

Minutes of Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC)

“Managing Together: Integrating community-centered, ecosystem-based approaches into forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors Project”

Tuesday 26 May 2020 at the Auditorium of Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, “Sobadam Piyasa”, 416/C/1, Robert Gunawardana Mawatha, Battaramulla

Chaired by:

Mr. A. H. S. Wijesinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources (MEWR), Sri Lanka
Ms. Faiza Effendi, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Sri Lanka

Present:

Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, Sri Lanka

Mr. Ajith Silva, Additional Secretary (Environment Development)
Mr. P. Mudalige, Director General (Planning)
Mr. Mahinda Gunarathne, Director (Planning)
Ms. R. H. M. P. Abeykoon, Director (Biodiversity)
Mr. Rifa Wadood, Deputy Director (International Relations)
Ms. N. D. Wickramarachchi, Director (Land Resources)
Mr. I. J. K. Palugaswewa, Assistant Director (Planning)
Ms. Nilmini Ranasinghe, Assistant Director
Ms. Asanthi Ranathunga, Development Officer

UNDP Sri Lanka

Dr. Buddhika Hapuarachchi, Team Leader, Climate and Environment Team, UNDP Sri Lanka
Ms. Sureka Perera, Programme and Design Specialist, UNDP Sri Lanka
Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga, National Project Coordinator, UNDP Sri Lanka
Ms. Sandyani Mihindukulasooriya, Project Assistant (Biodiversity), UNDP Sri Lanka

IUCN – Sri Lanka

Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri, Country Representative, IUCN – Sri Lanka

Mr. Damith Chandrasekara, Consultant, IUCN – Sri Lanka

Key government stakeholder institutions

Ms. Dedu Peiris, Deputy Director, Ministry of Tourism and Aviation, Sri Lanka

Eng. S. U. S. R. Siriwardhana, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department, Sri Lanka

Eng. P. L. N. Puranagedara, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department, Sri Lanka

Mr. Gamini Hewage, Director, Coastal Conservation Department, Sri Lanka

E. A. P. N. Edirisinghe, Conservator of Forest, Forest Department, Sri Lanka

Mr. A. J. M. Gunasekara, Deputy General Manager (Operations), Marine Environment Protection Authority (MEPA), Sri Lanka

Mr. A. G. D. L. Karunaratne, Deputy Director (Natural Resource Management), Central Environment Authority (CEA), Sri Lanka

Eng. S. Shanmuganathan, Deputy Chief Secretary, North Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

Mr. J. A. S. Jayasinghe, Assistant Secretary (Planning), North Central Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

Ms. Faiza Effendi, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Sri Lanka, welcomed the participants of the Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting of the Managing Together: Integrating Community-centered, Ecosystem-based Approaches into Forestry, Agriculture and Tourism Sectors Project.

In the opening remarks, she stated the objectives of meeting as;

- a. Discussing the project scope in terms of its outputs and time frame,
- b. Deliberating on ideas and suggestions on the most efficient and effective ways to achieve the expected outputs,
- c. To discuss how these intended outcomes cater to the national outcomes on environment management.

Ms. Effendi mentioned that the project is financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), under its VI cycle through the UNDP, which is the Accredited Entity to GEF for this project. The Implementing Partner of the project is the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, Sri Lanka whereas the Responsible Party of the project is IUCN – Sri Lanka. IUCN's engagement in project implementation as the Responsible Party has been endorsed by the GEF and the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources while the UNDP will provide overall monitoring and quality assurance to the project. Further, Ms. Effendi elaborated on the structure of the project components and the responsible parties for each component. Accordingly, the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources is responsible for implementing Component 01, the while IUCN is responsible for implementing Component 02 and Component 03. Both UNDP and IUCN will be responsible for Component 04.

Mr. A. H. S Wijesinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, in his opening remarks, mentioned that the project is wholly in line with the National Development Policy Framework- “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor”—it was noted that the project contributes to four themes (i.e. Environmental Regulation for Conservation and Protection, Updating the Environmental Policies, Integrating SDGs in Development Framework and Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge) identified in the national policy framework. While emphasizing the project design, the Secretary also stated that the Project has been designed

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based on the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, the National Action Plan on Land Degradation, and the SDGs. He also highlighted that this project will facilitate the establishment of a new culture and a new value system in the community in terms of natural resources management as this project will pioneer an integrated platform for forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors to work together. The Secretary also confirmed the Ministry's commitment, as the Implementing Partner, to provide its fullest support and cooperation to coordinate with other stakeholders, including relevant line agencies and other government and non-government organizations to achieve the project outcome and outputs. The importance of sharing knowledge and lessons learnt to a wider audience was also highlighted.

Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga, National Project Coordinator – UNDP, presented the project, in brief, emphasizing the importance of this project in the context of sustainable management of biodiversity in Sri Lanka. The significance of uplifting agriculture (including fisheries) and the tourism sectors using a sustainable approach was also highlighted, especially in the context of adapting to COVID – 19. This project enables the linking of three key sectors: forestry, agriculture and tourism, influencing the sustainable biodiversity management in an integrated manner. Within this approach, a special focus is given to strengthening the inclusion and participation of women and other vulnerable groups in environment management, agriculture and tourism meaningfully.

The expected long-term goal of the project is the reduction of direct threats to biodiversity through improved planning and decision-making in natural resource management and tourism. The project will contribute to the conservation of globally significant biodiversity through the mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable practices, into land-use planning and sectoral decision-making in forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors. Mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation will lead to more sustainable practices in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism in the three Trial Landscapes, and will be reflected upward in district development plans and government decision making. The project period will be four (04) years.

Mr. Wijethunga also described the components of the project. Monitoring and quality assurance will be conducted by the UNDP and it cannot be delegated to any other organization according to the provisions in the project document. The project implementation will mainly be focused on three trial landscapes, but certain outputs will target national level stakeholders as well. The budget of the project was presented based on allocations for each component, GEF financing and other co-financing mechanisms. The GEF allocation for the project will be USD 3,346,708. Project monitoring and quality assurance will be the sole responsibility of UNDP and it will need a budget of 160, 400 USD for the four years. The Project Director will be appointed by the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources and will be responsible for the timely achievement of the project outputs. Terms of reference for the Project Board and different members of the project board were also presented to the participants. The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be established in the project location (Anuradhapura or Mannar).

After the presentation, a Q&A session was facilitated to provide the participants with an opportunity to clarify any concerns related to the project scope, working arrangements and the budget. Following were the key discussion points;

Theme 01 - Role of IUCN in Project Implementation



Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources (MEWR) requested a clarification on the role of IUCN in project implementation and Ms. Faiza Effendi and Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri provided the requested information. In summary, IUCN will serve as the responsible partner for implementing the project Component 02 and Component 03. It will provide the services under the guidance of the Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources and will work with other relevant stakeholders. Based on the ground realities, the specific activities to be implemented under each component will be determined at the initiation phase of the project. IUCN will work with district and divisional level authorities and the communities in the preparation of the plans to be implemented.

Theme 02 – Changes in Land Use Pattern

Mr. A. H. S. Wijesinghe stated that the land encroachment of forest areas is a common issue in Malwathu-Oya basin. There is an increase in demand for permits for slash and burn (chena) cultivation. Based on this context, he recommended avoiding any livelihood interventions in areas with potential land disputes. He further stated that to ensure the effectiveness of the project interventions in the long term it will be better to avoid areas that might be subjected to resettlement programmes proposed by other development initiatives. He also stated that this approach would help address one of the main risk factors identified for this project.

Mr. Gamini Hewage requested a clarification on the criteria used to select the Malwathu Oya river basin and especially the district of Mannar for project implementation. Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri and Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga clarified, detailing the selection criteria used to ultimately settle on Malwathu Oya basin for the Project. The Mannar district belongs to the Trial Landscape (TL) 3 of the project. TL 3 is rich in marine biodiversity along with tourism being one of the most sought after economic activities. It has been identified that the full potential of Mannar is not being used for both tourism and agriculture. In addition, sustainably increasing livelihood opportunities in the area would result in a decrease of threats to existing biodiversity.

Theme 03 - Tourism industry and its impact on the livelihoods of people

Ms. Dedu Peiris requested a clarification on the possible tourism-related interventions of the project and in response, Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri and Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga outlined the potential tourism interventions of the project. This project will be implemented mainly in three Trial Landscapes (TL) as,

- TL 1 - Maminiya Oya, Upper Kanadara Oya, Upper Weli Oya and Lower Weli Oya sub-watersheds of the upper Malwathu Oya Basin,
- TL 2 - Lower Malwathu Oya riverine forests including the Mavillu Conservation Forest and other forests connecting the Madhu Road and Wilpattu National Parks and extending to the Giant's tank and its downstream feeder tank system,
- TL 3 - The land bordering the Malwathu Oya Estuary, and the adjacent seascape, including coral reefs of Vankalai, Arippu, and Silavaturai, Pearl Banks of Mannar, Cheval Bank and the seagrass beds in shallow coastal seas.

The project will work in different geographical areas, where various types of tourism systems are being practised (ex: Mannar – mostly eco-tourism, Anuradhapura – mostly heritage tourism). As such, Anuradhapura belongs to TL 1 and tourism is based on cultural heritage

while TL 2 consists of conservation forests and tourism are based on the forest and its ecosystem. Tourism in Mannar and Vannkalai Arippu areas that belong to TL 3 is based on the coast and the coral reefs. The project will focus on developing several tourism models based on the aforementioned types of tourism, as well as incorporating alternative tourism options that are viable for promotion in each area. And, these models could be replicated in other similar locations. Interventions such as capacity building of communities to engage in the tourism industry, value addition to product offers, developing current tourist destinations and developing new destinations will be some of the key contributions. All the tourism-related initiatives will be implemented in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism and Aviation and the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority.

Theme 04 – Community Engagement

Mr. Gamini Hewage requested clarification on mechanisms to be used for community engagement. Dr. Buddika Hapuarachchi and Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga clarified the issue as getting effective community engagement has been identified as the main challenge in project implementation. Innovative approaches such as information and communication technologies, new arrangements to ensure transparency and accountability are some of the tools that will be promoted to encourage community engagement. The landscape approach is a community-centered approach and therefore, will be critical to the success of the project to get communities engaged with the project activities from the design stage onwards.

Theme 04 – Consultation of Existing Development Plans and Stakeholder Involvement

Eng. S. U. S. R. Siriwardhana suggested that the project should get the Irrigation Department involved in the project activities as the Irrigation Department has already planned several major development programmes to be implemented in these geographical locations.

Mr. E. A. P. N. Edirisinghe suggested the involvement of the Department of Livestock Development as a stakeholder in the project as livestock management is one of the main livelihoods and one of the reasons for land encroachment in these areas.

Eng. S. Shanmuganathan suggested the inclusion of provincial councils and their allied agencies such as provincial tourism bureaus as project stakeholders.

Mr. Ajith Silva, Ms. Faiza Effendi, Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri, and Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga clarified the stakeholder involvement criteria of the project. The project management will ensure that all relevant development plans and stakeholders will be consulted and adequately represented in decision-making forums. The project will ensure that the existing protected forest and mangrove areas will not be disturbed and that the project interventions will be designed to enrich and rehabilitate forests and mangrove areas. In addition, project interventions will increase the livelihood opportunities in the project locations and thereby encourage communities to refrain from encroaching the forest land or sensitive ecosystems. Hence, the project will expect proactive engagement of all the stakeholders. Provision of data and information by stakeholders to set up baselines and identification of development needs will be critical. Incorporation of provincial, district and local level stakeholders will be one of the key methods of project implantation. The inception workshop of the project which will be organized soon and will be an opportunity to identify the relevant stakeholders comprehensively.

Theme 05 - Village Identification Process

Mr. E. A. P. N. Edirisinghe requested clarification on the village identification methods and it was clarified by Dr. Ananda Mallawatantri and Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga. Accordingly, village identification will be done at the initial stages of project implementation using a comprehensive community consultation process. It will be done transparently and the selection will be based on a community needs assessments. The project will ensure the representation of all types of communities living in different areas such as communities in forest buffer zones, fishing communities and those engaged in chena cultivation.

Theme 06 – Project Management Mechanism

Mr. Mahinda Gunarathne requested the project management to develop a comprehensive set of indicators with baseline values and annualized targets. Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga clarified that the indicators developed for the project would be discussed at the Inception Workshop in details and any amendments could be proposed for any output level indicator. He further requested the support of all stakeholders to provide their concerns on the project document so the issues can be discussed and resolved at the Inception Workshop.

Mr. Rifa Wadood raised a question on the establishment of Project Management Unit (PMU) and it was clarified by Ms. Faiza Effendi and Mr. Ramitha Wijethunga. The PMU location was decided for Anuradhapura or Mannar considering the proximity to the project implementing areas. The project management mechanism has been designed in such a way that project is managed according in a decentralized manner. The Inception Workshop will give more opportunities to discuss this matter.

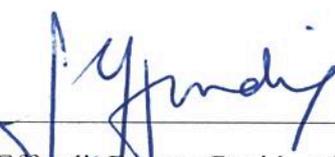
The LPAC approved the project scope and agreed that it is in line with the national development priorities. Further, the LPAC agreed to allocate resources from the budget given in project document (X. Total Budget and Work Plan) for monitoring and quality assurance of the project to UNDP as per narrative on monitoring and evaluation in the project document (pp 56 – 57). The LPAC unanimously approved the project for implementation as per the project document. Additional adjustments will be agreed at the Inception Workshop of the project.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks and vote of thanks by Dr. Buddhika Hapuarachchi, Team Leader- Climate and Environment Team, UNDP.

Approved:  _____

Date: 23.06.2020

Mr. Ajith Silva, Additional Secretary (Environment Development), Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, Sri Lanka

Approved:  _____

Date: 24 June 2020

Ms. Faiza Effendi, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP Sri Lanka

Enclosed: Agenda of the meeting, and attendance list.



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Agenda of the

Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting

Managing Together: Integrating community-centered, ecosystem-based approaches into forestry, agriculture and tourism sectors Project

Date: 26-05-2020

Venue: Auditorium, Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources, Sobadam Piyasa, Battaramulla

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| 1400-1415 | Registration |
| 1415-1425 | Welcoming the participants and explaining the objectives of the meeting- Faiza Effendi, Deputy Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) |
| 1425-1435 | Address by Mr. A.H.S. Wijesinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Wildlife Resources |
| 1435-1500 | Presentation on the contents of the Project Document- Ramitha Wijethunga, National Project Coordinator-UNDP |
| 1500-1550 | Discussion |
| 1550-1600 | Vote of thanks- Dr. Buddhika Hapuarachchi, Team Leader- Climate and Environment Team, UNDP |



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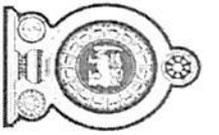
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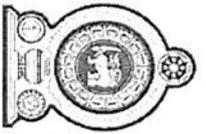
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