



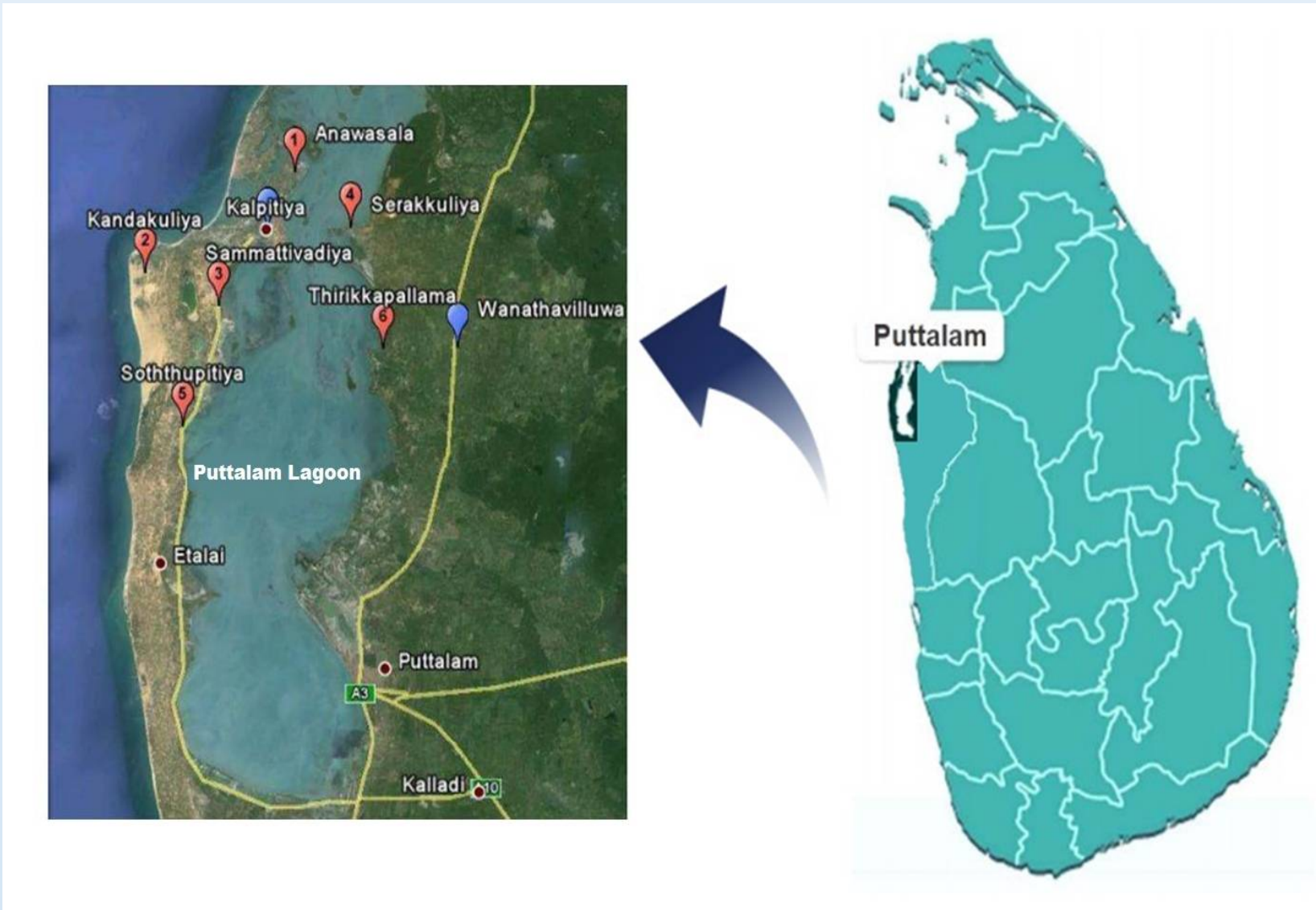
Providing incentives to local communities in return for wise stewardship of coastal habitats



Project Summary

Puttlam lagoon which is located in the Northwestern part of Sri Lanka is the main focus of this project as it provides habitat for Dugongs and Seagrass meadows. Most of the damage to the Puttlam lagoon is done by the local fishing communities through over exploitation of resources, use of illegal and harmful fishing gear. The project activities take place in six villages around the Puttlam lagoon namely Anawasala, Kandakkuliya, Palliwasathurei, Palakuda, Thirikkapallama and Serakkuliya.

This project was designed to **reduce impacts of destructive fishing practices on seagrass habitats and provide income-generation opportunities to local communities** in return for their commitments to wise habitat and natural resource use in Kalpitiya and Puttlam areas of Sri Lanka.



Main Activities

- Provide batik training
- Provide sewing training
- Provide crab-rearing pens
- Provide seabass cages
- Provide ornamental fish tanks
- Provide salt production facilities
- Provide training on marketing and branding using a business plan
- Conduct educational lectures, workshops, film shows and exhibitions to create awareness
- Replace illegal fishing nets with legal fishing nets
- Sign agreements (MoUs) between SLTCP and each of the beneficiaries
- Host a media exposure tour

Results

The ongoing Dugong and Seagrass Conservation Project (DSCP) was initiated in 2015 with six project partners from Sri Lanka. SLTCP’s project activities take place in six villages in Kalpitiya and Puttlam. Community incentive programmes include batik, sewing, crab aquaculture, fish breeding, sea bass culture, and salt production. Furthermore, legal fishing nets have been distributed to replace illegal nets. The project also provided toilets to some community members, audio-video equipment to two primary schools, and a water tank to a school. In addition, education and awareness programmes are extensively conducted within the target communities. As dugongs and sea turtles share the same habitats in the Gulf of Mannar, it is vital to protect these seagrass habitats to ensure the survival of dugongs and sea turtles as keystone species.



Educating School children



Training provided on Batik



Crab culture programme



Illegal fishing nets replaced with legal nets



Training provided on sewing

Next Steps & Lessons Learned

The next steps would include providing training on marketing and branding for the community members incorporated with a business plan. In addition, a media exposure tour will be conducted to capture the success stories with the aim of receiving more publicity for community livelihood options and also to share our lessons learned. Furthermore, findings of this project will be presented at the upcoming International Sea Turtle Symposium which will be held in Las Vegas in April, 2017. Expansion possibilities of project activities will be explored in order to include more community members in alternative livelihood activities and also to introduce new income activities.

About Our Organization

The Sri Lanka Turtle Conservation Project (SLTCP) has been working since 1993 to protect marine and coastal resources in Sri Lanka. In 1996, SLTCP began its pioneering community based in-situ marine turtle nest protection programme in Rekawa, Southern Sri Lanka by employing the local egg poachers as nest protectors. The project implemented several community incentives programmes, as alternative income generation activities. Community members were mobilized as Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and In 2012, SLTCP handed over the Rekawa turtle conservation efforts to the local community members and since then it has become a financially sustainable community driven turtle conservation project. SLTCP used experiences gained from Rekawa to design and implement a new project in the Gulf of Mannar to conserve endangered Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) and seagrass meadows.

