

# Brunei Assesses its Competencies in Protected Area Management

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The National Biodiversity Reference Unit of Brunei – Forestry Department of the Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources - completed the country’s Training Needs Assessment workshop for biodiversity conservation and protected area management in June 2001.

The Training Needs Assessment incorporated inputs from departments from the parent ministry such as Forestry, Fisheries, Museums, and Agriculture, and from both the Ministry of Development- Environmental Unit and the University of Brunei Darussalam. As key players in biodiversity conservation, they served as internal reviewers of institutional competences in protected area management.

The assessment revealed that the various stakeholders perceive their competencies in biodiversity conservation as inadequate, due to insuff-

icient training. It further disclosed a severe shortage of staffs to carry out effective biodiversity conservation and lack of active protected area management initiatives. Accordingly, these areas are merely delineated and left untouched.

The participants also reviewed the current training programmes, institutions as well as materials used.

## Training Programmes

There is virtually no institution offering training on biodiversity conservation. The only university offering undergraduate courses in ecology, taxonomy and resource management is concentrating on the production of graduate teachers. The level of these courses is basic and not suitable for the professional management of protected areas or effective biodiversity conservation. The only course that would have some potential is the proposed Masters Programme in Resource Management offered by the Department of Management Studies.

The Forestry Department conducts two introductory courses but only for the junior uniformed staff and forest labourers.

As such, Brunei Darussalam requires a large input in specialised training for protected area management.

## Training Institutions and Materials

A small number of training institutions offer courses directly relevant to biodiversity conservation. The University may have the best team of lecturers in biodiversity conservation but its policy is to produce graduate teachers. Unless the policy is changed, the university would have limited potential as a training institution for biodiversity conservation.

## Recommendations

The participants recommended the setting up of a comprehensive training programme, encompassing both in-country and regional seminars and workshops for decision makers and senior managers as well as appropriate courses for junior managers, and field operatives. The programme should also include study tours and work attachments that would enhance the skills of the staff involved.

Participants called upon ARCBC to play a tangible role in the implementation of this programme (see Table 1) as source of funding, resource personnel, and support in identifying appropriate resource materials and organisations and in facilitating cross-visits and exchange programmes among Brunei, other ASEAN member countries, and the European Union

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**Table 1. Recommended Training Programmes**

Training	Target Group	Possible Venue
Awareness & appreciation seminars and workshops	Decision Makers	In-country or regional, under sponsorship of ARCBC
Specific courses on formulation of management plans	Senior Managers of Protected Areas	Regional basis, under sponsorship of ARCBC
Postgraduate degree in Resource Management, Environment Conservation, or similar courses; Skill enhancement courses such as identification of flora & fauna; ecology; park management.	Junior Managers of Protected Areas	University of Brunei Darussalam; other universities in the region; In-country or on a regional basis, under sponsorship of ARCBC
Seminars/workshops on park management		Regional basis, under the sponsorship of ARCBC.
Specific courses on park guiding;	Field Operators (Field Assistants, Park Wardens, Park Guides)	Regional basis, under sponsorship of ARCBC
Courses on public speaking;		Regional basis, under sponsorship of ARCBC
Work attachment with established parks.		Parks within the region, such as those in Singapore & Malaysia.