

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): CEPF Small Grants Program, India- Small Grants Programme for Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Himalayas of India (#51218)

Implementation Partners for this Project: The names of the main partners assisting ATREE for implementing the project is given below. These partners will be participating in the form of an independent regional steering committee. This committee will comprise of social and scientific experts who will primarily be responsible for the selection of sub grantees. In total there will be seven members in the committee and the group will represent NGOs, the government, and universities.

1. Mr.MC Malakar, IFS
Chief Wildlife Warden. Assam
Office of the Chief Conservator of Forests
Rehabari, Guwahati - 8, Assam

2. Dr. Vincent Darlong
Natural Resource Management Coordinator
North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project
International Fund for Agricultural Development & Government of India
Shillong, Meghalaya, India

3. Dr. Saroj Barik
Reader, Department of Botany,
North Eastern Hill University
Shillong - Meghalaya, India

4. Dr. J.P. Tamang
Head and Senior Reader,
Department of Botany
Sikkim Government College
Gangtok 737102, Sikkim, India

5. Dr. PT Bhutia, IFS
Conservator of Forest
Wild Life Circle (North)
West Bengal

6. Mr. Simanta Kalita
Director,
Center for Environment Education, North East Office
Guwahati, Assam

7. Dr. Prasanna K. Samal
Scientist In-charge
G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment & Development
North-East Unit
Vivek Vihar, Itanagar 791 113

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): 1 June, 2007- 31 March, 2011
Date of Report (month/year): 31 May 2011

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

The CEPF Small Grants Programme for Biodiversity Conservation in the Eastern Himalayas of India has been able to address several of the issues and concerns that were highlighted during the broad-based consultative process of developing the Ecosystem Profile for the Eastern Himalayas and articulated in the priorities and strategic directions of the Programme. The objective of the grants programme was to generate reliable scientific information on key floral and faunal species to improve their conservation status and fill critical data/information gaps particularly of lesser studied species which would contribute to updating their status in the IUCN Red Data Book.

Over four years of its implementation here in the Indian Eastern Himalayas, the CEPF grants have resulted in a range of conservation efforts and a huge compendium of knowledge regarding the status and threats to species—new capacities have been built, there is new knowledge from primary research, and there has been local conservation action involving a range of actors, from local governance institutions, state line departments, community based organizations, local non-governmental organizations, and traditional institutions.

The Programme was able to support a total of 40 small grants to civil society for work on priority species and priority sites as outlined in the Ecosystem Profile. Mid-way through the programme, a reprioritization exercise was undertaken, which resulted in a focus on looking at areas outside the priority corridors that also needed attention. This was done after assessing ongoing and recently concluded projects in the region, which highlighted areas of concern but with no investments and engagement by civil society. As a result of this exercise, the Programme then supported conservation projects that engaged with traditional institutions in Arunachal Pradesh. This includes the Adi cultural landscape in the Siang Valley and the Apatani cultural landscape in Subansiri District. A total of six projects worked with local communities and community institutions in Arunachal Pradesh. This is of particular relevance in a region where much of the forests are managed by and under the control of community institutions.

Of the 40 grants awarded to NGOs, independent researchers and community based organizations, 13 focused on surveys and conservation action on mammals (including snow leopard, hispid hare, hoolock gibbon, golden langur, capped langur, wild water buffalo, Gangetic dolphin, takin); 4 on birds (including Bengal florican and white-bellied heron); 6 on endemic and threatened plants; 4 on herpetofauna (2 on amphibians; 1 on reptiles; 1 on chelonians); 2 on invertebrates (pollinators, swallowtail butterflies); and, 11 for other action oriented research and community conservation projects (including on wildlife trade, publications, community conservation projects).

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT IMPACTS

Project Impacts:

Long Term: Improve or stabilize the conservation status of key identified species to avoid extinction by contributing to strategies for the management of the following corridors (1) Mehao - Jamjing and Sengajan, (2) Nameri-Eagles's Nest and Sessa; both in the North Bank Landscape; and (3) Singalila -Barsey - Kanchenjunga in the Kangchenjunga Singalila Complex.

Short Term: Civil society is motivated and capacitated in leveraging partnership with the government and donor agencies for conserving endangered and endemic species as well as development and implementation of conservation plans for prioritized habitat sites and corridors within the North Bank Landscape and Kanchenjunga Singalila Complex.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

The small grants projects have contributed to a greater understanding of the status and threats to key identified species and sites in the priority corridors in the North Bank Landscape and the Kanchenjunga-Singalila landscape. In the Mehao-Jamjing and Sengajan corridor, the small grants have focused on key species like the wild water buffalo, hoolock gibbon, Bengal florican, hispid hare, turtles and tortoises, all of which are prioritized species.

The project on wild water buffalo enabled the first comprehensive survey of isolated sub-populations and recommendations for conservation of viable populations of the species in the region. This work is complemented by a separate grant that supported a regional strategic planning workshop for wild cattle and buffaloes in the region. The project on turtles assessed viable turtle populations, prepared distribution maps using GIS techniques and assess threats to their existence. It also evaluated present conservation measures and wherever proposed conservation strategies based on project findings. The project on Bengal Florican has resulted in the formation of a 'Bengal Florican Conservation Network' in the region and the findings from the project will inform the species recovery plan being formulated by the Government of India

Another project in the Jeypore-Upper Dehing-Kakojan forests, just outside the priority corridor, led to the discovery of the 'world's largest wild cat assemblage' in the lowland forests of Assam. The findings have been used to call for rationalization of the protected area boundaries and a proposal has been prepared to declare the area a National Park. Earlier, the state government had planned to exclude the river from the Sanctuary (the river lies between Jeypore Reserved Forest and Upper Dehing West Reserved Forest parts of the Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary). Based on the project findings about the importance of retaining the river within the Protected Area, the state has decided to rationalize the boundaries and keep the river within the PA. The project findings have also been used, along with documentary support of Wildlife Trust of India's (WTI) book on elephant corridors of India, to establish this as an important wildlife area and prevent the setting up of an oil terminal in the Golai elephant corridor.

In the Sikkim trans-Himalayas, the project on non-invasive monitoring of snow leopards and their prey has developed a strong baseline and highlighted priority areas for snow leopard conservation that are informing the Government of India's 'Project Snow Leopard' (PSL), a major conservation initiative spread across five states - Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. The information generated by the project was shared at the first PSL stakeholder workshop in Sikkim. Similarly, the work on rhododendrons and cycads has highlighted areas for conservation priority in Sikkim.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

None

IV. PROJECT COMPONENTS

Project Components:

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p>Output 1: Data and information in the form of individual reports on the conservation status of 10 different Critically Endangered and endemic species from 10 projects in 10 different sites across the three shortlisted corridors within the North Bank Landscape and Kanchenjunga Singalila Complex.</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 1.1: 10 different grants provided to civil society organizations for supporting action research for conservation of Critically Endangered and endemic species</i></p>	<p>This project component was able to support work on several critically endangered and endemic species, including the Bengal Florican (CR), White-bellied Heron (CR), Gharial (CR), black soft shell turtle (CR), hispid hare, Gangetic dolphin, golden langur, hoolock gibbon, red breasted hill partridge, and endemic plants (palm, rhododendrons, cycads). A total of 13 grants have been provided to civil society organizations for supporting action research for the conservation of critically endangered and endemic species.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 1.2: 10 reports prepared giving updated status on the conservation outcomes for 10 different Critically Endangered and endemic species</i></p>	<p>Thirteen reports prepared giving updated status on the conservation status and threats for 15 different critically endangered and endemic species</p>
<p>Output 2: Generation of new data and information in the form of individual reports giving population and threat status for 15 different species from the lesser known taxonomic group (reptiles, amphibians, fish, invertebrates, plants)</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 2.1: 15 grants provided to civil society organizations to conduct research to determine the population and threat status of 15 different species from the lesser known taxonomic groups</i></p>	<p>A total of 14 grants were provided to civil society organizations to conduct research to determine the population and threat status of lesser known taxonomic groups. They include: invertebrates (2 grants) – focused on pollinators in fragmented landscapes, and swallowtail butterflies; herpetofauna (4 grants) – two on amphibians, one on gharial and one project on chelonians; plants (6 grants) – rhododendrons, 2 on medicinal plants, cycads, Dioscorea and one on plant community responses to climate change; fish – one grant to support community conservation; and, one publication on butterflies of Assam.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 2.2: 15 reports prepared giving updated status on the population and threat status for 15 different species from the lesser known taxonomic group</i></p>	<p>Thirteen reports prepared giving updated status on the population and threat status of species from the lesser known taxonomic groups. One publication on the butterflies of Assam will be out soon.</p>
<p>Output 3: At least 6 scholars complete their doctoral dissertations on conservation biology with emphasis on Endangered and endemic species or species from lesser known taxonomic group of the region</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 3.1: A total of 6 scholars selected and supported with 6 different individual grants for doctoral dissertation on conservation biology</i></p>	<p>Six PhD scholars were selected and supported with individual grants for doctoral studies on conservation biology focused on priority species and sites in the Indian Eastern Himalayas. The emphasis was on endangered birds (hornbills), endangered primates (four species), pollinators, amphibians, plants and climate change.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 3.2: A total of 6 PhD dissertations on conservation biology submitted for doctoral degree</i></p>	<p>One dissertation has been completed, one is nearing completion and the others are in the process of finishing their field work.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 3.3: At least 3 of the doctoral candidates supported by the CEPF Small Grants</i></p>	<p>One of the doctoral students is involved with local NGO (Nature Conservation Foundation), one with</p>

<i>start working on a long term basis with local NGOs in the region</i>	an academic institution (Rajiv Gandhi University) and four in various capacities with ATREE.
Output 4: At least 40 civil society organizations/individuals are engaged in conservation of Endangered and endemic species in the region	
<i>Indicator 4.1: At least 25 different civil society organizations/individuals are supported through at least 30 CEPF Small Grants for conservation</i>	A total of 34 different civil society organizations/individuals were supported through 34 CEPF small grants for conservation. In all, a total of 40 small grants were disbursed: 17 to NGOs and CBOs working in the region and the rest to independent researchers.
<i>Indicator 4.2: At least 10 civil society organizations (NGOs, individual researchers, universities) continue to work on conservation issues by formulating concrete strategies and accessing additional funding from sources other than the CEPF.</i>	Twenty of the organizations/individuals continue to work on conservation issues in the region and have been able to leverage funding to continue their work. This includes work on Gangetic dolphin (Rufford Grant), Hispid Hare (Conservation Leadership Programme), Bengal Florican (Bengal Florican Conservation Network), rhododendrons (ATREE small grant), Snow Leopard (Project Snow Leopard), hornbills,
<i>Indicator 4.3: A network of civil society organizations supporting each other by sharing information through periodical publications, newsletters and meetings.</i>	CEPF grantees in the region have supported each other through sharing information and communicating their work through the CEPF newsletter and grantee sharing workshop and meeting
Output 5: Systems for management of the CEPF Small Grants established within ATREE to function effectively for delivering all the four outputs (1,2,3,4) within the scheduled project period	
<i>Indicator 5.1: Regional Steering Committee established and functioning for regular review of proposals</i>	The Steering Committee members and other subject experts have been involved in reviewing proposals and in guiding applicants and refining short-listed proposals through a consultative process.
<i>Indicator 5.2: US\$500,000 in small grants awarded by the end of the project period</i>	A total of \$560,000 was disbursed in small grants through the project period. The additional \$60000 to the original budget was made available by CEPF to support small grants for three applicants whose Core Grant proposals were cleared for support but held up due to other procedural delays.
<i>Indicator 5.3 Project monitoring system established and regular project reporting to CEPF undertaken on a quarterly/ semestral basis or as required</i>	Project monitoring system was established in November 2007 and regular reporting to CEPF was done on a quarterly basis. The monitoring and evaluation involved visits to grantee field sites and offices.

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

The Programme has been largely successful in terms of delivering against the intended outputs. The projects have been able to cover a majority of the priority sites and species of concern in the Ecosystem Profile and there has been significant progress towards some of the conservation goals.

The major achievement of the CEPF grants programme in the region has been to bring together such a wide range of individuals and civil society organizations in a regional conservation programme. It has resulted in a large compendium of knowledge regarding Critically Endangered, Endangered, Endemic and lesser known taxa, and this information is of crucial value to plans and management strategies aimed at mitigation of threats and conservation of these species and their

habitats. It has resulted in updating knowledge on and identification of new and emerging threats and the critical information gaps that continue to persist. Many of the grantee organizations have benefited from exchanges with other grantees and institutional capacities have been built as a result of the project and engagement with other institutions in the region. The work of CEPF grantees has also been used successfully to advocate successfully for conservation in the region. The involvement of community institutions has also resulted in a greater awareness of the issues and conservation concerns in the region.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

Four of the PhD students are still undertaking their field work. As a result their theses have still not been submitted for the doctoral degree.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Safeguard policies were communicated to all grantees and clarified in the grant making process, and included in the grant agreement. The projects have not resulted in any adverse environmental impacts, involuntary displacement or impacts on indigenous peoples.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

The inception of the Grants Programme in the region started a long time after the Ecosystem Profile had been put together. By then a lot of that information was dated and there were new and emerging threats. Also, many areas that needed urgent attention did not figure in the priority corridors and landscapes. Therefore it was necessary to assess, re-prioritize and strategize during the implementation of the Programme.

Although the specific objective of the Small Grants was to generate reliable scientific information on key floral and faunal species to improve their conservation status and fill critical data/information gaps particularly of lesser studied species, the Programme has pushed for more action oriented research that involves local communities and institutions. This helped us to reach out to a range of civil society institutions, including traditional offices and community based organizations that would otherwise be left out if it were limited to scientific research alone. Such an approach is particularly relevant in a region where much of the forests are under community control.

The sharing workshop for grantees, conducted after the first round of grants, brought together a range of stakeholders including grantees, academics, government officials and others. The feedback from the workshop helped us focus on the next round of grants.

The regular Requests for Proposals (RFP) call is limiting in a way. The bulk of the proposals continue to focus on charismatic mega fauna and sites that have considerable conservation inputs. Therefore, alongside the RFP, we were also involved in contacting people and

organizations in the region and urging them to submit proposals on sites and species that continue to be neglected.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

The orientation workshops helped clarify a lot of issues to potential grantees and stakeholders from across the region. The role of the steering committee and subject experts has been crucial in guiding the focus and implementation of the Programme. Lastly, the focus within the grants programme on lesser known taxa helped in committing resources to work on amphibians, invertebrates, fish and reptiles, giving relevance and balance to the portfolio and enabling wider participation in the grants programme.

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

The small grants were implemented with a certain degree of flexibility to enable participation by a wide range of stakeholders. We were able to involve subject experts to help develop and refine proposals through an iterative process where it was felt that work and involvement of local groups was crucial in some areas. We also identified and encouraged proposals where it was felt necessary. The success of the grants programme and the wide range of civil society participation is an end result of this approach.

VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Ford Foundation	D	\$300,000	This is supporting the grants programme on 'Capacity Building of Civil Society for Linking Conservation and Livelihood Needs in the Eastern Himalayas region of India'
MacArthur Foundation	D	\$250,000	This is supporting the 'ATREE Small Grant for Research in NE India'
National Geographic Society - CRE	C	\$30,000	This is supporting the 'ATREE Small Grant for Research in NE India'

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)
- B** Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)
- C** Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)
- D** Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

As detailed above, ATREE has been able to raise resources from other donors to complement and sustain some of the work that has been enabled by the CEPF grants programme in the region. The grants are being made through two programmes: 'ATREE Small Grants for Research in NE India' and 'Capacity Building of Civil Society for Linking Conservation and Livelihood Needs in the Eastern Himalayas region of India'. Through the latter programme, ATREE has been able to expand work into Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura, states which were not covered under the CEPF Grants Programme.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overwhelming feedback that we have received from grantees is that a Small Grants programme must continue in the region, both for building on the successes of the CEPF grants as well as to cover area and species of concern that were not covered. Therefore, a consolidation phase will greatly help to sustain and upscale the conservation gains made through this programme. There are new and emerging threats due to externally mediated development plans for the region. For instance, more than 160 small, medium and large hydro power projects are planned across the Indian Eastern Himalayas, and these are likely to have major impacts for biodiversity and livelihoods. A lot of the information that has been generated by civil society is being used to question some of these developments, but a lot more remains to be done.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Thomas Samuel M

Organization name: Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)

Mailing address: E2, Golden Heights, Gandhi Road, Darjeeling – 734 101, India

Tel: (+91) 354 2259297/ (+91) 94340 45123 (mobile)

Fax: (+91) 354 2259297

E-mail: samuel@atree.org