

# Knowledge Symposium and Networking Event for World Wildlife Day

**INVESTING IN CONSERVATION, VALUING OUR WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS**



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Centre for a Smart Future (CSF) in partnership with Lanka Environment Fund and Blue Resources Trust are organising a half-day event marking World Wildlife Day 2025, filled with insightful discussions, interactive activities, and networking opportunities.

As biodiversity faces unparalleled threats—with over one million species at risk of extinction—there is an urgent need for innovative and sustainable financial solutions. This event seeks to generate awareness and generate interest in mobilizing the necessary financial resources to protect Sri Lanka's invaluable natural heritage while fostering pragmatic approaches to conservation.

With over half of the global GDP reliant on nature, biodiversity loss poses a growing threat to economic stability and livelihoods. Sri Lanka's ongoing polycrisis has placed immense strain on public finances, making conservation funding more challenging than ever. However, the path to recovery must not come at the cost of environmental progress. This year's theme for World Wildlife Day of financing conservation aligns with CSF's ongoing efforts to reframe investment in nature as a necessity, not a luxury.

By bringing together key stakeholders, this event aims to chart smarter, more sustainable pathways for conservation in a post-crisis world.

**07 MAR**  
**2025 | 2PM**

**BAY 9, TRACE EXPERT CITY,  
COLOMBO 10**

**HOSTED BY**

**CENTRE  
FOR A  
SMART  
FUTURE**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH**



**Knowledge  
sessions**



**Interactive  
learning  
activities**



**Research  
presentations**



**Short film  
screenings**



**Nature  
photography  
exhibition**

**blue**  
resources trust

# OVERVIEW OF THE EVENT

## PRE-EVENT ENGAGEMENT



### 2.00 - 2.30 pm: Short films and introduction to the event

Understanding the users and tensions in a Marine Protected Area (MPA) - Case of the Vedithaltivu Nature Reserve (VNR).

Short films by Tashiya De Mel and Tashyana Handy | Overview by Natasha Van Hoff



### 2.30 - 3.15 pm: Game Simulation: Complexities in Conservation

An interactive game simulation focused on decision-making in conservation.

Facilitated by CSF and LEF



### 3.15 - 3.30 pm: Tea Break

## MAIN EVENT



### 3.30 - 3.45 pm: Opening

Setting the context, partners' interest in the theme, and overview of the day's programme.



### 3.45 - 5.15 pm: Knowledge Session and Panel Discussion : Conservation Finance – Approaches, Opportunities, Realities

Understanding conservation finance, what approaches exist, global experiences, and key considerations for Sri Lanka. A discussion of opportunities and practical challenges in channeling funding into conservation projects and deep-dive into specific conservation finance instruments relevant to Sri Lanka.

#### BIODIVERSITY CREDITS

**Paul Steele**

Chief Economist, International  
Institute for Development (IIED)

#### CHANNELING FUNDING INTO CONSERVATION

**Vinod Malwatte**

Executive Director,  
Lanka Environment Fund (LEF)

#### DEBT FOR NATURE SWAPS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR SRI LANKA

**Ashani Basnayake**

Research Associate,  
Centre for a Smart Future (CSF)



### 5.15 - 5.30 pm: Research Spotlight

Presentation from CSF research study on the tourism-nature nexus drawing from the report 'Spotting the Problem' on the complexities of wildlife tourism in Yala National Park.

**Senith Abeynayake**

Research Associate,  
Centre for a Smart Future (CSF)



### 5.30 pm onwards: Exhibition walk through

Walk-through of acclaimed nature photography exhibition 'The Tree Left Standing' that was featured in the Galle Literary Festival Art Trail.

**Nishan Perera**

Co-Founder and Director,  
Blue Resources Trust

**Anushka Wijesinha**

Co-Founder, Co-Director  
Centre for a Smart Future (CSF)



### 5.30 pm onwards: Refreshments and networking