



162/13/029 - Conserving Giant Clams Through A Community Reserve In The Lakshadweep Islands

Darwin Initiative

Annual Report

Conserving Giant Clams Through A Community Reserve In The Lakshadweep Islands

Reference # 162-13-029

Year 1

28 April 2006



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- CD-ROM with Annual Report and Photos
- Brochure - Conserving Giant Clams Through a Community Reserve in the Lakshadweep Islands
- Giant Clam Sticker
- Poster - Indian Spiderconches, BNHS
- Green Governance - January-June 2005: 'BNHS and LEAD-UK', page 26
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Annual Report

Darwin Project Information

Project Ref. Number	162-13-029
Project Title	Conserving Giant Clams Through A Community Reserve In The Lakshadweep Islands
Country	India
UK Contractor	LEAD-International ¹
Partner Organisation(s)	Bombay Natural History Society
Darwin Grant Value	£150,000 (149,961)
Start/End dates	1 April 2005 – 31 March 2008
Reporting period (1 Apr 200x to 31 Mar 200y) and annual report number (1,2,3..)	1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006 1 st Annual Report
Project website	http://www.lead.org/page/89
Author(s), date	Deepak Apte, Bombay Natural History Society Andrea Deri, LEAD International 28 April 2006

Project Background

The project is based in Lakshadweep Islands, the smallest Union Territory of India measuring 32 km² of land spread over 36 islands (10 inhabited with a population of circa 60,000), 12 atolls and 5 submerged sand banks, surrounded by 4,200 km² of lagoon rich in marine wildlife.

Tuna fishing and tourism are the main economic activities in Lakshadweep. Tuna fishing however, has been under threat over the last decade when the baitfish population in the reef lagoons began to decline drastically. Our project team therefore works closely with local island communities to establish management regimes to increase the biodiversity

¹ "To reflect the increasing amount of work being undertaken outside the United Kingdom, LEAD (UK) changed its name on 13 September 2005 to LEAD International"



of the reefs and thus restore the baitfish populations which are closely linked with the islands' overall economy and livelihood. To sustain these management practices a marine community reserve - the first of its kind in India - will be created during this project in close collaboration with the Indian government.

The traditionally strong local communities and the unique cultural characteristics of these islands – following matrilineal Muslim traditions where women have significant status in the community – provide a supportive social environment for community-based natural resource management.

Giant clams symbolise the health of coral reef. Due to their very selective ecological requirements they are very good indicators of changes in reef health. Thus monitoring giant clams is an essential tool to quantify changes in the integrity of reef habitats. Giant clams are globally significant species: protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; included in the IUCN Invertebrate Red Data Book as conservation dependent species; and listed by CITES and the Indian EXIM Policy.

3. Project Purpose and Outputs

Project purpose

The overall purpose of the project is to develop the capacity of local communities in the Lakshadweep Islands to prepare and implement the first marine community reserve in India which will enable local people who live in this biodiversity hotspot to put in place management regimes for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. This capacity development process harnesses LEAD-International's expertise in training and sustainable development.

Outputs

The most important output will be the establishment of a marine community reserve which will be the first marine community reserve in India. The proposed community reserve in the Lakshadweep Islands will

1. Conserve globally threatened populations of giant clams
2. Assist with the recovery of a degraded reef and depleted fish stocks
3. Enhance the livelihood prospects, in a sustainable way, of traditional fishing communities currently living below the poverty line.

Other outputs include management plans, training materials and resource materials based on the results of our project research:

1. Training or Trainers Manual for Tour guides (Year 1)
2. Management Plan for Tourism (Year 2)
3. Training of Trainers Manual for Community Reserve (Year 2)
4. Management Plan for Community Reserve (Year 2)
5. Training or Trainers Manual for Education (Year 2)
6. Management Plan for Giant Clams (Year 3)



4. Progress

Project History to Date

This is the first year of the project which successfully completed the planned all start-up activities and began baseline activities in the four dimensions of the project: (1) research, (2) capacity development, (3) fisheries, and (4) tourism. Start-up activities included establishing exemplary rapport with local stakeholders both with the Administration and community members, hiring a competent local project team, and setting up a project office in Kavaratti (where the Administration resides in Lakshadweep) which has also become a frequented community centre for people from all walks of life increasingly interested in biodiversity and livelihood. Project achievements are summarised under the following categories:

(1) Research

We successfully laid down 25 permanent transects each in 10 lagoons covering 21 islands. See **Annex 1: List of Islands Surveyed**. (Some lagoons like Kalpeni have several islands enclosed.) Our research has managed to investigate almost three times more islands than we envisaged in the original proposal which targeted only 8 islands. Each line transects measures 100m in length x10m on each side. For list of data monitored see **Annex 2: Data Sheet**.

Our research has found that the most common species of giant clam in the surveyed area of Lakshadweep is *Tridacna maxima*. A small population of *Tridacna squamosa* however, was also discovered in Bangaram Island.

Each individual clam is photographed with a 1mx1m frame to further analyse associates and habitat as well. For an example, please see a few pictures in **Annex 3: Images of *Tridacna maxima* and Associates**.

The baseline data will be used in statistical analysis – which begins in May 2006 - for the following areas significant for the conservation of giant clams:

- giant clam population on 21 islands (including distribution, abundance),
- recruitment of juveniles,
- mortality,
- breeding population,
- clam anchorage on substrate (for which clam count of 2,000 dead clam was also taken of various sizes),
- substrate preference for anchorage,
- general habitat profile,
- clam associates,
- clam's predatory molluscs,
- preferred depth,
- mantle profile and its relation to depth if any.



Preliminary analysis demonstrates differences in population projections on surveyed islands - see **Annex 4**: Preliminary Population Projections for *Tridacna maxima* on Various Islands -, and sheds light to distinct substrate preferences of *T. maxima* and its patterns of associate species - see **Annex 5**: Substrate Preference of *Tridacna maxima*.

The 25 transects in each lagoon will be monitored over the next two years to track mortality, recruitment and changes in habitat with season. This will help us make projections and trends for clam populations, the basis for their conservation management plan.

(2) Capacity Development

Capacity building is a key area of the project. As part of the training of trainers approach, the local project team and selected volunteers have acquired locally relevant training & learning methods which they can adapt to all capacity building activities including education, tourism, and fisheries over the next two years of the project period and beyond. A range of activities have been undertaken and reached over 1,000 local people in preparation of setting up a marine community reserve, the goal of this project. For details see **Annex 6**: Capacity Development Activities. Our experience confirmed the pressing need for locally relevant educational materials in local languages (Malayalam, Jassery). Textbooks used in Lakshadweep's schools do not discuss Lakshadweep at all. Textbooks used in Lakshadweep's schools are developed in Kerala and strictly follow the Kerala curriculum. Therefore significant amount of our second year project efforts in education activities will be devoted to design and publish locally relevant materials which can be used to complement the formal curriculum with non-formal educational resources.

(3) Fisheries

Baseline data collection has begun on local fisheries (methods, gears, seasonality, trends in stock changes, management, and traditional governance). See **Annex 7**: Fishery. The major fishing season in Lakshadweep is the 'fair-season', the period between November and May. During the rest of the year i.e. south-west monsoon period, fishing activities are restricted to the lagoons and the leeward side of the islands. The fishing methods used in Lakshadweep islands show a mixture of methods used in traditional subsistence and commercial fisheries. During the south-west monsoon fishermen of the little islands are mainly dependent on subsistence fishing when fishing activities are shifted to the inshore waters. Inshore waters include shallow lagoons, reef-flats, reef-fronts and reef-slopes. Almost all the fish found in inshore waters are pelagic with a few exceptions. Fish captured here include baitfish, aquarium fish, and reef food fish. Baitfish are critical for tuna fishery. Other inshore water species captured include lobsters, sea cucumbers, and octopus.



(4) Tourism

Besides fishing, tourism is the other, increasingly important, fast emerging industry of Lakshadweep's economy. See **Annex 8: Tourism**. Based on our surveys and interviews with tourists, however, the lack of trained tour guides has been identified as one of the constraints to develop high quality sustainable tourism in Lakshadweep comparable with the Administration's 'high value & low volume' tourism guidelines. Thus our first year intervention in terms of capacity building of local youths to become eco-tour guides has much significance. Three co-facilitated (UK and local trainers) 5-6 days training workshops were delivered in Kavaratti, Kadmat and Agatti where 35 local youths were trained as tour guides. A carefully prepared training manual was jointly developed with local partners to support future outreach training events and ongoing professional development for local tour guides in all islands where tourism has been and will be established. Parts of this manual will translated to local languages. **Annex 9: Training of Trainers Manual for Tour Guides**.

Baseline data and identification of methodology for calculating the ecological footprint of tourism and the islands' carrying capacity was completed for three islands (Kavaratti, Agatti and Bangaram). After the preliminary review by technical experts (Mathis Wackernagel, Stefan Gössling, Varghese Manalor) additional data will be generated during the second year to support the Tourism Management Plan of the selected island for the marine community reserve. The Tourism Management Plan will be developed by October 2006 through broad-based consultations involving tour operators, tour-guides, community representatives and government agencies.

No significant difficulties were encountered during the first year.

Timetable with Key Milestones in Project Activities in Year 2

Project implementation timetable		
Date	Financial year: Apr-Mar 2006/7	Key milestones
01.04.2006 - 31.07.2006	Apr-Mar 2006/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of trainers – 2nd phase (30 days) • Further training workshops for local communities • Reserve area mapping and identifying boundaries • Design and develop Marine Community Reserve Management Plan • Design and develop Island Tourism Management Plan • Island Tourism Management Plan submitted to Tourism Authority • Project video documentary initiated on the selected island for the Marine Community Reserve • Project website further developed • Continue raising additional resources (£36,509)
01.08.2006 - 30.11.2006	Apr-Mar 2006/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate process of establishment of Marine Community Reserve • Interact with Ministry of Environment and Forests and local government offices • Community Reserve Local Governing Council members identified • Community Reserve Local Governing Council established • Honorary reef warden and fish warden identified, appointed and trained • Continue education programmes for local schools and college students • Six monthly progress report
01.12.2006 - 31.03.2007	Apr-Mar 2006/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue giant clam mapping on reefs, populations studies, ecological and biological studies and data collection, associate species identification • Continue interaction with Ministry of Environment and Forests and local government offices for the Community Reserve establishment • Implementation of Tourism Management Plan • Bi monthly Local Governing Council meetings • Year 2 Annual report

5. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

Non applicable as this is our first annual report.



6. Partnerships

The collaboration between the UK and the host country partners was mutually inspiring and created numerous opportunities for joint professional development and sharing professional networks.

Our project has been very successful in establishing new links with local as well as international organisations committed to biodiversity and sustainable livelihood – including sustainable tourism - issues. Regular communication and/or exchange of resource materials has begun with the following organisations and likeminded projects – other than listed project partners:

- Darwin Centre Live, Natural History Museum, London, UK
- EarthCare Films, New Delhi, India
- Field Studies Council, with their Darwin Initiative Project, Shrewsbury, UK
- Global Footprint Network, Canada
- Global Islands Network, UNEP
- Harriot Watt University, with their Darwin Initiative Project, Edinburgh, UK
- IUCN, Gland, Switzerland
- LEAD-India, New Delhi, India
- LEAD-Indonesia, with their Darwin Initiative Project, Jakarta, Indonesia
- Lund University, Helsingborg, Sweden
- Marine Marine Research Assessment Group / DFID Fisheries Management Science Programme, London, UK
- National Institute of Oceanography, Goa, India
- University of Kochi, Kochi, India
- University of Delhi, New Delhi, India
- University of Sarragoza, Sarragoza, Spain
- University of Alberta, Camrose, Canada
- TARU Consulting, New Delhi, India
- TUNZA for Youth, UNEP
- Tyndall Centre, University of East Anglia, UK

7. Impact and Sustainability

Project objectives and preliminary findings were presented at the Marine Parks Congress in Australia. A series of articles were published on the project in magazines such as *Defending Wild India* and *Green Governance* with a circulation of over 5,000 (see attached hard copies).

One of the clear evidences for increasing interest in biodiversity resulting from the project is the fact that more and more local community members visit our local project office in Kavaratti on a daily basis to learn more about local biodiversity and inquire how they can support the project as volunteers. Other evidence was the invitation initiated by the Administrator of Lakshadweep (highest political decision maker) to provide capacity development for government staff with special focus on sustainable tourism in



March/April 2006. (The UK partner's visit had to be postponed to Year 2 due to unexpected staff changes in the Administration.)

8. Outputs, Outcomes and Dissemination

All planned projected outputs were achieved in the first year and even some of the second year activities were also brought forward to the first year to meet local needs, e.g. focusing the first year trainings on tourism.

As this was our first year, dissemination activities per se have not started yet but our project approach is communicated widely through our increasing network of project partners (see list above under 6. Partnership).

Table 1. Project Outputs (According to Standard Output Measures)

Code No.	Description	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	TOTAL
1A	Indian staff to submit thesis for PhD on fisheries and environmental economics	2				
3	Indian staff received PADI diver qualification	2				
4A	Undergraduate students (Indian, USA) received training on biodiversity	2				
4B	Training weeks	1				
6A	Indian staff received training on community-based conservation, environmental education and eco-tourism	3				
6B	Training weeks provided	4				
6A	Indian youths received training on eco-tourism	35				
6B	Training weeks provided	4				
6A	Indian students received awareness raising trainings on various environmental - including biodiversity – and conservation issues, and the role of reefs in their livelihood	1,000				
6B	Training days	9				
7	Training manual	1				
	Audio-visual	1				
	Guided reef trail	2				
	Leaflet	1				



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	Brochure	1				
	Poster	1				
	Stickers	1				
	Slide shows	1				
8	Week spent by UK staff in host country	4				
14B	Project presented at Marine Park Congress in Australia by two Indian project staff members	1				
15A	Articles, newsreleases in 'Green Governance'	3				
22	Transects established: Baseline ecological survey leading to identification of boundaries of Community Reserve completed	250				
23	Total amount raised:	£26,200 In-kind: £22,00				

Table 2: Publications

Type	Detail	Publishers	Available from	Cost £
Quarterly Newsletter on Biodiversity and Business	'Lakshadweep: The Treasure Island', Deepak Apte, page 3-5, July- August 2005, Green Governance	Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay, India	Hornbill House, S.B. Singh Road, Mumbai 400 023, India www.bnhs.org	
ibid	'BNHS and LEAD-UK', Deepak Apte, page 26, January-June 2005, Green Governance	Same as above	Same as above	
ibid	'Green Governance Programme - The Team', Deepak Apte, page 29, Process Compilation 2003-2005s, Green Governance	Same as above	Same as above	



over the phone, face-to-face, via e-mail – used the following criteria to monitor project achievements: saliency (local and global relevance), credibility, legitimacy and timely delivery according to the project plan.

Training

- The objectives of all capacity development activities were developed through a participatory process with local stakeholders. All training events had end-of-day monitoring ('reflection') sessions and an end-of-workshop evaluation session. These monitoring and evaluation sessions used a variety of small group discussion techniques as well as the more conventional but locally less used individual evaluation form.
- In order to establish a baseline data to gauge changes in children's perception and understanding of conservation issues, we performed content analysis of over 200 children's drawing which were submitted at the 2005 World Environmental Day Drawing Competition in Kavaratti. The same content analysis will be performed towards the end of the project (after 2007 World Environmental Day) to assess the progress of understanding complex conservation issues in 10 age groups of local children.
- In support of the community development process and also for establishing baseline process monitoring information several elements of islanders' life (fishing, coir making, tourism etc) as well as deep interviews with prominent community members in Kavaratti were filmed during December 2005 by EarthCare Ltd. The edited final film is also planned to be used for further fundraising to support a community empowerment process which will be critical in the sustainable management of the Marine Community Reserve.

Progress toward Project Purpose

- The ultimate output of this project is to establish a Marine Community Reserve for the sustainable management of natural resources which supports islanders' livelihood and contributes to global biodiversity. Accordingly, all project activities have been geared towards establishing a broad-based (multigenerational), trusted and empowering relationship with the local communities. The high and increasing number of community members (from all walks of life and age groups) and decision makers visiting our local project office, and participating in our project activities are good indicators of making progress toward our project purpose. The support provided by the local government offices and the initiation by the Administrator himself are also indicating progress towards the aimed effective co-management of the community reserve.

Lessons Learned

- **Most engaging delivery mechanisms** - Field studies, informal meetings, visuals including films were the most welcome mechanisms to engage local people in discussion about biodiversity and livelihood issues. Local people respond to these types of training & resource materials much more than to conventional types (text-heavy), so we are creating our training manuals, training designs and other relevant materials accordingly. This means: we continue using informal meetings to discuss issues relevant to the community reserve, and we increase the use of colourful



visuals including films in training events. All visuals are made by local artists and art teachers, and children.

- **Perception of future** - The perception of 'future' among those interviewed (youth, adults) follows a 'business as usual' scenario. There seems to be a low level of awareness of current global changes and their impact on the islands' natural resources and on islanders' livelihood. (However, further detailed research is needed in this area.) As perception shapes ability to act, future training events will have a purposeful emphasis on exploring different future scenarios to better support the long-term planning and management process of the Community Reserve.
- **Science & society interface** - Our efforts to create a link between research and community issues, making our research transparent and accessible to all interested echoed high appreciation in the community. Previous research projects did not engage local people and did not share the results. Accordingly, we will continue our approach to make our research activities accessible to community members and link our research with community and policy issues.
- **Films for community empowerment** - Building on the high interest and already existing skill level in creating visual media, we are planning to train local youth to film the process of establishing and managing the first Marine Community Reserve. These footages will be screened to the community on a regular basis in order to facilitate discussion on progress and next steps. This media-assisted community empowerment process has been successfully applied in other parts of India by EarthCare Films, a New Delhi based company which has already made significant amount of preliminary films and still images of Kavaratii as baseline in December 2005. These materials will be edited and used for both monitoring purpose as well as attracting further funding to support the media-assisted community empowerment process.



10. Outstanding achievements

The first year of 'Project Giant Clam' has celebrated the unprecedented volume of baseline data collected about globally threatened giant clam (*Tridacna maxima* and *T.squamosa*) populations in the Lakshadweep Islands, India. With the incomparable dedication and intensive underwater fieldwork of local project staff and volunteers - trained through this project - we managed to extend our giant clam survey to almost three times more islands (21) than we originally hoped for (8).

This extension has allowed us to have an overview of the current status of giant clam populations in more than half (21 out of 36) of Lakshadweep Islands including data for over 2,800 individual giant clams and their micro-habitats. Covering more islands, more habitats, involving more local people in the survey helped us develop better understanding of the possible factors (climatic, direct anthropogenic) influencing the population dynamics, distribution pattern and ultimately the conservation of giant clams.

An other outstanding achievement of our first year is the wide-range and enthusiastic support the project has received from the Administration of Lakshadweep's government and diverse members of the local communities, as well as from international experts and likeminded projects. Their interest has been catalysed by a series of capacity development and communication activities - reaching over 1,000 local people - spread throughout the year to maintain high visibility and profile for our project. One of these activities, the three five-day workshops on three islands (Kavaratti, Kadmat and Agatti) was significant as the participating 35 local youth now can work as tour-guides who are able to support eco-tourism with due awareness of the environmental and social challenges tourism poses at both local and global level. The keen interest and committed support of various stakeholders helps the project achieve its goal, i.e. to establish the first Marine Community Reserve in India to conserve Lakshadweep's unique biodiversity.

More on our project website: <http://www.lead.org/page/89>



Project Logical Framework

Report of progress and achievements against Logical Framework for Financial Year: 2005/2006

Project summary	Measurable Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2005-Mar 2006	Actions required/planned for next period
<p>Goal: To draw on expertise relevant to biodiversity from within the United Kingdom to work with local partners in countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to achieve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The conservation of biological diversity, • The sustainable use of its components, and • The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources 			
<p>Purpose Conservation of globally threatened Giant Clams and other marine biodiversity, through a participatory approach in the establishment of a Community Reserve in the Lakshadweep Islands, India</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Reserve designated for certification by yr 3 2. Evidence of <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) recovery of giant clams (measurable 5 yrs after Reserve designation) b) recovery of fish stocks within Reserve and lagoon (measurable 5 yrs after Reserve designation) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent relationship has been established and nurtured with Indian Government with regular project updates 2. a) Baseline survey of giant clams completed for 21 islands in 250 transects in order to assess recovery 2.b) Collection of baseline information on status of bait fish stock began in order to assess recovery 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue regular updates for Indian Government 2.a) Produce Year1 report for giant clam survey; Repeat survey on eight selected islands; 2.b) Complete baseline information collection on bait fish stock



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Outputs			
1. Research: Ecological & biological data on clams gathered & analysed	1. Baseline data by Yr 1, Annual monitoring data in subsequent years	1. Yr 1 baseline survey of giant clams is completed for 21 islands (c.f.: planned 8!)	1. Low level recruitment of giant clams: further research is needed
2. Local community capacity developed for management of Community Reserve	2. 125 local people trained in management of Community Reserve by yr 3	2.a) 40 local people trained in sustainable tourism and survey methods of giant clam: knowledge and skills needed for managing the Community Reserve; 2.b) Locally relevant training materials were developed in close collaboration with local community members.	2. a-b) Provide further trainings on co-management 2.c) Network with similar community-based reserves on other small tropical islands and use their lessons learned.
3. Management Plan for Reserve being implemented	3. a) Management Plan for the Reserve by Yr 2 3. b) Appointment of reef & fish wardens & task force by Yr 3	3.a.1) Research has begun on collecting information on community reserve management. 3.a.2) Three islands short-listed where the community reserve could be established. Most promising candidates: Agatti, Bitra. 3.a.3) Preliminary discussions started with candidate communities on the community reserve.	3.a.1) Complete background research; 3.a.2) Select island where the Community Reserve will be established. 3.a.3) Develop Management Plan in close collaboration with local communities.



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<p>4. Tourism plans for Reserve developed</p>	<p>4. Island carrying capacity mapped and tourism plan produced by Yr 2</p>	<p>4.a) Baseline data collected and methodology established for calculating the community reserve's tourism carrying capacity.</p> <p>4.b) Indian Government invited the project team to train local decision-makers on sustainable tourism and discussing potential scenarios in tourism development.</p>	<p>4. Develop Tourism Plans for the Community Reserve.</p>
<p>5. Dissemination of project results and lessons learned</p>	<p>5. Project Report produced, findings presented at international conferences, video documentary screened, website developed</p>		



Activities	Activity Milestones (Summary of Project Implementation Timetable)
1. MoU signed & field station established	1.4.2005 - 31.8.2005 - Completed
2. Training project staff	1.9.2005 – 31.10.2005; - Completed (1.-31.12.2005) 10 days left: will add to Year 2 1.4.2006 - 31.7.2006; - Year 2 1.4.2007 - 30.6.2007
3. Gathering baseline information on clams & Annual monitoring	1.11.2005-31.3.2006; - Completed 1.12.2006-31.3.2007; - Year 2 1.11.2007-31.12.2007
4. Identifying & designating Reserve	1.4.2006-31.7.2006; - Year 2 1.11.2007 – 31.12.2007
5. Community capacity building	1.11.2005- 31.3.2006; - 1st phase completed 1.4.2006-31.7.2006; - Year 2 1.4.2007-30.6.2007
6. Preparing & implementing Community Reserve Management Plan	1.4.2006-31.7.2006; - Year 2 1.4.2007-30.6.2007; 1.7.2007-31.10.2007
7. Measuring the Islands' carrying capacity to support tourism	1.9.2005-31.10.2005; 1.11.2005-31.3.2006 – Baseline data collection and method identification completed; Calculation of carrying capacity will be completed after the island is selected for community reserve. - Year 2
8. Local Governing Council and Assessment Task Force established	1.8.2006-30.11.2006; - Year 2 1.4.2007-30.6.2007; 1.11.2007-31.3.2008