

VoiceMoney

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GABORONE WEATHER

26 FRI



TEMP: 27° 12°

27 SAT



TEMP: 26° 11°

28 SUN



TEMP: 27° 11°

STUDY COMPLETED ON OIL PRODUCTION

ReconBotswana meets 46 villages and settlements

BAME PIET

A company planning to embark on oil drilling around the Okavango Delta says it has completed its Stakeholder Mapping and Regulation Review exercise and has so far visited 46 villages in the area, and have encountered very little to no resistance to the project.

Responding to our enquires, Reconnaissance Africa (ReconAfrica) Botswana Chief Executive Officer, Scot Evans, said several stakeholders have come forward during *kgotla* meetings among them local authorities, farmers, vulnerable groups, Non-Governmental Organisations and Trusts.

"These stakeholders have either come forward voluntarily to meetings or were engaged directly by a consultancy firm. A total of 46 villages and settlements have been visited, and a total of 1 000 people have attended the meetings," said Evans. He said he was not aware of any international NGOs who have expressed opposition or displeasure with the proposed mining activities. He said

working under supervision of Botswana Government. ReconBotswana, the subsidiary of ReconAfrica, is committed to best practices and will continue to work closely with local, regional, and national authorities in order to support local communities.

He said to this point, the company's workforce is 100 percent Botswana citizens while the consultancy firm is run by expatriates.

"Furthermore, the consultancy firm provided employment for additional people from within the licence area over and above its own personnel during the stakeholder mapping exercise. The additional recruits of the consultancy firm were 100% citizens of Botswana. ReconBotswana is committed to hiring locally and nationally whenever possible as the project continues. This includes opportunities for technical, skilled and unskilled Batswana contractors and personnel," he said.

Asked whether the company is on the verge of commencing mining activities, Evans said: "REB's work to date has been focused on gathering and interpreting desktop data as it is in the very early stages of initial analysis.



READY TO DRILL: Scot Evans

The environmental impact assessment has not yet commenced and its findings, content and ultimately any regulatory approval will guide the timeline of exploration activity that follows".

He added: "REB is exploring in Botswana at the invitation of the national government. We are committed to working closely with and under the direct oversight of the government, as well as regional and traditional authorities, as we continue to comply with relevant laws and regulations throughout all the stages of our operations - including addressing environmental and social concerns".

"Ultimately, the people of Botswana, through their traditional authorities, elected governments, and regulatory agencies, will determine how they will manage their natural resources," he concluded.

The CEO denied that they are currently embroiled in litigation with any entity or individual in Botswana.

Meanwhile, recent media reports indicate that oil drilling project by a sister company in Namibia will not affect the Delta, which is around 300 kilometres

away, and will neither affect the tourism sector nor wildlife migratory routes.

However, there is a lot of resistance from some NGOs in Kavango East and West conservancy and two of them have appealed to Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism to reverse the licence for ReconAfrica Namibia.

In our initial interview, Minister of Minerals, Energy and Green Technology, Lefoko Moagi, said he was confident that the system that ReconBotswana has adopted was not a threat to the environment and the world heritage sites.

"What needs to be understood is that the licence they have been given has expunged the World Heritage sites in the sense of Okavango Delta and Tsodilo Hills, from both the core and the buffer zones so that we do not disturb anything in that pristine environment," he said, adding that the government has engaged other partners to conduct a study on how to ensure the environment is not disturbed at all.

Blue JACKET PLAZA

ya zwagwa butshwa
The rebirth