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ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

# Course Evaluation Summary

UNU-INWEH International Training Course on Mangrove  
Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Annamalai University, India, October 2011

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## **Table of Contents**

1. Background.....	3
2. Report Overview.....	3
3. Course Evaluation.....	4
4. Dissemination of Course Training .....	5
5. Respondent Feedback.....	6
Annex 1. Questionnaire Respondents.....	9
Annex 2. Acknowledgements.....	11

## **1. Background**

The United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) international training course on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems is designed to build the capacity of professionals and institutions to undertake monitoring, research and management of mangrove ecosystems, in developing Asian countries. This is achieved through training of young professionals in research methodology and the latest trends in research on the conservation of biodiversity in mangrove ecosystems. The program is also set up to promote and encourage development of a network of professionals from developing countries, working in mangrove ecosystems.

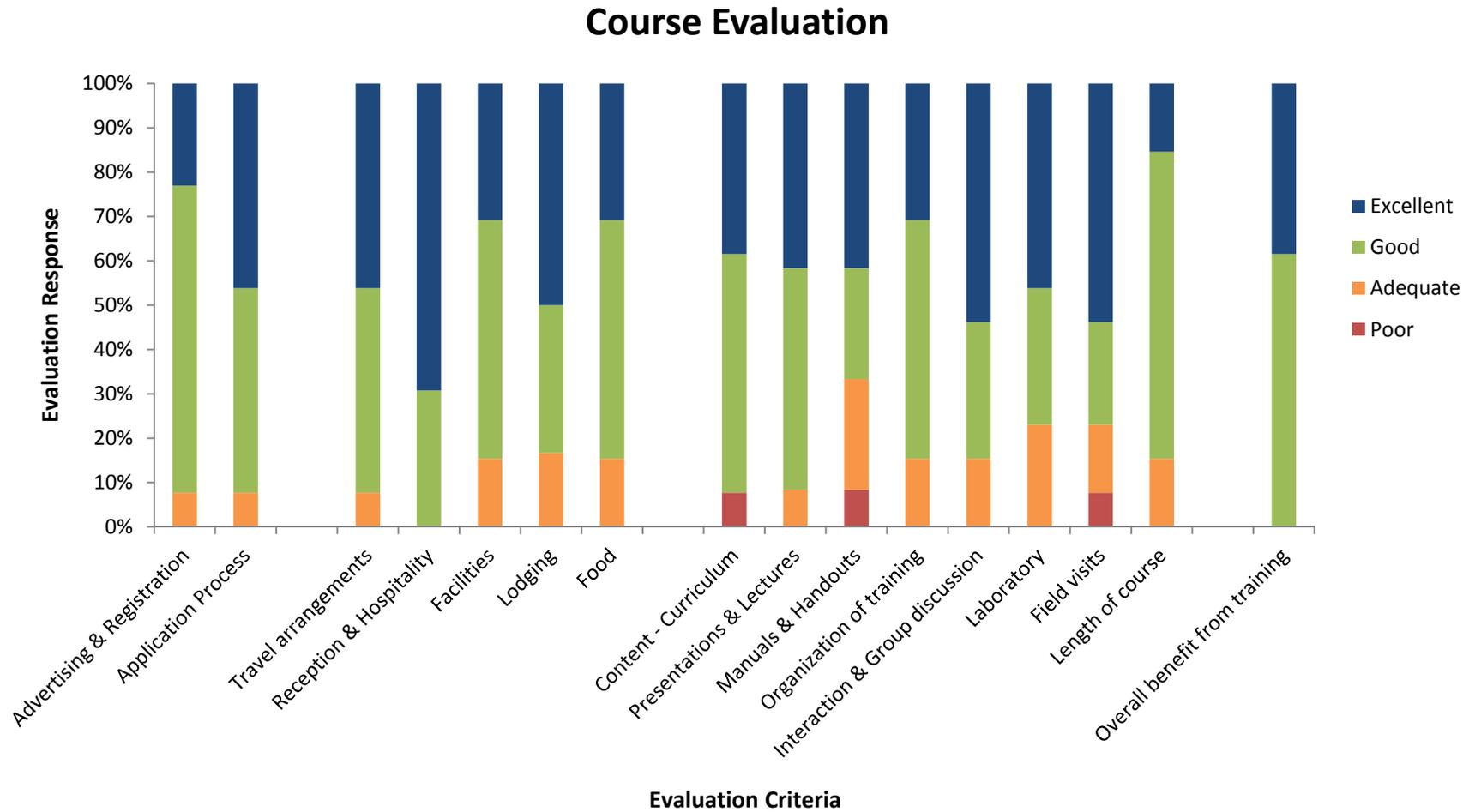
## **2. Report Overview**

This past year the program successfully held its 11<sup>th</sup> training course hosted by Annamalai University in India. 13 participants from across South-East Asia participated in the 15 day course focused on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems. The following report highlights the course evaluation by the participants who took part in the October 2011 training course organized by Annamalai University, Faculty of marine science in Tamil Nadu, India and sponsored by the UNU-INWEH.

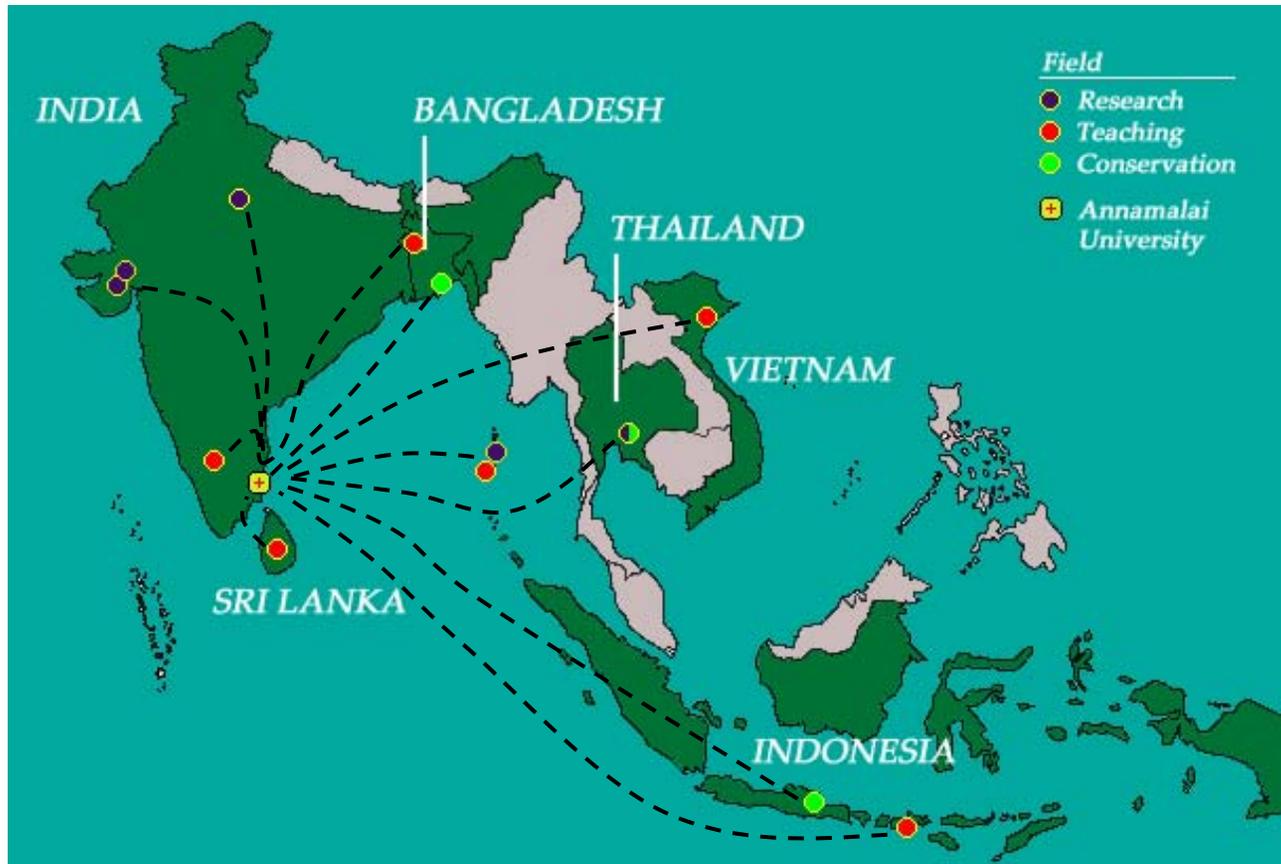
This course evaluation highlights both, areas in which things were doing well and areas where improvements can still be made. Overall, from the feed pack received by the participants it can be concluded that course met both of its objectives; it provided exceptional hands on training in the area of mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems that will be transferred and used by participants in their respective fields, and provided a platform for networking. Several areas of improvement that were persistent throughout the report and in the feedback are described below.

- Although the material covered was introductory and allowed for participants novel to the area to quickly grasp the concepts, the protocols/experiments and other procedures were found to be difficult to follow. Respondents suggested the use of flow charts and diagrams as well as handouts during the field work and experiments to alleviate this issue.
- Improvements to the scheduling can be made. Respondents suggested shortening the lectures and increasing the amount of field work to gain more hands on experience. Field work should also be more tightly scheduled and allow for rest periods. Time should also be allotted daily for individuals to do independent work or visit the library.

### 3. Course Evaluation;



**4. Dissemination of course training;**



## **5. Respondent Feedback;**

### **a) Lecture Delivery**

Respondents found lectures to be apt and highly relevant to their field of study. Lectures were well delivered, highly informative and provided a good foundation for those who were relatively new to the field of biology and/or had little working experience in it.

Most respondents agreed that the materials covered in the lectures would have been easier to grasp if each lecture was paired with field work or practicals immediately following. Respondents also felt that the lecture material, although good, was sometimes too introductory and would prefer some advanced material. One individual also suggested having lectures on the mangrove forest management system. Two others felt that the program length was too short for the number of lectures covered and suggested shortening the lecture material to 45 minutes each.

Overall impression; Good

### **b) Field work and demonstrations**

All respondents enjoyed the field work and felt that it was highly informative and useful in solidifying the concepts learned in lecture.

Respondents felt that it may be beneficial to have a fixed schedule with breaks put into place to improve organization. Several also felt that the ratio of field work to theory/lecture material should be increased to allow for more hands on training. Respondents also thought that several of the field work tasks were often completed or done by the trainers. They suggest allowing participants in the program to have more of a role in the field studies, demonstrations and practicals.

Overall impression; Very Good

### **c) Course manual and other materials**

Respondents liked the use of various research papers and case studies in the course manual. They also found it to be very useful with understanding the course as a whole and agreed that it will come in use in the future as they will implement several parts of it into their own work and research.

Respondents suggested having guest lecturers provide handouts of their presentations or definitions and key facts to make the material easier to convey. Respondents also felt that the protocols for the experiments were difficult to follow and suggested having flow charts and

diagrams to make them easier to understand and bridge the language barrier and for those with little experience in the area. One respondent also suggested reducing the number of research papers in the manual, as not all of them may have been covered.

Overall impression; Good

#### **d) Accommodations**

Most respondents were pleased with the accommodations provided.

Several respondents brought up the issue of safety, especially in regards to the women, and felt as though it could be improved.

Overall impression; Good

#### **e) Food**

Respondents enjoyed the meals and agreed that the food was both delicious and healthy.

Respondents suggested that the organizers consider that this is an international course and the tolerances of individuals will vary. Two of the respondents found the food difficult to adjust to and one other pointed out the lack of hygiene when it came to handling the food. Another respondent suggested having some variety and felt the food was the same every day.

Overall impression; Good

#### **f) Reception and hospitality**

All respondents agreed that the reception and hospitality was outstanding. The organizers and hosts were all friendly, caring and took into consideration their individual needs.

Overall impression; Excellent

#### **g) Most useful component of training program**

The majority of respondents agreed on the following aspects of the training course as being most useful:

- Practical hands on exposure through field work
- Propagation techniques of mangroves
- Lectures on mangrove conservation and climactic change
- Demonstration of statistical tools and GIS
- Scientific methodology/experience of technique

- Networking with individuals in related fields
- Policies analysis and management options

#### **h) Least useful component of training program**

All respondents found the entirety of the course to be useful and could not pick out a least useful feature of the course.

#### **i) Suggestions for future programs**

The following suggestions to improving the training program were made by respondents:

- Schedule
  - Schedule daily library/work hour
  - Shorter lectures, keep to 45 min each
  - have a defined schedule for field work with breaks included
- Materials
  - Provide handouts for protocols and selected lectures.
  - Have charts/figures/flow diagrams for protocols and experiments
- Course content
  - More field work
  - Include lectures on mangrove plant physiology, mangrove flora
- Overall program
  - Length of course and number of field work should be extended
  - Organize alumni meets or conferences to discuss progress in the area and share ongoing research
  - Allow for more international participants

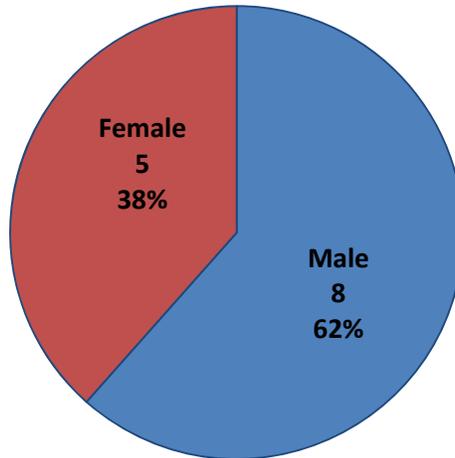
#### **j) General opinion and other comments**

Respondents enjoyed the course overall and found it to be a good 'forum/opportunity for likeminded to share and gain knowledge and research on the field of interest.' Participants felt that it did well to provide a good platform for networking with others. The information and material taught was highly informative and respondents agreed that the knowledge gained will be implemented to varying degrees in their respective fields.

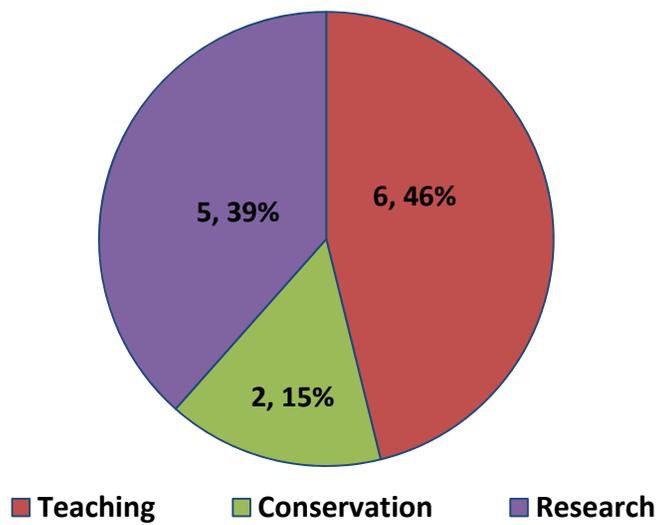
### **Annex 1. Questionnaire Respondents:**

<b>Course</b>	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Subject background</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Country</b>
2011	Ms. Swati Sappal	F	24	Environmental Science	Jawaharlal Nehru University	India
2011	Mr. Mali Mukeshkumar	M	26	Botany	GEER Foundation	India
2011	Dr. C. Ravinder Sing	M	31	Biotechnology	Vivekanandha College	India
2011	Dr. T. Ganesh	M	37	Marine Biology	Pondicherry University	India
2011	Mr. P. Ragaven	M	25	Marine Biology	HADDO Vanivikas Bhavan	India
2011	Mr. Bipinkumar Khokhariya	M	27	Botany	GEER Foundation	India
2011	Md. Masud Rana	M	32	Forestry	Ministry of Environment & Forests	Bangladesh
2011	Mr. Agus Ariyanto	M	28	Forestry	East Java Nature Resources Conservation	Indonesia
2011	Mr. Minh Nguyen Van	M	32	Mangrove Ecology	Hoa Lu University	Vietnam
2011	Mrs. Khodeeyoe Pornchai	F	43	Agriculture Extension	Maine & Coastal Resources Research Center	Thailand
2011	Ms. Kanchana Peeris	F	27	Biology	University of Kelaniya	Sri Lanka
2011	Ms. Eni Hidayati	F	26	Management Hydrology	University Samawa	Indonesia
2011	Dr. Zannatul Ferdoushi	F	35	Fisheries	Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science & Technology University	Bangladesh

### Gender Balance



### Application of Training



## **Annex 2. Acknowledgements;**

This summary report was compiled based on – and is a summary of – the UNU-INWEH International Training Course: Mangrove Biodiversity and Ecosystems October 5-19, 2011 Course Report assembled by Dr. T Balasubramanian, Dr. K. Kathiresan and professor S. Ajmal Khan.

\* The respondents are all grateful to UNU INWEH, Dr. T Balasubramanian, Dr. Kathiresan, professor Ajmal Khan, and the rest of the mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems training team for the exceptional experience that they had the opportunity to take part in.