

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: *DOLPHIN FOUNDATION*

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): *Integrated Approach to Enhance Protection of Manas Tiger Reserve, a Priority Site Outcome in the Indian part of the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex.*

Implementation Partners for this Project: Nil

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): January 1, 2008 - June 30, 2010

Date of Report (month/year): August 2010

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

The importance of the project site and the turmoil that has passed over it during the last 2 decades should be very significant factors to be considered in reviewing this project. The CEPF project site, Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam (India), is considered to be a very important conservation area for the nation because of its pristine ecosystems which represent major habitats of many globally threatened species – like Asian Elephant, Tiger, Indian Rhino, Pigmy Hog, Hispid Hare, Golden Langur, Gangetic Dolphin, Bengal Florican etc. Ecologically, the park is also considered as a part of the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex as described in the CEPF Ecosystem Profile. Because of its diverse ecosystem values, Manas has been conferred with many different titles, it is equally a National Park, a Tiger Reserve, Elephant Reserve, Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. But unfortunately, this area had also created history in the conservation movement of the country by loosing about 65% of its pristine forest during the last 20 years period, mainly due to socio-political unrest and unabated livelihood pressure, creating serious threats to the biodiversity, especially for the long range animals like Tiger and Elephant. Over 90% of the people in the fringe areas are living below the poverty level and they have absolute livelihood dependency on the resource of the park. Ever increasing demand for resources and space had led to massive shrinkage of habitats and blocking of corridors resulted in wide scale human-wildlife conflict in the fringe of Manas. The peripheral cooperation was down to zero and Manas had lost some of its attributes of a World Heritage Site. But fortunately, after one decade of all around efforts from all corners of society, the ethnic unrest finally subsided a few years back from now. So the strategies being adopted now for restoration of this great Park are both cautious and innovative for wining back the support and cooperation of the poor fringe villagers/local stakeholders by supporting them to earn their livelihoods in sustainable ways.

Dolphin Foundation (DF) had launched a comprehensive program during the year 2000 for the protection of this great Reserve, specifically targeting conservation of tiger and elephant (umbrella species) and their precious habitats. The program is an integrated approach of various components like – study and profiling of socio-economic status of the fringe villages, preference based sustainable alternative livelihood generation, community motivation, promotion of community forests, capacity building of the local youths/NGOs/bodies, human-wildlife conflict mitigation, besides carrying out extensive awareness and educational program during the last 10 year period. The current CEPF funded project is a very important part of this program which

actually had supported DF's effort of promoting Alternative Sustainable Livelihoods for the forest dependent communities. The input area is considerably huge comprising of 87 fringe villages distributed under the three Ranges of Manas National Park. With the support from CEPF the program had worked in 12 prioritized target villages (out of the 29 fringe villages located under the Western Range areas of the park) for a period of two & half years. Besides, some of the other important activities of the project were developing community forests as alternative sources to meet the firewood needs of the poor communities and building conservation awareness among the locals. The project design and the strategy adopted have been very successful so far, hence it would be replicated to cover rest of the villages in the near future. DF is already in the process of raising additional funds to continue this endeavor.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Reduction of dependence on forest resources of local communities in one key project site (areas under Panbari Range of Manas NP) of Manas Tiger Reserve.*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
1. <i>Change in resource use practices among at least one community group of the project site during the project period of 2 years through adoption of alternative sustainable livelihood strategies and awareness raising.</i>	Two main community groups (Bodo & Assamese) in 12 fringe villages had changed their resource use practices by adopting project promoted alternative sustainable livelihoods.
2. <i>At least 3 community base organizations formed and/or strengthened in the project site within project period of 2 years have started promoting alternative sustainable livelihood practices in their respective fringe villages.</i>	A total of 5 community based organizations were formed and strengthened by the project and they are now promoting alternative sustainable livelihoods in their respective target villages.
3. <i>Number of illegal forest produce extraction cases starts reducing in at least 9 fringe villages of the project site during the project period of 2 years.</i>	Illegal Forest Produce extractions have already started reducing in the areas of Manas Tiger Reserve corresponding to the 12 targeted fringe villages.

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

The project was intended to address one of the major threats to the ecosystems of Eastern Himalaya – “the habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation” by means of changing the resource use practices of the forest dependent communities living on the fringe of Manas Tiger Reserve through promotion of forest-free alternative sustainable livelihoods. The project had successfully brought in the concept of forest-free alternative sustainable livelihoods to earn the daily bread & butter for the poor forest dependent communities from 12 target villages of Manas. The target communities have accepted the concept by showing their willingness significantly. A considerable section of the households from the target villages, representing two major community groups, have already adopted the project promoted livelihoods. Illegal forest produce extraction cases have also started decreasing in the project site favoring restoration of lost key habitat areas in the park. Thus, the project concept has proven to be an affective strategy in controlling the excessive livelihood dependency on the forest resources and this was the major achievement of the project.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

N/A

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs:

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<p>Output 1: Community based organizations strengthened and mobilized to promote conservation friendly sustainable livelihoods and resource use practices.</p> <p><i>1.1. At least three community based organizations formed and/or strengthened in the project site during the project period and they are promoting alternative sustainable livelihood practices.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To launch the project formally and to inform the target communities and other stakeholders about the purpose of the project, an Inception Workshop was organized and the necessary cooperation from all the concerned was requested. • A field visit was organized for the target communities to demonstrate the previous alternative sustainable livelihood initiatives of Dolphin Foundation. About 200 community members participated in the demonstration and got the first hand example about the scope and benefits of adopting these livelihoods. • A Feasibility Study was carried out to select and prioritize the feasible alternative sustainable livelihoods for the project site. The previous socio-economic data generated by the DF's ongoing program was taken as baseline to carry out the study. • A Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop was organized to discuss about the feasibility of the livelihoods to be promoted by the project. The feasibility study data was presented in the workshop for further analysis and final selection of livelihoods by a panel of experts from different concerned govt. and other agencies. Govt. policies, necessary markets, financial scope and the success/ failure of the similar ongoing efforts by other agencies were discussed in details to develop an effective strategy for promotion. A total of 9 different agencies had participated in the workshop and their experts constituted the panel. Looking at from different angles, the major livelihoods finally selected were – Sericulture, Handloom (up-scaled), Apiculture, Handicraft, Intensive Agriculture etc. • All the likeminded community based organizations

	<p>existed in the project site were identified, selected and motivated to become working partner in the project implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings were organized to institutionalize among the communities in the target villages where there were no similar community organization existed prior to project implementation. Project had facilitated formation of one CBO in the project areas and got it registered under Society's Registration Act, (Govt of Assam). • A total of 5 community based organizations were finally selected and made them formal partners in the project implementation. • Meetings were organized separately with each of the selected CBOs to reorganize their structure based on their ability to do certain things and thereby enhanced their performances. This was done through a democratic process with consensus from all their members. • Technical workshops and meetings were organized involving concerned agencies/experts/professionals to provide know-how to the 5 selected CBOs about the scope for adoption, resource leverages, markets access and technical aspects of the selected feasible livelihoods (CBO strengthening exercises). • The selected 5 CBOs were helped to establish their working offices by donating office furniture, educational materials, technical pamphlets developed by the project, contacts of concerned govt. offices & other agencies, copies of documents to apply for govt. schemes and loan from financial institutions etc. • The 5 strengthened CBOs had worked in association with DF to promote forest-free alternative sustainable livelihoods for the poor forest dependent communities in the project site • These CBOs along with other Self-Help Groups formed by the project are now playing the role of a "Third Front" in promoting alternative sustainable livelihoods continuously beyond the project period.
<p>1.2. At least 9 fringe villages of the project site covered by the 3 community based organizations (3 villages each) for promotion of alternative sustainable livelihoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 fringe villages under Manas Tiger Reserve were covered by the 5 CBOs to promote alternative sustainable livelihoods during the project period. • A survey was conducted after 24 months of project implementation to gather the current baseline information for the 12 target villages and evaluate the over all impact made by the project (project monitoring & evaluation). An analysis was done by comparing it with the previous baseline data which showed encouraging results. The project had already witnessed decrease in illegal forest produce extractions by the locals in the project site.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After 24 months of project implementation all the households who adopted/showed interest to adopt the project promoted livelihoods were revisited to assess the progresses made and to continuously keep them motivated. About 350 households were covered under this exercise.
<p>Output 2: A community based education and awareness building program developed and implemented to promote conservation friendly livelihood practices in the project site.</p>	
<p><i>2.1. Developed and implemented a community based education and awareness building program for promotion of alternative sustainable livelihoods in 9 fringe villages of the project site during the project period of 2 years.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the identified CBOs and other influential individuals from the project site were sort listed as per their relevance to the project. • Six motivation meetings were organized with the identified CBOs / influential individuals to enlighten them all about the alternative sustainable livelihoods and to encourage them to work for its promotion. The CBOs were selected based on their willingness and capability. • During the project period a total of 25 short meetings were organized with the selected CBOs and other local bodies to find out modalities for working with their collaboration. • Workshops and discussions were organized to educate the selected CBOs and the influential individuals on the need of promotion of alternative sustainable livelihoods involving experts and educators from concerned govt. departments and other agencies. • A community based education and awareness building system was developed involving the selected CBOs, influencing individuals & other local groups and was implemented to raise awareness on the importance of adopting alternative sustainable livelihoods for the protection of Manas in 12 fringe villages of the project site during the project period. • The system was proved to be efficient and self-sustained. It would continue to work beyond the project period on regular basis. • An awareness pamphlet about the need & importance of adopting forest-free livelihoods was developed in local language, printed 4500 copies and distributed among the target communities of all the 29 fringe villages of the project site. • 11 different types of Awareness Banners were developed covering different aspects of forest-free livelihoods and displayed at various places in the project site and used during the awareness meetings. • The 5 selected CBOs were supplied with sufficient quantity of the awareness pamphlets printed by the project to maintain a regular stock at their

	<p>respective offices. This was for the CBOs to use in the awareness drives conducted by them to raise awareness (capacity building at the local level).</p>
<p>2.2. <i>At least one community group from the 9 target villages of the project site was motivated for taking up alternative sustainable livelihoods during the project period of 2 years.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two major community groups (Bodo & Assamese) from the 12 target villages of the project site were motivated for adopting alternative sustainable livelihoods during the project period. • A major section of the general communities irrespective from any specific target villages, teachers & students from the local schools, community leaders, student organizations, local bodies etc from the project site were made aware about the need and scope of adopting forest-free livelihood practices and its importance in conservation of Manas Tiger Reserve. • A total of 15 awareness meetings were organized in the project site for motivating people to adopt forest-free livelihoods and to inform them about the importance for the conservation of Manas Tiger Reserve. • 13 Village meetings were organized in the target villages to discuss on specific issues on different livelihoods and to find out modalities for promotion. • A Livelihood Exhibition was organized at a central location in the project site to exhibit the various types of forest-free rural livelihoods practiced by the people of Assam. Over 50 local entrepreneur and individuals had participated and exhibited their produces in the event. Over 500 people visited the exhibition including the target communities, local leaders, politicians, popular individuals etc. The event was proved to be very effective in raising awareness about the scope and benefit of adopting forest-free livelihoods. • The project had organized 14 meetings with the project beneficiaries to brief them about the benefits of forming Shelf-Help Groups (SHGs) and encouraged them to form and register their own SHGs.
<p>Output 3: Alternative sustainable livelihood and resource use practices/strategies adopted by the communities living in the project site.</p>	
<p>3.1. <i>Target villages of the project site adopted at least 3 different types of alternative sustainable livelihoods viz. Sericulture, Handloom (scaled-up), & Apiculture during the project period.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two major community groups from the 12 target villages of the project site adopted 3 major types of alternative sustainable livelihoods. They were Sericulture, Handloom (up-scaled), & Apiculture during the project period. • Handicraft, intensive agriculture, horticulture, medicinal plants garden etc were some other types of forest-free livelihoods encouraged / facilitated by the project for adoption by the interested target communities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the project period 14 meetings were organized with the previous beneficiaries of the ongoing alternative sustainable livelihood generation initiatives of DF in the project site. They were highly encouraged to form cooperatives and similar groups and leverage additional resources for promotion. They were facilitated to look for resources by establishing contacts with the financial agencies, providing necessary information & documents, besides developing market links etc. • Skill Development : Project had organized technical training workshops mainly on three types of livelihoods- Sericulture, Handloom (up-scaled), & Apiculture. Besides people interested in other forms of forest-free livelihoods (handcraft, intensive agriculture, and medicinal plant gardens) were also extended all form of possible support from the project. • A total of 212 persons from the target communities received formal technical trainings on three types of livelihoods. The trainings were organized in a centrally located area of the project site. The trainings modules were designed with help of the respective govt. departments and the Master Trainers for the training workshops were also hired from them. The successful trainers were awarded with course completion certificates by the department concerned. • Three Manuals on the technical aspects of the livelihood practices (Sericulture, Handloom & Apiculture) were developed with the help from the concerned Govt. departments. Project had printed 4000 copies of each manual (total 12000 copies). These Manuals were provided to the trainees, CBOs and other interested villagers of the project site. • One Pamphlet was developed on the compiled information on different financial institutions, microfinance, govt. sponsored schemes etc. Over 5000 copies of the pamphlet were printed and provided to the trainees, CBOs and other interested villagers of the project site. • Sericulture (Eri-culture) Food Plant Gardens (Castor Plantation) were developed in the target villages of the project site to help the community in Eri Silkworm rearing. The castor plant gardens would ensure ready availability of food plant for their caterpillars. The Castor Gardens were developed at two different levels – (1) in the unused community land and (2) in the personal land of the households involved in Eri-raising. The community Castor Gardens were developed in about 3.5 acre of community land area in the project site. Over 55 households were donated with the improved variety of castor seed for plantation in their private land. This had helped tremendously in getting regular supply of food plant leaves to raise silkworm.
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	<p>Earlier, food plant scarcity was happened to be one of the main hurdles for the Eri-raiser in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The project had arranged improved & disease resistant variety of Eri-seeds (eggs) form Central Silk Board (Govt of India) on subsidized rate and supplied to about 65 Eri-raiser households of the project site twice a year at free of cost. •Improved designed Honey Bee Boxes along with modern equipments for hygienic extraction of honey were donated to the CBOs for using in their demonstration drives in the target villages. •A local craftsmanship was promoted to make improved designed Honey Bee Box by providing training and supplying the necessary accessories. •To create alternative sources for fuel and timber wood the project had developed community forests in the fringe areas of project for long term reduction of illegal forest extractions. The community forests were developed at two different levels - 1) In unused community land and (2) in the personal land of the households. Over 15000 seedlings/ stamps of commercially important fast growing species were planted in the unused public land area (viz. village land, temple land, village school premises etc). Over 13000 seedlings/ stamps of similar species were donated to the interested households for plantation in their private land. •Meetings were organized with the project beneficiaries to encourage them to form Self-Help Groups. Project had facilitated formation of 7 Self-Help Groups(SHG), got them formally registered under the Govt. at Block Development level and helped them to open bank accounts under nationalized banks. The registered Self-Help Groups are now recognized as Cooperative Groups eligible to get loans/microfinance. They can also be considered as beneficiaries under the govt. schemes implemented in the project site. •The newly formed SHGs were provided with all the required assistances to reach the financial institutions and apply for microfinance & other suitable forms of loans. One SHGs had already started receiving Govt. aids and financial assistances from local agencies. •The Govt. agencies were liaised to implement their schemes relevant to the livelihoods promoted by the project through the registered SHGs. One Govt. sponsored scheme has so far been implemented by the state Sericulture Department in the project site. •The newly formed SHGs were provided with material supports like Eri-seeds, castor seeds, yarns and other equipments to upscale the newly adopted livelihood practices by them. They were
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	<p>also provided with other technical supports wherever necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary market links were established by networking with concerned agencies and individuals. A handout was printed with compiled information about the markets, marketing agents, local agents etc and was distributed among the SHG members and other interested communities.
<p>3.2. At least 50 households adopted program-promoted alternative sustainable livelihoods in the project site during the project period of 2 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the completion of project implementation 140 households from 12 target villages had adopted project promoted livelihoods. Over 200 more households had shown their interest and had come forward to adopt the same. These households are being provided with necessary assistances.

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

The outcome of the project was highly satisfactory as it had actually achieved more than the target set with some additional contributions in controlling the forest dependency on Manas. The concept of this project was a very textbook approach to change the resources use practices of the target communities by promoting alternative sustainable livelihoods using systematic and verified field methods. An alternative livelihood feasibility study for the project site was carried out with the involvement of expert agencies to select the most feasible livelihoods suitable for the target communities. A Stakeholders' Consultation Workshops was organized to analyze the data generated and to develop effective livelihood strategies for the target communities for implementation. The interests showed by the target communities and other stakeholders towards the project was noteworthy, who had provided outstanding support all throughout the project implementation.

The project had covered 12 target villages under the western range of Manas National Park. As per the plan a "third front" was developed by educating and strengthening 5 local Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for promotion of forest-free livelihoods in 12 target villages. This "third front" would sustain the project effort by continuously working for the cause beyond the project period. To strengthen the CBOs and other interested community members, trainings on different livelihoods were organized involving experts from the concerned agencies and Govt. departments. A community based Awareness and Education System was developed and executed involving the local CBOs to educate the communities on the need of promotion of alternative sustainable livelihoods in the project site. To showcase the benefits and scope of adopting the alternative sustainable livelihoods a Livelihood Exhibition was organized in the project site. The project had also facilitated institutionalization among the beneficiaries of the previous livelihood initiatives of Dolphin Foundation for leverage of additional resources for promotion. The project beneficiaries were encouraged to form Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to get access to financial assistance. A total of 7 SHGs were formed and registered under the Govt. at Block Level and got their Bank Account opened. The newly formed SHGs were encouraged and facilitated to apply for loan from the financial agencies. They were also provided with material support like Eri-seeds, castor seeds, yarns and other equipments to upscale the newly adopted livelihood practices. The necessary market links for the SHGs were established by networking with concerned agencies and individuals. Govt. agencies were lobbied to implement Govt sponsored livelihood schemes in the project site.

At the completion of the project, 140 households representing two major community groups (Bodo & Assamese) from the 12 target villages had adopted project promoted alternative livelihoods and now they are in the process of up-scaling these practices by forming cooperatives and self-help groups. 200 more such household had come forward to adopt forest friendly livelihood practices and they are being provided with necessary assistances. A total of 7 SHGs were formed from the project beneficiaries and registered under the Govt. at Block Level. The newly formed SHGs had already started receiving Govt. aids and financial assistance from local cooperatives. One Govt. sponsored scheme has so far been implemented by the state Sericulture Department in the project site. Project had developed Community Forests in the project site as alternative sources to meet the timber & firewood needs of the locals in long run by donating and planting fast growing and commercially important plants seedlings. Over 13000 seedlings were donated to the target community for plantation in their private land and another 15000 of similar seedlings were planted in community areas (public land). A community based awareness building system was developed and implemented for promotion of Alternative Sustainable Livelihoods by involving the CBOs, SHGs, influencing local individuals and other community members. This system would continue to work beyond the project period. A baseline survey was carried out to monitor and evaluate the overall impact of the project which showed encouraging results. The project had already witnessed decrease in illegal forest produce extractions by the locals in the project site.

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

N/A

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

N/A

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.

Conservation is a very complex process which involves multiple stakeholders & interaction of many different factors directly & indirectly. Planning and implementing conservation programs is still a learning process for the conservationists, which, however, helps tremendously in making the future programs more effective. The Livelihood projects are even more complex and difficult to implement. While implementing the CEPF funded livelihood project many important lessons were learnt. The most important among them are : - convincing the stakeholders to recognize that they have a very important stake in the process of conservation is a challenge and it is very important to accomplish this at the initial stage of the project implementation ; bringing in different stakeholders (different technical departments, financial agencies, marketing agencies, communities) for promotion of alternative livelihoods to a common platform and getting their consensus to adopt a common strategy is even more difficult which needs serious efforts and considerable amount of time ; for effective planning of livelihoods projects, thorough knowledge on the current socio-political development in the target area is very important ; the external factors influencing the economy of the target area is a major issue to be considered both at

planning and implementation stages for the livelihood projects; for successful implementation of livelihoods projects, the target community should be socially organized at least up to a minimum level and the presence of well organized community organizations is always instrumental to this ; knowledge of local govt. policies related to the socio-economic development of the target area is a key to proper planning of livelihood strategies, however it is not wise to calculate them as 100% which could potentially hamper in achieving the project goal (as they are highly dependent on the sincerity & efficiency of the concerned govt.) ; working out a strategy to demonstrate the linkage between alternative sustainable livelihood adoption by the communities and biodiversity conservation is very important to make the effort more meaningful ; motivating the communities and to make them understand the correlation between adoption of forest-free livelihood and forest conservation is a very delicate issue and a time consuming process, hence needs sufficient room to accomplish ; compensating the earnings from large-scale illegal forest extractions by any of these alternative livelihoods is difficult and requires research and application of other innovative approaches ; the womenfolk in the communities could be a very important resource in motivating their husbands/brothers to give up the risky profession of illegal forest extraction ; disagreement among the communities concerning the sharing of resources developed at public level is very common, this is a commonly observed behavior which has to be addressed by adopting proactive means ; planning of projects, with season dependent components (viz. agriculture based livelihoods) not correspond with funding cycle of the project, should be done with sufficient room for future adjustments ; unpredictable changes in the Law-order and socio-political situation in the project site can considerably affect the smooth implementation of the project ; institutional development and capacity building at the local level is very important for sustainable biodiversity conservation ; livelihood projects generally needs longtime investment for at least 5 years to get good results ; last but not the least, the forest department in Assam has a wider role to play in resolving the community related issues by taking up innovative means, which could be even beyond their official regulations, in the interest of offering effective protection to important places like Manas World Heritage Site.

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

Implementation of the CEPF project was a part of long ongoing program undertaken by Dolphin Foundation to offer effective protection to Manas Tiger Reserve. The project was designed on the basis of a need based analysis carried out with the baseline data previously generated by the program with participation from the target communities and other stakeholders. DF had over 8 years of experiences working in the fringe of Manas at the time of designing the project which and this tremendously helped in the process. The basic design of the project was to promote alternative sustainable livelihoods through institutionalization among the communities and strengthening the local CBOs of the project site. The strengthened CBOs acting as a “third front” to sustain the effort being made through this project and continue promoting sustainable livelihoods beyond the project period ; development and execution of a community based awareness building system for promotion of sustainable livelihoods ; bringing in all the concerned Govt. departments and other agencies and making them recognized themselves as important stakeholders in the process were some of the very important aspects of the project design which contributed a lot towards its successful implementation.

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

As the very initial step of the project implementation, a local Project Field Office was established in the project site for project operation. This had ensured uninterrupted field operations over 12

hours a day with very minimum time spent on outside travels and in avoiding the hindrances in project implementation caused by the social unrest, public protest shutdown sponsored by different political agencies, deteriorated law & order situation etc. At the same time recruiting field project personnel from the local village youths was also very advantageous in avoiding such situation. Moreover, this had also helped in acquire people's faith on the program and its sustainability. One of the major advantages of the DF project field team was that they could easily mix up with the local people and could behave as one amongst. This characteristic was highly beneficial in motivating the target communities and to work in their association.

DF has been the only agency working continuously over 10 years on the similar issues in Manas till completion of the present CEPF project. Naturally DF has the better understanding about the socio-cultural life of the local people which had helped immensely in smooth implementation of the project. Because of the long presence in the area DF was well known by the target communities in all respect and therefore a trusted relationship was built in between. Thus the community had always come forward to extend their helping hand without any hesitation.

DF's ongoing program had motivated and facilitated formation of many local organizations to work for the conservation of Manas. Motivating and giving necessary training to the local youths to work for conservation has been a regular exercise undertaken by the program. This was proved to be very much instrumental in creating a skilled workforce at the local level. This workforce was the very important constituent of Manas conservation that had extended outstanding supports to the project execution. At the same time the use of participatory and social mobilization approach was indeed an effective strategy for implementation livelihoods projects in communities.

Stakeholders' participation, especially the Govt. agencies, were outstanding throughout the project implementation which was beyond the normal expectation. This was attributed to in organizing the different trainings and other related activities like arrangement and supply of field materials (*improved variety of Eri seeds, Castor seeds, instruments etc.*)

Use of community infrastructures (*infrastructures belongs to various local organizations, viz. community halls, schools, temple premises etc*) in the project site was also an added advantage to the project as this had helped these organizations to recognize the importance of the project and brought them more closer to the program.

Many lessons were learned while implementing project and they were the good experiences gathered for lifetime, which would be helpful for designing the future projects (they were discussed in detail in the "Lessons Learned" para).

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
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	

		\$	
		\$	

***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.)*

No additional funding was received from any external agencies towards this project. However, Dolphin Foundation (Grantee) had shared some costs of the project. They were basically in-kind contributions like – additional manpower, vehicles, computers, supporting the communities affected by Human-Elephant Conflicts, supply of field materials like – Eri seed, castor seed, honey bee boxes, yarns etc.

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.

Continuation of the ongoing Manas Conservation Program has been DF's commitment until the reserve attains a comfortable stage. The present CEPF project had served as a part of this program which has been continuously in place for last 10 years period. Livelihood initiatives always needs longer period to get good results. Converting quick & easy earning professions (*illegal forest extraction*) into low income sustainable livelihoods with cooperatively sluggish earnings is a very difficult process and hence needs considerable amount of time and resources. With CEPF funding the program could cover some more villages of the project site and there are many more villages to cover. DF's is planning to continue this endeavor for at least another 3 years period and now it is in the process of developing fresh proposals for approaching other funding agencies. DF is also hopeful that CEPF or CI would consider for a second round of funding in the Eastern Himalaya in the near future and DF's Manas Conservation Program would get a chance to continue this effort. Moreover, the DF's CEPF project was well designed to get maximum sustainability. The project had developed a capable "third front" from its stakeholders which would continue to work in the project area beyond the project.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The project was of outstanding value towards restoring the integrity of World Heritage Site Manas Tiger Reserve. This project was in deed a need of the hour for Manas which contributed a lot towards getting back its lost attributes of a World Heritage Site. Dolphin Foundation has gratefully acknowledged CEPF for supporting the project. Dolphin Foundation also expresses its warm gratitude to all departments, agencies, individuals who had contributed directly or indirectly in project implementation.

All the activities of the project were completed successfully without any significant difficulties. Contributions from the CBOs, SHGs, general communities and other concerned departments

were outstanding all throughout the project. Their cooperation was instrumental in successful implementation of the project. It was really great experience and learning opportunity for the DF to implement this important project.

- Eastern Himalaya is one of the most important eco-regions of the world and the Manas represents a significant area in Eastern Himalaya so far conservation of critical ecosystems are concerned. The projects in Eastern Himalaya can very well showcase CEPF commitment towards conservation of world's important ecosystems. Extending the conservation programs in Eastern Himalaya would definitely add some more colors to its feathers.
- As the excessive livelihood dependency has been the only major cause of concern for Manas, taking up more such initiatives would be very helpful for the quick restoration of the park.
- Livelihood projects always need longer period of commitment in order to get good results. CEPF should think about funding long-term livelihood projects, at least for 5 years, to support the important PAs of this region.

The forest department in Assam has a wider role to play in resolving the community related issues by taking up proactive measures that may go even beyond their official regulations, in the interest of offering effective protection to important places like Manas World Heritage Site. Assam has already lost massive amount of forests and it can't afford to lose more.

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:

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