

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
No Objection Approval Pursuant to Section 2.03(c) of the Financing Agreement

July 13, 2017

Ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot

Recommended Action Item:

The Donor Council is asked **to approve on a no-objection basis** the ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot. Similarly, the Donor Council is asked to increase CEPF's spending authority by \$8 million for the implementation of this profile.

The deadline for no-objection approval is **August 27, 2017**.

Background

The ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Biodiversity Hotspot was prepared between May 2016 and March 2017, following the Donor Council's selection of the hotspot for investment at its Twenty-Eighth meeting in January 2016.

This will be the first investment by CEPF in this hotspot, which presents a number of exciting opportunities for the fund, including to: engage local civil society in local, national, and regional conservation initiatives; demonstrate the valuable role civil society can play in conserving biodiversity in countries with economies in transition; and take advantages of opportunities for synergy with investments by the EU, GEF, Government of Japan and the World Bank.

Zoi Environment Network of Geneva, Switzerland, led the process to prepare the ecosystem profile, with contributions from numerous national partners. The team held 10 formal, government-attended meetings in China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan between May and December 2016. While there were no formal meetings in Afghanistan, Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan, stakeholders did travel from those countries to the other events and were also consulted directly by phone and e-mail. In all, 256 unique participants attended the public meetings or were consulted directly.

The ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot was shared with the Working Group for review on 20 April 2017 and comments from its members have been incorporated into the final draft. A matrix showing how comments from the Working Group have been addressed is attached, together with an extended summary of the profile. The full text of the ecosystem profile for the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot can be downloaded from:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4fw3hx0l82458kp/AADWmB-vCMH8XVgFX2ubh0STa?dl=0>



Olivier Langrand
Executive Director
Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund

Response to Working Group Comments on the Mountains of Central Asia Ecosystem Profile

| Comment from Working Group | Response from CEPF Secretariat |
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| <p>1. We feel that the socio-political and economic complexity of the region needs to be carefully considered in the context of CEPF’s future engagement in this hotspot. We strongly feel that the space/niche that can be realistically occupied at this point should be focused on capacity building of the CSO organizations and networks.</p> | <p>The strategic directions outlined in Chapter 12 (pp115-137) are the result of input from more than 250 participants during the ecosystem profiling process, including representatives of governments and donors. Capacity building and networking for CSOs is directly addressed by Strategic Directions 5 (Enhance civil society capacity for effective conservation action) and 6 (Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through an RIT) but it is also indirectly addressed by Strategic Directions 1-4, which provide opportunities for CSOs to gain experience and credibility through design and implementation of conservation initiatives with guidance and mentoring from the CEPF Secretariat and RIT.</p> <p>The narrative description of each strategic direction (pp126-137) has been revised to provide more refined guidance on the intention for CEPF grant-making under each thematic area. This includes, among other changes, a section entitled “Limitations”, to better indicate to national country partners and potential applicants what CEPF is able to fund.</p> <p>The final version of the profile limits investments to 28 priority sites and five priority corridors. Variation in political space for civil society across the hotspot calls for an adaptive approach that takes account of local conditions and realities. In other words, the niche occupied by the CEPF portfolio will have different dimensions in each country. Across the hotspot as a whole, however, CEPF aims to engage a diversity of civil society organizations, ranging from lower capacity local and grassroots organizations, to more established, higher capacity national, regional and international institutions. Working with civil society organizations of varying size and capacity requires a differentiated approach to grant making. Within this continuum, CEPF understands that the World Bank wishes to restrict the use of its resources to higher capacity institutions to maximize the strategic impact of its funds and minimize risks associated with smaller, widely dispersed grants.</p> <p>To this end, the CEPF Secretariat proposes that World Bank-managed funds committed to the Mountains of Central Asia will meet the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the investment strategy outlined in the ecosystem profile for the hotspot. • Address grant opportunities that are adequately advertised in a manner acceptable to the Bank. • Be competitively awarded to eligible, capable institutions (i.e. civil society organizations with an established presence in the hotspot countries that are rated as low financial risk) |

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| | <p>following the CEPF Operational Manual. This would include international organizations, as well as established national and regional organizations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be awarded as larger grants (i.e., above the threshold grant size agreed in the final Action Plan for restructuring of the ongoing World Bank CEPF Project), focused on a narrow set of geographies or types of habitats/ecosystems, for measurable impact and to facilitate sharing and applying lessons learned. <p>The CEPF Secretariat and the RIT will develop Calls for Proposals meeting the above conditions. The draft Calls for Proposals will be sent to the World Bank for no-objection approval.</p> <p>Bank-funded investments would be complemented by smaller grants using other global and regional donor funds, with a view to developing a coherent, integrated grant portfolio that responds to the investment strategy set out in the ecosystem profile. The CEPF Secretariat will track and report on the use of Bank-supported grants in the context of regular hotspot progress reports and provide evidence of progress.</p> |
| <p>2. During the Working Group Meeting on the Mountains of Central Asia Ecosystem Profile we mentioned the wide-scale application of the IUCN Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas, for this profile exercise. We appreciate the idea of applying a standard and recognized format/application used for this profile.</p> | <p>CEPF is grateful for the comment. We will continue to apply this standard in future ecosystem profiles. No changes have been made to the text in response to this comment.</p> |
| <p>3. We are also encouraged that the new indicators under discussion by the CEPF Working Group will be used for this profile once granting commences. We strongly suggest to keep the two processes well aligned and would appreciate an update on the profile results framework once the CEPF results framework and indicator work has been concluded.</p> | <p>The revised CEPF monitoring framework (i.e., the new indicators) was adopted by the Donor Council on 27 June 2017. The logical framework for the Mountains of Central Asia (pp138-141) was reviewed against the new indicators, and changes were made to the wording of three targets and six intermediate indicators to ensure consistency with the global monitoring framework.</p> |
| <p>4. We would like to also emphasize a balanced yet cautious approach when setting targets for the expected results in light of the lack of robust local data. Any targets should be on the conservative side to avoid shortfalls or failures.</p> | <p>Three targets and 13 intermediate indicators in the logical framework (pp138-141) have been revised down to make them more conservative.</p> |

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| <p>5. The region is rather complex and energy is one of the challenges. The profile briefly covers the issue, however, we encourage the team to monitor energy-related issues closely, especially when it comes to infrastructure development, including power plants and transmission lines. E.g. it is likely that hydropower development plans in Tajikistan will have a negative impact on habitats and biodiversity and this needs to be carefully assessed when CEPF grants are considered.</p> | <p>The text under Section 8.1 on threats from habitat change (pp85-86) has been modified to explicitly mention impacts of power plants and transmission lines.</p> <p>Chapter 11 on CEPF’s niche (pp111-114) discusses the types of issues that CEPF can positively address. This section has been revised to state that <i>“no grants are anticipated to address threats from energy-related infrastructure, because stakeholders advised against this issue being taken up by CEPF-funded civil society groups”</i>.</p> <p>During preparation of the ecosystem profile, the issue of energy-related infrastructure (including hydropower plants) was specifically discussed during stakeholder workshops. Stakeholders specifically advised against raising this as a topic in Chapter 12 (pp115-137) due to the political sensitivity and powerful vested interests involved.</p> <p>Consequently, threats arising from energy-related infrastructure are not directly addressed by the investment strategy, so as ensure good cooperation with host-country partners and not to encourage adversarial relations between civil society and government. At the same time, the investment strategy, especially Investment Priority 4.4 (Engage with the government and private sector to incorporate site safeguards into infrastructure development), provides scope for <i>monitoring</i> situations related to energy-related infrastructure. CEPF will proceed cautiously in this area.</p> |

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| <p>6. The profile rightly states that “the trend in the region is one of greater government control over CSOs” and “that there are now more requirements for organizations and project registration in the recent past.” Based on our extensive experience in the region, we think that the profile is rather overoptimistic on the role CSOs can play in the region as the political economy in these countries is rather difficult. While in Kyrgyzstan, CSOs are vibrant and their voice are heard in shaping the environmental agenda (including mining concessions, etc.), in all the other countries there is tension between Government and CSOs and CSOs have marginal to no power and influence. Going forward the CEPF team and the future RIT will need to be realistic on what impacts CSOs can have through activities that would normally trigger policy changes or shape the government agendas.</p> | <p>Chapter 7 (pp76-84) describes the state of civil society in the region. While the role that civil society can play in this hotspot as a whole may be more limited than in other places where CEPF works, there is considerable variation among countries, and even sectors within countries, which calls for analysis at a finer scale than the hotspot level. Consultations and research carried out during the Ecosystem Profiling show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Kyrgyzstan, there are broad opportunities for civil society across multiple dimensions. • In Kazakhstan, there are dozens of viable local organizations working in conservation and science, although these tend to avoid politically sensitive issues, such as advocacy and pollution-prevention. • In the Wakhan Valley of Afghanistan, there are two strong international NGOs and several community-based groups with a significant level of freedom to operate. • In China, there are few truly independent NGOs but clear opportunities to work with Government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) and large academic institutes with established programs; this is a similar situation to that in the Mountains of Southwest China and Indo-Burma Hotspots, where CEPF has operated successfully. • In Tajikistan, the situation is dynamic, and will require careful engagement and an adaptive approach. Opportunities for civil society engagement may be limited to particular sectors or periods of time. • In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, government controls on civil society limit the choice of CEPF partners and only allow for a portfolio with a narrow technical and geographic scope. <p>The investment strategy set out in Chapter 12 (pp115-137) makes allowance for this diversity of operating environments. The intention is not to develop similar portfolios in each country but, rather, to allow for adaptive grant making that takes advantage of opportunities that arise, while making allowance for the very real constraints that exist. Investment Priority 3.3 (p130) has been revised to remove reference to analyzing development policies and proposing alternatives.</p> |

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| <p>7. It would be important to try to focus funding on capacity building efforts and creating an enabling environment so that CSOs can work at the local level through engaging in biodiversity monitoring, strengthening environmental education, raising public awareness, disseminating good practices, and helping creating networks.</p> | <p>Capacity building for civil society is the explicit focus of Strategic Direction 5 and addressed indirectly by several other investment priorities in the investment strategy (Chapter 12, pp115-137). In response to this comment, the following changes have been made to the strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The descriptions of Investment Priorities 1.1 and 1.5 (on species conservation) and 2.1 (on site conservation) have been modified to explicitly state that monitoring is an eligible grant-funded activity. • Investment Priority 5.1 includes public awareness. • Investment Priority 5.2 has been modified to specify sharing of best practice. • Investment Priority 5.5 (“Support action-oriented environmental education”) has been added to respond to the request to strengthen environmental education. <p>The investment strategy already explicitly addressed capacity building for civil society to engage in creating networks (Investment Priority 5.3).</p> |
| <p>8. The profile mentions that “there has been less money to support CSOs in more complex field-based conservation of KBAs.” The profile should explore the range of such activities and, where deemed possible, initiate funding to such conservation measure in order for CSOs to build skills and engage in technical work.</p> | <p>Section 10.4 on assessment of funding opportunities and gaps (p106) has been edited to explicitly state that <i>“Overall, there has been relatively little funding to support CSOs engage in more complex, field-based conservation of KBAs”</i>. This is reflected, in turn, in the CEPF investment strategy (Chapter 12, pp115-137). Strategic Directions 1, 2, and 3 provide funding to support CSOs in more complex field-based conservation at species, site and corridor scales (with the greatest emphasis on the site). The allocations for these strategic directions total \$4.8 million, or 60 percent of the requested spending authority.</p> |

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| <p>9. The proposed work in transboundary KBAs (SD 2) is reasonable, however, we encourage the team to be very cognizant of the political context. Conflicts and tensions between the countries, if not direct, are quite common, particularly between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan; and Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. While these tensions are mainly rooted in water availability and access, these tensions often transpire to other areas of cooperation as well.</p> | <p>CEPF welcomes this note of caution. With the reduction in number of priority sites from 50 to 28, the number of transboundary KBAs that will be addressed by the CEPF investment is much reduced (Section 12.2, pp117-121). The remaining prioritized KBAs along country borders include a number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, where the countries concerned have already agreed in principle to work with one another.</p> <p>Rather than preclude transboundary KBAs from consideration entirely, the RIT and Secretariat will monitor the situation and solicit proposals, or positively review proposals, from such geographies only if conditions allow. CEPF will not support work at sites where grants could exacerbate conflict.</p> <p>Furthermore, CEPF’s experience from the Caucasus and other transboundary hotspots shows that low-key, conservation-oriented grants that enable dialogue and cooperation between scientists or among CSOs can actually be quite successful. The RIT is expected to play a central role in facilitating such cooperation: a fact that is reflected in Investment Priority 6.1 (Build a constituency of civil society groups working across institutional and political boundaries toward achieving the shared conservation goals described in the ecosystem profile).</p> <p>The sections on the CEPF Niche (pp111-114), selection of priority sites (pp117-121), and selection of strategic directions (pp123-126) have been modified to address this comment.</p> |
| <p>10. The profile argues on sustainability and success based on that “a young and growing population will become the resource managers of the future.” (Page 108). No evidence is provided for such statement. Based on our experience in the region and macro-economic data, there is a strong rural to urban migration trend especially of younger generations. These type of assumptions/statements by the profiling team should either be evidence-based or avoided altogether.</p> | <p>This statement about young people has been deleted from Chapter 11 (p112).</p> |
| <p>11. One of the areas that will provide a good opportunity for CSO involvement is poaching, excessive hunting, collection of plants, overgrazing and human wildlife-conflict. A lot of these issues will require local-level interaction, interventions and community work which will, no doubt, benefit from CSO driven initiatives.</p> | <p>CEPF fully agrees with this comment. It is addressed by Investment Priorities 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, and 4.2 (pp126-132). No changes have been made to the text in response to this comment.</p> |

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| <p>12. The additional criteria applied at the request of the CEPF Secretariat (bullet points on priority sites, page 113) are good. However, we would like to urge the profiling team to further reduce the number of KBAs to keep a focused approach for greater impact for this CEPF investment.</p> | <p>Section 12.2, its associated tables and figures (pp117-121) and the underlying analysis have been revised in response to this comment. The number of priority KBAs has been reduced from 50 to 28: five each in China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; two in Turkmenistan; and one in Afghanistan. This will allow a more focused CEPF investment with more concentrated impact.</p> <p>The rationale for including fewer priority sites in Afghanistan and Turkmenistan than in the other countries is that the hotspot only includes very limited portions of these countries, and that socio-political and security conditions limit the number of civil society partners that CEPF can realistically expect to engage with.</p> |
| <p>13. The profile describes KBAs in the hotspot and strategic directions and investment priorities (Table 12.4). At least two of the World Bank's current operations have potential to directly address all of the strategic directions. These projects are the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin and the Integrated Forest Ecosystem Management Project. Therefore, the CEPF platform may open opportunities for prospective linkages/collaboration with these operations to identify a clear niche for the CEPF or consider using its scarce resources elsewhere.</p> | <p>The ecosystem profile references the two noted projects (CAMP4ASB and IFEM) in several places (e.g. p92, p106). The CEPF Secretariat and profiling team recognize the clear relationship between these projects and the proposed strategic directions. However, this is a relationship of purposeful synergy rather than overlap.</p> <p>CAMP4ASB works in the five Central Asian countries (but not China or Afghanistan), via communities, on several dimensions of climate change response and natural resources management. The program does not have as tight a focus on site-based biodiversity conservation as does CEPF. IFEM works in only one of the seven countries of the hotspot (Kyrgyzstan) and, by design, works primarily via the State Agency for Environmental Protection and Forests, and thus differs from CEPF, where the core constituency is civil society.</p> <p>During implementation, the CEPF Secretariat and RIT will engage with in-country staff of the World Bank (and other CEPF donors) to ensure complementarity of efforts. This could be done through various means, including: (1) releasing requests for proposals that target specific geographies, stakeholder groups, or themes not otherwise addressed by CAMP4ASB or IFEM; (2) using opportunity for synergy or leverage with projects of CEPF donors as a criterion for evaluating grant applications; (3) establishing advisory committees to oversee development of the CEPF portfolios at the national level, with representation of in-country staff of CEPF donors; and (4) facilitating information sharing between CEPF grantees and the executing agencies for the Bank-funded projects.</p> |

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| <p>14. We are concerned about the risk associated with SD3 (Public and private sector stakeholders decline to engage in discussions to mainstream biodiversity because political or economic demands). It is good to see this articulated in the risk assessment section (Page 138). As stated in the table, “the CEPF does not operate at a financial magnitude to command or demand engagement from host-country government or private sector.” We would like to hear more on the mitigation measures for this aspect as this also has bearing on other SDs (investment priority 2.1, 4.1, and 4.4).</p> | <p>This is a risk inherent in CEPF’s <i>modus operandi</i> of engaging and strengthening CSOs in biodiversity conservation. Nevertheless, CEPF’s experience from other hotspots, including the Caucasus and Mountains of Southwest China (which have similarities with the socio-political conditions in the Mountains of Central Asia), suggests that this risk can be mitigated in a number of ways.</p> <p>First, relevant government agencies have been closely involved in the preparation of the ecosystem profile, including the formulation of the Strategic Directions and Investment Programs. They will continue to be involved during development of the grant portfolio, through national advisory committees or other appropriate structures.</p> <p>Second, the RIT will be resourced and mandated to liaise closely with host-country governments, to ensure good alignment between CEPF investments and national priorities, such as those set out in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and to facilitate engagement by grantees.</p> <p>Third, the proposed investment strategy set out in Chapter 12 (pp115-137) does not anticipate grants being awarded under Strategic Direction 3 (and Investment Priorities 2.1, 4.1 and 4.4) in every country. There are 23 investment priorities in total, which allows for flexible implementation. The resulting grant portfolios in countries with limited political space for civil society may look very different from those in countries where civil society has greater opportunity to engage with and influence public and private sector actors.</p> <p>Fourth, the typical size of grants awarded under Strategic Direction 3 may be significantly greater than average, because such grants are likely to gain greater attention and traction from government partners. This suggests a grantee mix dominated by larger, higher capacity institutions, with established credibility with government. In addition, the RIT may facilitate the development of clusters of grants that, collectively, have sufficient funding from CEPF and co-financing to operate at the appropriate scale and achieve meaningful impact.</p> <p>The mitigation measures column of the risk analysis (pp142-144) has been edited accordingly.</p> |

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| 15. The assertion (page 141, para 1) that the CEPF can possibly “ <i>exert its strategic leadership to help policymakers in the region incorporate the KBA designation into routine government administration</i> ” is not realistic. Again such statements should be avoided because (a) CEPF is yet to fully engage in a region; and (b) our experience and the experience of other development partners point to a very challenging work environment, which cannot not be underestimated. | The relevant text (p146) has been deleted, to ensure that readers have appropriate expectations for the overall portfolio and for the role that CEPF can play. |
| 16. Page V: same names listed two times in several places. | Edits have been made to the list of stakeholders (pV) to remove duplications. |
| 17. Page 5: received about one hundred individual CSOs responses not “responded.” | The relevant text (p5) has been edited accordingly. |
| 18. Page 9: “Both Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, for example, identify 20-30 ecosystem types within their territories, but classifications of ecosystems vary both within countries and between countries, so it is difficult to make a universal comparison.” Not clear why would classification in the same country vary? | Edits have made to this paragraph (p10) to improve clarity. The text now reads “ <i>The number, extent, and sequence of vegetation zones vary across the hotspot as a function of temperature gradients, moisture gradients, slope aspect, altitude, and latitude, and depending on the system of classification, countries report between 20-30 different ecosystem types within their borders</i> ”. |
| 19. Page 58: The purpose of this Table is not clear also not sure if the Table is valid. Among 100 nationalities in Kazakhstan only 2 are mentioned and Uyghurs are really a minority. | Table 5.6 (p60) summarizes the main ethnicities, languages, and religions within the hotspot portion of each country within the hotspot. In Kazakhstan, for instance, there are many nationalities but only a small proportion of these are found within the hotspot. The table is not intended to provide a comprehensive listing of all nationalities and ethnicities but, rather, to indicate the ethnic diversity of the region and suggest the need for specialized outreach and communication during implementation of the grants program. The text of Section 5.4.3 (pp60-61) has been clarified accordingly. |
| 20. Page 59. The role of women: the description is rather superficial and is based on assumptions. The regional features within each country are not taken into account. If there is no substantial research based data, better not mention gender issues. | Section 5.4.4 on gender (p61) has been rewritten to address this comment. |
| 21. P 88 onwards. In the description, there is no clear link between the mitigation and adaptation responses and biodiversity. | New paragraphs have been added to Sections 9.3.1, 9.3.2, and 9.3.3 (pp92-95) to elaborate on the link between biodiversity and the mitigation and adaptation responses. |

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| <p>22. The text seems to be too much focused on the snow leopard and ungulates, and leaves other important species aside, in particular some of the large carnivores. While the priority put on snow leopard is understandable, it seems disproportionate that there is just one mention of wolves in the whole text in the paragraph on human-wildlife conflicts (I appreciate the CEPF priority on managing human-wildlife conflicts opening an opportunity for financing, but this is just one specific aspect of wolf population management). However, neither wolves, lynx nor bears appear in the list of priority species or in the paragraph on species synonyms and subspecies. While these species are of least concern according to IUCN globally, there are local subspecies / populations present in the region which would deserve more attention.</p> | <p>CEPF’s approach is predicated on conservation of global biodiversity. Specifically, it has been CEPF’s long-established practice to equate species conservation outcomes to globally threatened species per the IUCN Red List (which is the recognized authority on species’ conservation status). None of the species of wolf, lynx and bear that occur in the Mountains of Central Asia Hotspot are currently considered globally threatened. This is because they are all widely distributed species that occur outside of the hotspot. While their populations may be in decline in certain countries or areas, the overall status of the global population does not place them at risk of extinction. This matter is addressed by Sections 4.1.1 on the methodology (p19) and 4.2.3 on limitations to the methodology (pp25-29).</p> <p>In response to this comment, and in recognition of the fact that wolf, lynx and bear are viewed as national priorities for conservation in some or all hotspot countries, these species have been added to Appendix 3 on candidate species outcomes (pp162-163), thereby recognizing their importance in the region and flagging them as priorities for other funders. If the global threat status of these species is raised to threatened, they will automatically be added to the list of species outcomes, and will be candidates for inclusion on the list of priority species under Strategic Direction 1. In the meantime, it should be noted that these species will all benefit from conservation actions under Strategic Direction 2 that address KBAs where the species occur.</p> |
| <p>23. Consider migratory species, the Convention on Migratory Species, the Central Asian Mammals Initiative, the Raptors MoU, and the relationship between any of these and linear infrastructure.</p> | <p>Table 6.8 (p72) shows signatories to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Central Asian Mammals Initiative (CAMI). Of the 15 species listed as priorities by CAMI, two are prioritized for CEPF investment (Bukhara Deer and Snow Leopard) and a third is recognized as a candidate species outcome (Argali). The remaining species listed as priorities by CAMI either do not occur within the hotspot or occur their only marginally.</p> <p>Section 10.2.2 (p108) has been added to elaborate on these initiatives. The narrative descriptions of Strategic Direction 1 (p126) and Investment Priority 4.4 (pp132-133) have also been updated to mention these initiatives and the relationship to linear infrastructure.</p> |
| <p>24. We would like to see greater incorporation of gender considerations. It’s important to remember that gender considerations are not simply the lack of discrimination, but considering how women often have different relationship and use of the environment. There may also be particular barriers to women and women’s organizations in organizational development, applying for funding, etc.</p> | <p>Section 5.4.4 on gender (p61) has been rewritten and the narrative description of Investment Priority 6.1 (pp136-137) has been expanded to address this comment.</p> <p>The following target has been added to the logical framework at the objective level: <i>“Number of women receiving direct socio-economic benefits through increased income, food security, resource rights, or other measures of human wellbeing from CEPF grants is no less than 40% the number of men”</i> (p138). In addition, the following intermediate indicator has been added under Outcome 6: <i>“At least 10 local civil society organizations receiving grants demonstrate improved understanding of and commitment to gender issues”</i> (p141).</p> |

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| 25. The comments provided by my colleagues emphasize the challenges of the CEPF's mission in this region. They felt that it was a very narrow approach, so there is an importance in thinking about how the CEPF can pilot and promote replication and lessons learned. | The narrative description of Investment Priority 6.1 (pp136-137) and Chapter 14 on sustainability (pp145-146) have been revised to respond to this comment. Investment Priorities 5.2 and 5.3 (pp134-135) also respond to this issue specifically. |
| 26. They also suggested contacting Sulan Cheng from the GEF SGP program on a landscape approach. | A phone call with Sulan Chen of the GEF Small Grants Program (SGP) and her colleague Diana Salvemini was held on 13 June 2017. This call revealed that, while there was overlap between some of the conservation corridors identified in the ecosystem profile and the landscapes where the SGP is working, this does not extend to the priority corridors for CEPF investment. In this regard, the investments are geographically complementary. The call also provided an opportunity to discuss complementarity and potential synergies between the two programs, including the possibility of announcing joint calls for proposals and co-funding particular grantees. |
| 27. Consider lessons learned from GEF work on agri-biodiversity. | Agrobiodiversity conservation was consistently highlighted by stakeholders throughout the ecosystem profiling process, particularly in relation to the economic and cultural significance of wild fruit and nut trees and ongoing efforts to maintain seed stocks and protect standing forests. Consideration was given to lessons from the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and from projects supported by CEPF's global donors, including the GEF. These lessons are reflected in Strategic Directions 1 (species conservation) and 4 (production landscapes) and will be applied to the several priority species that are crop relatives, such as wild almond, wild apricot and various wild apples and pears (Table 12.1, pp116-117). |