

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS IN NAGALAND

via Field Intervention, Technology and Policy Support



**Final Project Report
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1. Background of Nagaland

The state of Nagaland includes 1,238 recognised villages within 11 administrative districts, namely Kohima, Phek, Wokha, Zunheboto, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Mon, Dimapur, Peren, Longleng, and Kephire. There are 16 (although people of Nagaland refer to up to 18) major distinct tribes in the state and many sub-tribes. Each district is predominantly occupied by one tribe, although some districts may inhabit more than one tribe. Each district, therefore, has a distinct linguistic, cultural, customary, social, and political characteristic, defined by the distinct socio-cultural and political organisation of the predominant tribe. The total population of the state is 1.98 million (2011 census), out of which 82.78% is rural population and 89.1% falls in the category of Scheduled Tribes (RNBSAP 2022).

The main livelihood for the people is agriculture, predominantly traditionally practised shifting cultivation, with some tribes (and sometimes a few villages within a tribe) also practising settled terrace farming. The traditional shifting cultivation practices in Nagaland are known for sustaining high agro-biodiversity and contributing to the food and nutritional security of the concerned tribes (Changkija 2017) in Nagaland. In recent years, there have been significant changes in the Jhum practices, including reduced fallow periods and consequent reduced production, leading to internal debates on the needs for different kinds of interventions. Although some of these interventions have been tried, local opinion makers and actors call for more widespread and rigorous action. The life, livelihoods, cultures, emotions, and identity of the majority of people from all tribes are deeply linked with their surrounding forests.

Politically, Nagaland has a special constitutional status under Article 371 (A) of the Indian Constitution. This article intends to safeguard the culture, traditions, and way of life of the indigenous Naga people.

371A. Special provision with respect to the State of Nagaland

1. Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,
 - a. no Act of Parliament in respect of—
 - i. religious or social practices of the Nagas,
 - ii. Naga customary law and procedure,
 - iii. administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law,
 - iv. ownership and transfer of land and its resources, shall apply to the State of Nagaland unless the Legislative Assembly of Nagaland by a resolution so decides.

Source: The Constitution of India

Article 371 (A) ensures that the customary land ownership patterns of different tribes—land is owned either by the village community as a whole, by a clan within the village, or by individuals—are safeguarded. The customary laws are not codified in the state but are known to be effective and adhered to by tribe/clan members. In the event of any dispute, the

traditional village council is the arbitrator. The village governance institutions and systems vary from tribe to tribe and include a complex (yet locally well understood) overlap of state-recognised formal institutions and informal social formulations and collectives.

1.1. Formal Local Governance Institutions

Village Council (VC): Every Naga village has a VC constituted under the Nagaland Village Council Act of 1978, that handles the administration of the judicial matters. The VCs have been adapted from the traditional village head system of the Naga tribes. While traditional systems vary from tribe to tribe, VCs on the other hand are meant to be a uniform structure for all villages in Nagaland. The VCs are composed of male village elders. They function under the guidance of a chairman who is elected by the members from among themselves. In their functioning however the village councils differ from tribe to tribe. Some tribes (e.g. the Sumi) continue to follow the Chieftainship system of governance, where the Village Chief (the one who started the village or their descendants) is the head of the village and plays a critical role in decision making. In other tribes (e.g. Angamis, Aos, Rengama, Chakesang) the village councils follow a more democratic form of governance where the elected members are appointed by the community, while village elders (gaon burah) play an advisory role for all formal and informal bodies.

Village Development Board (VDB): Under each recognised Village Council exists a VDB a statutory body for decentralised grass root level planning in Nagaland. The VDBs, established in the 1980s, are meant to deliver rural development programmes. Introduced in the 1980s. There are also other statutory institutions in many villages such as Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs), and institutions set up under the Communitisation process of Nagaland (Pathak Broome, 2014). The informal social collectives include mother's groups, self help groups, student unions, youth groups, age-groups, land right holders unions, collectives of Church functionaries, and very relevant to the purpose of this report many villages also have Community Conserved Area Management Committees (Pathak & Kothari, 2009)

1.2 Forests and Their Ownership

Over 75% (1,248,600 hectares) of the total geographical area of the state is under forest cover, out of which 88% is community owned. The forest density ranges from very dense (9.7%) to moderately dense (37.1%) to open forest (53.2%) (RNBSAP 2022). Likewise, Nagaland acts as a carbon sink region for the rest of the country as the green cover and forest absorb more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases. Nagaland has been estimated to have a potential to sequester between 26.53 to 27.25 million tons (MT) of additional above-ground carbon through the improvement of tree cover (TERI 2015).

1.3 Biodiversity in Nagaland

It is also noteworthy that the forests of Nagaland fall under the Indo-Myanmar Biodiversity hotspot (Myers et al. 2000). At 16,579 sq. kms, though small in geographical area, the diverse geographical locations and climatic conditions, ranging from tropical to temperate, have led to evolution of a rich floristic and faunal diversity in the state. Although floral and

faunal surveys in the state have been limited, it is estimated that 92 species of mammals, 500 species of birds, 490 species of butterflies, and 110 species of fish are likely to occur in the state (ZSI 2009). Among the first community based biodiversity surveys was carried out in Eastern Nagaland by the Nagaland Empowerment of People through Economic Development (NEPED) and Sálím Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) in 2008-2010. The study remained incomplete because of some extraneous reasons but revealed a very high diversity within a small region of the state. This included a total of 390 species, 42 mammals, 120 birds, 50 reptiles, and 171 butterfly species, among others. Floristically, it is estimated that the state harbours 2,431 angiospermic flora species belonging to 963 genera and 186 families and 103 Red Data Plants (RNBSAP 2022)

1.4 Threats to Forests and Biodiversity in Nagaland

Although at 75%, the forest cover in the state is much higher than the 33% national average envisioned in the Forest Policy of India 1988. Yet with globalisation, increased needs and consumption, and changing socio-cultural practices, infrastructure development, both the people and the forests in Nagaland face unprecedented pressures. Consequently, as reported by the Indian State of Forest Report 2019 (FSI 2019), the forests in Nagaland have reduced by 450 sq km in two years since 2015. Pressures on the forests come from multiple causes and conditions including:

1. Changes in land-use patterns due to changing and increasing livelihood, housing, infrastructure needs
2. Fragmentation of Land forest due to diminished traditional institutional authority and privatisation of communal forests.
3. Continued large scale hunting often unregulated (except within community conserved areas) largely due to:
 - a. break down of traditional hunting taboo systems
 - b. meeting livelihood needs by selling wild meat (which is increasingly also a very profitable business)
 - c. Hunting for pleasure among the Naga community
 - d. Use of highly sophisticated and modern guns for hunting
 - e. Love for wild meat
4. Excessive and often unregulated extraction of timber and other forest produce in the absence of a state level mechanism to support CCAs for sustainable harvest, marketing and enterprise building such as for eco-tourism.
5. Over-exploitation or unsustainable extraction and sale of medicinal herbs leading to decline in the availability of traditional medicines and hence impacting traditional healing practices.
6. Extreme weather conditions due to climate change are affecting the security of people as well as biodiversity in the state. Although not studied in detail, people also report disappearance or reduction in availability of certain species.
7. Shorter jhum (shifting cultivation) cycles reducing productivity of jhum fields and diversity of crops within. Shorter jhum cycles also lead to higher degradation of forests.
8. Actual or perceived increased conflicts with wild animals, exacerbated by factors such as infrastructural development and global climate change, declaration of

community conserved areas reducing spaces for agriculture, pose significant challenges.

9. Expansion of road networks and rapidly increasing urbanisation cutting across landscapes, etc.
10. Uncontrolled spread of fires to the surrounding forests during traditional burning of jhum fields, destroy large portions of natural flora and fauna annually.
11. Scarcity and deterioration of water quality is seriously impacting availability of potable water.
12. Use of explosives, poisons, and pesticides is causing further pollution of water sources and degradation of biodiversity and aquatic ecosystems.
13. Increasing presence and spread of invasive alien species is an emerging challenge to the biodiversity in the state.

1.5 Role of Communities in Conservation

Among the major reasons why the forest cover in Nagaland remains high and biodiversity, although fast depleting, continues to be rich include, people's continued association and pride over their lands and territories; continuation of a low carbon footprint and land based lifestyle. Most importantly, a long history of conservation of natural resources embedded in local worldviews and ways of being; a unique, rich and strong culturally embedded social organisation of each tribe, and newer efforts at conservation of biodiversity through creation of Community Conserved Areas (CCAs).

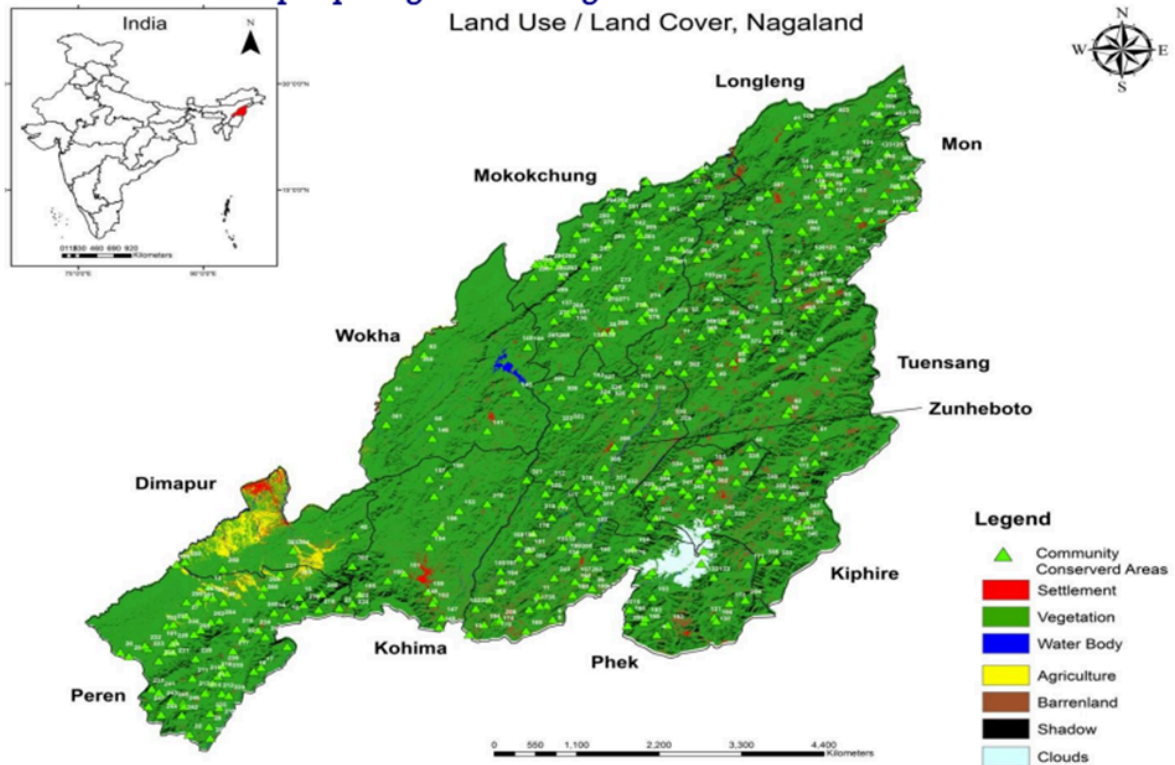
2. Community Conserved Areas in Nagaland

Conversations with village elders (personal communications, April 2024) indicate (although this has not been well studied in the state), that before the advent of Christianity in the 19th century most tribes followed animist traditions and tribe specific rituals, customs and customary taboos. Lack of modern hunting tools and traditional taboos ensured regulation in hunting and extraction of other forest produce. Over the years, multiple factors contributed to decline in traditional taboo systems, increase in unregulated hunting, heavy extraction of timber to meet livelihood needs, and shorter jhum cycles leading to decline in forest cover, quality of forest and consequent impact on biodiversity and mega fauna in particular. Since the 1990s and the 2000s, there has been a resurgence of community conservation initiatives conceptualised in the more modern framework (Pathak 2009). Likewise, this has also been an important period for the people to collaboratively embark on a path to build the foundations of a community led development model that incorporates conservation of its rich natural biodiversity heritage and changing economic and cultural needs of the community. Within Nagaland while some traditional practices such as protecting the forests within the watersheds etc continues, the newer efforts at total or seasonal hunting bans, setting aside several hectares of forests as exclusively protected zones, fishing ban over large stretches of rivers, hunting ban on specific species such as the Amur Falcon, among others have been initiated by community organisation like youth organisation, women groups, religious/cultural groups and village councils as a spontaneous reaction to address forest degradation, and decline in biodiversity (Pathak 2009). Currently, 1/3 of the total villages in Nagaland have forest areas in their village under community conservation (TERI 2015). In total, there are

407 documented community-conserved areas (CCAs)¹ in Nagaland covering an area of 170,000 hectares i.e.14% of the forest cover (TERI 2015).

The Land-use land-cover Map of Nagaland here depicts the spread of CCAs in Nagaland (RNBSAP 2022).

Annexure 2: LULC Map depicting CCAs in Nagaland



Source: Revised Nagaland Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2022

Out of the 407 CCAs, 343 CCAs i.e. 84.3% are self initiated by various community institutions while 62 CCAs i.e. 15.2% were initiated by the Forest Department (TERI 2015). In some areas individual villages are conserving their forests on their own but in most areas villages have come together to negotiate and bring a much larger landscape under protection. Through their own initiative and that of some support organisations about 70 such villages conserving about 28 landscapes have come together to form a state level support and action alliance called Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF). NCCAF is a member based forum which was created and registered in 2019 to represent the voice of the CCAs in the state. The forum has been somewhat dormant in the past few years but has a vision to revive itself. Towards this in a recent meeting in April 2024 the office bearers and functionaries were elected and NCCAF now hopes to work actively towards increasing

¹ An area or a territory is considered to be a Community Conserved Area, when: (a) The community is the main decision maker for the area under conservation, even if not legally. (b) The community makes and enforces rules and regulations including for conservation. (c) The efforts contribute to the conservation of nature and communities' own wellbeing.

its membership and supporting the member organisations. NCCAF with support from Foundation for Ecological Security has developed a wildlife corridor map for Nagaland and has a vision to bring the entire corridor under some form of community conservation.

However, this enormous scope for community conservation and community defining their own course for future wellbeing in Nagaland faces numerous challenges, mainly emerging from lack of a comprehensive mechanism for consistent, sufficient, accountable and empowering support at the level of the CCAs. Lack of a comprehensive legal and policy mechanism which is free from the framings of forest policy for the rest of the country where the situation of forest ownership and rights are very different also leads to hurdles for CCAs in the state. In the absence of the above mentioned desired conducive environment, the community conservation landscape in Nagaland has plateaued over the last 5-6 years both in terms of new areas being added under conservation and efforts made by various CSOs, CBOs and government in strengthening conservation efforts.

3. Current Project

3.1 Context

As mentioned above, while one third of the villages in Nagaland have adopted community conservation, there is currently two urgent asks to sustain the wellbeing of people and forests in Nagaland:

1. Being able to support the existing network of CCAs in their self-determined ecological, social and economic goals through meaningful and completely inclusive technical, legal, and financial support.
2. Inspiring the remaining 2/3rd villages to bring the rest of the 74% forest cover of the state under sustainable use and community conservation.

The second point above is crucial but will depend on villages being convinced of the appreciation, support, incentives and benefits that the first set of villagers have received for their conservation and climate actions. It is in this context, to create a long term and sustained supporting environment for the existing CCAs in the state and create greater opportunities for other communities to establish new CCAs, the project “Strengthening Community Conserved Areas in Nagaland via Field Intervention and Policy Support” was envisioned and initiated in 2023 with support from The Nature Conservancy.

3.2 Project Partners

While Kalpavriksh remains a knowledge and administrative partner, the main responsibility for execution of the project rests with local community based organisations Kenono Foundations in Tseminyu and LEMSACHENLOK in Longleng. Both organisations are also members of the NCCAF. Almost all the staff of the local implementation partners come from villages which have declared CCAs and many are office bearers of the informal CCA management committees. In addition, North East Network- a women based organisation, also located in and part of a village which has declared a CCA are knowledge partners for

bringing social equity concerns in the project as well as within the context of CCAs in Nagaland. Strand Life Sciences worked on the technological aspects of the CCA web portal.

3.3 Project Intervention Sites and Rationale for Selection

Five CCAs were selected for in depth explorative activities under this project. They are:

Sr. No.	CCA	Landscape	Area (Ha)	Households	Population
1	Sendenyu, Tseminyu District	Sendenyu-Phenshenyu-Tseminyu- Kasha daho (SPTK)	2,200	745	3,742
2	Gaili, Peren District	Mt Pauna CCA (Punglwa, Gaili, Ngwalwa, Lamhai, Peletkie)	400	276	1,377
3	Angangba, Tuensang District	Yehemi, Lithsami, Kiyetha (YLK) and Angangba	1,200	378	2,033
4	Yaongyimchen, Longleng District	Yaongyimchen Community Biodiversity Conservation Area	1,500	333	1,104
5	Chaklangan, Noklak District	Indo-Myanmar Transboundary landscape	4,000	466	2,027
	Total		9,100	2,198	10,283

The Five sites were chosen in consultation with the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF), and keeping in mind the priority of strengthening conservation efforts within the identified wildlife corridor. These CCAs were also chosen keeping in mind diversity of geographies and tribes with their diverse bio-cultural practices and social organisation. These CCAs are part of a larger landscape of CCAs within the corridor. The corridor has also been recognised for its conservation value by other organisations such as the Foundation for Ecological Security and also by the Nagaland Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Each CCA landscape is being conserved by multiple village councils of which, for this phase, under this project, one of the villages has been selected. Considering that multiple organisations (government and non government) have been intervening in these landscapes under various projects, the villages selected under this project were those with least or no intervention from other organisations and programmes but which were interested in collaborating.

3.4 Activities Undertaken

A project inception workshop was held on 26th September at Kohima. Key local stakeholders such as Nagaland Community Conserved Area Forum, Kenono Foundation, LEMSACHENLOK, North East Network (NEN), as well as community leaders from Sendenyu and Sukhai Community Biodiversity (CCAs) participated. Kalpavriksh members attended online.



The following activities were undertaken as part of this project:

1. Monitoring of Biodiversity and Human Wildlife Interactions
2. Social Equity in CCAs
3. Management of CCAs
4. Financial Mechanisms to Support CCAs
5. Development of Guidance Documents
6. Technical Enhancements of the CCA Web Portal
7. Documentation of 30 CCAs on the CCA Web Portal
8. Nagaland CCA Forum Meet

4. Biodiversity Monitoring



Capacity building workshop on setting camera traps in the field for local community members and field staff of Kenono Foundation

4.1 Background and Objectives

Despite a vast network of CCAs in Nagaland, few studies have been conducted to understand the flora and fauna diversity they protect. One of the first extensive community-led biodiversity surveys was conducted by the Salim Ali Center for Conservation (SACON) from 2005 to 2010 but was discontinued due to the untimely death of the principal investigator. Subsequent efforts by various organisations and local committees have continued this work. These surveys indicate over 100 species of mammals, 500 species of birds, 50 species of reptiles, 30 species of amphibians, and 100 species of fish, including many rare and endemic species. Notably, species such as tigers and leopards are believed to have become locally extinct, while lesser-known species like jungle cats and clouded leopards are still found.

Several CCAs have implemented rules to regulate hunting, contributing to wildlife protection. For instance, the Joint Council of Fakim, Thanamir, and Vongtsuvong Villages received recognition for their conservation efforts, highlighting the importance of community-led initiatives.

Conversations with local communities revealed a high interest in conducting faunal surveys and developing ecotourism. For example, the youth group in Choklangan has established a CCA for Hoolock Gibbons. Systematic surveys and monitoring could potentially discover new species or expand the known range of existing ones.

Challenges identified include the lack of baseline data, long-term monitoring plans, and detailed documentation of human-wildlife conflicts. Addressing these gaps is crucial for effective management and conservation. The methodology and action plan developed through this project aim to empower local youth to conduct these studies, ensuring the information generated is locally owned and used to inform decisions.

4.2 Methodologies

In this project, we reviewed previous faunal monitoring exercises from Thanamir CCA, Sendenyu CCA, and Yaongyimchen CCA to build upon their methodologies and insights. Additionally, we studied best practices of community-led monitoring of faunal biodiversity from other parts of India. By contextualising and integrating these diverse learnings, models, and experiences, we developed a holistic community-led monitoring framework for faunal biodiversity in Nagaland. The methodologies in this framework include:

1. Camera trapping
 - a. Identifying a team
 - b. Placement of Cameras
 - c. Data Compilation and Analysis
2. Group discussions and individual interviews

For the monitoring plan, see Annexure 1.

4.3 Findings

The limited data that could be collected during this phase of the project indicated presence of animals such as elephants, tigers, leopards, clouded leopards, hoolock gibbons, chinese pangolins, sun bears, Asiatic black bears, marbled cats, and linsangs. This already points to the fact that the CCAs in Nagaland are making significant contributions to the conservation of highly threatened species. This is in addition to other notable community efforts, such as the conservation of the Amur falcon and the landscape-level ban on hunting the Chinese pangolin. These findings highlight the need for long-term, community-led monitoring, including the use of camera traps in specific CCAs. Such monitoring will help establish the presence, frequency, and density of the threatened species mentioned above, which in turn will inform discussions and strategies for landscape-level conservation plans for these species, including long-range species like elephants and tigers. Long-term studies may also reveal species that are not currently known to inhabit Nagaland.

The preliminary results of collected data, interpretation and conclusions can be seen in *Assessment of Faunal Diversity and Human-Wildlife Interactions in Community Conserved Areas of Nagaland* in Annexure 2.

5. Monitoring of Perceptions on Human Wildlife Interactions

5.1 Background and Objectives

The survey achieved four specific goals:

1. assessing the perceptions of community groups (including women, men, and youth) about human-wildlife interactions and conflicts before and after the establishment of the CCA;
2. understanding the reasons behind human-wildlife conflicts and potential solutions from the community's perspective;
3. documenting the historical timeline of megafauna status over different periods (70 years ago, 50 years ago, 30 years ago, when the CCA was established, and currently); and
4. understanding changes in hunting patterns, taboos, and regulations over time.

5.2 Methodology

The methodology involved engaging with local institutions (Village Council and CCA Management Committee) to agree on survey outcomes, and preparing and piloting questionnaires for surveys. Samples were identified for group discussions and individual interviews, ensuring representation of diverse genders and age groups. Data was collected through interviews, analysed, and discussed with core team members and experts. Results were shared with the villages through presentations and reports, with community feedback incorporated into the final report.

Sampling included group discussions with various community groups (women, village council members, youth, elders, CCA management committee members, farmers, those impacted by human-wildlife conflicts, hunters, etc.) and individual interviews covering about 10% of the village population, including resident non-community members such as teachers, officials, and journalists.

For the monitoring plan, see Annexure 1.

5.3 Findings

The report includes preliminary perceptions of human-wildlife interactions and conflicts before and after CCA creation, reasons and solutions for conflicts, historical timelines of megafauna status, and changes in hunting patterns.

These preliminary results show that restricted hunting has resulted in reduced fear in the wildlife leading to them entering human spaces more boldly. In the past such incidents were dealt with by hunting the animals which is not possible anymore leading to some discontent among the people. The most serious impact reported during the surveys was on crops. It also emerged that there is no compensation

policy for CCAs in the state and CCA management committees do not have sufficient resources to conduct assessment of losses and make any meaningful and timely compensation efforts. Introducing alternative livelihood options for the communities will not only support their economic sustenance but also reduce the need for hunting, thereby aiding in the preservation of biodiversity. By providing viable economic alternatives, and putting in place a comprehensive compensation policy can shift away from practices that harm wildlife, leading to a more sustainable coexistence and further enhancing conservation efforts in the region.

The details of the preliminary results of collected data, interpretation and conclusions can be seen in *Assessment of Faunal Diversity and Human-Wildlife Interactions in Community Conserved Areas of Nagaland* in Annexure 2.

6. Social Equity in CCAs



Development of tool to study social equity in resource governance - North East Network with Kenono Foundation staff

6.1 Background and Objectives

Women's role in biodiversity conservation in Nagaland is often overlooked and undervalued. They lack inheritance rights to land and natural resources, depriving them of a voice in decisions regarding property inheritance, acquisition, or transfer, despite their active use and management of these resources. Although women have constitutional rights, these are frequently overshadowed by customary practices.

Traditionally, women have been excluded from village councils, the primary decision-making bodies in Nagaland, although recent exceptions indicate a gradual shift. Despite constitutional safeguards such as Article 371A intended to protect communal resources and traditional knowledge, their application sometimes exacerbates gender inequality. For instance, it has been used to deny women representation in municipal bodies, perpetuating gender discrimination.

Various customary practices across tribes and villages further perpetuate gender disparities, albeit with variations. The struggle for gender representation in governance underscores the ongoing challenges faced by women in Nagaland.

6.2 Methodology



North East Network facilitating a session on social-equity and bio-cultural aspects of conservation management

1. Orientation and Training of the project team members
2. Literature Review on gender disparities in CCA governance, community forest management, and rural livelihoods
3. Stakeholder Engagement
 - a. Interviews and Focus Groups
 - b. Consultative Stakeholder Sessions
4. Quantitative Surveys on demographics, household dynamics, livelihood strategies, and perceptions of gender roles and responsibilities among community members.
5. Case Studies to get detailed insights into the experiences of women and the factors influencing their participation and decision-making within the community
6. Analysis of Secondary Data
7. Data Analysis and Interpretation
8. Synthesis and Report Writing

9. Validation Workshops to present the study findings and solicit feedback from stakeholders

6.3 Findings

The key findings of this study can be summarised in the three categories give below:

1. Challenges to Women's Participation in CCA Governance and Conservation Efforts
2. Gender Stereotypes in Community Forest Management
3. Socio-Economic Dynamics and Gender Disparities in Rural Nagaland

See the complete report in Annexure 3

7. Updating Management Plans



Meeting with village leaders for visioning of management plan for holistic resource management, Choklangan CCA

7.1 Background and Objectives

In all five CCA villages, regardless of the existence of a pre-existing management plan for the CCA, resource allocation for the management of CCAs falls under the jurisdiction of the Village Council (VC). The VC allocates limited resources from the larger Village Development Board (VDB) budget on an ad hoc demand basis rather than based on actual needs. The likelihood of such resource diversion from the VDB budget increases if the village CCA committee leadership is proactive and strong. However, over the past 5-10 years, there has been a significant decrease in the availability of common funds to the VDB, particularly under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This has led to intense competition for resource allocation among various projects and interest groups within the village, with biodiversity conservation being just one of them.

To address unavoidable needs and emergencies, and to maintain a minimum program, communities under the leadership of strong CCA committees and concerned citizens engage in voluntary resource mobilisation through community contributions. This allows them to operationalize some of the activities under the management plan. Given this context, we have prepared the management plan and budgeting for CCAs, highlighting community leverage as well.

7.2 Methodology

Based on the review and analysis of the management plans and practices in the five CCAs, a model management plan budget has been developed to illustrate the financial requirements for managing CCAs ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 hectares. This model plan, excluding the financial mechanism section (livelihood support budget), is applicable to all five CCAs due to their similar geographic and cultural contexts. Additionally, the cost of managing a CCA of 1,000 hectares or 5,000 hectares is nearly identical when located within a village or cluster of villages belonging to the parent body. Therefore, estimating costs on a per-village basis is a more realistic approach for budgeting.

To see the model management plan, see Annexure 4.

8. Financial Mechanisms and their Feasibility

8.1 Methodology

The methodology for the feasibility study consisted of consultations and discussion at various stages of the projects and various stakeholders such as CCA committee and village councils, Federation of CCAs such as Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum, NGOs and government and subject experts. Besides this, focused groups discussion and participatory rural appraisal exercises during review of management plans and resource mapping helped identify the potential areas of enterprise development.

Lastly, in order to understand the baseline status of households in the village vis-à-vis resources, assets, financial inclusion and access, and microfinance and enterprise experience/ behaviour and overall perception and commitment to biodiversity conservation, the project undertook an adapted version of NABARD All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17 with 347 households in five villages using random sampling to map the pre-requisite conditions for conservation enterprise development for the project.

8.2 Findings

Perception surveys indicated that more than 70% of surveyed households are well aware of their village conservation efforts, likely due to proactive local action, initiatives taken by community based organisations and active community engagement by CBOs and village organisations. According to the data, 49% of households perceive that biodiversity conservation initiatives started from self-realisation at the community level. When asked about the most important factor for conservation, 78% of respondents indicated that

increasing overall flora and fauna biodiversity is paramount, with other factors being comparatively minor. Additionally, 98% of households feel that village forest conservation is directly important to their household. Furthermore, 90% of households are willing to make sacrifices today for their village biodiversity. This demonstrates a strong commitment to biodiversity conservation and suggests that communities in the five project villages are ready for cooperative efforts and benefit-sharing in enterprise projects related to CCA management plans.

The financial feasibility study found that on an average for basic CCA management and governance activities an annual recurring amount of Rs. 6,00,000 is required. Financial support for any other activities undertaken would be separate and need based.

The following top four financial mechanisms were identified based on village surveys:

1. Responsible Ecotourism
2. Carbon Credits
3. Agroforestry
4. Mithun Rearing

To see their feasibility, including budget estimations, see Annexure 4.

9. Development of Guidance Documents

Three technical Guidance Documents were developed under this project after discussions with Nagaland CCA Forum.

1. Policy and Technical Guidance on Community Conserved Areas and Community Reserves in Nagaland

Community Reserves (CRs) is a specific category of Protected Areas under the Wild Life Protection (Amendment) Act (WLPA) of 2003. Since 2014, 128 community reserves have been declared in Nagaland. According to a study conducted by Delhi based organisation TERI, many of these CRs were already existing CCAs, while others were declared by the Village Councils under the guidance of the forest department. However, several concerns were raised by community members and office bearers of the CCAs which have signed MoUs for declaring Community Reserves. This document was developed to explain the category of CRs and address the concerns surrounding them.

See Annexure 5

2. Carbon Markets

With various climate financing mechanisms being discussed at national and international policy levels, a need was felt to deep dive into carbon markets and the emissions trading system in the context of Nagaland. The idea of this technical guidance report was to simplify some of the most used jargon used in the discourse on carbon markets to equip communities with basic knowledge that will enable them to navigate a project in a better way and reduce the power imbalance between a project proponent and the communities.

See Annexure 6

3. Self-Documentation of CCAs

This document speaks about the participatory approach to documentation, its methodology and free-prior informed consent. It also lists some safeguards needed when making CCA data public.

See Annexure 7

10. Technical Enhancements of the CCA Web Portal

The [CCA web portal](#) was developed with the objectives of creating visibility and recognition for CCAs. It allows community and community-based organisations to map out and document CCAs on an online platform with structured and descriptive information. This project supported the technical enhancement of the portal through development of a microsite feature, an analytics dashboard and map layers.

9.1 Microsite for Nagaland

The CCA Web Portal is an open access, participatory platform that documents information on community conserved areas across India. Anyone can register and provide their information. To highlight the efforts of grassroots organisations that work with multiple communities as well as self organised clusters of CCAs, the function of a ‘microsite’ was developed on the portal. This allows a subset of the CCAs documented on the mother portal to be shown on a different map. It also allows one to create static pages with information about that organisation or cluster. The microsite owners and moderators can manage the content being shown on it.

A [microsite for Nagaland CCA Forum \(NCCAF\)](#) was developed as part of this project. The Nagaland CCA forum is a place where CCAs come together to share ideas, support each other in building skills, and speak as one voice for recognition and influence on policies. It also represents community efforts on national and international stages.

Currently, there are [432 CCAs](#) included on the microsite, including the 30 that were documented as part of this project.

9.2 Customisable Analytics Dashboard

An [analytics dashboard](#) with dynamic charts was developed. It shows the state wise distribution of documented CCAs, CCAs by ecosystem type, motivations, land ownership, social impacts, and threats and challenges.

9.3 Map Layers

A [map module](#) was incorporated on the CCA portal. Layers include census data, forest cover, ecoregions, biogeographic zones, tiger landscapes, key biodiversity areas, protected areas and OECMs.

11. Documentation of 30 CCAs on the CCA Web Portal

11.1 Background and Objectives

An in-depth participatory documentation exercise was undertaken in 30 CCAs. The generated data was uploaded on the Nagaland microsite described above. The objectives of this exercise were as follows:

Support Local Conservation Efforts:

- Provide a centralised platform for sharing information and resources to aid community-led conservation.
- Enhance the capacity of local communities to manage and protect their natural resources.

Promote Knowledge Sharing:

- Facilitate the exchange of traditional ecological knowledge and modern conservation practices among communities.
- Gather and disseminate stories and strategies from different communities about their nature protection efforts.

Raise Awareness:

- Increase understanding and appreciation of the importance of Community Conserved Areas and the role of local communities in biodiversity conservation.

Enhance Community Participation:

- Encourage active involvement of local communities in documenting and sharing their conservation experiences and practices.

Preserve Cultural Heritage:

- Document and preserve the cultural practices and traditions connected with local conservation efforts.
- Ensure that conservation strategies are culturally relevant and supportive of local identities.

Foster Sustainable Development:

- Promote conservation practices that support sustainable livelihoods, such as eco-tourism and sustainable harvesting of natural resources.
- Balance ecological preservation with economic benefits for local communities.

11.2 Methodology



Introducing CCA Portal at Angangba CCA

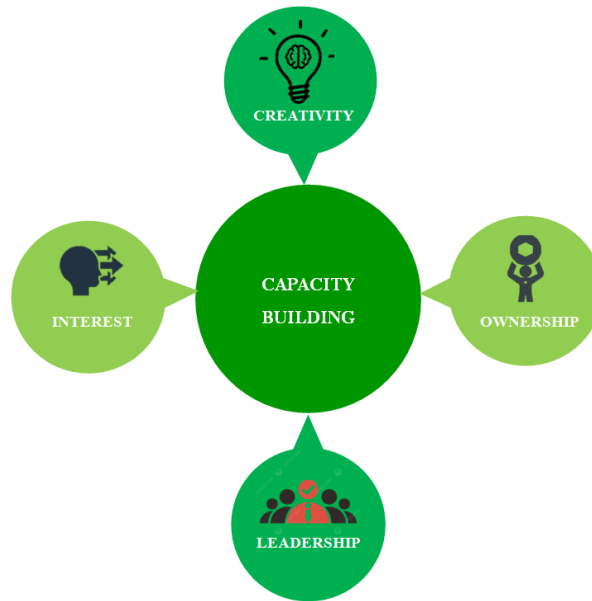
The following methodology was followed:

1. Selection of CCAs
2. Identification of youth from CCAs who can take charge of portal documentation
3. Pre-Training Surveys: Assessing digital literacy, conservation knowledge, and attitudes among the identified participants
4. Capacity building and training on use of portal
5. Recording participant engagement, challenges, and successes during training sessions.
6. Assessing portal usage and engagement by collecting data on logins, data entries, and types of data uploaded to the CCA portal.
7. Post-Training Surveys: Measuring changes in digital literacy, conservation knowledge, and satisfaction among participants
8. Gathering detailed feedback and personal experiences from participants.

11.2.1 Selection of CCAs and Documenters

30 CCAs were selected based on their geographic spread, type of landscape, level of conservation, and willingness to participate. Youth interested in conservation were identified from each CCA and trained in the use of the portal.

11.2.2 Capacity Building



Capacity Building workshops were conducted on “Engaging Youth in Forest Conservation through Creativity, Interest, Leadership, and Ownership”. The objectives, methods and strategies of these four key areas were as follows:

1. Creativity

Objective: Encourage youth to creatively document their forest experiences in the Community Conserved Areas (CCA) portal.

a) Storytelling and Writing

- Write about personal adventures and experiences in the forest.
- Create imaginative stories or myths inspired by the forest.
- Describe the flora, fauna, and landscapes in vivid detail.

b) Photography

- Develop a series of photos that collectively tell a story about the forest.
- Capture close-up shots of plants, insects, and other small details.

c) Videography

- Produce short documentary-style videos about different aspects of the forest.
- Record video blogs (vlogs) of their visits, highlighting what they see and learn.

d) Blogs and Journals

- Write blog posts updating ongoing experiences and discoveries.

e) Educational Content

- Write articles explaining various aspects of the forest, such as its ecosystem, conservation efforts, and biodiversity.
- Create guides on how to explore the forest responsibly, identify plants and animals, or conduct simple conservation activities.

2. Interest

Objective: Engage youth and foster their interest in conserved forests.

a) Education and Awareness

- Hold workshops to teach about CCAs, their importance, and how they help.
- Use engaging content like pictures and videos.

b) Interactive Activities

- Conduct guided nature walks or hikes in the conserved forests.
- Organise wildlife spotting activities like bird watching or identifying plants and animals.
- Encourage youth to take photos of the forest.

c) Hands-On Experience

- Organise tree planting events where youth can actively participate.
- Set up forest clean-up days to keep the area clean and beautiful.
- Offer volunteer opportunities for various conservation activities.

d) Community Involvement

- Host family-friendly events in the forest to get entire families involved.
- Create youth groups or clubs focused on forest conservation.

e) Recognition and Rewards

- Host competitions related to forest knowledge or conservation activities.
- Provide awards or certificates to those who actively participate and contribute.

3. Leadership

Objective: Develop youth leadership in knowledge management within CCAs.

a) Identify Potential Leaders

- Look for youth interested in conservation and leadership, with strong organizational skills, and who can connect well with community members.

b) Define Roles and Responsibilities

- Designate a passionate youth as a key person for sharing knowledge, keeping records, collecting ecological data, documenting traditional knowledge, organizing

community workshops, managing conservation practice databases, and promoting new ideas in the CCAs.

c) Training and Development

- Develop a training program in leadership skills, including effective communication, project management, and community engagement.

d) Mentorship and Support

- Encourage community elders and leaders to support and mentor the youth leader, blending traditional knowledge with modern practices.

e) Participation and Engagement

- Promote a culture where all community members, especially elders and knowledge holders, are encouraged to share knowledge.

f) Monitor and Evaluate

- Collect feedback from the community on the youth leader's performance and make changes based on feedback and evolving needs.

4. Ownership

Objective: Develop a sense of ownership among youth for the CCA portal.

a) Encourage Participation

- Ask youth to share their stories, photos, and videos about CCAs on the portal.
- Involve youth in local projects related to CCAs and let them share their experiences on the portal.

b) Build Responsibility

- Create a program where some youth can take on leadership roles and organize events.
- Give recognition, such as certificates or special opportunities, to those who contribute significantly.

c) Collaboration

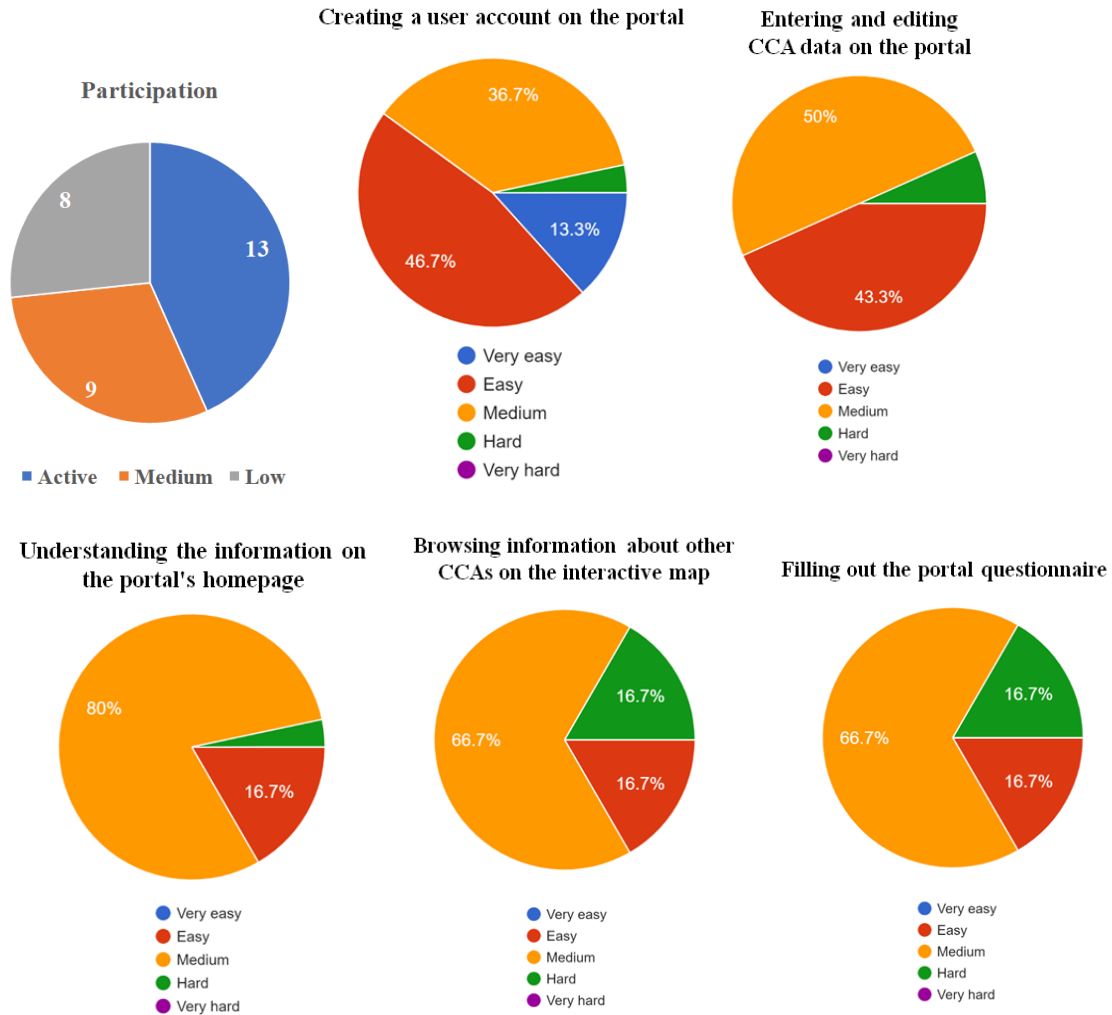
- Set up forums within the portal for youth to connect, share ideas, and work together on CCA projects.
- Organise community events like clean-up drives and tree planting where youth can participate and then share their work on the portal.

d) Ensure Long-Term Engagement

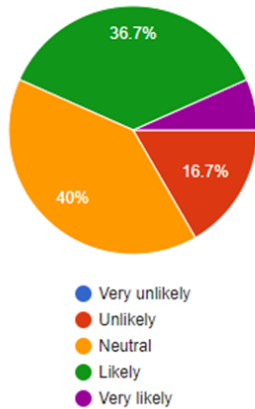
- Create long-term projects that will keep the youth involved and connected to CCAs.

- Build a network for those who have been involved, so they stay connected and continue to support CCAs.

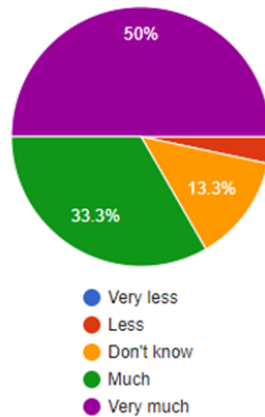
11.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation of Documentation Process



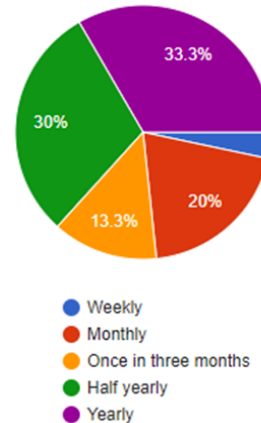
Will the questionnaire's length impact your use of the portal?



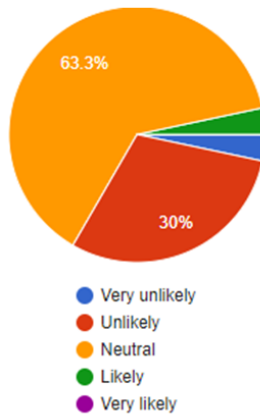
Benefits of portal for the CCA



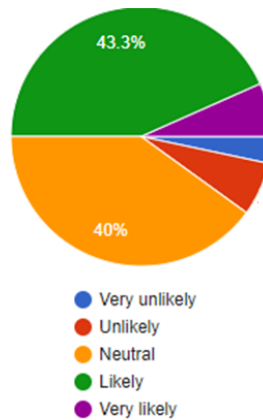
Frequency of updating information on the CCA Portal



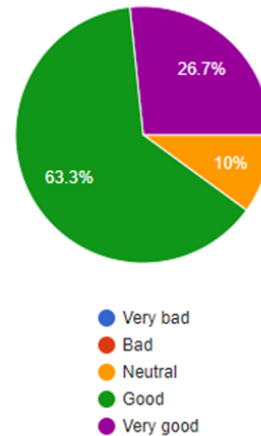
Likelihood of CCA data on portal being misused



Would you recommend the portal to someone else?



Overall experience of the CCA Portal



11.3 Documented CCAs

The data collected through the process described above was uploaded on the portal. The 30 CCAs documented are:

1. [Khonoma Nature Conservation and Nature Tragopan Sanctuary \(KNCTS\), Kohima](#)
2. [Dikhu Green Zone \(DGZ\), Mokokchung](#)
3. [Nanga Greener Zone \(NGZ\), Zunheboto](#)
4. [Sendenyu Community Biodiversity Wildlife Conservation Board \(SCBWCB\), Tseminyu](#)
5. [Ghosu, Ghukiye, Zunheboto](#)
6. [Dzulhami, Phek](#)
7. [Gaili, Peren](#)
8. [Shathuya, Meluri, Phek](#)
9. [Yehemi, Lithsami and Kiyetha \(YLK\), Zunheboto](#)
10. [Angangba, Tuensang \(Tizu Green Zone\)](#)

11. [Mt. Terogvuthun, Kohima](#)
12. [Auching, Longleng](#)
13. [Sakshi, Longleng](#)
14. [Yongphang, Longleng](#)
15. [Yaongyimchen, Longleng](#)
16. [Yongshei, Longleng](#)
17. [Tangha, Longleng](#)
18. [Hukphang, Longleng](#)
19. [Bhumnyu, Longleng](#)
20. [Ukha, Mon](#)
21. [Choklangan, Noklak](#)
22. [Tizu Valley Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Network, Zunheboto](#)
23. [Benreu, Peren](#)
24. [Satami, Zunheboto](#)
25. [Ruzaphema, Dimapur](#)
26. [Seiyhama, Kohima](#)
27. [Hongmong, Mon](#)
28. [Longtokur, Tuensang](#)
29. [Ikiye & Itovi, Zunheboto](#)
30. [Sotokur, Tuensang](#)

12. Facilitating Self-Strengthening of Nagaland State Level Forum for CCAs

12.1 About NCCAF

As mentioned, the state of Nagaland lies within the Indo-Myanmar Biodiversity hotspot and illustrates a unique, rich biodiversity of endemic flora and fauna, many of which are considered rare and endangered. In acknowledgment of the importance of natural resources, the communities of Nagaland work together to protect and conserve their biodiversity, resulting in the formation of many Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in the state. In 2014, during a consultation meeting, a group of CCAs identified the need for a common platform for the mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas, support in terms of skill-building, and other aspects. Most importantly, there was consensus on the need for an outlet for a common voice for all the CCAs in the state, for recognition and policy influence, and also for the representation of community initiatives at various national and international platforms.

Subsequently, with support from the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), in November 2014, the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF) was formally established with a total of 22 affiliated CCA members. A core committee was formed to draft the constitution, and with the consent of all the members, the constitution of the Nagaland CCA Forum was adopted with a vision for a green Nagaland with rich biodiversity. The objectives are to establish a cordial relationship between the functional CCAs in the state, participate in the global march on biodiversity conservation, encourage afforestation (local species), conserve forests, wildlife, water, and all other natural resources, voice common causes of

biodiversity and environmental conservation at various levels, promote eco-tourism, encourage scientific research on biodiversity, and sensitise people towards the sustainable use of natural resources.

12.2 Strengthening NCCAF

NCCAF made significant efforts to expand its membership and support its members in conservation and livelihood activities. They secured backing from various organisations, including the Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) and state agencies such as Nagaland Empowerment of People through Economic Development (NEPED) and the Forest Department (FD). Meetings were organised through voluntary contributions or occasional support, though this support was inconsistent.

12.2.1 Challenges and Objectives Post-COVID

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, NCCAF struggled to sustain itself, leading to a phase of dormancy. One key objective of this project was to revive NCCAF as a solidarity, technical, and policy support entity for CCAs in the state. It was envisioned that NCCAF would become a crucial actor on all issues related to CCAs, providing a common platform for engagement with state agencies, research organisations, NGOs, and donor agencies.

12.2.2. Revitalization Efforts

To initiate this revival, NCCAF office bearers were invited to act as key advisors and supporters for the project's implementation. An inception meeting was held to explain the project's objectives and activities, and to seek their engagement in an advisory and monitoring capacity, to which they consented.

12.2.3 Continuous Engagement and Input

Throughout the project's duration, NCCAF office bearers were kept informed at all stages. The project implementation strategy was discussed with them, and their input was sought in identifying the 30 CCAs for documentation and five CCAs for in-depth exploratory intervention.

12.2.4 Organisational Strengthening, Vision and Social Equity

Discussions were held about NCCAF's structure and future vision, leading to the identification of key steps towards its strengthening. During the project period, NCCAF held a meeting to elect new office bearers and reaffirm their organisational mandate. In a historic move towards social equity, they decided to elect two women office bearers out of six.

12.2.5 Establishing a Physical Presence

In subsequent meetings, the need for a physical office space and a knowledge centre on CCAs in the state was identified. During the project period, NCCAF successfully established a physical office and appointed two office staff to support its activities. This initiative was

financially supported by Kalpavriksh through the ICCA Consortium membership support programme..



NCCAF office bearers and staff along with members of Kenono Foundation, LEMSACHENLOK, Kalpavriksh and Strand Life Sciences at the inauguration of NCCAF office in Dimapur

12.2.6 Role of NCCAF in Future Follow-Up Activities

NCCAF will be one of the key partners for any follow-up activities from this project, leveraging its revitalised structure, newly elected office bearers, and established physical presence. With the necessary support, NCCAF's enhanced capacity and strengthened organisational mandate position it as a crucial actor in continuing to provide technical and policy support for CCAs. Their ongoing engagement with state agencies, research organisations, NGOs, and donor agencies will be instrumental in advancing conservation and livelihood initiatives in Nagaland.

13. Nagaland CCA Forum Meet

NCCAF along with Kenono Foundation, LEMSACHENLOK and Kalpavriksh, was the key partner in organising the first state level meeting on CCAs in over a decade.



The two day meet at Mokokchung was attended by over 150 delegates from 26 CCAs, in addition to diverse stakeholders

On 19 June 2024, the Nagaland Community Conserved Area Forum (NCCAF) meet commenced at Clark Theological College, Mokokchung, Nagaland with the theme “Camaraderie towards Safeguarding our Biodiversity.” The event was organised by Kenono Foundation, LEMSACHENLOK, Kalpavriksh, North East Network, with financial support from The Nature Conservancy.

The meet brought together diverse stakeholders, including CCAs from different parts of Nagaland, government officials, and NGOs. The meet was attended by over 150 delegates from 26 CCAs.

During the inaugural programme, Neema Pathak Brome, Secretary of Kalpavriksh and South Asia Coordinator, ICCA Consortium, said that the talk on conservation in Nagaland has a unique narrative since the talk was always about hunting. However, now we are talking about conservation in Nagaland, which has ignited the imagination of the people on conservation. She stated that Nagaland may serve as an inspiration to world leaders to achieve global conservation objectives. She emphasised that 75% of Nagaland is under forest reserve, which is something to be proud of, and that more than 80% is under community control. However, despite the data and progress, there is no statewide policy, legal, technical, or financial support for the CCA. Brome stated that Kalpavriksh will continue to help organisations such as CCA.

In a brief talk on “Strengthening Community Conserved Areas - Vision and Scope,” Y. Nuklu Phom stated that Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) cannot work in isolation and that all CCAs need to come together since there are many challenges in the state. While stating some of the challenges, Nuklu mentioned the impact of the plantation of alien crops or exotic plants in our land, logging, use of salt, drying of rivers and ponds, extinction of seeds, and

loss of production, among many others. He stated that there is an environmental emergency and that we need to act urgently by bringing together policymakers, intellectuals, experts, scientists, civil societies, and communities. He further stated that we need to take up mission-ecology, focusing on environmental protection in a mission mode.

Rongsenlemla Imchen, IFS, CF, NTC, Department of Forest & Climate Change, Government of Nagaland, graced the meet as the Chief Guest. “The issue and challenges of CCA have so far been focused on 'Conservation,' but it cannot work in isolation,” she said. “A workshop of this kind, where case studies, success stories, issues, and challenges can be discussed, consulted, and replicated in the respective CCAs, is a much-needed meet,” she asserted while lauding the initiative of the NCCAF. She informed that the Department's mandate is trying to expand the conservation area as a landscape approach. She also addressed striking a balance between conservation and livelihood security, which involves addressing alternative sources for livelihood dependency. She concluded by saying that the role of NCCAF is very crucial since it can act as the collaborating agent between various CCAs and also other sectors of the government.

In the second session of the meet, four topics were discussed and deliberated by various facilitators with the participants, which included Research, Community-led biodiversity surveys and monitoring facilitated by Neema Pathak Brome, Synergy between conservation management plans & enterprises/financial, facilitated by FES & Ruchinilo Kemp, Social equity in conservation facilitated by Akole Tsuhah, and Carbon mechanism facilitated by Rudrath Avinashi. Day one of the meet featured a walk-in exhibition from various CCAs, which was inaugurated by the special guest, and an evening session which witnessed a community event with nature sound competitions between various CCAs and presentations.

Day 2 of the meet had sessions by Special guest Alemtemshi Jamir, Retd. Chief Secretary of the state, as well as Tanya Majmudar and Neema Pathak Brome of Kalpavriksh & South Asia Coordination team of ICCA Consortium and Ruchinilo Kemp of Kenono Foundation. Neema Pathak Broome spoke on “Understanding Community Reserves in the context of CCAs in Nagaland.” Neema spoke about some concerns regarding community reserves, stating that there is a lack of clarity between Community Reserves and Community Conserved Areas. She said that villages should not be forced to sign MoUs for Community Reserves (CRs) solely for the purpose of availing support. All provisions of the Act must be explained clearly to all community members for them to take an informed decision. She said that a clear and comprehensive policy on CCAs needs to be adopted by the state government and added that the government departments need to play a crucial and critical role as facilitators and advisors.

Tanya Majmudar presented the CCA web portal, its features and its importance in bringing recognition to community conserved areas. Ruchinilo Kemp spoke about the participatory documentation exercise of 30 CCAs in Nagaland.

Alemtemshi Jamir, in his talk, said that there is a looming danger of climate change and that CCAs bank our hopes against the fight against global warming. He said that there is a window of hope to increase CCAs since migration trends in the villages are continuing and agricultural activities, especially jhum cultivation, are decreasing. Alemtemshi also stressed the need for proper conceptual clarity and policies concerning CCAs. G. Thong and Y. Nuklu

Phom, Advisors of NCCAF, spoke on “Collective Envisioning for the Support of CCAs in the State.”

The Nagaland Community Conserved Area Meet 2024 concluded on 20 June by adopting a six-point resolution at the final session of the meet. The resolution drafting committee presented a six-point resolution, which was approved by the house. The house resolved that CRs should not be a mechanism for support to CCAs in the state and that the government should have a separate policy for supporting CCAs without any further declaration of CRs in the state. It was also resolved that while the government and other agencies introduce new/alien species through projects, they should first conduct a comprehensive environmental, social, and economic research and assessment on the impact of the species on the local environment. NCCAF also resolved to identify key species in the state and create a strategy for their conservation at the state level. Further, the forum reaffirmed to work at a landscape level with a collective effort to create state-level corridors to safeguard the rich biodiversity and provide safe movement for flora and fauna. Inclusion of women and vulnerable sections of society in the decision-making process of biodiversity conservation at all levels was also included in the resolution.

Tokugha Sumi, Vice-chairman of NCCAF, concluded the meet by pronouncing the vote of thanks.

14. Future Actions and Recommendations

14.1 Towards Policy and Recognition of CCAs

For more details about these recommendations and their contexts, please refer to Annexure 5.

1. Comprehensive policy for the CCAs in the state

Nagaland has a unique context of having over 75% forest cover, 88% of land under community ownership, and over 14% of the forest area being declared by the village communities as community conserved areas. This requires the state government to formulate a clear and comprehensive conservation policy with community conserved areas as the focus. The policy must also have clear directives and mechanisms to support CCAs. The revised State Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 outlines 12 Biodiversity Targets that, if achieved, will support CCAs. Any such policy must be developed through extensive consultations with CCAs, Community-Based Organisations, Church Organisations, Women’s groups, Youth groups, and the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF), conducted at village, district, and state levels.

2. Recognition of CCAs as OECMs

Considering Nagaland's unique context, traditional national conservation models are not suitable. The State Biodiversity Board should identify CCAs as OECMs (Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures) to provide recognition without the constraints of the

Wildlife Protection Act. NCCAF should be centrally involved (at all stages) in a peer review process to identify OECMs.

14.2 Towards Biodiversity Conservation

3. Implement Long-term Community-led Monitoring of Fauna

Establish long-term, community-led monitoring programs in specific CCAs, utilising tools such as camera traps. This will help document the presence, frequency, and density of threatened species, informing conservation strategies at a landscape level.

4. Support CCA Management Committees

Enhance support for CCA Management Committees to provide timely and adequate compensation for farmers' losses, develop awareness programs, and conduct further studies. This support will empower committees to manage human-wildlife conflicts effectively and foster community involvement in conservation efforts.

5. Enforcement Support from the Forest Department

CCAs need support from the Forest Department to enforce their conservation rules, particularly against powerful and armed offenders. This support must be provided without conditions such as declaring Community Reserves (or any other category of Protected Areas under the WLPA). Any declaration of Community Reserves must be done after clear and detailed explanation of the law and its implications, clear explanation of the mechanism for support it would bring, Free Prior Informed discussions, and consent of all members of the community. Regardless of legal status, enforcement support from the forest department is much sought by the communities, and the mechanism for this needs to be put in place after extensive discussions with the CCAs and the NCCAF.

14.3 Towards Self-Strengthening of CCAs

6. Continue Documentation and Research

Documenting Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) is crucial to making the vital conservation efforts of communities visible and addressing the numerous threats they face. By thoroughly recording their methods of governance, management, and conservation, CCAs can gain recognition in policy spaces, which is essential for securing legal and institutional support. Detailed documentation serves as a powerful evidence base for researchers, lawyers, and advocates fighting for the rights of these communities. It provides concrete data and case studies that highlight the effectiveness of community-driven conservation and the urgent need to integrate these practices into national and international conservation policies.

7. Facilitate Knowledge Transfer

Encourage intergenerational knowledge transfer, ensuring that traditional practices and wisdom are preserved and passed down. This can help build a strong sense of identity and pride among community members, fostering unity and resilience.

Encourage platforms where local communities can share traditional knowledge related to biodiversity conservation. Facilitate dialogues and workshops that promote the exchange of practices and insights among communities. This exchange not only preserves valuable traditional wisdom but also enhances the efficacy of conservation efforts by integrating local knowledge with modern practices.

8. Build Capacities

Organise training sessions and capacity-building workshops that introduce communities to legal and policy frameworks, CCA management strategies, ecological value of CCAs, dangers of unsustainable hunting practices, financial mechanisms that can support CCAs, climate change, impacts of jhum and wildfires and monitoring methods among other things. This approach ensures that communities are equipped with the latest tools and knowledge to manage and protect their natural resources effectively.

Strengthen the capacity of government agencies, civil society organisations, and local institutions to effectively engage in conservation and resource governance. Provide training, technical assistance, and financial support to enhance the skills and capabilities of stakeholders involved in natural resource management. Foster partnerships and collaboration among different stakeholders to leverage resources and expertise for more effective conservation outcomes.

9. Promote Environment Education

Promote educational programs that empower community members, especially youth, with knowledge about local ecosystems, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods. Incorporate environmental conservation into school curricula and community outreach activities to cultivate a culture of environmental stewardship from an early age.

10. Strengthen Network of CCAs

Support the expansion of NCCAF's membership, enabling it to become a pivotal entity in providing technical and policy support for Community Conserved Areas (CCAs). Their continuous engagement with state agencies, research organizations, NGOs, and donor agencies will be instrumental in advancing conservation and livelihood initiatives across Nagaland.

14.4 Towards Livelihoods and Financial Support to CCAs

11. Financial support from the State Government

The state government should allocate an annual budget to support CCAs as part of its wildlife and conservation policy. Village Councils that pass resolutions for conservation, clearly indicate CCA boundaries, and establish governance and management plans should be eligible for financial support. NCCAF could play a key role in ensuring accountability, peer review, and transparency in the allocation and use of these funds.

12. Support Diverse Livelihoods

Promote diversification of livelihood options beyond traditional occupations such as agriculture and forestry. Encourage the development of eco-tourism, eco-enterprises, and value-added processing industries that generate income while promoting conservation and environmental sustainability. Provide training, infrastructure, and market linkages to facilitate the transition to more sustainable livelihoods.

13. Promote Responsible Ecotourism

Responsible ecotourism is crucial as it promotes environmental conservation by protecting biodiversity and encouraging sustainable resource use. It provides economic benefits through local employment and income generation, which can be reinvested in community development. Additionally, it helps preserve and promote indigenous culture, empowers local communities, and raises awareness about conservation and cultural sensitivity. By fostering sustainable development and community involvement, responsible ecotourism ensures balanced growth and minimal environmental impact, offering enriching experiences for tourists while safeguarding the community's natural and cultural heritage for future generations.

See Annexure 4 for feasibility of ecotourism in Nagaland

14. Explore Carbon and Biodiversity Credit Mechanisms with Adequate Safeguards for the Communities

Implementing a carbon credits program for forests in Nagaland offers multiple benefits: it promotes environmental conservation by enhancing carbon sequestration and protecting biodiversity, provides financial incentives for local communities through the sale of carbon credits, and supports sustainable livelihoods. Additionally, it empowers local communities by involving them in forest management, contributes to global climate change mitigation efforts, and promotes sustainable development by reinvesting revenue into conservation and community projects. This balanced approach ensures long-term ecological and economic benefits for both the region and the planet. Carbon credits program is one such mechanism which could be applied universally for all CCAs in Nagaland.

While the concept as a sustainable financial mechanism in theory bodes well in the present context of climate change, there are issues that need to be addressed vis-à-vis the communities' role in any carbon project cycle. There is a need to think about a minimum criteria regarding the nature of carbon credits program with certain fundamentals that can enable safeguards for local communities' in policy and practice. The legal implications for land and resources must be clearly understood. The state must adopt policies related to carbon to ensure that local communities' interests are not compromised.

Some points mentioned below must be considered:

1. Fair Land Tenure: The carbon markets need clarity in ownership of the land that is being used for the project thus it is important that the territorial rights of indigenous peoples and local communities' be recognised by all stakeholders.
2. Fair Information, Consultations and Consent: Information gap is one of the biggest hurdles in executing a successful carbon project. Thus, all stakeholders must be

aware of their role and risks associated in a project. This should be done through prior consultations, providing complete information and seeking informed consent.

3. **Fair Compensation:** The revenue generated by a carbon project must be shared in a fair and adequate manner with the communities' and it must flow to and be managed directly by them.
4. **Fair Participation:** To ensure that carbon markets become an important instrument to conserve the environment and strengthen the role of communities, all stakeholders must be informed about the nature of their participation and access to the relevant skill development opportunities. Resources must be provided for better and meaningful engagement during the entirety of a project cycle.

See Annexure 4 for feasibility of a carbon credits program in Nagaland. See Annexure 5 for a technical guidance document on carbon markets.

15. Agroforestry – Silviculture

Agroforestry and silviculture will offer significant benefits by integrating tree cultivation with agriculture, enhancing biodiversity, improving soil health, and increasing crop yields. These practices promote sustainable land use, providing economic benefits through diversified income sources for local farmers while mitigating climate change by sequestering carbon. Additionally, they help preserve traditional knowledge, strengthen community resilience against environmental challenges, and contribute to long-term ecological and economic sustainability in the region.

See Annexure 4 for feasibility of agroforestry in Nagaland

16. Mithun (Indian Gayal) Rearing in Conserved Areas

Mithun rearing in community conserved areas in Nagaland offers numerous benefits, including providing a sustainable source of income and nutrition for local communities, promoting cultural heritage, and supporting traditional agricultural practices. Mithuns, which are well-adapted to the local environment, require minimal resources and can help improve soil fertility through manure, contributing to sustainable land management. Additionally, mithun rearing can enhance food security, foster community cohesion, and support conservation efforts by reducing reliance on forest resources for livelihoods.

See Annexure 4 for feasibility of mithun rearing in Nagaland

14.5 Towards Social Equity

For more details on recommendations for social equity and their context, see Annexure 3.

17. Promote Inclusive Governance Models

Implement measures to ensure equitable representation of women in decision-making bodies within Community Conserved Areas (CCAs). This can be achieved through targeted capacity-building programs, awareness campaigns, and policy interventions aimed at addressing gender biases and increasing women's participation in governance structures.

Foster inclusive and participatory approaches to natural resource management that involve all segments of society, including marginalised groups and women and youths. Strengthen mechanisms for community consultation, consensus-building, and collaborative decision-making to ensure that diverse perspectives and interests are considered in conservation planning and implementation.

Foster community-based conservation and governance models that prioritise inclusivity, participation, and social justice. Facilitate multi-stakeholder collaborations and partnerships between local communities, government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders. Promote co-management approaches that recognize and respect indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, and customary rights in natural resource management.

18. Address Gender Stereotypes and Empower Women

Challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes that perpetuate the exclusion of women from forest management and governance. Develop gender-sensitive policies and guidelines that recognize and value women's knowledge, skills, and contributions to conservation efforts. Provide training and support to enable women to actively participate in forest-related activities and decision-making processes.

Create opportunities for rural women to access education, training, and resources that enhance their economic empowerment and livelihood security. Support initiatives that promote women's entrepreneurship, land rights, and access to credit and markets. Encourage the involvement of women in income-generating activities related to sustainable agriculture, agroforestry, and non-timber forest products.

Invest in education and skills development programs that empower rural communities, especially women and youth, with the knowledge and capacities needed for sustainable resource management. Provide vocational training, technical assistance, and extension services that promote conservation-friendly livelihoods and practices. Bridge the digital divide by expanding access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) in rural areas.

19. Strengthen Policy and Legal Frameworks for Social Equity

Advocate for the adoption and implementation of policies and laws that uphold principles of social equity, environmental justice, and indigenous rights. Ensure that legal frameworks recognize and protect the customary land tenure systems, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices of indigenous communities. Enforce regulations that prevent discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic status in access to resources and benefits. Develop monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress towards achieving social equity goals and outcomes.

20. Support Research, Monitoring, and Learning Initiatives Related to Social Equity

Invest in research, monitoring, and learning initiatives to better understand the drivers of social inequities in conservation and resource governance contexts. Support interdisciplinary research projects that integrate socio-economic, cultural, and environmental perspectives. Facilitate knowledge exchange and capacity-building opportunities for practitioners,

policymakers, and researchers to share best practices and lessons learned. Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress towards social equity goals in conservation and resource governance. Develop indicators and benchmarks to assess the impact of interventions on gender equality, community empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

21. Promote Social Justice and Equity through Constant Dialogues at All Levels

Embed principles of social justice and equity in all aspects of conservation and resource governance. Prioritise the needs and rights of marginalised communities, women, youths, and vulnerable populations, in decision-making processes and resource allocation. Create opportunities for meaningful participation, dialogue, and reconciliation to address historical injustices and promote social cohesion. For instance, continuous discussions on social equity issues led to their reflection in the NCCAF office bearers' meetings, resulting in the 2024 reconstitution of NCCAF including two women out of six office bearers.

22. Support Meaningful Participation of Women in Decision Making

Encourage and support the inclusion of women in village councils. Provide ongoing information support and capacity-building initiatives for women council members to enable them to make well-considered and informed contributions to the council's decisions. Promote regular discussions and dialogues among community members to raise awareness and foster collective decision-making.

An example of the above is Chizami. In Chizami village, Phek district, women have been successfully included in the village council (VC) through the persistent efforts of the local women's organisation and the North East Network. This inclusion was achieved through continuous negotiation and dialogue, ensuring that women contribute meaningfully to decision-making. The women's organisation provided vital information support, enabling the VC to make informed decisions, such as regulating bore wells to protect water security and controlling the use of harmful chemical pesticides. Additionally, women council members raised awareness and engaged in regular discussions with the community on these issues.

15. References

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16. Annexures

- Annexure 1 - Plan for Community-Led Monitoring of Faunal Diversity and Human-Wildlife Interactions in Community Conserved Areas of Nagaland
- Annexure 2 - Assessment of Faunal Diversity and Human-Wildlife Interactions in Community Conserved Areas of Nagaland
- Annexure 3 - Social Equity in Nagaland
- Annexure 4 - Management Plans, Budget Estimations, Potential Sources Of Finance And Their Feasibility
- Annexure 5 - Community Reserves in Nagaland
- Annexure 6 - Carbon Markets Toolkit for Communities
- Annexure 7 - Self-Documentation of Community Conserved Areas