

**THE ASIA FOUNDATION**

**ENVIRONMENTAL NGO PROJECT**

**EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE UNDER  
THE FIRST WORK PLAN**

**W. M. A. WIJERATNA BANDA**  
Consultant

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W. M. A. WIJERATNA BANDA  
Telephone: 565335

761/B, Pannipitiya Road,  
Pelawatte,  
Battaramulla.

December 14, 1992

Dr. Richard H. Fuller,  
Representative,  
The Asia Foundation,  
3/1 A, Rajakeeya Mawatha,  
Colombo 7.

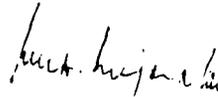
Dear Sir,

**Environmental NGO Project**  
**Evaluation of Progress under the First Work Plan**

I have the honour to submit 03 copies of my Final Report on completion of the evaluation of progress under the First Work Plan of the USAID/TAF Environmental NGO Project. This evaluation will, hopefully, meet with your requirements.

It has been a pleasure working for The Asia Foundation.

Yours sincerely,



W.M.A. Wijeratna Banda  
Consultant

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The purpose of the evaluation was for TAF to obtain an objective assessment of the progress made in implementing the First Work Plan of the Environmental NGO Project. TAF felt that such an assessment would facilitate the selection of NGOs for the second year, and bring into focus whatever deficiencies the project may have. Chapter 1 gives the background to the project, the primary goals of which were increasing environmental awareness and strengthening community-based resource management. It also describes the NGO institution-building objectives and criteria for measuring their interim impact. Chapter 2 defines and evaluates the NGO selection criteria. Evaluation was conducted in terms of the stated objectives and anticipated results, which varied from one NGO to another. Chapter 3 sets out these objectives and anticipated results for each participating NGO, and evaluates the extent to which these were achieved. Chapter 4 identifies the strengths and the weaknesses of the Environmental NGO Project as a whole and suggests the necessary remedial measures.

The major findings of the evaluation and the recommendations are summarized below.

### Overall Performance

The participants of the National-Level (Core Group) Programme have achieved, on an average, a large measure of success in implementing their respective First Year Work Plans. Grant assistance, which enabled the recruitment of additional staff and the acquisition of essential equipment, has had the desired effect of strengthening these organizations, thereby facilitating the more effective performance of their future roles. Financial support for programme activities has been utilized by all, but one of these NGOs for the intended purposes. In fact, in the period under review, MANDRU had achieved in this respect more than what was anticipated, and had the unique distinction of being the only TAF-supported NGO which had recommended to governmental authorities policy changes to ensure environmentally sustainable development. Generally, the prospects of the Core Group NGOs receiving support from other benefactors have improved, as is evident from

donor commitments for FY 1993. Thus, TAF's goals of institutional strengthening and promoting programme activities have been achieved.

Not all the Core Group NGOs had however performed equally well. Commendable progress had been made by the 04 organizations listed below:

- \* MANDRU (Institute for Alternative Development and Regional Co-operation)
- \* March for Conservation (MfC)
- \* Organization to Save Life and the Environment (OSLEN)
- \* Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF)

Of the 03 remaining NGOs, Environmental Foundation Ltd (EFL) and the National Development Foundation have achieved satisfactory progress. It was unfortunate that the disruption of its organizational structure in the aftermath of the last Annual General Meeting resulted in Sri Lanka Environmental Congress (SLEC) being unable to reach its full potential.

The Community-based (Seed Grant) Programme, viewed as a whole, had envisioned the strengthening of programme activities and institutional capabilities of the participating NGOs. A distinction within this framework had been drawn between the larger grants (up to Rs.150,000) and the smaller grants (of Rs.25,000-40,000) in regard to their specific objectives. Thus, the larger grants (given to 03 NGOs) were intended to implement self-sustaining projects, which would facilitate public participation in environmental conservation and resource management, whereas the smaller grants (given to another 09 NGOs) were meant primarily to implement public awareness and environmental education projects. Institutional strengthening was therefore not a major objective, except indirectly through the experience gained in implementing TAF-supported programmes and the wider rapport established in the process with the neighbouring communities. SLEC, which had agreed to administer seed grants, has hitherto had limited success. However, as its internal problems are being sorted out and as the current work plan will terminate only on March 31, 1993, it is anticipated that SLEC will perform better in the period ahead.

The current position is that the 03 recipients of the larger seed grants are in various stages of project implementation. Thus, while good progress has been made by the Youth Explorer's Society, the project of the Nation Builders' Association has got off the ground. The Twelve Hearts Community Development Foundation is at a preliminary stage of project implementation. The 09 recipients of the small grants have demonstrated better results. Good progress has been made by the Natural Forest Protection Society, and the Gampaha Gurukula Academy of Indigenous Medicine, while the achievements of the following NGOs could be deemed satisfactory :

- \* Sevashrama Environmental Circle
- \* Wediwatte Youth Society
- \* Youth Pioneers
- \* Sadaharitha Environmental Friends Society
- \* WildGREENS Organization

The projects undertaken by the Agrabodhi Environmental Friends Foundation are at a preliminary stage. CLEC has decided to withdraw support to the Young Environmentalists.

Thus, the Community-based (Seed Grant) Programme as a whole has attained its primary objectives. Where specific objectives are concerned, the recipients of the smaller seed grants have fared better than those who had received the larger grants.

Seed grant recipients had been so selected as to establish one lead NGO in every region, in the expectation that the grantee will serve as a rallying point with sufficient resources and strength to help other NGOs in the area. Admittedly, it would be impracticable for any local NGO to attain this status with one injection of grant assistance, particularly when institution-building was not the prime concern. The performances of the seed grantees have been such that the prospects of establishing lead NGOs in the long-term are brighter in Welimada, Nawalapitiya, Kandy, Gampaha, and Kalutara. More progress has to be made in the North-Western, the Southern, and the Sabaragamuwa Provinces from where the other seed grantees had been drawn.

The Practical Skills Training Programme, undertaken by CCSS, did not reach expectations due to poor participation in practical workshops.

It ought to be reiterated that the training programme itself needs further development on the basis of an assessment of needs, which is imperative in view of the diversity of the target group.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

The following recommendations are being made :-

- [1] that the selection criteria applicable to the National-Level (Core Group) Programme be amended -
  - [a] by the addition of two criteria, as follows
    - i] The NGO should have been established at least 05 years prior to the deadline for applications for grant assistance.
    - ii] It must have a membership of at least one-hundred (100) persons, or in the case of a federal or umbrella type of organization, a membership of at least ten (10) community-based NGOs.
  - [b] and, by phrasing the criterion at 2.2.6 to read as :  
It should have established co-operative relations with other NGOs and/or government agencies and/or the private sector [para.2.6].
- [2] that the concept underlying the Community-based (Seed Grant) Programme be reviewed and that large grants (say, Rs.100,000 to Rs.150,000) be given to fund income-generating projects [para. 2.23].
- [3] that while using a common format to obtain reports on matters generally applicable to all NGOs, each NGO be required to submit a special report on the specific results which it must achieve [para.3.4].
- [4] that the application format be so amended as to require each NGO being funded by any other donor/s (besides TAF) to disclose the specific purpose/s for which such funding is being received and the location/s of the activity/activities performed therewith [para.3.98].

- [5] that in the event of SLEC failing to make adequate progress in seed grant administration by March 31, 1993, an alternative arrangement be made, under which either TAF itself could undertake this responsibility or TAF could select in (place of SLEC) another national-level NGO for this purpose [para.3.105].
- [6] that training programmes be tailor-made after a needs-survey [para.3.141].

#### **Acknowledgement**

The Consultant wishes to place on record his appreciation of Dr Richard H Fuller, the Representative of The Asia Foundation, for having given the opportunity of undertaking this assignment. The guidance given by Mr Stephen J. Claborne, the Assistant Representative, and Mr Kapila Bandara, the Project Manager, particularly in the preparation of this final Report is gratefully acknowledged. The Consultant also wishes to thank the key personnel of the Core Group NGOs and of CCSS who made themselves readily available for discussions on the progress of their respective TAF-assisted activities, and the staff of The Asia Foundation who rendered such assistance as was requested in order to complete this task.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In implementing programmes for socio-economic development, most countries the world over had in the past accorded low priority to environmental or natural resources management. This was amply demonstrated by Sri Lanka, where vast extents of land in the central highlands had been cleared of natural vegetation cover to provide, first, for coffee, and later, for tea plantations, causing erosion on hill slopes. The soil and other material thus dislodged had been carried downstream by surface run-off, silting the reservoirs and the irrigation canals which sustained paddy cultivation in the dry zone. This in turn had set in motion a series of unfavourable consequences, such as the abandonment of a major section of the irrigation system, the breeding of mosquitoes in the resulting stagnant pools of water, and the spread of malaria itself. In the end, Sri Lanka, once eulogized as "the Granary of the East" came to be dependent upon food imports, including rice (the staple diet).
- 1.2 During the last two decades or so, those responsible for socio-economic development planning in most countries have increasingly recognized the need to correlate development to the management of natural resources. In Sri Lanka, the accelerated pace of development since 1977 had caused an aggravation of environmental problems. Although the Government had promulgated the necessary legislation and established the administrative infrastructure to address environmental concerns, the results appear to have fallen short of expectations. The public response to this situation was the remarkable growth, in recent years, of the environmental NGO movement within cities as well as rural areas.
- 1.3 A survey conducted by the Sri Lanka Environment Congress (SLEC) had revealed that there were nearly 800 NGOs concerned with some aspect of environmental conservation. The large majority of environmental organizations is quite modest in terms of membership, each consisting of 10-15 persons. Further, these have weak institutional structures, with much work being performed on a voluntary basis. This part-time approach to work had hampered the evolution of these NGOs to more

professional organizations. Most community-based NGOs have been constrained by the lack of financial and administrative support, which in turn have imposed limitations on the volume of activities performed and their quality.

- 1.4 It was in this background that USAID in Sri Lanka developed a Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Project (NAREPP). One of the components of NAREPP was intended "to support Sri Lankan NGOs in the creation of sustainable public awareness and involvement in environmental and natural resources management".
- 1.5 USAID selected The Asian Foundation (TAF) as the apex organization responsible for the administration of the NGO programme of NAREPP, for which purpose TAF had set up a Project Management Unit consisting of a Project Manager, a Project Assistant/Secretary, and a Project Advisor.
- 1.6 The NGO programme was to be implemented on the basis of annual work plans over the five-year period from January 01, 1991 to December 31, 1995. Preliminary activities, culminating in the selection of NGOs, had taken time, with the result that the First Work Plan (which is now under evaluation) was to have a duration of 15 months, ie. from October 01, 1991 to December 31, 1992.
- 1.7 USAID had allocated for this programme a total sum of US\$ 1,137,033, earmarking US\$ 505,000 for the period ending December 31, 1992.
- 1.8 The NGO programme envisioned two types of assistance, namely -
  - 1.8.1 At the national level, grants to a "Core Group" of environmental NGOs that have achieved, or have the potential to achieve, a national impact on environmental awareness and conservation in their particular area of focus;
  - 1.8.2 At the local level, assistance to the Sri Lanka Environmental Congress (SLEC) to provide seed grants to strengthen the programme activities and institutional capabilities of community-based NGOs.

1.9 Assistance to the Core Group was intended to facilitate institutional development through a combination of staff support, equipment acquisition, and specific programme activities. The criteria for selecting national-level NGOs were to be developed by TAF. It was intended that this group will consist of no more than 12 NGOs, who could change during the lifetime of the programme. TAF was expected to work with the selected NGOs to design specific programmes of support, which were to include staffing, equipment technical assistance, staff training/development, and specific programme support in the NGO's particular speciality/specialities. The activities of each participating NGO were to be programmed in annual work plans.

1.10 The objective of seed grant assistance, as above stated, was to strengthen the institutional and programme capabilities of community-based NGOs. About 40 small NGOs were to be assisted during the four-year project period, with SLEC providing one to three-year grants depending on the absorptive capacity of the NGO concerned. TAF was to have collaborated with SLEC in the development and the implementation of the seed grant programme. Thus, the two institutions were to be jointly responsible for the formulation of selection criteria and annual work plans. It was anticipated that SLEC would develop the administrative capacity to implement the seed grant programme, for which purpose it was to have received a separate grant from TAF.

1.11 The following objectives and benchmarks were established as indicators to measure success, during programme implementation, in the achievement of the overall purpose :-

1.11.1                    **Increased and sustainable profile of national-level NGOs**

A 200% increase in the membership of the core group NGOs.

Increase in revenues collected from membership fees by core group NGOs.

Diversification of the funding base of the core group NGOs with TAF support representing no more than 25% of their budgets by the end of the project.

1.11.2 **Increased application of technical expertise by national-level NGOs**

A 200% increase in the number of public requests for assistance from the core group NGOs in their particular area of specialization.

Evidence of NGO contribution to new or revised laws and/or procedures granting opportunities for public involvement in natural resource management.

1.11.3 **Increased public participation in environmental management**

An increase of at least 200% in the target audience reached through public awareness activities conducted by the core group NGOs.

An increase of at least 200% in attendance at public meetings and other activities organized by participating NGOs.

1.11.4 **Increased and sustainable community profile of local-level NGOs**

A 200% increase in the number of participants in activities conducted by seed grant recipient NGOs.

At least 50% of seed grant recipient NGOs able to continue similar or more sophisticated public awareness and citizen action activities following the expiry of the grants.

1.12 Detailed evaluation plans to measure the success of national-level and community-based NGOs in achieving their respective programme objectives had been prepared by TAF.

CHAPTER 2  
SELECTION OF NGOs AND APPROVAL OF GRANT ASSISTANCE

**National-Level (Core-Group) Programme**

- 2.1 In order to make maximum use of the limited financial resources, it had been decided to focus annual national-level support on a "Core-Group" of up to twelve NGOs, to be selected on a competitive basis by evaluating applications received each year. This procedure was intended to provide an opportunity to NGOs not previously associated with the project to be considered for support. Simultaneously, it was anticipated that most participating NGOs would perform at a level adequate to qualify them for grant assistance over a continuous period, while assistance could be discontinued in respect of those who had performed poorly.
- 2.2 A national-level NGO had to satisfy the undermentioned basic criteria to be selected for grant assistance under the programme :
- 2.2.1 It must be indigenous, ie. headquartered in Sri Lanka;
  - 2.2.2 It must be a not-for-profit organization;
  - 2.2.3 Environmental awareness, conservation, or resource management must be its primary goal, as stated in its constitution;
  - 2.2.4 The NGO should display the commitment and potential to achieve a national-level impact in its area of specialization;
  - 2.2.5 It should be capable of and prepared to provide information, co-ordination, and leadership to smaller, community-based NGOs; and
  - 2.2.6 It should have programmes or goals to establish cooperative relations with other NGOs, government agencies, and the private sector.
- 2.3 TAF had received in all 24 project proposals for grant assistance under the National-Level (Core Group) Programme. In evaluating these proposals, the current status as well as future prospects and

objectives of each NGO had been considered. More particularly, the following points had been taken into account in evaluating project proposals :

- 2.3.1 Is the organization an established NGO with active programme activities?
- 2.3.2 Does it have a clear strategy for meeting long-term institutional and programme objectives?
- 2.3.3 What is its declared area of specialization?
- 2.3.4 What is the NGOs track record in its declared area of specialization?
- 2.3.5 Where is the NGO headquartered and where are its project activities conducted?
- 2.3.6 Does the NGO have an institutional identity outside its membership?
- 2.3.7 Does it have a professional support staff or a facility from which it administers its activities?
- 2.3.8 What factors have inhibited the NGO in achieving its objectives, and can these factors be overcome through assistance from TAF?
- 2.3.9 Is there a clear connection between the long-term goals and strategies identified by the NGO in Part I of its national-level project proposal and the institutional development and programme activities for which support is requested?

It had been intended to accommodate a diversity of NGOs with different areas of specialization and to achieve broad geographic representation among participating NGOs.

- 2.4 Particularly in view of the limitation of funds and the need to ensure that these will be gainfully utilized, it is imperative that grant assistance under the National-Level (Core Group) Programme be made available only to well-established organizations having a large membership and an above-average record of performance. Besides, as these NGOs profess to operate at the national-level, they ought to have established links with other NGOs, government agencies and the private sector. The fact that such links or relations exist would enhance the credibility of these NGOs and endorse their acceptance or recognition

by other groups or institutions having the same or similar aims and objects.

2.5 Significantly, one participating NGO had reported dissatisfaction with the progress in dialogue, exchange of information, and cooperation among members of the Core Group; and wished that the reason/s therefore be identified and remedied. (Further reference to these matters is being made in paras 2.7 to 2.9). This is indicative of there being no inter-organizational relations at present. In this context, the mere availability of "programmes or goals to establish co-operative relations" (as anticipated by para 2.2.6) would not suffice. What would be relevant is the reality that such co-operative relations had been established by the concerned NGO as a condition precedent to seeking grant assistance.

2.6 Considering the observations made in the preceding paras, it is recommended that two more basic criteria be added to the list in para 2.2 and that the criterion at 2.2.6 be rephrased, as set out below :

**Additional Criteria -**

- [1] It should have been established at least five (05) years prior to the deadline for applications for grant assistance; and
- [2] It must have a membership of at least one-hundred (100) persons, or in the case of a federal or umbrella type of organization, a membership of at least ten (10) community-based NGOs.

With reference to [1], it is relevant to note that in evaluating the project proposal of each national-level NGO, its "track-record in its declared area of specialization" will also be considered. Such a record would be meaningful only if measured over a specified minimum period of time. It is necessary to add that there is nothing sacrosanct about insisting upon a five-year history. This period could be enhanced, or if an adequate number of qualifying NGOs is not available, be reduced to a shorter duration of not less than three (03) years. The latter

possibility, if accepted, could be referred to when inviting project proposals.

In regard to [2], it ought to be mentioned that a large membership is a good index to the popular acceptance of an organization. Besides, there is safety in numbers.

#### Rephrasing of criterion at 2.2.6 -

This basic criterion ought to be rephrased thus :

It should have established cooperative relations with other NGOs and/or government agencies and/or the private sector.

The scope of the present Scorecard is wide enough to admit the proposed changes, but its item 5 will have to be amended by deleting references to periods of experience below three years.

- 2.7 When questioned why there appeared to be little or no co-operative relations amongst themselves, the Colombo-based Core Group NGOs expressed the common view that there was little scope to establish and maintain such relations because the activities of each organization were often concerned with its chosen speciality. No co-ordination of effort was however noticeable even in common activities such as environmental education and training. In this instance, they had possibly failed to recognize that whatever specialization they may have acquired is incidental to, or is connected with, their primary objective of environmental conservation.
- 2.8 The real reason for the inadequacy or lack of co-operative relations would appear to be petty personal jealousy and inter-organizational rivalry. (SLEC claimed to have been at the receiving end of such jealousy and rivalry, and to have consequently gone through "a period of mixed fortunes"). Each NGO tends to carve a niche for itself, particularly where foreign funding is concerned, and zealously insulates itself from other local NGOs for fear of losing its favoured or 'prestigious' position in the eyes of external benefactors. It is presumably for this reason that a given foreign donor seldom supports more than one local organization.

2.9 The tendency on the part of most national-level NGOs to conduct their affairs in isolation may well result in a duplication of effort and an unnecessary dissipation of scarce financial and manpower resources. There is, unfortunately, little to offer by way of remedial measures. Given the Government's commitment to liberalism, the prospects of State intervention to promote or facilitate co-operation amongst NGOs are quite bleak. There is thus no alternative to the NGOs themselves recognizing the reciprocal benefits to be derived from maintaining cordial inter-relations.

2.10 A Core Group of seven NGOs had been selected to receive grant assistance in the first instance. These together with the respective approved grants, are as follows :

Core Group NGO	Approved Grant (See Note)
Environmental Foundation Ltd	Rs. 930,000 [Rs. 652,000]
MANDRU (Institute for Alternative Development and Regional Co-operation)	Rs. 600,000 [Rs. 558,000]
March for Conservation	Rs. 925,000 [Rs. 684,000]
Organization to Safeguard Life and the Environment	Rs. 490,000 [Rs. 317,000]
Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum	s. 868,208 [Rs. 589,650]
Sri Lanka Environmental Congress	Rs. 910,000 [Rs. 801,000]
National Development Foundation	Rs. 605,000 [Rs. 432,000]
	-----
<b>Total</b>	<b>Rs. 5,328,208 [Rs. 4,033,650]</b>
	=====

**Note :** Some items of equipment (eg. computers, typewriters) were procured by TAF on behalf of the participating NGOs. The first figure indicates the total value of each grant inclusive of equipment assistance, and the figure in parenthesis, the sum of money to be released direct to the NGO.

2.11 It would appear that in determining eligibility to qualify for grant assistance and in evaluating individual project proposals, the basic criteria and the points to be considered were relaxed to some extent, presumably for the reason that environmental NGOs operating at the national level are quite few in Sri Lanka and several of these may not have qualified for selection on a rigorous application of the criteria. The need to accommodate a variety of specializations and to ensure broad geographic representation had also been recognized. Weightage had also been given to the NGO's potential to achieve a national impact on environmental awareness and conservation in its particular area of focus. In this context, the selection of MANDRU was also justifiable notwithstanding that "Environmental awareness, conservation, or resource management" (referred to in the basic criteria) is not its primary goal. On a reading MANDRU's constitution it becomes evident that the above attributes are only of incidental or marginal relevance to its objectives.

#### **Local-Level (Seed Grant) Programme**

• 2.12 TAF selected the Sri Lanka Environmental Congress (SLEC) to administer the local-level (seed grant) component of the Environmental NGO Project. SLEC had been formed in 1984 with the primary objective of assisting community organizations to attain their true potential, by providing them with information and coordinating their activities to achieve more cohesive conservation initiatives. The environmental organizations working with SLEC have been constrained by two factors, namely, the lack of financial support and the lack of administrative support. TAF's aim was to assist SLEC to provide seed grants to strengthen the programme activities and institutional capabilities of local-level or community-based NGOs.

2.13 TAF was to provide SLEC with an annual sub-grant to administer the seed grant programme. In addition to meeting seed grant disbursements, the sub-grant was intended for the establishment and continued operation of an Administrative Support Unit (ASU), consisting of a programme co-ordinator and two assistants. The ASU's functions were to review applications for seed grant support; to select seed grant recipients;

to monitor the progress of grant-supported activities; and to evaluate the success of individual grants and the seed grant programme as a whole. It was anticipated that ASU members will travel extensively to maintain close personal contact with recipient NGOs, for which purpose specific financial allocation had been made. Other support for the ASU included the supply of two personal computers. SLEC was to be given as much autonomy as possible in administering the seed grant programme. It was SLEC's responsibility to develop, in consultation with TAF, annual work plans for implementing the programme. Each work plan had to be so flexible as to enable SLEC to respond to worthy seed grant applications within the work plan period.

2.14 In order to maximize the efficacy of the grants in meeting the financial and the administrative needs of the grantee NGOs, SLEC and TAF had jointly developed the undermentioned two-fold strategy for grant disbursement :

2.14.1 to give larger grants of up to Rs.150,000 to 3-4 more established NGOs to implement self-sustaining projects which facilitate public participation in environmental conservation and resource management; and

2.14.2 to give smaller grants of Rs.25,000-40,000 to another 10-12 NGOs primarily to implement public awareness and environmental education projects.

Grants under 2.14.1 were meant to support projects intended to be self-sustaining beyond the period of the seed grant. Such projects need not necessarily have been income-generating, because SLEC's interpretation of "self-sustaining" meant that the organization could, through initial seed grant support, come up to a position which would enable it to maintain itself independently of SLEC's support, and raise its own funds to carry out projects.

2.15 SLEC, with the concurrence of TAF, had defined the criteria for the selection of seed grant recipients, and the methodology for monitoring and evaluating grants.

2.16 Proposals for seed grants had been evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria :-

2.16.1 Grants of Rs.150,000

About the Organization :

- \* Past performance of the NGO in environmental activities
- \* Broad-based nature of the NGO's membership :
  - [a] Rural vs Urban
  - [b] Age, ethnicity, socio-economic status etc.
  - [c] Open membership
  - [d] Democratic orientation/pluralism
- Working strength of the NGO (number of people involved)
- \* Registration as an environmental NGO -
  - [a] with SLEC
  - [b] with CEA
  - [c] with both
- \* References provided for the organization/persons involved.

About the Project Proposal :

- \* Problem addressed (Real ? Important ? Adequate analysis ?)
- \* Approach utilized (Creative ? Effective? New ? Replicable ?)
- \* Expected outcomes (For problem, for community, for the NGO)
- \* Project viability (Are NGO's resources and person power consistent with work to be done ?)
- \* Sustainability (Does it generate funds for the future ?)
- \* Budget provided (Is it coherent, realistic, defensible ?)

Additional factors to ensure an appropriate mix :

- \* Area/s of specialization (Environmental issue)
- \* Target audience (Youth, industrialists, farmers, etc)
- \* Locus of activities (where geographically situated ?)

**2.16.2 Grants of Rs.25,000-40,000**

- \* Past performance of the NGO in environmental activities
- \* Broad-based nature of the NGO's membership
- \* Registration as an NGO
- \* Project impact on increasing popular awareness
- \* Action-orientation of project activities
- \* Institution-building focus of project (Membership, future sustainability)
- \* Special focus of project (Schools, youth brigades, etc)
- \* Coherence, pragmatism, and modesty of budget
- \* References provided.

- 2.17 SLEC had received 63 proposals, most seeking a larger grant of Rs.150,000. Many NGOs had however submitted proposals where funding could also be provided for particular components at the 40,000-rupee level. A total of twelve projects submitted by local-level NGOs had been selected to receive seed grants - three for the larger grants and nine for the smaller grants. In doing so, equal consideration had been given to all the proposals notwithstanding that the majority of these had been submitted by NGOs based in the Hill Country where the environment is most threatened. This procedure ensured an even geographic distribution of projects, whilst meeting the need to strengthen NGOs on an island-wide basis. Nevertheless, more than one grantee had been selected from the Hill Country in view of the critical environmental situation there. Grantees had been selected with a view to establishing one lead NGO in every region. It was anticipated that the present grantee will serve as a rallying point with sufficient resources and strength to help other NGOs in the area.

2.18 The community-based NGOs selected to receive seed grants and the grant assistance approved in each case were as follows :-

Community based NGO	Approved Grant
<u>Grants of Rs.150,000</u>	
Nation Builders Association	Rs. 110,000
Twelve Hearts Community Dev Foundation	Rs. 105,790
Youth Explorers' Society	<u>Rs. 149,150</u>
Sub-Total	Rs. 364,940
 <u>Rupees 25,000-40,000 Grants</u>	
Young Environmentalists	Rs. 43,480
Natural Forest Protection Society	Rs. 38,250
Sevashrama Environmental Circle	Rs. 38,500
Wediwatte Youth Society	Rs. 40,650
Youth Pioneers	Rs. 40,500
Agrabodhi Environmental Friends Foundation	Rs. 40,250
Sadaharita Environmental Friends Society	Rs. 41,000
WildGREENS Organization	Rs. 41,400
Gampaha Gurukula Academy of Indigenous Medicine	Rs. 49,625
Sub-Total	Rs. 373,655
Total	Rs. 738,595
	=====

These grants were intended for two purposes, namely, to implement project activities and to overcome logistical and administrative constraints. The recipient NGO was expected to utilize about 80% of the grant for project activities and the remainder for improving the infrastructure by recruitment of full-time or part-time personnel and acquisition of basic equipment. In most instances, however, no part of the grant had been specifically earmarked for recruitment of staff or procurement of basis equipment.

2.19 It was mutually agreed by TAF and SLEC -

- 2.19.1 that 70% of the funds made available to SLEC would be disbursed by April 1992, and the balance, by August 1992;
- 2.19.2 that SLEC will require each grantee to submit quarterly progress reports to SLEC on a set of format to be provided by SLEC;
- 2.19.3 that such reports will be reviewed by a review committee, to be appointed by SLEC, which will include a few representatives of grantee NGOs;
- 2.19.4 that SLEC will release 40% of the grant to each selected NGO at the commencement of the project, and 20% at the end of each quarter upon the receipt of a quarterly progress report; and
- 2.19.5 that SLEC itself would conduct interim evaluations of each project.

2.20 The selection criteria had left little, if at all, to be desired. As with those applicable to the Core Group, such criteria had been well thought of and carefully documented. No serious objection could be taken to the selection *per se* of the community-based NGOs to receive seed grants, but SLEC ought to have been more circumspect or discerning in identifying the project proposals. At least 04 of the projects identified for support had a poor cost-benefit ratio or were beyond the capabilities of the NGOs concerned. These were :

2.20.1 Sevashrama Environmental Circle

The proposed activity was to conduct a mobile environmental library in the area, for which purpose the entirety of the seed grant was to be utilized. This NGO is based in Kalawana (Ratnapura District), where the overwhelming majority of people speak (but may not read) Sinhala. The

Ratnapura District had been identified by educational authorities (such as the University Grants Commission) as an educationally under-privileged area. Naturally, Ratnapura's literacy rate must be below the national average, and that of Kalawana and its environs poor even by the District's standard. It is also common knowledge that books on the environment written in Sinhala are very few indeed. (SLEC has reported that of the 115 books carried in the mobile library, barely 30% concern the environment.) In this background, the selection of this particular project would appear to have been ill-advised. As the primary intention of the seed grant was to implement awareness and environmental education projects, the people of the locality would have benefitted more by conducting a series of public meetings, lectures and seminars, at which simple environmental literature could have been distributed. There would also have been no need to employ a librarian and two assistant librarians with project funds. It is more than likely that this NGO would be in no position to retain their services on payment after the termination of the grant.

#### **2.20.2 Agrabodhi Environmental Foundation**

One of the proposed activities of this NGO was to conduct a study, and to publish at its conclusion a document, on the areas devastated by the Nilwala Ganga Project. Although identified as an "ambitious project", this was expected to succeed for several reasons mentioned in the project description. SLEC has reported that the "project is yet to gather momentum". This NGO, which has a membership of about 150 persons, had had a history of having conducted tree planting campaigns and activities targeted towards environmental awareness and education. Considering the dimensions of the Nilwala Ganga Project and the intricate environmental issues involved therein, one cannot resist the conclusion that this organization had been permitted to

bite much more than what it could chew. Its model environment project is also an ambitious one. SLEC's interim substantive report has shed no light on the progress of this project.

### **2.20.3 Nation Builders Association**

The project is centred on the Sloping Areas Land Terracing (SALT) method. This method of land utilization had been identified as "not being tried and tested to the NGO satisfaction of the country". This may in fact be so, but in reality, the SALT method had been practised by the Hill Country (or the Kandyan) peasantry from time immemorial as the only practical method of utilizing hill slopes for paddy cultivation, where the supply of water is perennial or is dependant upon rainfall, and for vegetable cultivation in the off-seasons. In fact, almost all paddy and vegetable cultivation in areas such as Hewaheta, Walapone, Dumbara, Bandarawela, Badulla, and Passara had been under the SALT method. This is also a time-honoured system of soil conservation. There is thus no need to experiment with the SALT method or to train or educate farmers in its efficacy as a form of land utilization or soil conservation. The relevance of the Mahailukpallama Research Station (located in the north-central plains) for training farmers in the SALT method is also not readily understood, except on the basis that such training would be confined to methodology as distinct from its application.

### **2.20.4 Twelve Hearts Community Development Foundation**

The project concerns research on, and the protection of, mangroves. The relevance of the project could hardly be over-emphasized, but here again, a community-based NGO, having a membership of 39 persons, had been permitted to undertake a sophisticated task which would appear to be beyond its competence and capability. Besides, research on

mangroves has been done by scientists attached to the National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA). Some studies have also been made under the Bay of Bengal Programme (BOBP) of the FAO's Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission (IOFC). The fact that this NGO had asked for an extension of time to submit its first report is by itself indicative of the inadequacy, if not the lack, of progress made.

- 2.21 It would be relevant to comment on some fundamental issues concerning the Seed Grant Programme. In the first instance, it is debatable whether it was conceptually sound. The expression "seed grant" itself was not quite appropriate to describe the intended objectives. Such a grant is normally given for capital formation and utilization to promote the further growth of seed or capital. The recipient could either directly apply the initial grant for income-generating projects, or invest the grant and utilize the interest accruing thereon to finance income generation. A case in point is an activity of the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), a regional organization headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Sri Lanka, being a member country of CIRDAP, was a recipient of seed grants from this source. These grants were channelled through the national focal point (namely, the Ministry of Fisheries) to selected community-based organizations to be used for self-employment and other income-generating projects. Each organization thereafter offered its members small capital grants, at nominal rates of interest, to fund such projects as were (in the organization's opinion) worthy of support. The loan together with the interest thereon was recovered in convenient instalments. Most beneficiary members were successful in their modest endeavours, which in turn contributed to the capital growth of the recipient organization. It was envisioned that the organization would be self-sustaining in course of time by the appropriate use of the seed grant.
- 2.22 TAF seed grants were not intended for capital formation. Nevertheless, the larger grants given to 03 NGOs were for projects that would be self-sustaining beyond the term of the seed grant. One of the grantees

is a beneficiary of foreign donor agencies, and appears to be financially viable. Considering the approved projects of the other two recipients of larger grants, it is inconceivable that they would be self-sustaining, except within the particular meaning (not readily understood) attached to this expression by SLEC; and that each grantee would come to a position which would enable it to maintain itself independently of SLEC support, raising its own funds for future project activities. It is unlikely that the beneficiary would be better off, particularly in terms of finances, at the end of the project period than at its commencement. Going by the line items of the approved budget, each smaller grant (ranging from Rs.38,250 to Rs.43,480) may prove adequate for the intended purpose/s, but the grant is not likely to strengthen each NGO institutionally. These small NGOs, each having a modest membership, operate in developing areas having a limited clientele. Nor are these in the category of organizations which could attract foreign funding. Confronted with this situation, institution strengthening ought to have been an objective (if not the sole objective) of the Seed Grant Programme.

- 2.23 This Programme would have been more meaningful if each grant were large (say, Rs.100,000 to Rs.150,000) and intended to fund income-generating projects. An environmental activities could seldom result in income-generation in a rural setting, the projects to be financed need not necessarily have environmental concerns as their primary goal. The basic objective is institution-building through capital formation, which will in turn enable the recipient NGO to implement environmental projects independent of external (not necessarily foreign) support. It is recommended that the concept underlying the Community-based (Seed Grant) Programme be reviewed and that large grants (say, Rs.100,000 to Rs.150,000) be given to fund income-generating projects.

- 2.24 Secondly, the participation of SLEC in the selection process may have unnecessarily restricted the field of choice available to TAF. On a study of the relevant literature, it became evident that the intention had been to provide seed grants to community-based NGOs to involve themselves in environmental activities. As a result of SLEC's participation at the initial stages, what had really happened was the

identification for this purpose of a group of so-called "Environmental NGOs", which was not the same thing. Environmental concerns and associated activities are of recent origin to Sri Lanka, whereas the NGO movement had had a much longer history. From the standpoint of the Programme, it would have been more rewarding to select well-established community-based NGOs with a proven track record, and to support them to perform environmental functions (in addition to their traditional roles), rather than offering grants to the new category. SLEC, being the umbrella organization of the latter group, could not have, naturally, looked beyond its membership, thereby limiting the number of prospective candidates. Some of the present Environmental NGOs could have still been selected if the net were cast wider. Likewise, it would have been possible for SLEC to perform its present role even under a broad-based selection.

- 2.25 SLEC was invited to comment on the selection procedure. It had no intention whatsoever of disassociating itself from the selections made, but looking at the matter in retrospect, felt that the procedure, though democratic in character, may have precluded more deserving organizations from being considered for the reason that selection had been determined by pre-set criteria. SLEC was of the view that it would have been better to identify a group of promising NGOs on the basis of applications received in response to a newspaper advertisement, but without being guided by pre-determined criteria, and to assist those so selected to establish themselves firmly whilst performing environmental activities at the same time. In essence, the result would be the same as that visualized by the preceding paragraph.

#### Practical Skills Training Programme

- 2.26 Recognizing that staff development constituted an important component of institutional strengthening, TAF had budgeted for training and technical assistance during the first work plan period. Training was to be of two types - namely [1] in-country practical skills training, and [2] regional workshop and conference participation, and internship opportunities. Technical assistance was to be provided through consultancies in certain specialized areas such as library skills,

environmental science, and legal training. Local and international consultants to conduct training programmes were to be identified by TAF.

2.27 While TAF itself undertook the second type of training referred to above, it entrusted to the Central Council of Social Services (CCSS) the task of providing in-country skills training. The target group was to have consisted of the 07 Core Group NGOs and 06 smaller NGOs. CCSS was expected to develop and conduct, in Sinhala and English, 15 practical skills training workshops, with each workshop being limited to about 25 participants. For the purpose of these workshops, 05 topics relevant to the institutional and programme development of environmental organizations had been identified by TAF in consultation with the Core Group NGOs. The topics were :

- \* Financial Accounting
- \* NGO Management
- \* Project Monitoring
- \* Proposal Writing, and
- \* Community Organizing

2.28 A sub-grant of almost Rs. 1,000,000 was to be made to CCSS for conducting the in-country skills training programme. A breakdown of the sub-grant in terms of training topics and workshops is as follows :-

Topics	No. & Duration of Workshops	Budget Rs.
Financial Accounting	03 of one-day	125,500
NGO Management	03 of four-day	342,000
Project Monitoring	03 of two-day	203,500
Proposal Writing	02 of two-day & 01 of one-day	196,500
Community Organizing	03 of one-day	125,500
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<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>993,000</b>
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CHAPTER 3  
EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE UNDER THE FIRST WORK PLAN

PART 1 - GENERAL

**Methodology**

- 3.1 The evaluation of performance under the First Work Plan of TAF's Environmental NGO Project commenced with a preliminary discussion with the TAF Representative in Sri Lanka and the Project Manager on the scope of this assignment. It was understood that as there was some urgency as regards the selection of NGOs for the Second Work Plan, what was required was basically an assessment of the progress made by the first group of grantees rather than an in-depth and critical study of their individual performances.
- 3.2 The programme and performance reports available in TAF's Project Management Unit were thereafter studied with a view to gathering basic information on grant objectives, selection criteria, programme selection, programme concepts, project formulation and implementation, and monitoring procedures. The Environmental NGO Project has been quite well documented by TAF, and when clarification had to be sought on any particular aspect, the Project Manager made himself readily available for consultation. It was observed that a few of the grantees had failed to submit the two interim substantive reports which had become due by September 30, 1992.
- 3.3 The next stage of the evaluation process was meeting with each Core Group NGO to assess programme performance and the experience gained thereby. Although the number of NGOs concerned was quite small, meeting with their key personnel was rather difficult. Most of them continue to work on a part-time basis and their other engagements seemed to keep them quite busy. Nevertheless, discussions were held with all the Core Group NGOs. These proved useful in that several matters not reflected in the interim substantive reports came to light.
- 3.4 Reference need be made at this stage to a weakness in the uniform reporting format devised by TAF. TAF's document entitled *STRENGTHENING*

*SRI LANKA'S ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS, Appendices to Work Plan, October 01, 1991 to December 31, 1992* had, *inter alia*, made mention of the results to be achieved by each Core Group NGO at the completion of the First Work Plan. As stated in this document itself, such anticipated results also constituted the criteria for the evaluation of each NGO's performance under grant assistance. Naturally, the results expected varied from one NGO to another for the simple reason that the goals which TAF had envisioned were not identically the same in respect of all the NGOs in the Core Group. In these circumstances, the requirement that all Core Group NGOs should submit reports on a common format precluded TAF from eliciting information on the progress made by each NGO in achieving the anticipated results. It is recommended that while using a common format to obtain reports on matters generally applicable to all NGOs, each NGO be required to submit a special report on the progress made in achieving the anticipated specific results.

- 3.5 It is also relevant to mention that the Letter of Understanding issued to each Core Group NGO had made no particular reference to the results which that NGO was expected to achieve by the end of the First Work Plan. The majority of the NGOs interviewed claimed that they had no knowledge of the anticipated results. Nevertheless, in the course of a subsequent discussion with the Project Manager it came to light that these results were what each NGO had intended to achieve, as stated in its project proposal. TAF may consider the desirability of including in the Letter of Understanding the results which the NGO must attain.
- 3.6 As SLEC was directly responsible to TAF for the implementation of the Seed Grant Programme, the Project Manager had requested this organization to arrange visits to a few selected recipients. This was not possible as the time available was short.

#### Constraints

- 3.7 Performance evaluation was impeded by three factors, namely -
- \* The timing of evaluation
  - \* The time-frame for evaluation
  - \* The inability to meet with all grantee NGOs within the time-frame.

3.8 A final evaluation is usually made at the conclusion of a given exercise rather than in mid-stream. In the instant case however, no terminal evaluation would have been possible because the work plans had to run continuously and TAF had to obtain some feed back on the progress made under the First Work Plan as a preliminary to identifying grantee NGOs for the second. In reality, what is being evaluated is a position which had obtained at the time when the second interim substantive reports were submitted. This becomes significant in a situation (such as this) where all the recipient NGOs could not be interviewed. Mid-course evaluation also provided a convenient escape-valve to NGOs behind schedule in that it enabled them to say that what remained to be done will be done in the period intervening between the present and December 31, 1992 (the terminal date of the First Work Plan). TA's interests may have been better served if it were possible to have a break inbetween work plans, and to have set apart about six weeks for the evaluation. TAF could have, in the meantime, attended to NGO selection preliminaries. The necessary feed-back would have then been available about two weeks prior to the commencement of the next Work Plan. This procedure would have resulted in an extension of the total duration of the Environmental NGO Project as a whole by 06 months, assuming that there would be 04 work plans.

3.9 The other two constraints are inter-related. The total time frame for evaluation (which involved the submission of a draft report in the first instance) was far too narrow, and provided no opportunity to visit all the beneficiary NGOs. The visits made had to be necessarily short. The efficacy of project components such as inculcating environmental awareness in the general public, and training programmes could only be properly evaluated by interviewing the respective target groups. Here again, the period available being short, no target group could be consulted. In summary, the evaluation was heavily dependent upon what each grantee had stated in writing or orally on its own performance.

3.10 The results of evaluation are being reported under each NGO in the succeeding paragraphs. Reference has been made to the objectives of grant assistance, and to the results which each recipient NGO was

expected to achieve during the First Work Plan. As previously mentioned, the anticipated results serve as the basis for evaluation.

## PART II - NATIONAL-LEVEL (CORE GROUP) PROGRAMME

### Environmental Foundation Ltd (EFL)

3.11 EFL, established in 1981, has an island-wide coverage. It specializes in environmental legal advocacy, education and research.

3.12 In providing grant assistance, TAF's objectives were :

- \* to further extend legal services through support for the Ratnapura branch office and the Environmental Legal Aid Clinic (ELAC) headquarters in Colombo;
- \* to support a feasibility study for the development of a long-term institutional growth strategy;
- \* to support publications in accordance with EFL's long-term goal of self-sufficiency;
- \* to strengthen administrative capabilities and thereby ensure institutional credibility and financial discipline.

3.13 TAF anticipated that its support will enable EFL to achieve the following results :-

#### Institutional

- \* Increased administrative capacity will result in two new sources of revenue, and a 25 percent increase over the 1991 budget by the end of 1992;
- \* The Ratnapura Branch office will become an established office with a regular staff and a caseload during the first work plan period;
- \* EFL will develop a stronger grassroots orientation through the influence of branch office activities;

- \* EFL will design a formal strategy to guide its growth (eg. 5-year plan) as a result of the professional feasibility study;
- \* The Executive Board will expand and divide fund-raising responsibilities with the staff of EFL.

#### Programme

- \* At least 150 new legal matters will be handled through the ELAC programme (including the Ratnapura office), of which 20% are expected to go to court. Approximately, 1,500 persons will be directly affected by the ELAC programme, with thousands more enjoying indirect benefits;
- \* Staff productivity will increase in terms of the average number of legal matters handled per lawyer in Colombo;
- \* The number of ELEP education seminars held will increase from 05 in 1990 to 10 in 1991 and at least to 12 during 1992, as a result of institutional and administrative inputs;
- \* The number of individuals reached through ELEP seminars will increase to 1,000 per month by the end of 1992;
- \* At least six issues of *Biosphere* and six issues of *Surekuma* will be published during the workplan period, as well as four additional titles in the environmental law series and one book.

3.14 EFL's budget will register an overall increase by the end of 1992, but there was no firm commitment as regards the percentage growth. Thus, while NORAD and World Resources Institute have given new grants, the Cummings Foundation has doubled its support. Some additional income is also anticipated from the sale of publications and the earnings from private law practice by EFL's lawyers, who are expected to give a portion of their income to the organization.

Although the Ratnapura Branch office has been established, EFL has reported that the services of the lawyer have not been adequately used. EFL is debating whether or not to continue maintaining this office, and one possibility is that the office will be maintained with local NGO

support. It is intended to make a firm decision after EFL's organizational review, which is nearing completion.

- 3.16 The professional feasibility study for the development of a long-term institutional growth strategy, has been entrusted to the Sri Lanka Business Development Centre. The study has been completed, and EFL is presently considering the second draft report prepared by these consultants.
- 3.17 The Executive Board of EFL has been enlarged from five to eight members. The new members include a lawyer and a senior university lecturer. Fund raising responsibilities are now being shared by the Executive Board and the senior staff of EFL.
- 3.18 It would appear that performance in legal matters had fallen far short of expectations. Although it was anticipated that at least 150 new legal matters will be handled through the ELAC programme, the Colombo office had accepted only 06 new cases, while 20 were under investigation by the Senior Environmental Scientist. The Ratnapura Branch Office had handled no case. (As earlier stated, the lawyer's time had not been fully used.) EFL played a leading role in the public campaign against the proposed Kandalama Hotel Project. It is likely that several persons were influenced, directly as well as indirectly, by this campaign. As the total number of legal matters handled was small, staff productivity could not have increased on this ground.
- 3.19 EFL's approach to education seminars had undergone a drastic change. It would appear that much difficulty had been encountered in identifying target groups, with the result that not all the participants at EFL seminars had evinced interest in the topics under discussion. Confronted with this situation, no seminar had been recently organized by EFL, and its current strategy is to participate in seminars held by other groups, particularly in the outstations. About 30 seminars had been covered in this manner. As EFL itself had organized no seminar, it is impracticable to assess the number of individuals reached through this medium, but as its participation rate was high, it would be reasonable to conclude that a fairly large group had benefited.

3.20 While the March and the June 1992 issues of *Bioshpere* and its Sinhala translation, *Surekuma*, have been published, their September and December issues are with the printers. Two new titles in the environmental law series have been released, in addition to a few *ad hoc* publications.

3.21 The objectives which TAF had in mind when providing grant assistance to EFL have been generally realized. EFL has made satisfactory progress in achieving the anticipated institutional results, but where programme results are concerned, its attainments were way behind expectations, except in the case of publications. Here again, a 50% shortfall was noticed in the projected number of additions to the environmental law series. The number of legal matters which EFL could handle is dependent upon factors beyond its control. If, for example, no environmental law or requirement had been violated, the need for EFL intervention would not have arisen. EFL's present policy of merely participating in seminars held by others, as distinct from organizing seminars of its own accord, ought to be reconsidered. Apart from the education seminars being a forum for the dissemination of knowledge on environmental matters, these offered EFL an opportunity to project its image and to establish rapport with other NGOs, thereby enabling the organization to wield a greater degree of influence on environmental issues. If the number of legal matters handled continue to drop at the same time, EFL will be left with little opportunity to make its presence known to a wider public circle. The present difficulty in identifying target groups could be overcome by inventorizing the specific legal requirements of other environmental NGOs and organizing seminars to cater to such requirements.

#### **MANDRU (Institute for Alternative Development and Regional Co-operation**

3.22 Established in 1987, MANDRU specializes in environmental research at the regional and community levels. Its activities cover the North-East Province.

3.23 In providing grant assistance, TAF's objective was to provide for the establishment of a permanent branch office in the North-East Province,

which in turn was expected to spawn additional environmental projects.

3.24 TAF anticipated that its support will enable MANDRU to achieve the following results :-

**Institutional**

- \* The creation of a branch office in Batticaloa to serve as a base for immediate and on-going program activities;
- \* An increase in core staff from three to five during the first work plan period;
- \* A budget increase of 10 percent over the 1990-1991 level by the end of the project period, independent of foundation support.

**Programme**

- \* Creation of a database of environmental issues and conditions in the Eastern Province;
- \* Establishment of a concerned group on the environment supported by several community interest groups;
- \* Development of working relationships with at least 20 community-based organizations in the project area to raise environmental issues and present research findings;
- \* Development and pilot use of at least six visual and printed information resource materials for community education;
- \* Development of on-going strategies for facilitating community participation in environmental conservation and resource management in the North and East;
- \* Preparation of a formal report on the pilot experience in the Eastern Province.

3.25 MANDRU's activities have been circumscribed by the prevailing socio-political situation in the North East Province. There had been no major activity during the greater part of the first half of the current work plan period, but since then, it has been possible to implement the programme in spite of the adverse security situation.

3.26 A branch office has been established in Batticaloa, with a total staff of 11, including 07 part-time and 01 full-time Research Assistants, and

a Co-ordinator for administration and community programmes. Thus, the projected increase in core staff has been attained.

3.27 As for the budget, MANDRU anticipates an increase in excess of 10% over the 1990-91 level, the main source of additional income being consultancy fees.

3.28 Commendable progress has been made in the creation of a database on environmental issues and conditions in the Batticaloa District. In this connection, a collaborative arrangement has been established in September 1991 between the Eastern University and MANDRU, under which a group of researchers (both faculty and students) have commenced building a database. Individuals and community organizations have been identified for focusing on community-wide environmental issues.

3.29 A series of research studies, covering lagoons and wetlands, had commenced in January 1992. The research team assembled for this purpose has been engaged in activities such as the comparison and study of species distribution in the Batticaloa lagoon; survey of fishing gear; and a study of the socio-economic conditions of people involved in lagoon fishing. The investigations had also included an assessment of policy initiatives and recommendations for policy changes to ensure environmentally sustainable development in the district.

3.30 As it was felt that a mid-term evaluation of these research activities would be useful and that interaction between the research team and governmental agencies and community organizations was necessary, a three-day residential Conference had been held in early September 1991. Informal meetings of participants after the first two Conference sessions had lead to a series of action programmes being identified. These included a "keep the city clean" campaign; a campaign to highlight the need to protect mangroves; conducting environmental education programmes in schools; and exploring the possibilities of producing a video documentary on Batticaloa's environmental problems.

3.31 Action has been initiated by MANDRU to establish a Concerned Group on the Environment. It is relevant to mention that one of the

recommendations of the Conference referred to earlier was the establishment of a Forum on Environment, expected to perform a "watch dog" function. An action committee has been formed to implement this recommendation.

- 3.32 MANDRU has been quite successful in developing working relationships with several community-based organizations in the Batticaloa District. A total of 42 environmental workshops (12 with School Environmental Brigades and 30 with community groups) have been held with a view to facilitating community participation in environmental conservation and resource management within the District. These had been well attended, with their participants taking an active interest in environmental concerns.
- 3.33 MANDRU had published in collaboration with the District Environmental Agency a collection of articles to commemorate the World Environmental Day. It is intended to publish the papers presented at the Conference as a volume on Environment and Development in the Batticaloa District. With a view to reaching the widest possible audience, MANDRU is in the process of developing an education package in the form of a folk dance (*nattukuthu*). This will be in the tradition of street theatre, with which MANDRU had had success in the "keep the city clean" campaign. With the object of increasing environmental awareness, MANDRU had organized an art competition for schools, with support from the Departments of Education and Local Government, and a local NGO known as the World of Friends. Models prepared by 06 School Environmental Brigades to illustrate environmental aspects had also been displayed at the exhibition.
- 3.34 In summary, MANDRU has, notwithstanding the unfavourable security situation in the area, attained a commendable measure of success in the First Work Plan. The major result which remains to be achieved is the preparation of a formal report on its pilot experience in the Eastern Province. It is anticipated that this report will see the light of day in due course. MANDRU's success amply demonstrates what could be achieved by a dedicated leadership even under trying circumstances. Its indefatigable efforts to promote environmental awareness in a

relatively undeveloped region of Sri Lanka is worthy of being emulated by other national-level NGOs.

#### **March for Conservation (MfC)**

3.35 MfC, established in 1980, specializes in environmental education and teacher training. Its activities cover Galle, Badulla, and Colombo Districts.

3.36 In providing grant assistance, TAF's objectives were :

- \* to assist MfC to establish an institutional identity beyond the University of Colombo;
- \* to strengthen MfC's research capabilities;
- \* to support a pilot education programme, which will include the development and production of teaching materials, teacher-training workshops, and evaluation of the pilot activity. It was expected that the pilot programme will eventually be included in the national education curriculum.

3.37 TAF anticipated that its support will enable MfC to achieve the following results :-

##### **Institutional**

- \* The establishment of an institutional identity for MfC outside the University of Colombo, as indicated by leasehold office facilities and a broader range of public and private sector contacts developed through the new off campus site;
- \* The in-house design and production of education materials by MfC through the use of computer and laser printer;
- \* A 50 percent increase in the number of public sector consultations undertaken by MfC with agencies such as the NIE, NARESA and CCD;
- \* A budget increase of at least 10 percent by the end of the work plan period, independent of Foundation support;
- \* One new source of funds during the work plan period.

### **Programme**

- \* Development of Enviro-packs in three languages, and production of 300 copies in Sinhala;
- \* Development of teacher guides in three languages, and production of 120 copies in Sinhala;
- \* Preparation of a comprehensive evaluation report on the success of the pilot environmental education programme;
- \* Consultation with three parent-teacher organizations;
- \* Participation by 300 students in three districts in the pilot education programme, with an increase in environmental awareness among students, teachers, and parents.

3.38 MfC has established its new office in Colombo 5 (Park Road) with the support extended by TAF but as this organization's key personnel are university teachers and as working within universities has definite advantages in the pursuit of environmental education and teacher training goals, a part of the activities continue to be performed from the University of Colombo and the Open University of Sri Lanka. Of its staff of 05, all but one are located in these universities. The Park Road office accommodates the only contractual employee.

3.39 According to MfC, it is still in the first phase of the current work plan. Its utilization of grant assistance is commensurate with this status. MfC's membership has grown from 350 to about 500 since the First Work Plan commenced.

3.40 A few constraints, mainly logistical, had initially impeded implementation of MfC's environmental education programme. These were:-

- \* Failure to take account of the April school vacation when preparing the initial work plan
- \* The Co-ordinator, being new to the task, taking time to get things organized
- \* Difficulty in finding a niche in the school system for any specific activity.

While the first two constraints have been overcome, the other is not within MfC's control.

- 3.41 Ten sets of enviro-packs, together with a teacher-guide for each pack, have been designed in Sinhala and translated into English. Forty copies of each of these have been produced. This education material is presently being tested in a group of schools in Colombo. About 800 students and 20 teachers have been exposed to this pilot project, which MFC intends to extend to schools in two other districts, with or without modification, depending upon the degree of success achieved in the Colombo District. A comprehensive evaluation report on the pilot project could only be expected at its termination, which is not likely to occur in the current work plan period.
- 3.42 Consultancies undertaken by MFC for the public sector are likely to register a substantial growth, probably exceeding the envisioned 50%. Among the organizations which had sought MFC's services were IUCN, Forest Department, Department of Wild Life Conservation, Coast Conservation Department, and Central Environmental Agency. A consultancy had also been provided to the Girl Guides' Association.
- 3.43 MFC has estimated that its budget will increase by more than the targeted 10% by the end of this work plan period. In addition to income to be derived from its own publications, financial support will be provided by WWF, Global Environmental Fund, Smithsonian Institute, NORAD, a Swedish NGO and NARESA. The last mentioned institution will be the new source of funding.
- 3.44 It is MFC's conviction that environmental education could succeed only if attitudinal changes are brought about in the minds of parents as well as their children. Consultations with parent-teacher associations have been planned with this goal in view. It is proposed to hold such consultations within the current work plan period.
- 3.45 A research project on the *Sinharaja* forest has been completed by MFC. Among its on-going research projects are one on fauna and flora of the Horton Plains, which will also include rejuvenation of species, and another of Rainbow Trout.

3.46 MfC is well on the way to meeting the objectives of TAF and achieving the anticipated results. This NGO, similar to MANDRU, is gifted with a dedicated leadership, and it is still to achieve its full potential as a national-level organization. Its primary concern is environmental education and teacher training, and the fact that it draws its key personnel from the universities will facilitate the realization of these objectives.

#### Organization to Safeguard Life and the Environment (OSLEN)

3.47 OSLEN had been established in 1985. It is Colombo-based, and has a broad rural impact. OSLEN specializes in grassroots community organizing and issues-oriented networking.

3.48 In providing grant assistance, TAF's objectives were :

- \* to enhance the quality of OSLEN's education and networking capabilities through the development of the Library/Documentation Centre;
- \* to provide better information to OSLEN's NGO affiliates;
- \* to consolidate OSLEN's niche in the field of consumer environmental issues.

3.49 TAF anticipated that its support will enable OSLEN to achieve the following results :-

##### Institutional

- \* Combined organizational and individual membership of OSLEN will increase by 20 per cent during the work plan period;
- \* Subscriptions to *Harita* and *Niroda* will increase by 10 per cent each during the work plan period;
- \* OSLEN budget will increase by at least 10 per cent by January 1993;
- \* At least one new funding source will be found by January 1993.

### Programme

- \* Production and distribution of bound monthly news and information extracts (20 pages minimum) to 50 affiliate organizations;
- \* Sinhala/Tamil translation and distribution of at least three articles from outside sources per month;
- \* Establishment of lending library services to 25 small environmental and consumer organizations;
- \* The provision of reference library services to approximately 500 individual and institution users;
- \* Establishment of an expanded database for OSLEN's on going programme activities.

- 3.50 Organizational and individual membership of OSLEN had increased during the work plan period from 136 to 232, recording a growth rate well above the expected 20%.
- 3.51 Subscriptions to *Harita* had increased from about 200 to 1,000; and to *Niroda*, from about 50 to 100. Here again, the increases had far exceeded the targeted 10%.
- 3.52 With reference to its annual budget, OSLEN, felt that the organization had reached its optimum size, and that further addition to the budget, except by a modest amount, was likely to make the organization unwieldy, thereby causing managerial and administrative difficulties. Although the outlay had increased from US\$ 41,000 in 1991 to US\$ 46,000 in 1992, no major enhancement of the annual budget is intended in the immediate future.
- 3.53 OSLEN had successfully conducted a workshop in collaboration with the Asian Community Health Action Network (ACHAN). ACHAN is the NGO's new source of funding. Inclusive of this workshop, 12 workshops and seminars have been conducted. About 15,000 copies of pages of the publications set out in List (1) of OSLEN's interim substantive report have been distributed at these workshops and seminars.

- 3.54 News and information extracts are being produced monthly in a bound form and distributed by OSLEN to 60 affiliate organizations. Ten articles written in English have been translated into Sinhala. These too will be distributed after making an adequate number of copies. The photocopier supplied under grant assistance is being heavily overworked owing to the non-availability of an alternative. The procurement of an offset or other printer, which could handle a large volume of duplication, will expedite the production of material for circulation, and also ease the pressure on the photocopier.
- 3.55 OSLEN's library now provides lending as well as reference services to its member organizations. These services are being managed by one full-time and two part-time Library Assistants recruited with grant assistance under the First Work Plan. The articles and reports specified in List (2) of OSLEN's interim substantive report have been photocopied and bound for the Library and Documentation Centre. Further, this Centre has been strengthened by the addition of 632 new books.
- 3.56 OSLEN is well on the way to establishing an expanded database on its on-going programme activities. Bibliographies on 10 subjects have been prepared. Of these, 08 are on the environment, and the remaining 02 on consumer protection.
- 3.57 Thus, OSLEN had made appreciable progress under the First Work Plan. Its decision against substantial budgetary growth for fear of the organization becoming unwieldy, is not only commendable, but is demonstrative of its realistic and pragmatic approach of activities.
- 3.58 Some national-level NGOs (including OSLEN), which are concerned with environmental education and training, felt handicapped by the non-availability of a standard text book in Sinhala on the environment and its conservation. This could also be true of Tamil. Translating articles written in English is a cumbersome task, and besides, it will inhibit the publication of a text book in Sri Lanka's national languages. TAF may consider funding the preparation by a group of competent persons of a series of articles on the several aspects of the

local environment and its conservation. Such articles could thereafter be published in Sinhala and Tamil in the form of a handbook or textbook. This will not duplicate the pilot enviro-packs project of MFC.

### **Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF)**

3.59 SLEJF, established in 1987, has an island-wide coverage. It specializes in environmental awareness through the mass media.

3.60 In providing grant assistance, TAF's objective was to strengthen SLEJF's institutional capabilities and to extend its activities.

3.61 TAF anticipated that its support will enable SLEJF to achieve the following results :-

#### **Institutional**

- \* Increased recognition for SLEJF as a national profile organization through increased requests for training and educational services;
- \* Appointment of SLEJF's first four paid staff members;
- \* A 25 percent increase in SLEJF's annual operating budget, apart from TAF support, as a result of increased institutional profile and donor access;
- \* Holding of regular formal and informal meetings for journalists at SLEJF's offices.

#### **Programme**

- \* Publication of five SLEJF newsletters over the course of the workplan period;
- \* Increase in the number of major programme activities (workshops, campaigns, etc) from 10 in calendar year 1990 to 12 in 1991 and 15 in 1992;
- \* Increase in the number of journalists who receive basic (one-day) environmental journalism training from 300 in 1990-91 to 450 in 1991-92 (first workplan period). Increase in the number of journalists who receive comprehensive training from 25 to 50 during the same period;

Increase in the number of requests for assistance received from affiliate NGOs from 30 in 1990-91 to 50 in 1991-92 (first workplan period).

- 3.62 SLEJF has moved to its new location in Nawala (4th Lane) with the support of TAF grant assistance. It presently employs a staff of 08, including 02 voluntary Project Assistants. While 01 Project Officer is funded by the UNDP, all other paid staff are being supported by TAF grant assistance.
- 3.63 The necessary office furniture has been procured under the grant. In view of the inordinate delay in obtaining a telephone connection to the office, the allocation of Rs.15,000 for this purpose had been utilized to provide more stacking space in the library. It is intended to recover this amount from the sale proceeds of its publication *Reporting on the Environment - A Handbook for Sri Lankan Journalists*. This Handbook, originally written in English for ESCAP/AFEJ, has been translated into Sinhala by a professional journalist. The Sinhala publication had had the support of USAID/TAF. 2,000 copies have been printed, of which 500 were for free distribution among journalists and NGOs. The remainder will be sold to the public.
- 3.64 Special mention must be made of SLEJF having won, in 1992, UNEP's coveted Global 500 Award. It would appear that this was the first occasion at which a Sri Lankan NGO had won this rare distinction. SLEJF has also claimed that it was the first environmental journalists' organization in the world to have received this honour. UNEP has made the award in recognition, particularly, of SLEJF having trained Sri Lankan journalists on environmental reporting and having sensitised them on environmental issues.
- 3.65 The Global 500 Award has contributed towards the recognition enjoyed by SLEJF as a national-level environmental organization. As many as 67 requests for assistance had been received in 1992 from other NGOs, and SLEJF had responded to all but 08 of these.

- 3.66 The annual budget of SLEJF has increased from US\$ 7,000 in 1991 to US\$ 25,000 in 1992, registering a growth of well over the envisioned 25%. Further increases are anticipated in 1993. Funding sources had risen from 07 to 12 in the same period.
- 3.67 No meetings with journalists had been held by SLEJF prior to its relocation in Nawala. Since then, 28 official gatherings have taken place.
- 3.68 Six issues of SLEJF's newsletter *Diyadama* have been published in the work plan period. Each issue consists of 5,000 copies, all of which are for free distribution. Its goal is to educate its readers and to generate awareness on the projects of the United Nations Campaign for Environment and Development (UNCED), and on UNCED itself. In addition, SLEJF had published collations of newsitems on matters of current topical interest. In the recent past, these have included news items on [1] The Tragedy of Elephants at Resvehera, [2] The Diyatalawa Phenomenon, [3] Kukule Ganga - from dam to weir ? and [4] The Nuwara Eliya Lake. SLEJF is also in the process of building an Environmental Video Film Library. This presently consists of about 35 titles, mainly of less than thirty-minute duration. It is open to other NGOs to borrow these films.
- 3.69 There has been sizeable increase in the number of major project activities. 28 workshops, seminars, and campaigns had been conducted in 1992 as against 08 in 1991. Of the campaigns, the major one related to the Kandalama Hotel Project.
- 3.70 SLEJF provides two training programmes, namely, a one-day basic programme, and a multi-day in-depth programme. Up to the end of September 1990, a total of 325 journalists had been trained under both programmes. Since then, 114 journalists have benefitted from basic training, and another 17 from in-depth training.
- 3.71 SLEJF has made vast strides under the First Work Plan, and its benefactors could confidently look forward towards its further growth in the years ahead. Its greatest asset, besides ready access to mass

media, would appear to be a well-motivated and committed leadership consisting of persons, who by the very nature of their profession, are abreast of current trends and developments in the field of environment.

#### Sri Lanka Environmental Congress (SLEC)

3.72 Established in 1986, SLEC has an island-wide coverage. It specializes in providing umbrella support to environmental NGOs.

3.73 The present evaluation pertains to the performance of SLEC as a grantee under the National-Level (Core Group) Programme. Its role in relation to the Community-based (Seed Grant) Programme will be discussed in Part III of this Chapter.

3.74 TAF's grant assistance during the First Work Plan was focused primarily on developing SLEC's publishing capabilities. In targeting publishing activities, TAF's objectives were :

- \* to facilitate SLEC's publications to become self-financing;
- \* to enable SLEC to utilize its financial resources, including those hitherto expended on publications, to promote institutional growth in other areas;
- \* to enhance SLEC's institutional profile through an increase in the national and international circulation of its publications, thereby improving SLEC's ability to raise funds from other donors.

3.75 TAF anticipated that its support will enable SLEC to achieve the following results :-

##### Institutional

- \* Increase in full time core staff by at least two persons;
- \* Budget increase by 20 percent by January 1993, independent of Foundation support;

- \* Increase in SLEC's national profile and community outreach capabilities, as demonstrated by a 100 percent increase in the number of NGOs requesting SLEC assistance or services;
- \* Enhancement of SLEC complementary activities through an increase in financial resources available and the broader focus of permanent and voluntary staff that were previously involved in publishing activities at the exclusion of other functions. This will be evidenced by increase programme activities. (See below)

**Programme**

- \* Implementation of 20 percent more training/education workshops;
- \* Publication of 12 issues of *Mihikatha* per year, representing a 300 percent increase over present quarterly publication;
- \* Deadlines for the publication of *Mihikatha* and other periodicals met at least 75 percent of the time;
- \* Improvement in the professional quality of SLEC publications;
- \* 50 percent increase in revenue from the publication of *Mihikatha* (from present recovery rate of 23 percent).

3.76 As a preliminary to the evaluation, it is necessary to refer to SLEC's organizational structure up to late May 1992 and to the fundamental changes introduced thereafter. The affairs of this NGO had been managed by two entities, namely, the *Mihikatha* Trust Fund and the Executive Committee. In addition to bearing responsibility for SLEC's regular publication *Mihikatha*, the Trust Fund had been in control of the finances and the management of SLEC. The Executive Committee, which was annually elected, had been primarily a policy-making body. Thus, the Trust Fund had been the more important entity. These two had however functioned without conflict; one reason for amity being that some members were common to both.

3.77 It would appear that at the last Annual General Meeting held on May 23, 1992, an attempt had been made by some members to take control of the

Executive Committee. This had resulted in the decision that the Mihikatha Trust Fund and the Executive Committee should function as two independent entities and in the election of two members from a so-called opposing camp to key positions in the Executive Committee. The major consequences of these developments had been :

- \* that the Executive Committee, which was now responsible for the overall management of SLEC, moved to a new location, along with 13 members of the staff, while the Trust Fund continued to function from the original venue, retaining the remaining 02 staff members;
- \* that the Trust Fund became responsible only for the publication of *Mihikatha*;
- \* that monies lying to the credit of the Trust Fund were transferred to SLEC; and
- \* that SLEC commenced publishing a monthly newspaper, first known as *Sanrakshana* (Conservation). As another NGO had a publication by the same name, SLEC had changed the title of its newspaper to *Sanrakshaka* (Conservator).

3.78 The immediate aftermath of these developments had been (to quote SLEC) "a period of mixed fortunes", characterized by uncertainty and inactivity. This had compelled the staff to entertain doubts about their future with SLEC, and 03 of the staff of 13 had resigned. The resulting vacancies remain unfilled. Evidently, the *status quo ante* had been restored in August 1992 with the resignation from office of the two members of the "opposing camp" in the Executive Committee. In the opinion of those who narrated this sequence of events, SLEC had since then commenced functioning satisfactorily.

3.79 The anticipated increase of full-time core staff by at least two with grant assistance had not taken place. On the contrary, SLEC's staff strength which had dropped from 15 to 13 following the last Annual General Meeting, now stands at 10 in consequence of resignations. No

new staff had been recruited by way of filling vacancies or under grant assistance.

8.80 SLEC is confronted with a very gloomy picture where finances are concerned. Its foreign funding sources have virtually dried up. NORAD and PANOS, which had been funding SLEC over the years, have refused future support. Neither has SLEC won the confidence of any other donor. A balance of a grant from UNEP for funding the training programme on Safe Handling of Pesticides and Household Chemicals for Women Leaders, will be received on programme completion. Apart from this, SLEC presently has no visible means of support.

3.81 Nevertheless, 87 applications for membership had been received in 1992, and of these, 25 have been accepted up-to-date. The remainder are being processed. SLEC presently has 66 full members, 166 affiliated members, and 550 associated members, making a total of 872. Considering what has been stated earlier, one cannot definitely conclude that SLEC's national profile and community outreach capabilities have increased, although its membership has grown this year.

3.82 In spite of internal unsettled conditions, SLEC had conducted some programme activities. These were :

- \* 08 seminars and workshops for NGOs;
- \* A workshop on the training programme Safe Handling of Pesticides and Household Chemicals for Women Leaders. (This programme, targeted to train 200, has hitherto provided training to about 275);
- \* A speech and oratorical contest for school children;
- \* Compilation of an Environmental Education Kit for the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD).

In addition, 03 meetings of the NGO Media Forum have been held. SLEC had also been an active participant in the public campaign against the Kandalama Hotel Project.

3.83 The publication *Mihikatha* (completely under the Mihikatha Trust Fund as of May 23, 1992) had lagged far behind expectations, both in terms of

issues and deadlines. It had been last published as a "bumper" (double) issue in respect of May/June 1992. Since then, no issue of *Mihikatha* appears to have seen the light of day. Thus, the anticipated results have not been realized at all.

- 3.84 Since the separation of the Trust Fund and the Executive Committee, SLEC had commenced publishing a newspaper, initially known as *Sanrakshana* and presently as *Sanrakshaka*. July and August issues have been released, and the September issue is with the printer. As the editor of the newsletter *SLECNEWS* had been placed in charge of the newspaper, the former had not been published. *ECOMED*, the bimonthly medical newsletter, has been published twice (Vol.1, No.5 and No.6). In addition, 04 articles on issues pertaining to the environment have been released.
- 3.85 It is difficult to pass judgement on the professional quality of SLEC publications. *Mihikatha*, which had been identified as a SLEC publication, is now entirely within the Trust Fund's purview. No new issue has been published under this arrangement. SLEC, as presently conceived, has published no issue of its newsletter *SLECNEWS*. Being an innovation, no comparative evaluation of the newspaper *Sanrakshaka* is possible. Thus, what is left is only *ECOMED* whose quality is best assessed by a person competent in medical science and knowledgeable about the environment.
- 3.86 As stated in para.3.74, the First Work Plan was primarily focused on developing SLEC's publishing capabilities. It was intended that these publications would in the end be self-sustaining, and that the current expenditure on publications would be diverted for institution building. Obviously, these expectations have not been realized. This is equally true of international donor support anticipated from the institutional build-up of SLEC expected to result from international circulation of its publications.
- 3.87 While some of the anticipated results have been achieved partially, one is constrained to make the observation that looking at the overall situation, SLEC had defaulted in this respect. A part of the failure

could no doubt be attributed to the institutional changes which had taken place, but one cannot help but conclude that there should be something intrinsically wrong or lacking in an organization which cannot accommodate a change of leadership. After all, democracy works on the cardinal presumption that no one is indispensable.

#### National Development Foundation (NDF)

- 3.88 Established in 1979, NDF's activities cover Puttalam, Kurunegala, Minipe, Kandy and Moneragala. It specializes in integrated rural development with environmental issues as a primary focus.
- 3.89 In providing grant assistance, TAF's objective was to strengthen NDF's administrative and technical capacity to undertake a broader variety of environmentally-based community development activities.
- 3.90 TAF anticipated that its support will enable NDF to achieve the following results :-

##### Institutional

- \* Creation of a Training Department within NDF and the addition of one new core staff member;
- \* Budget increase of ten percent by January 1993, independent of Foundation support;
- \* Increased contact with new communities in the project areas (25 percent more villages by the end of the workplan period) through requests for training and other assistance.

##### Programme

- \* Creation of ten community nurseries in five districts, serving 50 villages : Minipe (12), Hakwatunaoya (3), Kurunegala (27), Puttalam (2) and Muthukandiya (6);
- \* Organization of eight community workshops for selected farmer families from each workshop area;
- \* Establishment of exchange workshops within project areas, facilitating interaction between participating communities;

Evaluation of the pilot project through the input local participants at the end of the workplan period.

- 3.91 A Training Department has been established in NDF's headquarters (at Nugegoda) with the appointment of a Training Co-ordinator funded by grant assistance. In conducting training programmes, he is being assisted by some staff at the headquarters and in the project sites.
- 3.92 NDF will receive in 1993 donor support from Community Aid Abroad, Intercooperation, and the Australian Development Assistance Bureau. A budget increase of more than 10% over the 1992 level is anticipated.
- 3.93 Although the original intention had been to conduct project activities at Ridibendi Ella (Kurunegala District); Muthkandiya (Monaragala District); and Minipe (Kandy District), two more project sites had been added on at the request of NGOs active in these areas. These were Kinigama (Badulla District) and Muruthalawa (Kandy District). The strategies followed in realizing project objectives were initial discussions with People-based Organizations (PBOs), conducting workshops at selected locations and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) programmes, and establishing and managing nurseries.
- 3.94 A total of 11 workshops had been held (04 each in the Kurunegala and the Monaragala Districts, 02 in the Kandy District, and 01 in the Badulla District). The participants had included teachers, pupils, and mainly, farmers. Issues such as the depletion of forest cover, soil erosion, and extensive use of chemical fertilizers and agro-chemicals had been discussed in the Kurunegala District workshops. These, together with *chena* cultivation, had been dealt with at Moneragala. The key issues at other workshops were environmental awareness and conservation. These workshops had enabled NDF to establish contact with new communities in project areas.
- 3.95 Although programme activities had contemplated exchange workshops within project areas to facilitate interaction among participating communities, no such workshop has been held. A major constraint in organizing workshops appears to have been the inadequacy of budgetary

provision due to cost escalation. However, NDF intends to hold a final national-level workshop in Kandy.

- 3.96 The long drought which had prevailed in the project areas had undermined the establishment and maintenance of plant nurseries. Nevertheless, 08 nurseries had been set up in the Kurunegala District. Of these, 04 were in school gardens by School Environmental Committees. They maintain the 04 nurseries. 02 nurseries had been raised in the Moneragala District, 02 in Kandy District, and 01 in the Badulla District. Plants from these nurseries were distributed to temples, Government offices, schools, NGOs and the general public.
- 3.97 NDF had conducted two *padayathra* (march) in Wariyapola (Kurunegala District) with the aim of creating environmental awareness in school children and the general public. Teachers as well as pupils had taken part in these *padayathra*.
- 3.98 NDF had made somewhat satisfactory progress in the present work plan period. It is evident that this NGO had attempted to replicate the very same activities in a wide geographical area. This is time-consuming, and often results in an unnecessary use of financial and other resources. It would have been more meaningful to concentrate on a few activities in a limited area and to perform these with professional thoroughness. Further, it is possible that the activities undertaken at some project sites by NDF with TAF grant assistance are also being supported by another donor. It would appear the Australian assistance is targeted to the Moneragala District. Any duplication of this nature is best avoided. It is therefore recommended that the application format be so amended as to require each NGO being funded by any other donor/s (besides TAF) to disclose the specific purpose/s for which such funding is being received and the location/s of the activity/activities performed therewith.

### PART III - LOCAL-LEVEL (SEED GRANT) PROGRAMME

#### The Role of SLEC

3.99 For the purpose of administering the seed grant programme, TAF was to provide SLEC with a sub-grant of Rs.1,232,500. The budget for seed grants, which amounted to Rs.1,000,000 of this sub-grant, was to be released to SLEC on approval of work plans. It was understood that SLEC would pay this amount to selected NGOs in three instalments, depending upon the progress made by them in project activities.

3.100 The balance sum of Rs.232,500, comprised as follows, was also to be paid to SLEC (in three instalments) for the establishment and continued operation of an Administrative Support Unit (ASU) :

Item	Amount
Programme Co-ordinator	Rs. 60,000
Programme Assistants (2)	Rs. 75,000
Personal Computers (2)	Rs. *
Travel & NGO Liaison	Rs. 45,000
Rent attributable	Rs. 45,000
Contingency	<u>Rs. 7,500</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Rs. 232,500</b>
	=====

\* To be purchased by TAF at an estimated cost of Rs.170,000.

3.101 The ASU was pivotal to the administration of seed grants. Its functions included progress monitoring of grant-supported activities, and evaluating the success of individual grants and the seed grant programme as a whole. ASU members (Programme Co-ordinator and two Programme Assistants) were expected to travel extensively to maintain close personal contact with seed grant recipients. The original grant component for this purpose was Rs.22,500 but as SLEC had represented that this was inadequate, TAF had enhanced this to Rs.45,000 in August 1992.

102 The grantees had to submit quarterly progress reports. These were to be evaluated by a committee, which was to include representatives of the grantee NGOs. SLEC itself was to have conducted interim evaluations of each project.

103 The following deficiencies in seed grant administration were noticed in the course of the present evaluation :-

3.103.1 SLEC had neither established the ASU in the manner specified nor recruited a Programme Co-ordinator and two Programme Assistants, for whom financial provision had been made. Instead, a Project Officer has been appointed. She had had no previous experience in project administration, but appeared to be otherwise suitable to hold this position. The functions of the ASU were said to be discharged by this Project Officer with the assistance of two other staff members of SLEC.

3.103.2 There has been no progress monitoring on a monthly basis. Instead, SLEC intended to monitor progress once in six months. The Project Officer was reported to have so far made one visit to each recipient NGO. It was intended to make a second visit at or about project termination.

3.103.3 There was no evidence of an interim evaluation of any project having being made.

3.103.4 Of the recipient NGOs, all but 02 had sent the first progress report on time. (These two had however reported later.) Only 05 NGOs have so far submitted the second progress report.

3.103.5 No evaluation committee as such has been appointed to review progress reports. Instead, evaluation was said to have been done by SLEC's Executive Committee, which included representatives of grantee NGOs.

3.104 The conclusion that SLEC had not fully discharged its responsibility to administer the seed grant programme is irresistible. This may have been partly due to the state of confusion which appears to have prevailed within SLEC in the period immediately following its last Annual General Meeting. Although accepted as an organization providing umbrella support to environmental NGOs, it is doubtful whether SLEC has the infrastructure, particularly in terms of regional offices, and is otherwise competent to administer a seed grant programme having a wide geographic coverage. Right now, its first priority is to put the house in order, which is bound to be wellnigh impossible owing to the inadequacy of external support. TAF could be of assistance in this regard.

#### **Alternative Arrangement**

3.105 As for the future implementation of the seed grant programme, whether with or without a conceptual change (see paras.2.21 to 2.23), it is recommended that in the event of SLEC failing to make adequate progress by March 31, 1993, an alternative arrangement be made. In this connection, TAF may consider the undermentioned alternatives :-

3.105.1 To undertake by itself the administration of the programme. This would necessitate strengthening its Project Management Unit by the appointment of two Project Officers on contract. They should be adequately experienced in project implementation and must be willing to undertake regular field visits to provide guidance to beneficiary NGOs and to monitor their projects.

3.105.2 To select another national-level NGO to administer the programme. The selectee must have [1] a good track record; [2] at least one regional office; and [3] considerable experience in working with rural communities (as distinct from community-based NGOs). Direct contact with the community is necessary to administer the seed grant programme. (In the event of TAF assuming direct

responsibility for the programme, it is assumed that the Project Officers will establish such contact.)

3.106 As no arrangement for field visits could be made to fit the short time schedule, much reliance had to be placed on the reports submitted by SLEC in evaluating the performances of seed grantees.

#### **Nation Builders Association (NBA)**

3.107 The objective of the grant is to test in the Upper Mahaweli Catchment area the merits of the Sloping Areas Land Terracing (SALT) method of conservation farming, and to acquire in the process the necessary knowledge and skills to promote this method in the hill country. Some comments on this project have been made in para 2.20.3 of this report.

3.108 An area of 20.5 acres has been selected, and initial steps taken to practice the SALT technique, for which purpose 41 farmers have been identified (01 per 0.5 acre). 04 one-day training workshops have been organized with a view to demonstrating, and thereby educating these farmers, in this method.

3.109 It would thus appear that the project has just got off the ground. No further comment could be made at this stage.

#### **Twelve Hearts Community Development Foundation**

3.110 The objectives of the project are to continue research on mangroves, in all their aspects (extent of destruction and its impact on the fauna and flora, and on fisherman, alternatives to using mangroves as a fuel-wood, and to recommend methods of overcoming the rapid loss of the mangrove forest. The findings of the research team were to be published by SLEC. Some observations on this project have also been previously made (para.2.20.4).

3.111 This recipient, who had first requested an extension of time to submit its report, has since then sent the same. In addition to having identified the research team, some preliminary arrangements to commence

the research activity have been made. As the project is still in its initial stage, no further comment is possible at this stage, except to state that it is not likely to be completed within the present work plan.

#### **Youth Explorers Society**

3.112 The project has a two-fold objective, namely, [1] to educate the public, especially school children and young people, in the need for environmental conservation and to get their active support to this effort; and [2] to actively involve the membership and any interested people in some practical way in the conservation process.

3.113 The society has so far conducted the following activities :-

- \* Organizing successfully 06 lectures for school children and 03 for the general public and NGOs;
- \* Further study of the practical possibility of introducing to households medicinal plants as ornamental plants;
- \* Establishing a small plant nursery with 200 plants;
  
- \* Providing 05 schools with material necessary to establish plant nurseries.

In addition, the Society has made arrangements to establish 12 school environmental societies, and to purchase 1,200 pots for the plants to be provided by school societies in the locality.

3.114 Thus, the Society has made good progress in project implementation, and could be expected to achieve the project objectives within the work plan period. It stands out among the three recipients of the larger seed grants as the best performer of project activities.

#### **Young Environmentalists**

3.115 The project objectives are to form, by means of training programmes, a cadre of personnel both committed and knowledgeable enough to lead the

general public in environmental conservation; and to conduct environmental studies in the highly degraded Uva Basin.

3.116 SLEC has encountered considerable difficulty with this project, and it is extremely doubtful whether this NGO would conduct any proposed project activity. In fact, it has not responded to letters from SLEC, whose current information is that the NGO's head, who had accepted a part of the grant, is now engaged elsewhere. Needless to add that the project would be fiasco. SLEC proposes to terminate the contract with this NGO.

#### **Natural Forest Protection Society**

3.117 The project objectives are to take, within the Society's area of activity, appropriate measures to protect : [1] the remaining patches of natural lowland forests, [2] the large number of species of endemic freshwater fish, [3] the traditional varieties of paddy and techniques of cultivation, each of which is threatened with extinction. Another project objective was to preserve the waterways of the area to ensure a steady supply to meet human needs and to sustain plant and animal life.

3.118 The Society has made good progress in implementing activities intended to facilitate the realization of project objectives. Thus, 500 trees have been planted along the waterways, and one plant nursery (of the proposed two) has been raised. A survey of traditional agricultural practices in the area is underway, and the information gathered is being documented. Action to popularize organic farming had had a positive response from the farmers. The awareness programme, implemented through seminars and visual aids, is underway. Two members of the society had undertaken prior to project approval the breeding of selected species of indigenous fish. Judging by this performance, the prospects of this Society achieving its objectives are bright.

### **Sevashrama Environmental Circle**

- 3.119 The objective of the project is to educate the local community on environmental issues and to promote environmental awareness within the community, through a mobile environmental library.
- 3.120 A mobile library carrying 115 books has been launched. It visits 20 village centres every fortnight for book-distribution and collection, and has been reported to be popular. A serious drawback is the inadequacy of books written in Sinhala on the environment. Of the books carried in the mobile library, hardly 30% concern the environment. The majority are novels (which presumably accounts for the popularity of the library). SLEC has insisted that at least 40% of the books should pertain to the environment.
- 3.121 Some comments on this project have been made in para.2.20.1. A series of public meetings, lectures and seminars on environmental issues, followed by a few simple handouts, would have had a better cost-benefit ratio.

### **Wediwatte Youth Society**

- 3.122 The project objectives are to enhance the image of the Society (the only one of its kind in the locality) as an environmental conservation organization, and to slow-down and prevent the ongoing destruction of the natural forest cover in the area.
- 3.123 The Society has published 1,000 copies of a leaflet on the danger of pesticides. Two one-day public gatherings have been held. A nursery of nearly 6,000 plants (to be increased to 15,000) has been established. These will be sold to governmental organizations for income generation. The society has formed a study group on fauna and flora, and information is being gathered on the current state of the environment in the area. Satisfactory progress has thus been made towards the realization of project objectives.

## Youth Pioneers

3.124 The project objective is to mobilize school children of the area through lecture programmes, workshops and school societies - [1] to influence the practices of their parents, relatives and neighbours, in relation to the environment; [2] to monitor existing environmental problems and to bring further problems to the Society's notice; and (3) to create in the long-term a generation of environmentally conscious citizens in the Bandarawela area.

3.125 The society, which had hitherto functioned from the homes of its members, has established a separate permanent office, and has purchased basic office furniture and stationery with grant assistance. Seven (of the 12 school seminars) have been held, with about 3,000 student participants. Preliminary arrangements are underway to hold a two-day residential workshop. It will be open to those selected from among school seminar participants. While the first issue of the society's environmental newsletter has been released, the second is under preparation. No information was available on the number of completed lecture programmes, of the schools so far covered under the project, and of the school environmental clubs established. The society's progress could however be considered satisfactory.

## Agrabodhi Environmental Friends Foundation

3.126 The project objectives are - [1] to generate interest in environmental conservation in the area by conducting a model environment along the new Weligama roadway; [2] to publish a document on the areas devastated by the Nilwala Ganga Project; and [3] to strengthen the society to carry out better work in future.

3.127 Para.2.20.2. contains some initial remarks on this project. SLEC intends taking a second look at the project whilst it is being implemented. The latest position, according to SLEC, is that the society has just initiated the establishment of the model environment by putting up a few boards identifying the trees and plants located within the site, and also prepared a questionnaire to elicit from the

public their impressions on the Nilwala Ganga Project. The questionnaire (which was perused at SLEC's office) has not been tested, and contained some enquiries to which the public cannot be reasonably expected to respond. These pertain to government policy and actions of public departments. It is unlikely that the project will achieve the intended goals.

#### **Sadaharitha Environmental Friends Society**

3.128 The project objectives are - [1] to create environmental awareness through school and rural societies to be established under the project; [2] to conserve soil, to take measures to prevent landslides, and to identify areas prone to sliding; and [3] to strengthen the administrative capabilities of the society.

3.129 Basic office furniture has been procured under grant assistance. While two issues of the society's newsletter *Sadaharitha* have been published, the third has been prepared. In addition to holding one seminar on landslides, two school environmental societies have been formed. Another three are in the process of being established.

3.130 The project has laudable objectives, but it would be in no position to achieve all these in the current work plan period. Nevertheless, satisfactory progress in this direction has been made.

#### **WildGREENS Organization**

3.131 The project objectives are - [1] to promote the Kandyan Home Garden concept as a viable method of soil conservation; [2] to conduct an education and research project in the area on environmental problems; and [3] to establish, as an income-generating venture, a sales outlet where nature-friendly products made of waste but unharmed material will be sold to the public and the tourist industry.

3.132 Two leaflets on the Kandyan Home Garden concept have been distributed, and the concept is being implemented by 45 farmers in an area of about 25 acres. These farmers have raised plant nurseries. The preparation

of greeting cards and calendars from waste material has commenced, and almost all the products have been sold. The society has made satisfactory progress.

#### **Gampaha Gurukula Academy of Indigenous Medicine**

3.133 The project objectives are : [1] to create public awareness of medicinal plants and their potential use an ornamental plants; [2] to establish a medicinal-plant garden, which will include a pond for the cultivation of aquatic medicinal plants; and [3] to strengthen the administrative capacity of the organization. The total sum of Rs.49,625 to be given to this organization will be the highest of the grants approved for the 09 seed grant NGOs.

3.134 The Academy has procured basic office furniture with funds provided under grant assistance. While an inventory of preserved medicinal plants has been compiled, the preparation of a book on medicinal plants is in progress. Basic construction work, including a pond for the cultivation of aquatic medicinal plants, and the layout of a medicinal-plant garden are nearing completion. The existing garden is being upgraded. SLEC is very satisfied with the progress made by this society, which has good prospects of achieving project objectives.

#### **PART IV - PRACTICAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMME**

3.135 The training programme was to be implemented by the Central Council of Social Services (CCSS). It was intended to provide training on 05 topics, by means of practical workshops. A total of 15 such workshops were to be held, with each having about 25 participants drawn from among the staff of 13 NGOs, including the 07 in the Core Group Programme. (Further details have been given in paras.2.26 to 2.28).

3.136 The training material was to be prepared by groups of consultants assembled by CCSS. Each consultant was to receive a handsome payment (Rs 4,000 per day). Three observations need be made at this stage.

3.137 Firstly, the CCSS had no Training Officer at the inception of the programme. He had been recruited about 03 months after programme commencement. He is well qualified in Health Education and has to his credit considerable experience in this field as a former employee of the Health Ministry. Since the Training Officer's appointment, he had undertaken the preparation of training material, which were finalized after obtaining comments and observations from the consultants.

3.138 Secondly, although the training topics fell within the field of social sciences, the majority of consultants had been drawn from among health educators. The Training Officer's contention was that Health Education also covered basic principles of management, accounting, project formulation, etc., and therefore, that health educators were also competent to mount training programmes in these disciplines. It is rather difficult to see eye-to-eye with him in this regard. While the competence of health educators in their chosen speciality is not denied, it is most unlikely that they have been exposed to the situations faced by NGOs active in the area of environmental studies and conservation methods. This training programme was essentially targeted to environmentalists, and the credibility of the programme would have risen in their eyes had a number of their colleagues also been associated in programme preparation and delivery.

3.139 Thirdly, no attempt had been made by CCSS to identify the actual training needs of the participating NGOs and the levels of training required. On the contrary, in the process of designing training material or thereafter, the NGOs had been requested to nominate participants, presumably in the expectation that each participating NGO required training in all the 05 topics, and that every member of the staff had to be exposed to the same level of training. It was no doubt for these reasons that two Core Group NGOs expressed diametrically opposite views on training in Financial Accounting. One felt that it was quite good, presumably because its participants, not being previously exposed to training in this subject, learnt something new by participating in the workshop. The other NGO stated that the training was merely a matter of 'preaching to the converted', implying thereby that its staff, having previously acquired adequate knowledge on

Financial Accounting, had nothing to gain from the workshop. The correct procedure would have been for CCSS to conduct a needs-survey with a view to identifying dark areas, and once such areas were identified, to determine also by the same or a subsequent survey, the levels at which training should be offered. In short, the practical workshops should have been tailor-made, rather than superimposing general training programmes in the mistaken belief that all and sundry would derive benefit. In brief, the methodology ought to have been more professional. Needless to add that this situation could have arisen from the unusual weightage given to Health Educators in the matter of selecting consultants. Those exposed to Health Education, whether an identical group of Ministry employees or members of the general public, are more or less equally knowledgeable (or ignorant), whereas the staff of NGOs, drawn from diverse subject areas and vocations, have varying academic attainments and training requirements.

3.140 Of the 15 practical workshops envisioned, only 13 have been held so far. The deficiency was entirely in respect of the topic NGO Management. All the practical workshops had been held in Colombo. Pending TAF approval, CCSS has conducted a workshop in an outstation (Badulla), and attendance thereat was reported to be almost 100%.

3.141 It is unfortunate that the Practical Skills Training Programme has been almost a thorough failure, if for no other reason, owing to an extremely poor rate of participation. Statistical data are available in the PAU for 06 workshops. In the case of Project Monitoring (Sinhala), a little over 50% attendance had been recorded. In Proposal Writing (English), NGO Management (Sinhala), Community Organizing (Sinhala & English), and Project Monitoring (English), the participation rate had varied from 15 to 28%.

3.142 As there was no opportunity to get a feed back on these CCSS training workshops from the 13 NGOs expected to participate therein, it is not easy to identify with any degree of certainty the reason or reasons for poor attendance. The undermentioned may have been some of the contributory factors :

- \* A clash of interest between training and other interests. Staff of NGOs often work on a voluntary part-time basis. It is quite possible that they had to give preference to their usual occupations over training. Then again, some of these staff members also follow other training programmes. There had been at least one instance where a prospective trainee had excused himself on the ground that he had to attend another training programme at the same time. A factor contributing to this situation is the absence of job security within the NGO's service itself. Several employees would appear to be 'marking time' in the hope of securing permanent employment elsewhere. They would, naturally, consider this type of training to be of no practical use in the long-term.
  
- \* Possibly, most environmental NGOs do not recognize CCSS as a training organization (which in fact it is not). Training is a small component of its multi-faceted aims and objectives, with the training provided being concentrated on social welfare and service delivery systems. Presumably, environmental NGOs are of the wrong opinion that it has no competence to provide training in the identified topics. One cannot reasonably expect (except perhaps within the university system) an in-house capability to offer training in a variety of disciplines. What is relevant is the expertise to mount training programmes with competent resource persons drawn from elsewhere, if necessary. The CCSS could be credited with having this quality.
  
- \* The environmental NGOs were envious of CCSS being asked to perform in relation to them a function which they considered legitimately their own. If so, it was possible that they had not sufficiently induced or encouraged their respective staff to participate in CCSS workshops. This may no doubt sound far-fetched but lends support from two considerations. Firstly, the only workshop held outside Colombo had had an excellent participation rate. Secondly, CCSS has claimed that other training programmes it had organized in the past were well attended.

3.143 Of the training budget of almost Rs 1,000,000, only Rs 496,500 (or less than one-half) has been used so far. The need to provide training opportunities cannot be overemphasized in a context where employment is often voluntary and on a part-time basis. It is recommended that a competent environmental NGO be identified to provide training in the selected areas. It is further recommended that in preparing training programmes the methodology briefly described in para.3.139 be followed.

## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The present evaluation was commissioned by TAF in the expectation that an objective assessment of the progress hitherto made in implementing the Environmental NGO Project would be useful in selecting NGOs for the ensuing year, and would, at the same time, surface such deficiencies as the project may have. The evaluation will, hopefully, meet with these expectations, notwithstanding that it had to be conducted prior to termination of the First Work Plan. The purpose of this Chapter is to highlight the strengths as well as the weaknesses of the project as a whole, as seen by the Consultant, and to suggest remedial measures for TAF's consideration. It is also intended to focus TAF's attention on a few other issues.
- 4.2 The project derived much strength from the commitment of both USAID and TAF to assist Sri Lankan NGOs to establish themselves more firmly, and to implement programmes, including those pertaining to environmental awareness and education, which would contribute towards sustainable development. The beneficial effects of a project having such objectives could only be realized in the long-term rather than in a period of less than one year's duration.
- 4.3 A criticism which could be levelled at the First Work Plans in general is that these were heavily biased in favour of environmental awareness and education. Environmental concerns have had a very short history in Sri Lanka. It would be no exaggeration to say that, until quite recently, references to the environment were confined to text-books on the country's geography. Sri Lanka's population continues to remain largely rural, and environmental concerns are hardly the theme of community-level discussions. The city dwellers seldom take cognizance of such concerns unless shocked into reality, as did happen by the deluge of May 1992 which inundated a major part of Colombo. There is thus the ever-pressing need to inculcate environmental awareness in the minds of people, thereby bringing about the desired attitudinal changes. Therefore, the emphasis

on environmental awareness and education, which is the foundation for environmental conservation, was indeed a strong point of the First Year Work Plans.

- 4.4 The criteria for the selection of NGOs was another plus-factor of the project. In the Consultant's opinion, these need further strengthening, and some recommendations have been made in this direction.
- 4.5 The seed grant programme appears to be conceptually weak, and would, as recommended, require reappraisal. Community-based NGOs are generally handicapped all round. Thus, they neither have formal offices nor permanent staff. They lack technical expertise, which in turn seriously circumscribes the scope and the quality of their activities. They have no funds of their own, and seldom have access to donors who could contribute towards remedying at least some of these deficiencies. Excepting the 03 larger grants, the maximum that each of the 09 remaining small NGO's received was less than Rs 50,000. The understanding between TAF and the grantee (through SLEC) was that about 80% of the grant will be utilized for project activities, and the balance, for improving the infrastructure by recruiting full-time or part-time personnel and by acquisition of basic equipment. Even on a superficial examination of their individual grant assistance budgets, it becomes evident that, except in a very few instances, the entirety of the grant was for programme activities. Thus, while there was no allocation for improvement of the infrastructure, each grant was so small that a 20% saving was impracticable. Environmental concerns are only of marginal relevance to rural communities at present, but these will no doubt assume increasing importance in the years ahead. Thus, from a long-term perspective, it would be more meaningful to institutionally strengthen grassroots level NGOs right now, so that they could in course of time come to grips with environmental issues which would have surfaced by then. It is in this context that the concept of seed grants ought to be looked at afresh.
- 4.6 What is being recommended are relatively large grants ranging from Rs 100,000 to Rs 150,000 for income-generating projects as opposed to the

present smaller grants for programme activities. As earlier stated, income-generating projects need not be necessarily restricted to environmental activities, the main reason being that such activities could seldom have an earning capability in a rural setting. Thus, rural folk, having no expertise to trade in, will have nothing to gain by (say) setting up an environmental consultancy service; nor will there be much income from attempting to sell plants raised in nurseries when these are found in abundance in the neighbouring forests. What is essential is the capital to undertake profit-motivated ventures, which would make these small NGOs strong enough to face future environmental realities. A precedent has been created by giving the highest of the smaller seed grants to the Gampaha Gurukula Academy of Indigenous Medicine. In the first place, this is hardly an environmental NGO, and for that matter, it falls short of being even an NGO in the sense that this acronym is popularly understood. Secondly and more importantly, the projects of the Academy, which have been funded under grant assistance, are of meagre relevance to environmental awareness or conservation. (The projects are creating public awareness of medicinal plants and their possible uses as ornamental plants; and the establishment of a medicinal-plant garden, with a pond for cultivating aquatic medicinal plants). This however does not detract the projects from their validity *per se* or as income-generating projects. What the recommendation envisions by Rs 100,000 to 150,000 seed grants, in the true sense of this usage, is merely an extension of the principle underlying the grant given to the Gampaha Gurukula Academy of Indigenous Medicine. The environment cannot obviously be confined to plants. Maintaining an ecological balance as between the ruminants and the carnivora in the African veldt is as good an example of environmental management as any other. In this context, a seed grant for the scientific running of a cattle pen or a poultry yard has its own environmental merits.

- 4.7 In the event of the recommendation to give larger seed grants for income-generating projects not being accepted, a suitable alternative could be to continue offering smaller grants, but to reverse their emphasis. Under

this arrangement, a greater part of the grant (say 60-65%) will be channelled to institution-building, while retaining the balance for programme activities. This could imply an annual change of grantees, because there will be no need to assist a small NGO to build itself over a period of years. On the other hand, if the same small NGO were selected two years in succession under the new dispensation, the emphasis could again be reversed in respect of the second year by attaching greater weightage to programme activities. The disadvantage of offering smaller grants in the manner suggested is that it involves an element of 'spoon-feeding', whereas, under the recommended concept, each recipient NGO has to build up itself by the prudent use of the seed grant.

- 4.8 The seed grant programme lost its efficacy as a whole by the manner in which it had hitherto been administered. SLEC, which had been entrusted with this function, unfortunately fell short of expectations. In the matter of selecting a suitable NGO for this purpose, TAF was confronted with a Hobson's choice in the sense that SLEC was the only available umbrella organisation for environmental NGOs. It has been previously recommended that an alternative arrangement to administer seed grants be made should SLEC show no improvement by March 31, 1993 (i.e. by the termination of the First Work Plan). The choice is between TAF itself undertaking the managerial function or getting another NGO to discharge this responsibility. Even if the latter alternative is preferred, TAF ought to play a more active role than at present in monitoring the Environmental NGO Project, and more particularly, its seed grant component. Regular field visits would be desirable. An important aspect of monitoring ought to be interviewing target groups of NGO programmes in order to get the necessary feed-back on the efficacy of programme activities. The present system of depending on reports submitted by core group NGOs and by SLEC on seed grant NGOs is best avoided.
- 4.9 Monitoring the project on a regular basis will necessitate strengthening of the present Project Administration Unit by the appointment (on a contractual basis) of 02 Project Officers. As the project components have

a wide geographic spread, a separate vehicle will also be required, if not available at present.

4.10 Reference was made to the current Letter of Understanding between TAF and each NGO making no mention of the goals and anticipated results of grant assistance. It is desirable to remedy this shortcoming in conveying future approval of individual Work Plans. Quite apart from enabling the NGO to be mindful of the requirement to achieve such goals and anticipated results, the inclusion of these in the Letter of Understanding will facilitate future evaluation of progress. It has also been recommended that each NGO be required to submit a special report on these goals and results, in addition to using the common format to report on matters generally applicable to all grantees.

4.11 The reasons for the failure of the Practical Skills Training Programme have been previously described, and appropriate recommendations made. It is most unlikely that the general-purpose training programmes developed by CCSS would succeed even in the rural areas. Only about 50% of the total allocation for training programmes has been spent so far. It is suggested that CCSS be advised not to incur further expenditure. TAF could select a suitable environmental NGO to provide tailor-made training programmes formulated after a needs-survey.

4.12 The inadequacy, if not the total lack, of co-operative relations amongst NGOs even in common activities such as providing environmental awareness and education programmes, will be a matter of concern to TAF. As prospects of governmental intervention are quite remote, the NGOs themselves will have to implement measures which would facilitate establishment of such links. Another alternative would be TAF intervention to bring about harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships amongst grantee NGOs. It is suggested that this possibility be earnestly pursued at an early date. Of the NGOs concerned, SLEJF, which could possibly have no conflict of interest with any other environmental NGO, may be of assistance to TAF in this regard.

4.13 Another important matter to which TAF could respond is the lack of a text-book on environmental studies written in Sinhala and Tamil. The NGOs concerned with environmental awareness and education programmes appeared to be seriously handicapped by this shortcoming. The suggestion has been made earlier that TAF commission a team of experts to bridge this gap by contributing articles on a series of topics (to be decided by the team itself), which could be published by TAF in the form of a text-book for use in schools. The National Institute of Education (NIE), which develops school curricula, could provide the necessary pedagogical guidance to the experts.

4.14 A severe constraint confronting NGOs is their inability to recruit and retain competent staff on a permanent basis. The usual procedure is to engage services on contract during the tenure of a donor-funded project and to lay off those so engaged at project termination. This benefits neither the NGO nor its staff. Uncertainty of the future appears to have resulted in most NGOs having a quick staff turnover. What lies at the base of the problem is the dearth of funds to provide steady employment even to a modest core-staff. Of the NGOs visited by the Consultant, only EFL has taken steps to establish an endowment fund, from the annual interest of which it intends financing its core-staff. Other NGOs had no solution to this problem. A solution that suggests itself is for each donor to contribute a percentage of the grant assistance obligated to a given NGO to an endowment fund to be established by that NGO. If one donor agency makes an initial contribution, others may also lend a helping hand. TAF may pursue this matter.