

Promoting Human-elephant coexistence among communities in Odisha, India

Interim Report
March - June 2022



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Names of investigators, affiliations and contact information

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Project starting date: 01 March 2022

Anticipated completion date: 28 February 2022

If date has changed from what was originally proposed, please provide an explanation.

The duration of the project required to complete all activities is 12 months. Since the project was initiated in March 2022, the completion date is bit delayed.

Conservation needs this project addressed; summarize the progress and results.

Rayagada and Koraput Forest Divisions in the Southern region of Odisha state in India have 36 six villages and the people who live in these villages experience conflict situations. The elephants that migrate from the neighbouring state Andhra Pradesh enter the cropland and crop damage is a regular happening leading to retaliation. In several villages in Rayagada Block during harvest season spend sleepless nights when elephants pass through the village and enter in search of food. Mortality on both sides is now inevitable and this situation has to be changed. People in these forest divisions and who live in close proximity to elephant ranges in the state are mostly tribes and they are unaware of the elephant etiquettes. The goal of the ongoing project is to promote Coexistence through a series of awareness teaching of human etiquette toward elephants and to avoid confrontation. Since the implementation of the project in March, several activities to meet the objectives of the project have been accomplished. A pre-visit was made to make the logistic requirements for the workshop and to see the HEC areas in Rayagada and Koraput districts. A survey has been conducted to understand the severity of the conflict situation. The results of it will be utilised during the workshop. The teaching guide required has been translated and it requires completion. Similarly, the booklet, stickers and other educational materials for use during the awareness program are in the process of development. The venue for the workshop in September has been finalised. A set of educators has almost been selected and the final participant's list will be finalised three weeks before the commencement of the training program. The leftover activities are finalising the printing materials and getting ready with educational materials for the workshop, the conduct of the trainers' training program, follow-up of the workshop and conducting awareness programs in the HEC areas by trained personnel, evaluating the workshop and the project, reporting and publication.

The goals and objectives. For each objective, the specific actions taken to achieve it.

Project Goals

The goal of the project is to involve local people in the conservation of migratory elephants and ensure the long-term survival of elephant populations.

The objectives are:

1. to understand the existing conflict situation and route cause of HEC
2. to Bring-in positive attitudes among the communities and introduce effective preventative and practical behavior to avoid conflict and;
3. to create momentum which would continue and build upon itself long after the project period.

Activities carried out so far:

Objective 1:

As part of fulfilling this objective, identified a point person in Koraput. Two zoom calls were conducted with the point person (Mr Antony), who is a Research Faculty in the Central University of Koraput. Antony will be the person who will be doing the groundwork required to carry out the workshop plans that have been planned during the second half of the project in the project period. During these calls, the PI, Co-PIs and the point person (Organising team) took part in it. The aim of these meetings was to make the objectives clear and for all the members of the organising team to stay on the same line of thought. During these meetings discussions related to objectives, primary target group, secondary target group, identifying local collaborating institutes or organisations, requirements for literature related to HEC in South West Odisha, the timeline for the survey, standardising the survey form and trial survey requirements, Pre-visit timings and requirements for the PI to visit important HEC areas and potential workshop locations, creating a link with the forest department, and interested individuals were discussed. A detailed plan for the pre-visit to Rayagada and Koraput HEC areas by PI was also made.

A pre-visit was made by the PI to the study area. This was made possible with the effort put in by the point person at Koraput. The pre-visit was carried out from 25-30 March. The PI visited

important HEC areas in both the districts where HEC are there to get a feel of the HEC situation and also to learn about the attitude of the people towards elephants. Dudhari Ghat, Hathi Munda, Jodi Padre, Bala, Similiguda, Rupapathy village, Sampani, Khoira village, Chalkhamba village, Nandramput, Jeypore, are some of the important places visited during the pre-visit. In all villages interactions with the village, the community were made to understand the HEC situation and their reactions. It was learned that in some of the villages like Rupapathy, elephant visitation is almost regular since a herd of about 25 elephants stays 5 km away from the village in a reserve forest. They frequently visit the village, but their tolerance level seems to be on the higher side. Also as part of the visit, designed a questionnaire for the survey so as to suit the local HEC situation. Also, some of the potential areas to conduct the Workshop were visited and identified. It was decided that it is better to organise the workshop in Rayagada since the city is a central place for the teacher participant to come and attend the workshop easily. Participants from Koraput can travel to Rayagada since the number of participants from koraput will be limited. High conflict areas are close to Rayagada and hence the location has been suggested. However, the final place will be selected depending on the logistic requirements and suitability which will be decided at the end of July 2022 when the workshop date is finalised.

The English teaching manual 'Getting along with Elephants' has been translated and it is in the completion stage. This 100-page manual in Odiya will be utilised during the educators' skills training programme in September 2022 at the proposed workshop site. The translation work on the booklet 'Ele Toolkit' is meant to be used with the ultimate audience, the public who lives in HEC areas. The translation work is in progress. All these materials will be ready by end of September for use.

Objective 2:

This objective is partially achieved. More reporting can be given after the completion of the project. However, for the trainers' training, potential participants for the workshops have been identified and it will be finalised three weeks before the commencement of the HECx workshop.

Objective 3:

We are in the preparative stage for the workshop and the awareness program. Evaluation of the impact of the workshop will be assessed during and after the workshop.

Describe any activities that differ from the original proposal and explain the reason for the change.

None of the activities differs from the original proposal. To date, the objectives and related activities remain the same. There may not be any deviation from the original activities proposed.

Conservation outcomes for elephants, other wildlife, habitat and human communities, and list major findings and accomplishments to date.

The project is in its preparatory stage. A complete picture of the project outcomes for the elephants can be given at the end of the project. However, during the pre-visit, we could understand that the human-elephant conflict though not a big issue two decades ago is gradually increasing since some of the elephant populations have become residents in the Rayagada area. During our visit to a village in Rayagada, the villagers even volunteered to take us to the forest area where the elephants take hide during the day. The fear of elephants in certain villages is more compared to nearby villages that are within 10km distance. Some of the reasons are cultivation practices, availability of palm trees used to make toddy, and storage of toddy inside the houses in villages. Village communities keep toddy for their own consumption and also for sale. Local toddy can not be stored for more than two days since it ferments quickly as the normal temperature is on the higher with an average of 35 degree C. We established links and contacts with the village heads, school and college teachers, the local forest department and a few individuals interested in Wildlife and the

environment. This network will be used to select participants for the Human-elephant Coexistence HECx workshop that we are planning in September 22.

Approximately how many humans/communities are/were impacted by your project?

Approximately how many elephants are/were impacted by your project?

This estimation will be done only after the completion of the project. We are planning to do awareness programs through trained educators in two districts where HEC is an issue. The trained educators in turn will be creating awareness for their audience. These will be the ultimate target group. There will be an indirect audience whom we will be reaching through newspapers and social media. The usage of mobiles is limited to urban areas in these districts.

Describe any problems discovered or that occurred during this grant period.

Was your project successful? State short and long-term goals that you are using to evaluate your accomplishments.

Response to this will be given after the completion of the project.

Based on this Project, what is the “next step” for this project and does it have implications for future conservation actions?

Response to this can be given after the completion of the project.

Provide at least one human interest story. This story should enable the reader to identify with the people, a problem, day-to-day situations, achievements or a funny or strange occurrence during the course of the project. Examples: a story about when the bull elephant put his tusk through the window of the research vehicle or the lion with a snare on his leg and the many weeks it took to find the animal and remove the snare or a specific family who benefitted due to the project. If available, please include a photo of the incident described.

Similar stories will be provided at the end of the project period. These kinds of stories will be collected from the people who will be taking part in the HECx workshop.

List all organisations associated with this project and their roles in the project.

Odisha Forest Department, Rayagada Forest Division

Odisha Forest Department, Koraput Forest Division

Central University of Odisha, Koraput

Living In Fine Environment Trust India

Arulagam, Coimbatore

De Paul International College, Mysuru.

Include an itemized financial report of IEF funds spent as a separate page of the report. The final report must include an itemized final budget clearly demonstrating the expenditure of IEF Funds. Unexpended funds must be returned to IEF at the time of the submission of the final report unless the Recipient provides a budget for the remainder of funds to be approved by IEF.

Activities	Funds requested and received from IEF	Amount spent from 1st instalment received
Survey expenses and honorarium	375	375
Honorarium for point person	441	200
Education material		
Drawing / typesetting	425	430
Translation charges	250	280
Accommodation		125
PI (1 pax x \$25/day x 5 days) during pre-visit	75	
Travel		
Pre-visit (1 pax x 1 trip)	550	580
Travel expense for Point person	100	180
Equipment	285	285
Pointer, voice recorder		
Others		
Communication	100	97
Stationary materials	250	50
Total spent from March - June 2022.		2602

Total project cost as per the award statement: **US\$: 8917**

Total amount received during the first Instalment: **US\$ 4459**

Justification

A sum of \$ 2602 has been spent so far from March - June 2022 from the funds received as the first instalment. The remaining amount from the first instalment is required for the next two months expenditure. With that, the first instalment of funds will be spent. There was some delay from the banking sector for the release of money received from IEF and hence the delay. Payments for printing as advance, advance to pay to reserve venue and accommodation for the workshop at Rayagada, advance for logistic requirements such as food for the workshop days, and to buy travel tickets for resource persons to travel to Rayagada, the workshop venue are some of the immediate anticipated expenses. Payments for the printing, workshop expenses, logistics, and travel will be made using the second instalment.

Submit at least five high-resolution digital images (500 dpi or over) representative of the Project as separate individual files for each 6-month and final report.

High-resolution photos are attached separately.

Submit at least one video clip at least 2 minutes in length for each 6-month and final report.

A complete video will be uploaded at the end of the workshop since this is a preparatory phase.

Do you intend to publish and/or present your findings at a conference or symposia?

Please provide us with information about the journal/conference/symposia and a timeframe.

Response to this can be given after the completion of the project. Nevertheless, we do have plans to present our findings at appropriate conferences.

Has your project received any media coverage? If so, provide copies of the articles, videos, etc complete with web links if the coverage was online.

So far nil. But it will be done in September and the later part of the project execution. This is a preparatory period of the project.

Please list all websites, blogs, social media accounts, etc associated with the project, its investigators, and organizations (this includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc).

It will be attached at the end of the project.