

Project Update: March 2015

We started work on this project in November 2014. Since then, we have secured in-principle support from senior officials of the Madhya Pradesh Forest Department that is responsible for ecotourism in and around Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, as well as some members of the tourism industry. The challenge, however, has been in engaging with the local community who deeply mistrust the forest department, are fearful because of rumours of forcible relocation, anguished by the extent of crop loss due to wild animals, and who have hitherto been completely cut off from all activities associated with tourism. And this is where we have channelised our effort over the last few months. We selected three, mostly tribal, agriculture dependent villages that are adjacent to the tiger reserve for intervention. Here, we conducted multiple meetings and have managed to convince 8 to 10 families to participate in designing and developing an ecotourism initiative. We are hoping that we will be able to garner more support in the days to come.

