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## **Minutes of the Local Project Appraisal Committee (LPAC): Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystem services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)**

LPAC Meetings were held on 20 March 2015 and 09 April 2015. Separate meetings were held to discuss project technical overview and project implementing arrangements.

### **Attendees:**

1. Mr. N. Rupasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment – **Chairman**
2. Mr. N.K.G.K. Nammawatta, Addl. Secretary (NR), Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment
3. Dr. I.H.K. Mahanama, Secretary, Ministry of Lands - **Member**
4. Mr. Anura Sathurusinghe, Conservator General of Forests, Forest Department - **Member**
5. Mr. H.D. Ratnayake, Director General, Department of Wild Life Conservation - **Member**
6. Ms. M. Gangatharan, Additional Director General, National Planning Department
7. Ms. Mangala Wickramasinghe, Director General, Coast Conservation Department - **Member**
8. Mr. H.H.D. Padmasiri, Deputy Director General (Technical Services), Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka
9. Mr. Veranjan Kurukulasuriya, Director General, National Physical Planning Department - **Member**
10. Dr. Vishaka Hidellage, Assistant Country Director, UNDP
11. Ms. Tharuka Dissanayake, Policy Specialist, UNDP
12. Mr. T.M.A.S.K. Rodrigo, Director, Central Environmental Authority
13. Mrs. K.R.S. Perera, Director, Ministry of Irrigation and Agriculture
14. Mr. N. Wasantha Ariyaratna, Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs & Fisheries
15. Mr. H.D. Sisira Hapuarachchi, Assistant Director, Land Use Policy Planning Department
16. Mr. U.K.L. Peiris, Assistant Director, Department of Wild Life Conservation
17. Ms. W.M. Hansani, Assistant Director, National Planning Department
18. Mr. Anuruddha Kumara, Environment Officer, Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka
19. Ms. Padma Abeykoon, Director, Biodiversity Secretariat
20. Ms. Pradeepa Ranaweera, Programme Assistant (Env), Biodiversity Secretariat
21. Ms. Hemamali Herath, Research Assistant, Biodiversity Secretariat

### **1. Secretary's Introduction and Welcome:**

Mr. Nihal Rupasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment (MMDE) as the chair meeting welcomed all agencies that were represented at the meeting. These agencies will eventually form the National ESA committee. Further, he made a brief introduction to the project on Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) and explained the importance and timeliness of this project.

He stated that although Sri Lanka has instituted a national system of Protected Areas including wildlife, coastal and forest reserves to protect the biodiversity, many important ecosystems and habitats continue to remain outside these protected areas. Therefore, these areas face accelerating threats from development projects including urbanization, infrastructure expansion and rural development. The Secretary spoke of his own experience as an engineer engaged in irrigation sector, and the damage done to the traditional environmentally sensitive agriculture practices through rapid infrastructure development. It is not always possible to safeguard the nation's wide ranging biodiversity just through protected areas alone. Therefore, strong measures are needed to put development on a more conservation-friendly path.

He appreciated the joint effort of UNDP and the Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment (MMDE) / State Ministry of Environment (SME) in formulating this project to safeguard biodiversity in environmentally sensitive areas especially focused on the Kala Oya Basin and further stated that the integrated approach in biodiversity conservation and sustenance of ecosystem services is the only way to rehabilitate the damage which was done by the accelerated Mahaweli project. He further stated that, ESA project which is planned to implement in the Kala Oya region is a pilot project and that successful application of this model and land use framework can be applied to many other areas across the country.

## **2. Project Overview:**

Mrs. Padma Abeykoon, Director, Biodiversity Secretariat presented the brief description about the ESA project. The project has two main components- one dealing with ESA policy and regulatory framework at national level and the other, implementing ground-level actions in the Puttlam District (Wanathawilluwa Divisional Secretariat Area) and Anuradhapura district (Kekirawa, Galnewa, Palagala and Ipalogama Divisional Secretariats) in Kala Oya region.

She stated that the objective of the project is "To operationalize Environment Sensitive Areas (ESAs) as a mechanism for mainstreaming biodiversity management into development in areas of high conservation significance" and the National level outcome is "National enabling framework strengthened to designate and manage ESAs". At site level the outcome is "Biodiversity- friendly ESA management for long term integrity and resilience ensured at two sites in the Kala Oya region"

She further stated that the project will be implemented over a period of five years, starting in 2015 and the project will be nationally executed with UNDP support. The lead executing agency for this project is the MMDE/ SME. The proposed institutional arrangement of this project is to have a project management unit at national level supported by the National ESA Committee, and coordinating committees at District level and site level.

## **3. Record of the Discussion**

### **3.1 Project Overview and TOR of the National ESA Committee:**

- The national champion agencies of the ESA committee should be represented in the two districts committees as well.
- The issue of Provincial Councils and their mandate over development planning and land rights was discussed in some detail. It was pointed out that discussions at Provincial level were confined to Provincial Departments of Agriculture of North Western and North Central provinces. It was decided to present the project to Provincial Chief Secretaries and request participation of relevant officials at the district ESA committees
- National Planning Department pointed out the need for an integrated approach at a landscape level, building on existing environmental projects and programmes implemented by UNDP with the MMDE/ SME. The project should bring together a collection of eco-friendly approaches to be implemented in a priority landscape as selected by the project.
- Assistant Country Director, UNDP requested that the ESA Committee TOR be edited to reflect project advisory and technical and policy support role. The management of the project should be the task of the National Project Director and the Project Management Unit.
- The Department of Physical Planning has already mapped out existing environmentally sensitive areas and was concerned on how to incorporate the new such areas in the revised National Physical Plan. It was discussed that the approach would be to take some key regions/provinces

which are prioritized for development and begin project-support identification of environmentally sensitive areas in the first year of implementation

- Coast Conservation Department pointed out that multi-stakeholder management committees have their own drawbacks; and quoted from the experience of Special Area Management (SAM) plans under the Department which tried out such a resource management model some time ago. CCD further highlighted that addressing of climatic conflicts and economic sustainability is affected for the long term sustainability of the project.

### **3.2 Project Implementation Arrangements:**

- The discussion on Project Implementing Arrangements formed the second part of the meeting between MMDE/ SME officials and UNDP. It was decided to appoint a Project Management Unit to manage the day to day implementation of project activities. This project unit will have staff recruited by UNDP supported by government recruited staff through management circular. SME/MMDE will obtain the government clearance to recruit staff ahead of the inception phase, to ensure implementation arrangements agreed at the inception workshop are workable.
- The Project will be overall coordinated by the MMDE/ SME, which will coordinate the Project Board, National ESA Committee and also the district facilitation committees. The Project Board will be Chaired by the Secretary/ Additional Secretary while the National ESA Committee will be chaired by Secretary or delegated to Director/ Biodiversity Secretariat
- The project will be implemented through a UNDP National Implementation Modality (NIM) with substantial support by UNDP in terms of recruitment and procurement of services. In this project, an assisted-NIM modality will be adopted, where both NIM advances and UNDP direct payment modalities will be adopted depending on the requirement and agreement of the Project Board.
- The Annual Work Plan will identify elements funded through NIM Advances and Direct Payments and these will be agreed upon at the first project board meeting. This agreement will greatly contribute to expediting implementation. Activities to be implemented through NIM advance and activities to be implemented through direct payments will be identified.
- National Planning Department has approved the project in February 2015.
- Ministry of Environment will ensure that the project has a budget allocation for the current year and also ensure that the necessary cabinet approval to begin implementation.
- A separate bank account will be opened for the project for easy access to the PMU during the inception phase.

### **3.3 Project Management Structure:**

- The Project Board will consist of Secretary MMDE/ SME, UNDP Deputy Country Director and Additional Secretary Ministry of Environment as the senior beneficiary and the appointed National Project Director. Where Secretary is unavailable, the Additional Secretary will chair the Board.
- A separate Management Committee will be established to assist smooth implementation and coordination between the National ESA Committee, the PMU and the MMDE/ SME. These monthly meetings will discuss implementation progress as per the agreed work plan between UNDP and MMDE/ SME.

- The Project Management Unit will consist of;

- 1) Project Director (MMDE/ SME, full time)
- 2) Deputy Project Director (full time)
- 3) Procurement specialist (full time)
- 4) Finance Manager (full time)
- 5) Deputy Managers (part time)
- 6) Project Assistants (full time)
- 7) Drivers / office assistants (full time)

If necessary;

- 8) Technical coordinator/ project manager (hired by UNDP)
- 9) Project associate (hired by UNDP)
- 10) Field coordinators (hired by UNDP)

#### 4. Next steps on the approval process and signing of the project document:

- Hold discussions between Biodiversity Secretariat and UNDP to fine tune the project management arrangements and implementation modality at district and site level.
- Amend the Project Document according to the discussions minuted above.
- Once the Local Project Appraisal Committee Meeting minutes are approved, UNDP will facilitate obtaining the Delegation of Authority (DoA) from GEF Secretariat. Upon obtaining the DoA GEF approved project document will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment for co-signature.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Mr. N. Rupasinghe,  
Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment

Date: 08/09/2015

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_



Ms. Lovita Ramguttee  
Deputy Country Director, UNDP

Date: 09/09/2015