

## CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Action for Community Transformation India Foundation Trust (ACTIF)
<b>Project Title:</b>	Promotion of Community Forest Management for livelihood support of Paliyar Tribe through Bio-diversity Conservation in Palni Hills - Anamalai Corridor, Western Ghats, Tamil Nadu
<b>Date of Report:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2014
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Mr. P.R. Ashok Raja

**CEPF Region: Western Ghats & Sri Lanka Biodiversity Hotspot (Periyar-Agasthyamalai corridor)**

**CEPF Strategic Direction: 1 Enable action by diverse communities and partnerships to ensure conservation of key biodiversity areas and enhance connectivity in the corridors.**

**Grant Amount: \$ 19,792.92**

**Project Dates: 1st July 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014**

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

Gandhigram University provided capacity building programmes for staffs and tribal leaders, and supplied resource materials related to tribal and environment policies.

Tamil Nadu Forest Department supported eco-tourism in initial stage.

Tribal Welfare Department supported the tribal people for obtaining the welfare schemes.

### Conservation Impacts

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

***CEPF Investment Priorities 1. 1. Test pilot models of community and private reserves to achieve conservation outcomes at priority sites and critical links in unprotected areas of the priority corridors:***

The Paliyar tribes live in the CEPF priority site of Anamalai Corridors. They have close association with the nature. Through the project action, the tribal people were informed about the depletion of the Non-timber Forest Products (NTFP) species and endangered mammal (Grizzled Giant Squirrels), then they were capacitated to conserve and protect the NTFP species and grizzled giant squirrels. In order to reduce their role of depleting the NTFP species, they were facilitated to engage in alternative livelihoods. For rejuvenating the NTFP species population and conserving the grizzled giant squirrels, Eco-Development Committees (EDC) were formed in each focus hamlet. The EDC are contributing for the protection of the NTFP species and the nest and food trees of the grizzled giant squirrels. Besides, in each hamlet a bio-diversity monitoring team comprising five youth has been formed to validate the ecological survey data. They are in the capacity to conduct the transect walk. Tribal people's structures (EDC and bio-diversity monitoring team) are created in the project sites, and the members of these structures are actively participating in the protection and conservation of the NTFP species and grizzled giant squirrels. The EDC would continuously lobby with the Forest Department to raise nest and food trees of grizzled giant squirrels in its habitats that fall within the project priority site. The contribution of tribal youth in the conservation of bio-diversity is laudable and they show high aspiration for conservation of bio-diversity.

**Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.**

- Formed Project Steering Committee with inclusion of government officials, social and environment scientists and tribal leaders (see Appendix I).
- The project staff are in a capacity and interest to accomplish the project tasks.
- Formed EDC in each tribal settlement. Totally, 10 EDCs were formed (See Annexure III). (Pictures in Annexure IX)
- Ten tribal youth have understood about the significance of eco-tourism in generating an income as well as reducing the NTFP collection pressure.
- The tribal leaders have realized about the significance of their traditional NTFP collection which prevented over exploitation of NTFP. They revealed that the non-tribal groups have entered into NTFP collection and they exploit the forest reserves but the blame falls on the tribes. To restrict the movement of the non-tribal, it has been planned to obtain identity card for tribes involving in NTFP collection. Thus, those who don't possess the identity card are not allowed for NTFP collection. The Village Tribal Community will monitor the movement of non-tribal's (see Appendix VI).
- Sixty tribal leaders have better understanding on community-based conservation.
- Identified 5 youth in each target hamlet for conducting resource mapping for identification of NTFP species and the nests of the *Ratufa macroura*. They were trained on utilising GPS, compass and densitometer for exercising transect walk to identify the NTFP species.
- The selected youth were trained on mapping *Ratufa macroura* nests by using GPS.
- The Forest Department of Tamil Nadu has planted *Bombax ceiba*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Mangifera indica*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Terminalia bellarica* and *Pterocarpus marsupium* in Ottanchattiram Forest Range in Dindigul Forest Division.
- Around 60 tribal youth have gained knowledge on NTFP species, birds and mammals to educate the tourists through eco-tourism. They have better understanding on protection of bio-diversity and the linkages between birds, mammals and plants.
- Youth have realised to a better extent about the diminishing population of *Ratufa macroura* and the need for protecting their habitats and conserving their food species.
- Formed trained bio-diversity monitoring teams consisting of Paliyar tribal youths (Annexure II).
- Around 60 NTFP collectors participated in the workshop on analyzing the problems of wildlife, tribal and environment due to declining trend in NTFP availability in the forest. They had a platform to discuss about the declining NTFP species owing to the tribal people's overexploit practices in NTFP collection, which caused due to market pressure. Through the discussion and analysis, the NTFP collectors realized about the depletion of NTFP resources and felt about the need for conserving the NTFP species (Appendix VII).
- The NTFP collectors charted out the NTFP species that are being collected for livelihood. They found that the NTFP collection doesn't fetch them better income, so they wanted alternative livelihoods that are associated with mainstream society.
- Twenty three aged NTFP collectors were motivated to practice selling fruits in carts. They were facilitated to avail loan from Tamil Nadu Adi-Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation Limited (TAHDCO). Now, the 23 aged persons are running mobile fruit vending in the road sides of Kodaikanal tourist spots.
- Conducted ecological survey by experts (Annexure IV) in 10 hamlets (Annexure X) of the project area (covering 638 square kilometers) by engaging trained EDC youth. The EDC youth learned to use the GPS, compass and canopy densitometer (Annexure XI) for mapping the NTFP species (Annexure XII) and the nests of *Ratufa macroura* (Annexure XIII) Based on the mapping, an ecological survey report has been generated (Annexure - V)

- Through ecological survey, the tribal youth have gained skill in conducting the transect walk by using GPS, compass and densitometer (Annexure XIII). These youth will incessantly involve in conducting transect walk in their hamlets in different seasons.
- For the first time, tribal people who spoke about the forest and wildlife in their tribal language will speak scientifically about forest, wildlife and their management after execution of this project.

***Please provide the following information where relevant:***

**Hectares Protected:** 63800 ha

The boundaries of 20 tribal villages cover 63800 hectares. Through the monitoring committees of the EDC, the pressure of NTFP collection is reduced and the habitants of grizzled giant squirrels are protected.

**Species Conserved:** 77 nests of Grizzled Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa macroura*)

**Corridors Created:** NIL

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

The successes of the project action are:

- The trained tribal youth have shown high interests towards conducting transect walk for understanding the biotic pressure of the NTFP species and food species required for *Ratufa macroura*, which resulted through the training programmes, workshops and awareness programmes. They have step forward to protect their nature.
- The Paliyar tribes of 20 hamlets are critically conscious about the low income from the NTFP collection and it does not provide them a better standard of life. A good number of the NTFP collectors have shifted from their traditional occupation of NTFP collection and currently they are working in alternative employment with better income.
- The tribal youth have engaged in identifying the NTFP species and the nests of the *Ratufa macroura* across 638 sq km in Palni Hills. The tribal people of the focus villages have started speaking about the protection and conservation of bio-diversity in their localities.

The challenge of the project action is:

- ACTIF approached the Wildlife Warden for getting permission for economic tourism. He refused to give permission for eco-tourism programme on the grounds that: the project area (Palni Hills) has been designated as Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary (Annexure VIII) but it has also been declared as Maoist (militant) zone. Further, the District Police did not give cooperation. Hence, ACTIF was not in a position to promote ecotourism.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

We planned to promote ecotourism for Paliyar tribes to reduce the biotic pressure of NTFP species, but the refusal of the Forest department for the eco-tourism programme turned the tribes to other alternative livelihoods. A set of tribal NTFP collectors are engaged as daily labourers in the farm sector, 3 NTFP collectors became taxi drivers and 23 aged NTFP collectors are engaged in mobile fruit vending. The restriction of forest department encumbered different livelihood options for the tribal people to leave their traditional occupation of the NTFP collection. Strangely, in the long run it would help in rejuvenating the NTFP species as now there would be no overexploitation and ample scope for regeneration.

## Lessons Learned

***Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

- Understood that both the tribes and non-tribes engage in NTFP collection. But the blame/accusation of exploitation of NTFP invariably falls only on the Paliyar tribes. (Kodaikanal is a tourism place, which has wider employment scope such as drivers, hotel waiters, ecotourism, etc. So, the tribal youth need to be placed in those jobs. Even if they are placed in those jobs, they will be motivated to participate in the wildlife conservation.) Through skill trainings the tribal youth would avail alternative employment, thus the collection of NTFP would be significantly reduced. Thus, there will be environment conservation. Since the tribal youth are trained in transect walk, resource mapping and how to protect indigenous species, they through the EDC will engage in protection of indigenous species.
- Identified the historical places of the Paliyar tribes, new water-falls and new trekking areas. (ACTIF will inform the spots to the Forest Department, if they give permission then the tourists will be allowed into areas. Before entering, they will be educated on their responsible acts for preserving the spots.)
- The tribal people have realized that the NTFP resources are limited in the priority site.
- The non-tribes entering into forest reserve for NTFP collection need to be stopped. The Eco-Development Committee should be given the responsibility for legal proceedings. By this act, the tribes protect their livelihood rights as well as help in wildlife conservation.
- During the project implementation, it was felt that the tribal youth might have difficulty in handling the scientific tools for transect walk. But they easily learned in utilising the GPS, compass and densitometer and also understood about the purpose of utilising those tools. Since they are living with the nature, they have better lateral thinking pattern.
- Through the ecological survey, identified the Grizzled Gaint squirrels living areas, which are located at a height ranging from 500 to 1000 meters elevation. They form nests at the tree heights that range from 10 to 40 meters. To protect their young ones from predators, they form nests in under dense trees that are situated near water streams. The Paliyar tribes in the focus villages have learned this scientific information about Grizzled Giant squirrels.
- The Paliyar tribes are more interested to engage in employments other than NTFP collection. They show an inclination to socialise with the mainstream society. ACTIF has learned about developing and maintaining a herbarium. In this concern, Dr. Stephen, Associate Professor in Biology of American College, Madurai, trained the tribal youth in collection of herbarium and he helped in preserving the plant specimens and identifying the botanical names for the species. (Kindly see Annexure VII: List of NTFP saplings)
- In the design and implementation process, ACTIF has learned the different aspects of the Ecotourism. In the upcoming years, it hopes to get the permission and cooperation of the forest department to promote the ecotourism.
- ACTIF has trained youth volunteers for conducting ecological surveys in different seasons and localities.

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

ACTIF's primary target group is Paliyar tribes of Palni Hills. In the project conception phase, it envisaged to involve the NTFP collectors of Paliyar tribes for conservation of NTFP species and grizzled giant squirrels as well as to find alternative livelihoods for their sustenance life. Since the Paliyar tribes live with the nature, they have traditional knowledge on forest. Thus, these three aspects helped in realizing the objectives to a better extent.

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

- Introducing of scientific tools in ecological survey created interests among the tribal youth to engage in the survey process.
- Tribal youth engaged in ecological survey have traditional knowledge on species and animals, which helped in conducting a successful survey. Moreover, they showed greater involvement and contribution in locating the NTFP species and the nests of Grizzled Giant squirrels.
- NTFP collectors showed their curiosity to engage in alternative livelihoods. A quite number of them are engaging in alternative livelihoods.
- The participation of the tribal youth in ecological survey has resulted in the formation of ecological survey team in each focus hamlet.

***Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:***

This project has revealed that the tribal groups are the most effective contributors in preserving and conserving the bio-diversity. Tribal people of different ages have traditional knowledge on forest. They are more inclined to live with nature.

**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.***

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
	-		
	-		
	-		
	-		

***\*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** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

## **Sustainability/Replicability**

***Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.***

- The bio-diversity monitoring teams formed at focal sites are consistently available for conducting ecological survey in different seasons and different localities.
- The Eco-Development Committees will discharge their duties frequently and it would help in conserving the bio-diversity in the priority site.
- The Forest Department is regenerating the trees for habitation and food security of Grizzled Giant squirrels. This action would help for the survival of the squirrels.

***Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.***

- The engagement of the NTFP collectors in alternative livelihoods would reduce the biotic pressure of the NTFP species. Earlier it was planned to engage them in eco-tourism.
- There was no plan on conducting nest density along different roads of the study site. During the survey, the nest habitats of Grizzled Giant squirrels along the road sides were identified. The tribal group will be engaged in protecting those nests.

## **Safeguard Policy Assessment**

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

Nil

**Performance Tracking Report Addendum**

**CEPF Global Targets**

**(Enter Grant Term)**

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.  
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from 1st July 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No	-		
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No	-	-	Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes	63800 ha.	63800 ha.	The tribal groups in 20 villages are capacitated to ensure the protection and safety of the forests as well as animals.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No	-	-	
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	No	-	-	

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.**



### Additional Comments/Recommendations

- If CEPF or ATREE promotes programme in Palni Hills in future, we request them to engage our trained bio-diversity monitoring team in the survey or implementation processes.
- Through this project, ACTIF has identified 3 areas where the grizzled giant squirrels have their habitation. In these areas, CEPF or ATREE can raise food and nest saplings.
- Grizzled giant squirrels are found more in Srivilliputhur Wildlife Sanctuary, Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary. CEPF can conduct a study to observe the linkages between three areas of the grizzled giant squirrels.

### Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

**Please include your full contact details below:**

**Name:** P. R. Ashok Raja

**Organization name:** Action for Community Transformation India Foundation Trust (ACTIF Trust)

**Mailing address:** No.93/15, Kodaikanal Main Road, Pannaikadu Pirivu, Moolaiyaru PO, Pannaikadu – 624210, Kodaikanal Tk, Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu.

**Tel:** 09486927548; 04542256441

**Fax:** -

**E-mail:** [actindiafoundation@hotmail.com](mailto:actindiafoundation@hotmail.com)

List of annexures:

- 1) Annexure I - Project Steering Committee Members
- 2) Annexure II - List of Tribal Youth who formed biodiversity monitoring teams
- 3) Annexure III - List of Ten Tribal Settlements with Eco Development Committees (EDC)
- 4) Annexure IV - List of Wildlife Professionals who helped in biodiversity assessments
- 5) Annexure V - Grizzled giant squirrel ecological study report
- 6) Annexure VI - Training Program for Community Leaders
- 7) Annexure VII - List of NTFP Saplings
- 8) Annexure VIII - Government Notification on Formation of Kodaikanal Wildlife Sanctuary
- 9) Annexure IX - Pictures of EDC Meetings
- 10) Annexure X - List of Hamlets for Ecological Survey
- 11) Annexure XI - Canopy Density
- 12) Annexure XII - List of NTFP Saplings Collected
- 13) Annexure XIII - Grizzled Giant Squirrel Nest Distribution