



Mangroves for the Future

Investing in coastal ecosystems

September - October 2011, Issue 23

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Dear Secretariat,

Welcome to the Mangroves for the Future (MFF) newsletter!
The MFF newsletter aims to keep MFF National Coordinating Bodies, partner organisations and other stakeholder groups, around the region and internationally, up-to-date on MFF activities and other marine and coastal news.



Children painting a mural at their school
© MFF Seychelles

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REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

New MangroveWatch hub for Thailand

Krabi, Thailand
5-7 September



MangroveWatch workshop participants © MAP

The first ever MangroveWatch introductory workshop held outside Australia was run in southern Thailand in early September. [MangroveWatch](#) is an Australian based monitoring program established through James Cook University, to address the urgent need to preserve and protect threatened tidal wetland ecosystems as well as scientific and environmental management needs. By establishing a partnership between scientists and the local community the MangroveWatch approach uses a video and digital camera, a GPS unit, and local knowledge to monitor mangroves. The workshop brought together 25 participants, including Thai government representatives, university researchers and non-governmental agencies, local community participants from Krabi and international mangrove experts working in Cambodia, India, Myanmar, and Singapore. They were very enthusiastic to learn how to use the equipment, and enjoyed working together to understand how MangroveWatch could be applied in Thailand. As a result, two MangroveWatch hubs will be developed in Thailand, at Burapha University in Chonburi on the Gulf of Thailand and Kasetsart University Coastal Resources Research Station in Ranong on the Andaman Sea. A technical training with

support from IUCN, will take place early in 2012 with the workshop trainers Dr Norman Duke and Mr Jock Mackenzie returning to Thailand.

New Integrated Coastal Management course completes lecture phase

Bangkok, Thailand
7 October

The first part of the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) course closed with great celebration in early October. The five week lecture series of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) post-graduate certificate course in ICM was completed with the presentation of the 29 planned projects of the students from 11 countries across the MFF region. The course participants, who are affiliated with their respective national governments and NGOs, will return to their countries and complete a supervised individual project focusing on coastal management issues. The majority of the projects address mangrove restoration and management, tourism, and aquaculture. The participants are set to complete their projects before a final course examination in early 2012.

MFF also expresses deep sympathies and offers support to AIT colleagues whose homes and workplace have been directly affected by the recent floods in Thailand. MFF recognizes their efforts to maintain continuity for the ICM students during this difficult time.

MFF Regional Steering Committee meets in Maldives

Bandos Island, Maldives
24-26 October

MFF held the eighth meeting of its Regional Steering Committee on Bandos Island in the Maldives, 24-26 October. The MFF Regional Steering Committee brought together all of the MFF member countries and institutional partners. The Regional Steering Committee endorsed two new regional initiatives - one focusing on income for coastal communities for mangrove protection and one on mapping and natural resources governance in small island communities. The meeting also highlighted MFF's work with the private sector and included a learning event based on the many examples of sustainable coastal tourism practices in the Maldives. As part of a learning event, participants visited nearby resorts: Six Senses, Banyan Tree and Four Seasons, to find out more about their onsite environmental practices and community engagement programs.



H.E. Mr. Ahmed Naseem, Minister of Foreign Affairs speaks at the opening ceremony of RSC-8 © MFF Secretariat

MFF COUNTRY UPDATES

This section provides a snapshot of activities and events in the MFF member countries. Further details can be obtained from the National Coordinator in each country, please see the [MFF website](#) for their contact details.

India

Film release showcasing mangrove forests

MFF India is pleased to announce the release of "Guardians of the Coast". This film uses stunning footage from above and below the waterline, primarily in the states of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal, to capture the fascinating web-of-life that relies on mangrove forests. The 28 minute film presents the unique collaboration between governments, regional and local institutions, NGO's and local communities in efforts to save these vulnerable, it highlights the threats to mangrove forests that are common across the region.

The film has already enjoyed positive reviews from international audiences at screenings at the following events: the IUCN Asia Regional Conservation Forum, Korea; the MFF Regional Steering Committee meeting, Maldives; and the Asia Pacific Forestry Week, China. Furthermore, the movie will be showcased on India's longest running, award winning environment and wildlife series, Earth Matters, which reaches out to 800 million people weekly.

For more information or to request a copy of the film, please contact [MFF India](#). The film will also soon be available on the [MFF website](#) and [MFF YouTube](#) channel.



Mangroves: Guardians of our Coast
© MFF India

Indonesia

Success with students at national mangrove festival

Cetral Java
18-19 October



Competition winners © Weka Mahardi,
MFF Indonesia

This year MFF Indonesia has run an innovative "MFF goes to Campus" programme, visiting schools and universities to excite students about the importance of mangrove conservation. Building upon this work, a two-day national event was held in October in Mangunharjo village, Semarang, to continue awareness-raising activities. The event was organized in conjunction with Ayo Tanam Mangroves, or *Let's Plant Mangroves Action*, a national mangrove planting programme run by the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries and KeSEMaT, a student association with particular interest in mangroves and coastal ecosystem from the University of Diponegoro, Jepara.

Around 300 students helped plant 36,000 mangrove seedlings. In addition, two different competitions were run, designed to assess the level of the student's understanding of mangroves following recent visits by MFF Indonesia and KeSEMaT. More than 45 elementary schools from the coastal area participated in the mangrove drawing competition, while the speech contest was open to university students. Neilil Marom, second runner up from Mangrove speech

contest, said: "I do hope there will be a similar event in the future that could enrich our love of the environment in particular mangroves for young people".

Pakistan

Go ahead for Small Grant Facility projects in Pakistan

Karachi
17 October

As a recently joined member country MFF Pakistan has initiated their first Small Grant Facility (SGF). Following an extensive process of proposal assessment, potential grantee training and final project selection, nine Small Grant Facility projects were approved by MFF Pakistan National Coordinating Body (NCB). The approved project proponents are from Community Based Organizations, NGOs, Federal and Provincial Government units and the private sector. The majority of projects will work to: improve knowledge for management; apply monitoring, learning and evaluation; promote civil society engagement; and build capacity for management. The selection process was undertaken in association with the NCB sub-committee on SGF projects in Pakistan. The NCB acknowledged the efforts of the sub-committee and the support role of MFF Pakistan in facilitating the process.



The Fifth meeting of the MFF Pakistan NCB
© MFF Pakistan

Seychelles

Torrential rains causes havoc on Mahé

Mahé island
30 October

Heavy rainfall on the last Sunday in October turned the streets of Mahé into chaos when approximately 137 mm (almost 20% of the month's rainfall) fell between 7am and 2pm. The entire country was on alert and all emergency brigades were mobilized as blocked drains caused roads, houses and shops to flood. In addition, land and rock slides affected people in the northern and central regions of the island.

A member of the MFF Seychelles NCB, from the Wetlands Unit, accompanied the Minister of Home Affairs, Environment, Transport and Energy and the Coastal Zone Division to assess the disaster. The Minister announced that the widespread impact from the high rainfall was mostly due to non-compliance of regulations, such as building over or draining rivers and marshes, illegal dumping, and littering.

"This is of great concern to NCB Seychelles as we keep seeing wetlands and coastal areas are becoming reclaimed, reducing the natural habitats where some endemic and natives species already struggle to survive" says the MFF Seychelles NCB member, from the Wetlands Unit. "We also feel that more should be done at district level by both community leaders and the public to bring those illegal practices forward to the relevant authorities" he says.



Homes and roads flooded in Mahé, Seychelles © MFF Seychelles

Sri Lanka

First official visit by new MFF Coordinator

Kalpitiya

30 October - 1 November



Dr Christensen visiting the wives of former sand miners who have begun shoe manufacturing, Katana

© Kumudini Ekaratne, MFF Sri Lanka

Dr Steen Christensen, MFF Coordinator, inspected several MFF project sites during his first visit to Sri Lanka in his new role. Travelling in the northwestern part of the country Dr Christensen met with a women's organization which is implementing a successful micro-finance scheme, in Serakkuliya, funded by an MFF Large Project. This project is working with the women of 30 local fisher families who have been provided with microfinance loans to start up various livelihood enterprises including poultry farming, and fishing gear and handicraft production. The project is progressing very well, with the organization already saving sufficient finances for the members to borrow for additional income generating activities.

In north Katana, northwestern Sri Lanka, Dr Christensen visited another MFF Large Project site. This project has helped develop alternative livelihoods for men, who used to dive in rivers to collect sand. Two former sand miners who are now successfully engaged in manufacturing travel bags and another involved in cage culture of Tilapia, proudly demonstrated their products. Several of the wives of former sand miners also received support and have successfully begun shoe manufacturing, yoghurt production, and growing flowers to sell to florists.

Thailand

Empowerment of coastal community through community-based learning centers

Pred Nai, Trat Province

10 October

The new MFF Thailand Medium Project led by RECOFTC held its inception meeting in October. The 18 month project aims to empower existing community-based coastal resource management networks, by improving knowledge sharing and management practices. Investing in local wisdom is a priority for MFF, and one particular recommendation from the meeting was that the project should involve youth, adult and elder members of the community and include all school in six sub-districts, as beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The community in Pred Nai, eastern Thailand, is already active in conservation efforts to protect, preserve their mangrove forests. A community-based coastal resource management learning center at Pred Nai will be established as a model in sustainable coastal resource management and to respond to climate change.

Meet the [Pred Nai community](#) and view a [photo gallery](#) of the fieldtrip.



Pred Nai - the second largest intact mangrove forest in Thailand, Trat Province
© Siriporn Sriaram, MFF Thailand

Innovative agreement supports sustainable livelihoods in a Vietnamese Ramsar site

Nam Dinh Province
26 October

The first series of Small Grant Facility projects for MFF Viet Nam, one of the new MFF member countries, have already begun - with great progress on the ground. One project led by Xuan Thuy National Park focuses on local women who collect clams from the core zone within the national park in north-east Viet Nam. Xuan Thuy was designated Vietnam's first Ramsar Site in 1989, but as a result of the exploitation of clams in many other parts of the Red River Delta, pressure on Xuan Thuy is increasing.

Rather than insist on a strict no-use policy, the park management has proposed the negotiation of a co-management agreement that would define for the first time, the rights and responsibilities of both the local communities and park management. The co-management agreement is an opportunity to ensure that clam harvesting does not exceed unsustainable limits and that the rights of women in terms of access to the clams are formally protected. The park authorities will involve the women in drafting the agreement and will train them in harvesting methods that minimize damage to the environment.



Women with shells collected from the mudflats inside Xuan Thuy National Park, Vietnam © IUCN Viet Nam

CROSS CUTTING THEMES: Climate Change

MFF supports Thai fisher community to take action for climate change adaptation

Chantaburi Province, Thailand
21-23 October

In collaboration with the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) and IUCN, MFF conducted its first pilot workshop to promote local innovations for climate change adaptation in Bang Chan Village 2, Chantaburi Province in eastern Thailand. The main output of the workshop was a tailored action plan for the community to tackle one of their most urgent climate change related problem: sustainable access to safe and affordable drinking water.

[Watch video](#)
[Read full story](#)



Local community participating in the PLI workshop © MFF Secretariat

RESOURCES

Governments Advance Protection of Coral Triangle

28 October

Environment and fisheries ministers from six Asia Pacific countries met to advance their collective agenda for protecting and managing the fragile Coral Triangle; one of the most diverse and threatened marine ecosystems in the world. [Read the full story](#)

How to take good images with different cameras [Read the full story](#)

MFF brochure and factsheet

Learn more about MFF and its activities across eight member countries. Download your own copy of the newly published MFF brochure and factsheet under the Publications section on the [MFF home page](#).