

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Arulagam
Project Title:	Building a Grassroots Constituency to Conserve the River Moyar in the Mysore-Nilgiri Corridor
Date of Report:	January 2012
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CEPF Region: Western Ghats

Strategic Direction: 1. Conservation of key biodiversity areas

Grant Amount: \$40,756

Project Dates: November 1, 2009 – November 30, 2011

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner): Care Earth Trust, Making McGuffin, State Government Departments,

1. Care Earth Trust was the primary implementation partner of Arulagam for the project titled 'Building a grassroots constituency to conserve the River Moyar in the Mysore-Nilgiri Corridor. The mode of operation was joint, and the level of involvement by Care Earth was in the areas of project formulation and design, project liaison with CEPF, ATREE and the state Departments, technical expertise, field assessments, development of the microplans and the sustainability mechanism.
2. Making McGuffin, due to internal problems was dissolved within the first quarter of implementation. One of the team members was absorbed into the project as a consultant for the purpose of visual documentation.
3. Tamil Nadu Forest Department, a major stakeholder of the landscape was fully involved in the project; provided research and entry permits, lodging and boarding facilities during the assessments, reviews and meetings. Forest guards and watchers participated in the surveys and micro plan process, while senior officials were briefed throughout the course of the study.
4. Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, Public Works Department and Fisheries Department provided access to data, allowed entry into their campuses for data collection. Played a supportive role in the project.

¹ With contributions from N Muthu Karthick, C Arivazhagan, G Das, R J Ranjit Daniels, Bharatidasan, Surya Adoor, .Prakash, Anbazhagan, Ramaswamy, Maran, Chenna Krishnan and Sampath.

5. Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation provided computer facilities to the field team, while the Special Task Force of the Tamil Nadu Police has evinced interest in using the results of the project as resource material for in house training.

Conservation Impacts

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

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

It is expected that the long term impact of the project would be the increased the capacities of local institutions and its constituents to engage in a planning process that accords equal merit and value to conservation and development goals.

It is also expected that this process will be translated into on-field action, that can eventually be an example for other regions and communities to follow.

It is further expected that the project will lead to characterisation of the landscape for conservation action, identify and dedicate sites for conservation action for a set of nominate species agreed upon by the local human communities.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

1. The project has resulted in building the capabilities of decentralized democratic institutions, viz. Panchayats and the local communities in engaging in a planning process for the conservation of River Moyar through a process of participatory assessments, training and capacity building and joint development of the Micro Plan. This has been achieved in 3 of the 5 panchayats that are located along the river course.
2. The Micro Plan has identified a set of conservation actions, of which two have already commenced operations in three panchayats. These are 1. Setting up of the River Moyar Conservation Brigade/ Vulture Watchers and 2. Setting up of the Community Conservation Learning Centre.
Other actions include: Using the Micro Plan as the basis for the Biodiversity Monitoring Committee, Evolving Eco livelihoods, Monitoring Fish Populations, Monitoring Fishing practices. Eliminate selective fishing, Regulating tourism, Promoting eco tourism Phased removal of invasive plants, Establishing Signage along the river course, Trainers trainers and Phasing out of flood plain cultivation. Monitoring of the realization of the conservation action would be through the establishment of a Joint review mechanism for monitoring water use and pollution.
3. The Project has identified three conservation nodes along the River Course as the most critical portion for conservation action within an overall area of 180 sq. km. The project has also concluded that a multi-species focus is appropriate for the project landscape.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

At the end of the project duration (24 months) it is expected that

- 1. Plan documents at the level of the Panchayat or Gram Sabha would be developed.**
- 2. These documents would contain socio-ecological data for the region, as well as sectoral sub-plans.**
- 3. The plan document would also identify habitats that are critical and recommend the method and means to secure the same.**
- 4. It is also expected that suggestions regarding improved management of the region and better networking amongst the stakeholders would be forged.**
- 5. Specific strategies for sites that are under varying ownerships patterns, but provide critical ecosystem services would be in place; thereby enhancing the connectivity between corridors.**
- 6. A mechanism or protocol to sustain the project would be evolved.**

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

The outcome of the project is as follows:

1. 3 Micro Plans have been developed and endorsed by the respective Panchayats
2. The Plans contain the most comprehensive and first time data on the social and ecological aspects of the region.
3. The Micro Plan, has for the first time, identified using proximity codes, Panchayat boundaries for conservation action.
4. A consolidated summary on conservation action, as agreed upon by all stakeholders has been developed.
5. Specific strategies have been identified which are addressed in detail in the Micro Plans.
6. The Micro Plans have been mainstreamed into the Panchayat Plans thus ensuring sustainability; co-financing processes are already in place.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: 160 sq. km. (20 sq. km of the landscape surveyed is under the category of urban areas / private plantations and hence could not be included in the planning process)

Species Conserved: Multi-species

Corridors Created: River Moyar as a Wildlife Corridor

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

1. The existence of two sets of data: the official and often stated and the unofficial, real data especially on aspects pertaining to the use of the river, cropping patterns, collection of Minor Forest Produce was one of the major challenges of the project towards achieving the goals.
2. Considerable amount of time and effort had to be dedicated to overcome this impediment; and it was finally agreed not to identify or state the GPS points or marked locations especially on land use in the final project report, but highlight ground reality in a narrative format.
3. Yet another confounding issue was that of fishing in the upper and mid reaches of River Moyar. While the on ground reality is that subsistence fishing with customary rules and regulations is in place, the data could not be used in the microplan since fishing is official banned within a Wildlife Sanctuary.
4. The above problem would be addressed by making monitoring of fishing/fish species diversity and population dynamics in River Moyar as one of the mandates of the Conservation Brigade.
5. The Conservation Brigades are a voluntary team of young men and women representing the three panchayats along River Moyar who have endorsed the project. They have been identified and evolved into a brigade through the combined efforts of the project proponents and the Panchayats. The Brigades have until the duration of the project, been trained in the methodology adopted in the project, as also group dynamics and functioning. The immediate task identified for them is the monitoring of the river course and the participation in the current project on 'In situ conservation of Vultures in the Moyar Valley' as trackers, volunteers for awareness generation and dissemination. The Conservation Brigade has 20 active members, and 8 members who need to be further motivated.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

1. The unexpected impact is the interest the project and its activities are generating amongst students of Wildlife Biology and Geography from two Universities in Tamil Nadu.

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned: The social-economic and ecological characteristics of the River Moyar's course characterised

Component 1 Actual at Completion: Completed: attached as Document 1. This characterization is the first ever assessment of River Moyar and its immediate environs. Data being provided to the Western Ghats Portal.

Component 2 Planned: Local communities mobilised and field teams built for participatory research

Component 2 Actual at Completion: Completed; volunteers and trainees at the level of the Panchayat identified and mainstreamed into the project; a dedicated field team of researchers and community organizers in place near the project site.

Component 3 Planned: Participatory research methodology developed

Component 3 Actual at Completion: Completed attached as Document 2. The participatory research methodology is the first ever initiative for the landscape and the riverine systems of the State of Tamil Nadu.

Component 4 Planned: Field teams orientated and trained to undertake the research

Component 4 Actual at Completion: Completed and attached as Document 3.

Component 5 Planned: Field assessments undertaken and findings fed back to key audiences.

Component 5 Actual at Completion: Field assessments have been completed, analysed and the results converted into a series of schematic diagrams that have been taken back to the local communities and concerned government departments. Described in detail in Document 4 and 5.

Component 6 Planned: Micro-planning for conservation action undertaken.

Component 6 Actual at Completion: Completed. The process is described in detail in Document 5.

One municipality (urban unit of administration) and five panchayats represent the human habitations and the landscape along the 90 km course of River Moyar. The current project is limited to the five Panchayats (East to West) viz Pungar, Pudubeerkadavu, Thengumaragada, Masinagudi and Mudmalai. Of the five Panchayats, three panchayats. Viz. Pungar, Pudubeerkadavu and Thengumaragada participated in the process and engaged themselves in the

formulation of the Micro Plans. The Panchayat of Masinagudi did not agree to be part of the process in any manner during the first year of the project, but subsequently agreed to provide permission to elicit data on the condition that the data would be provided to the Panchayat so that they could develop the Plan by themselves. This non participation is the outcome of the feeling of betrayal that the local community has developed towards NGOs and researchers in general, due to many proposed / ongoing conservation issues. The reasons for non participation by the Mudumalai Panchayat is complex: the long demanded request for voluntary resettlement by the inhabitants has been initiated under Project Tiger by the TN Forest Department, by which 312 families are being moved to the adjoining habitat, and the lands held by the families under customary and legal rights are being annexed to the TN Forest Department, thus rendering the process of micro plans redundant.

Component 7 Planned: Micro-plans finalized and endorsed by local government

Component 7 Actual at Completion: Completed and attached as Document 5. The original copies of the Plans are deposited with the custodians, copies available with the grantee organizations.

Component 8 Planned: Results of the project disseminated as a foundation for future conservation action.

Component 8 Actual at Completion: Completed. Website being developed and a formal endorsement from the State Authorities is awaited.

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

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Lessons Learned

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)

1. The project design was a judicious adaptation of the principles of an action research programme as well as applied sciences.
2. It was hence successful in developing a design that was valid (in terms of data collection and validation), easily disseminated to the stakeholders, adaptive to local situations and finally, enable sustained monitoring.

3. It was the first ever comprehensive assessment of the biological diversity of a riverine system in the Nilgiris and Sathyamangalam WLS
4. It was a pioneering effort of development a participatory methodology for assessing three groups viz. humans, flora and fauna.
5. It was also for the first time the project design factored in a programme approach to conservation, by building mechanisms for continuity and sustainability
6. The design created a platform for real time participation of decentralized units of democracy i.e. from inception to the final endorsement of the plans.
7. The project design also contributed to active engagement of the field level staff of major government departments.

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

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

1. Conservation action can be enabled only through open dialogue, negotiation and real time participation of primary stakeholders viz. local human populations in countries like India.
2. Projects involving community mobilization and planning need innovation and flexibility in implementation that is strongly supported by the donor agency / project actors.
3. Conservation can be enabled only when the processes and results are shared, and more actors are co-opted.
4. Riverine systems within Protected Areas in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu are poorly studied.
5. Similarly, there is very scant secondary data on aquatic fauna and flora (with the exception of fishes) within Protected Areas in the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation	Grantee and Partner Leveraging	INR 50,000 USD 1112.00	Purchase of computers for the staff of the project
Anuscha Enterprise	Regional and Portfolio Leveraging	INR 250,000 USD 5555.00	Improving the infrastructure using recycled wood/alternative building material in the villages
State Bank of Mysore	Grantee and Partner Leveraging	INR 10,000 USD 223.00	Providing basic material to the Conservation Brigade

Mr Saravana Bhagavan, Malaysia	Grantee and Partner Leveraging	INR 8,000 USD 178.00	Community mobilization efforts
Michellin Tyres	Regional and Portfolio Leveraging		Under discussion to support the Conservation Brigades through training for sustainable livelihoods
Cognizant Technology Solutions/Wild Wings Society	Regional and Portfolio Leveraging		Under discussion to support the Conservation Brigades through training for sustainable livelihoods
Royal Bank of Scotland Foundation	Regional and Portfolio Leveraging		Under discussion to support the Conservation Brigades through training for sustainable livelihoods
Tamil Nadu Forest Department	Grantee and Partner Leveraging		Tiger Reserve Declaration; and the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity and Greening Project: engaging the communities in voicing their opinion
Centre for Wildlife Studies / WCS	Grantee and Partner Leveraging	INR 6,00,000 USD 13334.00	Declaration of Sathyamangalam WLS as an Eco sensitive zone
Coast to Coast	Regional and Portfolio Leveraging	INR 1,50,000 USD 3333.00	
Panchayats	Project co financing	INR 60,000 USD 1333.00	Rentals, transport
Citi Connect Foundation	Project co financing	INR 20,000 USD 444.00	Developing a website on River Moyar and the results of the project / ongoing
Arulagam/Care Earth	Project co financing	INR 5,80,000 USD 12888.00	Staff salaries

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

- A*** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this 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 funded project.)*
- C*** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*
- D*** *In-Kind contributions can include staff and volunteer time, supplies, and other materials your organization provides to the project.*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results. Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

One of the goals of the Project was to ensure sustainability of the effort by transforming it into a programme mode. This was achieved through the following processes:

1. Ensuring that the Micro Plans become part of the Panchayat's five year agenda and not remain stand alone exercises.
2. Ensuring that there is dedicated fund (minimal at this point of time to the tune of 3 -5% percent of the total annual budget allotted for the Panchayat by the State Government.. It is to be noted that fund allocation has not yet been made to the Panchayats, and is expected before 31 March, 2012) made available by the Panchayat for enabling conservation action detailed in the Micro Plan
3. Setting up of conservation actions/ targets that are feasible and mutually agreeable.
4. Evolving an incentive based mechanism for local conservation action.
5. Continuing the effort with the engagement of other organizations

The project proponents are exploring the possibility of sharing and replicability by evolving a dedicated website by end March, 2012 with the support of a corporate entity.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

1. No grievances were raised by the local people throughout the course of the project since sustained interaction with the local people and their leaders was ensured by the community mobilization team. Likewise the researchers and the community mobilisers kept the local staff of the TN Forest Department updated on the nature and outcome of the project.
2. Local level modifications in the implementation of the safeguard policy however had to be carried out. For instance, Government entities are not allowed to display boards of private entities, and the features of the landscape as signage in open areas. Hence boards detailing the safeguard policies had to be scaled down in size and displayed only on the outer walls of the Panchayat.
3. Additional effort had to be taken to involve tribal communities especially in Thengumaragada, Pudubeerkadavu and Masinagudi Panchayats in the planning process.
4. Likewise, separate meetings had to be convened for women, since it was soon realized that their voices were drowned in the mixed group meetings.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

None

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, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

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. (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.	Yes	160 sq. km	160 sq.km	Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Nilgiri North Forest Division Sathyamangalam WLS
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	Yes	28 hectares of flood plain through community agreement		Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
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.	Yes	160 sq.km	160sq.km	The project is a first time assessment of the riverine system within the three protected areas viz. Mudumalai WLS, Niligiri North Forest Division and Sathyamangalam WLS All three are part of the Mysore-Niligiri Corridor of the Western Ghats, India
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes	No numerical value		This is the first time assessment of riverine systems within protected areas, the methodology of which is being considered for replication along all river courses. No final agreement reached yet.
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

