



Project Outputs

- National Policy and Strategy on Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- National ESA Scale up Plan
- Updated policy to address human wildlife conflicts
- Biodiversity integrated ESA land use plans
- Capacitated consortium of agencies built to act as the national lead to promote and manage effective ESAs
- National guideline to integrate biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into land use planning & sectoral plans
- Online integrated biodiversity assessment tool available to identify biodiversity hotspots nationwide, building on national and international data
- Two ESAs under management with inter-sectoral partnership and quantifiable biodiversity conservation targets
- Increased stakeholders' support and capacities to implement land use/ seascape plans for conservation
- Sustainable financing available for ESAs
- Protected area management integrated with wider landscapes/ seascapes to minimize threats from outside PA and to mitigate land and resource use conflicts
- Critical biodiversity habitats outside protected areas under effective management regimes within the ESA for habitat connectivity, integrity and resilience
- 25,000 ha of agro-ecosystems brought under biodiversity compatible production practices within ESAs (including paddy fields, slash and burn land and homesteads/ home gardens)



Towards a Blue-Green Era

The ESA pilot project is commenced on 1st of October 2015 in the Environmental Sensitive Areas of Kala Oya Region, under the patronage of the long term environmental policies of H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka and will be in operation for 5 years.

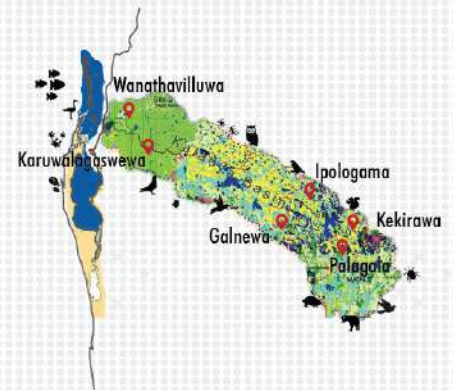
This project will greatly strengthen the country's ability to safeguard biodiversity outside protected areas in Environmentally Sensitive Areas, through a new land use governance framework, institutional and legal framework and guidelines.

The project will provide capacity building opportunities for Government, Non-Government, Private Sector stakeholders and empower communities and engage them as partners of the ESA management while facilitating to benefit from the sustainable socio-economic development associated with ESAs.

Biodiversity integrated landscape and seascape level land use plans will be developed and this will be used in evolving sectoral plans in Agriculture, Tourism and Forestry and coastal development to be implemented in Kala Oya Region.

Accordingly, mainstreaming ecosystem management into development will contribute towards sustainable development of Sri Lanka. The experience and learnings of the pilot project will be used to scale up Environment Sensitive Areas within the country.

A preserved country A sustainable tomorrow



Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystem Services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas – ESA Project



The Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment

Bio Diversity and Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a global biodiversity hotspot. It has declared a protected area network and has introduced a legal framework to safeguard its' biodiversity and ecosystems. However, this is not adequate to safeguard the natural eco systems and thus the environment is constantly endangered within and outside the protected areas.

It is required to formulate new environment friendly strategies and plans to overcome this situation. Realistic conservation approaches to be adopted on managing unsustainable livelihoods and fulfilling consumption needs.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas

This project will establish Environmentally Sensitive Areas to address above issue. The Project would contribute to safeguarding globally significant biodiversity on production lands of high interest for conservation. It will greatly strengthen the country's ability to safeguard biodiversity inside and outside protected areas in special Environmentally Sensitive Areas, through a new land use governance framework. It is expected to engage the communities living in the ESAs to preserve nature by adopting sustainable livelihood practices and becoming partners in managing the ESAs.

The pilot project supports the operationalization of ESA concept at two sites within a wider Kala Oya Region.

Kala Oya Basin

The Kala Oya Region (KOR) includes the Kala Oya River Basin and its surrounding area. The KOR is in the North-Central area of the country and mostly falls within the Dry Zone of the country, with some parts of the area falling in the intermediate zone.

The Kala Oya Basin is one of 103 river basins in Sri Lanka. It's width is approximately 25km, and length is 150 km and spreads across at different heights ranging to 600 m above sea level.

There are 600 small tanks in this region of which a few are dilapidated and the rest in good condition. The Kala Oya is a perennial river, but its water has been augmented by inter-basin transfer of water from the Mahaweli River through diversion tunnels and canals, primarily to irrigate agricultural land in the area and nurtures the associated eco systems and the fauna and flora.

Plans have been made to include an area of 209,700 ha to the Kala Oya Environmentally Sensitive Area. This includes 158,700 ha of landscape and 51,000 ha of seascape.

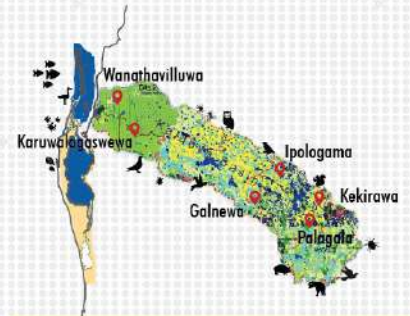
Within the 158,700 ha of land in the Kala Oya Region, it covers;

- 8000 ha of critical forest habitats
- 700 ha of tank and catchment and tank cascade landscapes
- 1000 ha of Coastal habitats
- 1500 isolated hill forests
- 250ha of Saltwater Marshes
- 620 ha of Mangrove Ecosystems
- 200 ha of Riverine Forests
- 25000 ha of Agro -ecosystems
- 64220 ha of Protected Area

Project Villages

The villages of Divisional Secretariats of Wanathavilluwa, and Karuwalagasweva as well as villages in the Divisional Secretariats of Ipologama, Kekirawa, Palagala and Galnewa have been selected for this pilot project.

It begins with the introduction of an environment friendly livelihood model. Introducing Sustainable livelihood practices, promoting ecological farming programmes and adopting community forestry programmes would be key entry points on this and will result in many benefits for the community and they will become champions in conserving the Environmentally Sensitive Areas.



Stakeholders

The five year Project "Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystems services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas" is a GEF funded project, implemented by the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MMDE) and supported by UNDP.

Government institutes such as the Forest Department, Department of Wildlife Conservation, Department of Land Use Policy Planning, Department of Coast Conservation, Department of Agriculture, Department of Irrigation, Sri Lanka Mahaweli Authority, Central Environmental Authority, Biodiversity Secretariat, District Secretariats of Anuradhapura and Puttalam, Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organisations and community are the key stakeholders of this project.

Therefore, this project will be instrumental in identifying Environmentally Sensitive Areas and adopting sustainable development measures while ensuring the biodiversity conservation and sustenance of ecosystem services in the implementation of national level development projects.

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