

An “ad hoc committee” has been created on Friday June 6, 2008. It is composed of Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries,- MAEP; Ministry of Environment, Water & Forest and Tourism - MINENVEFT, Ministry of Energy and Mines – MEM; ONE, ANGAP, OMNIS, NGO's (WWF, WCS, Fanamby), ExxonMobil to handle and coordinate this event.

Meeting June 6, 2008

Location: office of the Secrétaire General MINENVEFT

Focus: bringing together all whales' related information:

Situation:

- Whales moving to the bay have been observed on May 31, whales died first on June 1st;
- The Centre de Surveillance des Pêches (CSP) and the Gendarmerie Brigade are on site since the alarm has been given. Technicians from MAEP (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries) and WCS Scientists assist local communities in recovering grounding whales into the mangroves or the beaches and put them back to the sea;
- Centre de Surveillance des Pêches (CSP) boats make inquiries to coastal communities with respect to whales' occurrence.
- Two (2) CSP boats ensure the beach survey; other local fishing boats are also requested; they are lacking diesel.

Sofia Region is working on communication to the local communities: “*while seeing whales not to kill them and while finding died ones, not to eat them*”;

Actions needed

First priority: rescue the whales in putting them back to the sea then conduct investigation and learn more about the cause of this event;

- Find mammals experts and get them involve in rescue operations
- Get a standardized mammals rescue procedure
- Inventory of the animals and their location
- Sample mammals tissue and blood
- Sample seawater for analysis
- Check the surrounding areas of the bay to identify any more whales and to explore any damage expansion

Main concerns: financial resources

- Required action: Find out financial assistance to execute all needed operations

Meeting June 7, 2008

Location: Conference room MINENVEFT

Situation	Decision / action taken
Died whales : - 7 died in harbour of Antsohihy - 20 died in mangroves all buried	Send messages to local coordination not bury all died animals but proceed to freeze some because we need to preserve animals for necropsies and sample tissue and/or blood to make analysis later on.
If need to preserve animals for necropsies and sample tissue and/or blood to make analysis later on.	Request through Government some tuna fishing boats which are equipped with freezing system :
Alive whales: 60 of which 20 have trouble while breathing (documented by Bemahafaly, WCS Specialists) Some whales go back to offshore ?	Need to involved mammals experts as quick as possible to rescue, to sample, to investigate,
4 mammals experts are identified : Paul P.Calle (Vet); Denise McAloose (Pathologist); Kate McClave(Mammals monitoring supervisor); Cathie They will arrive in Antananarivo on Sunday 8 June; will fly to Antsohihy on Monday 9 June;	Need to get authorization from the Government to use these experts: write a note to the government Get authorization for courtesy visa ; to accelerate all procedures : work with Ministry of Foreign Affairs <i>It is proposed to optimize the intervention of these experts</i>
100 page standard rescue procedure (English version) has been received from WCS experts ; it includes a list of equipments and materials they will bring along with themselves	Need to get special authorization for customs clearances : work with customs department
Local communities work hard to try to prospect and monitor the whales; they lack diesel / fuel for the boat Boat crews have no food no more	Work through the Government to mobilise every potential financial partner including downstream companies: JOVENNA, GALANA, TOTAL, SHELL: write a note to the government and ask them inform and request
Coordination is made at two levels : on site by the Chef de Region Sofia And in Antananarivo by the Directeur de Cabinet of the Ministry of Environment Coordination support / secretariat is from WCS	Chef de Région SOFIA : M. Ferdinand Andriamihaja : andriferd@yahoo.fr 032 04 735 32 033 12 790 43 M. Herilala Andriamahazo: herilala@wcs.org 033 11 879 93
Handle the rumours over the Regional communities and at a national scale	Write a press release to communicate the accurate situation set up a "Hot Line" to get all related information which is also necessary to coordinate
The bay has many river branches; so, it is necessary to inventory the animals and identify their location	<i>Carry out an aerial survey: use of helicopter: this action is just proposed but it depends on the evolution of the situation over 24 hours</i>
Information to release to:	<i>All Oil companies operating exploration in Madagascar offshore blocks</i>
Other information:	Mammals Experts form Mayotte sent an email to NGO Fanamby and give instruction on how to preserve the animals in a sight of analysis and/or post rescue investigation; they are willing to help for the necessary

Situation	Decision / action taken
	analysis.
Budget estimated to cover all required operations	USD 350,000 (see rough estimation below) A special bank account will be open for the purpose.
Entities which will contribute to financial assistance:	EXXONMOBIL WCS ONE MAEP GTZ WWF ...

In italics are actions without effective decision on June 7, 2008

BUDGET ESTIMATION

Items / actions	Estimated amount USD
Five (5) Boats rent for five (5) days	50 000
Experts in Madagascar	80 000
Sampling and freezing	10 000
Materials and equipment	20 000
Local communities expenses	20 000
National Scientists costs	20 000
Diesel / fuel Oil	30 000
Analysis cost	50 000
Communication	10 000
Monitoring	10 000
Miscellaneous	20 000
TOTAL	350 000

Attendees:

- Secrétaire General MINENVEFT
- Directeur Cabinet MAEP
- Directeur Cabinet MINENVEFT
- Directeur des Hydrocarbures MEM
- Directeur de Pêche MAEP
- Chef CSP
- DG OMNIS
- DG ONE
- DIR EIE ONE
- DG ANGAP
- DG EXXONMOBIL
- EXXONMOBIL Environment Consultant
- WWF Representatives
- WCS Representatives
- FANAMBY Representatives (2)
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