

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

**SAFEGUARDING THE RIGHTS OF LIVING IN A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND LIVELIHOOD RECOVERY OF
TRADITIONAL FOREST - COMMUNALITIES**

COUNTRY/REGION: SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON SOUTH –EAST ASIA

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1. Brief Proposal Outline:

1.1 Objectives

- Mobilize and empower disadvantaged forest-dwelling indigenous communities in Sri Lanka and in the region
- Ensure the rights of living in a sustainable environment
- Provide sustainable measures for livelihood recovery and food security
- Enrich degraded habitats to maintain the quality of forestlands
- To preserve the traditional knowledge on survival techniques
- Mobilizing rights of access to ancestral lands to sustain the subsistence economy
- Create education and awareness on rights of indigenous communities
- Develop a regional national strategy and action plan to protect the rights of disadvantaged forest-based communities
- Main inputs
 - Technical assistance and resource personnel for training, skills development and Empowering the stakeholders
 - Financial assistance for implementation and coordination
 - Facilitation and promotion of developing small-scale subsistence agricultural practices in home gardens and model farm lands
 - Promotion and extension of nature friendly traditional income generation activities and providing integrated alternatives
 - Skills enhancement in identifying and restoring plant materials and habitats
 - Guidelines for establishing and maintaining forest schools for sustained community benefits
 - Resource personnel and study material on human rights education and awareness with special emphasis on traditional communities
 - Technical expertise on negotiations and preparing the proposed livelihood recovery strategy
 - Promotion and coordination of proposed activities
 - Monitoring, evaluation and follow up assistance

1.2 Main outputs

- Increased capacities of custodians and strengthened regional and national partner networks
- Social and economic wellbeing of motivated functional communities
- Ensured food security and sustainable livelihoods in traditional forest settlements
- Enhanced skills of the men and women in sustainable livelihoods
- Assist in basic infrastructural development including housing and sanitation
- Assist in community health care and promotion of traditional practices
- Restored ecosystems ensuring the right of living in a sustainable/healthy environment
- Opportunities to access the riches of knowledge in indigenous traditions and survival techniques
- Increased knowledge of integration of traditional customary rights and ethics into the present legal system
- Legal protection for customary rights of forest-dwelling communities
- Opportunities for access to traditional ancestral lands and recognized Vadda spirituality
- Built regional and national networks for facilitation and implementation of indigenous and local communities livelihood recovery programme
- Sustainability of implemented programme after the project financing duration

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Existing Situation

The Vadda people have been a well-integrated part of society – serving a defined role—whether in the capacity of huntsmen, trustworthy guardsmen or tradesmen recognized by royal decree throughout the lengthy Sinhalese kingdoms; and owed allegiance to the King. The arrival of European colonists as recently as 500 years ago and its resultant influences leading to cultural intrusion have had a direct impact on the local cultural system and natural environment. Forest-dwelling hunter-gatherer-fishers whose non-urban lifeways were by comparison ecologically balanced in their human-environment interactions as well as wholesome were defined as ‘uncivilized’ or ‘barbarous’ through cultural intolerance. The status of these and comparable social groups has since continued to remain well outside macro-society and unrecognized as far as an integrated programme for their overall wellbeing and cultural assimilation is concerned.

Forest -dwelling Vadda people reveals that only a handful of groups that remain scattered in a few remaining forest pockets of the south-eastern hinterland are recognized as such. The literary evidence first mentions the Ratugala and Bingoda (subsequently of Pollebadda) groups as the Vadda prototype, owing to their forest or cave-dwelling hunter-gatherer practices. The Ratugala and the popularly-described Dambana groups have also been referred to as “show” Vadda since the turn of the 20th century, being the focus of interest of both travelers and researchers owing to comparatively easy access, as well as the survival of certain elements of known Vadda cultural traits. The situation remains unchanged in Dambana. With the focus on Dambana by diverse individuals and State authorities -- for each of their own benefits -- it has grown to become “the recognized centre of the so-called “Vanniyelatto” or “people of the forest”-- a popular term by which the groups are now

referred to -- with national as well as international programmes linked to this community. Despite this status, the target groups and other comparable groups including Dimbulagala, Pollebadda and Ratugala among others are marginalized at most events concerning the “indigenous” people. A further case in point was the declaration of the International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples in 1993 that saw the sole representation of the Dambana group at the United Nations.

Large scale modernization programmes focused on “settling” -- or more likely "removal" of the forest-dependent communities since the 19th century and since. Further enforced changes with the declaration of State-managed Protected Areas neglected to recognize the localized traditional law of territorial property rights existing at the time. They were prohibited access to their traditional lands, leading to displacement with minimal guidance or viable alternatives provided. With it, they were deprived of traditional practices -- to include psychological, social and economic well-being, legal standing and the bond shared with their ancestral land and Vadda spirituality -- with a reverence for the great male and female ancestors relied upon for every aspect of their lives -- and rights to living in a sustainable environment primarily as hunter-fisher-gatherers with a primary dependence on the natural environment and its resources. Deprived of their traditional hunting tracts, the need for game flesh is particularly manifest in the lives of the once seasonally nomadic significantly small Pollebadda and Ratugala Vadda groups (pers comm. T.B. Gomba 1992; and 2004; pers comm. TB Heen Kaira 2004; pers comm. D.M.B Heen Manika of Ratugala 2004). Their dietary intake which mostly lacks nourishment today has no doubt led to a physically weakening -- ill health, failing eyesight, malnutrition and debilitating diseases among these groups. Being located in proximity to Tamil terrorist-controlled areas endangered the security of these impoverished groups as well as the neighbouring hamlets in the recent past and increased their vulnerability.

The priority need is thus, to minimize the conflicts of interest existing between the communities concerned and the present law enforcers and promote participation in the overall conservation and management plan of the island's Protected Areas and facilitate the recovery of livelihoods. Consultations with responsible members of the respective Vadda communities including the Vadda custodians of Pollebadda, Ratugala and Henanigala have been sustained since August 2004. Tala Bandaralage (T.B.) Gomba (presently afflicted with failing eyesight) and the late custodian Danigala Maha Bandaralage (D.M.B.) Randunu Vanniya (who subsequently died in January 2005) after a debilitating illness) at project preparatory level, led to the formulation of the long term programme, for sustained benefits and overall wellbeing of the communities in need. Discussions with members of the communities concerned in the presence of the custodians further enabled consolidation of the priority needs.

2.2 Existing Programs in the Area

Lands acquired and managed by the departments of Forest Conservation and Wildlife Conservation in ancestral territories where Protected Areas are concerned, are being demarcated for identification of lands presently available to indigenous and local communities (ILC). Despite its importance, the Vadda communities are alarmed by the activities carried out by the concerned authorities owing to previous acquisition of their ancestral lands by the State without Free, Prior or Informed Consent (FPIC). Potential to carry out the proposed community outreach programmes in partnership with the relevant authorities concerned is convincing through dialogue with established links and building of partnership programmes.

3. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

3.1 Objectives

- Mobilize the rights of access to ancestral lands to sustain the subsistence economy
- Mobilize and empower disadvantaged forest-dwelling indigenous communities
- Ensure the rights of living in a sustainable environment
- Provide sustainable measures for livelihood recovery and food security of the selected communities in Sri Lanka
- Enrich 70% of degraded habitats to maintain the quality of forestlands
- Preserve and document the traditional knowledge on survival techniques
- Create education and awareness on rights of selected indigenous communities and stakeholders
- Develop a regional and national strategy and action plan to protect the rights of disadvantaged forest-based communities

3.2 Description of the Proposal

- **Updating of baseline data**

The proposed updating of the baseline data is intended to enable carrying out some of the proposed activities prior to implementation. While the priority activities have been identified, documentation of the present knowledge existing in among the traditional elders required for archival purposes require systematisation and updating (on documentation and storage needs) essentially for the sustained use of the communities concerned.

- **Education and awareness on capacity building, skills enhancement and human rights**

Leadership training for present/future custodians as the designated representatives of the communities concerned is a priority need identified. It is envisioned that the present struggle for survival resulting from the conflict of interests that have rendered them voiceless and affected their free spirit with untold damage to their dignity will be minimized by means of conducting activity-oriented workshops among the communities concerned. The training received will serve to increase recognition of their leadership -- by the communities they represent, the dominant groups in the environs, local government concerns, the mainstream in general, as well national leadership -- and increase their motivation to provide the communities with the guidance they so rightly deserve for their long-term benefit and wellbeing.

Promoting of income generation opportunities for enhancing the skills of men and women under the guidance of the trained leadership for individual/group activities will open up avenues that are integrated with the other activities proposed for sustaining of livelihoods for economic benefits and empowerment. The required skills have been identified by the local men and women facilitated by the village societies.

The indigenous and local community rights awareness programme will directly serve to benefit the communities who have been deprived of their traditional rights and essential needs required by the human species owing to their presently disadvantaged standing in society. Further it envisions providing the other relevant stakeholders with the responsibilities and ethics required in working toward their assigned tasks -- whether as citizens, government authorities - teachers, police or non-governmental agencies of the target groups.

- **Infrastructural Development:**

Housing is one of the priority issues relating to most forest-based communities as a result of displacement, inadequate access to land, unsuitable housing sites and water logging, among other inadequacies. Thus the project proposes to assist communities in need with building adequate housing facilities. The traditional knowledge retained within the communities on house construction techniques will be used as a base, with the introduction of modern techniques depending on the request of the respective communities, while addressing their "right to development" and integration within modern society with consideration to social needs.

- **Agricultural development with mixed-cropping in home gardens**

The primary objective of the proposed programme is to promote agriculture as an alternate means of sustaining their livelihoods for these non-agricultural communities, based on the traditional mixed garden ecosystem. Lessons learnt from the Farmers Woodlot Programme launched by the Department of Forest Conservation will also be considered. Further, it aims to assist the village community to increase the productivity of agroforestry, agriculture and the village forest and alternate methods of income that reduce the pressure on the natural forest, for example, food/fruit crops, timber species and medicinal plants among others. This activity is planned to create awareness, instill responsibility required by the sedentary lives introduced to them and provide adequate training for community members on effective organic agricultural practices, soil conservation and development.

- **Establishment of forest schools**

The opportunity to document and preserve the knowledge pertaining to traditional lifeways, subsistence and medicinal practices, spirituality, etc. that exists among the traditional elders

by the communities -- men, women and children --themselves through knowledge transfer would enable preserving their traditions among themselves for sustained use and enable the mainstream to adopt ecologically balanced practices that would benefit their own environments from altered beliefs that are destructive to all living species.

- **Development of water and hygienic sanitation facilities**

The programme entails the rehabilitation of selected tank environs in the proposed village settings with the broad-based objective of watershed management. Assist in rebuilding abandoned tanks and restore catchment areas to provide access to safe drinking water and water for bathing/agricultural practices. Assistance in building agri-wells will provide the presently deprived communities with adequate water to sustain them during the annual dry season and minimize the risk of waterborne diseases. Additionally, improved sanitation facilities will minimize the risk from health hazards and increase the quality of life.

- **Enrichment of degraded habitats**

The programme will explore the viability of habitat rehabilitation primarily concerning abandoned chenalands in the surroundings with the introduction of indigenous plants and a limited number of fast-growing species suitable for the ecosystem, also focusing on indigenous plant species.

- **National & International Multi-stakeholder Network**

Initiatives and proactive participation will involve local communities that depend on natural resources. The multi-partite organizational network established nationally and regionally will pave the way for a constructive dialogue. Wider stakeholder participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and restructuring in accordance with national interests and local benefits are the key successes. Minimizing of conflicts of interest between the stakeholders

involving government institutions and local forest-dwelling communities will be negotiated via the Inter-agency Working Group for the Livelihood Recovery of Indigenous/traditional forest People) IWGLRIP), with priority given to forest peoples' livelihood recovery through recognition of community right based approach, as custodians of the forest ecosystems in which they live.

- **Development of a national & regional action plan for forest-based peoples**

Development of a national strategy for the livelihood recovery programme of ILC with the participation of all stakeholders concerned including the relevant ministries. Initial negotiations for drafting such a strategy is already established by the CES as the Joint Secretariat for the IWGLRIP with the facilitation of UNDP GEF-SGP and guidance of the Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

3.3 Expected Benefits and Risks

Independent decision-making for project implementation is yet somewhat beyond the capacity of forest people, having been misled previously with regard to assurances made by the selfish interests of other stakeholders. Continued dominance of the leadership of the mainstream (and submissiveness by the Vadda people) will pose a threat to empowering the communities concerned. Difficulties in gaining adequate support from the relevant authorities may affect, change or delay the fixed time schedule for carrying out the proposed activities. The economic pattern of growth in the area with its emphasis on natural resource exploitation is likely to raise expectations without sufficient employment opportunities. Unexpected drought and damage caused by wild animals may reduce the expected results of the agricultural programme and financial and technical assistance within the community for expansion of activities. The economic pattern of growth in the area with its emphasis on

natural resource exploitation is likely to raise expectations without sufficient employment opportunities. This will also put increasing pressures on forests and other areas important. The programme will resist this pressure by creating a local community livelihood recovery programme and by helping to provide alternative income generating activities and environmentally friendly land-use patterns to landowners who choose the option of conserving their natural forest habitat.

The difficulty in obtaining rapid, stable results for the progress of the community in the area may be regarded a failure in reaching the set goals discussed initially. Assistance from professionals, mainly involving natural resource managers, sociologists, anthropologists, social workers and communicators must place emphasis on presenting the project within a viable practical scope. Planning workshops, meetings and training courses for stakeholders among other relevant activities will help to achieve the set targets.

Official representatives of the relevant regional authorities will form an important component in each phase of the planned activities of the project to obtain maximum participation. They will also be included in the PAOC to obtain their active and effective participation.

3.4 Sustainability

With the focus on promoting and sustaining traditional lifeways in relation to the other activities, it is envisioned that the proposed activities will be sustained by the target groups as they have a direct impact on survival needs. The direct involvement of both Vadda groups in the project activities will be advocated and upheld for the long term benefit of the groups hitherto deprived, in addition to the strengthening of the existing local organization

in Pollebadda with the support of existing responsible community members such as the school principal of Pollebadda, who has participated in the Natural Resource Management (NRM) workshop in Chiang Mai, facilitated by the UNDP Regional Indigenous Peoples' Programme (RIPP). The establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) comprising trained members of the local communities will facilitate in sustaining the activities implemented, while the proposed environment-friendly income generation activities will provide the necessary additional funding required for extension of activities, thereafter.

During the last quarter of Phase I, the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) detailed below and CES in collaboration with other concerned parties will prepare a long-term investment plan for the management and non-destructive use of the biological and cultural diversity in the region, with the use of case studies conducted in Phase I - to initiate an effective community role in the management of natural resources combined with traditional knowledge and modern practices. The proposed programme involves a component of traditional knowledge documentation by the local community as well as alternative income generation programmes focusing on community-managed protected area conservation, mixed home garden and village forestry programme to enable self-sufficiency and a sustainable environment.

It is believed that the proposed alternative income generation programme, formal and non-formal education programmes and the localized community development programme which will protect the rights of living in a socially, economically, and environmentally sound environment with the participation of school children, visitors and the indigenous community that would form an important component of the traditional forest dwelling

community development programme of Sri Lanka, not merely as custodians but as co-partners of local resources.

4 PROPOSAL IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Implementing Agency(s) and Arrangements

The Centre for Eco-cultural Studies (CES) is a non-governmental research institute that was established in January 1998 by a group of interdisciplinary researchers. The aim of the institute is to promote eco-cultural development in Sri Lanka through research, education and awareness. The majority of CES members are currently involved in various consultancy and research-oriented activities for government, non-governmental organizations and universities. The CES field research base and interpretation centre at Diyakapilla in Sigiriya was established to facilitate eco-cultural resource documentation and provide training and experience specific to the culture and biodiversity found in the Dry Zone. CES seeks collaborative undertakings with other eco-cultural friendly institutes to create an extensive network promoting eco-cultural development.

The proposed work activities are based on the work CES is carrying out in modeling of the Protected Area complex of the Sigiriya World Heritage Site and wildlife sanctuary. Associated ties with the partner networks set up under the CEIF (Community Environment Initiative Facility) project of the Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources since project implementation in 2000, the UN partner network since 2001 -- with CES representing and serving as the coordinating body in 2004 for the Sri Lanka Nature Forum established in the same year -- and AusAID and the associated SLNRMP/Kurunagala and Matale Districts -- since 2004, combine to provide the expertise required to the benefit and empowerment of the disadvantaged indigenous groups concerned.

4.2 Monitoring

The MEC appointed by the local community organizations facilitated by CES will monitor progress of the activities of the overall project detailed above. Incremental cost benefit analyses will measure the success of the overall project, including social and economic benefits activity-wise. Economic valuation such as, profitability from the community-managed enterprises, sustainability and traditional values and methodologies occurring in the project area will also be used as indicators to measure the investment of the proposed project.

The MEC will evaluate the progress of the overall project activities under the close supervision/consultancy from the Country Representatives as an individual as well as a joint venture.

Indicators

- Improved leadership capacities and strengthened partner networks
- Improved social and economic wellbeing of motivated functional communities
- Model farms established
- Increased food security and sustainable livelihoods
- Number of self-sufficient local community members by the end of Phase I of the project
- Number of skilled men, women and children
- Number, capacity and area of rehabilitated land as well and tanks restored
- Restored ecosystems for ensuring a sustainable environment
- Area of land improved and diversity in mixed home gardens established
- Infrastructure for community hall/archive and conservation of traditions

- Number of TK publications and research papers available for public access
- Amount of data gathered, quality, and applicability of the traditional knowledge (TK) documenting programme
- Acquired knowledge in human rights and increased knowledge on rights to legal status
- Legal protection of forest-dwelling communities and access to ancestral lands and Vadda spirituality, with consideration to national conservation laws
- Number of education and awareness material produced by the project on indigenous communities rights
- Applicability of the planned model for other similar environs

For more Information:

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Proposed activity plan

	PROPOSED ACTIVITY	Period of three years in quarters											
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.1	Updating baseline data and preparation of development plans for selected ILC settlements	■	■	■	■								
1.2	Conducting national and international training programmes in capacity building and skills enhancement for livelihood recovery			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
1.3	Education & awareness for establishing and strengthening national and international partner networks and cultural integrity			■	■			■			■	■	
1.4	National and international training on rights based approach and international HR instruments on IP, ILCs	■	■										
2.1	Baseline survey for housing facility need assessment and preparation of project document with the technical assistance of UN Habitat & Ministry of Housing	■	■										
2.2	Construction of New Houses for needy communities		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
2.3	Development of existing housing facilities for needy communities			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
2.4	Development of Infrastructure Facilities		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
3.1	Development of drinking water and sanitary facility in selected settlements			■	■			■	■	■			
3.2	Selected small tank renovation with the technical assistance from WFP & Dep. Of Agrarian services			■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
4.1	Granting permission for traditional NTF product gathering with the assistance of Dep. Wildlife Conservation and Dep. Forest Conservation.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			
4.1	Setting up of purchasing arrangements for NTF products through Dep. Ayurveda , Pvt Sector etc.	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
5.1	Identification & declaring of traditional IP Settlement areas as National Heritage and Declare open as MAB Reserve under UNESCO		■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
6.1	Documenting of Intangible heritage of traditional knowledge on NRM livelihood, art and crafts etc.		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
7.1	Programs for drafting the national strategy on ILC community				■	■	■	■	■	■	■		

	livelihood recovery in accordance to the National Traditional Knowledge policy												
8.1	Regional dialog on indigenous issues with technical assistance from UN permanent forum on indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and Un Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme (RIPP) with special emphasis on protection of intangible cultural Heritage												
9.1	Development of Model farm and training facilities												
9.2	Training in Eco-agriculture and modeling of home gardening's												
9.3	Soil conservation initiatives and prevention of land degradations												
10.1	Establishment of forest schools and development of infrastructure facilities												
10.2	Development of teaching module's												
10.3	Training of trainers and educators												
11.1	National and international training in habitat restoration tools												
11.2	Local habitat restoration and conservation initiatives												
12.1	Preparation of National action plan for ILCs livelihood recovery and right protection												
12.2	Promotion of National TK policy and implementation of its recommendations												
13.1	Field monitoring and evaluation												
13.2	Project documentations and lesson learns												
14.1	Project management administration												

Budget estimated		
Activity Description	Cost estimate in US\$	Total Cost in US\$
UPDATING OF BASELINE DATA		
Field work expenses , Printing and publishing of the baseline data	100,000.00	
		100,000.00
EDUCATION AND AWARENESS ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILLS ENHANCEMENT		
Incentives for International trainers	2,500,000.00	
Conducting regional training programmes in capacity building and skills enhancement of community	3,500,000.00	
Educational material, study resources and stationery	500,000.00	
Local transport & travel	100,000.00	
Project Staff	60,000.00	
Management & administration cost	250,000.00	6,910,000.00
AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT WITH MIXED CROPPING IN HOME GARDENS		
Training programmes in nature farming	300,000.00	
Home garden development -seedlings/plant materials	200,000.00	
Establishing model farms	1,500,000.00	
Purchasing of agriculture instrument including agricultural vehicles and machinery	1,000,000.00	
Consumables/equipment	75,000.00	
Extension, promotion of organic agriculture	100,000.00	
		3,175,000.00
ESTABLISHMENT OF FOREST SCHOOLS		
Construction of multi-purpose community halls	750,000.00	
Purchase of audio & video equipment for documentation of local knowledge	350,000.00	
Allowances for national and international resource personal	600,000.00	
		1,700,000.00

DEVELOPMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES		
Construction of drinking water wells	425,000.00	
Construction of agricultural wells	350,000.00	
Restoration of abundant tanks and canals	2,650,000.00	
Construction of eco-san toilet facilities	150,000.00	
Training in health care & sanitation (National & International)	750,000.00	
		4,325,000.00
ENRICHMENT OF DEGRADED HABITATS		
Field training & demonstrations on habitat restorations	100,000.00	
Purchasing plant materials and seeds	250,000.00	
Preparation of land and soil conservation measures	175,000.00	
		525,000.00
INDEGENIOUS PEOPLES RIGHTS& HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS		
Incentives for national and International educators/ trainers ,	600,000.00	
Training programmes and study materials	200,000.00	
National and international travelling	400,000.00	
		1,200,000.00
DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR FOREST-BASED PEOPLE		
Stakeholder meetings for drafting the proposed national plan	100,000.00	
Promotion of proposed strategy	70,000.00	
		170,000.00
HOUSING		
Upgrading of existing houses	500,000.00	
Construction of New Houses	3,000,000.00	
Infrastructure Facilities	1,000,000.00	
		4,500,000.00
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT		
Project coordinators International	1,000,000.00	
Project coordinators local	400,000.00	

Project Staff	500,000.00	
Travel & transport	500,000.00	
Report writing, photo documentation, etc.	100,000.00	
Management cost	1,000,000.00	
Total		3,500,000.00
Total estimated cost for period of 3 years		26,105,000.00