



**MANEWA KANDE FOREST RESERVE
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLAN
JUNE 2017**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Glossary

Executive Summary

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION **6**

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan
- 1.3 Sustainable Tourism Development

SECTION 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS **10**

- 2.1 Background
- 2.2 Methodology & Findings
- 2.3 Key Findings & Recommendations

SECTION 3: OBJECTIVES AND KEY GUIDING STRATEGIES **17**

- 3.1 Vision
- 3.2 Key Guiding Strategies
- 3.3 Sustainable Tourism Programme Design

SECTION 4 – ACTIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION **21**

- 4.1 Viable Long-Term Economic Operations Ensured, Providing Economic Benefits To All Stakeholders
- 4.2 A Meaningful Visitor Experience Ensured, Raising Awareness About Sustainability Issues And Promoting Sustainable Practices Amongst Them
- 4.3 The Natural And Historical Heritage And Biodiversity Of Manewa Kande Forest Reserve Conserved
- 4.4 The Socio-Culture Of Local Communities Conserved, While Alternate Income Sources Have Increased
- 4.5 Implementation Plan
- 4.6 Preliminary Marketing Strategy

ANNEX **45**

GLOSSARY

Executive Summary

The Manewa Kanda (MK) Forest Reserve is located in Anuradhapura district, and falls under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department. It is about 600ha and located in the midst of other archeological and environmentally treasured attractions of the Cultural Triangle. The site itself has many attractions, especially archeological ruins and other historical artifacts. In the best interests of conserving this forest reserve and reducing the threats to it, the Forest Department has decided to promote sustainable tourism in the site. Sustainable tourism is built on the lessons of ecotourism, and understands that all forms of tourism to a large extent are nature based, dependent on natural resources, culture, local communities and economies. Given the broader more holistic and sustainable aspect of the Sustainable Tourism concept and its adoption by the Sri Lanka Tourism Strategy, this plan for the Manewa Kanda Forest Reserve will also align with this national and global agenda.

The study first undertook a review of relevant national and global literature and conducted a questionnaire survey online to understand local visitor perspectives. Focus group discussions were carried out with the local community and KII were conducted with key stakeholders along with site visits. It was determined that MK forest reserve has significant potential to become an exemplary site that increases peoples appreciation and awareness about the environment, while providing a substantial income to help in its conservation as well as uplifting the standard of living of the local community. However, a quality product has to be developed with good standards, providing value for money, as well as serving as a demonstration site for similar interventions.

Therefore a sustainable tourism plan, incorporating all ecotourism related activities, was developed aligned to global national park standards, with clear objectives, activities and implementation mechanics. The vision is: *“Manewa Kande Forest Reserve is a locally and globally recognized destination that provides visitors with the opportunity to experience Sri Lanka’s environment and heritage in a meaningful manner”*. The expected results are:

1. The natural and historical heritage and biodiversity of Manewa Kande Forest Reserve conserved
2. The socio-culture of local communities conserved, while alternate income sources have increased
3. Viable long-term economic operations ensured, providing economic benefits to all stakeholders
4. A meaningful visitor experience ensured, raising awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable practices amongst them

For each of these result areas, short-term, mid-term and long-term actions and mechanics for implementation has been developed in detail. An implementation plan and a preliminary marketing strategy has also been developed.

Of note, is that a cap on the maximum number of visitors will be implemented. Studies around the world have shown that when visitor numbers exceed the carrying capacity, the environment, services and facilities offered deteriorate, exponentially. In addition once local livelihoods have developed to support this larger (over cap) number, its difficult to reduce the visitor number without affecting people’s livelihoods. This is why sustainable tourism stresses that a balance must be achieved between the economy-environment-community nexus. The mechanics for the Forest Department to actively manage the visitor numbers has been developed in this plan.

However, it must be accepted that visitor numbers will increase only if visitors have a meaningful experience and thus recommend the site. Thus the quality of the visitor services especially the information translation work with indoor/ outdoor exhibits is critical as well as basic services like toilets, trails, etc. If a good quality product and experience is offered, the visitor numbers will naturally increase. If the visitor numbers are slow in picking up during the initial period, more marketing and communication efforts will need to be undertaken using professional marketing services.

Using the sustainable tourism principles as the basis, the Manewa Kande Forest Reserve can be developed into a site that provides visitors with a meaningful experience, where they not only see but get to understand the importance of the environment. This will greatly increase the impact on conservation not only at the site but also on the whole nation. It will also benefit the local community, improving their quality of life while also protecting their culture. However to get these results, this plan must be carried out with single minded emphasis on achieving the required quality of services for visitors. This is the keystone strategy and heart of the plan. The add-on benefits to the environment, local community and economy will naturally flow from doing this action well.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

The Manewa Kanda (MK) Forest Reserve (proposed Protected Area) is located in Anuradhapura district, under the Ipologama Divisional Secretariat Division and Heenakvegama Grama Niladhari Division. The forest reserve falls under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department, Anuradhapura District, Kekirawa beat. It is about 600ha and located in the midst of other archeological and environmentally treasured attractions such as *Aukana, Kalawewa, Vijithapura, Anuradhapuraya, Mihinthale, Nachchaduwa wewa, Eru wewa, Eru wewa* mountain, *Ritigala, Sigiriya and Dambulla*. The closest access is from the A-9 main road traveling from Kekirawa to Mihinthale, with a turn off to the site from the Maradhankaduwa small town.

The MK Forest Reserve had a plan 'The Manewa Kanda Sadhasethgama Forest Reserve Development Programme Report' developed in 2012 by D.M.C.K. Wasala. Previously, the Sri Lanka Australia Natural Resource Management Project (XX) also undertook some community development work to support tourism to the Reserve. However in both these cases, the impact has been limited. An assignment to update the previous plan was commissioned by the "Enhancing Biodiversity Conservation and Sustenance of Ecosystems services in Environmentally Sensitive Areas" Project, which is a GEF funded project, implemented by the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment (MMDE) and supported by UNDP. The primary objective of this project is "to operationalize Environment Sensitive Areas (ESA) as a mechanism for mainstreaming biodiversity management into development in areas of high conservation significance". The assignment is to review the existing management plan and develop an ecotourism plan for preserving the environment, culture and heritage and benefit local communities in the long run.

1.2 Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan

The Tourism industry in Sri Lanka is poised to offer great growth and investment potential. The Sri Tourism Strategy (2017 – 2020) describes how the country is missing opportunities to increase investment and jobs and to use tourism revenues to conserve the environment and sustainably support communities in all parts of the island. Accordingly it sets out a long-term view toward a Tourism Vision till 2025 and to achieve the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals.

"The underlying goal of all tourism efforts should be to improve visitor experiences so that they are world class and sustainable while still being firmly rooted in the inherent natural, cultural, historic and social capital of Sri Lanka and its people." Accordingly it aims to steer the country to increase revenue, support local communities, and increase tourism on a sustainable platform.

To achieve these ambitions, it outlines that a variety of stakeholders must be involved to ensure that:

1. Visitors have more opportunities to spend on extraordinary experiences, with more value added sites to visit and stay longer.
2. Communities are active participants in delivering the memorable experiences.
3. Investors have access to hassle-free opportunities and partnership prospects.
4. A skilled, service-oriented workforce is better equipped to engage in higher-value tourism services.
5. Government is well coordinated and consistent, prioritizing sustainability and using reliable

data to make decisions.

1.3 Sustainable Tourism Development

Over the last decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and increased diversification becoming one of the fastest developing economic sectors in the world. These dynamics have turned it into a key driver for socio-economic progress in nations worldwide. Today, tourism is one of the major sectors in international trade and one of the main wealth creators for many developing countries. Tourism means jobs, poverty eradication, gender equality, and has the potential to protect and promote our natural and cultural heritage. Further massive growth is predicted for tourism between now and 2020, providing excellent opportunities for spreading prosperity but presenting considerable challenges and potential threats to the environment and local communities if not well managed.

Accordingly, the United Nations 70th General Assembly has designated 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (A/RES/70/193). In the context of the universal 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Year aims to support a change in policies, business practices and consumer behavior towards a more sustainable tourism sector that can contribute to the SDGs.

What is Sustainable Tourism?

As per the World Tourism Organization, Sustainable Tourism is that which takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.

Sustainability principles are adopted and refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and identifies that a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Thus, sustainable tourism should:

- 1) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 2) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
- 3) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.

According to the World Tourism Organisation, the aim¹ of Sustainable Tourism is as follows:

Box 1.1: 12 Aims for Sustainable Tourism

1 ECONOMIC VIABILITY: To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.

2 LOCAL PROSPERITY: To maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.

3 EMPLOYMENT QUALITY: To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.

4 SOCIAL EQUITY: To seek a widespread distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.

5 VISITOR FULFILMENT: To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.

6 LOCAL CONTROL: To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.

7 COMMUNITY WELLBEING: To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.

8 CULTURAL RICHNESS: To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.

9 PHYSICAL INTEGRITY: To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment

10 BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimize damage to them.

11 RESOURCE EFFICIENCY: To minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.

12 ENVIRONMENTAL PURITY: To minimize the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.

UNWTO and UNEP, 2005

¹ Sustainable Tourism For Development Guidebook, 2013, World Tourism Organisation,

Sustainable tourism is built on the lessons of ecotourism, and understands that all forms of tourism to a large extent are nature based, dependent on natural resources, culture, local communities and economies. This is where the future is heading, mostly because of its more comprehensive holistic understanding tourism. Therefore it's proposed that the current plan being developed, broaden its scope to include relevant sustainable tourism development concepts.

Given the broader more holistic and sustainable aspect of the Sustainable Tourism concept and its adoption by the Sri Lanka Tourism Strategy, this plan for the Manewa Kanda Forest Reserve will also align with this national and global agenda.

Section 2: Situational Analysis and Findings

2.1 Background

The Forest Reserve Development Report developed in 2012 has a comprehensive background account of the site. Detail descriptions are provided of the location, history, archeological and environmental importance forest uses, forest threats and mitigation measures, information about surrounding villages, current ecotourism situation, ecotourism activities and promotion programmes, regional and environmental attractions, flora and fauna lists, etc. The report also documents information about the local community surrounding the reserve, and the previous Sri Lanka Australia Natural Resource Management Project (SLANRMP) conducted in the area. Extensive consultations had been carried out with the community and visitor related details in and around the area are comprehensive. However perspectives from other key stakeholders such as archeology department, tourist board, nearby hotels, visitors themselves are limited. Site visits and consultation carried out indicates that the implementation of this plan has been poor. The current plan also gives most of the onus for the implementation to the community organization. However when the project completed its implementation phase, the activities implemented by the community organization gradually came to a halt. From the consultations and site visit its clear that the community organization lacks the capacity despite the training and assistance given by the SLANRMP. For more details about the strengths and weaknesses of the current plan, please refer the detail Consultation & Gap Analysis Report submitted to the Forest Department. This Plan builds on the work already conducted by the Forest Department based on their 2012 plan.

2.2 Methodology & Analysis

1. **Literature Review** - The study first undertook a review of relevant national and global literature with regards to tourism, ecotourism and sustainable tourism. In addition a review of literature related to biodiversity and forest conservation, including the current National Biodiversity Strategy. The literature reviewed can be found in Annex 1. This forms the matter and sets the foundation in Section 1, as well as guides the direction for developing this current plan.

2. **Questionnaire Survey** - To understand Sri Lankan citizens and resident's perspectives a questionnaire survey was carried online. The survey captured the perspectives and preferences of 134 individuals, anonymously. Foreign visitor requirements were not analyzed directly, but indirectly via requests to tour operators and hotels through the key informant interviews. Detailed findings of the consultation findings are presented in the Consultation & Gap Analysis Report. Key findings are given below.

i. Visitor General Preferences:

- Most visitors traveled with friends (67%) and with families including children (44%). Lodging wise most preferred to stay in large hotel chains, private bungalows and guesthouses.
- Nature and beaches were the top destination for 78% of the time, while historical/ archeological sites were a preferred destination 46% of the time.
- Sites were mainly selected based on recommendations, 81% of the time. A majority (50%) of recommendations were also found based on social media sharing's and rankings.

- Given the urban nature of the respondents, most people wanted a destination to relax and recuperate from the hectic urban lifestyles, which was also why nature and beach destinations were preferred.
- There after the top preferred activities were to walk (55%), watch birds (50%), learn about the environment and historical backgrounds of the site.
- While trekking & hiking (40%), camping (31%), picnicking (31%), and cycling (21%) were preferred it was to a lesser degree, less than 40% of the time.
- Top requested facilities at the site (in ranked order) were toilets (90%), information about the site (52%), food stalls, activities, local snacks/food, guide service (35%) and visitor center (31%). There was more demand for souvenirs than handicrafts.

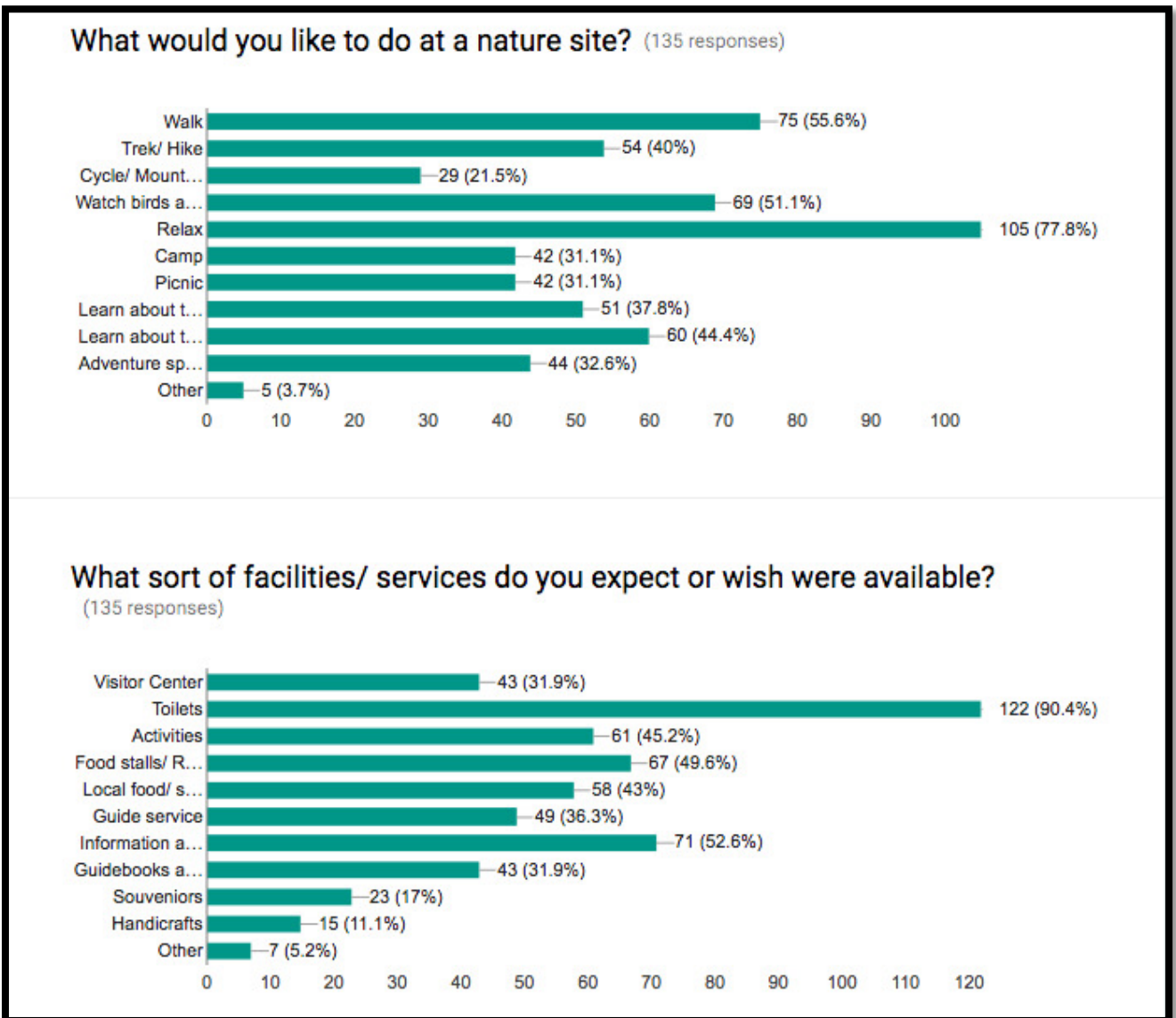


Figure: Chart showing preferred activities and expected facilities by all surveyed participants

- Among comments left by participants, its clear that there is a good understanding of the value of nature, the plastic and pollution problems, and the need for conservation work. Full list of comments are attached under **Annex 2**.

- Participants left comments encouraging the Forest Department to enforce rules and laws, promote conservation and education about our environment, and not misuse the sites.
- A few comments also pointed out the need to limit the number of visitors to a site, to reduce disturbances to the environment.
- Age and income was not a very good category for understanding site preferences, however some variations were seen under travel companions. Where there were distinctive trends or patterns the findings of the main correlation analysis are given below.

ii. Groups that traveled mostly with friends:

- This was the category that travelled regularly, 31% traveling at least once a month, while 57% about 3-6 times a year.
- 47% liked all types of sites from nature to historical and archeological sites.
- Key preferred activities were to relax and learn about the sites background and history, environment.
- Then to camp, walk, trek, hike being given relatively the same level of importance.

iii. Families with Children

- This was the widest (91%) category from the age group of 20-60 years; and 72% of this category traveled between 3-6 times a year
- Key activities were to relax and learn about the site history and environment. Other activities preferred were to walk and watch birds and animals.
- To a lesser degree was to trek, hike, camp and bike, possibly with families that had older children.



Figure: Word Cloud showing preferences of family groups travelling with children

3. **Focus Group Discussion** – FGD were conducted with the local community members, which also included the SLANRMP CBO committee members. Main findings are:

- The past SLANRMP project set up a CBO and provided a lot of training on CBO management, alternate livelihoods, setting up homestays, home gardening, exposure visits, Innamaduwa forest eco-training etc.
- From all the training provided to the community only a handful of individuals had continued with their personal enterprises. The majority has gained only the home gardens that were improved.

- Other investments such as building of a visitor center and toilets were also developed by that project. It was also handed over to the community, but due to a lack of capacity to maintain the structure, lack of water and poor visitor arrival, the center was not maintained and later abandoned.
- The traditional mud hut design used for the a visitor center and ticketing office has esthetic appeal, is environmentally friendly, cool, cost effective and in keeping with local design. However this does not appeal to the community due to regular maintenance issues and a sense that a modern development should have a brick walled building. The Forest Department and Community would like this to be a permanent modern structure.
- The responsibility for charging and issuing of tickets to the forest reserve was also granted to the local CBO.
- The CBO claims that their efforts stopped because of the poor visitor numbers.
- There seemed to be internal issues regarding the management of the CBO, some power dynamics, and mistrust between the committee and the general members.
- Overall, the conversation showcased that the communities capacity determined by their personal commitment, responsibility, pro-activeness, entrepreneurship, ownership, was poor.
- However they are willing to renew efforts to support the eco-tourism work in the forest reserve, and want to be involved with the forest department.

4. **Key Informant Interviews** – KII were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire with key stakeholders, which were identified to be Archeology Department, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Hotels and Tour Operators.

i. **Main Findings - Forest Department (incomplete)**

- Forest Department expectation from this work is to create awareness about the site and provide some income generation opportunities for the local community.
- The main threats to the reserve are illegal timber felling, poaching and treasure hunting. However the officers judge that the timber felling and poaching has reduced drastically since the SLANRMP work
- Some site enrichment work took place during the SLANRMP, and those sites are still growing well. Further enrichment was not done after that.
- The reserve lies along an elephant corridor, and during a certain season for about 3 months, there is a lot of elephant activity in certain areas of the reserve.
- It seems there are a lot of archeological ruins within the reserve, and the FD officers believe there are a lot more of it lying undiscovered. So in terms of heritage the site has a lot of importance and value, and needs to be well preserved.
- They felt the biggest barrier to undertaking this work is publicity, getting visitors to come to the site, as well as coordinating with the Archeology Department.
- There is a lot of mythological linkages and folk-lore about King Ravana, and the site is supposed to have many artifacts from that era, including some inscriptions in some caves.

ii. **Main Findings - Archeology Department**

- The department does not have information specific to this site, but has some information generic to that era for Anuradhapura.

- They are aware that less than 1% of the ruins in the site is declared by the department, however they don't have the funds necessary for more exploration or further studies, only basic site maintenance.
- According to them this site was mainly a hermitage for forest dwelling monks, more than connections to the Vijithapura battle, and there is less evidence about connections to the battle. They also refute all claims about associations to Ravana's legend.
- They believe the site holds Sri Lanka's biggest man made pond, and could also be a real attraction. In addition the site has two main types of ruins, the 'Padhanagara' which is the monks dwelling, and the 'Janthagara' which is an ancient type of medicinal steam room.
- The site they believe was used by the monks for medicinal purposes, and so lot of Ayurveda plants are abundantly available.
- The Department doesn't have any active relations with either the Rajarata University or the Post Graduate Institute of Archeology with regards to encouraging further learning, investigations, explorations or even for training purposes.
- They are prohibited from charging entrance fees or any other sort of viewing fees to any of their sites. They also were clear that no changes can be done to the site or any ruins.
- The Anuradhapura Archeology Department seemed to have strong opinions about how the previous SLANRMP was badly managed and project funds were wasted.
- They were against any sort of activities that would influence the local villagers culture or were not culturally sensitive such as homestays. They also felt that any guides being promoted should obtain the Regional Guide License, and should not be done in an adhoc manner.
- The Director General was open to supporting the Forest Department to do this work, providing information and training related to that era.

iii. Main Findings - Hotels in the Area

- All the hotels provide options to guests to undertake some nature and culture related walks, and the large companies like Cinnamon, Jetwing, and Aitken Spence have departments dedicated to nature trails and exploring the environment.
- Most of their clientele stay for 2-3 nights in the cultural triangle area, and to a lesser degree for 4-5 nights in the area.
- The main activities visitors are interested in are Sigiriya, Minneriya-Giritale national Park, Kaudulla National Park.
- Other activities the hotels promote are cultural walks in the nearby village, bird watching, and bike tours covering some scenic tanks. Generally it's about 2 hour trip. These are popular, but limited to about 10% of the visitors.
- The hotel promotes nature walks, climbing Ritigala and Pidurangala sites for a fewer number of tourists interested in nature.
- During the peak season, they may take about 3-4 groups a day, and during the low season it may be about 1 group a day on activities.
- Other than Ritigala and Pidurangala, they don't do treks and would be interested in exploring these opportunities, but it needs to be quality products.
- Most visitor itineraries are fixed before they arrive in the country, and it's only some that have about half a day to spend on unplanned activities. Therefore site promotion through social media, tour operators and jeep safari operators is key.

iv. Main Findings - Travel Agents and Tour Operators

- Most visitors are keen to see the mainstream travel sights such as Sigiriya, wildlife safari's and exploring the main temples and archeological ruins, most foreign travelers request for opportunities to explore the countryside, and get a feeling for the local culture.
- Most visitors request activities based on what's promoted via travel sites and social media sites.
- Cultural trips, village walks, bullock cart rides, traditional boat rides, experiencing local food, learning to cook local food were commonly requested and popular.
- Also requests to walk, trek, hike, cycle, birding, camping, photography, are rarely requested, maybe 5% of the time. There are a few places that they take them such as Modol kele, Pidhurangala for nature treks, but mostly in the Knuckles and Sinharaja.
- Very few groups request other adventure sports such as rock climbing, zip lining, water sports, etc.
- Most tour operators are not aware of other possible options, and said if awareness about such opportunities was given to them and it was a viable product, they could easily market it. It would also be best if the site were cleared by the SLTDA. They also requested that a discounted rate be provided for tour operators, and then it becomes competitive for them to market it.
- They also said value for money was critical, meaning that for the amount being charged good services must be provided. These are:
 - Paths to be marked, but not to destroy the environment. It should be natural with less concrete structures.
 - Adequate signs and boards to provide information about the site, history, flora and fauna
 - Easy access to the site, with clear guidelines and prices
 - Guides need to be well trained and knowledgeable about the site, animals and plants, should be friendly and should know basic English.
 - Encourage community based activities so as to encourage them to protect the environment

2.3 Key Findings & Recommendations

1. The MK forest reserve has significantly high potential to become a exemplary site that increases peoples appreciation and awareness about the environment, while providing a substantial income to help in its conservation as well as uplifting the standard of living of the local community. However, a quality product has to be developed with good standards, providing value for money, as well as serving as a demonstration site for similar interventions.
2. A sustainable tourism plan, incorporating all ecotourism related activities, is developed aligned to global national park standards, with clear objectives, activities and implementation mechanics.
3. The Forest Department will need to take responsibility to manage the site and charge entrance fees. The community will need to be engaged in a stepwise manner, developing their capacity gradually so that they also benefit from the intervention.
4. The main target group will be local visitors, and to a much lesser extent foreign visitors.
5. The top preferred activities were to relax, walk (55%), watch birds (50%), learn about the environment and historical backgrounds of the site.
6. While trekking & hiking (40%), camping (31%), picnicking (31%), and cycling (21%) were preferred it was to a lesser degree, less than 40% of the time.

7. Top requested facilities at the site (in ranked order) were toilets (90%), information about the site (52%), food stalls, activities, local snacks/food, guide service (35%) and visitor center (31%). There was more demand for souvenirs than handicrafts.
8. There is a huge demand for information both about nature and the archeological ruins, therefore finding solid well crafted information to create visibility and knowledge products, signs and boards is a significant need. Its difficult for the FD to do this alone, and therefore some strong partnerships with other institutions/ associations may need to be entered into.
9. The community development intervention needs to be undertaken with a long term, step-wise, hands on capacity development approach.
10. Promotion of the site in the first few years is critical. A number of specific strategies to create that awareness and attract initial visitors will need to be made, thereafter the knowledge and demand for the site will spread by direct recommendations, if the experience and value for money is good.
11. An agreement needs to be reached with the Archeology Department with regards to promoting visitor activities, and SLTDA for training of the guides and obtaining the license.

Section 3: Objectives and Key Guiding Strategies

3.1 Vision

The vision for Manewa Kande Forest Reserve is a long-term goal for all stakeholders, to guide the development of the reserve. The vision is:

3.2 Key Guiding Strategies

1. Sustainable Development Principles – This plan will take into account the environmental, socio-cultural and economic aspects of Sustainable Tourism. In addition its actions will tie into the Sustainable Development Goals, especially focusing on:
 - SDG 15 – Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably managed forest, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss – Target 15.2, 15.5, 15.8
 - SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all – Target 8.9, 8.5
 - SDG 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – Target 5.7, 5.5
 - SDG 12 – Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns – Target 12.10 and 12.8
2. National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan – This plan aligns with the biodiversity strategies and actions targeted nationally for Sri Lanka. It also works to implement those actions from the NBSAP relevant to this work for which the Forest Department has a primary responsibility. These are as follows:
 - Target 6 By 2022, mechanisms are established to ensure sustainable use of biodiversity –
 - Action 1 Develop innovative financing mechanisms to generate sustainable self-financing for biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation;
 - Action 2 Introduce appropriate economic instruments for biodiversity and ecosystem service conservation
 - Target 7 By 2022, traditional sustainable uses of biodiversity is promoted and established –
 - Action 1 Promote and mobilize cultural practices and traditional wisdom related to biodiversity;
 - Action 5 Introduce an outgrowing system for medicinal plants with the involvement of private sector
3. Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Action Plan – This plan is also aligned to the National Tourism Strategy's Roots Philosophy and its guiding principles with a focus on principles 3, 4 and 5.

RDOTS PHILOSOPHY

- Celebrate Sri Lanka
- Tourism is rooted in the people, places, heritage, and values of the country
- Tourism can promote a sense of place and belonging and a voice for every community
- Tourism should be used as an income generator to protect, conserve and enhance Sri Lanka's natural environment as well as the tangible and intangible cultural and historic assets
- This Roots Philosophy should govern policy, planning and development to build economic, social, environmental and local capital
- Visitors, both domestic and international, are guests in the country

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. CAPTURING THE BENEFITS OF TOURISM FOR SRI LANKA

The tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the growth and diversification of Sri Lanka's economy. It should be considered a key pillar of the economy and a priority in government decision-making. Facilitated by the public sector, the private sector should play a lead in the development of the tourism industry.

2. DEMOCRATISATION OF ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Tourism should result in optimal economic benefit to Sri Lanka's economy by maximising net foreign exchange income, spreading development throughout the island, and creating gainful employment for Sri Lankans. Tourism growth should stimulate and deepen the value chain and ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socioeconomic benefits that are fairly distributed to all stakeholders.

3. CONSERVATION AND WORLD-CLASS MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS

Tourism development should promote the conservation and enhancement of Sri Lanka's natural environment and its historical, social and cultural heritage, avoiding harmful effects. It should make optimal use of environmental resources — maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural biodiversity.

4. LOCAL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Tourism should respect the sociocultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance. Tourism development should involve local communities in a real, holistic capacity. Strong political leadership, including regional and local government, should foster informed, wide participation of all relevant stakeholders and support consensus building.

5. MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES ROOTED IN HERITAGE

All tourism services and activities should be visitor-centric and rooted in the environmental, religious, social and cultural heritage of Sri Lanka. They should provide a high level of visitor satisfaction and ensure a meaningful visitor experience, providing learning opportunities and raising awareness about best tourism practices.

6. RESPONSIBLE DESTINATION MARKETING

Sri Lanka should be marketed responsibly to highlight the country's distinctive environment, traditions and attractions. Efforts should also be made to dispel longstanding misconceptions about the country and the tourism sector.

7. SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL

A safe and secure environment should be ensured for all visitors, investors and communities, as well as animals.

4. Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity – This plan will actively support the empowerment of women by increasing their opportunities for income generation, entrepreneurship and leadership.
5. Environmental and Sustainable Development Knowledge Creation – This plan will seeks to promote environmental consciousness and sustainability concepts among visitors by demonstrations and dissemination.
 - Thus the concepts being implemented such as involving local communities or biodiversity conservation will be openly demonstrated and shared with visitors, through exhibits and guides.
 - Creative and innovative methods both demonstrative and exhibits will be used to disseminate information among visitors, so that it translates into knowledge creating and attitudinal changes.
 - It's expected that this will promote meaningful experiences among visitors, so that these concepts are driven home into their consciousness.

3.3 Sustainable Tourism Programme Design

Goal

1. To develop Manewa Kande Forest Reserve into a sustainable tourism site
2. To provide a viable model for the Forest Department to test and adapt in other appropriate areas

Expected Outcomes

5. Environment - The natural and historical heritage and biodiversity of Manewa Kande Forest Reserve conserved
6. Community - The socio-culture of local communities conserved, while alternate income sources have increased
7. Economy - Viable long-term economic operations ensured, providing economic benefits to all stakeholders
8. Visitors - A meaningful visitor experience ensured, raising awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable practices amongst them

Expected Outputs

Environment

1. Decreased threats to the forest
2. Improved forest quality indicators

Community

3. Increased capacity of CBO to support community development
4. Increased engagement in alternate livelihood sources

Economy

5. Increased visitor traffic to the site

6. Increased facilities for visitors on site

Visitors

7. Increased information and knowledge sharing with visitors

8. On-site studies and research on local environment and history increased

Section 4 – Actions And Guidelines for Implementation

4.1 Viable Long-Term Economic Operations Ensured, Providing Economic Benefits To All Stakeholders

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS – YEAR 1

1. **Map** – Forest Reserve map to be developed and displayed showing key locations, view points, caves, ruins, nature trails, birding points, water points, etc.
 - A large map will be displayed at the ticket office and people can be asked to take a picture of the displayed map for further information. A simple map can also be printed on the back of the ticket, with a message about reducing the use of paper.
 - Forest Department GIS unit support will be necessary to develop the map.
2. **Zoning** – The park has to be zoned into 3 areas. A central core area that will not be disturbed, an area for maximum traffic usage such as day groups, school groups, archeology site visitors, large tour groups etc; and an area for minimum traffic usage such as campers, researchers, etc.
 - The carrying capacity for these areas has to be determined by the water and toilet availability.
 - The elephant areas and corridors during the season needs to be mapped so that overlaps with the high traffic and low traffic zones can be minimized. If this cannot be minimized a decision will need to be made about closing the reserve during those months of the year.



3. **Park Rules** - A specific set of park rules and guidelines for visitors have to be developed and displayed at the entrance, and key messages displayed in the high traffic area.
 - It must be kept in mind that these rules and guidelines on behavior is put in place as a key educational tool that will help people appreciate nature and understand the need for conservation.
 - Guides will also need to be made to understand these rules, why they are needed, and trained to monitor and advice visitors about park rules.
 - Rules will also need to be established about number of visitors allowed into the reserve. It must be kept in mind that exceeding this number will reduce the quality of the experience for all visitors. The size of the reserve and the high traffic zone is finite, so from the beginning a agreeable cap on the visitors can easily be identified objectively, though enforcing this number may come into effect much later when the reserve becomes a well known popular attraction in the area.
4. **Toilets** - Need to develop well-ventilated, well drained, Asian style toilet facilities on the site. The design is critical, as a well-designed/ planned set of toilets will reduce construction costs and maintenance requirements.
 - The number of toilets required has to be calculated based on the maximum day group size that will be permitted.
 - Water conservation techniques have to be used including rainwater harvesting tanks, grey water recycling for flushing, etc.
 - A good sewerage management system must also be part of the design, and be able to recycle waste.
 - *Information about how these techniques are implemented and why they are important must be displayed inside and outside the toilet complex so as to create awareness about it.*
 - Number of toilets for women must be slightly more with sanitary disposal facilities, while facilities for men can include cost/ water saving mechanisms like using urinals.
 - Messages about how to use the toilets and about sustainable consumption should be displayed, encouraging people to be careful with the use of toilet paper, water, soap, etc.
 - Daily cleanliness and maintenance to be handed over to the community groups, who can charge a small amount for the work.
 - Major maintenance functions have to be undertaken by the Forest Department, using income from the ticket sales.
5. **MK Forest Reserve Entrance** – The entrance to the reserve and the office is the initial impression about the park and the principles it's demonstrating. Current global trends are moving



away from large-scale constructions and using innovative nature friendly signboards that demonstrate to the visitors all the principles of environmentally friendly tourism. See figure X. This point was further validated by the findings in the visitor survey conducted in the development of this study.

6. **Office cum Visitor center** - A center to issue tickets has to be established and should be designed in keeping with and to mimic the atmosphere of the site. Some of the ancient audience hall designs might be adapted, which will be in keeping with the character of the MK forest reserve.
 - The structure has to be designed for long-term use, using modern material but as per vernacular Sri Lankan designs that maximize light, space and air. The right design can minimize on the construction costs.
 - The visitor center should display key messages, forest reserve rules, basic background information, posters of plants n animals to be found, etc. This area can even be an [semi] open-air concept with messages displayed as outdoor exhibits as per figure X. Such areas can handle large numbers of visitors.
 - The responsibility for the management of the center will need to be taken up by the Forest Department, given past experience, limited capacity and initiative from the community.



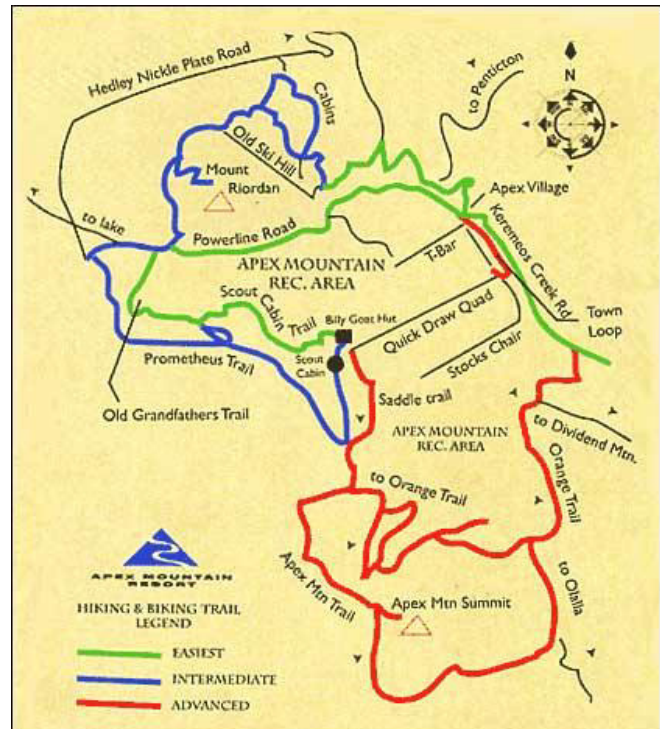
7. **Day Group Area** – After the zoning has been done, and the main sights marked, the area for maximum traffic has to be identified. Within that zone a spacious shady site has to be identified for large day groups, tour groups, family groups, etc to rest and picnic for a few hours, especially around midday.

- To increase the shade available, some canopies can be developed using pergola techniques and growing vines and creepers, locally found in the reserve, over it. See figure X.



8. **Camping** – Camping in the reserve should be encouraged where possible, as this helps build a meaningful experience with nature.
 - Currently there is a previously identified site for camping. However new sites will need to be defined after the zoning, and located in the borders of the high traffic area, or in the low traffic area.
 - Key criteria to be considered for site locations are the distance to a water source; and should not be near the elephant migration routes.
 - Initially 1 or 2 sites should be identified and not more than 8 people should be allowed at a site.
 - Traditional style clay cooking pits to be constructed in an appropriate location of the site, to help reduce the usage of firewood.
 - Certain types of inexpensive equipment could be available for rent from the visitor office such as - torches, lanterns, mats/paduru, tarps, first aid, water, buckets, etc.
9. **Nature Trails (phase 1)** – The ideal activity for this Forest Reserve is walking, trekking and hiking, based on the site visits and the visitor survey. Based on the zoning and recce, key view points, archeology sites, birding points, and other sites of interest will be mapped out. Accordingly trails can be plotted to incorporate a few sites in each trail. Three different categories of nature trails will be developed, easy walks, moderate treks, and difficult hikes as show in figure X.

- *Easy walks* – Within the high traffic zone for tour groups, families with small children and elders. Trails should be about 3 kms with 2-3 stops of interest. [E.g – archeology site, mountain man-made pond and the rock quarry]. The path should be broader than a footpath to accommodate the high two way traffic, approximately 3-5 ft compacted earth and gravel paths, to prevent people from going off the path and disturbing the surrounding environment. Depending on the size of the zone, a number of trails can be developed, that will also divide up the traffic on the path.
- *Moderate Treks* – Located across the high traffic and low traffic zones, for small groups of nature lovers about 5 – 8 km taking around 3-4 hours. These walks should branch out from the easy walks, and incorporate some of the sites of interest, birding points, and showcasing the flora, fauna and geology of the site, as well as some scenic viewpoints and caves. Again the number of paths needs to be decided based on the size of the zone and the attractions in it.
- *Difficult Hikes* – Mostly located in the low traffic zone for small groups of nature, adventure lovers, and campers taking about 4-6 hours plotted across the different terrain showcasing the different forest compositions, hidden archeological sites, caves, etc and covering early morning birding sites, scenic view points, mountain peaks, etc.



- In Year 1 – All the paths will be plotted after the mapping and zoning exercise. However in Year 1 only the first phase of activities that is 1 trail of each category, will be set up.
 - Phase 2 involves developing the remaining paths over the next 2-3 years. This pace of development is acceptable, since the same visitor is unlikely to visit more than once a year.
 - This will also allow the FD to slowly explore the rest of the forest reserve and to incorporate feedback from the visitors.
- Moderate and difficult trails need to be preserved in as close to its original/ natural condition with only a small single file footpath, cleared of leaf litter and lose topsoil. This will reduce the disturbance to the forest ecosystem, reduce the noise pollution and enable

trekkers to see animals easily.

- In difficult stretches of the path, especially where the incline is more than 45 degrees, small rocks will need to be placed strategically to serve as footholds and steps on such terrain. This will prevent damage to the path, and increase safety aspects. In certain stretches a weathered rope should be set up to provide support where necessary and prevent accidents. It should be noted that this should be done in such a way as to not disturb the esthetic character/ nature of the path.
- Trails need to be marked with visible colour codes indicating difficulty levels. Tree barks can be marked in weather resistant paint, at around 4m height, with intervals determined by visibility. (Eg on winding sections with multiple bends and climbs, intervals will need to be closer together than in straighter sections.)
- Guides need to be hired compulsorily from the office to undertake the moderate and difficult nature trails as well as for camping.

10. **Branding & Marketing**- The Manewa Kande (MK) site needs to be developed as a brand, since it promotes recognition, provides motivation and direction for staff, and generates referrals and recommendations. A strong brand also helps visitors know what to expect.

- Develop a logo and catch phrase for the site – either professionally or through a community/ school art competition; which can be further fine-tuned into a logo.
- Marketing Strategy – A preliminary marketing strategy for Year 1 has been developed and is included in this MK sustainable tourism plan to get the work started.
- The strategy will identify the key target groups, entry points, linking strategies, and other options, keeping in mind that the site cannot be over promoted during the first year when the facilities are not properly developed to manage visitors. Key aspects of the marketing strategy will also be outlined here, integrating activities under proposed actions.

11. **Parking** – The Manewa Kanda site is likely to develop large amounts of traffic if given adequate publicity and marketing. Traffic numbers is likely to be similar to Ritigala National Park nearby.

- Therefore parking area for vehicles, vans and buses will need to be demarcated from the beginning, which includes a phased plan to expanding parking areas.
- If the community can provide this land, then the CBO can directly manage and charge for parking fees. If not if the land belongs to the state, then a management fee can be provided to the CBO for managing the parking facility.

12. **Waste Management** – to ensure that visitors do not pollute the site a strong waste management system needs to be implemented.

- Colour coded waste disposal bins need to be provided on site. These need to be located in the high traffic areas and clearly identified on the map, and with signboards.
- Clear guidance on what type of waste goes into which bin has to be clearly provided.
- A fine must be imposed for disposing of trash in the environment, can be also be enforced by the guides and local community members as well. Other visitors are also encouraged to report on improper throwing of trash.
- Waste needs to be cleared every day, at the end of the day. This work can be contracted to the local community.

MID-TERM ACTIONS – YEAR 1 - 3

13. **Nature Trails (Phase 2)** – The second phase of implementation involves setting up more trails within the 3 categories.
- This pace of development is acceptable, since the same visitor is unlikely to visit more than once a year. This will also allow the FD to slowly explore the rest of the forest reserve and to incorporate feedback from the visitors.
 - A fourth category, which is the 2 day continuous hike, 5 – 6 hrs each day with a on-route camping stop can also be planned at this stage, if there is demand.
14. **Camping (Phase 2)** –Adventure activities such as camping are on an increasing trend, and in the near future there is going to be more demand for such facilities.



- For Phase 2, it is recommended that a western style *camping ground* be established if possible. As seen in figure X, this is a grouped zone, with multiple campsites. The advantages are that more people can experience camping, while also minimizing the disturbance to the environment. In addition, it also allows for facilities such as water and toilets to be provided communally, with less cost.
 - If a site suitable for a campground is not available, another couple of individual sites can be established if appropriate. The identification will be completed during the initial mapping exercise.
 - A temporary camping site on a 2 day trekking route can also be set up.
15. **Biking** – The activity requires considerable planning, and is therefore scheduled as a mid-term action. This activity is proposed to be carried out by the CBO, or community entrepreneurs, with some assistance given by the Forest Department. Some basic details are mentioned here, but the full design is provided under [4.4](#)
- Currently there is a biking path used by the villagers as they cross from one side of the reserve to another. In addition there is a certain part of the reserve that is a flatter terrain suitable for biking.

- Its proposed to plot out 2 bicycle routes, one which covers parts of the forest reserve, near by villages, paddy land, etc to form a enviro-cultural route targeting foreign tourists; another which covers mainly the forest paths and buffer zone area targeting local visitors.
- This will be a key attraction for foreign tourists who are used to biking and like to incorporate a cultural experience into their visit.
- An initial number of bikes (e.g not more than 4) can be provided to the CBO that can undertake the hiring of the bikes and the daily maintenance work. An agreement has to be made that they will maintain the bikes and save the profit from the activity to purchase more bikes and develop the activity further.
- This activity is further detailed out under the section on ‘alternate community income generation activities’.

16. **Marketing (phase 2)** – Marketing and branding activities will need to be escalated, based on the pace of implementation of activities from this plan after Year 1. This way, facilities and services will be available when visitor numbers increase.

- It will be worthwhile hiring a professional to develop a proper marketing plan towards the end of Year 1, based on experience and lessons learnt. The professional should be engaged (part-time/ task based) for about 3 years, thereafter knowledge about the site will spread through individual recommendations.
- Souvenirs to be sold at the visitor center need to be designed by the Forest Department and is a key aspect of promoting the MK brand.



- Up-cycled utility bags, bandana’s, wraps, multipurpose spreads, with MK logo
- T-shirts and caps with logo, both expensive and non-expensive quality and prices
- Field guides and handbooks on bird, butterflies, dragonflies, snakes, etc can be bought/ rented.

17. **Parking expansion** – Implementation of parking site expansion to be based on increasing traffic to the site. Again to be negotiated with the community and land made available for parking. The CBO can manage and charge for parking fees.

- Parking fees structure to be decided with the Forest Department, and differentiated into 4 categories – 1) bikes, 2) 3 wheelers and small cars, 3) Big Cars and Vans, 4) Buses
- If possible separate sections or parking bays to be identified for different categories.

18. **Maintenance Activities** – From the beginning itself regular maintenance work needs to be a priority.

- A maintenance budget needs to be identified from the beginning, focusing on the site infrastructure such as water facilities, waste management, toilets, nature trails, day group areas, exhibits, visitor center, camping sites, enrichment and biodiversity conservation activities etc.

- Day to day maintenance work can be contracted to the local CBO, in which case regular monitoring must be conducted and guidance provided so that the CBO learns to provide accepted standards of quality service.
- Other regular maintenance work needs to be done on major infrastructure that undergoes heavy usage like the visitor center, toilets, day group area, etc. A sizable budget needs to be set aside for these sorts of activities.
- Budget and other requirements have to be reviewed periodically and updated.

LONG-TERM ACTIONS – YEAR 3 ONWARDS

19. **Day Group Area with Toilets (Phase 2)** – Based on available budgets some picnic areas and toilets will need to be developed in the day group area depending on available budgets, these can later be developed like summer huts using natural material, which will also provide some shelter from the rain.



20. **Manewa Kande App for Online Bookings** - Once there is a steady crowd attracted, the Forest Department will need to actively manage the visitor numbers so as to not exceed the cap. Studies around the world have shown that when visitor numbers exceed the carrying capacity, the environment, services and facilities offered deteriorate, drastically. In addition once local livelihoods have developed to support this larger (over cap) number, its difficult to reduce the visitor number without affecting people’s livelihoods. Thus the solution is to strictly maintain a viable visitor number, and not allow it to exceed. To do this and prevent people having to return disappointed, its recommended to develop an online booking app.
- The app can maintain a ‘visitor counter’ for each day, which displays the number of people booked to visit. The counter stops working after the maximum number of visitors are

reached, and no further visitor's slots are available. This system will also help people prioritize the site, over other attractions.

- The app should also handle the bookings for guides for the moderate and difficult nature trails, and the camping site bookings.
- Payments can be made onsite, and a payment gateway is not recommended but this is an option if the funds and technical clearance is given by the Forest Department.
- The system has to be designed for people to log into the app using their social media networks, e.g from facebook, and this will prevent misuse of the app and false bookings since their activity is linked to their online profile, and thus is traceable.
- Key messages and notices from the Forest Department, such as for emergency closure due to elephants or heavy rain; or updated ticket prices; special discount promotions etc. can also be displayed on the app in real time.

21. **Biogas Unit** – For waste management purposes, its recommended a biogas unit is set up. It can be fed from the food and toilet wastes would help recycle and demonstrate recycling of waste products on site.

- The gas can be utilized by the community for cooking at the local store, or even to run the pumps and lights in the toilets.
- The slurry can use used around the forest reserve for enrichment-based activities.



22. **Dorm style lodging** - An Indonesian style long house lodge can be constructed at a reasonable cost offering dorm style lodging space. This can serve as alternate lodging to camping, especially for large groups of visitors, accommodation for researchers, and other professional visitors.

- The long house is essentially a large long hall with pillars supporting a high sloping roof. There are no walls inside or outside. This can be adapted to the Sri Lankan style of audience halls, and using local material.
- Separate communal washrooms with bathing facilities and Asian style toilets, need to also be constructed along with the lodge.
- Based on budget availability for procurement and maintenance, two types of lodging options can be explored by the Forest Department.
 - i. Only floor space provided.
 - ii. Simple style steel bunk-beds provided.
- In both cases lodgers are requested to bring their own bedding and linen, similar to how they would for camping. This increases water conservation onsite especially during the dry season, and resulting water pollution. In addition, it avoids site authorities having to deal with numerous standards of linen cleanliness demanded by guests, for minimal charges.
- Traditional style cane tats, can be used as separators for sections, and moved/ installed as necessary.
- Options to rent 'peduru', or buy basic supplies like toiletries; flashlights, local style cloth towels or sheets should be available from the local store.
- The management and maintenance of the long house can be shared with the local community organization.

23. **Adventure Sports** – The upper hilly terrain of the MK with its many rocky crags provides some options for adventure sports such as rock climbing, rappelling, intensive hiking etc. However adventure sports needs to be conducted professionally as it requires specialized skills, expensive equipment and safety procedures.

- A possible option is to tender out the activity to adventure companies for identified period, to undertake group hiking, biking and rock climbing activities within the reserve. The advantages is that the company will promote the visibility of the site among tourists, and can help provide the local guides with hands-on professional training on handling visitors, safety equipment etc. This help during the initial setting up period can help ensure visitor numbers and professional development of the site. The disadvantages are that this might set a precedent for other adventure companies to request and lobby the Forest Department, similar to the incidents in Yala National Park.



4.2 A Meaningful Visitor Experience Ensured, Raising Awareness About Sustainability Issues And Promoting Sustainable Practices Amongst Them

The relevant preliminary action for Year 1 will include the guide training work, and this is further described under the Action 4.4 Community Outcome



MID-TERM ACTIONS – YEAR 1- 3

24. **Information displayed through indoor/ outdoor exhibits** – There is a huge demand for information and thereby a huge potential to create awareness and knowledge among visitors.

- The ESA project conducted a biodiversity survey which will update and provide species lists for the MK forest reserve. This will form a sound basis for the information that will be provided to visitors.
- However this information cannot be displayed as lists. Paper based, leaflet type information is now obsolete. Therefore the information displayed needs to be described in a innovative, creative method, and can be displayed as indoor or outdoor exhibits.
- It needs to be packaged and developed into meaningful, interesting, creative chunks of



information that increase visitor's understanding about the species, plants, animals, environment, etc.

- Displays should be visual as much as possible, with limited amount of text since its been scientifically accepted that people grasp and understand information better this way.
- Example – signboards may be placed identifying a tree species. However it should display a few interesting characteristics or information about the plant such as medicinal purposes, or even water retention strategy used by the plant, etc.
- *Curating the information* to be displayed requires specialized communication and technical skills and will require some capital investment, but will greatly improve the visitor experience making it more meaningful and providing value for money, while also contributing to conservation.
 - Exhibit display material need not be costly, and depends on the material selected. Sponsorship for display boards might be another option to cover costs.

LONG-TERM ACTIONS – YEAR 3 ONWARDS

25. **Manewa Kande App** – The app can be developed to also serve as an interactive platform to provide more information about the site. Developing an interactive app today requires a very small investment, and can provide a lot of services easily. This can be developed integrated into the online booking app.

- It can have a interactive map of the site which will enable people to use it as a guidance system on the nature trails,
- It can also be programmed to provide key background and historical information on marked points of interest, as well as to provide information on identified plants, birds, and animals etc. This information can easily be updatable online unlike the outdoor exhibits.

26. **Research Programmes** – The site has a lot of potential based on its history, archeological ruins, and other floral/faunal/ geological aspects, to educate people and contribute to the nations knowledge base. Therefore proposing the Forest Department consider the following possibilities:

- Research agreement with a University or Institution on botany, zoology, archeology, geology, etc. The agreement will allow for a certain number of students to conduct research onsite, while providing the FD with updated inventory lists, research findings, and hands-on training of the local guides, FD field officers, etc.
- If a clear institutional agreement is not possible, then the FD can provide promote individual research programmes and provide permission on the site for interested parties, with a knowledge sharing agreement.
- Archeology site – There are many sites within the reserves of unknown archeological importance. In collaboration with an Archeology department team or a University research team undertake more exploration of the area within the reserve to identify and study unknown archeological findings.
- New research findings and knowledge can then be disseminated to visitors via the interactive app, new exhibits and also be passed on to the local guides.

4.3 The Natural And Historical Heritage And Biodiversity Of Manewa Kande Forest Reserve Conserved

ACTIONS YEAR 1 ONWARDS

27. **Forest Enrichment & Biodiversity Conservation** – *This activity should be guided as per the Forest Reserve management plan and therefore necessary actions are proposed here.*

- Forest Enrichment - Based on the mapping exercise, areas for enrichment activities will need to be identified and prioritized. Locally found wild fruiting species has to be used during enrichment activities, to provide more food and reduce animal-human conflict prevalent in the region.
- Invasive Alien Species Control - activities to be introduced. Available best practice strategies for management and control to be adopted, and carried out consistently for 5 years at the minimum.
- Timber felling and Poaching – Vigilance to be practiced so as to completely reduce timber felling and poaching in the reserve
- Bee keeping - to be facilitated through the local communities as a good alternate income source. Bee boxes should be widely distributed in the high – mid traffic zones.
- Animal & Bird species – In both cases, species visibility seemed less, which possibly is due to the poaching and forest degradation. Therefore special attention needs to be placed on the forest enrichment work and the poaching work. Further specific species regeneration supportive field activities to be undertaken based on research recommendations.
- Elephant Corridor – special enrichment attention needs to be given to the elephant pathways. Accordingly known elephant food species should be grown along the corridor, which will support the elephant migration as well as reduce the likelihood of them wandering all over the reserve.

4.4 The Socio-Culture Of Local Communities Conserved, While Alternate Income Sources Have Increased

YEAR 1 ACTIONS

Given past experience working with this community on a similar project, its proposed that responsibility be retained with the Forest Department and handed over gradually for certain activities if/when sufficient capacity is built. Thus a step by step, ownership oriented community capacity building programme is recommended as described below.

1. **Community Based Forest Conservation Organization** – The previously initiated community based organization will be need to be revived and its commitment to forest conservation activities reinstated. The Forest Department staff must be provided a copy of the meeting minutes.
 - i. A two-pronged strategy to develop the community, both on a community level and a individual level is being proposed.

- ii. Under both aspects, a number of activities are being proposed, to provide diversified services to the visitors, as well to provide a diversified income source for the CBO & the individual community member.
 - iii. Women's participation in committees and leadership positions must be encouraged to rise to 50% gradually, and the CBO must develop and implement a long-term plan to achieve this. At the start participation from women must be a minimum 10% on all committees and leadership positions.
 - iv. All trainings provided by the project must include women beneficiaries, and where appropriate rise to 50% of participants. No activities will however be solely focused on women, and should incorporate all genders.
 - v. A grievance addressing mechanism must be included into the CBO constitution, so that all matters are transparently managed.
2. **Revolving Loan Fund** – The Project should provide the CBO with an initial revolving loan fund, to be used and invested by the CBO for innovating, marketable activities with a clear business plan. Its not recommended to give funding and equipment directly to individuals for a number of reasons.
- i. Misunderstandings and perception issues on how the past project funds were managed and beneficiaries selected, already exist. Through the RLF scheme, these beneficiary selection issues, and limited support will be minimized.
 - ii. If equipment is directly provided, the project can only chose to support a few people, creating inequity and conflicting issues. The number of community members that can be supported through the RLF is unlimited, if the RLF is well managed, and loans paid on time.
 - iii. The RLF will be able to provide the community with continuous support beyond the lifetime of the project.
 - iv. In addition, this mechanism will support ownership building, since the community member is utilizing his own funds/ resources.
 - v. Also as the MK Forest Reserve becomes popular, and the community capacity gradually develops they will become more confident, proactive and willing to take risks. Accordingly more entrepreneurial options will open up and become viable that cannot be conceived today. Thus the RLF will be a supportive long term mechanism which will exist to nurture this sort of entrepreneurship.
 - vi. From the CBO, a RLF management committee will need to be appointed, and must include a Forest Department Official and 10% women's participation initially and set to rise to 50%.
 - vii. The Forest Department will need to provide the RLF committee members with training on managing the RLF, evaluating business proposals, book-keeping, etc. Committee members need to keep accurate records and minutes of meetings and action points, and train new committee members before handing over.
3. **Village store** – The CBO or even a group of enterprising individuals can set up a small food store. The basic capital investment can be obtained from the RLF, and will not be provided by the project.

- i. Certain conditions and standards need to be maintained at the store and for obtaining the revolving loan. It must uphold the values of the local culture, and provide environmentally friendly services and healthy products.
- ii. The site will need to be agreed with the Forest Department and the local community, and be conveniently placed for visitors to access.
- iii. Training and guidelines from the *Ministry of Agriculture 'Hela Bojun' Programme* on local food preparation to be made available for interested parties through the project.
- iv. Food Orders – This is an essential service the store can provide for visitors, with a very high demand, where it undertakes paid orders for traditional village meal packs.
 - A daily menu based on seasonal availability of fresh vegetables/ produce can be displayed on a blackboard, based on which visitors can place orders to be picked up after their walks/treks.
 - Similar options can be provided for campers to be delivered in tiffin carriers for various meals.
- v. Healthy snacks – Savory and sweet items, kenda (herbal porridge), herbal teas, local fruits and vegetable juices, etc should be available for immediate consumption in traditional/eco-friendly reusable packaging.
- vi. Herbal insect repellants; bee honey, nuts, jams and preserves, plants and seeds of locally available plants and medicinal herbs can also be available for sale



4. **Maintenance Activities** – The community organization has to be contracted to provide maintenance services in the forest reserve. This needs to be a formal agreement, with a clear number of tasks agreed on a daily basis and a monthly basis.
 - i. This work can be sponsored from a portion of the ticket sales, in a similar mechanism to how it's undertaken at the Hurullu Forest Reserve. Or it can be contracted in a similar manner to how FD contracts community members for enrichment activities, however equal opportunities must be provided to women from the community.
 - ii. Responsibilities should include maintaining the toilets, trails, day group area, exhibits, camping sites, long-house lodge, and other visitor center areas.
 - iii. They should also be contracted to undertake the waste collection and composting of food waste.

- iv. Monitoring support - The CBO should also manage a roster of members, to help the FD to undertake visitor assistance and monitoring actions. Roster members should get a small daily fee for this type of support from the ticket sales. Responsibilities include monitoring visitor usage of facilities, helping in emergency situations, visitor information, ensuring visitors don't enter the moderate and high trekking paths without a guide, etc.

YEAR 1 - 3 ACTIONS

- 5. **Bike hire & Cultural trips** - The FD with the CBO will jointly develop two biking routes, one that runs through the forest, the local village and paddy fields targeting foreign tourists, and another that runs mainly through the forest and buffer zone areas for local visitors.
 - i. The key target groups here are foreign tourists, and for them the cultural aspect of the ride is a key interest. Hotels and tour groups generally take tourists on cultural walks, which incorporate aspects of village and agricultural lifestyles. They are keen to see how people live, what their homes look like, what the local daily food is like, what types of work they do, and in farming communities how they cultivate and harvest their crops, etc.
 - ii. Thus the cultural aspect of the bike routes needs to be developed in more aspects than a mere route. Which local aspects are actually traditional and appealing, needs to be identified. It's proposed to obtain the SLTDA expertise to develop the full cultural part of the programme, and obtain necessary training on how to manage clients, and the overall cultural experience expected..
 - iii. The CBO will be provided with 4 bikes that they can use to hire out to visitors through the Village Store. Rates will be as agreed with the FD initially.
 - iv. The project will provide the CBO members and guides identified to manage this intervention, with exposure visits.
 - v. Guides will be necessary to show the route and conduct the tour for both routes. However its recommended to allow the hotel/ tour operator to organize an English speaking guide for the socio-environmental route for the foreigners. The local guides can hopefully overtime learn the skills and English necessary to conduct the tour by himself.
 - vi. Depending on the success of the intervention and increasing demand, the CBO can invest in



more bikes through the RLF; and/or individual members can apply for a loan from the RLF to start their own initiative.

6. **Guides** – Guides are a necessary part of the facilities provided by the Forest Reserve and so a guide training programme is a key intervention, and best done with locally sourced guides in a mutually beneficial manner. However, it must be kept in mind that this is an activity that will benefit only a few individuals in the community.
- i. A call for applicants for the guide programme can be displayed in a public notice at the GN office. This call should outline a set of selection criteria and key characteristics of people wishing to join the guide programme. The call can be broadened out to other GN divisions, if there are not enough applicants.
 - ii. Key criteria for selection into the guide programme needs to be a skill for story telling and talking to people, friendly personality, loves nature, knowledgeable about plants and animals and can already easily identify certain plants, birds and animals, etc
 - iii. Its suggested that up to 6 individuals are selected for training in the first year, and based on demand new guides are gradually trained.
 - iv. Guides should be put through the official training programme in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and supported to get their professional license. This training is freely available from the SLTDA.
 - v. In addition guides need to be trained in park rules, fauna, flora, environmental issues, and history behind certain archeological ruins. This training needs to be provided in collaboration with the Forest Department staff, Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Archeology Department.
 - vi. Additional training should be also given to increase their exposure and working experience. The FD, can also personally train them, and send them for additional exposure/ training visits to Ritigala, Sigiriya to tutor under experienced guides.
 - vii. Archeology Department has indicated they will also be happy to provide some training. In addition hands-on training from visiting researchers will help greatly improve their experience.
 - viii. It's also highly recommended that an expression of interest is published requesting for qualified professionals in the above technical categories to volunteer their time to provide training to the guides. If it's difficult for the Forest Department to issue this directly, the notice can be issued by the CBO with the support of the FD. The course material for the training can be agreed with the FD before hand.
7. **Forest Enrichment Support** – This will to be done from the first three years, through the CBO.
- i. It's proposed to contract the community to plant and maintain some locally available wild fruiting plants, other smaller forest fruit trees to encourage animal and bird populations within the forest reserve. Their support is also essential in controlling and managing the invasive alien species in the reserve. This will improve the visitor experience while reducing animal human conflict in the neighboring areas.
 - ii. It's also recommended to facilitate planting of medicinal plant species naturally found in the locality, in the buffer zone areas of the reserve. This is in keeping with the national

biodiversity strategy targets and can also be harvested by the CBO sustainably, as there is a broad based demand for it.

8. **Bee keeping, Climate Smart Home Gardening & Plant Nursery** – Its proposed to provide community members through the CBO with technical support and training on bee-keeping, setting up plant nurseries and climate smart home gardening techniques. This will be beneficial for the forest health, as well as provide a good source of income for the community.
 - i. Its not recommended to give equipment directly to individuals, as the project can only chose to support a few people, creating an inequity/conflict issue. The number of community members that can be supported through the RLF is unlimited, if the RLF is well managed, and loans paid on time.
 - ii. Through the RLF, interested community members can apply for loans to set up bee keeping, and plant nurseries.
 - iii. The bee boxes need to be spread around the forest boundary to ensure adequate coverage.
 - iv. The honey and plants can be sold at the CBO managed village store, directly to the visitors.
9. **Souvenir production** – Souvenirs to be sold at the visitor center need to be designed by the Forest Department and is a key aspect of promoting the MK brand.
 - i. However the option exists for the production/ manufacturing of these items to be contracted/ outsourced to the local community, based on the CBO interest.
 - ii. T-shirts, caps and local style travel towels with logo, of expensive and non-expensive quality and prices;
 - iii. These can also include Up-cycled utility bags, bandana's, wraps, multipurpose spreads, with MK logo

ACTIONS YEAR 3 ONWARDS

10. **Home Stays** – Homestays can be organized once visitor demand for it increases. Its best to allow the community to develop these organically, with technical support provided by the Forest Department through a professional. Objections regarding this affecting the deterioration of local culture will need to be clarified before promoting the initiative. These are personally profitable interventions, and therefore should not be funded by the Forest Department, but supported technically.
 - iv. To undertake these, its recommended that the mechanism be promoted through the CBO, with interested local parties applying through the CBO with an expression of interest.
 - v. The Forest Department will provide the technical services of a professional specializing in home-stays, as the only form of support for this initiative. All activities will need to be funded by the individual party.
 - vi. The technical professional will need to evaluate the applications, and select suitable sites, and provide guidance for those that were not selected if they are interested in necessary improvements.

- vii. The CBO can develop a loan provision facility, from the earnings of the contracting work with the Forest Department, and provide loans to people interested in developing a local business or homestay.
- viii. Interested parties need to be aware of financial investment that has to be borne upfront for certain infrastructure and facilities, and apply for a loan from the CBO.
- ix. Thereafter the professional will provide detail guidance to develop a business plan and way forward for the selected parties.
- x. The Forest Department can also arrange for training and exposure visits to nearby locations for successful applicants.
- xi. Standards and guidelines of service and maintenance are key to sustainability of the homestays and need to be developed, trained and maintained.

4.5 Implementation Plan

The activities described above have been sequentially arranged in order, and listed here with the targeted time line to be adopted.

- Section 1 in green lists activities to be undertaken in the first year and is critical to set up the foundational systems. It's critical these activities are undertaken quickly before visitation to the park is promoted.
- Section 2 in purple lists the community activities that also need to start immediately in Year 1, and continue onwards mainly over the first 3 years.
- Section 3 in blue highlights activities that can be started towards the end of Year 1 and carried out till Year 3.
- Section 4 in dark green highlights long term activities that should be undertaken from Year 4 onwards, depending on the successful completion of the first 3 years of work, and the visitor numbers improving to the park. If not its not recommended to undertake this section of activities.
- If the visitor numbers are slow in picking up, more marketing and communication efforts need to be undertaken. However, it must be accepted that visitor numbers will increase only if visitors have a meaningful experience and thus recommend the site. Thus the quality of the visitor services especially the information translation work with indoor/ outdoor exhibits needs to be improved as well as basic services like toilets, trails, etc. If a good quality product and experience is offered, the visitor numbers will naturally increase.
- During the season when elephants migrate using the corridor across the reserve, it's advised that the reserve be closed so that the elephants are not disturbed and for the safety of the people.

| Implementation Plan | Y1 | | | | Y2 | Y3 | Y4 | Y5 |
|----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | | | | |
| Map | | | | | | | | |
| Field mapping exercise using GPS | X | | | | | | | |
| GIS Mapping | X | X | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Printing of Map on Billboard | | X | | | | | | |
| Zone | | | | | | | | |
| Field mapping exercise with GPS | X | X | | | | | | |
| Park Rules & Tickets | | | | | | | | |
| Literature and best practice review | X | | | | | | | |
| Consultation | | X | | | | | | |
| Finalization | | X | | | | | | |
| Toilets | | | | | X | | | |
| Design and location setting | | X | | | | | | |
| Construction | | X | X | X | X | | | |
| Water Conservation techniques | | X | X | X | | | | |
| Info Display - Exhibits | | | | | X | | | |
| MK Entrance & Office | | | | | | | | |
| Design and location setting | | X | | | | | | |
| Construction | | | X | X | X | | | |
| Visitor Center | | | | | X | | | |
| Design and location setting | | X | | | X | | | |
| Construction | | | | | | X | | |
| Day Group Area | | | | | | | | |
| Location setting | X | | | | | | | |
| Field set up | | X | | | | | | |
| Camping | | | | | | | | |
| Location setting | X | | | | | | | |
| Field set up | | X | | | | | | |
| Nature Trails - Phase1 | | | | | | | | |
| Location setting | X | | | | | | | |
| Field set up | | X | X | | | | | |
| Construction | | | X | X | | | | |
| Forest Enrichment & Biod Conservation | | | | | | | | |
| CBO Training | | X | X | | | | | |
| Field work | | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Branding & Marketing | | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Parking | | | | | | | | |
| Location setting | X | | | | | | | |
| Field set up | | X | | | | | | |
| Waste Management | | | | | | | | |
| Design and location setting | | X | | | | | | |
| Construction | | | X | X | X | | | |
| Upgrade size requirement | | | | | | | | X |
| CBO - Engagement | | | | | | | | |
| CBO Training | | X | X | X | | | | |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Revolving Loan Fund | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CBO Training | | X | X | X | | | | |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Village Store | | | | | | | | |
| CBO Training | | | | X | | | | |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Maintenance Activities - CBO | | | | | | | | |
| CBO Training | | | | X | | | | |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Enviro - Cultural Bike trips | | | | | | | | |
| Field set up | | | | | X | | | |
| CBO Training | | | | | X | | | |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | X | X | | |
| Guides | | | | | | | | |
| Candidate selection | | | X | | | | | |
| Training | | | X | X | | | | |
| Forest Enrichment | | | | | | | | |
| Selection and procurement of seeds/ plants | | | X | | | | | |
| Identification of sites | | | X | | | | | |
| Planting and maintenance | | | X | X | X | X | X | |
| Bee Keeping/ Climate smart Gardening/ Nursery | | | | | | | | |
| Training | | | | | X | | | |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | X | | | |
| Souvenir Production | | | | | | | | |
| Design and specification determined | | | | | X | | | |
| Production outsourced through contracts | | | | | X | | | |
| Homestays | | | | | | | | |
| Training to CBO | | | | | | | | X |
| Technical assistance | | | | | | | | X |
| CBO Monitoring & Guidance | | | | | | | | X |
| Info Display - Exhibits | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Nature Trails - Phase 2 | | | | | | X | | |
| Camping - Phase 2 | | | | | | X | | |
| Branding & Marketing | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Parking - Phase 2 | | | | | | X | | X |
| Maintenance Activities - FD | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| MK App | | | | | | | X | |
| Research Program | | | | | | | X | |
| Day Group Area - Phase 2 | | | | | | | | X |
| Adventure Sports | | | | | | | | X |
| Dorm Style Lodging | | | | | | | | X |
| Biogas Unit | | | | | | | | X |

4.6 PRELIMINARY MARKETING STRATEGY

MISSION

To develop Manewa Kande Forest Reserve into a locally and globally recognized site that provides an authentic meaningful experience, and raises visitors understanding and appreciation for the environment.

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION AND MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Manewa Kande Forest Reserve has the advantage of being one of a very few protected sites in the cultural triangle region, that offers visitors the opportunity to experience first hand a dryzone forest and see lost ancient ruins.

This experience is multifold and the key objective is educational aimed at creating a real appreciation among visitors for the environment.

Specific Objectives

1. To increase meaningful environmental and historical visitor experiences
2. To increase traffic to the site and visitor recommendations of the site
3. To develop site recognition as a site that provide value for money, in terms of facilities, options and services being offered

TARGET MARKET

The target market is

1. Local visitors with a special focus on family groups, school groups, nature groups, scouts/girl guides, etc.
2. Foreign tourists visiting the cultural triangle with a special focus on young adults interested in experiencing the environment

KEY MARKETING METHODS

1. Logo and Brand Image
 - Contract a marketing person, with environmental interests, to lead this work.
 - Develop a logo, brand image and tag line for the site
 - Souvenirs in keeping with the brand image to be developed
 - Informative Posters about the site to be developed for sharing and display. No fliers, brochures or other leaflets – which are not environmentally friendly products.
2. Direct Marketing
 - Informative posters to be developed and displayed at key tourist sites and hotels in the region
 - Linkages to be established with SLTDA, Central Cultural Fund (CCF) and Hotel Association for site promotion

- Monthly exposure/ awareness tour to be organized and conducted for tour operators and hotels in the first year of operation.
 - Annual discount package to be offered for Tour Operators and Hotels
 - Information to be widely shared through SLTDA networks and hotel association
 - Discount package to be promoted through AirBnB hotel operators
 - Discount packages to be offered for Schools, Universities and nature groups
 - Information about the site and this package to be widely shared through posters in zonal education offices, key schools, scout/ girl guide associations.
3. Social Media
- Discount package system to be offered for tagging and pictures of the site shared on social media
 - # of tags and pictures – can be equated to a discount voucher system at the souvenir store
 - 4 blog articles and photo articles to be published over the course of a year. E.g Roar.lk; Yamu; Future Sri Lanka; etc.
4. Mass Media
- 4 Articles published in the local papers in all 3 languages
 - Request 4 travel magazines like Explore Sri Lanka, Serendib, TimeOut, Travellanka, Living to do some articles on the site

ANNEX 1 - References

Desk Review – Bibliography

1. Sri Lank Tourism Strategic Plan, 2017 – 2020. Ministry of Tourism Development and Christian Religious Affairs. 2017.
2. Ecotourism Plan for Manawe Kande Forest Reserve, 2012.
3. Annual Statistical Report, 2014. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
4. Annual Statistical Report, 2015. Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
5. The Business of Ecotourism Development and Management, Vol1. A Manual for Conservation Planners and Managers. 2004. The Nature Conservancy, Alec Walker Foundation, UNDP, USAID.
6. The Business of Ecotourism Development and Management, Vol2. A Manual for Conservation Planners and Managers. 2004. The Nature Conservancy, Alec Walker Foundation, UNDP, USAID.
7. Making Tourism more Sustainable: A Guideline for Policy Makers, UNEP and World Tourism Organisation, 2005
8. Sustainable Tourism for Development Guidebook (2013), World Tourism Organization and European Commission.
9. Management Plan for more efficient Tourism Development, Integrated Coastal Management Project between Lebanon and Syria, EU funded.
10. 2017 International Year for Sustainable Tourism Development <http://www.tourism4development2017.org/about/>
11. Sustainable Tourism Development Guidebook: Enhancing capacities for Sustainable Tourism for development in developing countries, 2013. World Tourism Organisation. <http://sdt.unwto.org/>
12. National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, 2016, Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment.

Key Informant Interviews Conducted

1. Mr. S. Dissanayaka, Director General, Department of Archeology
2. Mr. Jayathileke, Artifact Maintenance Manager, Department of Archeology, Anuradhapura
3. Mr. Wasala, Regional Forest Officer, Anuradhapura, Forest Department
4. Ms. Rashmini Mather – Advisor to Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
5. Mr. Bandara, Head Naturalist, Jetwing Lake, Dambulla.
6. Mr. Mohan Sahabandu, Naturalist, Cinnamon Lodge/ Village, Habarana
7. Mr. K Chaminda, Head Naturalist, Jetwing VilUyana, Dambulla
8. Mr. Sujith A. Head Naturalist, Kandalama, Dambulla
9. Ms. Charini Amarathunge, Director, Endless Outdoors Pvt Ltd
10. Mr. Graham, Manager, Serendipitous Encounters Pvt Ltd
11. Mr. Ravi Delawaka, Director, Olanka Travels Sri Lanka Pvt Ltd
12. Mr. Nimal Gunathileke, Founder & Director, Lanka Walking Safaris Pvt Ltd
13. Mr. A Migara, Owner, Sigiriya Heritage Tours and Pintu Ecotours Pvt Ltd
14. Mr. Saliya Senanayaka, Owner, Ancient Sri Lanka Tours Pvt Ltd
15. Mr. Ashan D Fernando, Owner, Ceylon Bird Trails; Committee member, Young Zoologists Association

Focus Group Discussion Conducted

16. Manewa Kande Community

Online Questionnaire Survey for local visitors

1. 134 respondents were surveyed, and detail findings are attached

ANNEX 2 – Direct Comments From Questionnaire Survey

1. Would like to see more truly eco-friendly site management
2. I like to find places where there are less crowds
3. Protect our wildlife & parks. There are no laws in place to do that
4. Great approach
5. All the best
6. People to be educated on being eco-friendly and not to spoil the environment
7. Litter is the worst thing to see at a nature sight
8. Opportunity for activities on spiritual relaxation
9. I would like to see minimum plastic use, no plastic spoons, plates, Pet water bottles etc. No fried rice, local food cooked fresh, clean toilets washed after each guest vacates, (please train staff to clean toilets including taps), hot water facilities working (they charge but heater does not work) parking facilities. Nowadays WiFi is common, should work in rooms.
 - a. Clean toilets (separate for male and female, with water facilities) are very important, even people afford to pay for the quality of such services. (2) Keep dustbins for garbage
10. Would love to see the results of this survey! Please share it with me on aarthidharmadasa@gmail.com if possible.
11. Online Info about the location - Website/ FB Page/ Blog to research prior to visit together with up-to-date pictures of location/ facilities and a visitor rating/ comments section. This will help to keep the site upto standard.
12. No price disparity between local and foreign guests.
13. With regard to sanctuary parks there should be control & restriction on vehicles, sound and blasting music. Mobile hones should be kept on silent and vehicles should not communicate with each other every time an animal is spotted. It is disturbing and drives away animals depriving others from viewing.
14. We have such amazing sites but the infrastructure to handle large groups of people is very poor. For example at the National Parks, there isn't a decent place to have a cup of tea early morning or late evening on your way out, clean toilets etc. As for the campsites, one squatting pan in a dingy little shed doesn't really work anymore! There can be a basic unit at each site with two simple toilets, kitchen wash up facility, lockable storage. You can see these online in South Africa / USA. The privately built camp toilet at Kokmotai is a good example. Unfortunately this is now in ruins much like the superb facilities that were there at Horton Plains.
15. Assurances that the hotel is actively involved in preserving and conserving the natural reserves and/or resources and, the local communities
16. I would like to see a limit to the number of vehicles or persons at these sites at any given point. It is difficult to enjoy nature or history when it is overcrowded, and moreover unlimited crowds can disturb the environment and its inhabitants.
17. More camping sites

18. Impose heavy fines on dumping trash in natural places
19. Adequate directions and adverts about the attraction in the city or locality. People who speak all three languages, especially English. Better management of information about the site. Better policies and method of punishment for degrading the sites. Adequate enforcement of the above.
20. Sri Lankans need to be reminded of the intrinsic value; biodiversity; conservation and protection of our natural and man-made heritage; we need to drive home that this is our collective property and it needs to be conserved and protected for generations to come for many, many reasons! Reminding visitors of the value, will make them feel proud, educated, and aware. Plastic should be prohibited; glass bottles and drinking responsibly should be checked; stress that only photos should be taken and footprints left behind and nothing else. Thanks for doing this survey; hope we can promote sustainable and responsible tourism! Forest Department - you have a big role to play in this and in sustainably managing our forests, not just for timber, but for carbon sequestration, rainfall, and wildlife too!
21. More knowledge on local area activities and events