



CKS (ASIA)



SGP  
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Small Grants  
Programme

## A brief report on the Launching of Community Knowledge Service (CKS) Sri Lanka



Organised by  
Community Knowledge Service (Asia) in collaboration with  
UNDP-GEF-SGP, UNDP Equator Initiative, Ecoagriculture Partners & Biodiversity Secretariat of  
the Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources, Sri Lanka

VENUE: UNDP AUDITORIUM, COLOMBO

DATE: 14 DECEMBER 2007

## INTRODUCTION

A one-day event commemorating the launch of the Community Knowledge Service (CKS) Sri Lanka was Organized by Community Knowledge Service (Asia) in collaboration with UNDP-GEF-SGP, UNDP Equator Initiative, Ecoagriculture Partners, Biodiversity Secretariat of the Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources of Sri Lanka at the UNDP Auditorium, Colombo on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

The Community Knowledge Service (CKS) is a program being developed by community leaders from the Asia Pacific, Africa and Latin America regions, in collaboration with Ecoagriculture Partners and UNDP Equator Initiative. The main goal is to enable local community leaders and representatives to share their expertise more broadly, and apply newly acquired knowledge to strengthen and scale-up their work to enhance livelihoods while sustaining and conserving biodiversity.

The CKS Asia program development is being led by the foundation for Revitalisation of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) and MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, India; the Kalinga Mission for Indigenous Communities, the Youth Development, Inc. (KAMICYDI) and ICRAF-Philippines, with support from Ecoagriculture Partners and UNDP Equator Initiative.

The program has been initiated with a 12-month planning, pilot testing and learning process. The CKS Asia work plan is structured around four main components: Process planning; Community-led documentation of Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Management Practices; Pilot testing of peer-peer knowledge sharing processes; review of lessons learnt and strategic planning for next steps. The initiative adopts a multi-stakeholder participatory, community enabled bottom-up approach, with its activities, partnership and fundraising strategies operating in accordance with the principles of subsidiary, transparency, strength in diversity, equity, accountability, complementary and shared ownership. Three initial focus regions have been identified for pilot testing: Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, India and Kalinga Province within the Philippines.

Further to the decision taken during the first Strategic Planning Meeting of CKS Asia in Bangalore on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2007, the CKS Sri Lanka launch event has been organized with a focus on raising awareness among a broad range of Sri Lanka-based stakeholders and engaging community leaders and representatives from Sri Lanka in CKS Asia development. The main goal is to create wider awareness on this new initiative to the development communities and to engage a broader network of partners and collaborators in CKS development.

An Orientation Workshop on the need for promotion of Community Knowledge was held in the morning.

The objective of the workshop was to provide the participants with a clear understanding of documentation, assessment and promotion of community knowledge in agriculture, health, natural resource management and livelihood related activities.

The program schedule of the workshop is enclosed herewith as Annexure-1.

The first session began with an introduction of participants and a briefing on the agenda for the day. It was followed by a presentation by Mr. G. Hariramamurthi, Chairperson of the International Steering Committee (ISC) of Community Knowledge Services - Asia (CKS), giving a detailed overview of the processes and deliberations that have preceded the CKS Sri Lanka launch and especially the key milestone dialogue space at the Community Kraal at the World Summit for Social Development 2002, Johannesburg, initiating active participation of local communities in the development process. This was followed by a series of dialogue spaces between 2002 and 2006, in different parts of the world, leading to a formal constitution of a Community Knowledge Service framework.



These meetings were attended by community leaders and representatives from International NGOs based in Africa, Latin America and Asia. The Community Knowledge Service (CKS) - Asia was officially launched on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007 in Bangalore, India.

The development of CKS is guided by our belief that local communities across the world in general, and along the biodiversity and culturally rich equatorial region, harbor inherent strengths for their own 'development'. The key recommendations at all the above dialogue spaces included:

- Documentation, assessment and promotion community knowledge, skills and practices
- Leadership development opportunities
- Knowledge sharing activities on key challenges & opportunities
- Investments in community knowledge-sharing and learning processes
- Formation of a Knowledge Service Planning Committee

The first strategic planning meeting that was held in Berlin, September 2006. A key deliberation was the establishment of the CKS goal:

*To enable local community representatives to share their expertise more broadly, and apply newly acquired knowledge to strengthen and scale-up their work to enhance livelihoods while sustaining and conserving biodiversity. (See Annexure- 2 for the complete presentation)*

The second session was facilitated by Mr. Sujeewa Jasinghe, Member of the International Steering Committee from Sri Lanka. This session dedicated itself to the sharing of experiences, amongst the participants, in documentation, assessment and promotion of community knowledge in agriculture, health, natural resource management and livelihood.

Mr. K.A.J Kahandawa shared their experiences in:

- Preservation and conservation of eco-cultural resources through the documentation and promotion of community knowledge in agriculture through natural farming,

studies conducted to make a comparison between traditional and 'modern' rice varieties.

Mr. V. Ramani, representing the Indian NGO Gandeepam in Tamil Nadu, shared his experience in documentation, assessment and promotion of community knowledge in healthcare.

He explained how his community leaders and representatives have worked to make available low-cost healthcare at the doorsteps of rural communities through a kitchen herbal garden programme. The implemented kitchen herbal garden (KHG) programme was preceded by a Participatory Rural Appraisal that was conducted involving multiple stakeholders for prioritization of the community's primary healthcare needs. This was followed by documentation, assessment and short-listing of sound and effective home remedies from the local healers and knowledgeable women.

The KHG program included the establishment of medicinal plant nurseries, training of village resource persons and rural household women in the establishment and management of KHGs to meet primary healthcare needs.

Mr. Sunil Poddeniya shared his experience in:

- Documentation and promotion of ethno-veterinary practices across 15 districts, based on the data collected from 500 Community Knowledge practitioners consisting of mainly dairy farmers.

Mr. Abeywardene shared his experiences in forest management in the early years of the Forest Department's activities. The forests were effectively managed by the communities themselves based on the knowledge they shared at the time.

A data base compiled on forest plants and uses documented since then by the Forest Department is available, in addition to the publications on the topic, such as the *Flora of Ceylon* series.

Their present experiences were shared in the social use of space in kitchens based along traditional lines promoting low cost energy-efficient stoves and kitchen improvement and management techniques among rural communities, promoting improved health as well as biodiversity conservation.

Mr. A.M.S. Attanayake shared similar views on systematic traditional kitchen implements and spatial use when compared with the present-day, providing examples of the smoking trestle, coconut scraper and mortar and pestle.

Talking of his experiences in design, Mr. Bentota highlighted community initiatives in promoting traditional design in mat weaving, for example, the Vankagiri design derived from Vessanthara Jatakaya (of Buddhist folklore), read in Buddhist funeral rites.

After lunch, the third session was initiated. Mr. Kahandawa facilitated the session.

This session included discussions relating to the development of the vision for CKS Sri Lanka using CKS Asia as a guiding text. A working definition of 'traditional knowledge' was debated and a consensus was reached with an emphasis on:

- Traditional Knowledge should include all sects of the community.
- Knowledge should empower communities.
- Service as an underlying principle of community knowledge sharing.

It was agreed to organize the first Strategic Planning Meeting of the National Steering Committee Members of CKS - Sri Lanka on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 at the Rush and Reeds Conservation and Diversification Project site in Horana. The agenda for this will include an Action Plan for 2008 and finalization of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of CKS Sri Lanka. The following nine participants were elected as members of the interim Sri Lankan National Steering Committee:

Proposed interim National Steering Committee members of the CKS (Sri Lanka)

1. Sujeewa Jasinghe
2. L.K. Priyantha Kumara
3. Piyasoma Bentota
4. Sunil Poddeniya
5. Sugath Chandrasena
6. Damayanthi Godamulla
7. P.A.A. Nuwan
8. K.A.J. Kahandawa
9. Piyal Parakrama
10. Asoka Kumara Karunarathne

At the end of the orientation workshop, CKS Sri Lanka was formally launched with a ceremonial lighting of the lamps and beating of drums and blowing of the conch shell.

The launch ceremony was chaired by Dr. Ananda Mallawathanthri, Assistant Resident Representative of UNDP. He expressed special thanks to all the active stakeholders for having come together to launch the community knowledge service initiative in Sri Lanka. He expressed his congratulations to all those involved in the development of this CKS Sri Lanka initiative.

The ceremony was interspersed by performance of traditional drumming. These cultural expressions illustrating up-country rhythms that included healing of ailments and celebrative beats commonly performed during the ceremonies



Mr. Sumanadasa, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka who was the Chief Guest on this occasion spoke relating to the recognition and formalization of traditional knowledge systems within national policy frameworks. He explained that the process began in 2003 with the end of the International Decade for Indigenous Peoples (1993-2003). The values and momentum created during this period gave rise to the National Policy on Traditional Knowledge. CKS Sri Lanka, he conveyed is the next logical step, in line with efforts undertaken thus far, in the promotion of community knowledge in the country. He said that the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka emphasized the current importance of intergrating community knowledge into regional, national institutions and would support this cause to be taken up with the support of international institutions in order to promote the preservation of biological and cultural diversity.

Mr. G. Hariramamurthi, Chairperson, International Steering Committee, CKS who was the Guest Speaker on the occasion introduced the process preceding the formal launching of CKS Sri Lanka.

Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya, National Coordinator, UNDP GEF SGP felicitated the community leaders and NGO representatives of Sri Lanka for taking the major step forward to provide an institutional framework to promote the cause of community knowledge.

Mr. Piyasoma Benthota, Director, Committee for Peoples Rights expressed a Vote of thanks.

The workshop was moderated by Mr. Mohan Samaranayaka, National Information Officer, UN, Sri Lanka.



## ORIENTATION WORKSHOP ON PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND LAUNCHING OF COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE SERVICE (SRI LANKA)

**Organised by: Community Knowledge Service (Asia) in collaboration with  
UNDP-GEF-SGP, UNDP Equator Initiative, Ecoagriculture Partners, Biodiversity Secretariat,  
Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka**

**VENUE: UNDP AUDITORIUM, COLOMBO**

**DATE: 14 DECEMBER 2007**

**Objective of the workshop:** To provide the participants with a clear understanding of documentation, assessment and promotion of community knowledge in agriculture, health, natural resource management and livelihood related activities.

**Participants:** Selected Core Group of Non-governmental & Government representatives.

8.30 - 9.30 am	Arrival of participants and registration
9.30 – 10.30 am	<p>Session I</p> <p>Welcome, Participants' Introduction</p> <p>Workshop Background, Purpose, Expectations and Desired outcomes</p> <p>Facilitator: Mr. G. Hariramamurthi, Chairperson, International Steering Committee, Community Knowledge Service (CKS)</p>
10.30 -11.00 am	<b>Tea</b>
11.00 am -12.30 pm	<p>Session II</p> <p>Sharing of experiences in documentation, assessment and promotion of Community Knowledge in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Health</li> <li>• Natural Resource Management</li> <li>• Livelihood</li> </ul> <p>Facilitator: Mr. Sujeewa Jasinghe, Member, International Steering Committee, Community Knowledge Service (CKS)</p>
12.30 – 1.30 pm	<b>Lunch</b>
1.30 – 2.55 pm	<p>Session III</p> <p>Discussion and finalization of Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives and Work Plan of Community Knowledge Service (Sri Lanka) and Constitution of Interim National Steering Committee of Community Knowledge Service (Sri Lanka)</p> <p>Facilitator: Mr. Kahandawa, Member, Regional Steering Committee, Community Knowledge Service (Asia)</p>
2.55 – 3.00 pm	Vote of thanks

**LAUNCHING OF  
COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE SERVICE (SRI LANKA)**

3.00 - 3.30 pm	Arrival of participants, registration & Tea
3.30 -5.00 pm	<p>Welcome</p> <p><b><i>Launching of CKS (Sri Lanka) by lighting of lamp</i></b></p> <p>Chair: Dr. Ananda Mallawathanthri, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP</p> <p>Guest Speak: Mr. G. Hariramamurthi, Chairperson , International Steering Committee, Community Knowledge Service (CKS)</p> <p>Felicitation: Ms. Shireen Samarasuriya National Coordinator, UNDP GEF SGP</p> <p>Chief Guest: Mr. M. Sumanadasa Additional Secretary Ministry of Environment &amp; Natural Resources</p> <p>Vote of Thanks: Mr. Piyasoma Bentota Director, Committee for People’s Rights (CPR)</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Mohan Samaranayaka, National Information Officer, UN</p>





## LIST SO PARTICIPANTS

Orientation Workshop on Promotion of Community Knowledge and Launching of Community Knowledge Service (Sri Lanka)

Venue: UNDP Auditorium, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Date: 14 December 2007

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**CKS Sri Lanka**