

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
TO THE 2ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT THE GABORONE SUN HOTEL
ON THE 28TH MAY, 2012**

INTRODUCTION

I welcome you all and thank you all for having found time to attend this year's (2011/2012) Annual General Meeting, which is the second AGM of the BEAPA. I am grateful and excited at the opportunity today to meet as practitioners and to discuss the Board activities of the last year which ended the month of March. The first AGM as you will all recall involved the election of this board which took the baton from the Interim Board. Time is opportune to sincerely express my gratitude to the Interim Board - it laid the strong foundation on which we stand firmly today.

The current Board membership is as follows:

- Dr Alfred Tsheboeng – Chairperson
- Mrs Mmapula Keaikitse – Vice Chairperson
- Prof. Elisha Toteng – Secretary
- Mr David Parry – Treasurer
- Mrs Portia Segomelo – Member
- Mr Goitseone Mathope – Member
- Mrs Keamogetse Mogae-Tabulawa – Member
- Ms Abigail Tiroyaone Ezekiel – Legal Advisor

The purpose of this AGM is to present to members the activities and progress made by the Board lasting from April 2011 to March 2012, and the financial report by the treasurer Mr D. Parry.

BOARDS ACTIVITIES

The current Board assumed office in March 2011 but only started to be active June awaiting for the appointment of three appointees to the Board by the Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism as per Section 20.1.2 of the BEAPA Constitution. It was only in June 2011 that the Minister gave the Board the green light to proceed without the appointees as he could only be empowered to appoint them after the ascendency of the Environmental Assessment Act, 2011.

The board prioritized the activities and had two urgent broad activities that they run with:

- a) To set up the BEAPA structure and establish the secretariat; and
- b) Source funding for the Association.

BEAPA Structure and Establishment of Office

When the Board met for the first time in June 2011, the Association had no funds. The Board then decided that while waiting for funding from MEWT, they should be hands on. This decision saw the development of the registration and certification tools by the Board. Tools for registration and certification of Practitioners ready these include:

- Registration Forms
- Certification Forms
- Assessment Criteria
- Certificate for registration
- Certificate for certification
- Seal of Association

The assessment tools that were designed were tested on the Board members and ready for implementation.

Initially we had thought that Environmental Impact Assessment Assessors at the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) were not subject to registration and certification by the Association but further scrutiny of the Association Constitution pointed to the contrary. We have ever since agreed with DEA that, they would facilitate the process in-house (the initial assessments of assessors) and make recommendation to the Board who would then certify or otherwise.

Sub - Committees

The BEAPA Constitution prescribes at Section 25, establishment of three committees, viz, the Disciplinary Committee, Standards and Criteria Committee, and Professional Development Committee. The latter was established and I have already alluded to the fact that it developed the registration and certification tools.

Office Structure and Personnel

The staff profile of the Association, as set out at Section 29 of the BEAPA Constitution comprises of the Executive Secretary, Registrar, and Personal Assistant/Office Assistant. Upon receipt of part payment grant of P529, 750. 00 from MEWT (against a budget proposal of P1, 283,300.00) the Board decided to postpone hiring the Executive Secretary and started by hiring the Registrar to set up the office and kick-start the registration and certification process. The Registrar was recruited and commenced work on the 1st December 2011. Upon receipt of a further P185, 240.00 on 14th Feb 2012 the Registrar was given the green light to recruit the Personal Assistant. On realising that the grant balance would not be

available until the ascendance of the Environment Assessment Act, 2011 the recruitment of the Personal Assistant was put on hold (but with suitable candidates having been identified). This process will be finalised once the balance is received.

I am happy to report that the office has been established at Kgale Mews, Unit 7, First Floor, with all the necessary equipment and furniture. Most of the costs are in the Financial Statement (attached).

The website that communicates all the important information to the stakeholders out there has gone live. Please visit it at www.beapa.org.bw.

Registration Process

It is my pleasure to report that the registration and certification process of members has started in earnest. Adverts have been placed in the media inviting you to submit application for registration and/or certification please be informed that you can now do so. All the information, including application forms, are on the website. We have provided a grace period of one year from the date of the enactment of the EA Act, 2011. Please be advised to submit now in order to avoid the last minute rush.

FINANCIAL AND SOURCE FUNDING FOR THE ASSOCIATION

As stated earlier the Association only received a part payment grant of P714, 960.00 from government and due to the unavailability of funds, the Board also

decided to suspend Board members' registration, certification and annual subscription fees for a year in lieu of their sitting allowance. Seeing that the Board had more than fifteen (15) meetings, this decision saved the Association an amount in excess of P90, 000.00. This is against P 17, 000.00 that would otherwise have been made from both the registration and certification tariffs from Board members.

The Board is aware that funding from government is, and will, not be sufficient for the Association activities. The Association will also raise its own funding through membership/subscription and certification fees. When fully operational, it is envisaged that the Association will conduct training workshops and seminars for members at a fee. This will generate the much needed funds. A proposal for donation of a vehicle has been submitted to some donors and prospects look promising.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The board met with the Minister to brief him on the progress of the Association. The meeting was fruitful and the Minister was happy with the progress made so far. He also advised the Association to do address full council meetings and the parliamentary committees relevant to the environment sector.

I am pleased to also announce that the Board has also been busy in pursuing one of its other objectives which is to promote awareness of the purpose and practice of environmental assessment in Botswana. A request has been submitted to BOCCIM in one of its workshop to create or form a sector for the environmental in its structures.

BEAPA has also interacted with PPADB in various workshops and one -on- one discussions where the objectives of professional practitioners certification was discussed and proposal made to the PPADB for purposes of registration of practitioners as a stand-alone service. Prior to this, environmental services were within the water engineering services of predominantly the Ministry of Minerals Energy and Water Resources. Effective first quarter of 2012 a new and independent environmental services code was established by the PPADB Code 313 and its sub codes.

The Association has also continued participating in the BOBS' Standards Committee for the development of the environmental noise standards.

CHALLENGES

I have already alluded to the fact that the Environmental Assessment Act, 2011 has not yet been enacted, and it is the very Act that sets up the Association. This has meant that the Association has been operating in legal vacuum, the main result of which has been, and understandably so, the uneasiness of MEWT to make good of the grant balance for the last financial year and the budget for the current financial year.

There are also Constitutional challenges. The Constitution requires that the Board register members and certify practitioners but with the experience that we have now, we think it is best the registration process be left to the Secretariat so that the Board concentrates on the certification process.

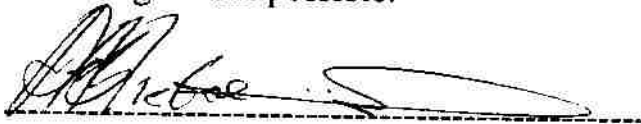
Another Constitutional challenge relates to the Board membership. Section 20.5 of the Constitution requires that the positions of Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer should have deputies. The current Board has only one deputy – the Vice Chairperson. I seek your indulgence in whether having deputies for all these positions will not weigh heavily on the Association’s resources through sitting allowances.

It is, therefore, my humble submission to you that you sanction the amendment of these Articles of the Association Constitution.

CONCLUSION

Let me conclude by looking forward. As a new entity it is important that the Association publicises itself. To these end regional workshops for members will be organised to inform them of the mandate of the Association and explain the registration and certification process. Similar fora will be organised for Parliamentary Committees relevant to the environment sector. District and City Councils will also be addressed to make them appreciate the role of BEAPA’s work in the tendering development projects cycle, more especially relating to assessment of EIA tenders. The official launch of the Association is also planned, and if given enough coverage by the media, could reach out to all the corners of the country.

Thank you. My sincere gratitude to my Board for the hard work they have rendered in making all this possible.



Dr Alfred Tsheboeng

BEAPA Board Chairperson