

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: The East Foundation

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Community-Initiated Red Panda Conservation Project in North-East Region of Sankhuwasabha District in Eastern Nepal, Himalaya

Implementation Partners for this Project: Community Forest User Groups, Buffer zone Management Committee of Makalu-Barun National Park, Area-level Federations of Community Forest Users, Village Development Committees, District Development Committee of Sankhuwasabha district, Makalu-Barun National Park and District Forest Office are the partner/stakeholder organizations involved directly in project implementation.

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): 1 September, 2009- 31 March, 2011

Date of Report (month/year): 30 April 2011

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

In brief, this project was launched to mitigate threats to red panda (*Ailurus fulgens*), a Conservation Target Species in the area between Makalu-Barun National Park and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area under Strategic Direction 2 and Investment Priorities 2.1 and 2.2 of the Ecosystem Profile Eastern Himalayan Region 2005. And this project was designed and developed through a series of consultation meetings with concerned Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) and stakeholders of the area by launching a short term planning project entitled A Pre-Community Planning for Red Panda Conservation in Eastern Himalayan Region of Nepal supported by CEPF in 2009. This project therefore included its outputs and indicators based on the findings of pre-community planning. It included 4 outputs with categorized indicators to cover all the aspects and to meet the purpose and goal of the project eventually.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT IMPACTS

Project Impacts:

Long Term: Conservation of Red Panda with a viable population and optimum good habitat by improving connectivity between Makalu-Barun National Park and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in North-East region of Sankhuwasabha District in Eastern Nepal Himalaya.

1. Red Panda's population status maintained
2. Red Panda's habitat and connectivity between Makalu-Barun National Park and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area improved

Short Term: Involvement of communities in conservation of Red Panda and its habitats increased

1. Conservation status of red panda in the connectivity between Makalu Barun National Park and Kanchenjunga Conservation Area under Kangchenjunga Singalila Complex maintained
2. Improved management of 10782 hectares of red panda habitat in the connectivity between Makalu Barun and Kangchenjunga Singalila Complex

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

Involvement of local communities in red panda and its habitat conservation is increased. They follow and implement the provision and activities of red panda conservation which have been

legally incorporated in the statute and operational plan of each Community Forest through their own participation and consensus. As a result, the management of 10782 ha of red panda habitat is improved and red panda conservation status is also maintained in the area.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The unexpected impacts of the project were as follows:

1. Some people of the project area who used to wear the caps made from the pelt of red panda previously were not seen with the caps again because of the project's awareness development activities. It was reported that they renounced to wear red panda pelt caps after knowing the value of red panda and the provision of law for restriction.

2. Community forest users of the area were proud of red panda existing in their respective forests. They thought that the beautiful species of red panda is still existed in their forests as an asset of them.

3. After knowing the value of red panda through this project, the District Development Committee of Sankhuwasabha district included the photo/image of red panda as one of the flagships of Sankhuwasabha district at its website: www.ddcsankhuwasabha.gov.np.

4. The community of Thudam village proudly responded that they have now a good trail for the people and the animal because of red panda project. A difficult section of the trail to Thudam village which crossed through a cliff was broken down two years before and it was supported to reconstruct by the project.

5. People outside the project also became very cautious about the value of red panda and its conservation and, asked to get the same type of red panda conservation project in their areas.

IV. PROJECT COMPONENTS

Project Components:

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Red Panda and its habitat conservation practice in Community Forest management system developed	Red panda and its habitat conservation practice in 10 Community Forests management system developed
<i>Indicator 1.1: 10 Community Forests comprising of 10782 ha of forests incorporated and approved Red Panda Conservation program in their statutes and operational plans by year 1 of the project</i>	5 Community Forests comprising of 2016 ha of forests incorporated and approved red panda conservation program in their statutes and operational plans by year 1 and remaining 5 Community Forests comprising of 8766 ha of forests incorporated and approved the programs by the last quarter of the project
<i>Indicator 1.2: At least 1 community forest user group initiated implementation of red panda conservation management by 9 months of project</i>	2 Community Forest User Groups initiated implementation of red panda conservation management by year 1 of the project.
<i>Indicator 1.3: An effective coordination mechanism developed among the 10 Community Forest User Groups</i>	Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network developed and established with the representatives of 10 Community Forest User Groups as an effective coordination mechanism for red panda conservation in the area
Output 2: Sustainable livelihood opportunities that enhance conservation strengthened	Sustainable livelihood opportunities that enhance conservation strengthened
<i>Indicator 2.1: 4 Community Forest User Groups strengthened on conservation friendly sustainable livelihood practices by the end of project</i>	4 NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products) nurseries under 4 Community Forest User Groups developed to initiate conservation friendly sustainable

	livelihoods practices in the area
<i>Indicator 2.2: A feasibility study on conservation based enterprise to improve local livelihoods conducted by the end of project</i>	A feasibility study conducted and produced a report entitled "A Feasibility Study on Conservation based Enterprise to Improve Local Livelihood: Red Panda based Ecotourism in Bhot Khola Area, Sankhuwasabha District, Nepal" which has been put on TEF website: www.eastfoundation.org.np
Output 3: Scientific and community based red panda monitoring system developed and implemented	Scientific and community based red panda monitoring system developed and implemented
<i>Indicator 3.1: Red Panda Hot spots / key red panda conservation sites identified</i>	5 key red panda conservation sites identified
<i>Indicator 3.2: 10 Community Forest User Group initiated Red panda monitoring activities by year 2 of the project</i>	10 Community Forest s User Groups initiated red panda monitoring activities by year 1 of the project but red panda was found only in 7 Community Forests and so scientists and User Groups decided to continue the monitoring only in 5 key hot spot sites/Community Forests. Although, all 10 Community Forest User Groups have developed the same type of operational plan to launch for red panda conservation
<i>Indicator 3.3: Data/information base on red panda established</i>	<i>Data/information base on red panda established</i>
Output 4: Understanding of Red Panda and its habitat conservation amid the local communities increased	Understanding of Red Panda and its habitat conservation amid the local communities increased
<i>Indicator 4.1: A package for sensitization and awareness raising for red panda conservation developed</i>	Red panda poster, booklet, signage, exposure visit of the representatives of 10 Community Forest User Groups to already started Red Panda Project in llam and red panda class rooms in 15 schools of the project site for sensitization and awareness raising for red panda conservation developed, established and provided
<i>Indicator 4.2: At least 10 sensitization and awareness raising interactions to reduce red panda casualties organized</i>	20 sensitization and awareness raising interaction meetings to reduce red panda casualties organized with 10 Community Forest User Groups, Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network, local schools' teachers and district level stakeholders

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

1. Red panda conservation provision and activities have been legally incorporated and endorsed in each Community Forest User Group's statute and operational plan and, 2 Community forest User Groups have already initiated the implementation of red panda conservation. Likewise, the Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network has been established to coordinate and assist the conservation activities. Therefore the red panda and its habitat conservation practice in community management system are developed in the area.

2. NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products) nursery development and domestication practice have been introduced and initiated in 4 Community Forests and a feasibility study on red panda based tourism development has also been conducted in the the area for sustainable livelihoods opportunities for the local communities. NTFP nursery development and domestication practice are now going to be taken over by The Mountain Institute (an INGO) upon a request and red panda based tourism development study of the area has been included in the tourism planning process of Sankhuwasabha District. Consequently sustainable livelihoods opportunities that enhance conservation are strengthened.

3. Representatives of all 10 Community Forest User Groups and Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network have been trained and involved in red panda monitoring and 5 community Forest User Groups have initiated red panda monitoring in their respective forests. As a result,

scientific and community based red panda monitoring system is developed within the community forests.

4. Sensitization and awareness development have been adequately radiated through interaction, exposure visit, red panda class room development in the local schools, and the distribution of poster, signage and booklet which have increased a wide understanding of red panda and its habitat conservation among the local communities. Moreover, red panda information booklet entitled "An Introduction to Red Panda" has been proposed to the Resource Persons of District Education Office to include it as local curriculum in the local schools of the project area and the booklet has also been supplied to each school according to the consensus of Resource Persons and so it can keep the understanding of red panda and its habitat conservation in the area through the local teachers and students as well. Understanding of Red Panda and its habitat conservation amid the local communities is thus increased.

Additionally, Chief Warden and District Forest Officer who have provided their legal approval for the incorporation of red panda conservation in each Community Forest User Group's statute and operational plan will oversee the performance of Community Forest User Groups and it also supports to enhance all intended Outputs in the future.

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

None

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

None

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.

Lessons learned during the phases of the project were as follows:

1. After project briefing workshop, almost all partners and stakeholders knew the value of red panda. Consequently the message of red panda conservation project radiated in the district and in the project area unexpectedly and different people came to talk about the red panda and asked to provide support to red panda conservation project in their forests too. Partners and stakeholders were proud of red panda existence in their forests and they committed to conserve this shy and beautiful animal as much as their capacity in the future. From this unexpected result, it was learned that right information can give right action or information can play a good role for the project success.

2. Unanticipated challenges of the project area such as inconsistent socio-cultural calendar, unfair climatic condition and conflict among community forest user groups for their forest borders created impediment against the accomplishment of project activities. Though, we frequently consulted with the local communities and other concerned stakeholders to receive their consensus and involvement in the activities or to overcome the challenges. As a result, we got

the success to complete the activities eventually. From this event, we learned that risks analysis of the project should be done very carefully and frequent consultation with the partners and stakeholders must be done to overcome the challenges.

3. Conflict of community forest borders among the forest users created problem abruptly for the development of statute and operational plan of their forest management incorporating red panda conservation provision and activities and we attempted to explain and clarify the borders issues using GIS information sheets and GPS tool. As a result, they became normal and understood the issues and lastly they came to involve in the development of statute and operational plan. From this happening, we learned that technical information and tools which solved the borders conflict must be there with project workers according to the project activities.

4. When the members of Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network were fully involved in the activities of fund raising, review of their yearly action plan, finalization of their Network's statute and registration process with District Administration Office, they began to feel responsibilities and these responsibilities developed their ownership on the Network and on red panda and its conservation. And ownership eventually developed the ideas to explore new business for program sustainability. As a result, the Network members themselves have set a program to pull the budget from District Development Committee of Sankhuwasabha District too for red panda conservation in the future.

It was thus learnt that the involvement of stakeholders/partners in the project activities can give a good result for sustainability.

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

This project design was prepared based on the findings of A Pre-Community Planning for Red Panda Conservation in Eastern Himalayas Region of Nepal and the feedback of CEPF Nepal staffs (Dr. Sarala Khaling, regional coordinator and Mr. Angphuri Sherpa, Nepal country coordinator) that contributed to this project success eventually. A Pre-Community Planning for Red Panda Conservation in Eastern Himalayas Region of Nepal, a short term project which was conducted in the area by TEF itself with the financial support from CEPF in 2009 provided the opportunities to conduct meetings with the local communities and stakeholders on red panda issues and to study the realities of the area. This project design, thus, included the consensus of the local communities and stakeholders with the realities of the area.

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

The project was executed through the consensus and participation of the users of concerning community forests, local school teachers, representatives of local political parties, Area-level Federations of Community Forest Users formed by Federations of Community Forest Users Nepal, Makalu-Barun Buffer Zone Management Committee, Chief Warden and staffs of Makalu-Barun National Park, District Forest Officer, Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network, CEPF Nepal staffs (Dr. Sarala Khaling, regional coordinator and Mr. Angphuri Sherpa, Nepal country coordinator) and other stakeholders that contributed to this project success.

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.

No any additional donors supported this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
None			

None			
None			
None			

***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.

1. Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network has been established aiming to continue some indispensable activities of this project. Consequently the Network has developed its yearly plan comprising of red panda monitoring in key hot spots, minimization of encroachment to the hot spots, awareness development in each Community Forest User Group, facilitation to implement operational plan of Community Forest User Groups etc. For this plan, the Network has collected Rs. 82,000 (1,157 US\$) and they have a plan to raise fund each year from concerning Community Forest User Groups, Village Development Committees and District development Committee.

2. The East Foundation will give its first priority to raise fund and to keep continuity of red panda conservation activities. TEF will also provide facilitation to Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network for fund raising from local line agencies and organizations and for program implementation.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
--

The additional comments and recommendations are as follows:

1. It was a very short term project. This type of conservation project needs long term especially in the area of illiterate, poverty stricken and natural resource dependent communities comprising the activities of poverty alleviation.

2. Red panda/wilderness based tourism should be initiated to uplift conservation awareness and to improve economic condition of the area (Please, the report of A Feasibility Study on Conservation based Enterprise to Improve Local Livelihood: Red Panda based Ecotourism in Bhot Khola Area, Sankhuwasabha District, Nepal also on Website: www.eastfoundation.org,np).

3. Regular monitoring on the targeted species (red panda) and the progress of Community Forest User Groups' operational plan implementation should be conducted in the future also to get a meaningful outcome of the conservation (Please, see the report of Community Initiated Red Panda Monitoring in Bhotkhola Area, Sankhuwasabha district, Nepal also on Website: www.eastfoundation.org,np).

4. Bhotkhola Red Panda Conservation Network which has been established aiming to coordinate, lead and continue the red panda conservation activities in the area should be refreshed time to time.

5. Scientific study on red panda distribution and its habitats should be carried out to ensure red panda conservation in the area. (Please, see the report of Community Based Red Panda Study in Bhotkhola Region, Sankhuwasabha also on Website: www.eastfoundation.org.np)

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: Khagendra Sangam

Organization name: The East Foundation

Mailing address: Khandbari, Sankhuwasabha District, Nepal

Tel: (977) 029560137

Fax: (977) 029560137

E-mail: ksangam@info.com.np