

## CEPF Project Cycle Management Plan

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) approaches project cycle management in a slightly different way than the more traditional approach. CEPF strives to turn what is often a series of monitoring and evaluation reports and requirements into an active and effective management tool for grantees. The goal is to create a powerful, adaptive approach that becomes a learning system for all involved. While reports are important for CEPF as a whole to monitor the project and to manage its overall portfolio, the process enables each grant recipient to manage its project implementation and to track intended results in a more cohesive way. It also assists both the grantee and CEPF in determining when adaptive management may be necessary.

### Project cycle management for CEPF

Project cycle management (PCM) is a term often used to cover the different tools and methods used to manage a project throughout its full “cycle” of **design, implementation, and evaluation**. There are several tools and methods that might be used during each of these phases. An organized set of these that are linked through the different phases of the cycle leads to an effective project cycle management approach.

In the case of CEPF, an interesting feature has been added to what might otherwise be considered rather standard PCM practice. In an effort to provide timely, strategic assistance to grantees, CEPF has developed an automated system for all of its grant-making activities. Therefore, each project to be funded by CEPF can be proposed, monitored, and evaluated via the automated system and shared via the Internet. While many of the tools and methods used are standard, the automated feature allows these tools to be interlinked and to act as a powerful learning tool for project cycle management. Project designs and implementation plans and reports are made available to the public through the CEPF Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net). This allows project teams to learn from others’ experiences, share successful ideas from one area to the next, and avoid possible pitfalls encountered by past efforts. In addition, CEPF will screen for “best practice” examples to highlight and further enhance the learning feature of the system.

The CEPF project cycle management approach is based on projects establishing logical hypotheses, clearly defining objectives, identifying targeted, measurable indicators, highlighting important assumptions, compiling baseline information and establishing practical monitoring and evaluation systems. This is required from a programmatic, as well as an individual project point of view. Therefore, the approach begins with a clear definition of the overall CEPF global program. This includes defining the main objectives for the program, what the intended impacts are, who the intended beneficiaries are, and what the operational structures of the program will be. Key targets are summarized in a Global Results Framework<sup>1</sup> to which each ecosystem will be linked. The Results

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<sup>1</sup> The CEPF Global Results Framework is found in Section 1.2 of the Operational Manual.

Framework is a simplified Logical Framework that will form the basis for monitoring and evaluation of the global program.

**Note:** *The Logical Framework is a project design matrix used to summarize and communicate complex project. It outlines the cause & effect model (hypothesis) of a project's objectives and highlights the direct impact the project deliverables are*

*expected to have. It also defines clear performance indicators for all objectives, elaborates the monitoring and evaluation requirements, and details important external factors surrounding the internal project design.*

**The Logical Framework assists in:**

- Defining clear, casually linked objectives
- Defining clear indicators of project impact or success
- Defining the project implementers' deliverables (terms of reference)
- Identifying activity clusters for implementation
- Defining critical external assumptions that may impact the project's success
- Setting up the monitoring & evaluation system of the project
- Defining the necessary inputs required (human, financial, time, etc.)

All CEPF-supported projects will be requested to use the Logical Framework to summarize their project designs in an effort to help track their performance throughout implementation, to provide a clear guide to evaluating each project upon completion, and to allow the projects to learn from previous experiences. By applying this tool, CEPF expects projects to:

- have effective and efficient project implementation, particularly as conservation interventions become more complex and multi-sectoral;
- identify unexpected problems before they turn into larger crises;
- assess new, innovative components;
- track progress toward the achievement of objectives;
- derive lessons learned from past experiences;
- test conservation and development hypotheses; and
- measure conservation impact, particularly in areas where there are urgent threats.

This approach demands the participation of project leadership, project teams, partners, host organizations, and donors such that it allows for open collaboration, learning, and change. If there is broad participation in the monitoring and evaluation process, CEPF expects there will be greater acceptance of its benefit and a commitment to it on the part of project teams, partners, and beneficiaries.

**Ecosystem profiles:** Based on the CEPF strategy, as described in Section 1, detailed ecosystem profiles will be developed for selected ecosystems. These profiles are meant to elaborate a strategic approach toward a particular hotspot region that follows the objectives set out under CEPF. The ecosystem profiles will be developed in a manner consistent with the Ecosystem Profile section of the Operational Manual (4.1) which includes *Information Requirements for Ecosystem Profiles* as defined in the Financing Agreement between the CEPF donor partners.

The section *CEPF Investment Strategy and Programmatic Focus* will describe the set of strategic outputs that must be delivered to achieve the desired impacts for the region. For each ecosystem profile, this will include strategic directions and investment priorities that form the basis for specific projects to be supported. A logical framework will also be developed for each ecosystem, including selected, related indicators from the global Results Framework.

To summarize, a statement of impact and a programmatic set of objectives for CEPF as a global program will be expressed in the form of a Logical Framework. Within this program will be several ecosystem strategies that will also be expressed in the form of Logical Frameworks. This will form the basis of a strategic portfolio in which the impacts or projects in each ecosystem will contribute to a higher-level impact outlined in the CEPF Logical Framework. At the same time, each ecosystem profile may be viewed as a program portfolio in which each funded project contributes to the stated impacts and objectives of that particular profile. This results in the creation of a cascading set of logically linked objectives and hypotheses that allows even the smallest CEPF project to recognize its place and importance in a much larger strategic portfolio. By following such an approach, CEPF anticipates having a very active, constructive project cycle management system that invites collaboration, innovation, and integration while maintaining effectiveness, efficiency, and structure in the process.