

Adhering to CEPF's Indigenous Peoples Safeguard Policies

The Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF) seeks to implement the CEPF supported project entitled: **Conservation of the Periyar-Agasthyamalai Corridor in the Southern Western Ghats: Knowledge Generation, Dissemination of Information and Capacity Building for Key Stakeholders**. In simple terms the project will take ANCF's GIS based conservation database for the Periyar-Agasthyamalai landscape, update and strengthen its biodiversity data holdings through primary surveys and addition of information from secondary sources, and put out the consolidated database into the public domain. The biodiversity information from the database, with its scientific and management components, mainly focused on the elephant ranges of the landscape, will be used to develop resource material for structured programmes of capacity building for conservation stakeholders including natural resource managers within the Forest Department staff of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and community groups in and around the critical habitat areas and habitat links within the landscape.

The first step in project implementation upon receiving CEPF sanction for the project will be the preparation of a Social Assessment (SA) for the landscape. This SA will be prepared within three months of the commencement of the project in line with the guidance provided at http://www.cepf.net/Documents/CEPF_planning_framework.pdf. The survey across the landscape for identifying the communities (especially the indigenous peoples' groups) within the project areas, assessing the potential for positive and negative interactions of these communities with the project, and drawing up a plan based on consultation with potentially interfacing communities for implementing the ANCF project, will be the responsibility of a senior social scientist and his field team. Based on the demographic, social, cultural and political information gathered from secondary sources, as well as limited primary surveys over the entire landscape, a plan will be presented in the given CEPF Social Assessment framework. ANCF has an incomplete database on indigenous peoples of the P-A landscape. An extract from the same is shown in Table 1 below. The survey for preparing the Social Assessment will substantially complete this information for the landscape.

The ANCF project is to be carried out over the entire P-A landscape i.e. all thirteen-forest divisions (see map 1).

The CEPF supported study will include collation of information drawn from field surveys to identify and map the (a) elephant distribution, (b) critical habitat links and (c) land use and vegetation patterns incorporating ground truthing data to validate and supplement information from satellite imageries, and (d) fresh biodiversity surveys planned to fill gaps in the taxa already covered in the existing ANCF biodiversity database. This information will be supplemented by information drawn from comprehensive literature surveys to capture additional biodiversity information from secondary sources relevant to the Periyar-Agasthyamalai landscape. It is expected that these exercises will render ANCF's biodiversity database substantial enough to enable the creation of action plans that identify critical habitat links to be conserved, and draws up conservation strategies

prepared in full consultation with communities (in particular the indigenous communities) resident in, or otherwise impacting, the critical areas identified.

Table I: Partial List of Indigenous Peoples (Scheduled Tribes) living in and around Periyar–Agasthyamalai corridor/landscape

Indigenous community	Place of living	Livelihood
<i>Mannan</i>	Around 300 families live in Peripheral areas of Periyar Tiger Reserve [PTR] around Thekkady	Agriculture/Fishing
<i>Paliyan</i>	About 150 families lived in Thekkady area inside PTR relocated to the periphery	Agriculture/MFP
<i>Urali</i>	Inside Periyar Tiger Reserve in Vallakadavu area	Agriculture/MFP
<i>Ulladan</i>	Rani Division Pumba area at the periphery	Agriculture/Pilgrimage
<i>Mala-araya</i>	Living in peripheral areas of Rani & Kottayam Division economically well-off community	Agriculture
<i>Malapandaram</i>	A nomadic tribe about 150 families living inside Sabarimala (PTR), Rani, Achankoil Divisions	MFP/Fishing
<i>Kanni</i>	Commonly found in Agasthyamalai region such as Mundandurai & Kalakad Tiger Reserve (KMTR), Peppara & Neyar Wildlife Sanctuaries. KMTR alone has five <i>Kanni's</i> human settlements/hamlets	Agriculture/MFP

It must be noted that there is no facet of the project that involves any direct or indirect impact upon local communities (e.g. through voluntary or involuntary relocation) during the duration of the ANCF project. ANCF recognizes the benefits to conservation management to be gained by early, systematic and comprehensive consultation with local communities in regard to conservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity within the region. This will be fully described in the Social Assessment plan to be submitted to CEPF within three months of project approval.

In accordance with the CEPF guidance for instituting safeguards in regard to the potential direct or indirect impact from the project on vulnerable communities ANCF will institute a grievance mechanism for use by communities. Information on this grievance mechanism will be publicized to the communities relevant to the project sites during the initial round of consultations. At any time during the duration of the project, communities will have a fair opportunity to communicate to designated nodal personnel within ANCF/ATREE/CEPF about any perceived negative consequences to community wellbeing as a result of project implementation. The project will cease implementation till such time the perceived grievance is mitigated or redressed. This mechanism will be more fully described in the Social Assessment report.

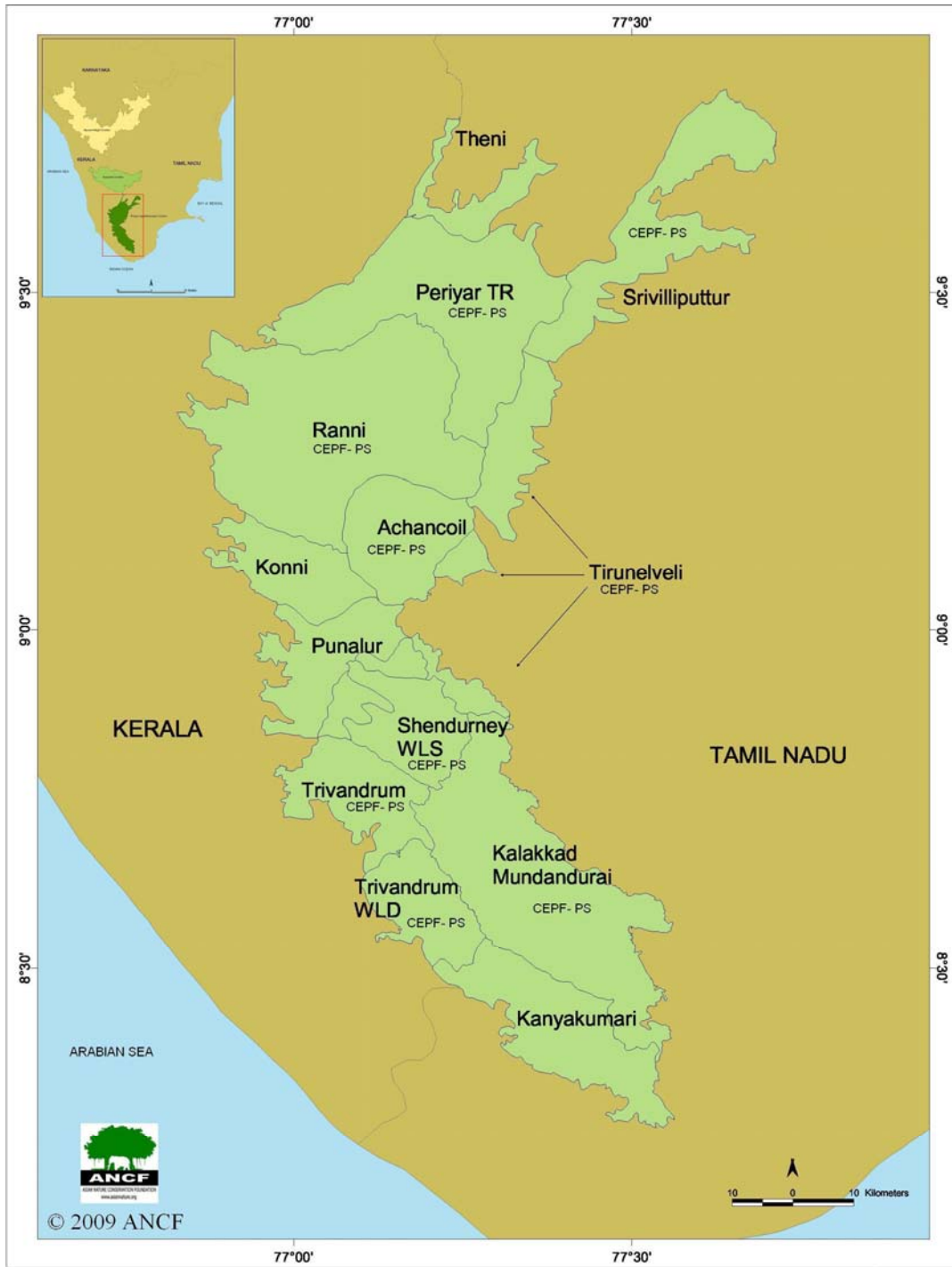


Fig 1: Forest Divisions of Periyar-Agasthiyamalai Corridor
 (Note: Trivandrum WLD includes Pepara and Neyyar Wild Life .CEPF-PS: Priority site for CEPF Investment)