

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

## MINUTES OF THE FIFTH BOARD MEETING OF THE ESA PROJECT

**Date:** 25.01.2018

**Time:** 11.00 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.

**Venue:** Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment, Sobadam Piyasa, 416/ C/ 1, Robert Gunawardena Mawatha, Battaramulla

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

### **Attendees:**

1. Ms. Lovita Ramguttee, Deputy Country Director, UNDP
2. Mr. D.C. Siribaddana, Director, Environment Planning & Economics Division/ Project Director
3. Ms. Pathma Abeykoon, Director, Biodiversity Secretariat, MoMDE
4. Mr. Mahinda Gunarathna, Director, National Planning Department
5. Ms. P.N.D. Abeyarathne, Accountant, MoMDE
6. Ms. Sureka Perera, Programme Analyst, UNDP
7. Ms. Dilki Palliyaguruge, M & E Specialist, UNDP
8. Ms. Shyara Baztians, Programme Analyst, UNDP
9. Mr. T.M.A. Tennakoon, Asst. Director, MoMDE
10. Ms. Nirosha Kumari, Environment Management Officer, MoMDE
11. Ms. Pradeepa Ranaweera, Project Assistant, MoMDE
12. Ms. G.C. Pallearchi, Development Officer, MoMDE
13. Ms. J.A. Hasini Prabodha, Project Assistant, MoMDE
14. Ms. Sugandhi Samarasinghe, Technical Coordinator (ESA PMU), UNDP/ Secretary to the Project Board

### **Excused:**

1. Ms. A. Kavitha., Assistant Director (United Nations, NGO & HRD Division), Department of External Resources

### **1.0 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Mr. Anura Dissanayake, Secretary, MoMDE, welcomed all the members who represented the senior beneficiary, National planning department and the representatives of senior supplier of the “Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystem Services in Environmentally

Sensitive Areas (ESA)" Project. He noted that ESA Project has reached the prime time to reflect on achievements and lessons learnt against the strategic objective since the mid-term review (MTR) to be carried out before mid of this year.

Ms. Lovita Ramguttee, Deputy Country Director, UNDP seconded Secretaries remarks and emphasized that the project-mid-term review is an important requirement for GEF, and it's also a useful exercise for us to take stock of the progress made so far, and bring-in any necessary changes to the work planned. She appreciated project has made significant physical progress, since it started and achieved financial targets. She commented further on various platforms established, by project with wide range of key stakeholders from local to national level to pilot and promote ESA concept. Ms. Ramagutte noted the successful efforts on landscape based, biodiversity integrated land-use plans and stressed the fact that 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 with the policy and enabling framework. Commenting on financial progress for 2017, it was appreciated the project has expensed approximately 94 % utilization of last year's budget. This year, the delivery of the project, as with all projects facilitated by UNDP, will be monitored on a quarterly basis. Therefore, ensuring that the 2018 workplan and budget is implemented effectively is of paramount importance. She commended the efforts made by the Ministry and the project team, to ensure that the project is on track and will perform as well as they did in 2017 while assuring UNDP's continued assistance this year, and for the remainder of the project, and requested active engagement of all.

Mr. Dissanayake expressed pleasure in hearing the positive remarks of UNDP as the senior supplier of the project.

## **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 2017 and the summary of financial progress as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

### **Financial Progress:**

The allocated budget for 2017 is LKR 106,202,651.59 (USD 690,838.82). MoMDE and UNDP has jointly liquidated LKR 99,521,171.13 (USD 690,838.82). Financial progress for 2017 as of date was 94 % of the annual budget.

Table 1: Summary of the financial progress

2017 Financial Target			Financial expenditure		%
Currency	USD	LKR	USD	LKR	
Annual	690,838.82	106,202,651.59	647,275.65	99,521,171.13	93.7 %
MoMDE	430,674.31	66,207,561.59	387111.15	59,526,081.13	89.9%
UNDP	260,164.50	39,995,090.00	260,164.50	39,995,090.00	100%

**Physical progress:**

- Developed training module and guidelines on BD integration to Landscape planning with Landscape Planning & Capacity Development Expert
- Completed review of National Wild Elephant Conservation & Management Policy
- Formulation of National ESA Policy is ongoing. Gap analysis of existing environment policies is completed. Policy Statements were drafted by the international consultant and received comments of Policy Committee.
- Completed & validated Biodiversity Baseline Survey
- Provided equipment's to DWC, FD, LUPPD, MASL
- Local Management Committees (LMCs) and District Facilitation Committees (DFCs) are functional. (Held 12 LMC meetings & 04 DFC meetings in "Anuradhapura" & "Puttalam")
- Appointed planning team & completed capacity building on integration of Biodiversity in to Land Use Planning and landscape level land use planning
- 2 Field Offices in Puttalam & Anuradhapura were functional assisting field level stakeholders.
- Produced, validated Strategic Management Framework for Wilpattu complex and handed over to the Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Produced, validated and handed over Management plan for Kala Wewa and Kahalla Pallekale protected area complex.
- Completed a survey at "Bar Reef Sanctuary", identified core area for restoration and the management plan development is in progress
- A Responsible Party Agreement is signed with ORCA to facilitate restoration of bar reef through design and installation of buoys at the identified core, develop monitoring protocols etc.
- Developed ESA Communication Strategy and started implementation (teacher's guide, training of journalists)
- Completed reconnaissance survey to identify critical biodiversity habitats outside protected areas in ESA 1 Prepared and validated 04 management plans for "Kadiyangalla" forest complex, Part of "Kahalapallekele" forest complex, "Nelliagama" forest complex, "Kaduboda" forest complex

- Demarcated one of main of Bio diversity hotspot outside PAs (“Nelliyakanda” and “Kadiyangalla” un-demarcated forests)
- Validated Sustainable tourism plan for Manawekanda forest reserve and stated first year implementation activities
- Promotion of Ecological Farming – ongoing with 420 farmer families
- Ecological farming promotion at Mahaweli areas – 300 farmer families, Field Trails- Model home gardening and liquid bio –pesticide preparation was covered parallelly
- 70% rehabilitation completed in Habarawatta cascade system

### 3.0 Approval of board papers

Ms. Sugandhi Samarasinghe, Technical Coordinator, ESA Project/ Secretary to the Project Board and Ms. P.N.D. Abehayarathne, Accountant, MoMDE/ Finance Manager, ESA project presented two board papers for the approval of Project Board.

#### 3.1 Board paper 1: Grant approval for the Annual Work Plan (AWP) - 2018 of ESA project

The ESA Annual Work Plan 2018 was developed in par with the five- year activity plan of the ESA project at the consortium meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and presented at the National Steering Committee (NSC) meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017. The comments were incorporated and it was suggested to have one to one discussions on AWP prior finalization with consortium members representing Bio Diversity Secretariat, Central Environment Authority, Land Use Policy Planning Department, Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka, Forest Department, Department of Wild Life Conservation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Irrigation. Simultaneously the draft AWP was presented at the District Facilitation Committees at Anuradhapura and Puttalam districts.

Accordingly, the proposed AWP 2018 is budgeted at LKR 106,070,903.00 (USD 691,466.12)

*Table 2: Summary of the budget of AWP 2018*

	<b>LKR</b>	<b>USD</b>	<b>%</b>
Allocation of MoMDE	61,000,000.00	397,653.19	58
Allocation of UNDP	45,070,903.00	293,812.93	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>106,070,903.00</b>	<b>691,466.12</b>	

Mr. Mahinda Gunarathna, Director, National Planning Department noted the significance of creating market linkages within the programme and Ms. Samarasinghe explained it is addressed within the annual work plan to create market linkages among relevant producers and national supermarket chains to foster the marketing dynamics.

Ms. Sureka Perera, Programme Analyst, UNDP highlighted the advantage of ensuring GAP certification within ecological farming programme. On the request of Mr. Dissanayake,

Ms. Samarasinghe clarified the difference between organic and ecological farming concept and its' applicability within the ESA project.

Project board granted approval for the board paper 01: Annual Work Plan (AWP) - 2018 of ESA project

### **3.2 Board paper 02: Approval for the sitting allowance**

As per the five-year work plan of ESA Project, it is required to prepare and continue reviewing policy documents, action plans and strategies. In this process, it is important to use the knowledge of wider stakeholders who are having expertise and experience in the relevant fields and it is required to facilitate their continued participation to such workshops and meetings.

This requirement was presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> ESA PB meeting and PB principally agreed to the proposal and it was recommended to refer the existing circulars and propose an appropriate payment mechanism.

Accordingly; Second board paper referred to the section 2(i) of the internal circular dated 23 January 2017, issued under the recommendation of national Salaries and Cadre Commission, by the Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment; which allows a sitting allowance of Rs. 1000.00 per sitting is paid for the participant of the workshops and meeting of above nature.

Consequently, based on the provisions in the above circular proposed the approval is sought;

1. To pay a sitting allowance of LKR 1000.00 per sitting per person, for ESA Project workshops and meetings.
2. To adopt the same provisions for the consortium agencies of the project when required and applicable

Ms. Lovita Ramguttee said that sitting allowance is not encouraged at UNDP and the PMU may use consolidated funds to cover such expenses and suggested to check the applicability of paying transport allowance for the resource persons.

Mr. Anura Dissanayake explained that it is acceptable to enforce the circular referred in the board paper and it could be adopted for the ESA project. The Project board approved the board paper 02.

## **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 seven management responses (strategic, relevant, management & monitoring, efficient, effective, Social and Environmental Standards, Sustainability and National Ownership) to QA tool.

Table 3: Progress against management response of Q/A tool

Criteria	Management response	Progress for 2017	Remarks
<b>Relevant</b>	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	On track	Conducted gender analysis. Initiated integration of gender inequity concerns in to the operational plan Started documenting the observation
<b>Social and Environment Standards</b>	To conduct a quick review during 2017 on applicability of human right approach within the project context.	Didn't take place	Key resource person of UNDP didn't attend the session. Suggested to do in 2018. Mr. Dissanayake emphasized importance of applying human right approach.
<b>Sustainability and national ownership</b>	Review of the sustainability plan by the Consortium- 2017	Didn't take place	Systematic review has not been conducted. Implementation processes have been incorporated sustainability principles. Need to plan this within a consortium agenda. Secretary asked to follow up this.
	Capacity development programmes targeting the individual partners and their specific requirements are planned from 2017 onwards, which will be monitored through appropriate indicators	Didn't take place	Gap assessment of capacities is yet to be completed because of delayed recruitment of International expert. Secretary advised to be realistic with planning and lessons learnt should be addressed.

**Project Midterm Review:** This is a useful exercise for us to take stock of the progress made so far, and bring-in any necessary changes to the work planned. The review will be facilitated by UNDP and is due to start in May this year. Ms. Palliyaguruge noted that not to be discouraging to share failures as this is a good opportunity to take corrective measures before it is too late.

Mr. Dissanayake requested PMU to prioritize MTR and ensure active involvement of all stakeholders in the exercise.

**Language of deliverables:** Mr. Dissanayake emphasized the importance of availability of all the project deliverables in local languages to maximize resource efficiency, effectivity and outreach, requested PMU to translate all the major outputs in to local languages and present them before the next PB meeting.

**5.0 Conclusion:**

The meeting was adjourned at 1.30 p. 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.

Prepared By:  .....

Date: 01/02/2018 .....

Sugandhi Samarasinghe  
Technical Coordinator (ESA PMU) / Secretary to the Project Board

Approved By:  .....

Date: 02.02.2018 .....

Anura Dissanayake,  
Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment

**Secretary**  
**Ministry of Mahaweli Development and**  
**Environment**

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