



Annual Activity Report 2017 & Annual Work Plan 2018



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Table of Contents

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2017	1
1. Strengthening Education	2
Grant for Community Teachers	2
Construction of School	4
2. Increase villager's awareness and reinforce communication campaign	5
Environmental Events and Awareness	5
Ecotourism	9
3. Improvement Of Forest Management And Preservation	12
Establishing Firebreaks	12
Forest monitoring by the member of the park local committees	13
School meal	13
Staff Management	15
4. Royal and Malagasy President visits	18
ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2018	19

List of photos

Photo 1 : Male blue-eyed black lemur (Eulemur flavifrons)	1
Photo 2 : Meeting with teachers during the firebreak	2
Photo 3 : Meeting with teachers in Maromandia	3
Photo 4: Old School	4
Photo 5: New School	5
Photo 6: World Environment Day in Anjamangirana.....Photo 7: World Environment Day Poster	6
Photo 8: World Environment Day in Bevoay.....Photo 9: Presentation of the members of the PLC	6
Photo 10: Official Speeches	7
Photo 11: Distribution of 'SOS' t-shirts	7
Photo 12: Carnival	8
Photo 13: Traditional Dance	8
Photo 14: Tents at the tourist camp	9
Photo 15: Inside one of the tents	10
Photo 16: Unfinished toilet	11
Photo 17: Recording of participants list	12
Photo 18: Creation of firebreaks	12
Photo 19: School meal food preparation	14
Photo 20: Kids having their meal	14
Photo 21: Holy working on the staff rota.....Photo 22: Holy with the staff in Ankarafa	15
Photo 23: New school inauguration	16
Photo 24: AEECL Board Member Frank Rietkerk helping setting up a tent	17
Photo 25 : AEECL Treasurer Brice Lefaux and the Programme Director Guy Randriatahina	17
Photo 26: Her Royal Highness Princess Anne & Gary Batters	18
Photo 27: Malagasy President and delegation	18

Acronyms

MKLF:	Marat Karpeka Lemur Foundation
MNP:	Madagascar National Parks
PLC:	Park Local Committees
SGT:	Sofia Guide Touristique
SOS:	Save Our Species
WED:	World Environment Day

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2017

The AEECL aims to protect the habitat and ecosystems within the Sahamalaza National Park, monitor and increase lemur populations and be a strong conservation ambassador for the area. To achieve this, we invest in local communities through education, resource management and communication, to ensure the communities of today can forge a safe haven for wildlife tomorrow.



Photo 1 : Male blue-eyed black lemur (*Eulemur flavifrons*)

The following activities were planned and achieved during 2017:

- Providing salary support for 78 community teachers,
- Awarding scholarships for 15 high school students,
- Construction of a firebreak around the Ankarafa forest,
- Participation in the Lemur Festivals,

- Construction of a school in the village of Ambinda,
- Improvement at the tourist camp,
- Discussions about fire management.

The activities hereafter were not planned but achieved:

- Royal and Presidential visit to Sahamalaza
- Visit from three members of the AEECL board to Madagascar
- Arrival of international tourists

1. Strengthening Education

Grant for Community Teachers

This project consisted of providing salary support for the community teachers. Half of the community teacher salaries are paid by the AEECL and the villagers should pay the rest. The grant covered the same number of the subsidized teachers as in 2016. In total, 78 teachers received this subsidy from the AEECL.



Photo 2 : Meeting with teachers during the firebreak



Photo 3 : Meeting with teachers in Maromandia

Strengths

- Objectives were achieved up to 90%.
- Teachers are motivated and involved the students in the environmental activities. Many of the teachers participated in the establishment of the firebreak and the Lemur Festival.
- Teachers took their responsibilities towards teaching seriously and the students' enrollment rate is stable.

Weaknesses

- We could not conduct the evaluation of the teachers due to the lack of time.
- The villagers were not able to pay the teacher's salary because of the increase of the cost of living.
- Many teachers want to receive the grant from the AEECL.

Actions for the future

- Each teacher needs to engage in the protection of the environment. They will be assessed regarding the activity that they have done during the year.
- Keep supporting the teachers and have regular meetings with them.
- Continue the teacher's assessment
- Some schools need more action on environmental activities.

Construction of School

The construction of the school is tangible proof of our commitment to support the community. The construction allowed us to stand out from the other organizations working in Sahamalaza. We achieved what we have pledged and the villagers in Ambinda have a brand new school building.

Strengths

Objectives were achieved,
One school was built in Ambinda village,
No incident reported during the construction,
The builder respected the contract,
The construction went well and it was well received by the communities and the local leaders around the park.

Weakness

The construction was slightly delayed.



Photo 4: Old School



Photo 5: New School

2. Increase Villager's Awareness And Reinforce Communication Campaign

Environmental Events and Awareness

The aim of environmental events is to increase awareness about the conservation of the environment by bringing all organisations and groups together in one place. The AEECL participated and organized four activities at environmental events throughout 2017.

- **World Environment Day**

The celebration of World Environment Day took place in the Anjamangirana District of Antsohihy between 5th and 6th June 2017. This was organized by the Regional Directorate of Ecology, Environment and Forestry. The AEECL were present during the event and was represented by Holy and Anick, AEECL staff based in Antsohihy. They manned an exhibition stand displaying the work of the AEECL. There were about 850 participants in the event.



Photo 6: World Environment Day in Anjamangirana



Photo 7: World Environment Day Poster

- **Local World Environment Day**

The local World Environment Day took place in Bevoay Maromandia on 2nd September 2017. There were about 250 participants at this event. Bevoay is a village in the Sahamalaza National Park. The Madagascar National Parks (MNP) organized this event and the AEECL were in attendance.



Photo 8: World Environment Day in Bevoay



Photo 9: Presentation of the members of the Parks Local Committee

- **Local Lemur Festival**

The local Lemur Festival took place in Ambinda on the 24th and 25th September 2017. The festival was organized by the local association Volamaitso. The AEECL provided financial support. The Head of the Sofia Region was present and highlighted the need for protection of the environment and collaboration with non-governmental organisations.

The AEECL distributed more 'SOS – Save Our Species' t-shirts and sarongs during this event.



Photo 10: Official Speeches



Photo 11: Distribution of 'SOS' t-shirts

- **World Lemur Festival**

The AEECL participated in the celebration of the fourth edition of the World Lemur Festival at the University of Antananarivo on 10th November 2017. The lemur conservation organisation, Le Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche sur les Primates de Madagascar (GERP) is the main organizer of this festival. Brice Lefaux, treasurer of the AEECL and the Programme Director, Guy Randriatahina, were present during the opening ceremony. The activities undertaken during this celebration included a carnival, panel discussions, dances, sketch performances and exhibition stands. The festival was held at an indoor gymnasium at the University of Antananarivo. Due to the recent outbreak of the plague in Madagascar, certain restrictions were in force restricting the gathering of people in public places which did impact on the festival.



Photo 12: Carnival



Photo 13: Traditional Dance

Strengths

Objectives were achieved.

There was an improvement in the celebration of local environmental events.

There were more than 1000 people in attendance during the local lemur festival in Ambinda. This was an increase of 20% compared to the celebration in 2016,

The presence of the students from the University of Antananarivo during the celebration of the local lemur festival made the event more animated.

Weaknesses

The location in Ambinda that was chosen for the local lemur festival ceremony was not appropriate,

The nearest water source was far from the place where people were staying,

Several people left after the first day of the celebrations,

There were less fun activities to keep people busy during the festival,

The AEECL participation to environmental events outside of the main site (Sahamalaza National Park) were limited because this kind of expenditure was not budgeted for.

Actions for the future

Make funds available for the participation in environmental events which happen outside of the field site.

Change the location of the next local lemur festival to another place where the water supply is more accessible,

Organize some attractive games during the lemur festival to keep people more entertained.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism has been a big focus for the AEECL in 2018 as it helps to strengthen community links, creates employment for local people and creates awareness of the incredible biodiversity in the area.

Apenheul Zoo offered eight tents to the AEECL to improve camp facilities and helped on the construction of tables, beds, chairs and other equipment and the road construction from Marovato to the camp.

The Marat Karpeka Lemur Foundation (MKLF) also helped to develop the tourist camp. With their donation, we can build a new toilet facility and we created three information plaques and set one of them in the village of Ambinda and the rest in Ankarafa at the entrance of the forest.



Photo 14: Tents at the tourist camp



Photo 15: Inside one of the tents

Strengths

Objectives were achieved

Tourist infrastructures were ready prior to the arrival of the tourists.

There were signs up before coming to the camp.

Collaboration with the Sofia Guide Touristique (SGT) and travel agent Madafocus was good.

We welcomed 60 tourists in total to the camp.

The tourists were happy about the service at the camp.

Local villagers were happy because they had the opportunity to earn some money during the visit (cooking, laundry, porters, etc.)

Villagers were able to show their national culture to the visitors.

Weaknesses

Tourists had to walk about three hours to join the camp and many of them complained about the long walk and it was difficult to drive to Marovato to fetch some people as the road was bad.

The activities were not as well developed as they could be,

It was a bit risky to come in to Ankarafa by boat. Tourists and their luggage were wet during the trip by boat.

None of the guides speak English.

The construction of the new toilet was delayed due to the difficulty with some of the construction materials supply.

Water supply system did not work properly,

Communication to the tourist camp was restricted due to the bad telephone network signal,

The team at the tourist camp need to prepare more thoroughly to receive visitors.

Actions for the future

These tourists groups were much larger in size and lessons have been learnt regarding the organising of this size of group.

The Park entrance fee from tourists should be paid directly to the MNP.

Train local people to be tourist guides,

Improve the responsibility of the porters and train them to be more professional,

Complete the construction of the new toilet,

Build a shelter above the tents,

Resolve the problem with the pump,

Improve the tourist path within the forest,

Find an extra car to fetch more people from Marovato,

Continue lemur surveys and habituation,

Organize a trip by car to avoid the long walk from the beach to the camp,

Review and adapt the price of food at the camp during the visit,

Tourist guides should learn English,

Regularly fix the road to Marovato with suitable tools,

Improve the vegetables crops.



Photo 16: Unfinished toilet

3. Improvement Of Forest Management And Preservation

Establishing Firebreaks

In order to stop the spread of fires, fire breaks were established around the Ankarafa forest from 6th to 8th August 2017. In total, 856 persons participated in the building of the firebreak, this was an increase of 60% compare to the previous year.



Photo 17: Recording of participants list



Photo 18: Creation of firebreaks

Strengths

Objectives were achieved.

Villagers built 7km of firebreaks surrounding the Ankarafa forest,

Participation from the villages saw an increase,

The participation from school children was high compared to the previous years,

All AEECL staff working in Ankarafa and the skippers of the AEECL boat were involved,

The Madagascar National Parks (MNP) helped in transporting some teachers from Maromandia to Ankarafa forest.

Weaknesses

The water supply was not good,

Participants needed more shelter,

Food offered to the participants was not enough.

Actions for the future

Improve participants' water supply,

Build another shed or hire tents,

Make sure that there is enough food for all participants.

Forest monitoring by members of the Park Local Committees

Six members of the Parks Local Committee (PLC) regularly monitor the Ankarafa forest.

About 1000 grids were visited.

Strengths

Objectives were achieved,

The main pressure identified was selective logging.

Weaknesses

It seems that the members of PLC work for half a day. We could not control what they do in the afternoon.

There was overlap with the MNP activities which caused some confusion.

Actions for the future

To avoid unnecessary duplication of activity, the AEECL should allow the MNP to be responsible for the members of the PLC. It is part of their activity and they have sufficient funds to continue to pay them as was the case in Maromandia. The AEECL can support the members of the PLC by supplying materials and giving training if required.

School meal

The AEECL provides a school meal for some of the villages around the municipality of Ambolobofo.

About 400 children received this meal in 2017.

Photo 19: School meal food preparation



Photo 20: Children having their meal

Strengths

Objectives were achieved,

Two schools received the meal. They were the village of Ambolobozo and Ampanittoa.

Teachers and women at the village helped us to organize the school meal.

Weaknesses

As electronic communications in the area are intermittent, it is difficult to inform the villagers on times regarding the meals.

The price of the food was not stable.

The villages are not accessible during the rainy season.

Actions for the future

The school meals will continue but they will only be organized during the dry season before the school holidays.

Staff Management

Each year we organize a staff meeting at the beginning and at the end of the year, the objectives are to assess personal work progress and to understand the interpersonal relationships.

During the meeting, the AEECL Programme Director, Guy Randriatahina, thanked all the employees for their efforts during the previous year and presented the New Year wishes for the staff.

Guy also distributed some basic needs such as cooking oils, concentrated milk, sugars and various toys for the staff's children to motivate and to support staff facing the considerable increase in prices of these staple goods.

The staff made a collective request in order to improve their working conditions. This included work uniform, medical support and salary increases. The AEECL board members received their requests and replied according to what the organization can feasibly support.

Holy started to be operational in her new role; so she can comply with her new position. However, she would like to have a computer and a camera to be more efficient.



Photo 21: Holy working on the staff rota



Photo 22: Holy with the staff in Ankarafa

Work uniform

The staff have asked for uniform. This will strengthen staff's sense of belonging and promote their integration into the organization.

The AEECL is one of the major NGO's within the Sofia Region, therefore, it is important to highlight the visibility of the AEECL. The staff should wear a uniform to display a serious image of efficiency and professionalism and team spirit.

Board members visit

Four AEECL board members came to Madagascar over the course of the year. Board member Frank Rietkerk arrived in June, followed by the President Gary Batters and the Vice President Christoph Schwitzer who came in October. The final board member was the treasurer Brice Lefaux who visited in November.

Frank Rietkerk was there to monitor how the camp is organized to welcome visitors prior to their visit. Gary Batters and Christoph Schwitzer were there for the new school inauguration and VIP visit in October. Brice Lefaux helped with the financial audit and to also assess AEECL activity.

All of the board members met with the staff and also the partners such as the MNP, Members of the PLC and some teachers, the local community and local children.



Photo 23: New school inauguration



Photo 24: AEECL Board Member Frank Rietkerk helping setting up a tent



Photo 25 : AEECL Treasurer Brice Lefaux and the Programme Director Guy Randriatahina

4. Royal and Malagasy President visits

As part of her official visit to Madagascar, Her Royal Highness Princess Anne of the United Kingdom was joined by the Malagasy President, Hery Rajaonarimampianina and some Malagasy Ministers to visit the Sahamalaza Park in the Radama Islands on 25th October 2017. They saw lemurs in the forest and have witnessed the importance of conservation action for the lemur species endemic to Madagascar, work which is led by the AEECL.



Photo 26: Her Royal Highness Princess Anne & Gary Batters



Photo 27: Malagasy President and delegation

ANNUAL WORK PLAN 2018

For 2018, the goals remain the same. The AEECL will focus on lemur protection, achieved through supporting the local communities. Therefore, the usual annual activities will be undertaken. These activities include improvement and strengthening education. We are planning to engage more schools in environmental protection.

Another school will be built in Antafiabe. This will be a challenge that we need to achieve by the end of 2018.

The improvement of the facilities at the tourist camp will continue. Awareness raising will continue during organised activities and there will be an improvement in the organization of the local lemur festival.

Objective 1: Strengthening education

Expected outcomes	Activities	Timeline			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
By the end of 2018, one more school will be built	Organization of meeting with the villagers				
	Visit the place where the school will be built				
	Description of the tasks of the villagers				
	Building of the school and toilet				
All 78 community teachers will be dedicated during the school year 2017-2018 and the enrollment rate increased up to 10% and the drop-out rate reduced by 50%	Renewal of contracts				
	Distribution of the grant				
	Teachers assessment and school visit				
High school students are dedicated and participate to conservation activities	Distribution of scholarship				

Objective 2: Forest preservation and awareness

Expected outcomes	Activities	Timeline			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Forest fires decreased by 50% during this year	Villagers aware 2 months prior to the creation of the firebreaks				
	Invitation of all 78 subsidized teachers				
	Creation of firebreaks				
	Organization of 2 environmental events				
Increase of local participation by 50% during the celebration of the lemur festival in Sahamalaza	Advertisement prior to the lemur festival				
	School visit for awareness				
	Improvement in transportation and visitors accommodation				
	Organization of more interactive activities				

Objective 3: Improvement of tourist infrastructures

Expected outcomes	Activities	Time			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
More development of infrastructure at the tourist camp Increase in tourists visiting	Build tent shelters				
	Guide training				
	Collaboration with the tourist agents				
	Design of signage and informative plaques				
	Purchase of solar pump				
	Construction of well				