

(Narrative Report- Sri Lanka Water Partnership)

July– December 2011

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Date of Assessment: 16/01/2012

Goal I: Promote Water as Key Part of Sustainable Development

Activity 1.

Water Related Disasters- Landslides, Impact on Human Settlements. SLWP and NBRO organized a media tour and briefing on the above on 30th September and 1st October as a sequel to the workshop held on 1st March for agency staff to be briefed on the new regulations pertaining to construction in landslide prone areas. The new clearance processes for settlement planning in landslide prone regions that have been identified with new regulations in place and role of the National Building Research Organization (NBRO) as the regulator and clearance authority was required to be given publicity so that the public would be knowledgeable of these requirements and processes. The media was used as vehicle for this purpose. 15 media persons joined in the field visit and 25 attended the media briefing at which the Hon Governor of the Central province was Chief Guest. Dr Alice Bowmen GWP SC member also attended the briefing.

Output / Outcome.

There is now improved communication among state agencies and local authorities in land use practices in landslide prone areas and public are aware of the new requirements through electronic and print media articles on this aspect. Water related disasters such as landslides and floods are hot topics through which SLWP seeks to mobilize public, agency and political interest to rekindle interest in the requirement of a Comprehensive water policy and law for the water sector, shelved due to some public and political discontent on the draft developed.

Activity .2

A decision Maker Consultation on Colombo wetlands based on a research activity conducted by the University of Moratuwa as part of the SLWP urban wetlands programme initiated in 2009 was held on 8th September, jointly organized with the main regulator the Land Reclamation and Development Corporation and the main stakeholders including the Urban Development Authority and Central Environment Authority. Findings concluded that due to encroachment, unauthorized filling ,invasive species changing g the characteristics of the wetland and lack of a strong monitoring and focused management institutional arrangement rapid deterioration was taking place.

Output / Outcome.

The main six stakeholders agreed to formulate a common policy approach including a policy paper that would contribute to better management and integration with IWRM approach with a joint proposal to integrate technical and regulatory functions including an institutional platform to regularly meet that would also include the research community.

Activity. 3

The Nilwala AWP together with the University of Ruhuna organized a school sanction policy awareness workshop for politicians and education and school heads of the Southern Zone in November as a follow up to the sanitation and toilet survey conducted by SLWP and NetWater in 2010 highlighting the importance of evidence based advocacy. It was the first time that politicians and the education authorities had discussed this on a common platform based on such a survey.

Output / Outcome.

A clear policy based approach to amelioration and investment with respect to improving school sanitation in the region was agreed upon and it was agreed that regular monitoring and reporting of progress would be made. A similar survey based programme is now in place for the Central Region

Goal II: Coping with Critical Water Challenges through Partnerships to Secure Mutual Goals

Activity 1.

A Ground Water Management Workshop was organized in collaboration with the Water Resources Board and the Dam Safety and Water resources Project Policy Project in association with the National Water Supply and Drainage Board for technical and management staff in Jaffna in October. This was the first SLWP activity in the North and East of the country. Ground water Management is the main and critical resource for water supply in the Jaffna peninsula. This programme is one of several to strengthen institutional linkages with the main agencies to address the issues of Jaffna as part of ground water related national policy and support.

Output / Outcome.

Close interaction and support of national level institutions are required to address the varied issues related to ground water and its management in the country. Conjunctive surface/ground water management is a key element in integrating water resources management in the journey towards comprehensive water resources management. Ground water has also like water related disasters being perceived as entry points to highlight the need for a comprehensive integrated water policy now on back burner. It is expected that these sub sector initiatives will soon highlight the need to address the issue of IWRM in holistic manner through an enabling policy and law.

Activity 2.

a) An awareness workshop under the clean river programme was held by SLWP. Menik ganga AWP and the National Water Supply and Drainage Board in July timed with the annual Kataragama Festival. There is now a regular institutional arrangement to deal with upstream water issues and issues directly linked to the festival that result in heavy river pollution affecting drinking water supply of Kataragama town. This latter arrangement includes the local authority, police, environment staff, health and the Divisional Secretary of the area. The main focus is on the Sella Kataragama portion of the river.

b) The Maha Oya AWP and SLWP arranged a awareness workshop for small and medium entrepreneurs of Mawanella to request non discharge of industrial and commercial waste and effluent direct to the river. Over 40 SME Operators who participated were enthusiastic in supporting this effort and agreed to support a road show (Elephant Procession) to highlight issues and secure further public support. This programme highlights the importance of involving the private sector in such activities

Output / Outcome.

a) This annual activity aimed at pilgrims from outside now a annual feature has resulted in much less pollution of the banks and river by pilgrims. A coordinated waste collection and drinking water supply system during this period with use of posters, handbills, public address announcements has had significant impact.

b) Mawanella the urban centre has to depend on water intake in the vicinity of the town for water supply by the National water Supply and Drainage Board. An earlier effort of reducing fecal contamination/sewage discharge close to the main water intake was resolved through SLWP intervention with support from the Colombo Rotary Club in 2006 and reduced garbage dumping from 2003 onwards by both the public and even the local authorities. This initiative with the SME Operators will further improve water quality in the river.

Regular interventions by the AWP ensure community awareness and commitment to safeguarding river resources and in pollution mitigation activities. There is now a closer interaction between the agencies, local authority and CBO in which the AWP play a major role.

Activity 3.

An Awareness workshop on Natural Resources Management with special focus on impacts of river sand mining was conducted for the Special Task Force (STF) of the Police at the STF Camp in Kegalle for 41 officers from districts of Gampaha, Puttalam, Kurunegal and Kegalle. This was conducted in collaboration with the Geological Survey and Mines Bureau (GSMB) the sand regulator, The Central Environment Authority (CEA) and Universities of Colombo and Ruhuna. This programme is follow up to the police and agency dialogues on sand mining undertaken since 2008. This programme has resulted in a close working relationship between the main agencies and police which was lacking earlier.

Output / Outcome.

Police initiatives in combating illicit and unregulated sand mining are now closely integrated with the other agencies and main regulator the GSMB and authorities such as the CEA. Action now being pursued to address this issue as part of a Construction Industry priority and need for sand alternatives.

(Above 3 activities also contribute to Goal3- Capacity Building)

Goal III: Reinforce Knowledge Sharing and Communications, Capacity Building

Activity 1

A special Training of Trainers (TOT) for Girl Guides on IWRM and Water Messengers Programme for Schools was conducted over 2 days in Colombo in August. 23 guides and 3 teachers representing 3 provinces attended this very successful programme. With over 23,000 guides this partnering with the Girl Guides Association will reinforce the SLWP Schools *Sisu Jal Hamuwa* Programme on IWRM and School health/sanitation. This programme will be expanded to other provinces including the North and East and also to possibility of linking with the Boy Scouts programme as well.

Output / Outcome.

The link with the girl guides now offers greater opportunity to link up with the local communities on IWRM programmes reinforcing the teacher/parent linkages that were the traditional link. There is greater outreach and similar programmes including Gender and water dialogues can now be integrated at the planning and implementation stage.

Activity 2.

A survey on sanitation and water quality in Nanu Oya was conducted by the Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA) in July with report in August. This was to prepare for a joint intervention with the private sector, service organizations (Lions) and the local authority on interventions in highly polluted section of the Nanu oya under the Upper Mahaweli AWP.

Output / Outcome

Use of bio digesters to be provided with private sector support linked to a programme with the National Water Board and Local Authority with a public pay toilet programme being planned to reduce fecal contamination and direct sewage disposal by use of digesters based on evidence of the survey will be promoted in the coming year. This programme fits into the SLWP clean river programme activities carried out in other AWP areas.

Activity 3. A school sanitation booklet sponsored by a partner Brandix Limited and a poster was printed in Sinhala in nearly 2011 for distribution to the schools where the survey was undertaken and for use in the SLWP Schools Programme. Printing of the booklet in Tamil with support from CAPNET Lanka and NWSDB is expected to increase outreach. SLWP had a stall at the SACOSAN Exhibition in Colombo which highlighted its work both on IWRM and health/sanitation. In October a further 5000 copies of the Tamil version and 1000 posters to be distributed with the earlier printed booklets were made available through sponsorship again by Brandix. This will be distributed to the education authorities at an event to be chaired by the Hon Chief Minister with UNICEF Support in early 2012.

Output / Outcome

Printed material including booklets and posters and the exhibition has helped SLWP to reach and influence a larger audience than it would have through small group capacity building and awareness programmes. Significant changes with respect to health sanitation issues both in the school children, teachers and education authorities is noted. School sanitation which had low priority and little investment by the authorities are now being given adequate priority and is on the high concern agenda both of the education authorities and local politicians.

Activity 4

A Gender and Water Dialogue was held for the first time by SLWP in the North and East after the civil disturbances that prevented such activity, in October in the Vavuniya District. The two day programme conducted in Tamil for the first time was organized in collaboration with the District Secretary, National Water Board, Regional Health Department, Open University and UNICEF. The target group were middle level technical and administrative staff involved together with CBO/NGO representatives. Considering the reduced water availability for livelihoods in the region which is part of the dry zone, emphasis was also on coping with climate change challenges.

Output / Outcome

This first initiative in the N&E was enthusiastically received and was the first programme conducted in the Tamil language. G&W programmes are usually linked to Schools programmes and the next one in the East planned for 2012 will be conducted together for greater outreach and cost effectiveness. Both Health/sanitation issues and climate change adaptation will feature in programmes to be conducted in the dry zone areas.

Goal IV: Build a More Effective Network

Activity 1

Two Steering Committee Meetings and 5 Programme Committee Meetings have been held up to end December. AWP established are being strengthened, but no new ones will be established due to funding and follow up capacity issues. A further 3 New Partners- the Girl Guides Association, Environmental Foundation and Ministry of Disaster Management joined as Partners.

Output/ Outcome SLWP Programme on track but unable yet to move on Comprehensive Water Policy due to apathy by state on this. Operating to impact by working through "hot topics" such as floods, droughts, landslides, climate change, river sand mining, pollution, wetlands etc. Major activity with Schools, AWP and collaborating partners.

Activity 2

The Annual Partners Forum of SLWP was held on 20th December in Colombo. The Minister of Water Supply and sanitation Hon Dinesh Gunaewardene was Chief Guest. Considering that SACOSAN was held this year the main theme was on sanitation and drinking water. UNICEF Sri Lanka made presentation on School sanitation while a presentation on Impacts of River sand mining was made by Prof. Champa Navaratne from the University of Ruhuna. The Girl Guides Association arranged for a short street drama on IWRM at this event that was highly appreciated. The Hon Minister congratulated SLWP on its work and said that the Ministry and National water board will continue to collaborate with SLWP in future. 54 Collaborators and partners attended this annual event at which the 2010 Audit Report, 2011 Annual Progress and Expenditure Report and 2012 Work Plan and Budget were presented and endorsed.

Activity 3.

SLWP participated at the South Asia Regional Confidence on Community and Water Services- Challenges for Sustainability held in Kandy on 29th and 30th September at which the Hon Minister of Water Supply and Drainage was Chief Guest and Dr Alice Bowman GWP SC Member Guest Speaker. SLWP sponsored 3 participants from among its partners.

Chair SLWP, RC Members and One Partner attended the 17th RC Meeting and 4th General Assembly held in Kathmandu on 29th and 30th November,