

**WWF India AREAS Programme**  
**Elephant Conservation in the Nilgiris and the Eastern Ghats**  
**The Stakeholders Workshop**  
**A REPORT**

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**The Objective**

Conservation of elephants in the Nilgiris and the Eastern Ghats Landscape involves a very large elephant habitat that lies in three South Indian states - Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The conservation issues in this landscape vary greatly and for addressing these issues the need to identify and prioritise them was imminent. The best way for achieving this target was to hold a Stakeholders Workshop using participatory methods leading to ownership of conservation initiatives.

**Action**

To prioritize field action in the Nilgiri Eastern Ghats landscape, a meeting of all the stakeholders was called by WWF India under its AREAS Programme. The meeting specifically referred to conservation action in the Nilgiri Eastern Ghats landscape, identified as one of the priority landscapes by AREAS TSN earlier. A pre-proposal was written by AERCC and a basic idea of the conservation needs in the landscape was available.

**The Participants**

The stakeholders in the area represented all the major government and non-government organisations and researchers working in the landscape. The Director of Project Elephant, the Forest Departments of the Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, research institutions of each state and a set of NGOs dealing in conservation were invited to contribute to the process. The stakeholders meet was facilitated by Ms. Sejal Worha.

**Setting Up the Workshop**

The meeting began with introduction of all the participants and the areas of work they were looking at.

**The Agenda for the Workshop**

1. **Setting the scene** - The objective of having this basically targeted at a discussion on the process and the objectives of the stakeholders meeting. The inputs for any changes in the two days plan of work was included here.
2. **Understanding the context** - The need to devote time for this was required because most of the stakeholders were to be introduced to the concept of the AREAS and the conservation issues as understood by scientists working in the region. This included presentations by AERCC and SACON.
3. **Developing the vision** - A brief discussion on creating a vision was considered necessary.
4. **Identifying issues and action** - It was understood that the number of issues involving conservation of elephants in the landscape were too many, some of these included course cutting issues. Hence, it was necessary to first identify such issues within individual states and the ones that cut across geographical boundaries.
5. **Prioritizing issues and actions** - Once the issues necessary for conservation of elephants in the landscape are identified, the next step was to select the ones that required attention on a priority basis. All the stakeholders were to prioritize conservation action under this.

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6. **Developing action plans** – This section was set for taking the stakeholders a step further from prioritizing issues into actually putting down specific action for achieving conservation in the landscape. Who would be the best agency / person to carry out the action?.
7. **Agreeing on a coordination mechanism** – Considering the size of the landscape and involvement of three states, it was felt necessary to create a mechanism for coordination for conservation of elephants in the landscape. This was considered necessary keeping in view the different approaches towards conservation along with cultural and traditional variety of people living in or around the landscape.
8. **Next steps** – A discussion on continuing the process of sharing information, the roles to be played by individuals and organisations and the time frames within which targets were to be met, was necessary to carry the process forward into the next stage.
9. **Closing**

### Setting the scene

#### The Broad Objectives

The broad objectives identified by the stakeholders were :

1. *To identify an agree on priority issues and actions for conservation of elephant in the Nilgiri's and Eastern Ghats (Elephant Reserve No. 7, Project Elephant, GOI).*
2. *To initiate a process of coordination, mechanism for implementation of action plans.*

### Understanding the context

#### The Presentations (Scheduled)

- ◆ Dr. Raman Sukumar of AIRCC made a presentation on elephant conservation in the landscape. His presentation resulted in heated debate on the issue of corridors and elephant poaching in the landscape.
- ◆ The second presentation was made by Dr. Sivaganeshan on issues relating to corridors and management of the corridors by active people's participation.

#### The Presentations (Unscheduled)

After the two presentations, a debate resulted in a diversity of ideas and the stakeholders decided to have more presentations explaining various scenarios that this very large landscape has. The perspectives of three major groups -- The government, the researchers, and the NGOs --- were to be brought round a single larger goal. Short presentations were made by the top representatives of the three Forest Departments, and the NGOs.

The Chief Wildlife Warden of Karnataka made a very good presentation that set the perspective straight and brought people to give top priority to elephants and put it above individual or organisational differences. The Chief Wildlife Warden of Tamil Nadu reinforced this by making an excellent presentation. The representative of the Kerala Forest Department came forward and concretized the matter in his presentation by suggesting a course of action for elephant conservation in his state and gave unconditional support for any positive action.

*Note : A good three quarters of the day were consumed by differences in approaches towards elephant conservation in the region. But the exercise proved to be extremely profitable as it helped in settling the long pending dust that these issues had kicked up.*

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### **Developing the vision**

Brief on developing a vision was given to the stakeholders and a draft vision statement was put forward. The discussion on the vision led to differences in semantics because of which it was put aside for discussion at a later stage. What came out is below:

**A landscape with a healthy, viable elephant population  
co-existing with human development aspirations in the  
long term. ????**

### **Identifying issues and action**

#### **The Discussion Paper**

The guidelines for discussions during the stakeholders meeting were presented to all the participants. The discussion paper itself was developed by WWF and the AERCC on the basis of existing information on the conservation of elephants in the landscape.

It was decided by the stakeholders that a broad set of objectives be developed after consultation on each proposed objective in the discussion paper. The three states, the NGOs and the scientists came forward with written objectives. This was done by breaking the stakeholders into three groups representing each state. The objectives listed for each state were then discussed and put in a single format as listed below.

**1. Augmentation and restoration of key corridors and elephant habitats**

It was felt by all that the elephant habitat was facing serious fragmentation due to loss of habitat linked to various human interventions. In some places key connections linking large chunks of elephant habitats were coming under serious threats or were already on the verge of total decimation. The need to address these key crucial corridors was felt strongly.

**2. Alleviating human elephant conflict and selected settlement**

The second most important area of work for elephant conservation in the landscape was to do with the serious problem of human elephant conflict. Among the causes for this conflict were loss of habitat and fragmentation. It was felt that a very objective look at this problem with a view to minimising it needed to be taken up.

**3. Supporting the strengthening of anti-poaching efforts**

Poaching was identified as the major problem for the elephants. Cooperation between three states in anti poaching measures and at the same time strengthening anti poaching mechanisms was considered as critical to the survival of elephants in the landscape.

**4. Consolidation and improvement of elephant habitat**

The subject was discussed at length. The need to look at elephant habitat keeping in mind the welfare factors required for elephants was considered necessary. In many places experiments for improving the habitat for increasing fodder and cover value are underway. But these are being done at a small scale and it was felt that successful experiments needed to be replicated.

**5. Policy research framing, advocacy, legal support**

The lack of policy on part of the state governments and the central government on various policy matters with respect to conservation (PAs, elephants, forests etc) were really not in place. Various government agencies and regulations that are in place

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need to be studied and brought together to create a clear picture of the landscapes and its future. The lack of documentation on issues like the status of forest and other lands and an investment in advocacy and legal support was considered a necessity for long term conservation of elephants.

### **6. Training of the field staff, capacity building including human resource development**

Lack of trained professionals in the field and reduced capacity of law enforcement agencies to implement regulation effectively was viewed as serious impediment in conservation efforts underway. To improve human resource in areas like scientific monitoring and experimentation was termed a necessity.

### **7. Promoting awareness among all sectors**

General improvement of conservation awareness along with mass communication for elephant conservation in the region was identified an area of work that lacked in its outreach.

### **8. Conducting management related research**

Though there is a lot of scientific data obtained through research, the need to secure investments for furthering applied research for effective management of elephants was identified.

### **9. Improving animal health and veterinary care**

This relates to the both wild and domestic elephants. The need to maintain domestic elephants for management purposes was indeed a necessity. Incidents that related to loss of domestic and wild elephants due to absence/lack of veterinary care pointed towards the need to have improved animal health care units at least in the protected areas.

### **10. Neutralising scrub cattle population**

Scrub cattle were identified as a major problem and to directly work with people to reduce their numbers and to optimise the utilisation of those that remained by improving breeds and encourage stall feeding were discussed. This area emerged as an important conflict area detrimental to the wild elephants and hence the need to address it.

## **Prioritizing issues and actions**

Prioritizing of these issues was done by all the stakeholders in one group. The stakeholders felt that some of the issues listed were extremely important for long term elephant conservation in the landscape and needed immediate attention. This included augmentation and restoration of key corridors and elephant habitats. An important area that emerged a priority was promoting awareness among all the sectors. Along with this policy research, advocacy and legal support were also given priority. Lower on the priority but above the remaining listed objectives was consolidation of and improving existing elephant habitats.

The objectives were sieved from detailed and long discussions on threats to elephants and its habitats and how these threats were perceived by different stakeholders. Because the action to address these threats is based on the above understanding the exercise proved to be extremely invaluable.

The priority areas of work that needed immediate action were decided after a detailed discussion and a subsequent vote. The results were as follows:

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### PRIORITISING CONSERVATION ACTION IN NILGIRIS & EASTERN GHATS FOR ELEPHANT CONSERVATION

| RANK | CONSERVATION ACTION  | VOTES |
|------|--|-------|
| I    | <b>Augmentation and restoration of key corridors and elephant habitats</b>                 | 22    |
| II   | <b>Supporting the strengthening of anti-poaching efforts</b>                               | 17    |
| III  | <b>Alleviating human elephant conflict and selected settlement</b>                         | 10    |
| IV   | <b>Promoting awareness among all sectors</b>   | 9     |
| V    | <b>Policy research framing, advocacy, legal support</b>                                    | 8     |
| VI   | <b>Consolidation and improvement of elephant habitat</b>                                   | 4     |
| VII  | <b>Training of the field staff, capacity building including human resource Development</b> | 4     |
| VIII | <b>Neutralising scrub cattle population</b>  | 3     |
| IX   | <b>Improving animal health and veterinary care</b>   | 1     |

*The shaded portions are the ones that are likely to be taken up on a priority basis by the WWF AREAS India Programme.*

### Developing action plans

Top six issues were finally considered for development of a detailed action plan. The participants were broken into three groups representing the three states with sufficient representations from the FD, the NGOs and the researchers.

The outcome of the deliberations are presented in tabular form. While these were presented by each group it was identified that some areas of work have been described in broader terms and the specific identification needed to be done on the ground by having smaller meetings in specific locations before developing a final action plan.

A tabular form of the action plans as made by the three groups of stake holders (one for each state) is presented in tabular form in Appendix one.

### Agreeing on a coordination mechanism

A discussion on the matter dragged for a while and the need to have a coordination mechanism for implementation of not only the WWF AREAS project in the landscape but also for targeted conservation work from other sources and also for ensuring sufficient cooperation between the states for the same. The broader objective of such a mechanism called for creating a group of individuals who could follow up on the planned work. Suggestion was for creating such a group. Considering the needs of the group its size became rather large and unmanageable. It was left to the WWF India to come up with such a group keeping in view the collective wisdom of the stake holders.

#### THE SUGGESTED COORDINATION GROUP OR COMMITTEE??

| STAKE HOLDERS   | NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES | ROLE  |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Project Elephant</b>                               | <b>One</b>                | ◆ Broad strategic direction                         |
| <b>State Forest Departments (one from each state)</b> | <b>Three</b>              | ◆ Overall funding decisions                         |
| <b>NGOs (one from each sector )</b>                   | <b>Three</b>              | ◆ Fundraising                                       |
| <b>Research Institutes (one from each state)</b>      | <b>Three</b>              | ◆ Publicity   |
| <b>WWF India</b>                                      | <b>One + more</b>         | ◆ Overall monitoring<br>◆ Technical support/ advice |

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The coordination mechanism between the three states border forests is already in place with CWW and other officers meeting regularly specially on issues related to poaching

The flow of funds for implementation of work, as expected by the stake holders, must be as direct as possible with no intervening agencies and could be different for different states or could follow the FRLHT Model.

### Next steps

Where do we go from the stake holders meet? An action plan for further work as discussed is presented below.

| S.NO | ACTION   | AGENCY             | TIME          |
|------|--|--------------------|---------------|
| 1.   | Report of workshop                                     | WWF-India<br>AERCC | Mid- December |
| 1.1. | Consultation for proposal                              | WWF-India<br>AERCC | January       |
| 2.   | Proposal for funding<br>(through further consultation) | WWF-India          | Mid-February  |
| 3.   | Approval of funding                                    | WWF-International  | June          |
| 3.1. | Finalize representation of the<br>Committee            | WWF-International  | June          |
| 4.   | Meeting of co-ordination<br>committee                  | WWF India          | ??            |
| 5.   | Plan for long-term program                             |                    | ??            |
| 6.   | Implementation   |                    | ??            |

Closing

|   | ROLE-RESPONSIBILITY                | RESOURCES AVAILABLE GOI + GOK | LEVEL OF INVESTMENT | REMARKS |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| <b>CORRIDORS</b>  |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| a. Land acquisition and transfer  | Govt of Karnataka (F.D. & Revenue) | 15%                           | Medium              |         |
| b. Restoration of corridor through protection and afforestation                     | Field Director                     | 20%                           | High                |         |
| c. Advocacy of legislation, policy research and awareness                           | Field Director-NGO                 | -                             | Low                 |         |
| d. Alternatives of livelihood for people connected with the corridor                | Field Director-NGO                 | 20%                           | Low                 |         |
| e. Research and monitoring of habitat, elephant movement and anthropogenic activity | Field Director - Institute-NGO     | -                             | Medium              |         |
| <b>PRIORITY CORRIDORS</b>   |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| 1. Hanayyura (Follow up action and monitoring)                                      |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| 2. Bhatnur Arabkere (Byloor)  |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| 3. Brahmagiri-Thimalli  |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| 4. Koliyalye  |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| <b>ANTI-POACHING</b>  |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| a. Protection of anti-poaching watchers (interest case)                             | Field Director                     | 50%                           | Medium              |         |
| b. Capacity building and intelligence training (arms and fireless etc)              | Field Director                     | 50%                           | Medium              |         |
| c. Information (intelligence) network outside the PA                                | Field Director+NGO                 | 20%                           | Low                 |         |
| d. Security to anti-poaching staff → medical and life insurance                     | Field Director(GOK)                | 10%                           | Low                 |         |
| e. Legal support to forest officials  | G.O.K (LAW)                        | -                             | Low                 |         |
| <b>HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICT</b>  |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| a. Management Plan  | Field Director-NGO                 | -                             | Low                 |         |
| b. Research on alternate pattern of crop cultivation and raiding                    | Field Director - Institute - NGO   | -                             | Low                 |         |
| c. Community participation  | N.G.O.                             | -                             | Low                 |         |
| d. Monitoring effectiveness of mitigation methods                                   | Field Director - Institute - NGO   | -                             | Low                 |         |
| e. Landscape analysis   |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| f. Ex-gratia compensation   | Field Director - Institute - NGO   | -                             | Low                 |         |
| 1. Hedyala-Bandipur   |                                    |                               |                     |         |
| 2. H.D. Kotte   | Field Director                     | 50%                           | Medium              |         |
| 3. Brahmagiri Sanctuary   |                                    |                               |                     |         |

|    |           |  |   |   |     |
|----|-----------|--|---|---|-----|
| 4. | AWARINESS |  |   |   |     |
|    | a.        | Media awareness  |   |   |     |
|    | b.        | Awareness of judicial, enforcement, etc. agencies                                      | Field Director · Institute · NGO        | - | Low |
|    | c.        | Schools and colleges → Bare foot researchers   | Field Director · NGO                    | - | Low |
|    | d.        | Education and awareness of local stakeholders  | NGO                                     | - | Low |
|    | e.        | Leadership training for local people who will contribute to conservation efforts       | Field Director · NGO · Institute<br>NGO | - | Low |
| 5. | POLICY    |  | Institute · NGO                         |   |     |
|    | a.        | Research on and legal intervention against developmental activities affecting the area | Field Director · Institute              | - | Low |
|    | b.        | Sustainability research of eco-development initiatives to influence policy discussion  |   | - | Low |
|    | c.        | Enabling inter-state & inter-developmental co-operation                                | Field Director · NGO (Govt. Depts.)     | - | Low |
|    | d.        | Research on eco-wildlife tourism impacts   | Field Director · Institute · NGO        | - | Low |
|    | e.        | Training exchange (Inter-state)  | Field Director · NGO                    | - | Low |

### TAMIL NADU

|    | Activity  | Role Responsibility   | Resource available | Level of Investment | Remarks |
|----|---|---|--------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1. | Augumentation and restoration of Corridor               |   |                    |                     |         |
|    | a) Corridors Acquisition                                | Field Director Rev. Department                                | Nil                | High                |         |
|    | 1. Singara  | --- Do ---  | Nil                | Medium              |         |
|    | 2. Peerkadavu-Chemmalai (4 Bits)                        | --- Do ---  | Nil                | Medium              |         |
|    | 3. Nellithurai  | --- Do ---  | Nil                | Medium              |         |
|    | 4. Glencairn  |   |                    |                     |         |
|    | b) Enhancing Protection Status (Rev. Land Notification) | Rev. Deptt. Field Director. NGO<br>Research Policy Department | Nil                | Nil                 |         |
|    | c) Rehabilitation (Chettis)                             | Rev. Deptt. Field Director. NGO<br>Research                   | Nil                | High                |         |
|    | (Gulithuraipatti)                                       | --- Do ---  | Nil                | Low                 |         |
| 2. | Alleviating Human Elephant Conflict                     |   |                    |                     |         |
|    | a) Solar Fencing  |   |                    |                     |         |
|    | Kallampalayam 5 km                                      | Field Director  | 5-10%              | Low                 |         |
|    | Thengumavada 9 km                                       | Local Communities   |                    |                     |         |
|    | Talamalai 10 km   |   |                    |                     |         |

|    |   |  |                                       |  |  |
|----|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
|    | <p>Hallimoyar - 5 km<br/> Natrpalayam - 5 km<br/> Panola - 2 km<br/> Irenkankotta - 5 km<br/> Anchetty - 5 km<br/> Naranhalli - 4 km</p>                                    |  |                                       | High   |  |
|    | <p>b) Ex-gratia<br/> c) Problem Population<br/> d) Landuse Pattern</p>  | <p>F.D. Rev. Department<br/> F.D. Researchers, Local People<br/> Agri Animal Hus.<br/> Rev. Hort. F.D. Researchers, NGOs,<br/> Local Communities</p> | <p>50%<br/> Nil<br/> Nil</p>          | <p>Medium<br/> Low<br/> Low</p>                |  |
| 3. | <p>Support strengthen Anti-Poaching Effort</p> <p>a) New Camps (in E-7)<br/> b) Existing Camps (in E-7)<br/> c) Intelligence Network<br/> d) Operational Costs (in E-7)</p> | <p>F.D.<br/> F.D.<br/> F.D. Police customs, RI, NGOs,<br/> Researchers<br/> F.D.</p>   | <p>Nil<br/> 50%<br/> 10%<br/> 25%</p> | <p>Medium<br/> Medium<br/> Low<br/> Medium</p> |  |
| 4. | <p>Promoting Awareness</p> <p>Eco-camps (All target groups)<br/> Publicity Ext. Material<br/> Stakeholders Meetings<br/> School Curriculum</p>                              | <p>F.D. Media, NGOs, Researchers,<br/> Other Govt. Departments, Schools,<br/> Local Communities, Professional<br/> groups</p>                        | <p>20%</p>                            | <p>Low<br/> Medium<br/> High</p>               |  |
| 5. | <p>Policy Research Legal Support</p> <p>a) Legal Cell<br/> b) Monitoring Dev. Activities</p>  | <p>F.D. NGOs, Professionals<br/> F.D. Researchers, NGOs</p>  | <p>Nil<br/> Nil</p>                   | <p>Low<br/> Low</p>                            |  |
| 6. | <p>Training Capacity Building</p> <p>a) Field Staff<br/> Executive<br/> NGOs &amp; other Stakeholders<br/> b) Incentives for staff &amp; other stakeholders</p>             | <p>F.D. Researchers, Police,<br/> Professionals<br/> --- Do ---<br/> --- Do ---<br/> F.D.</p>  | <p>5%<br/> 5%</p>                     | <p>Low<br/> Medium<br/> Low</p>                |  |

## KERALA

|     |  | Role Responsibility   | Resource available  | Level of Investment                      | Criteria Status                                    |
|-----|--|---|---|--|--|
| I   | Augmentation & Restoration of Key Corridors<br>1. Brahmagiri-Tirunelly<br>2. Kunchat-North Padiri<br>3. Pakranthalam<br>Activity<br>a) Acquisition/Rehabilitation<br>b) Improvement of acquired area<br>c) Monitoring & evaluation   | Rev. Fund Ag.<br><br>FD<br>FD & NGO Res. Ins.   | --<br><br>--<br>--  | M/M<br>H/H<br>M/M<br><br>M<br>L          | U.C.L.B., Sus.,<br>Feasible, 1 yr.<br><br>--<br>-- |
| II  | Consolidation<br>Nulputha Village<br>1st Phase - 20 out of 39 settlements<br><br>Habitat improvement Activity<br>Promoting regeneration<br>Conversion of monoculture → natural<br>(Augmentation in monoculture areas)  | FD<br><br>FD & local NGO<br>-- Do --  | --<br><br>--  | H<br><br>H                               | Feasible/URGE<br><br>Feasible                      |
| III | Human-Elephant conflict<br>Power fencing<br>-- Gohir & Aramavayal<br>Natural barriers (experimentation)  | FD  | --  | M<br>L                                   |  |
| IV  | Antipaching Efforts<br>1. Intelligence network<br>2. Communication network<br><br>3. Rationalisation & Strengthening existing camps<br>4. Incentives - food kits, etc.<br>5. Patrolling - vehicles/elephants<br>6. Training - skills, attitude & knowledge<br>7. Legal support | FD NGOs, CBO<br>FD<br><br>FD<br>FD NGOs<br>FD NGOs, CBO<br>FD NGOs Res. & Training Instt.<br>NGO LEAF | --<br>50% (P.E.NBR / state)<br>50%<br><br>--<br>25% (states)<br>75% (KFP) | L<br>L<br><br>L<br>L<br>L<br>M<br>L<br>L |  |
| V   | Awareness<br>All Sectors   | FD NGO Instt.   | 50% (NBR, KFP state, PE)  | L  |  |
| VI  | Policy<br>Compilation & additions<br>(Documentation)   | FD/NGO ---  | --  | L  |  |