

Project COTS

Project for Development of the Culture-Oriented Tourism in Sigiriya
NEWS LETTER

No. 02

Dambulla- Sigiriya Tourism Promotion Committee (DSTPC) Formed

COTS Project consists of two components: one component is to assist the development of the Museum, and the other is to promote tourism in Dambulla DS Division. As the implementation body of the latter, the Dambulla-Sigiriya Tourism Promotion Committee (DSTPC) has been formed and its first meeting was held on 27th March. The DSTPC, which was initially named as "Damulla Tourism Promotion Committee," includes "Sigiriya" in its name so that the committee would be remembered when the world-famous Sigiriya is mentioned. The DSTPC has the Dambulla Divisional Secretary as its Chairperson, and ten representatives from both public and private sectors to form the steering committee, which meets monthly. The steering committee will formulate its constitution and by-law in order to register itself to the Damulla DS.



The 2nd Meeting of the DSTPC, held on 4th May at Sigiriya Handicraft Village.

Meanwhile, as the first initiative by the DSTPC, a tourist map has been developed, which introduces tourist spots rarely visited around the Sigiriya World Heritage Site. The map is printed on the back side of this New Letter. Take it with you to Sigiriya on your next visit. This will help you re-discovering Sigiriya, by taking you to great spots for bird watching and photographing, in addition to several historical sites. If you find any comments and suggestions regarding this map, please feel free to write to the following address.

Visitor Feedback, Sigiriya Museum
Sigiriya World Heritage Site
Sigiriya, Sri Lanka

At the same time, Working Groups (hereafter referred as WG) were formed under the steering committee. Initially three WGs have been formed; the Tourism Information WG to collect and update the tourist information of the area, the Planning WG to formulate a plan of action for tourism promotion by the DSTPC, and the Pilot Project WG to develop the pilot project(s) to be implemented in cooperation with COTS Project.

These WGs will meet bi-weekly.

The Tourism Information WG has already started collecting information of tourist accommodations in the Dambulla DS Division. The information will be uploaded onto the DSTPC website, which is to be set up in the very near future. In addition to accommodation, more information about interesting tourist attractions will be updated.

Planning WG had its first meeting on 29th April. After reviewing available tourism resources and the recent trends in tourists in Dambulla DS Division, they conducted SWOT analysis (S:Strength, W:Weakness, O:Opportunity, T:Threat). The participants mentioned Dambulla's geographical advantage, being located at the center of the transportation system in Sri Lanka; the presence of many historical sites in the area; and the rich natural environment, while pointing out some possible negative impacts of tourism development such as changes in local life style and damage to the ecosystem. Their analysis indicates that the people involved in tourism in this area are already highly aware of their stakes and ready for taking their part in tourism promotion.

The first meeting of the Pilot Project WG was held on the same day as the Planning WG. The COTS project team introduced several examples of project ideas in the area such as tourism services improvement, community development, and local products development and briefed the WG about the steps toward implementation. The participants were requested to submit their proposals of pilot projects at their second meeting to be held on 21st May. The DSTPC will select and decide the final plan for pilot projects from among these proposals.

Moreover, the DSTPC will have its secretariat in the Tourist Information Centre within the Sigiriya Museum, which will be staffed with personnel from CCF and SLTPB, the two implementation counterparts of the COTS Project. It is expected that the tourism information updated by the DSTPC will be made available at the Tourist Information Centre of the Sigiriya Museum.

We may see some new tourist attractions coming up from the DSTPC's activities. Await updates!

The Sigiriya Museum Nearing Completion!!

The Sigiriya Museum is at the side of the road between the New Town--the entrance for domestic tourists--and the main gate of the World Heritage Site, but it was up to now barely visible from the passageway. The entire building itself is still not visible, and will not be visible, hidden in trees. This is based on the concepts of the Expert Committee, led by Prof. S. Bandaranayake, "the museum [is] seen as a building merged with the forest" and "one would not be able to say where the forest ended and the museum began."

While final touches to the building are being applied, landscaping of the museum premises is almost complete and the Museum building now

appears mirrored on the surface of its surrounding pond, with beautifully turfed garden embracing it.



Gallery Attendants of the Museum Assigned

The museums in Sri Lanka so far seldom have staff assigned to guide its visitors through the Museum. The questions popped up in your mind are left up in the air, for you would not know to whom you should ask or where to look for solutions. In the Sigiriya Museum, "Gallery Attendants" (hereafter GA) are stationed in the Exhibition Gallery and other areas, so that the visitors will have easy access to the information concerning the Sigiriya Museum. The eight staff members taking this role was assigned on 30th April. They all have been working with Sigiriya CCF, and have sufficient knowledge about the site, and, above anything, personal attachment to the site. In addition to GAs, the two receptionists, the 'face' of the Museum, were also assigned. All of them are now participating in the training on the history and concepts of the Museum, and the contents of its exhibitions.

Keyword of the Museum and the Sigiriya

Archeological Site: *Combination of Opposites*

The ancient builders of the Sigiriya created the garden, beautifully incorporating such contrasting opposite elements as follows;

Geometry : Nature
Symmetry, planning : Reality, asymmetry
Water (culture) : Rocks (nature)
Terrace : Hill-slope
Structures : Vegetation

In addition, the staff of the Bookstore and Ticket counter were also appointed. All of the above mentioned staff decided on the "Standards of the services provided in the Sigiriya Museum" in a workshop. During the workshop, they shared their own experiences of "Good" services and "Poor" services, to discuss what kind of services would result in positive responses from the visitors to the Sigiriya Museum.

The shared actual episodes including some positive encounters like "A shop keeper was very informative," and some negative episodes like "I had to wait for hours, and ended up being told 'you didn't have to come,'" "A bus conductor forced me to pay with small change." COTS members also

joined the discussion to share foreigners' experiences, such as "I was disturbed by a waiter with series of questions while having dinner."

As a result, the following keywords have been selected as pillars of Sigiriya Museum's visitor services.

- 1) Welcoming; 2) Guidance; 3) Friendly; 4) Correct Information; 5) Efficient; 6) Helpful; 7) Polite; 8) Give Space.

The Museum staff will go through more trainings, so that they will be able to offer the aimed services.



Staffs sharing their own episodes during the workshop on visitor services.

Meet the Sigiriya Museum Staff (1)

Project Manager, CCF Sigiriya Project Mr. Sumedha Karnaratne

Q: How long have you been serving in Sigiriya?

A: Twelve years.

Q: What is the most appealing point about the Sigiriya?

A: Sigiriya conveys the supreme technology of the 5th century which harmonized the nature into the architecture, to the 21st century, and it also carries artistic value as seen in the *apsara* of the fresco pockets.

Q: Where is your favorite spot in the Museum?

A: Gallery 1 in the Exhibition Gallery. I participated in the excavation in Ibbankatuwa in 1988, where the Megalithic grave was found. The replica of the grave is displayed in the later half of the Gallery 1.

Q: The COTS Project is involved in tourism promotion along with museum development. What is your expectation for COTS?

A: I hope the project will improve various aspects of and around Sigiriya, not only the Museum, so that the number of visitors to Sigiriya is increased, and the community benefits.



"The Sigiriya Museum" van, provided by JICA.

Wave at us, if you see the van on streets!

