

An Overview of CEPF's Portfolio in the Western Ghats Region

October 2010

Introduction

The Western Ghats Region of the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka biodiversity hotspot covers an area of 180,000 km² along the west coast of India. The region is extraordinarily rich in biodiversity. Although it occupies less than 6 percent of the land area of India, the region contains more than 30 percent of the country's plant and vertebrate species. In common with other biodiversity hotspots, the Western Ghats supports a high number of species found nowhere else, including an estimated 1,500 endemic plants. The region also has a spectacular assemblage of large mammals, containing two of India's most important areas for the conservation of Asian elephant and one of the most essential landscapes for global tiger conservation.

Because it is a largely montane area with high, concentrated rainfall, the Western Ghats provides essential hydrological and other ecosystem services. Approximately 245 million people live in the peninsular Indian states that receive most of their water supply from rivers originating in the Western Ghats. Thus, with the possible exception of the Indo-Burma Hotspot, no other hotspot sustains the livelihoods of so many people.

The biodiversity values of the Western Ghats are, however, threatened by a variety of human pressures. Following a long process of conversion to cultivated land, coffee and tea plantations and hydroelectric reservoirs, only one-third of the region is still under natural vegetation. Moreover, the remaining forests are highly fragmented and facing the prospect of increasing degradation. Proximate threats fall into two broad categories: localized threats, such as illegal hunting, extraction of non-timber forest products, livestock grazing and forest fires; and landscape-level threats, such as mining, roads, hydroelectric power projects and large-scale agricultural expansion.

The Western Ghats is home to diverse social, religious and linguistic groups. A key challenge is to engage these heterogeneous social groups in community efforts aimed at biodiversity conservation and consolidation of fragmented habitats in the hotspot. The region is also home to many outstanding civil society organizations, in terms of education and motivation. Investments by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) are helping to strengthen civil society's participation in biodiversity conservation and provide resources to a range of civil society actors who seek to catalyze change and undertake innovative and effective approaches to conservation.

Niche for CEPF Investment

Overview

The CEPF ecosystem profile and five-year investment strategy for the Western Ghats Region were developed by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE) in collaboration with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) India Program and the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore. A stakeholder workshop was held in Bangalore, India to allow broader input from the conservation community and to provide inputs toward the formulation of a niche and investment strategy for CEPF in the region.

The ecosystem profile defined a niche for CEPF investment in the region based on analyses of conservation outcomes, threats to biodiversity, current conservation investments in the region, and stakeholder consultations. The niche recognized that, throughout the Western Ghats, unique habitats rich in biodiversity (both protected and unprotected) occur within a highly fragmented, human-dominated landscape. Consequently, conservation will only be successful in the long term if conservation efforts are strengthened within core areas and extended to the wider matrix, with the active involvement of civil society in public as well as private lands.

The Indian government is the largest investor in conservation-related activities in the Western Ghats, although much of this investment is on infrastructure. Investments by nongovernmental organizations and research institutes, while relatively small, play an important role in filling investment gaps in biodiversity conservation research and action. CEPF's niche in the Western Ghats is to provide incremental support to existing protected area efforts and generate momentum for biodiversity conservation around protected areas to enhance habitat connectivity and enable greater civil society participation in conservation efforts.

To this end, the ecosystem profile defined three strategic directions for CEPF investment in the Western Ghats:

1. Enable action by diverse communities and partnerships to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and enhance connectivity in the corridors.
2. Improve the conservation of globally threatened species through systematic conservation planning and action.
3. Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team.

To maximize impact and enable synergies among individual projects, CEPF investment is focused on 80 key biodiversity areas located within five corridors: Anamalai; Malnad-Kodagu; Mysore-Nilgiri; Periyar-Agasthyamalai; and Sahyadri-Konkan. In addition, the 332 globally threatened plant and animal species found in the region are also targeted for support.

The ecosystem profile was approved by the CEPF Donor Council in May 2007, with a total budget allocation of \$4.5 million. Of this amount, \$2.3 million was allocated to Strategic Direction 1, \$1.8 million to Strategic Direction 2 and \$400,000 to Strategic Direction 3.

Portfolio Status

CEPF grantmaking in the Western Ghats began in June 2008 with the first grant to ATREE to act as the Regional Implementation Team (RIT). This grant was for \$400,000, representing 100 percent of the funds available under Strategic Direction 3. The first funding round was launched on December 1, 2008, with a simultaneous call for proposals for small grants (up to \$20,000) and large grants (over \$20,000). Under this round, a total of 18 large and 22 small grants were

awarded, with a total value of \$2,914,940. All grants made under the first round were contracted and began implementation in either the second half of 2009 or the first half of 2010.

In order to distribute the workload for the RIT and technical reviewers more evenly, the calls under the second funding round were staggered, with the call for large grant proposals being issued on November 17, 2009, followed by the call for small grant proposals on February 1, 2010. As of July 31, 2010, none of the proposals received under these calls had yet been awarded, although several were in advanced stages of development and expected to commence implementation in the second half of 2010. In addition, one small grant application was accepted outside of the timeframe of the second call, in order to respond to a time-bound opportunity. This grant, of \$12,123, has been contracted and begun implementation.

Therefore, as of July 31, 2010, CEPF investment in the Western Ghats totaled \$3,327,063, equivalent to 74% of the total allocation for the region. Of this sum, \$2,612,650 (or 79%) was committed to local groups and individuals, with the remainder going to international groups. This reflects the strong, dynamic and widespread local civil society presence in the region. Of the funds awarded to date, \$3,014,702 has been in the form of large grants (including the RIT grant). These grants range in size from \$40,756 to \$499,443, with a mean of \$158,669. The remaining \$312,361 has been awarded in the form of small grants, ranging in size from \$3,080 to \$19,721, with a mean of \$13,581.

Under SD1 (enable action by diverse communities and partnerships to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and enhance connectivity in the corridors), a total of \$2,027,306 has been committed out of an allocation of \$2,300,000, to 12 large and 12 small grants, leaving \$272,694 uncommitted. Under SD2 (improve the conservation of globally threatened species through systematic conservation planning and action), a total of \$899,757 has been committed out of an allocation of \$1,800,000, to six large and 11 small grants, leaving \$900,243 uncommitted.

Overall, therefore, \$1,172,937 remains uncommitted. Some of these funds are earmarked for two large grants submitted under the second call (totaling \$448,486), which are expected to be contracted during the second half of 2010. Other funds (\$50,000) have been set aside to cover the costs of the mid-term and final assessments of CEPF performance in the Western Ghats. The remaining funds (\$674,451) will be used to fund the second and third rounds of small grants at a similar level of investment to the first round (\$300,238), plus a few extensions to existing large grants, if required.

After two rounds of large grants and one of small grants, the remaining geographic funding gaps are the Malnad-Kodagu and Anamalai corridors (Table 1). Despite them being specifically targeted by the second call for large grants, only one suitable application was received for these corridors, and this was subsequently withdrawn by the applicant. Few civil society groups are active in these corridors, which makes it difficult to solicit high quality applications from groups with a long-term commitment to working in these areas. Also, Naxalite activity in the central part of the Malnad-Kodagu corridor is a major constraint on conservation groups working there. Several proposals focused on the Malnad-Kodagu and Anamalai corridors have been received under the second call for small grants, which, if they were funded, would go some way towards addressing these geographic gaps. As the figures in Table 1 show, the Sahyadri-Konkan corridor has received similar levels of funding to the Malnad-Kodagu and Anamalai corridors. However, this corridor is not considered to be an investment gap, because it is more highly fragmented, with lower levels of endemism, and is less well known biologically than the other four corridors. Consequently, the corridor is not explicitly targeted by any CEPF Investment Priority (IP).

Table 1: Total CEPF Investment by Corridor

CORRIDOR	Large grants	Small grants	All grants
Sahyadri-Konkan	\$283,094	\$32,600	\$315,694
Malnad-Kodagu	\$227,580	\$63,239	\$290,819
Mysore-Nilgiri	\$662,125	\$43,159	\$705,284
Anamalai	\$210,524	\$45,803	\$256,327
Periyar-Agasthyamalai	\$590,025	\$32,822	\$622,847
Not corridor specific	\$1,041,354	\$94,738	\$1,136,092
TOTAL	\$3,014,702	\$312,361	\$3,327,063

The main thematic gaps remaining after the first funding round were IP2.3 (evaluate the existing protected areas network for adequate globally threatened species representation, and assess effectiveness of protected area types in biodiversity conservation) and IP2.4 (support interdisciplinary efforts to analyze and disseminate biodiversity data). Several LoIs addressing IP2.3 were submitted under the first and second calls for large grants but none was of sufficient quality to invite a full proposal. Consequently, it was decided to try to address IP2.3 via small grants. However, very few of the applications received under the second call for small grants address IP2.3 in a comprehensive way, and it seems that civil society groups are unwilling to engage in this type of work, particularly given the great sensitivity of the Forest Department and protected area managers to being ‘evaluated’ by NGOs. This investment priority will be prioritized again under the third funding round but it is possible that no suitable applications will be forthcoming.

Regarding IP2.4, two mutually supportive large grant proposals are being developed under the second call for large grants. The first, led by Strand Life Sciences Pvt Ltd, proposes to develop a web-based GIS platform for a Western Ghats Biodiversity Portal. The second, led by the French Institute of Pondicherry, proposes to establish a network of data-holding partners to populate and maintain the database behind the portal. These two projects are expected to make spatial biodiversity data on the Western Ghats publically available from a single source, thereby providing a valuable resource for scientists, conservationists, environmental regulators and development planners, and a catalyst for citizen-science by amateur naturalists.

Coordinating CEPF Grantmaking

The RIT is based at ATREE’s office in Bangalore, and is integrated into the operations of the organization. As of July 31, 2010, the RIT has four full-time staff positions, supported by part-time inputs from five ATREE fellows. The four full-time staff members comprise the RIT Project Coordinator (Dr Bhaskar Acharya), two RIT Project Assistants (Ms Liza Pinto and Ms Amrita Tripathy) and the RIT Accountant. The Project Coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the RIT, including coordinating review of large and small grant proposals, providing strategic guidance to applicants, and monitoring CEPF implementation at the project and portfolio levels. The two Project Assistants support the Project Coordinator with all aspects of his work, with a particular emphasis on providing administrative guidance to applicants and grantees, and monitoring implementation of individual grants. The Accountant is responsible for book keeping and financial reporting of the RIT grant, as well as for overseeing contracting and disbursement of funds to small grantees. The position is currently being covered by Mr T. R. Gopi, ATREE’s Financial Manager, following the departure of Mr Ravishankar Prasad earlier in 2010; a permanent replacement will be recruited soon. All RIT staff members are based at the ATREE office in Bangalore city, Karnataka state.

Technical inputs and overall strategic direction are provided by a management team composed of the RIT Team Leader (Dr Jagdish Krishnaswamy), the ATREE Director (Dr Gladwin Joseph), and three other ATREE fellows (Dr T. Ganesh, Dr Soubadra Devy and Dr Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan). The ATREE fellows devote between 15 and 20 percent of their time to the project. Jagdish, as the team leader, is the principal point of contact between the full-time staff and the management team. Together with the other management team members, he provides key technical inputs into the proposal review process and the design of individual grants, and ensures that the CEPF grant portfolio coordinates with and responds to key developments in biodiversity conservation and environmental management in the Western Ghats.

Performance assessment

The RIT has added significant value to CEPF investment in the Western Ghats, by: (i) reaching out to a wide spectrum of civil society groups and enabling them to access international donor funds, sometimes for the first time; (ii) enhancing the technical quality and relevance to CEPF investment priorities of individual projects, through providing feedback based on a firsthand knowledge of the issues addressed and the capacities of the applicant institution; (iii) guiding the development of a balanced grant portfolio, including, where relevant, encouraging applicants to work synergistically and eliminate overlaps between projects; and (iv) assisting applicants to negotiate the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

The RIT grant has 23 deliverables, spread across nine components. As of July 31, 2010, progress towards 19 of these deliverables was either on target or ahead of target. There are two areas where the RIT is behind target. The first is communications with the Forest Departments in the five states in the Western Ghats, to inform them about progress with CEPF implementation, and ensure their continued support from projects requiring permissions for field work within protected areas. The RIT has made good progress with engaging Forest Department staff at district level and below, including by inviting them to meetings of CEPF grantees in key districts with concentrations of projects. However, the RIT has held few meetings with Chief Wildlife Wardens or other Forest Department staff at state level. In part, this reflects the challenge of scheduling meetings with senior government staff, although it also reflects the fact that the RIT staff have been overstretched, particularly during the first 18 months of implementation, when there were fewer full-time staff assigned to the team. Improving liaison with the State Forest Departments has been identified as a priority action for the RIT during the second half of 2010.

The other main area with room for improvement as regards progress toward achieving the objectives set for CEPF investment in the Western Ghats Region is the amount of time taken to award grants. This problem was identified in the previous portfolio overview, and has not been fully rectified since then. The challenges inherent in initiating any complex project, coupled with the fact that this was the first time local coordination for CEPF investment had been delivered via the RIT model, largely explain the relatively slow start to CEPF investment in the region. These challenges have been compounded by changes in key grant team staff at CEPF and relocation of the ATREE office. Because of these factors, the grants made during the first funding round were not awarded as rapidly as had been originally projected (within six months). The grant-making process for the 18 large grants averaged 275 days (nine months) between the deadline for proposals and signing of the grant agreement. The average time for each stage of the process was as follows: 94 days for review of the letter of inquiry (LoI); 37 days for preparation of the full proposal by the applicant; 110 days for review and revision of the full proposal; and 34 days for final legal and financial review and contracting. For the 22 small grants, the grant-making process averaged 182 days (six months) between the deadline for proposals and signing of the grant agreement. The process was shorter, on average, than that for large grants, because of the fewer steps involved; in particular, small grant applicants were not required to prepare an LoI.

Learning lessons from the first funding round, several changes were instituted to facilitate the grant-making process in future rounds. In particular, the calls for large and small grants were staggered by at least three months, to avoid the need to coordinate two review processes simultaneously, and a rolling review process was instituted, whereby proposals were sent out for comment as soon as they were received. In spite of these modifications to the process, the speed of grant making during the second funding round showed no marked improvement over the first round. As of July 31, 2010, the two large grants in the pipeline had each been in the pipeline for 226 days (seven and a half months) without yet reaching the contracting stage. Similarly, the 73 small grant applications had been in the pipeline for 153 days (five months) without any reaching the contracting stage. As was the case during the first funding round, the review stages accounted for most of the delay in the grant-making process. The RIT found it very challenging to obtain technical reviews of LoIs and full proposals, whether external reviews by appropriately qualified experts or internal reviews by ATREE fellows. Reviewers cited heavy workloads and extended field work as reasons for not completing reviews in a timely fashion. This problem was compounded by potential reviewers being ruled out due to conflicts of interest in many cases. Another factor contributing to the slow progress with small-grant-making during the second round was that the RIT had to invest considerable time and effort in working with the applicants to ensure that the proposals fit with the scope of the call, and that they were submitted by eligible institutions, not individuals, as had been the case for most small grants made under the first round.

Portfolio Investment Highlights by Strategic Direction

Of the 19 large and 23 small grants awarded by July 31, 2010, only the RIT grant has been active for over 12 months. The other grants have been active, on average, for nine-and-a-half months. Consequently many grants have only just begun to realize tangible conservation results. Nevertheless, there have been some significant achievements by CEPF grantees, and most projects have established solid foundations for conservation results in the next 12 months.

Strategic Direction 1

CEPF investment under this strategic direction aims to enable action by diverse communities and partnerships to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and enhance connectivity in the corridors. To this end, CEPF investments address protected areas, biodiversity-rich lands outside protected areas, and the wider habitat matrix. Within protected areas, CEPF is supporting civil society to establish partnerships with state agencies to implement science-based management of priority sites (IP1.3). Outside protected areas, CEPF is helping civil society to pilot models of community and private reserves to achieve conservation outcomes at unprotected sites (IP1.1). In the wider matrix, CEPF is promoting partnerships to identify, evaluate, and advocate for suitable mechanisms that incorporate critical links (biological corridors) into the protected area network (IP1.2). The 24 projects supported under Strategic Direction 1 have a good spread across these three investment priorities. They are adopting a range of conservation approaches, including community conservation areas, partnerships with the private sector, payments for ecosystem services, and ecological monitoring in protected areas as a basis for adaptive management.

Under IP1.1, Keystone Foundation has supported the indigenous Kuruma community in the Mysore-Nilgiri corridor to designate 4.7 ha of Kotada Estate as 'Bendayada Sacred Grove', because of its cultural values and the important ecosystem services it provides. The declaration will ensure that the grove is protected by the community and by the estate. It is the first of several locally designated conservation areas that will be established under this project. In the Malnad-Kodagu corridor, small grantee Balachandra Hegde has developed proposals to designate key wildlife habitats in Uttara Kannada district as conservation reserves: a new category of protected area that allows co-management and sustainable use by local communities. It is expected that the

Forest Department will designate at least three of these sites as conservation reserves before the end of 2010: Bedthi (3,396 ha); Aghanashini (9,634 ha); and Dandeli Hornbill (c.6,200 ha). Elsewhere, WWF India has begun work to establish community managed forest areas in Vazhachal Forest Division of the Anamalai corridor and the Mysore-Nilgiri corridor's Moyar Valley. These projects are helping to test the suitability of new protected area categories, and generating good practice models that can facilitate wider application in the Western Ghats.

Under IP1.2, one of CEPF's key investments in the wider matrix is a pair of linked grants to Nature Conservation Foundation and Rainforest Alliance to foster sustainable, biodiversity-enhancing agriculture practices in production landscapes, through the promotion of the Sustainable Agriculture Standard. To date, the project has introduced sustainable agricultural practices to over 5,600 ha of tea and coffee plantations outside protected areas in the Western Ghats, on farms that are in the process of preparing for Rainforest Alliance certification. The total area of Rainforest Alliance certified plantations in the Western Ghats currently stands at nearly 11,000 ha, and additional estates are expected to adopt the standard and apply for certification in coming years. Another key investment in the wider matrix is a project led by Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning, which aims at enhancing connectivity in the Periyar-Agasthyamalai corridor through promoting biodiversity-friendly land-use in private smallholdings. The project has identified potential wildlife corridors linking Periyar and Kalakkad-Mundunthurai Tiger Reserves, across the Shencottah Gap, and is currently testing auctions as a means of establishing the opportunity cost of conservation actions to local people, before establishing a payment-for-ecosystem-services mechanism. This approach involves smallholders deciding how much money would be sufficient compensation for implementing defined conservation measures on their land, such as removing fences or replanting native trees; ecosystem service payments are then targeted to the bids that offer the best conservation 'value' for money. Like many CEPF investments, this project promises to deliver tangible benefits to local communities, at the same time as realizing conservation goals.

The prevailing climate for civil society groups working on conservation issues in India, where advice is frequently construed as criticism and offers of assistance as interference, means that there are considerable challenges to civil society working with the Forest Department to promote science-based management of protected areas. Consequently, CEPF has made rather few grants under IP1.3. One of the most important investments has been to Wildlife Conservation Society, for improving protected area effectiveness through enhanced civil society support and rigorous monitoring of wildlife populations and threats. This project, which focuses on protected areas and neighboring reserve forests in Karnataka state, spanning the Sahyadri-Konkan, Malnad-Kodagu and Mysore-Nilgiri corridors, has so far provided training to 38 Forest Department staff and 169 civil society volunteers in monitoring of large mammal populations and threats to biodiversity. At each site, meetings have been held with local Range Forest Officers and Park Wardens to discuss conservation issues, and bring their attention to specific threats observed.

CEPF investment under Strategic Direction 1 is spread across the five priority corridors, although investment is weighted more heavily towards some than others (Table 2). The uneven geographical distribution of investment largely reflects the pattern of high-quality applications but also the emphasis given to different corridors in the CEPF investment strategy. For instance, the Mysore-Nilgiri corridor, which has received the highest level of investment to date, is the only one explicitly prioritized for support under all three investment priorities. Nevertheless, as previously discussed, the Malnad-Kodagu and Anamalai corridors have, to date, received limited CEPF investment relative to their biological priority and the opportunities they present to engage civil society in biodiversity conservation. Consequently, these corridors will be explicitly prioritized for support under all future calls for proposals.

Table 2: Large Grants Awarded under Strategic Direction 1 by Corridor

SAHYADRI-KONKAN CORRIDOR	\$283,094
Applied Environmental Research Foundation Critical Links – Forging Community-Civil Society Partnerships to Enhance Connectivity in the Sahyadri-Konkan Corridor	\$155,510
*Environics Trust Empowering Local Communities and CSO’s in Using EIA Process as a Conservation Tool in the Western Ghats (total grant = \$52,920)	\$10,584
*Wildlife Conservation Society Improving Protected Area Effectiveness through Enhanced Civil Society Support and Rigorous Monitoring of Wildlife Populations and Conservation Threats (total grant = \$350,000)	\$117,000
MALNAD-KODAGU CORRIDOR	\$127,584
*Environics Trust Empowering Local Communities and CSO’s in Using EIA Process as a Conservation Tool in the Western Ghats (total grant = \$52,920)	\$10,584
*Wildlife Conservation Society Improving Protected Area Effectiveness through Enhanced Civil Society Support and Rigorous Monitoring of Wildlife Populations and Conservation Threats (total grant = \$350,000)	\$117,000
MYSORE-NILGIRI CORRIDOR	\$662,125
Arulagam (Care Earth Trust) River Moyar and its Connotation to the Conservation of the Mysore-Nilgiri Corridor	\$40,756
*Environics Trust Empowering Local Communities and CSO’s in Using EIA Process as a Conservation Tool in the Western Ghats (total grant = \$52,920)	\$10,584
Equitable Tourism Options Community Based Partnerships for Impact Assessment and Regulation of Tourism in Western Ghats	\$50,000
Keystone Foundation Hill Biodiversity and Indigenous People: The God of Small Ecosystems	\$199,845
*Nature Conservation Foundation Fostering Sustainable Agriculture Practices for Conservation of Tropical Biodiversity in Plantation Landscapes of Western Ghats (total grant = \$115,300)	\$57,650
*Rainforest Alliance Fostering Sustainable Agriculture Practices for Conservation of Tropical Biodiversity in Plantation Landscapes of Western Ghats (total grant = \$84,700)	\$42,350
*Wildlife Conservation Society Improving Protected Area Effectiveness through Enhanced Civil Society Support and Rigorous Monitoring of Wildlife Populations and Conservation Threats (total grant = \$350,000)	\$116,000
Wildlife Trust of India Conservation Plan for Securing Selected Elephant Corridors in Southern Western Ghats	\$45,000
*World Wide Fund for Nature – India Communities and Critical Corridors: Maintaining Landscape Connectivity in the Southern Western Ghats through Collaborative Approaches (total grant = \$199,880)	\$99,940

ANAMALAI CORRIDOR	\$210,524
*Environics Trust Empowering Local Communities and CSO's in Using EIA Process as a Conservation Tool in the Western Ghats (total grant = \$52,920)	\$10,584
*Nature Conservation Foundation Fostering Sustainable Agriculture Practices for Conservation of Tropical Biodiversity in Plantation Landscapes of Western Ghats (total grant = \$115,300)	\$57,650
*Rainforest Alliance Fostering Sustainable Agriculture Practices for Conservation of Tropical Biodiversity in Plantation Landscapes of Western Ghats (total grant = \$84,700)	\$42,350
*World Wide Fund for Nature – India Communities and Critical Corridors: Maintaining Landscape Connectivity in the Southern Western Ghats through Collaborative Approaches (total grant = \$199,880)	\$99,940
PERIYAR-AGASTYAMALAI CORRIDOR	\$590,025
Asian Nature Conservation Foundation Conservation of the Major Landscapes in Southern Western Ghats: Knowledge Generation, Dissemination of Information and Capacity Building for Key Stakeholders	\$79,998
*Environics Trust Empowering Local Communities and CSO's in Using EIA Process as a Conservation Tool in the Western Ghats (total grant = \$52,920)	\$10,584
Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy & Learning Bridging the Shencottah Gap: How Payments for Ecosystem Services Can Restore Biodiversity Outside Protected Areas in India	\$499,443

Note: * = cross-cutting grant, active in more than one corridor.

Strategic Direction 2

CEPF investment under this strategic direction aims to improve the conservation of globally threatened species through systematic conservation planning and action. To this end, CEPF is supporting civil society groups to monitor and assess the conservation status of globally threatened species with an emphasis on lesser-known organisms, in order to establish priorities for action (IP2.1). For species already identified as the highest priorities for action, CEPF is investing in the creation and implementation of species recovery and management plans (IP2.2). Also, in order to ensure that site conservation efforts address the needs of all species for which they are needed, CEPF aims to support efforts to evaluate the existing protected area network for adequate representation of globally threatened species and assess the effectiveness of different protected area types (IP2.3). Finally, in order to provide a basis for systematic conservation planning and integration of biodiversity considerations into development plans and projects, CEPF aims to support interdisciplinary efforts to analyze and disseminate biodiversity data through a publically accessible portal (IP2.4).

Under IP2.1, the IUCN Species Programme has initiated a comprehensive Red List assessment of four major freshwater taxa: fish; mollusks; odonates; and plants. The results of this assessment, which is engaging experts from across the Western Ghats Region, will help to ensure that the intrinsic and socio-economic values of aquatic ecosystems are taken into account during conservation planning (through, for example, incorporation into protected areas) and development decision making (in particular environmental approval processes for hydropower projects). A similar exercise is being undertaken for reptiles, under a grant led by Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society.

Under IP2.2, there have been several significant conservation results for globally threatened species over the last 12 months. Efforts by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds to avert the extinction of vultures in the Western Ghats received a major boost with the first successful captive breeding of the Critically Endangered Long-billed Vulture *Gyps indicus* in the world. Over the next 12 months, the focus of the project will turn towards *in situ* conservation, with the establishment of ‘Vulture Safe Zones’, where veterinary use of diclofenac (the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug implicated in the species’ decline) will be strictly monitored and controlled. Also, under a Snehakunja Trust-led project in the Malnad-Kodagu corridor, restoration of *Myristica* swamps (home to some of the most threatened plant species in the Western Ghats) has begun at three pilot sites. These efforts are being supported and sustained through the establishment of community-based organizations, through which local people are being given opportunities to become directly involved in and benefit directly from conservation activities.

As Table 3 shows, the six large grants awarded to date exhibit a good spread across IP2.1 and 2.2. In addition, as previously discussed, two interlinked pipeline projects will address IP2.4, which envisions a single, region-wide effort to analyze and disseminate data on the biodiversity of the Western Ghats. However, no active or pipeline projects address IP2.3, due to the challenge of engaging with the Forest Department to evaluate the coverage and effectiveness of protected areas. While significant funds remain unallocated under Strategic Direction 2, and although IP2.3 will be prioritized in all future calls for proposals, it may not be possible to solicit suitable applications for this investment priority.

Table 3: Large Grants Awarded under Strategic Direction 2 by Investment Priority

 Globally Threatened Species	\$741,350	IP2.1	IP2.2	IP2.3	IP2.4
Indian Institute of Sciences Addressing the ‘Wallacean Shortfall’ for Small Vertebrates in the Western Ghats Across Space and Time	\$149,716	X			
IUCN Species Programme Freshwater Biodiversity Assessments in the Western Ghats: Fishes, Molluscs, Odonates, and Plants	\$179,756	X			
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Averting the Extinction of Critically Endangered Vultures in the Western Ghats	\$99,957		X		
Snehakunja Trust Linking Fragmented Fresh-water Swamps through the Restoration of Micro-corridors in central Western Ghats	\$99,996		X		
University of Delhi WNPATA: Western Ghats Network of Protected Areas for Threatened Amphibians	\$100,000		X		
Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society Implementing Priority Conservation Actions Using Network Engineering Model for Lesser-Known Faunal Groups of the Western Ghats	\$111,925	X			

Collaboration with CEPF Donor Partners

Three CEPF projects have close links to investments by CEPF donors. Under Strategic Direction 1, CEPF is supporting a project by the Foundation for Ecological Research, Advocacy and Learning, which aims to develop a payment-for-ecosystem-services mechanism in order to re-establish ecological connectivity across the most critical link in the Periyar-Agasthyamalai

corridor. Following close consultations with the Conservation Stewards Program at Conservation International (CI), this initiative has been selected as a pilot project under the “Conservation Agreement Private Partnership Platform.” This platform has been proposed by CI under the GEF Earth Fund, under the World Bank as Implementing Agency. The FERAL project is a perfect fit with the goal of the platform, which is to forge mutually beneficial links between the private sector and local communities and landowners who commit to achieve biodiversity conservation, reduce land degradation, support climate regulation efforts, and promote sustainable natural resource management. It is envisioned that GEF Earth Fund resources will be used to help develop working PES models involving private companies in the tea, coffee, energy and/or tourism sectors, with potential for wider replication in the Western Ghats and elsewhere in India.

Also under Strategic Direction 1, CEPF is supporting a project led by the Applied Environmental Research Foundation (AERF), which uses “conservation agreements” to effectively engage local communities in biodiversity conservation and, thereby, enhance ecological connectivity in the Sahyadri-Konkan corridor. CI’s Conservation Stewards Program has been closely involved in the development of this project, providing support to AERF for related activities at other sites, and sharing experience from within its portfolio of conservation agreement projects in other Asian countries.

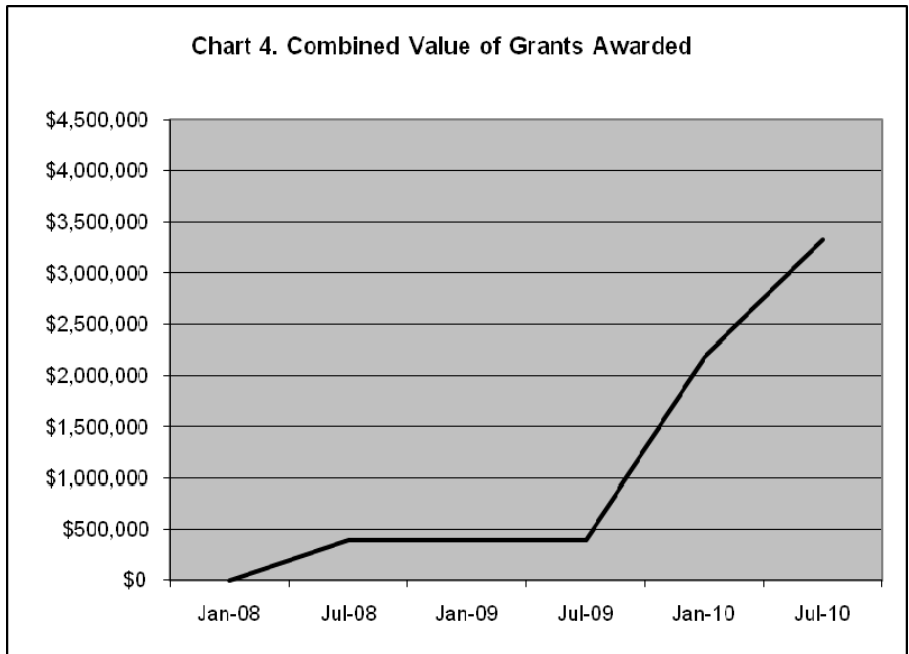
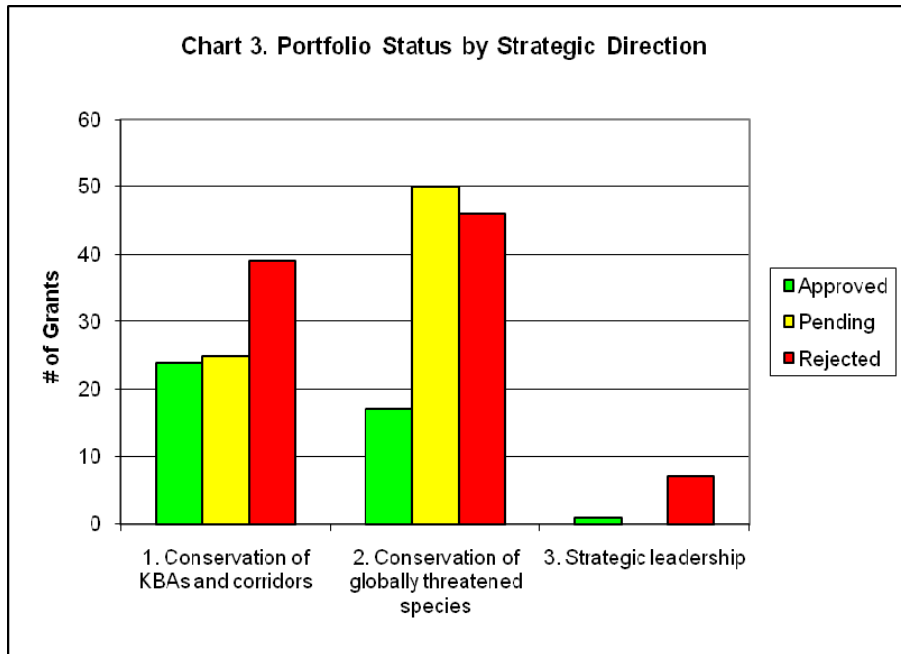
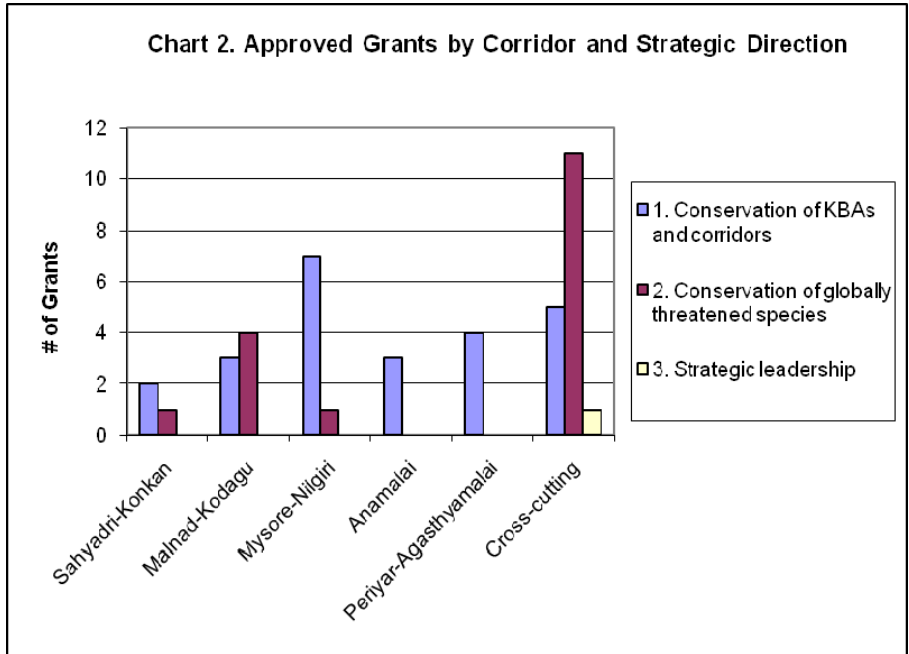
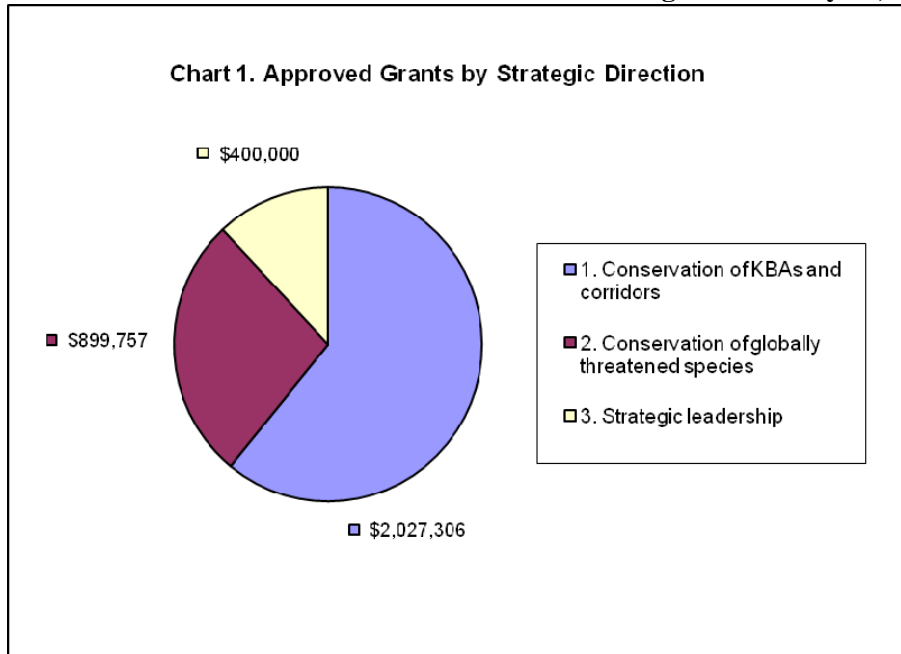
Under Strategic Direction 2, CEPF is supporting a vitally important initiative to undertake Red List assessments for freshwater biodiversity and use the results to inform planning for hydropower, irrigation and other developments threatening freshwater ecosystems and the essential services they provide. This project, which is led by IUCN Species Programme, complements a similar initiative in the Eastern Himalayas supported by the MacArthur Foundation. The two projects are being closely coordinated to ensure sharing of data and cost efficiencies.

Conclusion

After a relatively slow start, rapid progress has been made over the last 12 months towards the development of a balanced grant portfolio in the Western Ghats. All grants awarded to date have good potential for sustainability, and many are developing innovative conservation approaches or piloting them in the Western Ghats for the first time. It can be reasonably expected that these approaches will be replicated at other sites and support the emergence of new best practices and development paradigms, thereby amplifying the impact of CEPF investments in the region.

After the first funding round, a little over \$3.3 million has been awarded, across 19 large and 23 small grants, equivalent to 74% of the total allocation for the Western Ghats Region. Of the \$1.2 million that remains unallocated, around \$800,000 is expected to be awarded under the second funding round, to two large and an estimated 20 small grants. This will leave around \$400,000, to cover a third round of around 20 small grants, plus a small reserve to cover costs associated with the final assessment and a few cost extensions to large grants, if required. Therefore, by the end of the third year of CEPF implementation in the Western Ghats, it is projected that the grants portfolio will be complete or almost so, leaving two years for project implementation to be completed, sustainability of individual projects to be secured, and results of CEPF investment to be documented and disseminated.

Charts – CEPF Investment in the Western Ghats Region as of July 31, 2010



Annex 1 – Update of the Logical Framework for CEPF Investment in the Western Ghats

Objective	Targets	Progress
<p>Conserve and manage globally important biodiversity by strengthening the involvement and effectiveness of NGOs and other sectors of civil society in biodiversity conservation in the Western Ghats and Sri Lanka Biodiversity Hotspot: Western Ghats Region.</p>	<p>NGOs and civil society actors, including the private sector, actively participate in conservation programs guided by the CEPF ecosystem profile for the Western Ghats Region.</p> <p>Alliances and networks among civil society groups formed to avoid duplication of effort and maximize impact in support of the CEPF ecosystem profile for the Western Ghats Region.</p> <p>Development plans or policies influenced to accommodate biodiversity.</p> <p>80 key biodiversity areas have new or strengthened protection and management guided by a sustainable management plan.</p>	<p>41 grantees received grants during the reporting period. To date, 42 civil society grantees have received CEPF grants (including ATREE as the RIT). Of these, 4 are international organizations, 19 are local organizations and 19 (all small grantees) are individuals.</p> <p>5 alliances and networks have been forged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) University of Delhi has formed a network of amphibian experts for the Western Ghats; (ii) Environics Trust has created a website called Western Ghats EIA Watch to network stakeholders to monitor and engage in the environmental approval process for development projects; (iii) Keystone Foundation has founded the Nilgiri Natural History Society to network and exchange information among organizations and individuals with interests in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve; (iv) Rainforest Alliance and Nature Conservation Foundation have fostered an alliance for setting standards for sustainably produced coffee and tea; (v) IUCN's Freshwater Biodiversity Unit, through its local partner Zoo Outreach Organization, has created a network of freshwater biodiversity experts to update the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. <p>No progress to date.</p> <p>Management has been strengthened at the following 9 KBAs: Nagarhole; Bandipur; Bhadra; Kudremukh; Mookambika; Sharavati; Someshwara; Anshi; and Dandeli.</p>

Intermediate Outcomes	Intermediate Indicators	Progress
<p>Outcome 1: Action by diverse communities and partnerships enabled to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and to enhance connectivity in the target corridors</p> <p>\$2,300,000</p>	<p>Percent of targeted protected areas with strengthened protection and management.</p> <p>Percent of projects outside protected areas that introduce and/or strengthen biodiversity in management practices</p> <p>Percent of projects that enable stewardship of biodiversity and ecosystem services by Indigenous and local communities in focus areas.</p> <p>Number of hectares of key biodiversity areas with strengthened protection and management.</p> <p>Number of hectares in newly established or expanded protected areas.</p> <p>Partnerships (including with state agencies) established to implement progressive science-based management, conservation and monitoring of priority sites.</p>	<p>Management has been strengthened at 9 protected areas, equivalent to 100 percent of those targeted to date: Nagarhole NP; Bandipur NP; Bhadra TR; Kudremukh WLS; Mookambika WLS; Sharavati WLS; Someshwara WLS; Anshi NP; & Dandeli WLS.</p> <p>2 projects (Nature Conservation Foundation and Rainforest Alliance), equivalent to 9 percent of the 23 projects located outside protected areas, have integrated biodiversity conservation into management practices of production landscapes, in this case, tea and coffee estates through the adoption of the Sustainable Agriculture Network standard.</p> <p>9 grants, equivalent to 21 percent of the 42 grants made to date, have begun to enable stewardship of biodiversity and ecosystem services by local communities.</p> <p>83,025 ha have strengthened protection and management: (i) training has been provided to Forest Department staff responsible for managing a total of 83,000 ha spread across 8 KBAs; (ii) habitat restoration efforts have been initiated for 25 ha of Myristica swamp at Sharavati KBA.</p> <p>4.7 ha of the Kotada Estate near Kotagiri has been designated as 'Bendayada Sacred Grove'.</p> <p>1 small grantee, Amitha Bachan, has established a protocol for biodiversity monitoring, engaging Kadar tribal people, sponsored and supported by the Forest Department in Vazhachal Forest Division.</p>

<p>Outcome 2: Conserve globally threatened species and habitats through systematic conservation planning and action</p> <p>\$1,800,000</p>	<p>Percent of targeted areas with strengthened protection and management.</p> <p>Number of hectares of key biodiversity areas with strengthened protection and management.</p> <p>Number of hectares in newly established or expanded protected areas.</p> <p>The status and distribution of globally threatened plant species investigated and results applied to planning, management, awareness raising and/or outreach.</p>	<p>Management has been strengthened at 9 KBAs, equivalent to 11 percent of the 80 targeted sites: Nagarhole; Bandipur; Bhadra; Kudremukh; Mookambika; Sharavati; Someshwara; Anshi; and Dandeli.</p> <p>83,025 ha have strengthened protection and management: (i) training has been provided to Forest Department staff responsible for managing a total of 83,000 ha spread across 8 KBAs; (ii) habitat restoration efforts have been initiated for 25 ha of Myristica swamp at Sharavati KBA.</p> <p>4.7 ha of the Kotada Estate near Kotagiri has been designated as 'Bendayada Sacred Grove'.</p> <p>No progress to date.</p>
<p>Outcome 3: A regional implementation team effectively coordinates the CEPF investment in the Western Ghats Region.</p> <p>\$400,000</p>	<p>Number of groups receiving grants that achieve a satisfactory score on final performance scorecard RIT performance in fulfilling the approved terms of reference.</p>	<p>In the last 12 months, site visits were conducted to 27 grantees (18 large and 9 small), 26 of which (96 percent) received a performance rating of "Met Targets" or higher. No grant has yet finished and submitted a final performance report.</p>
<p>Strategic Funding Summary</p>	<p>Amount</p>	
<p>Total Budget Amount</p>	<p>\$4,500,000</p>	