

BAA ATOLL CONSERVATION FUND /BR MEETING

Meeting No: 2

Date: 24 June 2018

Time: 1.00pm to 2.00pm

Venue: Baa Atoll Council Secretariat

Minutes of the Meeting

Participants:

1. Mabrook Naseer, President , Baa Atoll Council
2. Federica Siena, Marine Biologist, Sonevafushi
3. Nina Rothe, Resident Marine Biologist, Milaidhoo
4. Tam Sawers, Project Leader, Manta Trust
5. Shafee Ali, Baa Atoll BR Office
6. Ahmed Shan, Baa Atoll BR Office
7. Abdulla Shibau, Baa Atoll Conservation Fund

Agenda

1. Welcome Remarks
2. Update of BR and BACF Activities
3. Presentation by Manta Trust
4. Discussion
5. Other Issues

The meeting was attended by 7 participants from 6 Organizations and was chaired Mabrook Naseer, President of Baa Atoll Council

Agenda Item 1

Welcome Remarks

The Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting and spelled out the Agenda Items for the day.

Agenda Item 2

Update of BR and BACF Activities

A presentation of the BR and BACF Activities undertaken in the first 5 months was given by Shafee Ali, Outreach Officer of BR Office. In his presentation he outlined the activities undertaken by the 3 areas of work of BR Office namely Conservation, Education, Awareness and Research and Livelihood Programs as scheduled in the Workplan.

The main areas of discussion included on the management plans in effect within the atoll namely Olhugiri, Mensdhoo and Nibiligaa Region and Hanifaru MPA.

Information was presented on these three areas and its resource use.

Out of the 3 protected areas discussion was mainly centered of Hanifaru Regulation and in this regard, the participants discussed on the existing regulation with reference to the ratio of tour guides versus guest ratio.

At present the ratio is 1:10, and it was highlighted by BR Office that in case of bad weather this ratio needs to be changed to 1:5 for the safety of those visiting Hanifaru.

The representative from the Sonevafushi mentioned that this was discussed previously at various forums and this needs to be changed.

The representative from BACF agreed to this stating that Rangers in place should be given the authority to act on this based on weather conditions and to propose for amendment the existing regulation.

The Chair mentioned that the way forward should be to make Tour Guides more responsible and to brief guests prior to coming to Hanifaru on the Dos and DO's NOT's within Hanifaru.

It was also mentioned that there is a marked increase in guest to Hanifaru as the number of resort and guest houses having increased in the atoll.

It was also mentioned that the increase in the number of resource users will increase the pressure on Hanifaru and these should be regulated according to Hanifaru Regulation.

Agenda Item 3 **Presentation by Manta Trust**

A presentation on the ongoing research activities and activities undertaken in 2017 and also planned for 2018 was given by Tam Sawers, Project Leader, Manta Trust and the representative from Manta Trust answered question raised by the participants.

With regards to this Manta Trust presented the details of the research permits granted to them and those under the process of approval at EPA.

Manta Trust also informed that they are working very closely with the schools within the atoll working with BR Office on the educations and awareness components.

Other Issues

It was also brought to the attention by BR Office to the participants that there are other biologically significant sites within the atoll and these areas need to be better managed.

In this regard the representative from Manta Trust together with BR office explained the importance of Huraifaru located near Hanifaru.

It was also brought to the attention of all participants by BACF that as resource users are increasing within the atoll with the introduction of local tourism and opening of new resorts, the need to manage the protected areas is of utmost importance and to take advantage of this to find new voluntary partners.

It was agreed that BACF should work on this component and it was also agreed in the meeting that information should be shared more frequently amongst stakeholders and to improve communication amongst themselves.

It was also agreed that all changes proposed to the Hanifaru regulation needs to be sent to Ministry Of Environment for amendment of the regulation.

Finally it was agreed that all work undertaken within the atoll needs to be more transparent and the Atoll Council should be kept in the loop on research work and other initiatives undertaken in partnership with atoll schools by stakeholders.