

Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystem Services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH BOARD MEETING OF THE ESA PROJECT

Date: 10.08.2017

Time: 9.00 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.

Venue: Conference Hall, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment, No. 500, T.B. JayahMawatha, Colombo 10

Chaired by Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment (MoMDE)

Attendees:

1. Ms. Lovita Ramaguttee, Deputy Country Director, UNDP
2. Dr. Vishaka Hidellage, Assistant Country Director-ESDR, UNDP
3. Mr. D.C. Siribaddana, Director, Environment Planning & Economics Division/ Project Director,
4. Mr. M.F.A. Mubarak, Director, National Planning Department
5. Ms. A. Kavitha Arunasalam, Assistant Director (United Nations, NGO & HRD Division), Department of External Resources
6. Mr. D. Somirathna, Dy. Project Director (ESA Project)/Asst. Secretary (HRD), MoMDE
7. Ms. P.N.D. Abehayarathne, Accountant, MoMDE
8. Ms. Sureka Perera, Programme Analyst, UNDP
9. Ms. Dilki Palliyaguruge, M & E Specialist, UNDP
10. Ms. Shyara Bastiansz, Programme Associate, UNDP
11. Ms. Nirosha Kumari, Environment Management Officer, MoMDE
12. Ms. Sugandhi Samarasinghe, Technical Coordinator (ESA PMU), UNDP (Secretary to the Project Board)

1.0 Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary, MoMDE, welcomed all the members who represented the senior beneficiary and senior supplier of the “Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystem Services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA)” Project. He stated that ESA Project Management Unit (PMU) has briefed the project already and noted that project implementation progress is satisfactory. He emphasized the importance of continuous monitoring of physical and financial progress of the project towards achieving the expected results.

Ms. Lovita Ramagutte, Deputy Country Director, UNDP appreciated the cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the MoMDE and noted the 4th Board Meeting of the ESA project which is the 2nd BM for 2017, is important in another front as this is the first meeting with Mr. Anura Dissanayake, newly appointed Secretary to the MoMDE. She briefed the status of the ESA project and noted most challenging part of the project is the conservation and management of biodiversity outside the protected areas which is yet to properly fall in to place, and the PMU needs to take proactive measures to ensure this. It was remarked that UNDP has taken initiatives to increase the budget on climate action in the coming year and a proposal development is in the pipeline.

Dr. Vishaka Hidellage, Asst. Country Director, UNDP explained the Environment Sensitive Area concept further and pointed out the importance of landscape level land use planning which is an innovative planning tool which is adopted in spatial planning in the Kala Oya Basin.

2.0 Project overview and progress

Mr. Deepal Siribaddana, Project Director (ESA Project)/ Director (EP&E), MoMDE presented the project overview, physical progress achieved during first seven months of 2017 and the summary of financial progress as at 31st July 2017.

Upon presenting the project overview following points were discussed.

- Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary requested clarifications on the project locations and rationale for proposed 8 annual work plans to be approved by national ESA Committee, along with joint policy guidance for ESA management.

It was explained that even though there are two ESA sites identified within Kala Oya Basin (Site 1: Kakirawa, Palagala, Ipalogama, Galnewa & Site 2: Wanathawilluwa, Kaluwwaagaswewa), Project team has realized the significance of implementing the project across the Kala Oya Basin and project area including number of plans are to be reviewed at the forthcoming Mid Term Review (MTR) of the project.

- Mr. M.F.A. Mubarak, Director, National Planning Department noted the delays of policy review lead by Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) to address human wildlife conflicts and asked to complete it before Eco System Conservation and Management Project (ESCAMP) implementations begin on wild elephant conservation and management in early 2018. The review was initially scheduled to be completed in 2016. However, owing to several process related delays, the Policy review was delayed to 2017.
- Dr. Vishaka Hidellage recalled that a decision was reached among MoMDE, Ministry of Sustainable Development & Wildlife, UNDP & GIZ that both projects can work on Wilpattu Strategic Management Plan in a collaborative manner and officials from GIZ, UNDP, MoMDE and relevant coordinators of DWC to be attended at the Steering Committees of both projects but no actions have taken so far and we are not aware on the status of Wilpattu & Influence Zone Management Project.

- Mr. Anura Dissanayake suggested to convene a meeting with the Secretary of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife and Director General of DWCC to adopt alternative measures and to accelerate delayed ESA project activities which are implemented by the DWC.
- The Secretary sought clarification as to how the baseline survey data collated by the project can be maintained and regularly updated by the Biodiversity Secretariat. This is to be further discussed, to ensure that the data is valid and up to date.

Financial Progress:

The allocated budget for 2017 is LKR 70,684,230 (USD 471,699.90). MoMDE and UNDP has jointly liquidated LKR 38,670,320 (USD 251,547). Financial progress for 2017 as of date was 64 % of the annual budget.

Table 1: Summary of the financial progress

2017 Financial Target			Financial progress to-date				%
Currency	USD	LKR	Expenditure		Commitment/ unsettled advances/ pending payments		
			USD	LKR	USD	LKR	
Annual	471,699.90	70,684,230	188,948.20	29,047,006.29	62,598.57	9,623,278	53%
MoMDE	223,242.48	33,502,885	70,675.20	10,864,898.00	19,956.57	3,067,923	41%
UNDP	248,123.76	37,181,345	118,273.00	18,182,108.29	42,642.00	6,555,355	65%

Physical progress:

- Accomplished Inception Phase and developed Theory of Change, five-year work plans
- Developed training module and guidelines on BD integration to Landscape planning with Landscape Planning & Capacity Development Expert
- Developed guidelines on landscape level land use planning with LUPPD
- Started reviewing the National Wild Elephant Conservation & Management Policy
- Completed & validated Biodiversity Baseline Survey
- Provided equipment's to DWC, FD, LUPPD, MASL
- Formed 06 Local Management Committees and 02 District Facilitation Committees which are operational in Anuradhapura & Puttalam districts
- Appointed planning team & completed capacity building on integration of Biodiversity in to Land Use Planning and landscape level land use planning

- Established 2 Field Offices in Puttalam & Anuradhapura.
- Produced Strategic Management Framework for Wilpattu complex and, handed over to the Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Validated Management plan for KahallaPallekale sanctuary
- Developed ESA Communication Strategy
- Completed reconnaissance survey to identify critical biodiversity habitats outside protected areas in ESA 1
- Demarcated one of Bio diversity hotspot outside PAs (un-demarcated forests)
- Prepared Sustainable tourism plan for Manawekanda forest reserve
- Started Ecological Farming programme across 270 home gardens
- Started preparations on rehabilitating Habarawatta cascade system and completed surveys, soil profile analysis and engineering designs for upgrading village irrigation systems and produced estimates and BoQs
- Gap analysis of existing environment policies is completed, Policy Review Committee is appointed and BDS leads the process of developing ESA policy

3.0 Approval of board papers

Ms. Sugandhi Samarasinghe, Technical Coordinator, ESA Project presented three board papers for the approval of Project Board.

3.1 Board paper 1: Budget revision of Annual Work Plan 2017

The Annual Work Plan 2017 approved at the first project board meeting held on 19th January 2017, to be revised based on following;

- On request at the third Project Board meeting to advance the activities planned for 2018
- Based on reported progress and forecast for next four months of the project stakeholders (Bio Diversity Secretariat, Central Environment Authority, Land Use Policy Planning Department, Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, Forest Department, Department of Wild Life Conservation)
- Actuals against forecasted budget

Table 2: Summary of the revised budget

Proposed revision	LKR	USD	%
Allocation of MoMDE	66,207,561.59	430,674.31	62%
Allocation of UNDP	39,995,090.00	260,164.50	38%
Total	106,202,651.59	690,838.82	

A surplus of LKR 35,518,421.59 (219,138.92 USD) was proposed with this revision. Accordingly, the AWP 2017 will be LKR 106,202,651.59 (USD 690,838.82).

The chair noted, out of the total allocation LKR 69.9 million of the MoMDE, LKR 3.3 million should be reallocated to other foreign funded projects within MoMDE and advised Ms. P.N.D. Abeyarathne, Accountant, MoMDE to discuss with Chief Finance Officer and transfer this allocation accordingly .

PB approved the budget requested for AWP 2017.

3.2 Board paper 02: Approval for the rehabilitation of Habarawatta Cascade System

The Project proposed to rehabilitate a smaller cascade system to demonstrate micro-catchment management and restoration. It is expected to improve the “dead storage” of minor tanks in the cascade by assisting de-silting of tanks, demarcation of tank beds and the catchment and boundary and adoption of appropriate catchment conservation programmes through community participation. It has selected the Habarawatta cascade in Galnewa Divisional Secretariat Division, Anuradapura district through a systematic selection process. This cascade consists of four minor irrigation tanks namely Kanubicchiyagama, Wetakoluwegama, PahalaHabarawatta and IhalaHabarawatta. The surveys, soil profile analysis and engineering designs for upgrading village irrigation systems is completed and estimates and BoQs are produced.

Table 3: Summary of the estimate of four tanks

No	Project Name	Revised Estimate by PDI	Required Allocation for 2017	Required Allocation for 2018
1	Kanupichchiya tank	6,976,077.17	5,819,663.21	1,156,413.96
2	Wetakoluwegama tank	8,553,368.54	6,090,778.21	2,462,590.33
3	IhalaHabarawatta Tank	12,720,355.12	11,910,441.42	809,913.70
4	PahalaHabarawatta tank	15,442,519.92	10,784,793.45	4,657,726.47
	Total	43,692,320. 75.	34,605,676.29	9,086,644.46

- MoMDE will collaborate with the Provincial Department of Irrigation (PDI) through Provincial Council, NCP via signing a MoU for the implementation and monitoring of the cascade rehabilitation process. Initial discussions on feasibility have completed among relevant stakeholders and their consent and commitment is noted.
- Dr. Vishaka Hidellage raised her concerns over the limited time left for the cascade rehabilitation prior to start of monsoon rains and stated that as per experience of UNDP in cascade rehabilitation, UNDP doesn't recommend full dependence over the capacity of Provincial Department of Irrigation (PDI) to complete the tasks on time. Further she stated the inevitable delays could affect the financial dash boards and can negatively impact on

project cash flow and the project board should consider the opportunity cost on not being able to finish this in this quarter.

- Mr. Deepal Siribaddana explained that project already discussed this with the Chief Secretary of North Central Province and his patronage is assured and the project will closely work with PDI to accomplish the cascade rehabilitation activities assigned for 2017 on time.
- Mr. M.F.A. Mubarak said PDI is the most appropriate means in rehabilitating the proposed cascade system.
- Mr. Anura Dissanayake, advised to coordinate closely with the PDI to assure timely deliverables. Also, it was suggested that a dedicated focal point in the provincial authority should be committed to oversee the progress of this activity, if the project is to minimize the current risk of investment.

PB approved the budget request for the cascade rehabilitation assignment stated above and authorized Project Director to sign a MoU with the Chief Secretary of North Central Province at the total value is LKR 43,692,320. 75.

3.3 Board paper 03: Approval for the sitting allowance

As per the ESA Project work plan, it is needed to prepare and revise policy documents, action plans and strategies (Eg - National ESA Policy and Strategy, Wild Elephant Conservation & Management Policy, Bio-diversity integrated sectoral plans etc.). In this process, selected officers/ resource persons who are having expertise on the relevant subjects are participated to the workshops and meeting as experts and share their knowledge. Their continuous participation, expertise and knowledge is vital for the success of proposed activities. Therefore, it was proposed to pay them Rs. 2000/= per sitting as a sitting allowance/ person who participates to the ESA Project workshops and meetings to contribute their expertise knowledge and experience.

Ms. Lovita Ramaguttee said that sitting allowance is not encouraged at UNDP and suggested to check the applicability of paying transport allowance for the resource persons.

Other members of senior beneficiary noted that there are existing circulars to follow. The chair advised Ms. P.N.D. Abeyarathne to refer circulars of CEA, MASL, SLIDA etc. and adopt an appropriate circular.

In principally agreed to the proposal and it is recommended to refer the existing circulars and propose an appropriate payment mechanism.

4.0 Discussion

Quality Assurance: Ms. Dilki Palliyaguruge, M&E Specialist, UNDP conducted a short presentation on project quality assurance needs and discussed on commitments on response to QA tool.

Table 4: Progress against management response of Q/A tool

Criteria	Management response	Progress as at end July 2017
Are the project's taken measures (through outputs, activities, indicators) to address gender inequalities and empower women relevant and producing the intended effect?	A gender analysis is planned for March 2017 and will incorporate measures appropriately at different level of project design and implementation plan to strengthen gender inclusiveness.	60% completed.
Social and Environmental Standards: Does the project seek to further the realization of human rights using a human right based approach?	conduct a quick review during 2017 on applicability of human right based approach within the project context.	Working on this
Sustainability and National ownership regular monitoring of changes in capacities and performance of national institutions and systems relevant to the project.	Capacity changes are assessed through the indicators	Further improvement is required

Project Midterm Review is scheduled in January 2018 and PMU needs to start on necessary preparations by Q-4 2017.

Project team needs to keep close attention on Project M&E frame work and attention on progress towards following objective indicators will keep the team on track.

- % of land area identified nationally for Environmentally Sensitive Area designation
- Areas of critical habitats under management within Wilpattu and Kala Wewa ESAs for connectivity and resilience
- Area under management with inter-sectoral partnership and quantifiable biodiversity conservation targets

5.0 Follow-up actions

Action	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ convene a meeting with the Secretary of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Wildlife and Director General of DWC to adopt alternative measures and to accelerate delayed ESA project activities which are implemented by the DWC.	Mr. Deepal Siribaddana
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Discuss with BDS on how the baseline survey data collated by the project can be maintained and regularly updated by the Biodiversity Secretariat	Ms. Sugandhi Samarasinghe
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Discuss with Chief Finance Officer and transfer LKR 3.3 million to other foreign funded projects within MoMDE	Chief Finance Officer, MoMDE, Ms. P.N.D. Abeyarathne
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sitting allowances to be approved, subject to their compliance with existing government circulars that facilitate such payments.	Ms. P.N.D. Abeyarathne,
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sign the MoU with Provincial Department of Irrigation for the implementation and monitoring of the cascade rehabilitation process.	Mr. Deepal Siribaddana
Address management response on Q/A tool <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Gender analysis○ Assess project using human right based approach	Ms. Sugandhi Samarasinghe

6.0 Conclusion:

The meeting was adjourned at 10.30 a.m. upon final remarks of Mr. Anura Dissanayake, extending appreciation to all the participants for their time and cooperation in all endeavors. The date of next Board Meeting will be notified in due course.

Approved By:

Date: 06/09/2017.....

Mr. Anura Dissanayake,
Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment

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