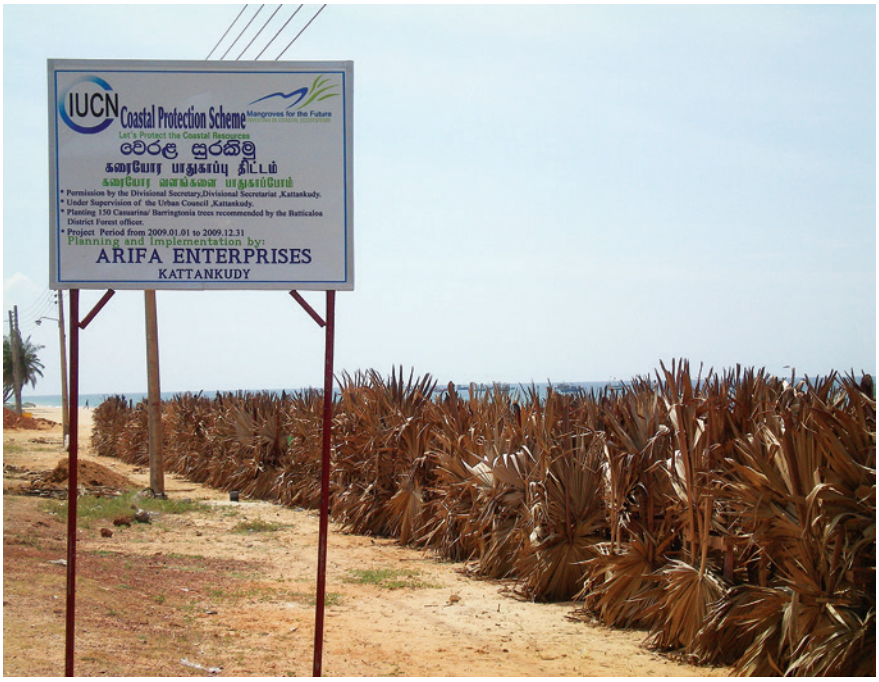
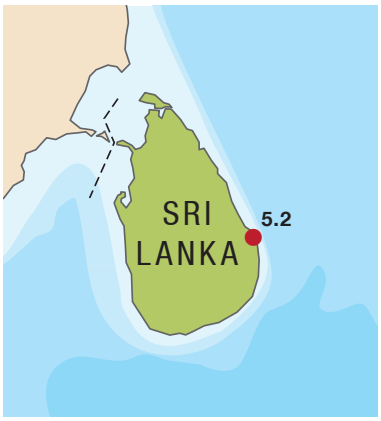
Coastal planting on Hadjiar Beach

Mangroves for the Future
INVESTING IN COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS



Green belt on Hadjiar Beach, Kattankudy, Sri Lanka © R. Mahindapala



LOCATION
Kattankudy, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

PRIORITY POWS
- Strategies for Management
- Community Resilence

DURATION
One year

MFF GRANT AMOUNT
US$3,118

Objectives

The main idea behind this project was to protect a coastal area through reforestation which would also benefit the local community. The specific objectives were to protect the coast through reforestation, prevent soil erosion, increase rainfall and shade, enhance natural beauty and attract tourists.

Background

The vegetation of Hadjiar Beach in Kattankudy has twice been badly damaged by natural disasters, first by a cyclone in 1978 and then by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. It appears that the cyclone damage was not effectively restored, nor was the beach properly maintained afterwards. The tsunami destroyed what vegetation was left, eroding the beach and causing extensive damage.

Before the tsunami, local people liked to spend their evenings and leisure time on the beach. After it they were forced to stay away, no longer able to use the beach to gain relief from the high temperatures and humidity in the area. The beach and the coast in this area are now actively deteriorating, creating an urgent need for protection and conservation.

Coastal vegetation serves a protective function. It reduces the vulnerability of the coast and shoreline to erosion. To re-establish a protective cover of vegetation that will also enhance recreational values, Arifa Enterprises secured a small grant from MFF to undertake a pilot coastal replanting programme at Hadjiar beach.

Target beneficiaries

Fisher families living in Batticaloa and Kattankudy divisions, and members of the public who visit Hadjiar beach.

Outputs

- Gained approval for planting from Coast Conservation Department and Divisional Secretariat.
- Construction of a tube well.
- Planting of 150 *Casuarina* and *Barringtonia* trees.
- Installation of 150 eco-friendly protective covers for the trees.
- Protection and maintenance of the planted trees.

Accomplishments and challenges

This project has taken the first steps towards restoring the coastal vegetation. In this first phase, 150 *Barringtonia* and *Casuarina* trees were planted, contributing to the regrowth of the coastal forest. Eco-friendly protective covers were constructed to protect the plants from harsh, salt-laden winds. These consist of wooden frames overlain with palmyrah leaves; the frames are made from wood discarded by a nearby timber yard. A tube well was also dug to supply water for the plants and for general use.

Challenges

Despite these accomplishments, the project faced several drawbacks. Some plants had to be replaced after dying in a drought, and the covers had to be repaired after being damaged by strong winds. The urban council also requested that the covers be removed and relocated. Lastly the project had to contend with a scarcity of palmyrah leaves and wood.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Climate change

The loss of vegetation in 1978 and 2004 caused the weather in Batticaloa to become drier and hotter than before. It is hoped that reforestation will help to increase local rainfall and decrease local temperatures.

Lessons learned

One year after planting, over 90% of the trees had survived and were growing well. Together they form a green belt 500 m long and 4 m wide, established within a period of one year. These trees will, in the course of time, provide coastal protection as well as a shaded recreation area to be enjoyed by the community.

The success of this planting programme can be attributed to providing a well to support regular watering, making covers to protect the plants from the desiccating winds and, not least, involving the local community in maintaining the plantation. The project showed that replanting of coastal vegetation can be successfully achieved with tree cover reaching an appreciable level in a short space of time.

One lesson learned is that permission and cooperation from local authorities are needed to implement projects of this nature. Encouraged by its success, and especially the support and appreciation of the community, Arifa Enterprises gladly volunteered to look after the trees for another three years.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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Sheltered coastal planting, Kattankudy, Sri Lanka
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"Green belts, each 500 m by 4 m in extent, were established at Hadjiar and Ethukkaal beaches in Kattankudy using Casuarina and Barringtonia plants. While these have contributed to improving the biodiversity of the area, the community now also enjoys the shade they provide."

— MR ABDUL KAIYOOM
PROJECT COORDINATOR,
ARIFA ENTERPRISES

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