

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: World Wide Fund for Nature, Caucasus Programme Office

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Building Capacity to Strengthen Conservation Alliances through CEPF Coordination and Grant Making in the Caucasus

Implementation Partners for this Project: WWF Armenian Branch, WWF Azerbaijan Branch, WWF Russia and WWF Turkey

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): July 1, 2004 – December 31, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): 25 February 2010

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

In 2003 WWF Caucasus Programme Office (WWF Caucasus) coordinated preparation of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile - a strategic document directing CEPF's activities in the Caucasus Hotspot. The profile defined universal conservation outcomes for the region and identified conservation targets on species, site, and landscape corridor levels. The Ecosystem Profile formulated CEPF's niche and recommended a five-year investment strategy for contribution to the biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus - globally significant region in the World. This funding strategy was developed based on stakeholder workshops and background reports; more than 130 experts representing a variety of scientific, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations in the six countries of the Caucasus participated in preparation process. WWF Caucasus role in preparation of the Ecosystem Profile as well as its experience in the region put it at a comparative advantage to serve as the coordinating organization for implementation of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile and five-year Investment Strategy in the Hotspot.

Alongside the CEPF Ecosystem Profile, WWF Caucasus developed an Ecoregional Conservation Plan (ECP) - a comprehensive strategy for action to conserve and restore the biodiversity of the Caucasus Ecoregion over the span of several decades. The ECP is a guiding document for medium- and long-term conservation in the Ecoregion: Governments, NGOs, and donor organizations find the document useful to assist in planning and coordinating conservation activities in the Caucasus.

CEPF and WWF Caucasus have agreed to combine their efforts for biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus Hotspot/Ecoregion by establishing a joint regional coordination mechanism for implementation of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile and Ecoregional Conservation Plan. The joint effort took three main purposes into consideration:

- ⇒ To support and facilitate the implementation of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile / Investment Strategy in the Hotspot and make it successful and tangible at the end: the joint coordination mechanism / CEPF Coordination Unit in the Caucasus played a crucial role in this regard;
- ⇒ To engage the civil-society / non-governmental sector in biodiversity conservation efforts: the joint coordination mechanism significantly contributed to wide and active involvement of civil-society sector in the biodiversity conservation and strengthening its capacity for future;
- ⇒ To ensure that CEPF's biodiversity conservation efforts complement existing regional strategies and frameworks: the joint coordination mechanism ensured that the CEPF's five-year investment significantly contributed to achieving the ECP medium-term goals.

WWF Caucasus has a long-term interest in promoting biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus Hotspot. Its projects and efforts will carry on for many years after the CEPF investments are completed. With nearly 20 years of experience in the region, WWF is clearly well positioned for facilitating and leading the biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus Hotspot. WWF Caucasus has excellent working relations with governmental institutions in all Caucasus countries and cooperates closely with NGOs and the scientific community.

Through the given coordination project - ``**Building Capacity to Strengthen Conservation Alliances through CEPF Coordination and Grant Making in the Caucasus**`, CEPF successfully established a coordination, monitoring and grant-making system for its five-year Programme / Investments in the Caucasus. Prior to the CEPF investment period, WWF Caucasus had been working to protect biodiversity in the region for more than a decade. Given its breadth of experience, and commitment and coverage in the region, the organization was selected to be CEPF's local coordination partner. Based at WWF's offices in the Caucasus countries, the WWF Caucasus established a local CEPF Coordination Unit, consisting of Regional and Country Coordinators, a Communications Officer, a Small Grants Manager and a Programme Administrator. Tasks and responsibilities were clearly delegated among members of the Coordination Unit. The Coordination Unit managed and led development / implementation of the CEPF Grants Portfolio, in close cooperation with the CEPF staff. In addition to the local Coordination Unit, an External Reviewers Group was established. This group involved over 100 experts, drawn from all countries of the hotspot, representing NGOs, government agencies, scientific institutions and donor organizations. The External Reviewers Group was responsible for review and evaluation of project proposals. Reviewers' feedback was considered in final decision-making on project selection and funding.

The CEPF Regional Programme in the Caucasus was implemented through grant making, and the main beneficiaries were the NGO sector and scientific institutions. Within the overall investment portfolio, two types of grants were made: small grants up to US\$20,000 and large grants above that amount. With a few exceptions, all small grants were contracted and managed by the WWF Caucasus in the frame of the CEPF/WWF Small Grants Programme which was a part / one of the outputs of the given coordination project: totally, around US\$ 1 360 000 was allocated for small grants.

The CEPF and WWF joint coordination mechanism for the CEPF Ecosystem Profile / Investment Strategy in the Caucasus served as the main basis / tool for successful implementation of the CEPF Investments in the region.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: Civil Society in the region successfully and effectively implemented CEPF projects that contribute to identified conservation outcomes in the Ecosystem Profile

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose Level:	
1. Civil society is effectively implementing CEPF funded projects in the five corridors by 30 June, 2009	<p>During the investment period CEPF awarded 42 grants to civil society organizations active in the Caucasus Hotspot, with a total value of around \$8,498,783. The CEPF grant portfolio in the Caucasus was balanced and well aligned to the strategic directions set out in the ecosystem profile. Ten international organizations received grants totaling around \$5,418,079, while 21 local organizations received grants totaling around 3,080,704. The grants to international organizations included a grant of \$2.92 million to WWF Caucasus for the given project - ``Building Capacity to Strengthen Conservation Alliances through CEPF Coordination and Grant Making in the Caucasus``, nearly half of which was for the CEPF/WWF Small Grants Program. Under this program, 87 small grants (of up to \$20,000) were made, almost all of them to local organizations.</p> <p>Active involvement of civil society in conservation of Caucasus biodiversity hotspot and its capacity-building are strong prerequisites for sustainability of CEPF impact in the region.</p>
2. Government and civil society collaborate to mitigate major threats to biodiversity in the Caucasus Hotspot by the end of June, 2009	All key CEPF funded projects in the region were implemented in close cooperation with relevant government institutions. Itself, implementation of the CEPF Portfolio significantly contributed to strengthening partnership between governmental and non-governmental sectors.
3. CEPF grants successfully used to leverage other major donors to invest at least 50% in additional funds to support biodiversity conservation in the region by 2009	While the whole duration of the CEPF investment in the Caucasus, around \$21.9 million matching funds was leveraged from different donor institutions for biodiversity conservation activities in the hotspot: this amount is more than double of the overall CEPF investment in the region.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

All main objectives of the project were achieved: through the given coordination project, the CEPF five-year Investment Programme for biodiversity conservation in the Caucasus was successfully and effectively coordinated, managed, facilitated and monitored at both national and regional levels in the Hotspot. As a result, the CEPF Programme was successfully implemented with very wide range of conservation outcomes attained through its investment, such as (i) contributions to the establishment, extension and strengthening of protected area systems; (ii) species-focused and site-specific conservation activities; (iii) strengthened capacity of civil society to become directly involved in biodiversity conservation; (iv) establishment of a regional biodiversity monitoring network; (v) raised public environmental awareness, with a special focus on biodiversity values and conservation issues; (vi) demonstration of approaches for sustainable natural resources use; (vii) promotion of national, transboundary, regional and international cooperation and partnerships to support biodiversity conservation; (viii) promotion of policy changes to support biodiversity conservation and (ix) development of alternative livelihoods for local communities.

More detailed information on achieved progress and implementation process are presented below under the output indicators table.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

There were positive unexpected impacts during the implementation of the given project: the project gave an opportunity to plan and implement several additional activities which were not envisaged at the beginning while the project designing process. All these additional activities were implemented following consultations with- and after endorsement of the relevant CEPF staff / representatives. Detailed information on the unplanned activities and positive impacts are provided below under the outputs section.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: The CEPF Coordination Team successfully solicits, reviews, and processes project proposals, reports by liaising with CEPF and conservation partners to ensure smooth operation in the Caucasus Hotspot	The CEPF Coordination Unit / Team played a crucial role in- and significantly contributed to the smooth processing and development of the project proposals received in the frame of the CEPF Investment Portfolio in the Caucasus: see more detailed information under this output indicators below.
1.1 A regional Coordination Team, consisting of regional	A regional Coordination Unit / Team for overall coordination, facilitation and monitoring of the CEPF Investment Programme

<p>coordinator, six country coordinators, project administrator, communications officer, and regional reviewers group (qualified experts from all six countries) established by July 2004 with defined roles and responsibilities</p>	<p>in the Caucasus Hotspot was established and successfully run. WWF was selected to be CEPF's local coordination partner. WWF Caucasus located in Tbilisi, Georgia was led the overall coordination process through the given project - ``Building Capacity to Strengthen Conservation Alliances through CEPF Coordination and Grant Making in the Caucasus``. Based at WWF's offices in the Caucasus countries (WWF Armenia, WWF Azerbaijan, WWF Russia and WWF Turkey), the WWF Caucasus established a local Coordination Unit, consisting of the following nine members: Regional and Country Coordinators, a Communications Officer, a Small Grants Manager and a Programme Administrator. Tasks and responsibilities were clearly delegated among members of the Coordination Unit. The Coordination Unit managed, facilitated, monitored and led development of the CEPF Grants Portfolio, in close cooperation with CEPF staff.</p> <p>In addition to the local Coordination Unit, an External Reviewers Group was established. This group involved over 100 experts, drawn from all countries of the Hotspot, representing NGOs, government agencies, scientific institutions and donor organizations. This group was responsible for review and evaluation of project proposals. Reviewers' feedback was considered in final decision-making on project selection and funding.</p>
<p>1.2 The CEPF Coordination Team fully trained on the CEPF application process and procedures including log-frame by CEPF staff by Dec. 2004</p>	<p>The first training course for the CEPF Coordination Unit was organized on 27 May 2004, in Tbilisi, Georgia. The training course was attended by Regional Coordinator, Country Coordinators and Project Administrator and led by Dan Cao - CEPF Asia Grant Manager. The participants of this course were trained in CEPF application process and procedures - soliciting, review of submitted project proposals and decision-making. In addition, the training course thematically covered content and general principles of the log-frame outlining.</p> <p>The second training course for the CEPF Coordination Unit was held on 6-8 October, 2004 in Tbilisi, Georgia. This three-day training course was attended by the whole regional Coordination Unit and led by CEPF Asia Grant Manager - Dan Cao and CEPF Information Officer Jim Ragle. The participants of this course were trained how to work with Grant Tracker and E-room. They were provided with ``Grants Systems and Operations Manual`` and ``Grant Writer Application and Reporting Guide`` prepared by CEPF. The resource persons of the training course gave detailed information</p>

	<p>on using CEPF's Grant Writer software for developing Part 2 applications and reporting. Also, issues dealing with receiving and reviewing of LOIs and advancing to the next step, including part 2 procedures, were discussed. Additionally, Risk Assessment Procedures, to be done for applicants of large-scale project proposals, were presented and discussed.</p>
<p>1.3 System for efficient exchange of information and reporting established among the members of the Coordination Team and the CEPF Grant Director by Aug. 2004</p>	<p>Following discussions among the Coordination Unit members, it was agreed that (i) each Country Coordinator submits quarterly progress report to the Regional Coordinator with highlighting main issues; (ii) based on country reports, the Regional Coordinator shares information with Asia Grant Manager in CEPF and (iii) additionally, daily correspondences and contacts were considered as a crucial and inevitable part of the overall coordination work in the Hotspot. Especially, in case of urgency, daily and direct contacts were agreed to follow as the most effective approach for the right coordination process and proper decision-making. This approach of information sharing and reporting worked effectively during the whole CEPF Programme implementation period.</p>
<p>1.4 The coordination team proactively soliciting proposals and facilitates the call for proposals process annually, and a rapid, efficient review process is established to assist decision making process</p>	<p>General principles for processing and review of applications were agreed among the Coordination Unit members and CEPF.</p> <p>Over the duration of the CEPF Investment, two official calls for proposals were made in the region: (i) the first in the period of August-September 2004 and (ii) the second in the period of April-May 2005. Various communications tools were applied to distribute calls for proposals and make available for wide stakeholders, such as web-sites, national newspapers, electronic newsletters, civil-society networking mailing lists etc.</p> <p>Following these two calls for proposals, around 465 proposals were received and reviewed. Applicants submitted project proposals using a standard Letter of Inquire (LoI) template. LoIs were reviewed by the Coordination Unit, the CEPF Grant Director and selected external reviewers. If the LoI for a large grant was approved, the applicant was invited to submit a full proposal. Programmatic and financial risk assessments were undertaken by CEPF and, once final approval was given, a grant agreement was signed between the grantee and the CEPF Executive Director. In the case of small grants, a full proposal was not required, and grant agreements were signed between the grantee and the WWF Caucasus Director.</p> <p>Generally, the LoIs assessment process had a three-stage approach: (i) the first stage - screening and review directly by</p>

	<p>the Coordination Unit. During this stage only project proposals, in line with CEPF thematic and geographic priorities, were selected; (ii) the second stage - the project proposals selected during the first stage were reviewed and evaluated by the regional reviewers / experts using a special CEPF assessment scorecards; (iii) the third stage - in case of large grants the scorecards filled in by the reviewers / external experts were provided to CEPF for final decision-making and in case of small grants the decision was made by the Coordination Unit in close cooperation with CEPF.</p> <p>Given very high level of interest in CEPF among civil society organizations active in the Caucasus relative to the amount of resources available, it was only possible to fund one application almost in four. Reasons for rejection were varied but always made clear to the applicant. Common reasons for rejection included: applications not being sufficiently aligned with a strategic direction; applications being located outside of CEPF's geographic priorities; and applications lacking adequate details about the proposed project.</p>
<p>1.5 Each National Coordinator organizes at least four training workshops annually for different civil groups to assist with the CEPF grant application process, Project implementation, and/or sharing of lessons learned.</p>	<p>The CEPF Coordination Unit agreed that it is not feasible to elaborate the precise work-plan of workshops to be convened for potential and existing grantees. The workshops were conducted at national levels upon existing necessities. At the project planning stage, separate meetings with potential grantees worked much better than common workshops, especially in case of large grants. However, at the project implementation stage, grantees meetings were very important for the overall coordination of CEPF biodiversity conservation efforts, as well as, to build partnership and ensure sharing of experiences and lessons learned among them at both national and regional levels.</p> <p>Throughout the whole implementation of the CEPF Investment Programme in the Caucasus, the Coordination Unit convened (i) the certain number of training workshops to assist with the CEPF grant application process and CEPF-funded projects implementation; (ii) a lot of separate / personal meetings with different large- and small grantees to train and help them in the project management and progress and financial reporting standards and (iii) a number of grantees` meetings for building partnerships and sharing of experiences and lessons learned.</p> <p>However, it should be highlighted that periodical individual meetings and consultations were more preferable and helpful for the grantees and a high number of such personal / separate</p>

	<p>meetings and consultations for the grantees were organized by the CEPF Coordinators throughout the CEPF Programme implementation process.</p> <p>CEPF Country Coordinators had permanent contacts with the grantees, facilitated projects implementation process and directly supported them in case of necessity. Correspondingly, the Country Coordinators were always timely informed on progress achieved and delays in the project implementation if any. In addition, financial accountability and expenditures accuracy were permanently monitored. So, such kind of permanent and interactive coordination and grants management worked well and was quite effective.</p> <p>There are listed a number of trainings, personal consultations and grantees meeting organized in the countries concerned by the CEPF Country Coordinators during the CEPF Programme implementation in the Region:</p> <p>Armenia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ 10-11 October 2005, in Yerevan - The training for CEPF small grantees on development of projects work-plans and budgets was organized and around 10 grantees participated in this workshop. ⇒ 12-15 October 2005, in Kapan - A separate training for the CEPF large-grantee - Nature Protection NGO ``Khustup`` was organized. During this training the grantee was assisted by CEPF country coordinator in elaboration of the project log-frame (logical framework, budget worksheets and performance tracking worksheet). ⇒ 6-7 April 2006, in Yerevan - A training for CEPF small-grantees on performance and financial reporting issues was organized and more than fifteen grantees attended the training. ⇒ 30 May 2006, Yerevan (while the CEPF mission in Armenia) - The CEPF country coordinator for Armenia organized the grantees` meeting in WWF Armenia Office. Ms. Kelly Keehan, CEPF Asia Programme Coordinator attended the meeting. The grantees delivered presentations on their projects and shared key information to each others. ⇒ Following recommendations of the fifth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit, national level grantees meeting was organized in Yerevan in June 2007. The meeting had two main objectives: (a) to strengthen cooperation / partnership and facilitate information sharing among the CEPF grantees
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	<p>and (b) make a midterm evaluation of the CEPF Regional Programme at national levels.</p> <p>⇒ 25 October 2007 in Yerevan - A meeting with participation of around 15 CEPF grantees in Armenia was organized in WWF Armenian Branch Office to review the CEPF projects implementation in Armenia and discuss urgent and important issues related to the projects. Totally 15 participants attended the meeting.</p> <p>Azerbaijan:</p> <p>⇒ July 2004, Baku - The first meeting with the NGO representatives was organized for their information about the CEPF Investment Strategy in the region</p> <p>⇒ 11 March 2005, Baku – The training for the CEPF grantees was organized in CEPF procedures and rules for the project management and reporting.</p> <p>⇒ A number of individual / separate consultations and meetings were arranged for the CEPF grantees during the whole CEPF Programme implementation in Azerbaijan. Periodical individual meetings and consultations were more preferable and helpful for the grantees.</p> <p>Georgia:</p> <p>⇒ 9 July 2004, Tbilisi - The first meeting with the NGO representatives was organized for their information about the CEPF Investment Strategy in the region.</p> <p>⇒ 25 February 2005, Tbilisi – The first training for the CEPF grantees was organized on the overall project cycle management and CEPF internal procedures for project management. More than 15 grantees participated in this training.</p> <p>⇒ 28 June 2005 – The second training for the CEPF grantees on the project progress and financial reporting issues. Around 20 grantees attended this training.</p> <p>⇒ The following individual trainings / meetings were organized with potential ``large-grantees`` to support them in the elaboration of projects log-frames and also, brief on CEPF main approaches and procedures in the project management: (i) 15 February 2006 – a meeting with NGO - Field Researchers` Union - ``Campester``, the project - ``Development and Capacity Building of Trans-boundary Bats Monitoring Network in the Caucasus``; (ii) 24 March 2006 – a meeting with NGO - Black Sea Eco Academy, the project - `` Establishing the Conservation Status of the</p>
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	<p>Acipenseridae Family in Georgia` ` and (iii) 30 March 2006 – a meeting with NGO - Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (REC Caucasus), the project - ` `Promotion of Media-Civil Society-Government Environmental Dialogue in the South Caucasus` `.</p> <p>⇒ 24 November 2006 - Regional Coordinator and Country Coordinator in Georgia met Umberto Gallo-Orsi, Project Manager for the Birdlife International's regional project - ` `Development of an IBA Caretaker Network in the priority Corridors` `. During this meetings project achievements, existing problems and future plans were discussed.</p> <p>⇒ 6-7 June 2007 - Following recommendations of the fifth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit, a national level grantees` meeting was organized in Shindisi. Almost all small- and large- Georgian grantees attended the meeting which had two main objectives: (a) to strengthen cooperation / partnership and facilitate information sharing among the CEPF grantees and (b) make a midterm evaluation of the CEPF Regional Programme at national level.</p> <p>Russia:</p> <p>⇒ 21 April 2006, Moscow - A joint meeting with leading persons of the following two large projects was organized to discuss how to coordinate implementation processes of these projects and incorporate their results: (i) Project - ` `Development of the Econet scheme of the North Caucasus on the base of analysis of satellite images and topographical maps` `, grantee - WWF Russia; and (ii) Project - ` `Site network for birds and wetlands: inventory, protection and community management, implementers` `, the main grantee – WWF Russia, implementers - Russian Bird Conservation Union & Russian office of Wetland International.</p> <p>⇒ 5-6 May 2006, Moscow (while the CEPF mission in Russia) – Joint and separate meetings were organized with relevant CEPF grantees and partners and the implementation of CEPF funded projects was mainly discussed.</p> <p>Turkey:</p> <p>⇒ 22-31 July 2005 - Country Coordinator for Turkey had series of meetings with Governors in the Turkish Caucasus. The main aim of the meetings was to provide information on CEPF investment in the Caucasus, relevant funded projects and activities of WWF in the region concerned.</p> <p>⇒ 17 September 2005, Trabzon - WWF-Turkey organized the</p>
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	<p>regional training / workshop for NGOs and academic institutions. The main aim of the workshop was to train representatives of NGOs and academic institutions on elaboration and development of project proposals for further submission to CEPF.</p> <p>⇒ 28-20 September 2005 - Besides the above mentioned training / workshop, separate meetings were organized for the relevant stakeholders in Giresun, Rize and Artvin provinces to provide information additionally on CEPF Investments in the Caucasus. All nature conservation NGOs, academic organizations, and research institutions were invited and totally around 28 organizations were participated in these meetings.</p> <p>⇒ 12 November 2006 - Meeting with CEPF grantees in Turkey was convened which was attended by CEPF representative – Dan Martin, Senior Managing Director, CEPF. During the meeting, the grantees presented information on projects implementation - progress achieved, challenges and planned activities for future.</p> <p>Grantees` meetings on the CEPF communications issues: The CEPF Communications Officer organized meetings of CEPF grantees under the strategic direction 4 in Armenia (April 2007), Azerbaijan (May 2007) and Georgia (May 2007) and presented them the common communications message and made clear ways of its use in the communications materials to be produced under the CEPF projects concerned.</p>
<p>1.6 At least six meetings of Regional Coordination Team organized by June, 2009 to share lessons among coordinators</p>	<p>Totally eight meetings of the Regional Coordination Unit were convened throughout the implementation period of the CEPF Programme. These meetings were the most successful opportunities for the overall coordination and monitoring of the CEPF Investment Programme at both national and regional levels.</p> <p>⇒ The first meeting was organized back to back the second training course of the CEPF Coordination Unit, on 9-10 October 2004 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting was attended by the whole Coordination Unit and led by CEPF Asia Grant Manager - Dan Cao. This meeting was mainly dedicated to consideration and reviewing of project proposals received following the first call for proposals.</p> <p>⇒ The second meeting was convened on 26-27 May 2005 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The whole Coordination Unit participated in the meeting. The meeting, also, was attended by Dan Martin – CEPF Senior Managing Director, Christopher</p>

	<p>Holtz – CEPF Grants Director and Giorgi Sanadiradze - Director of WWF Caucasus. The following issues were mainly discussed by the participants: (i) final results of the first call for proposals; (ii) results of the second call for proposals; and (iii) a general approach and steps for future on how to facilitate and follow implementation of the CEPF Investment Strategy in the Caucasus.</p> <p>⇒ The third meeting was convened on 8-9 December 2005 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting was attended by all members of the Coordination Unit as well as by Mr. Christopher Holtz - CEPF Grants Director. The Team thoroughly reviewed and assessed the Caucasus Portfolio implementation status by countries and priority Strategic Directions. Based on findings of the Caucasus Portfolio review, relevant recommendations were provided to be followed by the team members to facilitate proper implementation of the CEPF Investment Strategy in the Caucasus. Also, the Unit discussed CEPF projects monitoring issue and Country Coordinators were provided with a relevant Monitoring Form to be used in projects monitoring and filled out following monitoring results.</p> <p>⇒ The fourth meeting was convened on 24-25 May 2006 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting was attended by all members of the CEPF Coordination Unit. Also, CEPF representatives – CEPF Grants Director - Mr. Christopher Holtz and CEPF Asia Programme Coordinator – Ms. Kelly Keehan participated in this meeting. Christopher Holtz provided information on results of the CEPF independent evaluation and also, shared information on the second phase of the CEPF Programme and donors` replenishment. Kelly Keehan delivered the presentation - ``Grants Enterprise Management (GEM) and key steps of application process - pending 1 and pending 2``. CEPF Country Coordinators delivered presentations covering information on ongoing and pipeline small and large projects, expectations from these projects, achievements so far, existing problems and lessons learned. In addition, individual / separate meetings were arranged between CEPF representatives and each Country Coordinator in order to discuss in detail all urgent issues, including large pipeline projects and new proposals. Following the fourth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit, the CEPF representatives continued their mission in the region. In particular, in 24 May-7 June, 2006 they visited three countries of the Caucasus Hotspot – Armenia, Georgia and Russia. The CEPF representatives,</p>
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	<p>together with Country Coordinators, organized meetings with key stakeholders (NGOs, governmental organizations and donors) and grantees (both existing and potential) and also, visited to projects sites.</p> <p>⇒ The fifth meeting was convened on 27-28 March 2007 in Tbilisi, Georgia and attended by all members of the Unit and CEPF representative – Christopher Holtz, CEPF Grants Director. The following issues were discussed during the meeting: (i) implementation status of the Caucasus Portfolio and progress attained to date; (ii) communications activities under CEPF funded projects; (iii) large pipeline projects; (v) future plans.</p> <p>⇒ The sixth meeting was held on 5-6 December 2007 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting was attended by CEPF Regional and Country Coordinators and CEPF representatives – Christopher Holtz, CEPF Grants Director and Tina Schneider, CEPF Asia Programme Coordinator. The participants mainly discussed implementation process and progress of the CEPF Portfolio in the Region.</p> <p>⇒ The seventh meeting was held on 24 July 2008, in Batumi, Georgia. The meeting was attended by CEPF Regional and Country Coordinators and Communications Officer. The team reviewed the Portfolio and discussed the following issues: (i) CEPF Programme implementation progress; (ii) CEPF projects monitoring visits to Armenia and Azerbaijan in May-June, 2008; (iii) CEPF Programme communications activities and (iv) CEPF Coordination project extension and revision opportunities for the FY 2009, including sub-contracting and budgeting.</p> <p>⇒ The eighth meeting of the CEPF Coordination Unit was held on 9 February 2009 in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting was attended by CEPF Regional and Country Coordinators and Communications Officer. The Coordination Unit discussed recommendations and tasks coming from the previous coordination meeting and reviewed the implementation status of the CEPF Portfolio, including those projects having some problems and delay. Special attention was placed on communication activities such as preparation an Image Brochure and organizing the second international press-trip. Also, the Coordination Unit discussed the final regional assessment workshop planned as the completion step of the CEPF Programme and essential tool in evaluating CEPF impact in the Caucasus Ecoregion.</p>
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	All meeting minutes and additional subsidiary documentations, including photos, are available.
1.7 Coordination Team members took part in four CI/CEPF annual meetings in Washington, DC by July 2008	<p>In January, 2005, after signing of the Grant Agreement between CI and WWF Caucasus, CI changed the format and name of its annual meetings. As it was known later on, CI made decision to convert this portion of the meeting into a Global Symposium to be held every two years (starting in 2006) and hosted by a Regional Programme. Additionally, a concept paper and proposal form of CI's Global Symposium were provided. However, the Coordination Unit members never participated in the Global Symposium.</p> <p>It should be noted that one member of the CEPF Coordination Unit – Maka Bitsadze (CEPF Country Coordinator for Georgia) attended the CEPF Grant Enterprise Management training organized in Washington DC (USA), 24-28 April 2006.</p>
Output 2: Coordination Team effectively assists CEPF funded projects and investment portfolio monitoring in the Caucasus	
2.1 Sites, corridors and species outcome indicators and priorities for CEPF Ecosystem Profile are further defined to set the base for monitoring	<p>CEPF and WWF Caucasus in close cooperation with the John D. and Katherine T. MacArthur Foundation, convened the stakeholders workshop on ``Priorities and Indicators of CEPF Investment Strategy for Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot`` on 25-26 May 2004, in Tbilisi, Georgia. The Stakeholders Workshop was attended by 54 specialists and experts from governmental and non-governmental organizations of all countries of the Ecoregion (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Russia, and Turkey) and representatives from BirdLife International, CEPF and the MacArthur Foundation. The workshop participants identified indicators and priorities as the base for monitoring of the CEPF Programme implementation in the Caucasus</p> <p>The workshop report, including recommendations elaborated following the workshop results, were prepared and agreed with CEPF and other key stakeholders.</p>
2.2 Coordination Team reviews project reports and communicates project issues to CEPF grant manager.	<p>The CEPF Coordination Unit was responsible for soliciting preparation of project proposals, facilitating projects implementation processes, and monitoring projects by tracking progress towards set objectives. Additionally, small grants administrator, in close cooperation with the CEPF Programme Country Coordinators, was in charge of small grants management, particularly responsible to:</p> <p>⇒ prepare sub-grants agreements between WWF Caucasus and grantees;</p>

	<p>⇒ provide timely disbursement of appropriate funds to the small grantees;</p> <p>⇒ obtain all financial and progress reports and also, other related supported materials in due course;</p> <p>⇒ ensure that submitted reports are compatible and acceptable through cooperation with country and regional coordinators.</p> <p>The CEPF Programme Regional and Country Coordinators were directly tracking and monitoring implementation of the CEPF funded projects. The CEPF funded project reports were periodically reviewed by the CEPF Coordinators and results provided to the relevant CEPF representatives. Besides such planned periodical reviews, all CEPF Country Coordinators had very close cooperation with CEPF grantees in their own countries. Much more, CEPF Country Coordinators had permanent contacts with the grantees, facilitated projects implementation process and directly supported them in case of necessity. Correspondingly, the Country Coordinators were timely informed on progress and also, delays / obstacles in the projects implementation. CEPF funded small-grants reports were reviewed by the relevant Country Coordinator and small grants manager. As for CEPF-funded large-grants reports, they were reviewed by the Country Coordinators in close cooperation with the relevant representatives of CEPF. The regular review of the projects reports and close cooperation with the grantees was giving an opportunity to be informed on all important issues at the earliest convenience. The daily contacts and correspondence between the CEPF Coordinators and grantees was the most effective approach for the effective facilitation and successful implementation of the CEPF Investment in the region.</p> <p>In addition to the above mentioned, the overall review results and key issues were presented and discussed at the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit meetings.</p> <p>Review of the CEPF funded project reports and communication to CEPF was a permanent and continuing process throughout the whole life of the CEPF Programme.</p>
<p>2.3 Site visits conducted by relevant National Coordinator and/or Regional Coordinator</p>	<p>In addition to the project reports reviews and meetings with the CEPF grantees, CEPF field projects sites were visited by the CEPF Coordinators to monitor the real ongoing filed works on the ground and is was ongoing process throughout the CEPF Programme implementation.</p> <p>The Regional and Country Coordinators were visiting to the</p>

projects sites when and where appropriate and needed depending on the project content and activities. The main aim of the projects sites visits was to monitor projects implementation processes and observe progress and achievements. Here the information on some key projects sites visits is provided:

Armenia:

- ⇒ 12-14 May 2006, Vayots Dzor Region - Site visit for the project - “Feasibility Study for the establishment of “Arpi” National Park”, grantee – NGO “Biodiversity and Landscape Conservation Union”.
- ⇒ 14-16 May 2006, Vayots Dzor Region - Site visit for the project - “Development of an IBA Caretaker Network in the priority corridors”, grantee - “Birdlife International” and the key partner in Armenia – NGO “Armenian Society for the Protection of Birds”.
- ⇒ 29 May 2006, Stepanavan, Lori Region (while the CEPF mission in Armenia) - Site visit for the project - “Campaign against corruption in forests supervision and participation of society in management of forests in Lori Region”. This site visit was accompanied by the CEPF representative - Kelly Keehan.
- ⇒ 31 May - 3 June 2006, Ararat, Vayots Dzor and Syunik (Kapan) Regions (while the CEPF mission in Armenia) - Sites visits were organized for four CEPF funded projects and accompanied by the CEPF representative - Kelly Keehan.
- ⇒ 28 July – 8 August 2006 - CEPF Regional Coordinator – Nugzar Zazanashvili, visited to Armenia to monitor CEPF projects implementation at national level. He met CEPF grantees and also, visited some projects sites. Generally, monitoring showed that the most of the projects are implemented in accordance with budgets and work-plans.
- ⇒ December 2006 - CEPF Communications Officer visited to Armenia. As a part of this visit, she arranged a meeting with CEPF small grantees in Armenia on 14th December 2006 and obtained relevant information useful and valuable for communications purposes.
- ⇒ June 2008 - CEPF Regional Coordinator - Nugzar Zazanashvili, visited to Armenia to monitor the CEPF projects implementation process.
- ⇒ July 2008 - National Coordinator visited to the site of the project “Evaluation and Implementation of Sustainable Forestry Models in Northern Armenia” implemented by Armenian Tree Project.

	<p>⇒ October 2008 - CEPF Regional and National Coordinators visited to three large-projects in the South Armenia: Project - “Establishing new Protected Area "Arevik" in the Southern Armenia” implemented by Ecotourism Association Public Organization; Project - “Establishing new Protected Area 'Zangezur' in the Southern Armenia” implemented by NGO - “Khustup”; and Project - “Promoting Sustainable Resource Use among Local Communities near Protected Areas in Southern Armenia” implemented by Fund for Biodiversity Conservation of Armenian Highland.</p> <p>⇒ May 2009 - CEPF Country Coordinator visited to ongoing projects` sites in the Southern Armenia: (i) Assistance to Establishment of New Specially Protected Natural Area “Arevik” in the Southern Armenia and (ii) Assistance to Establishment of New Protected Area Zangezur in the Southern Armenia. Meetings were held with projects coordinators and staff members (NGOs - Ecotourism Association and Khustup), as well as local stakeholders (communities, business representatives, etc.).</p> <p>Azerbaijan:</p> <p>⇒ June 2005 - Country Coordinator attended the field work arranged by a research team of the project Save the Otter in Talysh Mountains. During this site visit otter tracks were found on the sand along the Istisu River and on the bank of Khanbulan Water Reservoir. Also, traces of the otter viability in Talysh Mountains were registered, biotope conditions and other ecological parameters studied.</p> <p>⇒ February 2006, Absheron National Park - Site visit was organized for the project - “Improvement of protection of Caspian seal (<i>Phoca caspica</i>) breeding-grounds and habitats of priority bird species in the Absheron Sanctuary”, grantee - NGO “Ecology and Conservation of Birds”. It is important to note that during the implementation of the project the status of the Absheron Sanctuary was changed and it was officially stated as a National Park.</p> <p>⇒ 13 February 2006, Zakatala Nature Reserve – Site visit was organized for the project - “Improvement protection of the Dagestanian tur (<i>Capra cylindricornis</i>) and other CEPF species outcomes in Zakatala Strict Nature Reserve”, grantee - NGO “Centre for Biodiversity”.</p> <p>⇒ June 2006 – All projects sites covering key areas of Caprine species in Azerbaijan were visited by the Country Coordinator and a member of IUCN Caprine Specialist Group, international expert – Mr. Pavel Veynberg.</p>
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	<p>⇒ 29 November – 8 December 2006 - CEPF Regional Coordinator – Nugzar Zazanashvili, visited to Azerbaijan to monitor CEPF projects implementation at national level. He met CEPF grantees and also visited some projects sites. Generally, monitoring showed that the most of the projects are implemented in accordance with budgets and work-plans.</p> <p>⇒ In September, 2008 – Director of WWF Caucasus / G. Sanadiradze and the CEPF regional and country coordinators together with officials from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources visited to Shirvan National Park. This visit was organized under the project - ``Development of Eco-tourism Infrastructure in Hyrcan and Shirvan National Parks of Azerbaijan`` implemented by NGO -Technologies of Stable Democracy.</p> <p>⇒ In May-June 2009 the CEPF Country Coordinator visited to the following projects sites: (i) ``Development of Eco-tourism Infrastructure in Hyrcan and Shirvan National Parks of Azerbaijan`` implemented by NGO -Technologies of Stable Democracy; (ii) “Improvement of protection of Caspian seal (<i>Phoca caspica</i>) breeding-grounds and habitats of priority bird species in the Absheron sanctuary” implemented by - NGO “Ecology and Conservation of Birds”; (iii) “Improvement of protection of the Dagestanian tur (<i>Capra cylindricornis</i>) and other CEPF outcome species in Zakatala Strict Nature Reserve” by - NGO “Center for Biodiversity”, and (iv) “Creation of Selective-Tribal Beekeeping Economy in Zakatala Region for Production of Bee Families as Alternative Income Sources for Rural Communities” by - NGO “Centre for Protection of Natural and Cultural Heritage”.</p> <p>Georgia:</p> <p>⇒ 17 May 2006, Kvareli, Kakheti region - Site visit was organized for the project `` Honey Production - Promotion of Non-timber Forest Product Use in Kvareli``, grantee - Union ``Duruji Madli``.</p> <p>⇒ 26-28 May 2006 (while CEPF mission in Georgia) - Meetings with potential grantees and key stakeholders (governmental and non-governmental representatives and local communities) and sites visits were arranged for advancing of some pending CEPF large scale projects.</p> <p>⇒ 24-25 December 2006 – Regional Coordinator and Country Coordinator visited to Batumi to monitor the national level project - ``Establishment of Conservation status of</p>
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	<p>Acipenseridae family in Georgia` implemented by a local NGO – ``Black Sea Eco Academy``. During this visit a meeting with local stakeholders was convened to discuss the ongoing project.</p> <p>⇒ 12-13 September 2006 - Following the ``Alpiniada`` event, Christopher Holtz – CEPF Grants Director, together with Regional Coordinator and Country Coordinator met CEPF grantees in Georgia for monitoring the projects implementation process.</p> <p>⇒ 27-29 September 2007 - CEPF Regional and Country Coordinators visited to Adjara Region to monitor two CEPF large-scale projects: (a) ``Establishment of current conservation status of all species of Acipenseridae family in South-Eastern part of the black Sea and creation of rationale for inclusion into the Red List`` implemented by Black Sea Eco Academy and (b) ``Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in the Support/Buffer zone of Mtirala National Park`` implemented by Association for Environment Protection and Sustainable Development - “MTA-BARI”. While the monitoring the project implemented by ``MTA-BARI``, coordinators participated in the stakeholders workshop convened in the frame of this project.</p> <p>⇒ July 2008 – The regional and country coordinators visited to sites for two large grants in Adjara Region.</p> <p>⇒ September 2008 – Regional Coordinator visited to Adjara Region to monitor the progress under the project - ``Development of the Buffer Zone of Mtirala National Park: Initiation of Sustainable Resource Use Activities`` implemented by Association for Environment Protection and Sustainable Development - “MTA-BARI”.</p> <p>⇒ February 2009 – The regional and country coordinators visited to sites for two large grants in Adjara Region.</p> <p>⇒ April 2009 – The Country Coordinator attended a regional meeting of journalists` convened by the CEPF large grantee – REC Caucasus in the frame of the project - ``Environmental Hot Spots Journalistic Monitoring`` which was a closing event for this project giving an opportunity to see and assess project results at the end.</p> <p>Russia: It should be mentioned that annual monitoring visits to the Northern Caucasus were organized by the Country Coordinator in 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. During these visits the Country Coordinator had meetings with the local CEPF grantees and also, was managing some projects sites / fields visits. Here, just two such cases are presented from 2006:</p>
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	<p>⇒ 19 June 2006, Dagestan - Site visit for the project - ``Strategy for Conservation of the Riesen-Blindmaus (Spalax Giganteus) in the North Caucasus``; grantee - Pre-Caspian Institute of Biological resources of the Daghestan Scientific Centre at the Academy of Science of Russia.</p> <p>⇒ 20-22 June 2006 Dagestan - Meetings with local key stakeholders were organized for the project - ``Creation of the System of Protected Areas of the North Caucasus (Green Corridor of the North Caucasus)`` , grantee - WWF Russia. Particularly, a work plan and timetable for creation of the Tlyarata Nature Reserve were discussed with the key stakeholders such as: (a) Dagestan Branch of the Russian Academy of Science consisting of a few institutions and Dagestan State University; (b) local decision-makers - Regional Committee of Nature Resources, Regional Land Committee, Dagestan Nature Reserve representatives and Head of Tlyarata Municipality.</p> <p>Turkey: Annual monitoring visits to the Turkish Caucasus were organized by the Country Coordinator in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. During these visits the Country Coordinator had meetings with the local CEPF grantees and also, was managing some projects sites / fields visits. Here, just one such case is presented from 2005:</p> <p>⇒ June 2005, Country Coordinator arranged a project site visit in the Artvin Province. She met the CEPF grantee (NGO - ``The Society of Green Artvin``) implementing the project - ``Management Effectiveness of Protected Areas in the Turkish Part of the West lesser Caucasus Corridor using WWF`s RAPPAM Methodology``.</p>
<p>2.4 Review of portfolio and ecosystem profile to assess implementation.</p>	<p>The review process of the CEPF Portfolio and Ecosystem Profile was an integral part of the overall implementation of the CEPF Programme and mostly made and discussed at the meetings of the CEPF Coordination Unit.</p> <p>⇒ The first quarterly portfolio review was made in May 2005. This review gave a general picture about the implementation of the CEPF Regional Programme in the Caucasus Hotspot and also, revealed existing thematic and financial trends according to participating countries concerned. This quarterly portfolio review was delivered and discussed during the second meeting of the CEPF Coordination Unit (26-27 May 2005, Tbilisi Georgia).</p> <p>⇒ A basic analysis for reviewing the Caucasus Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile was presented to the third Coordination</p>

	<p>unit meeting convened on 8-9 December 2005 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Consequently, review of the Caucasus Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile was completed during this meeting with some important findings and following these findings the relevant recommendations were elaborated for the Coordination Unit to follow and facilitate implementation of the CEPF Investment Strategy in the Caucasus.</p> <p>⇒ Implementation of the Caucasus Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile was fully reviewed and assessed during the fourth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit convened on 24-25 May 2006 in Tbilisi, Georgia and attended by all members of this Unit and CEPF representatives – Christopher Holtz (CEPF Grants Director) and Kelly Keehan (CEPF Asia Program Coordinator). The Regional Coordination Unit thoroughly reviewed and assessed the Caucasus Portfolio implementation status by countries and priority Strategic Directions. Particularly, the Unit discussed progress achieved so far, ongoing and pipeline projects, existing gaps, problems, and financial trends.</p> <p>⇒ A Periodical review of the Caucasus Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile was done in November-December 2006 and correspondingly, this review significantly contributed to the preparation of CEPF Portfolio Interim Overview Report for the World Bank. All CEPF Coordinators participated in the Caucasus Portfolio interim overview and the relevant report was submitted to CEPF.</p> <p>⇒ Implementation of the Caucasus Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile was fully reviewed and assessed during the fifth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit convened on 27-28 March, 2007 in Tbilisi, Georgia and attended by all members of this Unit and CEPF representative – Christopher Holtz, CEPF Grants Director. The Regional Coordination Unit thoroughly reviewed and assessed the Caucasus Portfolio implementation status by countries and priority Strategic Directions.</p> <p>⇒ Implementation of the Caucasus Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile was fully reviewed and assessed during the sixth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit convened on 5-6 December, 2007 in Tbilisi, Georgia and attended by CEPF Regional / Country Coordinators from the region and CEPF representatives – Mr. Christopher Holtz, CEPF Grants Director and Ms. Tina Schneider – CEPF Asia Program Coordinator. The Regional Coordination Unit thoroughly reviewed and assessed the Caucasus Portfolio implementation status by countries and priority Strategic</p>
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	<p>Directions. Particularly, the Unit discussed progress achieved, ongoing and pipeline projects, existing gaps, problems, and financial trends.</p> <p>It should be mentioned that following the each review of the Caucasus Portfolio, the relevant recommendations were provided to be followed by the Coordination Unit members for proper facilitation the CEPF Programme Implementation in the Caucasus. The review report on the Caucasus Portfolio implementation was prepared as a part of the relevant coordination meeting minutes and communicated to all participants, including the CEPF representatives.</p>
<p>Output 3: CEPF coordination and project related information is best communicated so that the conservation message and lessons learned are shared in a strategic way among partners, the public and policy makers</p>	
<p>3.1 Communications Strategy for disseminating information to grantees and other civil groups in the Hotspot developed by Dec. 2004</p>	<p>The Communication Strategy Outline was prepared by the Communications Officer and adopted by the Regional Coordination Unit and CEPF representatives concerned in December, 2004. The Communication Strategy consisted of the following paragraphs: Overall goal of the Communications Strategy; Objectives; Key messages; Target Groups; Means of Communications; and Actions Plan by objectives.</p>
<p>3.2 Interactive webpage on the WWF Caucasus website developed to serve as an information source on CEPF investment strategy and to link partner organizations by Dec. 2004</p>	<p>The special web-page for the CEPF activities in the Caucasus was created under www.panda.org/caucasus with the following information: CEPF Programme overview; News and events; Ecosystem profile (linked to cepf.net); Application templates (linked to cepf.net); Guidelines for application (linked to cepf.net); FAQ; Grantees/Ongoing projects; publications and contact details. The web-page is in two languages English and Russian.</p>
<p>3.3 One event to launch CEPF investment program organized to engage stakeholders in the CEPF regional conservation program by Jun. 2005 and one final regional assessment workshop organized by June, 2009</p>	<p>Launching event: An official launch event of CEPF Investment Programme in the Caucasus Hotspot took place on 27 May, 2004 at the Youth Palace in Tbilisi, Georgia. The official launch event was attended by representatives of International Organizations and Foundations (CEPF, UNDP, World Bank, USAID, KfW), Governmental Institutions (Ministries and Departments) and Environmental NGOs (CENN, REC, NACRES, etc.). Representatives from Government and NGOs from all six countries of the Ecoregion took part in the launch event.</p>

	<p>Giorgi Sanadiradze, Director of WWF Caucasus Programme Office, opened the launch event and welcomed the guests. Giorgi Sanadiradze briefly presented the information on CEPF Investment Programme for the Caucasus Hotspot and CEPF-WWF joint initiative. Also, welcome speeches were made by Mr. Dan Martin (Senior Managing Director, CEPF) and Mr. Mohammad Taghi Farvar (Chair of Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, IUCN).</p> <p>Final Assessment Workshop: Initially the final regional assessment workshop was planned for the week of 29 June- 4 July 2009, however due to some objective reasons and following negotiations with CEPF, it was postponed for 28-29 September 2009. Finally, the regional assessment workshop was convened on 28-29 September 2009 in Tbilisi, Georgia where the CEPF investment conservation impact in the Caucasus Hotspot was reviewed, summarized and validated. The workshop was attended by over 60 participants, including CEPF grantees, governmental officials and representatives of donor institutions (WB, GCF, CI) donated to CEPF.</p>
<p>3.4 At least 48 articles published in the central press in all five countries and quarterly news releases disseminated to relevant target audiences by June, 2009</p>	<p>At the beginning of the process, representatives of the media interested in environmental issues were identified. The media list included 14 newspapers (2 of them are regional), 11 TV stations, 8 news agencies, 3 informative web-sites, 2 freelance journalists. Media representatives were briefed on CEPF investment strategy and program implementation process. The special media-kit, frequently asked questions, for journalists has been prepared, which covered all basic information on CEPF investment strategy written in reader-friendly manner, map of Caucasus hotspot, contact details for media and useful links.</p> <p>Articles: During the whole implementation process of the CEPF Programme in the Caucasus, around 50 articles were published and communicated to wide audience through both central and regional newspapers in all five countries covered by the CEPF Investment. Some of the articles were more general about the overall CEPF investments in countries and in the region and some of the articles were more project-specific.</p> <p>News-releases / Newsletters: At the beginning of the CEPF Investment the newsletters were produced on monthly basis, then on bi-monthly basis and to the end of the Investment, the newsletters were produced on quarterly basis. The newsletters were very informative and comprehensive presenting all news</p>

	<p>and ongoing projects and initiatives supported by CEPF and also, the key issues, progress and challenges were highlighted in the newsletters. There was a period during the CEPF Programme implementation, when the newsletters were not produced on quarterly basis due to other alternatively ongoing communications activities replacing the news-releases function, like press-trip articles, CEPF projects stories etc.. The following bilingual / English-Russian newsletters were produced and communicated to the wide external audiences, including the CEPF grantees, governmental officials, scientific sector representatives, mass-media-representatives and donor institutions throughout the region:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Five monthly newsletters in the period of January - June 2005; ⇒ Three bi-monthly newsletters in the period of July-December 2005; ⇒ Bi-annual newsletter covering the period of January-June 2006; ⇒ Bi-monthly newsletter for the period of July-August 2007; ⇒ Bi-monthly newsletter for the period of September-October 2007; ⇒ Bi-monthly newsletter for the period of November-December 2007; ⇒ Bi-monthly newsletter for the period of January-February 2008; ⇒ Bi-monthly newsletter for the period of March-April 2008; <p>The CEPF Coordination Unit discussed the quarterly issuance of newsletters since FY 2009 (July, 2009) and agreed on its reasonability and this was agreed with the CEPF as well. It was agreed to produce the newsletters covering the period of: July-September, 2008; October-December, 2008; January-March, 2009 and April-June, 2009. After this decision the following quarterly newsletters were produced and communicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Quarterly newsletter for the period of July-September 2008; ⇒ Quarterly newsletter for the period of October-December 2008; ⇒ Quarterly newsletter for the period of January-March 2009; ⇒ Quarterly newsletter for the period of April-June 2009.
<p>3.5 At least two international press trips organized by June, 2009</p>	<p>Two international press-trips were organized in 2006 and 2009.</p> <p>The first press-trip: The first press-trip was organized in three countries of the region – Armenia, Georgia and Turkey in the period of 9-18 October, 2006. 11 Journalists from three countries Georgia, Armenia and Turkey visited to key CEPF projects sites</p>

and met the grantees, local governmental officials and local media community. Some interesting points for highlighting from and following the press trip:

- ⇒ 9 different categories of protected areas visited;
- ⇒ Meetings with governmental officials representing Artvin-Rize province in Turkey, Ajara Autonomous republic in Georgia, Kapan and Alaverdy mazrs in Armenia organized;
- ⇒ 14 Armenian journalists from Lori and Kapan mazrs met with press-trip group in Shikahogh, Armenia;
- ⇒ 21 newspaper articles were published following the press trip: 7 articles in Georgian media (newspapers Akhali Versia, 24 Hours, Rezonansi), 8 - in Armenian media (newspapers Noyan Tapan, Republic of Armenia, ArmInfo) , 6 - in Turkish media (newspapers and their web-versions - Referans, Radical, Zaman, Gunebakis, Yeni Safak, Bizim Gazete);
- ⇒ 3 radio stories were broadcasted: 2 (6 minutes each) broadcasted by Green Wave radio station in Georgia and 1 TRT Trabzon Radio, Turkey;
- ⇒ 1 documentary was broadcasted at Alaverdy (Armenia) local TV station (22 minutes);
- ⇒ 2 news TV stories: 1 broadcasted at CNN Turk 25-26-27.10.2006 and 1 at TRT 2TV 24.10.2006;
- ⇒ 1 big article with photos in Atlas magazine (Turkey).

It should be noted that journalists were interested not only in projects are being implemented, but in places, people and general meaning of biodiversity conservation. The published articles and broadcasted TV and Radio stories draw readers' attention not only to the NGOs activity to protect their nature but to the Caucasus region as a biodiversity hotspot showing that nature does not consider borders. Up to 3000 km had been covered by the journalists during 9 days of the international press-trip. Another important point is that journalists of different countries had a chance to meet each other, share their opinions and visions, see what problems and media attitudes exist in the neighboring countries.

Due to quite intensive mass media coverage following the first press-trip, separate monthly news releases were not issued and communicated in this period concerned.

The second press-trip: Initially it was planned to organize the second international press-trip in October, 2008 only in two countries of the Ecoregion – Azerbaijan and Russia which have

	<p>not been covered by the first press-trip. However, due to conflict and political tension between Russia and Georgia in August & September, 2008, WWF Caucasus could not organize the second press trip as planned. This issue was discussed by the coordination team and it was agreed to arrange the second press-trip in May-June, 2009 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Accordingly, the second press-trip was organized for these four countries in the period of 26 May – 5 July 2009. An international consultant / journalist was hired who visited to certain CEPF projects sites and met grantees in these four countries together with local / national journalists. At the end of the press trip, the overall press-trip report and articles were produced and communicated to internal and external audiences and key stakeholders through different communication ways – internet based networks, newspapers etc. As a result of this press-trip national journalists prepared 15 articles published in national-level newspapers of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey and two articles prepared by the international consultant / journalist were produced and communicated electronically. One of these international articles serves as the press-trip report which describes in details the whole press-trip story by countries. This press-trip gave an opportunity to journalists to visit to key CEPF funded projects sites, meet CEPF grantees and explore CEPF investment results on the ground which were further communicated to both internal and external audiences.</p>
<p>3.6 Communication officer prepared articles on projects for CEPFs electronic newsletter and other relevant CEPF publications at least twice a year by June, 2009</p>	<p>The following articles were prepared and submitted to CEPF for publishing in its electronic newsletter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Article on civil society campaigning against highway construction in the Shikahogh Reserve, where WWF Armenian branch office played a key role; ⇒ Article on ecotourism development project in Georgia, Great Caucasus Corridor; ⇒ Article about the Ministerial Conference – Nature Protection in the Caucasus, convened in Berlin, Germany, 9-10 March, 2006; ⇒ Article on a Caucasus Protected Areas Fund launched at the Ministerial Conference in Berlin, Germany, 9-10 March, 2006; ⇒ A short feedback article on the ``Alpiniada`` – the first regional meeting of CEPF grantees in a manner of mountain camping arranged in Kazbegi mountainous region in 5-12 September, Georgia; ⇒ Article on the Caucasus Protected Areas Fund for its Annual Report of the year 2006 (pp. 2, 10, 12); ⇒ Article on the success story within the project on IBA

	<p>caretaker network development in the priority corridors, implemented by Birdlife International;</p> <p>⇒ Article on establishing the buffer zone surrounding Mtirala National Park in Georgia was prepared in close cooperation with Mr. Patrick Johnston and submitted to CEPF to be published in its annual report;</p> <p>⇒ An article on Evaluation and Implementation of Sustainable Forestry Models in Northern Armenia was under top stories of CEPF in June 2009.</p>
<p>3.7 An image brochure covering lessons learned and success stories from CEPF Programme Implementation in the Caucasus produced and communicated to key stakeholders by June, 2009.</p>	<p>The Image Brochure (500 colored copies) covering lessons learned and success stories from the CEPF Programme Implementation in the Caucasus was produced and widely communicated to key stakeholders in the Hotspot and at international level as well.</p>
<p>Output 4: Coordination Team helped leverage matching funds for CEPF grantees and ensured that CEPF projects are sustainable over the long-term</p>	
<p>4.1 Institutions and donor agencies identified that have strategic interests complementing CEPF objectives by Jun. 2005</p>	<p>Key institutions and donor organizations were identified in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey.</p> <p>Key Institutions: Leading environmental NGOs, state / governmental environmental institutions, relevant scientific / educational organizations, mass-media agencies and private sector were considered as the interested institutions for cooperation in the implementation of CEPF Investment Strategy in the Caucasus Hotspot.</p> <p>⇒ Leading environmental NGOs: both, national and international leading environmental NGOs expressed their interests and willingness to cooperate. Later on, the most of these NGOs became the CEPF grantees.</p> <p>⇒ Governmental environmental institutions, such as Ministries of Environment, State Departments of Ecotourism, Forestry and Land Management were identified as key targets for cooperation and information sharing. The Governmental institutions were involved in the CEPF Programme implementation process and also, they were kept informed on the overall progress of the CEPF Programme at national level.</p> <p>⇒ Scientific / Educational Institutions: These institutions were, also, one of the target groups for the CEPF Programme.</p> <p>⇒ Media / Radio Agencies were involved in the CEPF projects</p>

	<p>focused on public-awareness raising, information sharing and communications.</p> <p>⇒ Private sector: At the beginning this sector was considered as the key one and negotiations were initiated with this sector however it was difficult to motivate them to be engaged in the biodiversity conservation efforts.</p> <p>Donor Organizations: All leading international and regional donor organizations working in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey have been revealed. After analysis done in the field concerned the following donor organizations have been identified at Ecoregional level: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United States Agency for International Development (USAID); The World Bank (WB); Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); KfW; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); Norway and Japan Embassies in Baku; Mikhael Succow Foundation; Open Society Foundation (OSF); TACIS Programme; The Eurasia Foundation; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); EU Representative in Turkey; WWF Germany; WWF Sweden; WWF International. However, it should be noted that it was not possible to succeed in cooperation with all of them and this is quite logical and we did not expect to have successes in cooperation with all initially identified donors.</p> <p>More detailed information about relationships and meetings with potential donors and additional fundraising / matching funds are presented in the paragraph #4.2 and chapter VII below.</p>
<p>4.2 At least 50% of additional funds are leveraged in the region to support biodiversity conservation by June 2009.</p>	<p>At the beginning, preliminary informative meetings with potential donors were arranged. The main goals of these preliminary meetings were to inform donor organizations about CEPF progress in the Caucasus Ecoregion and discuss about further potential cooperation and co-funding opportunities.</p> <p>⇒ Armenia: Country coordinator in Armenia arranged meetings with representatives of WB, UNDP and USAID in Armenia. These meetings were conducted in December 2004. Meeting with WB was hosted by Mr. Samvel Baloyan (Environmental Project Coordinator), meeting with UNDP - by Mrs. Anahit Simonyan (Environmental Portfolio Manager) and meeting with USAID by Mrs. Marina Vardanyan (Project Management Specialist on Environment and Nature Resources).</p> <p>⇒ Azerbaijan: Country Coordinator for Azerbaijan arranged meetings with representatives of OSCE Baku Office and local</p>

donor organizations AzerCell and TV Company ``SPACE``. Meetings were arranged in November 2004. Meeting with OSCE Baku Office was led by CEPF Regional Coordinator Mr. Nugzar Zazanashvili.

- ⇒ **Georgia:** Country Coordinator for Georgia arranged meetings with representatives of WB, UNDP and USAID in Georgia. These meetings were conducted in November and December 2004. Meeting with WB was hosted by Mrs. Darejan Kapanadze (Operations Officer for Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Sector), meeting with UNDP - by Mrs. Mariam Shotadze (Environmental Programme Analyst) and meeting with USAID by Mr. John Hansen (Director of USAID Office in Georgia) and Mrs. Tamar Barabadze (Project Development Specialist). Besides all these meetings, Director of WWF Caucasus – Mr. Giorgi Sanadiradze had an official meeting with representatives of KfW in Frankfurt, Germany, 6-7 February 2005 since the KfW was identified as a key potential donor for leveraging matching funds to CEPF activities in the Caucasus. Also, on 1st June 2006 (while the CEPF mission in Georgia) – CEPF representative - Christopher Holtz and Country Coordinator - Maka Bitsadze had a meeting with a representative of WB Office in Georgia – Mrs. Darejan Kapanadze (Operations Officer for Environment & Agriculture). The meeting participants discussed the progress achieved so far through the CEPF Programme implementation in Georgia and also, talked about perspectives for future cooperation.
- ⇒ **Russia:** Country Coordinator for Russia arranged special meetings with WWF-Germany and WWF-Sweden in December 2004. WWF Germany takes a long-term commitment for biodiversity conservation activities in the North Caucasus.
- ⇒ **Turkey:** Country Coordinator for Turkey organized small informative meetings with representatives of UNDP Office in Turkey, UNDP-SGP and REC officials.

A general outcome of the conducted meetings was that key donor organizations working in the Caucasus Hotspot were thoroughly informed about the CEPF Investment Strategy and Priorities in this Ecoregion. Donor organizations expressed their willingness to start cooperation with the CEPF Coordination Unit in the Caucasus through different approaches. Following these preliminary informative meetings, negotiations and lobby and information sharing with the potential donors were continued.

	<p>As a result of work and lobby with the donors, a number of new biodiversity conservation projects were initiated and implemented and some of them can be considered as co-funding / matching funds to the overall CEPF Programme in the Region. More detailed information on such matching funds are presented in the chapter VII - ``Additional Funding`` of the given report.</p>
<p>Output 5: Managing CEPF small grants to support civil society groups in conservation of biodiversity in the Caucasus Hotspot</p>	
<p>5.1 Small grant projects supported for conservation of 50 globally threatened species in the Caucasus hotspot by June, 2009</p>	<p>During the CEPF investment period, WWF Caucasus in close cooperation with- and support of the Coordination Unit members managed the CEPF/WWF Caucasus Small Grants Programme with overall budget of US\$ 1, 360, 000. WWF Caucasus contracted and managed 87 small grants (up to US\$20,000) within the framework of the CEPF/WWF Small Grants Programme and almost all of these small grants were made to local organizations.</p> <p>From these 87 small grants: (i) 14 grants were issued under the Strategic Direction 1 (SD) of the CEPF Ecosystem Profile which is about development of transboundary cooperation and development of protected areas system; (ii) 38 grants were granted under the SD 2 which is mostly about the species conservation; (iii) 17 grants were awarded under the SD3 which is about sustainable resource use and development of alternative livelihoods and (iv) 18 grants were issued under the SD 4 which is mostly on public-awareness raising. This brief overall evaluation clearly shows that the mostly small grants were issued for conservation of globally threatened species.</p> <p>Totally, around 29 globally threatened CEPF priority species were addressed by small grants issued in the frame of the CEPF / WWF Small Grants Programme which is almost 58 % of all CEPF priority species targeted in the Caucasus. These 29 species were addressed and covered through various kinds of projects, like direct filed conservation projects, scientific researches, key experts` regional meetings and consultations, and public awareness raising.</p> <p>The overall assessment of the small grants implementation including their conservation impacts on the ground is the</p>

	<p>substantial part of the overall assessment of the CEPF Portfolio implementation and presented in the final report - ``Assessing Five Years of CEPF Investment In the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot``.</p> <p>Here, it should be added that all CEPF Country Coordinators had very close cooperation with both small and large CEPF grantees in their own countries. Much more, CEPF Country Coordinators had permanent contacts with the grantees, facilitated projects implementation process and directly supported them in case of necessity. Correspondingly, the Country Coordinators were always timely informed on progress achieved and delays in the project implementation if any. In addition, financial accountability and expenditures accuracy were permanently monitored by CEPF Small Grants Manager based in WWF Caucasus. So, such kind of permanent and interactive management of small grants worked well and was quite effective. Besides, the CEPF Regional Coordination Team meetings were the most suitable tool to make comprehensive assessment and discuss small grants implementation in the region as a whole.</p>
<p>5.2 At least 20 projects supported for developing alternative livelihoods by local organizations such as ecotourism, non-timber forest products, and sustainable hunting and fishing in the 5 corridors</p>	<p>As it was mentioned above in the paragraph 5.1, 17 small grants were awarded under the SD3 which is about sustainable resource use and development of alternative livelihoods. Following the review of the received LoI and considering (i) biodiversity conservation priorities and (ii) quality of the LoIs received under the SD3, it was possible to fund only 17 small grants for supporting the development of alternative livelihoods in the following priority corridors - East Lesser Caucasus; Greater Caucasus, Caspian and Hyrcan corridors.</p> <p>More detailed information on impacts of these 17 small grants are presented under the chapter ``Socio-Economic Results`` of the final report - ``Assessing Five Years of CEPF Investment In the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot``.</p>
<p>5.3 At least 60 local NGOs and institutions have increased capacity in achieving conservation outcomes identified in the Ecosystem Profile</p>	<p>As it was mentioned above in the paragraph 5.1, WWF Caucasus contracted and managed 87 small grants (up to US\$20,000) within the framework of the CEPF/WWF Small Grants Programme and almost all of these small grants were made to local organizations. Almost all these grantees were trained by the Coordination Unit in the project management cycle (see more information on such meetings and consultations under the output indicator 1.5 above) and also, capacity of their organizations was increased and strengthened through the CEPF funded projects. This means that these organizations / CEPF</p>

	<p>grantees became more capable to deliver real biodiversity conservation on the ground after the CEPF funded projects.</p> <p>Finally, almost 75% of small grantees, which equals to 65 small grantees, could increase their capacity and besides their successful conservation work on the ground, they gained more experience in the project management and relationships with donors. Itself, this is a strong basis for them to be effectively functioning, get more financial support and keep real conservation work in future as a continuation and follow-up of the CEPF support.</p>
<p>5.4 At least 50% of the small grant projects are reported and communicated among partners, organizations, relevant government agencies and donors</p>	<p>All communications tools and approaches presented under the output 3 above, such as newsletters, articles, press-trips, image brochure substantially covered small-grants results and accordingly, they were widely communicated to different stakeholders.</p> <p>Besides, at the end of the CEPF Programme, the book - ``Status and Protection of Globally Threatened Species in the Caucasus`` (500 colored copies) was published and communicated to key stakeholders. This book includes scientifically sound results of all small grants aimed at conservation of globally threatened CEPF priority species. This book was, also, widely distributed among key stakeholders at national, regional and international levels.</p> <p>Following the above mentioned very diverse and effective communications tools (see the output 3 above) applied throughout the CEPF Programme life in the Caucasus, almost 70% of small grants were communicated to key stakeholders and partners from the sectors concerned.</p>
<p>5.5 At least 30% is secured as additional funds to the Small Grant Fund to ensure sustainability beyond the project completion date</p>	<p>As it was mentioned above, US\$ 1, 360, 000 was allocated for the Small Grant Fund and its 30 % which equals US\$ 408 000 was not directly co-funded to small grants. However, the overall leveraged funds to the CEPF Investment in the Region is around US\$ 21.9 million which itself significantly contributes to - and ensures sustainability of the CEPF conservation impact in the Caucasus. Besides, at the final regional assessment workshop convened on 28-29 September 2009 in Tbilisi, Georgia, the CEPF small grantees highlighted that the CEPF funded projects improved and strengthened their capacity in terms of further fundraising and also, in certain cases based on the CEPF project results, new projects and initiations were supported by other donors.</p>

	<p>Following results of the Final Assessment Workshop and the small grants final completion reports, totally around US\$ 200 000 was leveraged by small grantees as a direct co-funding to the CEPF-funded project which is approximately 15% of the overall awarded small grants amount. However, it should be noted that at the beginning of the investment the small-grantees` capacity was not appropriate required as usual for prompt fund-raising in parallel to the CEPF projects. This raised fund shows the amount which was received by the CEPF small-grantees by the end of the CEPF-grants as a direct contribution to them.</p> <p>However, thanks to CEPF Investment and well set coordination mechanism, the grantees were trained by the Coordination Unit in the project management cycle (see more information on such meetings and consultations under the output indicator 1.5 above) and also, capacity of their organizations was increased and strengthened through the CEPF funded projects. This means that these organizations / CEPF grantees became more capable to deliver real biodiversity conservation on the ground after the CEPF funded projects and succeed in future fundraising as a continuation and follow-up of the CEPF conservation results.</p>
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Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

1. Additional activities under the given project

In the frame of the given project - ``Building Capacity to Strengthen Conservation Alliances through CEPF Coordination and Grant Making in the Caucasus``, several additional activities were implemented which were not envisaged initially by the project. These additional activities were discussed by the CEPF Coordination Team and agreed with the CEPF. After the CEPF endorsement the following newly initiated activities were implemented in close cooperation with the relevant key stakeholders.

1.1 Alpiniada / Regional mountain camping trip in Juta, Kazbegi, Georgia, 5-12 September 2006

During the fourth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit (24-25 May, 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia), it was agreed to organize the first regional meeting of the CEPF grantees. ``Alpiniada`` - the first regional meeting of CEPF grantees in a manner of mountain camping was convened in Kazbegi mountainous region, Georgia, 5-12 September, 2006. The format of the meeting was informal and aimed at bringing together the CEPF grantees and other key stakeholders to present and discuss conservation outputs achieved through the CEPF Programme in the Caucasus and build partnership among the CEPF grantees at regional level. A special environmental camp was set up in the highlands of Juta, Kazbegi Mountains, where scientists and biodiversity conservationists, representing 35 NGOs and institutions from five countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation and Turkey, came together to discuss their individual and collective achievements. They, also, shared their

research findings and field experiences. Informal presentations clearly showed biodiversity conservation activities carried out in each country under the CEPF Programme. WWF and CEPF representatives as well as journalists participated in the event. Also, the participants had a unique opportunity to visit some of the most beautiful places of the Greater Caucasus. The group hiked to Chaukhi Gorge, which peaks reach 3100 m above sea level and the next day enjoyed a drive through Truso Gorge where the river Terek starts its flow before concluding their tour at the Dariali Gorge bordering Russia. This regional meeting was concluded by climbing up Mountain Kazbegi where the CEPF–WWF partnership banner was placed. This regional unordinary event held for the first time in the Caucasus and it was crucial for development of partnership and cooperation among the relevant organizations / CEPF grantees which itself was very important for the successful implementation of the CEPF Regional Programme in the Hotspot.

1.2 Initiation of the Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Network

CEPF investment helped to establish the Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Network for the Caucasus Hotspot. As a first step, an international conference on “Perspectives of Biodiversity Monitoring in the Caucasus” was held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on December 6-7, 2005. This conference was the first attempt by the government, NGO and academic communities from all Caucasian countries to initiate regional efforts for biodiversity monitoring. The conference highlighted the fact that monitoring of the status of biodiversity in the Caucasus is essential for its effective conservation. As a result of the conference, monitoring indicators were selected; data collection, sharing and dissemination methods were defined; model monitoring plans were designed; and a general outline of a regional network was developed. Based on results of the conference, development of the Regional Biodiversity Monitoring Network began. The WWF Caucasus is presently working to maintain the network and develop it across the whole of the Caucasus. As part of this, special software, including a database on protected areas, has been developed for the whole hotspot.

1.3 Pre-feasibility study on wildlife parks in Azerbaijan

With request of- and in close cooperation with the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan, a pre-feasibility study on creation of wildlife parks in Azerbaijan was carried out by Flaxfield Nature Consultancy. The pre-feasibility study report was delivered to the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan for further developing of the wildlife parks idea.

1.4 Pupils competition - ``Zolimpiada``

Pupils` competition "Zolimpiada" was organized by the Tbilisi Zoo on 1-4 December, 2007. This competition for pupils from nine secondary schools was dedicated to knowledge of animals` world, especially focused on CEPF priority species. The competition was held on the territory of Zoo and actively involved pupils in identifying the key species by tracks, habits, etc. The four-day competition has immediately become the popular event and many citizens enjoyed watching this interesting performance. Five pupils from the winner group have been awarded by the first prize - Canon digital cameras on behalf of CEPF Programme and itself, cameras were purchased for this competition by the courtesy of CEPF financial support.

1.5 The Book - ``Status and Protection of Globally Threatened Species in the Caucasus``

The book - ``Status and Protection of Globally Threatened Species in the Caucasus`` (500 colored copies) was published and communicated to key stakeholders. This publication / book shows the

consolidated effort of the Caucasus NGOs, experts, scientific institutions and governmental agencies for conservation of globally threatened species and improving PA systems in the Caucasus. The CEPF investment made it possible for the first time in the Caucasus to carry out simultaneous assessments of species populations at national and regional levels. Today much more is known about the status of globally threatened species in the region than five years ago and this book compiled and presented the whole scientifically-based comprehensive and updated information on population status of these species and will be very useful for further coordinated conservation efforts in the Caucasus Hotspot.

2. Meetings with different key stakeholders

The Regional Coordination Unit, as the responsible for the overall coordination, facilitation and monitoring of the CEPF Programme implementation in the Caucasus, managed and participated in various kinds of meetings with different stakeholders. Generally, such meetings significantly contributed to building partnership and cooperation among key stakeholders, including the CEPF grantees, at both national and regional levels which itself created strong basis for the successful implementation of the CEPF Investment in the Hotspot.

2.1 Stakeholders involvement: The CEPF Coordination Unit used different approaches to inform wide audience about the CEPF Investment Strategy and its progress in the Caucasus and involve key stakeholders in the implementation of the CEPF Regional Programme.

Armenia:

- ⇒ Country Coordinator arranged meeting with the National Forest Facility (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), on 6 April 2005. He met Mr. Francois Wenceiius - manager of the National Forest Facility. They discussed on possible cooperation between the CEPF Regional Programme in the Caucasus and the National Forest Facility Programme.
- ⇒ Country Coordinator participated in the workshop related to FPF investment conducted on 8 April 2005 and made a presentation on the CEPF Regional Programme and its investment priorities in the Caucasus.

Georgia

- ⇒ Country Coordinator made two detailed presentations on the CEPF Investment Strategy in the Caucasus at the following meetings: (i) Regional Seminar - ``Protected Areas and Tourism Development in the South Caucasus`` conducted on 13-17 October 2004 in Bakuriani, Georgia. The Seminar was organized by InWent and attended by representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia; and (ii) Caucasus Ecoregional Team Meeting conducted under WWF network on 14-15 October 2004 in Tbilisi, Georgia.
- ⇒ Country Coordinator made a presentation on the CEPF Programme Implementation Status in the Caucasus at the WWF Caucasus Steering Group meeting convened on 18 October 2006, Tbilisi, Georgia.

Turkey

- ⇒ Country Coordinator made a presentation on CEPF activities at the workshop - ``Organic Agriculture Possibilities for Eastern Black Sea Region`` conducted on 30 September-1 October 2004.

- ⇒ Country Coordinator made a general presentation on the Caucasus Hotspot and CEPF Investment priorities at the national environmental protection symposium held on 8 December 2005, Trabzon, Turkey.

2.2 Lobby and partnership development: A number of meetings were convened with the aim to promote and lobby the CEPF Regional Programme in the region and also, to develop partnership with- and among key stakeholders. Besides, the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit supported and participated in certain meetings organized by the Grantees under the CEPF funded projects.

Russia

- ⇒ 6 May 2006, (while CEPF mission in Russia) – Being in Russia, the CEPF mission (both representatives – Christopher Holtz and Kelly Keehan) had a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation. – Mr. Amirkhan Amirkhanov and Mrs. Olga Krever. The key point for discussion was the implementation status of the CEPF Programme in Russia and expected results from this Programme.

Turkey

- ⇒ Country Coordinator had meetings with Governors in Artvin, Rize and Trabzon and during these meetings she provided information on the CEPF Programme implementation in Turkey, the Caucasus Biodiversity Council and activities planned in Turkey under the Caucasus Ecoregional Conservation Plan. In particular, the following meetings were organized: (i) 27 June 2006 - Meeting with Artvin Deputy Governor – Mr. Muzaffer Basibuyuk; (ii) 29 June 2006 - Meeting with Rize Governor – Mr. Enver Salihoglu; and (iii) 30 June 2006 - Meeting with Trabzon Deputy Governor – Mr. Vural Demirtas.
- ⇒ 17-19 October 2007 - Country Coordinator attended “Turkey – Georgia Nature Conservation Cooperation Meeting” in Posof, Turkey, organized by Doga Dernegi in the frame of CEPF funded large project - “Enhancing Conservation in the West Lesser Caucasus Through Transboundary Cooperation and Establishing a Training Programme on KBA Conservation”.
- ⇒ 22-25 October 2007 - Nature Conservation Center (DKM) organized a training in the frame of CEPF funded large project – “Training for Conservation - Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring Training Programme in the Turkish Caucasus”. Country Coordinator attended the preliminary meetings with DKM and General Directorate of Forest.

Georgia

- ⇒ 2 June 2006, Tbilisi - Country Coordinator participated in the seminar organized in the frame of small-scale project - “Creation of Base for the Improvement / Perfection of National Legislation to ensure Implementation and Fully Enforcement of CITES and RAMSAR Conventions”, grantee - NGO “Eco-view”.
- ⇒ 5 June 2006, Bakuriani district – Country Coordinator participated in the official presentation of the IUCN large-scale project - “Coordination and Development of Plant Red List Assessments for the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot”.
- ⇒ 25 November 2007 – Country Coordinator and representatives of WWF Caucasus attended the Journalists’ awarding ceremony organized in the frame of the CEPF funded project “Building Awareness of Conservation” implemented by “International Centre for Journalists”. This project was functioning twofold: as a training initiative for journalists from

- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russia who publish articles on biodiversity issues in the mass media, and as a competition between the journalists for the best publication on biodiversity problems.
- ⇒ May 2007 - under the CEPF funded project ``Building Awareness of Conservation`` implemented by ``International Centre for Journalists``, two regional journalists' trainings on biodiversity conservation issues were organized: the first training in Georgia and the second one in Azerbaijan. Members of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit contributed to these trainings and they delivered presentations on biodiversity conservation priorities in the Caucasus Hotspot.

2.3 Facilitation cooperation among the CEPF grantees working on the crossing issues: There were some grants with crossing fields and objectives and cooperation among such grantees was crucial thing for final success. The CEPF Coordination Unit substantially contributed to development of national and regional level cooperation among the CEPF grantees working in the same field on crossing issues.

- ⇒ 29 March 2007, Tbilisi, Georgia - Meeting on impact of the CEPF Programme in the Russian Caucasus was convened on the request of the Caucasus Biodiversity Council. The meeting was attended by nine participants representing Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), CEPF Coordination Unit in the Caucasus, Caucasus Biodiversity Council and NGO sector from the North Caucasian part of Russia. The meeting was led and facilitated by Dr. Hartmut Jungius – Chairman, Caucasus Biodiversity Council. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the CEPF Programme implementation in the Northern Caucasus and agree on future plans on improvement of cooperation among the CEPF grantees in Russia.
- ⇒ 17 April 2007 - WWF Caucasus hosted the regional meeting under the CEPF funded Birdlife International's project - ``Development of an IBA Caretaker Network in the priority Corridors`` in which all project partners from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russia and Turkey participated. Also, the meeting was attended by some members of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit and external expert being in charge of the project progress audit. During this meeting the project implementation was reviewed and the project progress audit report was presented.
- ⇒ 1 June 2006 (while the CEPF mission in Georgia) – A special meeting was organized for two potential large grantees - REC Caucasus and International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) with a concrete purpose - to coordinate the elaboration of their projects log-frames. These both projects are developed under the same strategic direction - 4.1 and close coordination is essential at both planning and implementation phases to avoid any overlapping activities. The meeting was attended by REC Caucasus and ICFJ representatives, Country Coordinator for Georgia, CEPF Communications Officer and also, by CEPF representative - Christopher Holtz. During the meeting all key and specific thematic areas where close cooperation is pivotal were identified and relevant recommendations provided to be followed.

3. CEPF Missions to review the implementation of the CEPF Investment Portfolio in the Caucasus

3.1 The CEPF Mission in 2005

In the period of 27 September – 4 October 2005, a CEPF mission (Jorgen Thomsen – CEPF Senior Vice President and Executive Director, Michael Wells - CEPF Programme External Evaluator and Christopher Holtz – CEPF Grants Director) visited to two countries Armenia and Georgia. In these countries, the CEPF mission had meetings with key stakeholders, such as the CEPF grantees, local experts / scientists participating in the preparation of the CEPF Caucasus Portfolio, local reviewers group participating in the review of LOIs, representatives of the governmental sector and donor institutions. Also, key projects sites visits were arranged in both countries. Following the CEPF mission in the Caucasus, the Independent Evaluation Report on the CEPF Investment was prepared and communicated.

3.2 The CEPF Internal Review of the CEPF Programme implementation in the Caucasus, 2006

After the fourth meeting of the CEPF Regional Coordination Unit, the CEPF representatives - Christopher Holtz (CEPF Grants Director) and Kelly Keehan (CEPF Asia Program Coordinator) continued their mission in the region. In particular, in the period of 24 May - 7 June, 2006 they visited three countries of the Caucasus Hotspot – Armenia, Georgia and Russia. The CEPF representatives, together with Country Coordinators, organized meetings with key stakeholders (NGOs, governmental organizations and donors) and grantees (both existing and potential) and also, visited to key CEPF projects sites.

3.3 The CEPF Internal Review of the CEPF Programme implementation in the Caucasus, 2007

The sixth meeting of the Caucasus Biodiversity Council was convened on 26-28 June 2007 in Batumi, Georgia. This meeting was attended by CI / CEPF representatives as well: Mr. Jorgen Thomson – CI / CEPF Vice-President, Mr. Christopher Holtz - CEPF Grants Director and Mr. Kevin Tagami - CI/Global Conservation Fund. Following the meeting, CI / CEPF representatives organized visits to Armenia and Turkey to monitor CEPF projects implementation. Mr. Kevin Tagami visited to Armenia and Mr. Jorgen Thomson, Christopher Holtz and Mr. Nugzar Zazanashvili (CEPF Regional Coordinator) visited to Turkey.

4. Caucasus Portfolio Mid-term Overview for the World Bank, December 2006

A mid-term overview of the CEPF Portfolio / Ecosystem Profile implementation in the Caucasus was carried out in November-December 2009. All CEPF Coordinators and the relevant CEPF representatives participated in the interim overview process and based on the results the Caucasus Portfolio Interim Overview Report was developed for- and submitted to the World Bank. This report included the following key paragraphs: CEPF niche in the Caucasus, including information on the set implementation mechanism; Biodiversity results; Species; Sites or key biodiversity areas / Protected Areas; Corridors; Enabling condition results; Lessons learned; and Conclusions.

5. CI / CEPF auditing mission for the project - ``Building capacity to strengthen conservation alliances through CEPF coordination and grant making in the Caucasus ``

In the period of 3-11 December 2008, CI / CEPF mission with leading of Ms. Martine Vedier Culbertson - Senior Director, Grants Policy and Management, visited to Georgia and Armenia to audit the given coordination project at WWF Caucasus and WWF Armenia Offices. Besides, the umbrella coordination project, this CI / CEPF mission audited several large grants in both countries. As a result of this mission, Audit Report was developed and communicated to the people concerned.

6. Auditing of the project - `` Building capacity to strengthen conservation alliances through CEPF coordination and grant making in the Caucasus ``

During the project implementation period since July 2004 by December 2009, two external Audits were carried out by Independent Audit Companies. The first Audit covered the period of 1 July 2004 – 31 December 2007 and the second Audit covered the period of 1 January 2008 – 31 December 2009. Both Independent Auditors` Report were submitted to CEPF.

7. Report on the CEPF investment in the Caucasus

The draft report - `` Assessing Five Years of CEPF Investment in the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot `` was prepared through mutual efforts of WWF Caucasus and CEPF. The draft report was reviewed, summarized and validated at the final regional assessment workshop convened on 28-29 September 2009 in Tbilisi, Georgia and attended by over 60 participants, including CEPF grantees, governmental officials and representatives of donor institutions (WB, GCF, CI) donated to CEPF.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

All project outputs were successfully realized.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

N/A

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

This section briefly outlines the key lessons learned from the implementation of the CEPF program in the Caucasus Hotspot:

Lessons related to the overall coordination of the CEPF Investment in the Region:

⇒ There were challenges during coordination, facilitation and monitoring of the overall CEPF investment in the Caucasus, including management of the CEPF/WWF Small Grants Programme and most of them are common to hotspot-wide conservation programs in areas with great geographic, cultural and biological diversity. Principal among these challenges were the needs to: (i) work in countries with different cultures; (ii) engage various groups of stakeholders in biodiversity conservation; (iii) address several thematic work areas simultaneously; (iv) overcome capacity limitations among local civil society groups; and (v) build partnerships and cooperation

among different stakeholders at both national and regional levels to ensure tangible impacts on the ground.

- ⇒ It is crucial to maintain very close coordination with grantees and partners at all stages of project development and implementation.
- ⇒ Establishing partnerships among governmental, nongovernmental and academic organizations can be an effective means of delivering conservation impacts, by bringing together various skills and facilitating experience sharing. Strong partnerships among civil society organizations can also be an effective way of eliciting changes in government policies and actions.
- ⇒ Where project implementation involves more than one organization, it is important to ensure close collaboration among project partners from the earliest stage of project design in order to ensure successful and smooth implementation. Also, ensuring that the right organizations are involved in the partnership is as important as ensuring their involvement from the beginning of the project planning process.
- ⇒ Effective communication of biodiversity-related issues, through various forms of mass media and with different techniques, is essential to reach politicians, business sector representatives and the general public, in order to: (i) raise their awareness of these issues; (ii) engage them in the conservation process; and (iii) place on their agenda environmental problems requiring urgent solutions.
- ⇒ Sometimes the conditions encountered during project implementation differ from those prevailing at the time the project was designed. Careful attention needs to be given to project planning, especially for long and complex actions. However, an adaptive management approach is the best solution for overcoming problems and obstacles that may arise during project implementation. As an aspect of this, flexible financial planning is helpful in order to be able to respond to unexpected impacts arising from changes in prices or exchange rates.

Lessons directly learned from the coordination process on the ground:

- ⇒ Before launching and initiating the wide-scale investment programme it is crucial to assess capacity of civil society / national NGO sector in the countries concerned and in case of necessity to manage a short-term capacity-building programme prior to the investment.
- ⇒ Close cooperation with relevant governmental institutions and involvement of local communities are strong bases of successful implementation of projects and itself, ensure long-term sustainability of achieved results.
- ⇒ Support capacity building of civil society to allow them to be directly involved in biodiversity conservation activities
- ⇒ Build close partnership between CEPF Grantees
- ⇒ Build dialogue and cooperation between GO, NGO and private sectors
- ⇒ Urge Government to take long-term commitments
- ⇒ Cooperate with key stakeholders (GOs, Scientific Institutions, NGOs, CBOs, Private sector, Media representatives, Donor Organizations and relevant large projects implementation unites)
- ⇒ The national level meetings of the CEPF grantees are very important to strengthen cooperation and facilitate sharing of information, experiences and lessons learned among them.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount in USD	Notes
KfW	D	10 500 000	Project - <i>Biodiversity Conservation in Javakheti and Caspian Corridors</i>
Government of Norway	D	600 000	Project - <i>Halting the Extinction of the Threatened Tugai Forest in the Transboundary Area of the Iori river in the Caucasus (Iori-Mingechauri Corridor)</i>
KfW	D	600 000	Project - <i>Effective Functioning and Maintenance of Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park (West Lesser Caucasus Corridor)</i>
Government of Norway	D	1 800 000	Project - <i>Saving Forest Ecosystems and Promoting Transboundary Cooperation in the Caucasus (West Lesser Caucasus Corridor)</i>
MAVA Foundation	D	1 700 000	Project - <i>Protected Areas for a Living Planet – Caucasus Ecoregion</i>
WWF network in the Caucasus		1 300 000	<p><i>This amount is the core funding of WWF Caucasus PO, WWF-Armenia and WWF-Azerbaijan over these years and not amount allocated particularly for this given project. However, WWF Caucasus PO and the whole WWF network, including WWF-Russia and WWF-Turkey, in the Caucasus was entirely involved in the implementation of the CEPF Programme. WWF used its expertise, skill and existing communications in the Caucasus Ecoregion and significantly contributed to the successful completion of the CEPF Investment in the Hotspot.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant representatives of the WWF staff were involved in the coordination mechanisms at regional level. For example, financial management teams of the WWF Offices were involved in managing of coordination funds during the whole duration of the project.</i></p>

**Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

- A Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)*
- B Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF funded project)*
- C Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- D Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

N/A

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
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The strong and well-set Local Coordination Mechanism / Coordination Unit plays a crucial role in- and significantly contributes to the successful implementation of the CEPF Investment Programme on the ground through (i) its experience in- and knowledge of the region; (ii) overall coordination, facilitation and monitoring of the Programme implementation within countries and throughout the region as well; and (iii) building partnership among different key stakeholders from the governmental, non-governmental and scientific sectors at both national and regional levels.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Maka Bitsadze / Nugzar Zazanashvili

Organization name: WWF Caucasus Programme Office

Mailing address: # 11, Aleksidze street, Tbilisi, 0193, Georgia

Tel: (995 32) 33 01 54 / 55

Fax: (995 32) 33 01 90

E-mail: mbitsadze@wwfcaucasus.ge; nzazanashvili@wwfcaucasus.ge