

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Applied Environmental Research Foundation
Project Title:	Celebrating 25 years of Save the Western Ghats March Rejuvenating the spirit of civil society movement
Date of Report:	July 5 , 2013
Report Author and Contact Information	Dr. Archana Godbole , Director, AERF C-10Natya Chitra CHS , Kalagram Bhusari Colony , Kothrud , Pune 411038

CEPF Region: Western Ghats India & Sri Lanka Biodiversity hotspot , Western Ghats Region

Strategic Direction:

Strategic Direction 1

Support civil society to establish partnerships with state agencies to implement science-based management and conservation of priority sites.

Investment Priority 3.1

Build a broad constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile

Grant Amount: USD 30,000.00

Project Dates: Dec. 1 2011 to May 31 2013

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

Keystone Foundation Kotagiri Nilgiris , Tamilnadu : It is a CSO from Tamilnadu and part of SWG group AERF has been working closely with Keystone Foundation for organizing SWGM annual meetings in 2010 & 2011. Keystone foundation participated in SWG core group meetings prior to 2012 conclave and also organized one preparatory meeting at Kotagiri in March 2012. Keystone Foundation provided financial support to the conclave through Swallows.

Nisarg Mitra, Kolhapur Maharashtra : Is a local CSO from Kolhapur (NWG) and supported AERF in organizing conclave and getting participation of teachers from colleges and universities from NWG. Nisrag Mitra was also responsible to enhance the participation from Kolhapur and Sangali districts in general .The coordinator of the CSO Dr. Bachulkar helped conclave in many ways in the capacity of local Organizing Committee member.

Nature Conservation Society ,Nasik, Maharashtra : It is NGO working for conservation in the northern most part of Western Ghats in Nasik region. The organization has helped in organizing the conclave, spreading the awareness about the conclave and most importantly organized few pre conclave events . The Godavari Yatra to create awareness about the river health of major river Godavari in Aug. 2012 . It has generated lot of response and helped to spread news of Mahabaleshwar event.

Conservation Impacts

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

This project did not have any research component that would add or contribute to the CEPF Ecosystem profile .

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

A three day meeting of Civil Society groups and other stakeholders called **Practitioner's Conclave** has been organized successfully at Mahabaleshwar from 30th Nov. to 2nd Dec. 2012. The project has received very good response from the civil society groups across the six Western Ghats states and new partnerships were developed through the preparations of the Conclave and actual conclave. The need for CSOs to work together and engaging other stakeholders was surfaced and most of the participants accepted the need to work in collaborations. Many of the members of Save The Western Ghats March of 1987-88 could attend the conclave and were happy to see the young torchbearers and new ways of Civil Society Movements. New dimension of indigenous peoples from Western Ghats has been added and engaging with them has been highlighted.

Detailed reports of the Conclave and the Indigenous day celebrations at the Conclave on 1st Dec. 2012 have been posted on **www.savethewesternghats.org**

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

The proposed project will help establishing a strong network of civil society organizations that will work together , share their concerns and act in collaborations and will work closely with Govt, Business and policy makers for long term sustainability of conservation initiatives in Western Ghats Landscape.

Actual Progress toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

1. The Conclave could rejuvenate the enthusiasm among civil society groups both old and newly formed groups. The search of Marchers of 1987-88 and their session of reliving the memories of the March has been one of the peaks of the conclave.
2. Celebrations of Indigenous day at the conclave created an opportunity for the first time to specifically discuss the issues of indigenous people from Western Ghats . It was the first effort to provide them platform at such a large civil society gathering. We have made a beginning and in a processes of continuing this effort further.
3. Collaborations with international organizations like Indigenous Partnership helped to take issues of indigenous people of Western Ghats to the international level and specific programmes to promote the indigenous champions , knowledge holders from this hot spot have began. It created further opportunity to work together for the existing CEPF large grantees (AERF & Keystone Foundation).
4. Media's interest in the Western Ghats has been enhanced and due to varied sessions in the conclave , their focus has been shifted from just reporting about WGEEP report and controversies due to it, to issues and positive efforts and solutions and Civil Societies' engagement in the process of mainstreaming Western Ghats.

5. Other than formal sessions many networking meetings and small corner meetings were the highlight and these discussions are important to continue the civil society's collective efforts to conserve Western Ghats.

6. Due to our efforts we could bring many stakeholders groups including researchers, teachers and private sector representatives to the conclave . their active participation and communication among civil society groups initiated the process of engaging them meaningfully in the collective efforts for long term sustainability of Western Ghats. Their discussions with participants created possibilities of working together , the conclave session on green economy provided an opportunity to know the role of corporate companies n protecting and ways in which we could involve them, and help them invest in conservation.

7. Civil society meetings generally discuss issues and magnitude of issues rather than solutions to conservation issues and promoting them. Mahabaleshwar conclave has changed this and focused on practitioners making difference rather than just discussing issues .

8. There was space and time provided to local groups to present and discuss their work and it was a beginning to link them to the collective process of working together in Western Ghats., As a follow up constant email exchange has started and it will be the foundation for more groups joining hands to resolve local conservation issues and to contribute to collective process.

9. It has been one of the objectives of the conclave to explore the possibilities to future action plan for civil society groups to continue their efforts , activism and practical solutions to ensure long term sustainability of the Western Ghats hot spot. The meeting had a specific session to discuss the way forward and many new organizations came forward with suggestions. Many have reservations about core group, informal organic group leading the way as well as there were strong supporters of these view points. Though we have not reached any conclusion among participants many of the suggestions and deliberations are on since last two months. They are discussed in the final conclave report. There are many possibilities that a more formal group may evolve, smaller regional informal networks continue to fight , promotion of best practices and innovative ideas for conserving the Western ghats will be promoted through internet and smaller issue based meetings and or annual meetings. We are sure that this churning began since the conclave will keep the civil society enthusiasm and commitment alive for long time.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

1. Easy access for contacts through dedicated website
2. Facilitation available for new collaborations and partnerships
3. Space available for sharing experiences through E newsletter
4. Collective action by CSOs and other stakeholders for advocacy ,for just decision making

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

1. A dedicated website www.savethewesternghats.org was created for the conclave. Website is being updated till date. Website provided inputs on developments for the conclave, searching the Marchers and attracting young generation to the event.
2. A face book account has also been generated and within a month's time more than 300 followers started responding and taking interest.
3. Four issues of Sahyadri Varta an E newsletter were created and posted. There was a support from many CSOs in the form of news and other articles.
4. During the conclave a special session on legal issues and public interest litigations has been organized and committed legal activists like Mr. S.R. Hiremath from SPS Karnataka facilitated and shared their journeys and other local case studies and success stories.

Please provide the following information where relevant: Not relevant

Hectares Protected: n/a
Species Conserved: n/a
Corridors Created: n/a

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

One of the major challenges was tracing back the organizations and individuals who were a part of the 1987/88 march. Twenty five years had passed in the interim and a lot had changed in the civil society activism of the Western Ghats. Many of these organizations were localized and there were no websites or email ids registered. The postal addresses and phone numbers had also been changed multiple times which made it extremely difficult for us to trace these organizations. We used every possible medium to circulate the news but mostly relied on word of mouth publicity to get some positive response. We managed to elicit some response from old marchers through our traditional means (emails, letters, networks, associations) and finally hosted nearly 50 old marchers from various states. Those marchers were from all walks of life and had come from various regions of the Western Ghats. It was not possible for us in spite of our best efforts to get more old marchers to participate. We did the best we could with the resources at our disposal and turned out with a satisfactory result.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

No

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned: Collective action planned and implemented by providing platform to Civil Society Organizations from Western Ghats for sustainable conservation efforts

Component 1 Actual at Completion: Meeting to celebrate 25 years of Save the Western Ghats March to enhance the spirit of Civil Society groups organized. Participant lists, agenda and detailed report of the meeting celebrating 25 years of the Save the Western Ghats March , were produced. These documents are posted on www.savethewesternghats.org
The other dissemination material prepared for the Conclave is also available on the website.

The conclave was attended by more than 345 participants representing civil society organizations, businesses, Govt., representatives, medial persons, teachers, students, research organizations and general public. Two books have been published during the conclave. Six indigenous groups have participated in Indigenous day celebrations during the conclave and provided opportunity to taste traditional food through food festival organized with the support of Indigenous partnerships – Bioversity international. More in Conclave report **Celebrations and convergence for Conservation in Western Ghats on** www.savethewesternghats.org

Component 2 Planned: Strengthening SWGM to engage more diverse groups and individuals in the process of safeguarding biodiversity of Western Ghats.

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

Small regional meetings or state meetings were organized with strong local partners from each state. Eg. Nasik, Kolhapur , Kotagiri, Dharwad and Baroda. A range of programmes and innovative ideas to get support for implementing them were discussed in these meetings along with progress and roles and responsibilities of local organizations for the Conclave.

A state level meeting organized in Kerala to celebrate 25 years of SWGM 1987-88, by KFRI in Nov. 2012 was attended by AERF conclave team and used to further publicize the conclave.

Three meetings were organized in MoEF ,New Delhi, with higher officials for discussing the conclave and support of the MoEF. Specific efforts through meetings and letters to Principle Chief Conservator of Forests and other state level officials for all six Western Ghats states helped to reach to the Forest Department in all six states. Similar efforts were made to engage other line department officials in the process.

Total four meetings were organized with corporate sector companies from Western Ghats to engage with them and to have their participation in Green Economy and Western Ghats session. It helped to get greater representation of the private sector to the conclave.

The conclave was successful in having participation of 80 organizations representing various stakeholders groups mainly civil society.

Component 3 Planned: A group with varied expertise among the CSOs and stakeholders of the conservation of Western Ghats formed and it will be facilitating the decision making at regional and local level by providing inputs to WGEA (Western Ghats Ecology Authority) .

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

The report of WGEEP has been submitted to Govt. of India Mins. of Environment & Forests In Aug. 2011 and a lot of debate and controversy has been generated since then. The WGEEP report was made public in May 2012 and collective action by Civil Society was organized. AERF played a role in providing inputs to the process, getting support from the North Western Ghats Conservation network, members as well as provided inputs to the comments prepared by SWG core group.

A separate session on WGEEP report was planned for the Conclave in consultation with the SWG group and the WGEEP chairperson Prof. Gadgil, who chaired the session at Mahabaleshwar Conclave on 3rd Dec. 2012. There was a huge response to the session and later few more focused group discussions have been conducted spontaneously at the conclave venue.

However in Oct. 2012 Govt. of India to formed High Level Working Group under the chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasturirangan to study the comments received on WGEEP report and to independently provide status of Western Ghats Ecology to the MoEF . This committee has recently submitted the report and the idea of forming Western Ghats Ecology Authority has not been validated by this HLWG.

AERF also has provided comments on the HLWG report collectively with CSOs from Western Ghats.

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

No.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Some dissemination materials are attached as separate files.

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.

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

There were no shortcomings in the project design process as AERF had accepted the responsibility of organizing annual meeting to celebrate 25 years of SWGM in 2012 in the 2011 SWG annual meeting of Moodbidri . It was also cleared that AERF would apply for funding and would also get help from other SWG group members to get financial support.

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

1. The response of few members of SWG group members was limited and responsibilities accepted in the preparatory meetings since 2011 Sept. were not fulfilled by these members.
2. It is extremely difficult to keep different types of organizations and individuals with different philosophies and operative principle together and to create an all inclusive space for deliberations.
3. It was extremely difficult to change the face of SWGM from only activism to all inclusive broader groups with space for other view points.
4. It is difficult to engage with other stakeholders groups that have been contributing to both negative as well as positive changes for conservation in Western Ghats and provide them comfort level to discuss, due to the label of activism. There is a need to have balance of both activism and other view points and approaches to find long term solutions to conservation issues of Western Ghats.
5. The dedicated team of AERF, positive response from partners like Keystone Foundation and rigorous follow up with CSOs helped to achieve the objectives of the Conclave and beyond.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

None

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Indigenous Partnerships (Through Bioversity International, Rome Italy)	Support for indigenous day celebrations during the conclave	6000 USD	First time the Conclave created an opportunity to engage with indigenous communities separately and provided a platform to them. The need to link forest conservation with agrobiodiversity conservation and indigenous communities' livelihoods highlighted.
Keystone Foundation (through Swallows India Bangla Desh)	General support to Conclave	4000USD	Keystone Foundation is already a CEPF grantee and mutual leveraging was possible through the support.
Central Bank of India	General support to Conclave	2000 USD	Sponsorship through the dedicated fund raising efforts of AERF Conclave team.
Vanaz Engineering Ltd.	General support to Conclave	2000 USD	Through AERF's Business & Biodiversity programme
Bank of Baroda, other local donors	General support to Conclave	1000 USD	Sponsorship through the dedicated fund raising efforts of AERF Conclave team.
Lab India Instruments Pvt. Ltd.	Travel support to 10 invited speakers	1000 USD	Through AERF's Business & Biodiversity programme
AERF staff time	In kind support through a team of 6 people particularly working for the Conclave since Sept. 2011.	4000 USD	Organization of Conclave was pride and great experience for team members and they have dedicated their time without any remuneration from the project.

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this 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 funded 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 project aimed at building constituency of civil society organizations and in the process addressed the issues of lack of synergy and lack of long term action for conservation. The activities of the project contributed into a solid network of institutions and stakeholders to deliberate on the conservation issues of this biodiversity hotspot. The continuation of network will bring sustainability to the constituency of the organizations. For the event of 25 years celebrations, AERF could successfully engage with businesses. The impact of this engagement will certainly help to take the responsibility of investing for the conservation in Western Ghats. The approach of engaging CSOs and other stakeholders will be used effectively through the other conservation projects, the new collaborations and partnerships, acquaintances developed through the conclave will certainly inspire many CSOs to replicate such networks and processes at regional local levels to strengthen the conservation and contribute to environment friendly development of Western Ghats.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

N/A

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

Not Applicable

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Not Applicable

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, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

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.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2012 to May 30, 2013. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No			Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
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.	No			
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

