

## CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Wildlife Information Liaison Development (WILD) Society
<b>Project Title:</b>	Establishing Community Conservation Reserves in the Anamalai Corridor
<b>Date of Report:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2013
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Arun Kanagavel (arun.kanagavel@gmail.com)

**CEPF Region:** Western Ghats (Anamalai Corridor)

**Strategic Direction:**

CEPF Strategic Directions 1 - Enable action by diverse communities and partnerships to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and enhance connectivity in the corridors.

**Grant Amount:** \$ 17500.00

**Project Dates:** January 2012 to February 2013

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

This project did not have any implementation partners

### Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.***

The project contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile by developing partnerships with local communities, NGOs and forest departments that led to the nomination of a priority site/critical link as a Conservation Reserve (Kanagavel et al. 2013), a community-based collaborative type of Protected Area under the Wildlife Protection Act.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.***

The project aimed to propose selected sites for setting up Conservation Reserves at Theni and Kodaikanal Forest Division in order to conserve the local biodiversity and manage it appropriately through collaborative reserve management with the local community. Out of the four potential sites, three were pursued as Conservation Reserve sites. Panchayat cum local community support/approval letters were obtained from these three sites (see Technical Report). Two sites (Kurangini and Agamalai) were clubbed together along with another new site (Bodi North Hills Village) and a draft proposal towards this as "Theni Conservation Reserve" for an area of 220 km<sup>2</sup> has been submitted to the Tamil Nadu State Government and Forest Department officials (see Technical Report). The third site (Kukkal) chosen for further perusal as Conservation Reserve has been put on hold as the DFO-Kodaikanal has been pursuing to declare the Kodaikanal Hills as a Wildlife Sanctuary. Once a decision on this is reached, we will decide whether or not to submit our proposal. Basic management plan and participation pointers have been established at the potential sites. However, implementation of these need to be organized in the next phase of the project.

***Please provide the following information where relevant:***

**Hectares Protected:**

Not yet. A proposal to protect 220 km<sup>2</sup> as a Conservation Reserve has been submitted to the Tamil Nadu State Government and Forest Department

**Species Conserved:** None

**Corridors Created:** None

***Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.***

The project objectives entailed the following:

- To gather in-depth socio-political information and local footprints of communities at potential reserve areas to inform site selection
- Develop site-specific management plans and establish key relationships with the various stakeholders to set up reserves and reserve management committees
- Documentation and nomination of potential reserves
- Establish community and conservation reserves

Socio-political information and local footprints of communities was successfully gathered that informed further site selection as Conservation Reserve. However the human settlements at the four sites were spatially farther apart than expected and along with transcribing interviews and discussions, these activities took up more time than expected. Additional time was also spent in revising proposed sites due to revision in protected area status at Theni (see map appended within Technical Report).

Through our interactions and workshops/meetings with the stakeholders, basic management plans were established and key relationships within these stakeholders were set that assisted in the nomination of the proposed Theni Conservation Reserve. The multi-stakeholder workshops/meetings were held to create a platform of knowledge regarding the potential Conservation Reserve and its aim, taking into consideration stakeholders' interest. The meetings were carried out successfully, however getting all the stakeholders to be present at the meeting was a challenge often met with. Potential reserve management committee members from key stakeholders like the Panchayat, VFC and local NGO's have been identified. The documentation and nomination of potential reserves was successfully undertaken. However establishing/notifying it would take more time and is dependent upon the Tamil Nadu State Government and Forest Department. An additional outreach component after reserve nomination would have been useful towards this purpose. The challenge henceforth would be to maintain interaction between the stakeholders and form a set of feasible and productive management plans in the face of local scale politics and often-conflicting interests within the stakeholders.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

None

<b>Lessons Learned</b>
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***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that***

**would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.**

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

The flexibility of our project design allowed for success over its shortcomings and the challenges we faced. The decision to cover and visit most of the settlements personally as part of the social survey brought in more holistic information (see Technical Report). This was in comparison with the stakeholder workshop and meetings whereby people's participation reduced. Furthermore a site-based biodiversity profile is crucial especially while preparing nomination documents to highlight the area's importance for increased conservation. We realized this quite late in the project period but were able to collect the necessary information through an existing Rufford Project in the locality. Professional and local expertise proved equally crucial to formulate the necessary documents and to convince local stakeholders. The role played by Balachandra Hegde who has been involved in setting up similar reserves in Karnataka was very crucial and his expertise provided the much-needed mentorship and advice the project required. Through such a project we also had to deal with other governmental institutions like the village administration authorities and the police departments regarding the project and its aims. This was not included in the initial design process and should generally be included when a project includes local communities.

***Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)***

Previous interaction with the local community led to a level of familiarity for this project. The project's component to interact with the Forest Department at all the levels assisted in understanding their perceptions and support from the management authority. Mr. Pandi C. provided the much-needed support locally and assisted in our discussions, workshops, meetings and outreach with local stakeholders.

***Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:***

Politics and differences within the community were often exposed only after the few initial interactions with them. These were, as in this case, due to possible interest in more management power, advancement in the community and group-ism present before project-related interaction with the community.

**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.***

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Rufford Small Grants	None	GBP 5950	Chelonian-based project undertaken in Trivandrum, Theni and Kodaikanal. A part of the biodiversity surveys undertaken at proposed CEPF sites were supported by this grant

***\*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** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

### **Sustainability/Replicability**

***Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.***

Sustainability will depend on the nominated reserve's notification and declaration as Conservation Reserve. Project components are replicable and the series of information, support letters and the relevant methods described/provided in the attached files, enable this. An application was then prepared for a CEPF Western Ghats follow-up grant in order to build upon the results achieved during the current project and continue the community-based conservation initiative.

***Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.***

None

### **Safeguard Policy Assessment**

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

The project was found to trigger two CEPF socio-economic safeguards – Indigenous Peoples (OP/BP 4.10) and Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12).

In-depth surveys were conducted at the proposed sites to understand the socio-political scenario, relationships with stakeholders, wildlife and the forest to ensure site-specific local appropriateness. Workshops and meeting were conducted to debrief the findings of the earlier prioritization study, the objectives of the current CEPF-ATREE-funded project, the results of the current social survey, gauge their interest in co-managing the site, discuss potential benefits, and incorporate their perceptions into the reserve nomination and support letters. The final support letter was made available to the people along with the map of proposed Theni Conservation Reserve (see appendix of Technical Report).

## Performance Tracking Report Addendum

### CEPF Global Targets

**(1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 - 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013)**

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from January, 2012 to January, 2013. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No	No		
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	Yes	Not yet		A proposal has been sent to the Tamil Nadu State Government and the Forest Department for declaring a region of approximately 22000 ha as a Conservation Reserve in the Theni Forest Division. This area comes within the Bodi and Periyakulam Forest Range.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes	Not Yet		The project introduced the concept of collaborative management in the four proposed sites outside protected areas. The concept was introduced and discussed with various stakeholders, namely local communities, forest department, police department and local NGOs in Theni and Kodaikanal.
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	No			

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.**

### Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under **Community Characteristics** and **Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit**, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics							Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit														
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Increased Income due to:				Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other	
									Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services										
<b>Total</b>																						

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the **Community Characteristic** and **Socioeconomic Benefit**:

### **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

While undertaking the interview surveys and discussions with the various stakeholders we realized that a locally-suitable initiative ensuing on-ground action through stakeholder engagement would be necessary to foster stakeholder participation.

Two proposed sites Agamalai and Kottagudi have also been recommended as Important Bird Areas to bring much-needed conservation attention to this region. The draft proposal is available in the attached Technical Report.

### **Information Sharing and CEPF Policy**

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

#### **Please include your full contact details below:**

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#### List of appendices:

- 1) Technical Report: Kanagavel, A. and R. Pandya 2013. Establishing Community Conservation Reserves in the Anamalai Corridor. Technical Report. WILD, Coimbatore.
- 2) Kanagavel, A., S. Joseph, R. Pandya & R. Raghavan 2013. Potential for Community and Conservation Reserves in the Western Ghats, India. *Asian Journal of Conservation Biology* 2(1): 61-68.
- 3) Kanagavel, A., R. Pandya, C. Sinclair, A. Prithvi & R. Raghavan 2013. Community and Conservation Reserves in Southern India: Status, Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 5(17) (in press)