

DARWIN INITIATIVE FOR THE SURVIVAL OF SPECIES

SIX MONTHLY MONITORING FORM

Project Details

Project Reference No. 09/002_____

Project Title ~~Effective management for biodiversity~~
conservation in Sri Lankan coastal wetlands
(EMBioC)

Institution ~~Centre for the Economics and~~
Management of Aquatic Resources
(CEMARE), University of Portsmouth

Round 4 (please tick)
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- a) Outline progress over the last six months against the agreed baseline timetable for the project. If some milestones have not been achieved or have slipped, explain reasons for this.

- The purpose of this project is to weigh the benefits of restoring (conservation) wetlands against other development options. We have conducted several planned research activities to achieve objectives of the project during the last six months. Meetings conducted on monthly basis in UK have been used to monitor the progress of the project. The UK researchers in July 2001 made third field visits to the field site. The purposes of this visit were to: a) begin the CVM and socio-economic survey; b) collect information for the ecological footprint analysis and; c) establish permanent plots to characterise the mangrove ecosystems under investigation. Field survey questionnaires were designed for socio-economic survey and the CVM study. These were field-tested using selected and trained enumerators in January 2001 and reviewed to overcome some difficulties encountered in the enumeration. The universe of the study is the entire project area and the sample population was collected from the list of users and non-users of the wetland, which was maintained by the district councils. The survey was carried out in houses on a randomly selected sample out of the total population. The questionnaire was designed to be easily understood and filled out without external consultation. Many parts were self-explanatory but, where it was necessary, clear explanations were provided. Opportunity cost, and embarrassment was reduced by keeping the questionnaire brief. This also emphasised by writing clearly and using easy-to-follow instructions. With the help of trained survey team it took about 30 minutes to complete a questionnaire. It is the hope of the team to complete the survey before the end of the year 2001. Part of the survey data has been entered into the database. Five ribbon permanent plots were surveyed and marked in the investigation area. This work involved collaborative development of methodology between UK staff, the Darwin Fellow and a team of eleven undergraduates from the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. Data on basal area, floristic characteristics and tree architecture were collected from the plots. A method for assessing the recent growth rates of individual trees in the plots was tested. Methods of mangrove conservation in a heavily human-impacted region to the North of the study area were examined in a visit by the UK team and the Darwin Fellow.
- A Sri Lankan researcher/lecturer at the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka has enrolled for MSc in Coastal and Marine Resources Management at the University of Portsmouth from September 2001. A paper was submitted to the Journal of Environment International on the title "Economic framework for analysing conservation effectiveness in coastal wetlands using passive use values". It has been identified that at least 5 peer-reviewed journal articles will be published at the end of the project period. Accordingly, each researcher (UK and Sri Lankan) will first author at least one paper before the end of the project period. Initial ideas of the papers have been discussed at the project meeting held in Sri Lanka on the 25th July 2001. Training materials were prepared in June 2001 in sample selection, questionnaire preparation and the data entry process of the final analysis. Guidelines and indicators will be developed based on findings of the survey. Five newsletters will be produced based on the findings of surveys and circulated before the end of month 24. The Project Leader has conducted a short-course on environment valuation methodologies for the post graduate students and the staff at the Zoology department, University of Kelaniya on 14 and 21 July 2001. Training materials were prepared and handed over to the participants at the short course. A Darwin Fellow (full time) attached to the Project EMBioC office at the University of Moratuwa is liaising work with other members of the team and co-ordinating the work programme.

- b) Is the project still expected to achieve all the original objectives which were specified? Explain any problems/difficulties which have been encountered to date in achieving the objectives of the project (or any which you envisage may be encountered in the future).
- Yes, it is still expected to achieve the original objectives specified in the project proposal.
 - Any international project of multidisciplinary nature is facing some difficulties in implementing it. One of the problems we have faced during the last six months was getting a job done in time from our collaborators. However, it has not affected by any means to achieve our targets of the project, though, constant follow-up is necessary in order to see the final results. It is well under control with some constant follow-up procedures.
 - The recent terrorist attack to the international airport at Colombo interrupted fieldwork as a Government curfew was imposed for a short period. This led to some rescheduling of field activities. Nonetheless we managed to complete the planned programme during the last visit. We may encounter similar incidents in the future, however, they will not hinder achieving the set targets.
 - Payments to the Sri Lankan researchers have not progressed due to the delay in signing the MOU between the University of Portsmouth and the University of Moratuwa, due to procedural requirements at UoM. A committee was set up to look into the implications of the Biodiversity convention due to the project and the matter has now been resolved and payments will be made in the near future.
- c) What lessons can be learnt from your experiences (both good and bad) over the last six months?
- One of the lessons we learned during the last six months was to plan well ahead and leave a sufficient margin to get it done a work from our collaborators. It was not a lesson we learned from this project, but it was the fact that we have experienced over the years working in developing countries. It was difficult to blame any individual for the drawback; however, it comes with the system, which will be difficult to correct in one project experience. The challenge of working in developing countries is to achieve set target overcoming these difficulties.
- d) If the project timetable has slipped or changed, provide an updated project implementation timetable for the remainder of the project. *(Please note that projects are expected to adhere to their original timetable and that the timely completion of projects is an important factor taken into account by the Department when assessing project performance. However, from time to time projects may be delayed unavoidably. Where a project is falling behind schedule, details on the revised programme of work should be provided below. We shall then follow up on this with you)*
- Project timetable has not changed.
- e) What is the estimated completion date for the project?
- May 2002, as planned.

f) Is this different to the completion date set out in the original application form?

Yes

(please tick)

No X

g) Miscellaneous information

Please use this space to provide any further information on the progress of the project over the last six months.

- The project's research, training and/or technical work during the last six months were successful according to the progress given in previous section. In designing the research work it was made clear that partners in developing countries should be involved in all stages of the project, from design to implementation and evaluation. It has included a strong component of capacity building, so the results will have long lasting effects that extend beyond the life of the project for many years to the future. Each of the resource personnel (3 UK researchers and 3 Sri Lankan researchers) attached to the project has been allocated a part of responsibility of the research under the supervision of the project leader. Research methodologies suggested by each sub section and findings will be published as part of project reports and peer reviewed journal articles.