

## **Indigenous People Plan and Social Assessment based on CEPF Safeguard Policy**

### **Title and brief summary of the project**

**Project Title:** "Facilitating partnerships for community forest resource areas (CFRs) in the southern Western Ghats"

*Applicant organization:* Centre for Environment and Development (CED), Thiruvananthapuram

*Partner/collaborating Organisation:* Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation (WGHF)

*Principal Investigator/s :* Dr. K.H. Amitha Bachan (WGHF), Dr. T.R. Vinod (CED)

*Project Sanctioned under:* CEPF-ATREE Western Ghats Small Grants 2013

*Beneficiaries:* 26 Tribal Grama Sabhas/ Oorukootams with support and integrated action from State Agencies such as Forest Department, FDA/VSS/EDCs, Tribal Department and Grama Panchayath.

*Project Area:* Southern Western Ghats - Anamalai and Periyar-Agasthyamala corridors

Vazhachal, Chalakkudy, Malayattur, Nenmara forest divisions of Anamalai corridor and Achankovil and Ranni Forest Divisions of Periyar-Agasthyamalai Corridor.

### **Summary of the Project**

At present there is a paradigm shift all over the world from the 'exclusionary' conservation to the 'Right based Conservation'. The Forest Rights Act (2006), known as the 'Tribal Act' is one of the revolutionary legislation in India where the ultimate decision making units with respect to conversion of the forests or Community Forest Resource Areas and their habitats are the Grama Saba's (GS). Since its inception during 2006-07 no community claims have been given in Kerala up to 2012. The overall goal of the project to strengthen GS/FRCs and community organizations for resource management and conservation of CFRs in the Anamalai and Periyar- Agasthayamala corridors ensuring long term involvement and responsibility of the community groups. The GS will be strengthened through to ensure continuity of the activities for future. Activities will be deployed only based on the status of empowerment and progress of activities in the areas or community groups we address. Fruitful support from various Government departments will be for tribal Gramasabhas in the study area for resource monitoring and development of CFR management committees. The thought and initiative is a result of some of the project outcomes of the CEPF-ATREE collaboration with Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation (WGHF), Centre for Environment and Development (CED) and WWF. Some of the local

language materials like field guides and guidelines for FRA implementation also will be printed in hardcopies and distributed freely to the stakeholders. Similar partnerships can be brought from various departments and schemes of the state and central Govt. for ensuring the sustainability of the project.

**(i) identify scheduled tribes in the project area;**

The project envisages facilitating recognition of Community Forest Resource (CFR) area under the forest right act 2006 among 23 (or more) tribal settlements / Grama Sabhas in the project area.

**The major tribes in the area**

The major ethnic communities in the area include 1. Kadar, 2.Muthuvan, 3. Malaya, 4. Mannan, 5. Malasar of the Anamalai landscape and the and 6. Malampondaram of the Periyar-Agasthyamalai landscape. They constitute almost all the tribal communities in the Anamalai landscape except the Malamalasers of the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve area. Among these Kadars are the most primitive; they are endemic rainforest dwellers of the Anamalais. About 50% population (10 settlements) of the Kadars comes under the purview of this project. All other tribes from the Anamalai landscape are agriculture oriented. The Malampondaram of the Periyar – Agasthyamalai shows a pre-agriculture culture and lifestyles. A small population of the Malampondaram and Malasar population comes under the project. The Kadar tribe depends exclusively on Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) such as Honey, Black Dammar, Wild nutmeg, Kasthurimanjal etc and fish from the river. All other tribes in the area depend on Agriculture as well as NTFPs.

<b>Sl No.</b>	<b>Name of Corridor</b>	<b>Name of Tribe</b>	<b>Number of settlements</b>	<b>Population</b>
1	Anamalai	Kadar	10	964
2		Muthuvan	9	1971
3		Malayar	15	1587
4		Mannan	10	1200
5		Malasar	1	82
6	Periyar Agasthyamalai	Malampondaram	3	186

See attached detailed Social Assessment

**(ii) describe the scope and impact of project-related restrictions on natural resource use**

The main objective of the project is to facilitate and empower the tribal Grama Sabhas for proper implementation of community rights under Forest Rights Act 2006, especially community rights including NTFP rights, CFR and formation of CFR Management Committees and preparation of CFR Management plans. The act itself ensures rights of the tribal communities over NTFPs (Section 3(1) c), fish and water resources (Section 3(1) d) and right for management and conservation of community forest resource (CFR) (Section 3(1) i). Section 5 of the act itself automatically establishes right of the tribal communities for Conservation and management of Forest, Wildlife and Biodiversity. So there won't be further restriction of natural resource use but instead it will legally ensure right over resources and decision making for its use, conservation and management. Restriction will be only on Hunting or tapping of wild animals or plants and that has already been restricted under the Forest Conservation Act and Wildlife Protection Act.

**(iii) assess project impacts (both positive and negative) on local people;**

The tribal people in the area will be supported for claiming their community rights for access to Community Forest Resource and its conservation and management. This can address any 'historical injustice' happened to the tribal communities as quoted in the preamble of the Forest Right Act 2006.

Only possible negative impact may be possibility for indiscriminate use of NTFPs and natural resources and exploitation from the outsiders. The need and scope of the project is to empower the tribal Gramasabhas for decision making and formation of functional bodies such as CFR Management Committees under each tribal village Gramasabha. An integrated platform with support from Tribal and Forest Departments will also ensure proper measures and technical support for ensuring sustainable management and conservation of resources. The CFR Management plans will be developed for each Gramasabhas under the Act incorporating traditional and scientific protocols for resource management and conservation. The methodology to involve different strata of people from the villages along with various activities can ensure maximum participation, empowerment and transparency.

**(iv) Describe how free, prior and informed consultations have been carried out with affected tribal communities during design of the project (i.e. prior to submission of the full proposal);**

The project is an outcome of previous initiatives of the "Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation" with the support of Forest Department and CEPF-ATREE

Western Ghats Small Grants involving Kadar tribal communities to conserve and monitor 'Hornbill Nest Trees in the Anamalais. With requirement from the 'Kadar' and other neighboring communities this has been developed to "Resource monitoring involving tribal communities in the Anmalais". All of these activities supported the tribal communities to become aware of participatory resource conservation and management activities and claiming for community right. The Hornbills and resource monitoring team of the Kadar communities in the Vazhachal forest division played significant role for claiming community rights in the Vazhachal forest division facilitated by CEPF, WWF and Western Ghats Hornbill Foundation. The present project was evolved from the need and requirements of the previous trial in the area and most of the objectives and methodology were framed in a participatory manner in consultation with the communities in the area.

**(v) outline measures to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits;**

One of the main objective is to support the communities for the formation of CFR Management plans with proper empowerment and activities for resource monitoring and management in the community and CFR area level. Measures will be taken to develop integrated activities of the Tribal, Forest and Local Self-government Departments for the activities. These together can address possible future impact over the access to the resource use. The CFR Management Committee and CFR Management plans will be specific to each community and their Community Forest Resource area. Traditional and cultural practices will also be incorporated for developing sustainability. So the specific and participatory nature will provide great platform for addressing their cultural diversity in future.

**(vi) Explain a monitoring system for such issues; and**

An evaluation team will be formed at two levels, i. independent team involving tribal people, interested academicians, social activist, conservationist etc for a social assessment of the project. ii. a team of responsible officials, tribal people and conservationists for evaluation wherever an leveraging of fund and support mechanism happened during the project period.

The project will be evaluated periodically on the basis of extent of participation, number of meeting and programs, extent of integrated platforms, distribution of awareness materials, talks, shows, media reports etc., number of targets achieved such as village learning centers, CFR titles, CFR management Committees, CFR Management Plans and measures for sustainability.

**(vii) Detail a grievance mechanism.**

A poster showing objectives and contact for grievance will be printed in local language and will be displayed in all the Tribal Villages and important public places. A pamphlet will also be prepared in local language and distributed to all the tribal people of the project area.

**Address of people to whom the tribe can approach regarding any complaint, identification of any adverse effect and any adverse effect from the project implementing agency or investigator.**

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