PROJECT PROPOSAL

Biodiversity Conservation through Environmental Education and the Replanting of Endemic Plants in the Communities around Sinharaja World Heritage site.
SECTION 1

Basic Information on the Proposed Project
TITLE OF THE PROJECT

Biodiversity Conservation through Environmental Education and the Replanting of Endemic Plants in the Communities around Sinharaja World Heritage site.

PROJECT SITE

Country: Sri Lanka
Province: Sabaragamuwa Province
District: Ratnapura
Area: Kudawa and Vaddagala

PROJECT IMPLEMENTING ORGANISATION

Sri Lanka Wilderness Foundation (SLWF)

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

Kudawa and Veddagala are traditional villages with its origins located inside the buffer zone area of Sinharaja World Heritage Site (SWHS). The Kudawa village is the epicenter of the proposed project area. However ten (10) major environmental problems have been identified by SLWF in the area:

1. Gradual Encroachment into the most sensitive areas
2. Illegal activity (timber felling, gem mining, sand mining, dynamiting granite, hunting, poaching)
3. Heavy usage of insecticides, pesticides and chemical fertilizer
4. Unsustainable home Garden Management and serious human-monkey conflict
5. Large numbers of domesticated animals being released to the sensitive areas
6. Spreading of invasive plants
7. Mythical beliefs and incorrect identification of animals (not distinguishing rare and endangered ones from common ones)
8. Road kills
9. Massive and irresponsible tourism
10. Lack of environmental Education

Taking the above facts into consideration, SLWF has recognized the value of a proper environmental education campaign to educate the community in the area, thus minimizing the adverse impact on sensitive habitats. These community based environmental educational programs will focus on local farmer organizations, business Schools and the local governing authorities. Special attention will be given to design a tailor-made educational program to attract the younger generation towards the conservation, as they are the guardians of the local natural resources. With the proper education and awareness, programs directed towards the young adults will motivate them towards environmental conservation as well as sustainable use of the abundant resources of the area. There will be an additional benefit to biodiversity since the project area is located in the buffer zone of the protected area. Successful completion of this project, will enhance the environmental knowledge, change the attitudes towards sustainable utilization of natural resources, improve environmental management skills of local communities for better conservation of natural resources in their surroundings, and improve the Human Welfare factor.
The major objectives are to:

- Raise awareness on environmental issues among school children, farmers and local decision makers of the area, with special emphasis on surrounding ecosystems and its biological values.
- Create awareness of the economical benefits through conservation and sustainable environmental management practices,
- Increase participation in conservation and management activities in the buffer zone,
- Disseminate information of lessons learnt to improve similar modules in other areas.

Expected outcomes will be to:

1. Increase the knowledge of the local community, make aware the importance and consequences of destructing the natural habitat and wasting/over-using resources.
2. Increase the proactive participation of community members for future conservation programs.
3. Print a colour poster depicting the local biodiversity, giving publicity for wider distribution.
4. Protect the natural resources through the collective effort of all the communities.
5. Establish a 5000 seedling plant nursery for free distribution.
6. Prove and project an environmentally friendly community to the outside world to be model.

CONTACT PERSONS AND CONTACT ADDRESS

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PARTNER ORGANIZATION(S) No

DURATION OF THE PROJECT

Total (1 year) months: 12
Start from: Janvier, 2011 to Decembre, 2011

ESTIMATED BUDGET (in US dollars)

US$ 3000.00
SECTION 2

Outline of the Proposed Project
BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

The Sinharaja Rain Forest is a world heritage site and major eco tourism destination, which can also be described as a Tropical Lowland Rainforest or Tropical Wet Evergreen Forest. It is undoubtedly a rich treasure trove of nature with a great diversity of habitats and a vast repository of Sri Lanka’s endemic species. Named as a world heritage site in 1989, this lowland evergreen rain forest is steeped in deep legend and mystery.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

- Raise awareness among school children, farmers and local decision makers of the area on environmental issues with special emphasis on surrounding ecosystems and its biological values.
- To create awareness of the economical benefits which could be harnessed, through conservation & sustainable environmental management practices.
- Increase people participation for conservation & park management activities in the buffer zone.
- Dissemination of information of lessons learnt to improve similar modules in other areas.
- Create a trial eco community as a world exemple
- Improve Human Welfare

OUTLINE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

**Key activities**

1. Selection of community groups and presentations:

   SLWF will conduct a survey and a consultation process to identify the most appropriate schools, farmer associations, and local governmental bodies. This selection will encompass the buffer zones of SWHS. The organization will conduct a 2-day program at each site. The first day of the workshop will be reserved for environmental films, videos, and slide presentations. The second day will be devoted entirely to short lectures by relevant experts with ample time for community feedback. Priority will be given to the local environmental issues in selecting lecture topics. At least 10 schools, 5 farmer organizations and 5 governmental bodies will be identified as the target groups of this project.

   Before each community program, project personnel will visit local markets and meet traditional doctors to determine what wild medicinal plants, cooking herbs and wildlife species are being sold/poached. Results of these inventories will have a variety of uses such as determining the value and importance of wild forest products in local culture and commerce and identifying opportunities for conservation. This information will assist project personnel to engage/share knowledge in harmony with the villagers during the program and explore with them the opportunities and costs of wild harvesting. It will also provide the basis for subsequent development of conservation priorities with government agencies.

2. Identification of Resource persons/groups

   SLWF has identified, and already developed strong relationships with the following resources for the environmental education campaign:

   1. University faculty and lecturers
   2. Staff of the Department of Forest & Wildlife Conservation
3. Extension Service of the Agriculture Department
4. Other government agencies and local authorities
5. Conservationists

Since above-mentioned organizations already have a very strong commitment for environmental education in Sri Lanka, SLWF will have in place a proper coordinating mechanism to get the maximum support from those organizations for the success of this project.

3. Preparation of Multi Media Presentations

Five different multi-media presentations will be produced showing the beauty, importance, and consequences of destruction of the natural resources of the local area. Special requests will be made to the most popular nature photographers and videographers to obtain attractive images of the SWHS Area. It is easier for SLWF to obtain such images since we have already helped many leading national and international nature photographers to capture the beauty of SWHS Area.

4. Establishment of Plant Nursery

Outside of this project, SLWF is planning to establish a 5000 seedling plant nursery in the area with endemic plant species, for free distribution. A seed bank will also be set up at the same time. Funds from this project will be provided to members of the farmer groups to establish small-scale individual nurseries to raise 5000 plants in their home gardens. This nursery program will help to increase income and as well as their environmental knowledge. This program will be conducted parallel to the education campaign. A few acres of abandoned land will be selected to establish a community woodlot with valuable tree species. Small-scale school woodlots also can be established without any cost if the schools have enough land for such initiatives. The planting and the maintenance can be done with the help of the school children (primary school) and volunteers, with specialist supervision.

**Key stakeholders to be involved in the project and their roles**

All the villagers will be involved as explained above. A critical component of the project will be to receive feedback (survey, plant surveillance...etc) from the villagers about their needs and aspirations, so that the land and resources can be managed for the benefit of both parties. The university, government staff and conservationists mentioned above will also be involved in the planning and implementation of the project.

**Key benchmarks and indicators for monitoring and evaluation**

Measure of successes of the proposed education campaign will be assessed by distributing a simple questionnaire among the targeted community groups. The same questionnaire will be distributed in pre- and post-educational campaigns on general environmental knowledge, local environmental issues, and community willingness to participate in future conservation related programs. Data will be analyzed to measure the success of the project. Well designed certificates of participation will be awarded for each participant after the program. Inter-school environmental awareness quiz competitions for school children between 5 to 9 years will also be conducted before the end of the project. Teachers will be interviewed to ascertain the degree to which the students have understood and integrated the information into their lives, and whether the information will be used in classrooms on a regular basis. It is expected that the contacts established between SLWF and the teachers will be the foundation of ongoing relationships that contribute to regional conservation.
SLWF will gradually extend the geographic area to continue future education programs. Future programs are envisioned being conducted at a minimal cost by the selected group of community members after this project. SLWF will select five highly motivated students from each school to form a group to conduct/participate in programs to be continued in other schools.

**Potential/anticipated risks**

No potential or anticipated risks are associated with key activities.

**FINAL OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT**

1. Increase knowledge among the local community on the importance and consequences of the destruction of natural habitat/resources.
2. Reduce the human-monkey conflict through Home garden management
3. Increase the proactive participation of community members for future conservation programs.
4. Adaptation of eco friendly cultivation systems.
5. To protect the natural resources through the collective efforts of the communities.
7. Prove and project an environmentally friendly community to the outside world to be used as a model.

There is a high probability that the project will lead to increased integrity of forested habitats, and a decrease or even reversal in the rate of decline in populations of certain rare species.
### TIMEFRAME FOR THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

#### Key Activities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Year 1 - quarters</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1st</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct survey to identify the relevant schools for awareness program</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conduct a survey to identify the most appropriate farmer associations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conduct a survey to identify the most appropriate local governmental institutions</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Preparation of time table</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Coordination with relevant resource persons to conduct programs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Preparation of education modules</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Preparation of information materials</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Preparation of multimedia presentations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conduct of awareness programs for schools (2 programs per month)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Conduct of awareness programs for farmer groups (2 programs per month)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conduct of awareness programs for local Govt. institutions (6 programs)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Establishment of plant nursery for free distribution of plants</strong></td>
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<td><strong>List of members who is willing to establish small scale nurseries</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Short training upon establishment of small scale plant nursery</strong></td>
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<td><strong>List of local plant species to be raised in the nursery</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Collection of seeds to establish the nursery</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Distribution of plants for program participants to plant in their home gardens (5 plants per each participant)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Planting activity in the tank catchment by the villagers</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Monitoring the plantations</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Progress Review/Report</strong></td>
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*Table 1. Sequence of key activities by yearly quarter for Years I.*