

## PROJECT NAME:

Training, Capacity Building, and Decision Support for Community Forest Resource Rights recognition and management in Bastar District, Chhattisgarh. *By Sharachchandra Lele (project lead), Shruti Mokashi, Atul Joshi, Venkat Ramanujam Ramani, Anubhav Shori and Ananya Rao*

## BACKGROUND:

Among the rights that the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, recognizes, is the right of local communities to forest resources and to manage them sustainably as a collective. Referred to as the community forest resource right (CFRR), it is the most potent provision of the FRA in terms of achieving the twin goals of sustainable livelihoods and forest conservation. A significant number of villages across central India have successfully claimed CFRR but remain in need of support for launching on the next step of community forest resource (CFR) management. In Bastar District, ATREE is engaged in a project to enhance capacities for the recognition of Community Forest Resource Rights (CFRRs) and the post-recognition management of sustainable forest-based livelihoods under the FRA. This is a year-long project that began in October 2021 and is supported by the Bastar District administration.

## SOLUTION:

ATREE's CFR team is training a team of 18 FRA Coordinators chosen from Bastar District to work with Gram Sabhas for claim-making and for developing CFR management plans. We are also strengthening the capacities of the district administration to carry out a rigorous and fair claim-recognition process through training and the use of a webGIS. Finally, we are conducting policy research to support the convergence of CFR-based forest governance with existing government programmes and policies on non-timber forest products (NTFPs).

## OUTCOMES:

The following activities were undertaken and completed in order to build capacities for CFRR recognition and management:

- Recruitment and Training of 18 FRA Coordinators in CFR claim-making, and hand-holding subsequent work in the villages.
- Conducting workshops on CFR claim-making members of the District and Sub-District Level Committees, forest and revenue department field staff, and fieldworkers from NGOs.
- WebGIS: (<http://cfr.atree.org/bastar/>) Provides publicly browsable overlays of block and village boundaries, revenue (cadastral) maps, and forest compartment boundaries on Google/Bing Satellite base maps.
- Aamcho CFR Mapping app: This mobile app allows Forest Rights Committee members to upload CFR claim boundaries as part of their CFRR claim-recognition process.
- Conflict resolution: Developing strategies for village-level conflict resolution through a consultative process aided by the Chhattisgarh FRA manual and ATREE's web-GIS.
- Training in CFR Management Planning: Imparting on-site training to selected FRA Coordinators in CFR management planning, and initiating CFR Management Planning in 5 villages.

- NTFP Policy Convergence: Carrying out field research to develop a policy brief for integrating Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP)-based livelihoods into CFR-based governance.



*Conducting vegetation sampling for CFR management planning*



*Utilising our Web-GIS maps for conflict resolution in Netanar village*