

Evaluation of Lessons Learned in relation to the
Regional Implementation Team for the
Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APO	Annual Portfolio Overview
CBO	Community-based organization
CEPF	Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
CSO	Civil society organization
IEB	Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil
IP	Investment Priority
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
LOI	Letter of Interest
RNNP	Private Natural Heritage Reserves
RFP	Request for Proposals
RIT	Regional Implementation Team
SGM	Small Grant Mechanism
SD	Strategic Direction
TOR	Terms of Reference



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Executive Summary

The Cerrado Hotspot in central South America has a total land area of over 2 million km², principally (99.3%) in Brazil, with the remainder located in Paraguay (0.41%) and Bolivia (0.29%). The Cerrado is one of the world's largest and biologically richest tropical savanna ecosystems. In 2013, the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (CEPF) formally approved the Cerrado Ecosystem Profile and allocated \$8 million for the hotspot. The investment is guided by seven Strategic Directions and 17 investment priorities, and geographically focused on 62 priority sites in 4 corridors. The program is due to formally end in November 2022.

In each of the biodiversity hotspots where it invests, CEPF selects a Regional Implementation Team (RIT) to support operations and provide strategic leadership for the program. An RIT consists of one or more civil society organizations (CSOs) active in conservation in the hotspot. The objective of the RIT is to convert the plans in the Ecosystem Profile into a coherent grant portfolio that achieves the objectives outlined in the logical framework. Through a competitive selection process, the International Institute of Education of Brazil (IEB) was selected to serve as the RIT for the Cerrado hotspot, headquartered in Brasilia.

This independent evaluation of the incumbent RIT entails an examination of its performance and the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned associated with the RIT role. The purpose is to inform future RIT selection processes and applicants for the RIT role in the event of re-investment by CEPF in the Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot (noting that no such re-investment is currently envisioned). The scope of the evaluation encompasses RIT performance and lessons learned in relation to the Cerrado geography, the capacity of civil society in the hotspot, the budget allocated to the RIT, and achievement of deliverables as defined in the RIT Terms of Reference (TOR) and grant agreement with CEPF. The evaluation of lessons learned covered seven main themes. Three of these themes relate to relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the RIT. Four of the themes concern the nature of the Cerrado grant portfolio, encompassing coverage, impact, accessibility, and adaptive management. Evaluation methods included document review and interviews.

Challenges faced by IEB included limited capacity on the part of some potential grantees, particularly smaller community-based organizations in more remote portions of the hotspot, and the communications and logistics difficulties involved in supporting these organizations. While these challenges were anticipated, others were not and demanded flexibility and adaptability. One unanticipated challenge was the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020; another was the 2018 election of the Bolsonaro administration and resulting deterioration in the policy context for conservation and indigenous rights in Brazil. Working together, CEPF and IEB effectively met these challenges through a combination of budget reallocations and extended timelines, and pivoting from activities that required federal government and private sector support to alternative protected area strategies working with local communities.



Consequently, despite challenges, the outcomes of the program and the performance of IEB as RIT were successful. Between July 2016 and June 2022 (extended because of COVID-related delays), CEPF's Cerrado investment supported more than 60 small- to large-scale projects, representing a significant increase in support for conservation in the hotspot. The bulk of portfolio targets have been met or exceeded, and IEB implemented the program with effective budget management. Almost the entirety of the grant portfolio was implemented by local organizations, and for several organizations this first experience as grant recipients resulted in marked capacity increases. All grantees noted great appreciation for the CEPF grants as well as IEB's support, and their contribution to improving the funding context for conservation in the Cerrado and putting in place a regional network of like-minded entities that can continue to support conservation in the hotspot after CEPF exits in November 2022.

Document review and the preponderance of interviews indicate that IEB performed very well as RIT for the Cerrado biodiversity hotspot. There is broad consensus that the RIT communicated well with grantees and effectively provided necessary guidance and support; moreover, IEB effectively cultivated network links among grantees, noted in several interviews as one of the most significant contributions. However, feedback from the RIT and CEPF staff and a review of the portfolio's execution suggest two ways in which the overall portfolio strategy itself presented challenges. First, the scope of Strategic Directions and priority corridors may have been too ambitious given the timeframe and resources available for such a large hotspot confronting multiple threats; second, the formidable challenge posed by the agribusiness sector in the Cerrado may not be amenable to effective response through CEPF investment, given the scale of resources required.

The prominence of Indigenous and traditional community organizations (notably *quilombolas*) in the portfolio gives rise to reflections on the suitability of CEPF processes and requirements in such community settings. With RIT guidance and intermediation, all but three of these organizations ultimately succeeded as small grantees. However, this required considerable effort on the part of the RIT; more generally, IEB's experience on this front suggests that there may be value to an exercise to consider how processes and requirements could be adjusted to better fit Indigenous and traditional peoples contexts, in line with wider global trends relating to Indigenous-led conservation.

Main lessons learned with respect to CEPF investment in the Cerrado include:

- The CEPF investment and IEB efforts elevated the visibility of the hotspot, particularly among the international donor community. It also created a strong, synergistic network of like-minded organizations, communities and individuals working towards conservation of the region.
- The relationship between IEB and CEPF was positive and productive, based on a strong shared commitment to work through management differences, and measures like translating key documents into Portuguese and raising the small grant limit to \$50,000.



- IEB served as a professional, dedicated and engaged RIT with established institutional infrastructure, and successfully managed CEPF investments, including calls for LOIs, the application process, and reporting requirements from grantees. The second RIT leader played a particularly important role in overseeing CEPF's portfolio through dedicated and consistent leadership for most of the investment period. The creation of a separate online monitoring system for small grants by the RIT may have contributed to some of the frustrations grantees felt when reporting project results, but it will ensure preservation of institutional knowledge and lessons learned after CEPF exits the region.
- The Cerrado portfolio faced an unprecedented crisis with the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and political risks brought on by the 2018 presidential election of Jair Bolsonaro, yet through a series of adaptive management measures, CEPF and RIT staff were able to extend the project by one year with no additional funding necessary and bring the investment to a successful close.
- The single biggest driver of habitat destruction in the Cerrado is the agribusiness sector, which largely continues to resist measures to mitigate its impacts and promote conservation. The Long-term Vision developed for the hotspot offered insights on how best to approach this sector, focusing on water/ecosystem services as entry points for more successful engagement with the sector here and in other hotspots.
- CEPF recognized in the Ecosystem Profile that there were limited opportunities to create and strengthen conventional protected areas in the Cerrado due to an unfavorable political and economic environment. Focusing protected area creation and strengthening efforts at the municipal, private and indigenous/traditional community levels helped the portfolio not only surpass its protected area goals, but also to create and strengthen local capacity. It demonstrated how protected areas can be created and expanded despite adverse political and economic conditions.
- A relatively small number of grants took a disproportionate amount of time to guide through the approval process and administer once approved. This is likely caused by CEPF's focus on supporting CSOs and community-level groups that may lack initial project management capacity and thus require relatively more time and attention from RIT and CEPF staff. While challenging at times for the RIT, this is an integral and desirable aspect of CEPF investments.
- The focus on building capacity at the local level was highly appropriate and yielded concrete results.

Given the overall findings that the IEB was an effective RIT, principal recommendations relate more to wider CEPF strategy and processes. Specifically:

- Given its strong performance as RIT, IEB should be considered as the RIT for any future new investment by CEPF in the Cerrado.
- For future investment in this and other portfolios, CEPF should consider whether circumstances warrant allowing RITs to manage longer project time frames and/or fewer projects with larger grants, including an "umbrella" mechanism where a large



- grantee could make smaller sub-grants to complementary projects. Allocating more staff and resources to the initial phases of the investment period could potentially help future portfolios avoid some of the challenges faced by both CEPF and RIT in the first year of implementation.
- Narrowing focus in terms of both strategic directions and geographic priority areas merits consideration, particularly in a large hotspot like the Cerrado, as a possible means to increase overall impact and reduce the risk of too thinly spreading resources.
 - CEPF could consider how to develop more deliberate and explicit “entry” and “exit” strategies with future RITs. For the “entry” strategy, consideration could be given to how to better inform key stakeholders and sectors on potential opportunities for CEPF investment prior to initiating activities, while a more developed “exit” strategy could involve greater emphasis on ensuring that grantees have clearly established paths for sustainability after CEPF investment.
 - A more explicit approach for assessing and managing risks relating to local grantees with lower levels of initial capacity could potentially enhance efficient grant management at the level of individual grants as well as the portfolio.
 - CEPF could explore ways to ensure RITs continue to have access to important project data that helps preserve institutional knowledge and lessons learned after exiting a hotspot, and avoids RIT desire to implement additional reporting platforms.
 - Reassessment should be considered as to whether and how CEPF engages large-scale commodity producers in ecosystems like the Cerrado, where they are the biggest drivers of habitat destruction.
 - CEPF should examine whether administrative policies and procedures are suitable for effectively supporting indigenous and traditional community groups, in ways that are culturally appropriate and responsive to their specific needs. Acquiring indigenous expertise within the CEPF Secretariat could aid in that effort.



Introduction

Introduction

The Brazilian Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot

The Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot, located in central South America, has a total land area of over 2 million km², the vast majority (99.3%) in Brazil, with the remainder located in Paraguay (0.41%) and Bolivia (0.29%). According to Mittermeier et al. (2004), the Cerrado is one of the world's largest and biologically richest tropical savanna ecosystems, with high levels of biodiversity and endemism throughout the hotspot. The region also provides critical ecosystem services, with the headwaters of three of South America's major river basins (Amazon/Tocantins, São Francisco and Plata) originating in the hotspot. The Cerrado is highly threatened, with over 50% of the original habitat altered by human activity by 2016.¹ Principal threats to the region's biodiversity and ecosystem services include expansion of the agricultural frontier (principally soy, cotton, sugarcane and beef), increased urbanization, fires, invasive species and climate change.

In 2013, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) formally approved the Cerrado Ecosystem Profile and allocated \$8 million for the hotspot. The investment is guided by seven Strategic Directions and 17 investment priorities, described in **Table 1**. **Table 2** summarizes budget allocations for each Strategic Direction. Between July 2016 and June 2022 (extended because of COVID-related delays), CEPF Cerrado issued five calls for proposals and approved 64 small- to large-scale projects throughout the hotspot. The program is due to formally end in November 2022.

As noted in the 2019 Midterm report, in terms of geographic distribution, CEPF's Cerrado portfolio can be divided into five different clusters:

- *Cerrado*: Projects that encompass the entire Cerrado, implementing activities such as training, events and mapping at the hotspot scale.
- *District Federal (DF)/ Goiás (GO)*: Projects that work in the center of the hotspot, with a focus on issues such as the territorial management of small areas and the management of endangered species.
- *Matopiba*: Projects that work in the central/northern region of the Cerrado, more precisely in the states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí and Bahia, with a focus on mapping of communities, species and territorial conflicts.

¹ Ecosystem Profile: Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot. February 2017



- *Mato Grosso do Sul (MS)/ Mato Grosso (MT)*: Projects that work in the southern region of the Cerrado, working with small rural properties and traditional extractivist communities², as well as on the issue of municipal environmental councils.

- *Minas Gerais (MG)*: Projects concentrated further to the southeast of the hotspot, which involve protected area landscape management, cooperation to enhance management practices in extractive sectors, as well as training for the conservation of the hotspot.³

With these five clusters, CEPF identified four priority corridors from an original list of 13. These four corridors are in the northern and eastern sections of the hotspot and include Mirador-Mesas, Central of Matopiba, Veadeiros-Pouso Alto-Kalungas and Sertão Veredas-Peruaçu. Sixty-two priority sites to focus investments were also identified within the four priority corridors, using biological, socioeconomic and ecosystem services criteria, as well as a prioritization of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).⁴

Table 1: CEPF Strategic Directions and Respective Investment Priorities for the Cerrado Hotspot

CEPF Strategic Directions (SD)	CEPF Investment Priorities (IP)
1. Promote the adoption of best practices in agriculture in the priority corridors	1.1 Identify and disseminate sustainable technologies and production practices in the agriculture sector to ensure protection of biodiversity, maintenance of ecosystem services and food security
	1.2 Promote the development and adoption of public policies and economic incentives for improved agricultural and livestock production practices, promoting sustainable agricultural landscapes
2. Support the creation/ expansion and effective management of protected areas in the priority corridors	2.1 Support studies and analyses necessary to justify the creation and expansion of public protected areas, while promoting conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and valuing local and traditional culture
	2.2 Promote the inclusion of existing indigenous, <i>quilombola</i> and traditional populations, respecting and integrating their traditional knowledge, into conservation/restoration planning by government and civil society
	2.3 Encourage the creation and implementation of private protected areas (RPPNs) to extend legal protection in priority KBAs

² Communities that rely on extraction of natural products, such as babassu palm (*Attalea speciosa*), for part or all of their livelihoods.

³ Mid-Term Assessment: July 2016 - April 2019 CEPF Investment in the Cerrado Biodiversity hotspot. May 2019

⁴ Ecosystem Profile: Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot. February 2017



3. Promote and strengthen supply chains associated with the sustainable use of natural resources and ecological restoration in the hotspot	3.1 Support the development of markets and supply chains for sustainably harvested non-timber products, in particular for women and youth
	3.2 Promote capacity-building initiatives in particular among seed collectors, seedlings producers and those who carry out restoration activities, to enhance technical and management skills and low- cost, ecologically appropriate technologies in the supply chain of ecological restoration
	3.3 Promote the adoption of public policies and economic incentives to expand the scale and effectiveness of conservation and restoration of Permanent Preservation Areas (APPs) and Legal Reserves (LRs), through improved productive systems that enhance ecosystem services
4. Support the protection of threatened species in the hotspot	4.1 Support the implementation of National Action Plans (PANs) for priority species, with a focus on habitat management and protection
5. Support the implementation of tools to integrate and to share data on monitoring to better inform decision-making processes in the hotspot	5.1 Support the dissemination of data on native vegetation cover and dynamics of land uses, seeking reliability and shorter time intervals between analyses and informed evidence-based decision- making
	5.2 Support the collection and dissemination of monitoring data on quantity and quality of water resources, to integrate and to share data on the main river basins in the hotspot
6. Strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to promote better management of territories and of natural resources and to support other investment priorities in the hotspot	6.1 Strengthen capacities of civil society organizations to participate in collective bodies and processes related to the management of territories and natural resources
	6.2 Develop and strengthen technical and management skills of civil society organizations, on environment, conservation strategy and planning, policy advocacy, fund raising, compliance with regulations and other topics relevant to investment priorities
	6.3 Facilitate processes of dialogue and cooperation among public, private and civil society actors to identify synergies and to catalyze integrated actions and policies for the conservation and sustainable development of the Cerrado
	6.4 Disseminate information about the biological, ecological, social and cultural functions of the Cerrado to different stakeholders, including civil society leaders, decision makers, and national and international audiences
7. Coordinate the implementation of the investment strategy of the CEPF in the hotspot	7.1 Coordinate and implement the strategy of investments of CEPF in the Cerrado, through procedures to ensure the effective use of resources and achievement of expected results
	7.2 Support and strategically guide the network of institutions responsible for the implementation of actions and projects



through a Regional Implementation Team	funded by CEPF, promoting their coordination, integration, cooperation and exchange of experiences and lessons learned
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Table 2: Original CEPF Budget Allocations per Strategic Direction (SD)

No.	Strategic Direction (SD)	Funding
1	Promote the adoption of best practices in agriculture in the priority corridors	\$800,000
2	Support the creation/ expansion and effective management of protected areas in the priority corridors	\$1,200,000
3	Promote and strengthen supply chains associated with the sustainable use of natural resources and ecological restoration in the hotspot	\$1,800,000
4	Support the protection of threatened species in the hotspot	\$700,000
5	Support the implementation of tools to integrate and to share data on monitoring to better inform decision-making processes in the hotspot	\$500,000
6	Strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to promote better management of territories and of natural resources and to support other investment priorities in the hotspot	\$2,000,000
7	Coordinate the implementation of the investment strategy of the CEPF in the hotspot through a Regional Implementation Team	\$1,000,000
Total		\$8,000,000

Regional Implementation Team

In each of the biodiversity hotspots where it invests, CEPF selects a Regional Implementation Team (RIT) to support operations and provide strategic leadership for the program (SD7). An RIT consists of one or more civil society organizations (CSOs) active in conservation in the hotspot. The objective of the RIT is to convert the plans in the Ecosystem Profile into a coherent grant portfolio that achieves the objectives outlined in the logical framework.

Through a competitive selection process, the Brazilian Civil Society Organization (CSO) the International Institute of Education of Brazil (IEB) was selected as the CEPF RIT, having worked for over two decades on issues related to natural resource conservation, economic, social and cultural sustainability, and grant making. At the writing of this evaluation, 53 large and small grants had been officially closed or terminated, with another 11 large grants still active. The IEB is headquartered in Brasilia, with offices in Belém, Pará and Humaitá



(Amazonas). **Table 3** details key RIT members and positions that have overseen the Cerrado portfolio since work commenced in 2016.

Table 3: Regional Implementation Team Members

Name	Position(s)	Start Date	End Date
Henyo Trindade Barretto Filho	RIT Team Leader	January 2016	July 2016
Michael Becker	RIT Team Leader	September 2016	April 2022
Aryanne Amaral	RIT Team Leader	May 2022	Current
Aryanne Amaral	Project Assistant	June 2017	April 2022
Michael Jackson de Oliviera Alves	GIS intern/Project Assistant	July 2017	Current
Camila Pinheiro de Castro	Grants Manager	January 2016	December 2018
Claudia Sachetto	Grants Manager	February 2019	Current
Magdalena Lambert	Financial Management (part-time)	January 2016	Current
Maria-José Gontijo	Founder and General Coordinator for IEB engagement with donors and private sector (part-time)	January 2016	February 2022

Grant portfolio

Over the 6+ years of the investment window (the original five-year period, extended by 17 months owing to COVID-related delays and restrictions), CEPF and the RIT approved 64 grants, excluding the initial \$1 million grant to the RIT, later increased by \$59,758 in March 2022. This included 33 large grants (approximately \$6 million) and 31 small grants (approximately \$885,000),⁵ with over 96% of the grants going to Brazilian organizations. **Table 4** below summarizes the grant portfolio allocation, as well as percentage of original budget that was allocated versus funding that was spent as of June 2022 during the investment phase:

⁵ There were 31 total small grants approved, but one (*Associação dos Pequenos Produtores Rurais Quilombolas de Onça e Adjacências*) ultimately did not receive funding before being terminated. Two additional small grants (*Associação Xavante de Etenhiritipá* and *Pesquisa e Conservação do Cerrado - PEQUI*) received partial funding, but were terminated prior to completion.



Table 4: Summary of Cerrado Grant Portfolio (as of June 2022)

Grant Size	Number	CEPF Investment
Large grant	33	\$6,005,060
Small grant	31	\$885,297
Total	64	\$6,890,357
Strategic Direction	Grant size/Number	
SD 1: Mainstreaming Biodiversity	Large (2)	\$489,018
	Small (2)	\$34,273
Total		\$523,291
<i>Percent of original SD budget (\$800,000)</i>		<i>65%</i>
SD 2: Creating Protected areas	Large (7)	\$1,463,400
	Small (8)	\$196,321
Total		\$1,659,721
<i>Percent of original SD budget (\$1,200,000)</i>		<i>138%</i>
SD 3: Supporting Supply Chains	Large (8)	\$1,637,601
	Small (7)	\$199,379
Total		\$1,836,977
<i>Percent of original SD budget (\$1,800,000)</i>		<i>102%</i>
SD 4: Protecting Priority Species	Large (3)	\$429,784
	Small (4)	\$128,783
Total		\$558,567
<i>Percent of original SD budget (\$700,000)</i>		<i>80%</i>
SD 5: Disseminating Decision-making Data	Large (2)	\$319,000
	Small (3)	\$86,901
Total		\$405,901
<i>Percent of original SD budget (\$500,000)</i>		<i>81%</i>
SD 6: Strengthening Civil Society Organizations	Large (11)	\$1,675,276
	Small (7)	\$243,895
Total		\$1,919,171
<i>Percent of original SD budget (\$2,000,000)</i>		<i>96%</i>



Purpose and Scope of Evaluation of Lessons Learned

This independent evaluation of the incumbent RIT entails an examination of its performance and the challenges, opportunities and lessons learned associated with the RIT role. The purpose of this evaluation is to inform future RIT selection processes and applicants for the RIT role in the event of re-investment by CEPF in the Cerrado hotspot, if future funding becomes available (the findings may also be of interest to other donors who support work in the hotspot). Thus, the results will guide decisions by CEPF donors regarding optimal programmatic and management approaches for coordinating any future investment. The scope of the evaluation encompasses RIT performance and lessons learned in relation to: the Cerrado geography, the capacity of civil society in the hotspot, the budget allocated to the RIT, and achievement of deliverables as defined in the RIT Terms of Reference (TOR) and grant agreement with CEPF.

Evaluation Approach

Methodology

The evaluation of lessons learned covered seven main themes. Three of these themes relate to relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the RIT. Four of the themes concern the nature of the Cerrado grant portfolio, encompassing coverage, impact, accessibility, and adaptive management.

Evaluation methods included document review and interviews. Documents reviewed included the original EIB proposal to CEPF, Ecosystem Profile and logframe, RIT progress reports, Annual Portfolio Overviews and supervision mission reports, the Midterm assessment, project summaries on the CEPF-IEB online reporting platform and the 2021 Long-Term Vision (**see Annex A for a full list**). Themes and conclusions derived from the desk review provided the basis for interviews with key informants to refine and expand on findings. A semi-structured interview methodology was used: interviews were conducted using an interview guide with prepared open-ended questions and discussion topics (**see Annex B for the interview guide**). Semi-structured interviews allowed for discussions to evolve as they took place, and for pursuing promising lines of inquiry as they emerged. A complete list of key informants was provided by the CEPF Secretariat, including grantees, CEPF Secretariat staff, and RIT staff.

A sample of 16 grantees (25% of the total) was selected based on input from CEPF and RIT members, with representation across the hotspot, grant type (small/large), period of awards, habitat, pillar, organizational status, and organization location (local/international). Key informants were contacted via email, and at least two follow up



attempts to schedule an interview were made. Key RIT staff members, notably Aryanne Amaral, were extremely helpful in providing updated contact information and suggestions on how best to contact community-based grantees without regular internet access (WhatsApp being the preferred means of communication). In total, eight grantees (five large grants and three small grants) responded and were interviewed for the evaluation. This included one grantee (FINATEC) that executed both a small and large grant, and another, WWF-Brazil, that executed three large grants. **Annex C** contains the list of all key informants interviewed, as well as the selected sample of grantees.

Limitations

Although the evaluation team is confident that the lessons learned as compiled in this report are a fair reflection of the CEPF Cerrado investment experience, the evaluation process itself was subject to limitations, primarily the inability to travel. This resulted in input only being provided by those persons who responded to requests for virtual meetings. This posed a particular challenge with respect to smaller NGOs in remote areas with limited communications connections. Indeed, interviews with two small, community-based organizations relied on WhatsApp, as internet service is not consistently accessed or available in those communities.

In addition, the virtual format of the interviews itself impacted the nature of the exchanges, potentially stifling sharing of input relative to in-person conversations. As a result, there was no possibility of obtaining direct impressions with respect to such factors as capacity or impact on the ground. Assessment of impact therefore necessarily relied on available documentation, which principally took the form of self-reporting; thus, there was no practicable way to subject data to independent ground-truthing. Moreover, there were limited responses from the grantees, with only eight of the 16 grantees (five large and three small) responding positively to requests for interviews, or just 15% of the large grant portfolio and just over 9.6% for the small grant portfolio.⁶ However, given the consistency of feedback from both small and large grantees that were interviewed, EcoAdvisors is confident that, despite the small sample size, the findings are broadly representative of grantees views of both RIT and CEPF's oversight of the portfolio.

Another limitation relates to a theme that was raised in a subset of the interviews. The evaluation team sought to identify lessons learned relating to the RIT structure and capacity; however, some interviews indicated that the Cerrado RIT experience was to a degree adversely impacted by interpersonal dynamics between grantees and the RIT as well as the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat. Different work and communication styles required some time for mutual adjustment. Also, although the formal RIT-CEPF relationship is a grantee-grantor one governed by a grant agreement, there was a view on the part of IEB that the relationship needed to be more like a collaborative partnership to successfully

⁶ WWF-Brazil managed three large grants and FINATEC managed both a small and large grant, allowing for a relatively broader perspective than grantees that implemented only one grant.



reach the portfolio's goals (both parties indicated that this type of relationship ultimately did emerge). Finally, while some interviewees took exception at times with the style of the RIT Team Leader, others expressed appreciation for his assertive and direct approach. However, the portions of interviews that focused on this theme relate to particularities that are not very relevant to future replication of CEPF investments.

A third limitation on the evaluation derives from the lack of final results and budget allocations from CEPF's investment. The RIT provided preliminary results to the evaluation team on July 29, 2022, but emphasized that the information was still being assessed by them and CEPF, and therefore should not be regarded as final. Budget data from June 2022 indicated that nearly all investment funds have been spent, putting the portfolio on track to spend the allocated budget by November 2022.

Background

Duties of Regional Implementation Team

The following are the nine key components of the TOR (**see Annex D**). The activities and deliverables of the RIT are described in a logframe in the grant agreement between CEPF and IEB, and documented through semi-annual progress reports. The components of the logframe are consistent with the TOR. The nine components from the original RFP include:

1. Coordinate CEPF investment in the hotspot.
2. Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices.
3. Communicate the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot.
4. Build the capacity of local civil society.
5. Establish and coordinate a process for large grant proposal solicitation and review.
6. Manage a program of small grants of US\$20,000 (US\$50,000 or less in select approved regions).
7. Monitor and evaluate the impact of CEPF's large and small grants.
8. Lead the process to develop, over a three-month period, a long-term strategic vision for CEPF investment.
9. Reporting.

Grant portfolio

Over the 6+ years of the investment window, CEPF supported 64 grants (excluding the grant to the RIT). See **Table 4** above for a summary of the grant portfolio by grant size, strategic direction, and original budget/funds expended.



Findings

Relevance

Relevance relates to the degree to which RIT activities were relevant to the Ecosystem Profile, the RIT TOR, the hotspot geography, civil society capacity, and the CEPF global monitoring framework. This section describes the RIT activities undertaken under each of the main components of the TOR:

1. Coordinate CEPF investment in the hotspot

According to interviews with both CEPF and RIT staff, the RIT's overall coordination of CEPF investment in the hotspot was relevant to the portfolio's eventual outcomes. **A broad consensus exists that IEB was an effective RIT for the portfolio**, with only minimal challenges mentioned, such as differences of opinion on how specific management issues were best addressed within the context of the Cerrado. Turnover of key staff was rare, and when it did occur, new staff were hired with no significant disruptions in coordination. Early challenges, such as the small-grant limit of \$20,000, were identified and successfully modified to ensure more effective investments at the small grant level. Both CEPF and RIT staff consistently emphasized that when coordination challenges did arise, all parties successfully were able to mitigate them owing to mutual dedication to project outcomes.

Michael Becker, who served as Team Leader from September 2016 until April 2022, was generally regarded by interviewees as an effective RIT Team Leader and a key aspect of the RIT's coordination of CEPF's investment in the hotspot. By taking a dedicated and detailed-oriented approach as RIT leader, he was able to integrate CEPF's investment into the larger regional context, working well with key stakeholders, and elevating the hotspot's profile within Brazil. He also developed and secured other sources of funding to ensure longer-term sustainability of CEPF's investment after it exits the region. His communication and management styles at times created friction with CEPF staff, but his commitment to the hotspot and successful project outcomes enabled him to develop strong working relationships by the end of his tenure.

Although the RIT's overall coordination of CEPF's investment was sound, RIT staff noted that the lack of an "entry strategy" complicated the initial call for proposals, as there was a lack of understanding on the part of some key stakeholders (notably the agribusiness sector) of the potential opportunities available from CEPF funding. RIT staff also voiced concern over a lack of a more comprehensive "exit strategy" from the hotspot to ensure continuity and sustainability of CEPF's investment. This arguably is the responsibility of the RIT (with CEPF support), suggesting that there may have been a misalignment of expectations on this front. It also should be noted that during the Final Assessment



workshop attended by many of the grantees in late November 2021, CEPF did announce that their investment would be ending in 2022 with no additional funding for a Phase 2.

Finally, many RIT staff highlighted a similar challenge in their coordination of the CEPF portfolio: a relatively small number of both small and large grants took a disproportionate amount of time to guide through the application process and administer once approved. These grants tended to be to CSOs with little or no prior experience with international donors and reporting requirements, and many involved indigenous or traditional communities, such as *quilombolas*. While there was a strong consensus among RIT staff that working with these “riskier” communities was in many ways a key strategic component of CEPF’s overall approach in the hotspot, there were also questions as to how grants to these types of projects could be better managed in the future, with consideration currently being given to adding an indigenous peoples’ specialist to IEB’s staff.

2. Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices.

Given the role of the agribusiness sector’s impact in the Cerrado and the contentious political environment after the 2018 presidential election of Jair Bolsonaro, this was arguably the most challenging component of the TOR for the RIT. Accordingly, the largest gap between the original budget and final amount spent was for SD1 (Mainstreaming Biodiversity), with just over two-thirds of funds being spent by June 2022. Interviews with CEPF staff and the RIT and review of project reports noted that key stakeholders in the agricultural sector, primarily large-scale commodity producers, were largely not ready to substantively engage on the issue of conservation (with the exception of the coffee sector), and the political environment after 2018 and COVID-related restrictions in 2020 made full realization of SD1 difficult.

Staff in the RIT also noted that the aforementioned lack of a specific “entry strategy” for SD1 in particular, which would make CEPF’s goals more widely known among key stakeholders prior to initiating activities, exacerbated the already formidable challenges on this front. Nonetheless, preliminary results provided by IEB in July 2022 did indicate that most of the targets for SD1 had been achieved or were likely to be achieved, with the exception of Target 1.3 “*At least four financial incentives for sustainable land-sparing agricultural and livestock practices promoted among commodity chains in priority corridors,*” which was anticipated to only be 25% achieved by the end of the portfolio deadline.

Related to this component was SD2, which sought expansion of protected areas within the hotspot. RIT and CEPF staff interviewed emphasized that in both the Cerrado’s Ecosystem Profile and early in the portfolio’s implementation, it was clear that traditional protected areas, such as national and state parks, were likely not going to be feasible because of resistance from political and agribusiness leaders. This resistance only increased after the



presidential 2018 election of Jair Bolsonaro and his strong support for Brazil's agribusiness sector and opposition to conservation. The RIT, in collaboration with CEPF, was able to meet this challenge by focusing on more local protected area options, such as private reserves, municipal parks and indigenous and traditional community territories, which had previously not been highlighted in protected area creation efforts in the hotspot. Multiple grantees interviewed felt that CEPF-RIT's focus on local and private protected areas and indigenous/traditional people territories was highly innovative and would allow for continued policy support at those levels.

3. Communicate the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot

In terms of communicating and disseminating information about CEPF in the hotspot, the Cerrado's RIT performed several activities. Among the earliest activities was to work with CEPF to make available Portuguese translations of key CEPF documents, guidelines and templates, and it was the first RIT to ever publish a "glossy" version of a hotspot's Ecosystem Profile with an ISBN registration,⁷ establishing a new precedent for CEPF RITs to follow. A communications strategy was also developed and communication products, like the Fala Parceiros newsletter, were regularly disseminated, as were social media accounts (see: <https://twitter.com/cepfcerrado>). CEPF and RIT staff interviewed about communication-related issues characterized the coordination of communication activities as smooth and effective.

Notably, the RIT coordinated with CEPF to develop and regularly provide content for two websites to disseminate information relevant to conservation efforts in the Cerrado. The first website was the principal CEPF-IEB website to publish results, documents and other information on the impact the investment was having in the hotspot (<https://cepfcerrado.iieb.org.br/en/>). The second website is the Cerrado Knowledge Platform (<https://cepf.lapig.iesa.ufg.br/#/>), developed by the *Laboratório de Processamento de Imagens e Geoprocessamento* (Lapig) with CEPF funding. In addition to providing data on the Cerrado, including interactive maps with multiple data layers, the site also allows users to share and upload information.

Feedback from grantee and RIT staff interviews indicated that these efforts, combined with the management and oversight from both CEPF and the RIT, have helped to nationally and internationally elevate the profile of the hotspot, notably among the donor community. Though it is the world's largest savannah ecosystem, the Cerrado has long been neglected relative to other areas of Brazil such as the Amazon. By raising the profile of the Cerrado, there was hope among grantees and RIT staff that the hotspot would be able to continue securing resources after CEPF ended its investment and exited the region.

⁷ International Standard Book Number



4. Build the capacity of local civil society

Capacity building is a key operating mode for CEPF throughout its investments, and the Cerrado portfolio was no exception. Indeed, SD6 (*Strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to promote better management of territories and of natural resources and to support other investment priorities in the hotspot*) originally was the largest single SD allocation in the budget (\$2 million), with \$1.9 million eventually being expended by July 2022. Specifically, there were 11 large grants under SD6 (total \$1.675 million) and seven small grants (\$243,000) that received support for capacity building of civil society organizations.

All grantees interviewed noted the capacity-building role that CEPF and the RIT have served over the last six years. For example, both the *Instituto Jurumi para Conservação da Natureza* (small grant) and the *Associação Mineira de Defesa do Ambiente* (large grant) noted that they were both new, relatively small organizations when they received support from CEPF, and the process of project development, implementation and oversight allowed for significant internal administrative capacity-building that will help ensure long-term sustainability of both organizations. All small grantees noted the importance of the support they received from the RIT on CEPF technical and financial reporting requirements, and how that support enabled their staff to develop much stronger administrative capacities than existed prior to their projects.

Most grantees interviewed noted that while Brazil has relatively high capacity, significant sections of the Cerrado suffered from low capacity prior to the arrival of CEPF, notably at the local and community level. The region's profile was elevated as a result of CEPF's Ecosystem Profile and initial grant-making activities in 2016, allowing for the first time a comprehensive approach to building regional capacity. Specific reflections and lessons learned with regards to CEPF's capacity-building in the hotspot from grantees interviewed included:

- Given the political and economic environment, capacity-building at the local and community levels is critical for long-term conservation success in the Cerrado. Support for building capacity in indigenous and traditional communities to conserve their territories was a particularly successful component of CEPF's portfolio;
- CEPF and RIT's support for capacity building, both in terms of direct support under SD6 and in working with grantees' administrative capacity, were to a real degree successful, but the region's capacity-building needs remain considerable, notably in the northern part of the hotspot. Grantees also indicated strong support for a second phase of CEPF investment to consolidate and build on the first phase's work;
- While both the RIT and CEPF staff were extremely helpful in addressing capacity-building needs, some grantees felt that the resources and staff allocated for the project were insufficient, particularly with regards to CEPF in the early phase of their investment;



- Capacity building often takes a long time, so CEPF could have considered longer time frames in their project timelines, or should consider implementing a second phase of support.

In addition to strengthening capacity, the RIT was also lauded by both CEPF staff and grantees interviewed for the important role they played in fomenting partnerships and collaborations among the portfolio's grantees. Given the relatively high levels of capacity within the hotspot as well as Brazil, CEPF's overall strategy in the Cerrado has focused less on capacity building and more on creating and strengthening networks of like-minded stakeholders that can continue collaboration on key issues after the portfolio's investment period ends. Examples of RIT-supported collaborations provided during the interview process included: 1) *Rede de Sementes* work to provide seeds and habitat restoration assistance to other grantees, and 2) the project coordinator of the *Cooperativa Agropecuária dos Produtores Familiares de Niquelândia* supported large grantee *Associação Quilombo Kalunga's* work promoting agroforestry techniques to increase food security.

5. Establish and coordinate a process for large grant proposal solicitation and review

For large grants, the RIT and Grant Director prepare calls for proposals together; the Grant Director coordinates preparation and posting of the Request for Proposals (RFP) to the CEPF website, and the RIT is responsible for local dissemination. Potential applicants submit letters of inquiry (LOIs) via an online template. The RIT and Grant Director independently review all LOIs for large grants, with the RIT soliciting expert review as relevant (see below for small grants). If an LOI receives a positive review from both the Grant Director and RIT, the applicant is invited to submit a full proposal. As of June 2022, 33 large grants had been awarded (excluding the RIT grant), with 11 still active.

Table 5 below shows the number of LOI submissions from the five calls for proposals. As noted in the June 2021 Supervision Mission report, the first call was intentionally broad, open to all SDs and priority geographies, resulting in the largest number of LOIs received during the grant period. The second call was open to both small and large grants, with a focus on SD3, and Investment Priorities (IP) 4.1 (*Support the implementation of National Action Plans <PANs> for priority species, with a focus on habitat management and protection*), 5.2 (*Support the dissemination of data on native vegetation cover and dynamics of land uses, seeking reliability and shorter time intervals between analyses and informed evidence-based decision-making*) and 6.1 (*Strengthen capacities of civil society organizations to participate in collective bodies and processes related to the management of territories and natural resources*).

The third call helped to address gaps in the SDs still present in the project portfolio, with thirteen projects approved. The fourth and fifth calls resulted in only two LOIs being approved, the last being a large grant awarded to Impact Hub Brasilia (CEPF-111599) in March 2021. As with other CEPF project portfolios, the number of LOIs tended to decrease



over time, with early calls for proposals dedicated to a larger share of the investment strategy, thus attracting more LOIs. Subsequent calls for proposals thus became more targeted and reduced in scope to fill specific gaps that had not been filled by previous grants.

Feedback from large grantees on the RIT’s performance was overwhelmingly positive. The largest issues identified were the application/approval process and the subsequent reporting requirements for approved projects; however, all grantees interviewed said that the RIT’s support in both areas was consistently strong, allowing for their projects to succeed. As mentioned above, RIT staff did note that a lack of a specific “entry strategy” for beginning CEPF’s work in the hotspot (i.e. a specific strategy for presenting CEPF, its goals and funding opportunities to a broader audience of key stakeholders via regional hubs), likely made the initial round of LOIs for large grants more challenging than it would have been otherwise (though also recalling that this could be seen as a task for the RIT). Had such an “entry strategy” been implemented, the first call for proposals might have been smoother and generated greater interest among key groups, notably the agribusiness sector, in applying for a grant.

Table 5: LOIs Submitted per Call⁸

LOI Round	Received	Eligible, but not selected	Ineligible	Approved
1st Call	150	85	27	38
2nd Call	73	40	24	9
3rd Call	78	45	20	13
4th Call	31	4	26	1
5th Call	8	4	3	1

6. Manage a program of small grants of US\$20,000 (US\$50,000 or less in select approved regions)

The RIT was responsible for managing the CEPF Small Grant Mechanism (SGM) in the hotspot. CEPF obligated US\$800,000 to the SGM upon inception, with the RIT and IEB financial personnel managing small grants and disbursements. The maximum funding limit for small grants originally was US\$20,000, but was later increased to \$50,000 through an amendment after the RIT argued that given Brazil is a middle-income country, project expenses tend to be higher than in other hotspots, and to attract appropriate projects, the

⁸ Cerrado Supervision Mission Report, June 2021



small grant limit needed to be increased. The SGM was amended again during the investment phase with a cost-extension, reflecting both the RIT's desire to support more small grantees and CEPF's confidence in RIT's ability to administer additional funds. That CEPF was able to support both amendments to the SGM was highlighted by multiple grantees as evidence of flexibility and willingness to accommodate the "reality on the ground" in the Cerrado. As of June 2022, the RIT had approved 31 small grants, with none still active. Three of the small grants were terminated before final completion. According to the RIT, reasons for termination included:

- Internal management issues in one organization led to the decision to not move forward with the grant after it was approved, resulting in no funding being disbursed.
- For another organization, the local community experienced a number of COVID-related public health and food security issues after the grant was approved and challenges arose with the project's bank account, making implementation of activities difficult.
- For the third organization, persistent challenges were experienced in organizing and mobilizing community members and implementing prescribed burn activities, coupled with tensions around creating a documentary of the community.

Interviews indicate that overall, the RIT was very successful in the administration and oversight of the portfolio's small grant program. Small grantees interviewed were universally impressed and appreciative of the RIT's professionalism, dedication and support throughout project approval and implementation. One grantee did note conflicts that arose as the result of personality differences with a member of RIT's staff, but emphasized that mutual dedication on both sides allowed for eventual resolution and the completion of a successful project. While some small grantees noted few significant challenges with the initial application process and the technical and financial reporting required for the grants through the RIT reporting platform, most found both processes to be time-consuming and confusing, requiring significant amounts of support and capacity-building from the RIT.

Specific challenges for small grants cited during interviews included: 1) confusing application guidelines and often long time periods between submission and approval; 2) unclear reporting requirements for both technical and financial reporting, often requiring multiple attempts to submit the correct information, and 3) the need to input the same information into multiple reporting platforms. With regards to the multiple reporting platform challenge, this could have stemmed in part from the RIT developing its own online project monitoring system to ensure all grantee data were preserved after CEPF ended its investment in the hotspot and access to its ConservationGrants reporting platform was restricted. The RIT Team Leader emphasized in an interview the importance of maintaining project data after CEPF exited the hotspot to ensure retention of institutional knowledge and lessons learned should future investment opportunities become available.

All small grantees interviewed noted that the capacity-building and support provided by the RIT enabled them to eventually overcome the above challenges. They were also



particularly effusive in their praise of RIT's efforts to bring together grantees and other organizations active in the Cerrado to share experiences and knowledge of their work in the hotspot with CEPF. This effort has resulted in creating and strengthening a regional network of like-minded stakeholders working to conserve the Cerrado hotspot, with one small grantee calling it the most significant contribution made by CEPF. Finally, grants that began or continued in the first half of 2020 noted the considerable challenges from the onset of the COVID pandemic and the subsequent restrictions on travel and face-to-face meetings. Without exception, grantees interviewed noted that the RIT was proactive, supportive and flexible on how projects could continue to operate. Timelines were revised, IT support was provided and additional funds found from cost categories impacted by COVID-related restrictions (such as travel) and exchange rate gains, all of which collectively allowed for most small grants to continue operating.

7. Monitor and evaluate the impact of CEPF's large and small grants

The RIT is responsible for monitoring grantee accomplishments in relation to the Ecosystem Profile logical framework and according to the CEPF global monitoring framework. Grantees provide project results either directly online or via an offline template, with the RIT providing requisite verification and ground-truthing, in addition to any support that grantees require. The RIT also ensures that grantees follow all required World Bank safeguards as considerations of the grant. During the investment period, CEPF's grant portfolio triggered the following:

- 40 gender equality policies (30 large and 10 small grants)
- 58 stakeholder engagement policies (30 large and 18 small grants);
- 8 environmental and social assessment safeguards (4 each);
- 17 indigenous people safeguards (11 large and 6 small grants);
- 5 restrictions and involuntary resettlement safeguards (5 large grants).

Review of project documents and interviews with CEPF and RIT staff did not show any significant issues with the monitoring and evaluation of the portfolio. Challenges in the reporting process were highlighted by grantees, usually with regards to ensuring results were properly reported on and shared via CEPF reporting mechanisms, but as with other issues, all grantees interviewed said that the RIT's consistent follow up and oversight allowed for successful submission of results. As mentioned above, maintaining project data after CEPF exits the hotspot was a concern of RIT staff and likely drove the decision to develop a separate reporting platform for the small grants portfolio.

As in other hotspot portfolios, the RIT was responsible for conducting a Midterm assessment, which was conducted in May, 2019 and covered the period of July 2016 - April 2019. No significant issues were cited during the stakeholder interview process with regards to the production or content of the Midterm assessment. The report noted that by



the portfolio's mid-way point, 40 grants (21 large and 19 small) had spent over 61% of the original \$7 million for the portfolio's six SDs.⁹

8. Lead the process to develop, over a three-month period, a long-term strategic vision for CEPF investment

The RIT led the process and submitted a long-term vision document in July 2020, later updated and approved by June 2021. Initiated in April 2019, the long-term vision was developed by the RIT, with additional input provided by local experts and grantees, providing proposed long-term priorities for the hotspot. The document proposed six strategic directions for long-term conservation of the hotspot:

1. Promotion of best practices for water resource management;
2. Promotion and support for protected area creation and expansion, including for private reserves and local community/indigenous territories;
3. Support for investment in small and medium sustainable enterprises and supply chains, notably in traditional and indigenous communities;
4. Reconnect urban centers to the Cerrado through promotion of restoring ecosystems that deliver key services, such as water, to urban centers, and increasing production of native species seeds;
5. Support for implementing National Action Plans (PANs) for priority threatened species, focusing on habitat protection.
6. Support for strengthening civil society organizations' capacity to address environmental and sustainability issues, such as management of territories and improved natural resource management, with particular emphasis on increasing the number of community and civil society organizations in the states of Mato Grosso, Goiás, Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia.

The document recommended a more restricted geographic scope for activities over the longer-term, including the four priority corridors from the first phase, and adding the Araguaia and RIDE-DF Paranaíba-Abaeté corridors. It also recommended that the RIT consider longer grant periods for fewer organizations than in the first phase of CEPF's investment, and increase the amount of funding for small grants to \$100,000. Finally, the long-term vision recommended that CEPF continue working in the hotspot, either through another five year period (\$8.5 million) or a three-year extension of the first phase (\$3.5 million).¹⁰

9. Reporting

⁹ Mid-Term Assessment: July 2016 - April 2019 CEPF Investment in the Cerrado Biodiversity hotspot. May 2019

¹⁰ Long-Term Strategic Vision for Graduating Civil Society from CEPF Support: Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot. June 2021.



Reporting requirements per the TOR included items such as RIT training, participating in two supervision missions per year, preparation of financial and six-month reports and responding to requests from the CEPF Secretariat for information, travel and events to promote CEPF in the Cerrado. Reviews of reporting documents and interviews with RIT and CEPF staff showed no significant issues with the RIT's overall performance. As with other elements of the RIT's oversight and management, differences of opinion on how best to address specific issues were not unusual, and the RIT's financial reporting was cited as occasionally difficult to discern. However, none of these challenges impeded effective reporting, and all financial audits to date have found no material issues.

Efficiency

The efficiency of RIT operations considers how effectively the RIT converted its budget into results. Program impacts will be discussed in a later section; this section will focus mainly on the RIT's disbursement of grants.

During the CEPF investment phase, five calls for proposals were issued. The calls generated 340 Letters of Inquiry (LOI). Not including the grant to RIT, a total of 64 projects were eventually approved, or approximately 19% of all LOIs received. In addition to awarding grants through competitive calls, five large grants and six small grants totaling \$1.16 million were made on an invitation basis and one small planning grant was issued (\$5,032). Excluding the RIT grant, the total of 64 awarded grants reached a total value of \$6.96 million (as of July 2022). These comprised 33 large grants, with a total value of \$6.07 million, and 31 small grants, with a total value of over \$880,500.

By the Midterm-Evaluation (April 2019), approximately, over \$4.2 million (or 61% of the total budget, excluding the RIT) had been contracted, with an additional \$2.7 million projected in the pipeline or for special projects.¹¹ CEPF's total investment was originally scheduled to end in June 2021, but owing to delays and restrictions from COVID-19, as well as considerable gains in exchange rate, the investment phase, was extended to June 2022 with the RIT's grant extended to November 2022 to allow additional time for successful completion of outstanding grants. Funding for the RIT's grant extension came from gains in the exchange rate, along with additional savings from unspent travel funds and an additional \$59,758 allocated by the CEPF Secretariat in April 2022. These additional funds will ensure the continuity of RIT's operations until the formal end of CEPF's investment in November 2022, when additional funds are expected to be secured by the RIT.

With respect to the \$1 million RIT budget, **Table 6** presents the approximate percentage of the budget spent by the RIT per year of the grant lifetime. As seen in the table, spending was consistently steady until the end of March 2022, the last time period for which financial

¹¹ Mid-Term Assessment: July 2016 - April 2019 CEPF Investment in the Cerrado Biodiversity hotspot. May 2019



reports were made available, with the total percentage of budgeted funds spent roughly in line with each project year. The exception is in Year 5, when COVID restrictions went into effect leading to a slowdown of spending, notably in categories like travel and special events. These figures suggest that the original allocation among budget lines was aligned with the ultimate RIT structure, even after taking into account the unanticipated 17-month extension because of the pandemic.

Table 6: Percentage of RIT budget (SD7) expended over the course of CEPF investment (including 1-year extension until March 2022)¹²

Grantee Budget Category Name	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6 (as of end March 2022)
Bank and Insurance Fees	40%	55%	76%	90%	87%	91%
Management Support Costs	14%	22%	49%	66%	79%	93%
Travel and Special Events	7%	18%	64%	80%	80%	99%
Furniture and Equipment	24%	24%	37%	84%	94%	100%
Supplies	41%	51%	86%	98%	100%	100%
Telecommunications	64%	69%	76%	88%	94%	98%
Occupancy (Office Rent and Utilities)	29%	35%	63%	70%	90%	101%
Consultancies and Professional Services	8%	20%	63%	84%	91%	97%
Salaries and Benefits	14%	23%	46%	63%	75%	91%
Average annual expenditure as a percentage of total budget	27%	35%	62%	80%	88%	97%

Both CEPF and RIT staff interviewed for the evaluation noted that the Cerrado hotspot has several inherent advantages relative to other investment portfolios. Specifically, nearly all of the hotspot is located in a single middle-income country that uses one language and has overall high technical capacity and well-developed infrastructure, though both are unevenly distributed, particularly at the local community level and in the northern region of the biome. Conversely, being a large, relatively expensive middle-income country also leads to unit costs for essential categories like personnel and transportation being higher than in many other hotspots.

¹² On April 1, 2022, CEPF allocated an additional \$59,758 to IEB to maintain operations and develop post-CEPF donor options until the formal end of the investment in November 2022.



Effectiveness

With respect to effectiveness, the evaluation explored the strengths and weaknesses of the RIT structure and capacities regarding effective delivery of results.

Strengths

The IEB offered a valuable set of strengths as the RIT for the Cerrado investment. Founded in 1980, IEB has focused on building the capacity of people, organizations and communities in sustainable natural resource management, environmental protection and demarcation of territorial boundaries. With offices in Brasilia, Pará and Amazonas, IEB works to build and strengthen networks and partnerships between civil society, communities, the private sector and government agencies. With an established administrative infrastructure, extensive network of experts, grant management experience and an office location in Brasilia (which is located within the Cerrado hotspot), IEB was able to provide the strong institutional support needed to allow CEPF's investment to succeed.

Feedback from CEPF staff on the performance of IEB as the RIT for the hotspot was overwhelmingly positive. The RIT staff played a key leadership and oversight role for CEPF's investment, and provided solid management and oversight of the small grants portfolio, including considerable project modifications owing to COVID-related restrictions. Departures of key staff during the investment period were not frequent, and when they did occur, there was a transition plan in place which facilitated continuation of key project management and oversight responsibilities. Additional evidence of the RIT's effectiveness can be seen in the fact that of the 31 small grants made during the investment period, all but three, or over 90%, were successfully closed by the beginning of 2022. That this was accomplished during a pandemic, with widespread travel and related restrictions in place since the beginning of 2020, makes this achievement all the more impressive.

Moreover, the IEB's dedication to knowledge-sharing and transparency was demonstrated by consistently and proactively uploading key documents and reports into the CEPF platform from the onset of the project. Finally, IEB's dedication to building capacity and assisting grantees in implementation was noted by both CEPF staff and grantees, with its translation of key operational manuals into Portuguese being a notably positive contribution in several interviews. More importantly, both CEPF staff and grantees noted that one of the most positive contributions of the IEB and RIT was to expand and strengthen the hotspot's network of like-minded organizations and communities, which will likely contribute to the longer-term sustainability of conservation efforts in the Cerrado.



Weaknesses

The CEPF staff and grantees interviewed for the evaluation did note some challenges working with the IEB and the RIT. In particular, the management style and outspoken nature of the RIT's second Team Leader repeatedly led to differences of opinion on various management and oversight issues for the portfolio. Some members of the RIT staff took issue with the initial nature of the relationship between CEPF and IEB, which the latter perceived as a partnership, and not as the "grantee-grantor" relationship that was guided by the terms of the grant agreement with the CEPF Secretariat. As indicated above, there is a degree to which the grantee-grantor relationship is unavoidable and indeed necessary, and the RFP makes clear that this is the expectation. However, RIT staff also noted that none of these issues were insurmountable, and a dedication to dialogue and successful outcomes allowed for eventual resolution, allowing for what was ultimately seen as an effective working relationship.

Some additional difficulties were also noted by CEPF staff with respect to IEB's financial management and oversight procedures, as financial reporting results were often not initially clear or easy to understand. However, mutual dedication on both sides eventually was able to resolve these difficulties, with funds adequately accounted for and annual audits showing no material issues. Although CEPF staff and grantees emphasized the dedication and persistence of the RIT staff, there were concerns, notably from the grantees, about available staff and resources allocated to the proposal development and approval process, as well as for administrative and reporting requirements once approval had been secured. Specifically, many grantees thought that more staff and funding should have been made available for the initial stages of proposal development, as some proposals took relatively long periods of time to assess and approve. Reporting requirements, notably financial reporting, were repeatedly mentioned by large and small grantees alike as a challenge, though it is worth noting that grantees with prior experience in developing and managing proposals seemed to have fewer issues on the reporting process than members of CSOs or community-based organizations.

One issue that arose in interviews is that some grant applicants experienced an inordinately long period between proposal submission and ultimate grant decisions. The Midterm assessment did show that from the first to the second call for proposals, the time required for the grant-making process for both large and small grants was significantly reduced (by 44% and 20%, respectively). The assessment attributed this reduction to an analysis of the grant-making process, which resulted in three modifications: (i) capacity building for proposal submission, (ii) increased staff allocation within the RIT, and (iii) removal of duplicative efforts among the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat.¹³

¹³ Mid-Term Assessment: July 2016 - April 2019 CEPF Investment in the Cerrado Biodiversity hotspot. May 2019



Finally, while perhaps not a weakness *per se*, both CEPF and RIT staff observed that a relatively small number of large and small grants seemed to take a disproportionate amount of time to both walk through the approval process and manage once approved. Discussions around potential explanations centered around the inherent risks from focusing on civil society entities that may not have a great deal of administrative capacity or familiarity with international donor requirements, but nonetheless have worthwhile goals that fit with CEPF's strategic priorities. These risks are particularly pronounced in local and indigenous communities, who are often on the front lines of the struggle to conserve critical ecosystems.

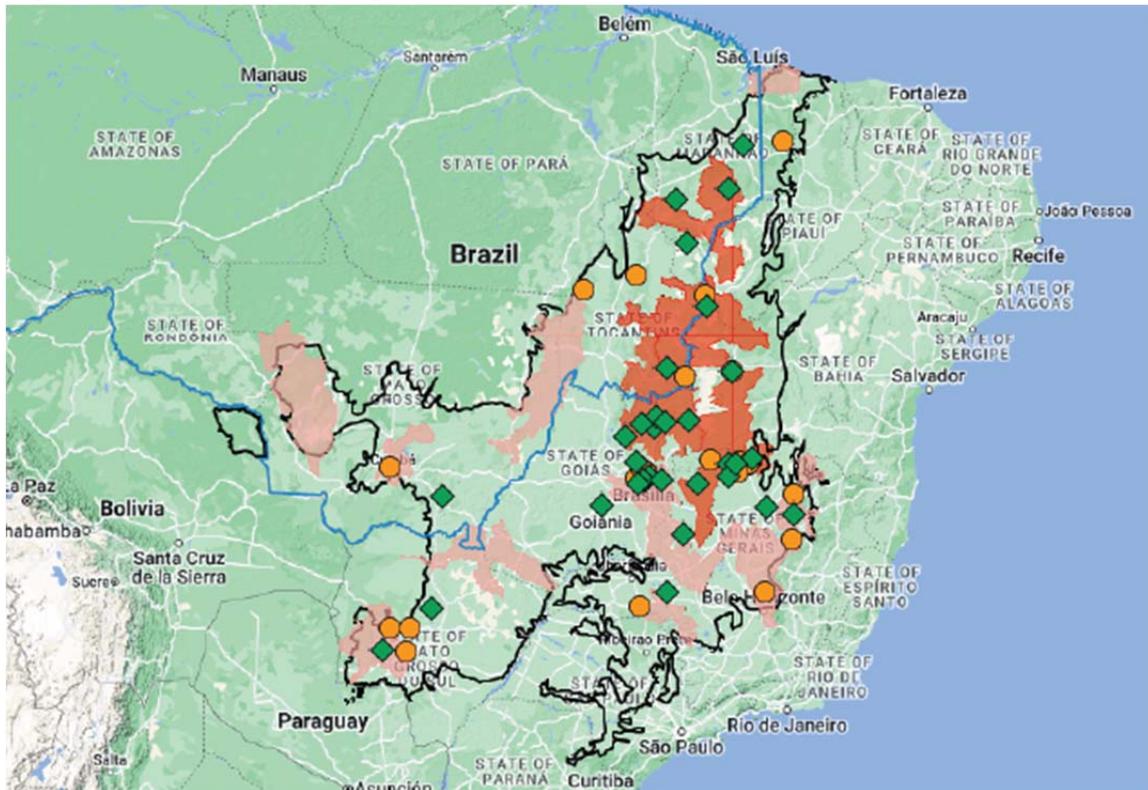
Coverage

Coverage relates to the extent to which the portfolio of awarded grants addresses the strategic directions and investment priorities set out in the investment strategy for the hotspot. Achieving a cohesive and coherent portfolio of supported projects that aligns with the investment strategy is a challenging endeavor, constrained in part by the scope and quality of the proposals received. Dissemination of the funding opportunity and program priorities are key activities to this end. As seen in **Figure 1**, the portfolio was able to cover a number of geographic areas within the hotspot, including multiple projects in the four priority corridors.¹⁴ Interviews with grantees and RIT staff indicated that while the coverage was good given limited resources, there were relatively fewer projects in the northeastern part of the hotspot because both capacity and opportunities were limited. The relatively large number of projects clustered around Brasilia and the northwestern part of Minas Gerais likely reflects to some degree the relatively large amount of capacity and civil society organizations present in those regions, denser population centers, and better communication and transportation infrastructure than in areas in the northern part of the hotspot.

¹⁴ A more detailed map of coverage can be found through the online platform developed by CEPF and RIT (see: <https://cepfcerrado.iieb.org.br/en/mapa-de-localizacao/>).



Figure 1: CEPF-Cerrado Large and Small Scale Project Sites



Legend:

Yellow Circle: Small Grants

Green Diamond: Large Grants

Priority Corridors: Red Areas

Other Corridors: Pink Areas

Black Line: Cerrado Hotspot Delimitation

Table 7: Strategic Directions Original Budget and Funds Expended

Strategic Direction/Original Budget	Percent spent (as of beginning of 2022)
SD 1 (\$800,000)	65%
SD 2 (\$1,200,000)	138%
SD 3 (\$1,800,000)	102%
SD 4 (\$700,000)	80%
SD 5 (\$500,000)	81%
SD 6 (\$2,000,000)	96%

With respect to SDs, **Table 7** details the original budgeted amounts (which reflected the priorities established in the Ecosystem Profile) with funding expended as of the beginning of 2022. The largest gap in coverage was under SD1 (Mainstreaming Biodiversity), with just over two-thirds of budgeted funds being spent. This SD focused on the Cerrado’s agribusiness sector, which currently is one of the principal drivers of habitat loss in the hotspot. However, interviews with CEPF staff and the RIT and review of project reports noted that key stakeholders in the agribusiness sector, primarily large-scale producers,



were not ready to substantively engage on the issue of conservation (with the exception of the coffee sector), and the political environment after 2018 and COVID-related restrictions in 2020 made full realization of SD1 especially challenging. Questions were also raised by both RIT and CEPF staff during the interview process as to whether CEPF, which is structured to support civil society entities, has the appropriate structure and scale of funding available to effectively address issues associated with large-scale agricultural commodity producers.

Final investments for SD2, focused on creating protected areas, were well above the initial amount budgeted (138%). Both the Ecosystem Profile and RIT-CEPF staff interviewed during the evaluation process noted that early on in the investment's process, it was clear that there were going to be very limited opportunities to create and/or expand traditional protected areas, such as national and state parks, in the Cerrado. This necessitated focusing on alternatives for creating and strengthening protected areas, such as private reserves, indigenous/traditional communities (such as *quilombolas*), and municipal protected areas. As the potential scope of engagement of the stakeholders needed for the protected area process increased, additional resources were reallocated from other parts of the budget.

For the remaining four SDs, budget expenditures were broadly in line with original amounts allocated. Moreover, of these four SDs where total expenditures were below the amount originally allocated, nearly all targets were nonetheless achieved or exceeded (see below), further indicating effective coverage.

Impact

With respect to impact, the question of interest is the extent to which the targets set in the hotspot Ecosystem Profile have been met for impacts on biodiversity conservation, human wellbeing, civil society capacity, and enabling conditions. **Table 8** below summarizes this progress as of July 2022, though final results are still being assessed by CEPF and IEB, and figures reported in Table 8 therefore should be regarded as preliminary.

Overall, 24 of CEPF's 27 targets, or 88%, had been met or exceeded by July 2022, with many key targets being appreciably exceeded by orders of magnitude. Notable preliminary results include:

- Target 1.1 (*At least 500,000 hectares (5.000 km²) of production landscapes with improved management for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use within four corridors targeted by CEPF grants*): Approximately **1,120,929 ha** are estimated to be under improved management or sustainable use, 224% of the original target;
- Target 2.1 (*At least 500,000 hectares of protected areas targeted by CEPF grants with new or strengthened protection and management*): Approximately **935,248 ha** of new or strengthened areas have been estimated, 187% of the original target. This includes 29 declared private reserves (totaling approximately 3,777 ha), with another 21 submitted for government approval;



- Target 3.2 (*At least 10% of indigenous, quilombola and traditional community lands, located in the priority corridors, totaling 144,929 ha, integrated in the planning and strategies for conservation and sustainable development at macro scale, respecting traditional knowledge and culture*): **An estimated 1,429,019 ha** of territories are now integrated into conservation and sustainable development strategies, well above the initial target;
- Target 4.2 (*Priority actions identified in National Action Plans, especially on habitat management and protection, implemented for at least five priority threatened species*): **Eight (8) priority threatened species** now have plans either fully or partially implemented, 160% of the original target;
- Target 5.1 (*At least one partnership successfully leverages resources for the implementation of a joint long-term dissemination program on native vegetation cover and dynamics of land uses in the hotspot in order to support different stakeholders for planning*): **Twenty-five (25) partnerships** have been estimated to have successfully leveraged resources, 2,500% above the original target;
- Target 6.4 (*At least 100 members of governance bodies and councils (national councils, watershed committees, protected areas management boards, Citizenship Territories, state/municipal councils, etc.) with strengthened capacity to participate in and influence policy*): **Six-hundred and seven (607)** governance bodies and councils are estimated to have had capacity strengthened by the end of the investment, 607% above the original target.

In sum, the information available at the time of this evaluation strongly indicates that CEPF and the RIT have achieved or are likely to achieve most of the targets initially established for the hotspot’s portfolio. In critical areas such as protected creation and strengthening, protecting key threatened species, and increasing local capacity, many of the investment’s targets were not just met, but have been exceeded.

Table 8: Summary of Impacts against Targets (as of July 2022; portfolio not yet closed)¹⁵

Target	Expected Result Based on Awarded Grants	Preliminary Results/Percentage of Target (July 2022)
1.1 At least 500 000 hectares (5,000 km ²) of production landscapes with improved management for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use within four corridors targeted by CEPF grants.	500,000 ha	1,120,929 ha (224%)
1.2 At least six sustainable technologies and production best practices in the agriculture sector identified and disseminated to ensure	6	50 (833%)

¹⁵ Results provided by IEB, which noted that they are still preliminary.



protection of biodiversity, maintenance of ecosystem services and food security.		
1.3 At least four financial incentives for sustainable land-sparing agricultural and livestock practices promoted among commodity chains in priority corridors.	4	1 (25%)
1.4 At least two consistent public policies (legislation, policies, programs, public-private partnerships, etc.) created or adjusted to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.	2	6 (300%)
1.5 At least two multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSI) that involve the private sector (global commodity chains), small farmers, traditional communities, governments and donors promoted to identify synergies and to catalyze integrated actions and policies f	2	3 (150%)
2.1 At least 500,000 hectares of protected areas targeted by CEPF grants with new or strengthened protection and management.	500,000 ha	935,248 ha (187%)
2.2 At least five land-use planning or public policies influenced to accommodate biodiversity.	5	32 (640%)
2.3 At least ten studies and analyses carried out to justify the creation or expansion of public protected areas in priority corridors and/or to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity while valuing local and traditional culture within management plans of protected areas.	10	22 (220%)
2.4 Five protected areas located in the CEPF Priority KBAs with an integrated management plan designed and implemented.	5	20 (400%)
2.5 At least 50 new Private Natural Heritage Reserves (RPPN) established in priority KBAs.	50	29 (100%?) ¹⁶
3.1 At least 60 local and indigenous communities are empowered and directly benefit from sustainable use of resources and/or restoration of ecological connectivity at the landscape scale.	60	247 (412%)

¹⁶ IEB (Michael Jackson) noted that while 29 private areas have been formally declared, an additional 21 areas have been submitted for approval, but are still pending.



3.2 At least 10% of indigenous, quilombola and traditional community lands, located in the priority corridors, integrated in the planning and strategies for conservation and sustainable development at macro scale, respecting traditional knowledge and culture, as an alternative form of protection and management of lands outside of the official national system (SNUC).	144,929 ha (10%)	1,429,019 ha (~98% of total lands)
3.3 At least ten markets and supply chains for sustainably harvested non- timber forest products developed or enabled with direct benefit for networks or groups of women and youth in particular.	10	77 (770%)
3.4 Innovations regarding seeds, seedlings and planting that result in greater efficiency and lower cost in ecological restoration activities demonstrated in at least ten sites, especially in Permanent Preservation Areas (APPs) and Legal Reserves (LRs).	10	5 (50%)
3.5 Production capacity and management skills of 20 community-based businesses working with ecological restoration productive chain enhanced.	20	32 (160%) ¹⁷
3.6 One pilot network made of civil society organizations, academic institutions, businesses and governments supported to create synergies and provide socio-environmental benefits as incentives for ecosystem restoration and compliance with the Forest Law.	1	6 (600%)
3.7 At least two public policies (legislation, regional strategic plans, etc.) created or adjusted to promote ecosystem restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity.	2	6 (300%)
4.1 At least five globally threatened species targeted by CEPF grants have stable or improved conservation status.	5	6 (120%)
4.2 Priority actions identified in National Action Plans, especially on habitat management and protection, implemented for at least five priority threatened species.	5	8 (160%)

¹⁷ Final results are still not verified, so target could potentially still not be met.



5.1 At least one partnership successfully leverages resources for the implementation of a joint long-term dissemination program on native vegetation cover and dynamics of land uses in the hotspot in order to support different stakeholders for planning and decision making.	1	25 (2500%)
5.2 At least four action plans based on shared data and experiences for better water quantity and quality developed and made available to relevant stakeholders to improve watershed management.	4	115 (2,875%)
6.1 At least 40 local civil society organizations with increased capacities actively participate in conservation actions and management of territories guided by the ecosystem profile.	40	152 (375%)
6.2 At least eight partnerships and networks formed among public, private and civil society actors to facilitate synergies and to catalyze integrated actions and policies for the conservation and sustainable development of the Cerrado in support of the ecosystem profile.	8	20 (250%)
6.3 At least five networks and/or alliances of civil society organizations strengthened, with enhanced skills to participate in relevant forums.	5	13 (260%)
6.4 At least 100 members of governance bodies and councils (national councils, watershed committees, protected areas management boards, Citizenship Territories, state/municipal councils, etc.) with strengthened capacity to participate in and influence forums related to the conservation and sustainable use of the Cerrado.	100	607 (607%)
6.5 At least 40 civil society organizations with developed and strengthened institutional and technical skills (environment, conservation strategy and planning, management, policy advocacy, fundraising and reporting, regulatory frameworks, etc.) to function effectively and participate in relevant conservation and management actions guided by the ecosystem profile.	40	260 (650%)
6.6 At least 20 publications (books, manuals,	20	508



<p>technical reports, websites, etc.) or awareness raising actions (broadcasting spots, public campaigns and media outreach) on the Cerrado biodiversity, ecosystem services, protected areas, restoration, sustainable practices and climate resilience and civil society participation published.</p>		<p>(2540%)</p>
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Accessibility

With respect to accessibility, the question of interest is whether the grant portfolio reflects an appropriate balance of international and local grantees, considering the relative strengths of different organizations and considering the priority given by CEPF to building the capacity of local civil society. Approximately 96% of CEPF grant funding went to Brazilian organizations during the investment phase, with all small grant funding awarded to Brazilian organizations. Two large grants totaling approximately \$226,000 went to two international conservation organizations: Action Aid (\$152,000) and Conservation Strategy Fund (\$104,000), or just under 4% of the total funding allocated for investments (i.e. not including funding for the RIT).¹⁸

These figures demonstrate CEPF and RIT’s mutual prioritization of building and strengthening the capacity of Brazilian civil society, as well as the considerable existing capacity already present in Brazil. A number of grantees noted that prior to the arrival of CEPF, there were few international donors interested in working with Brazilian organizations in the Cerrado, particularly at the local or community level. The distribution of funding among grantees in the hotspot demonstrates how well both CEPF and the RIT recognized that need and focused their investment accordingly, and how the RIT ensured accessibility for a diverse set of local actors.

Adaptive Management

With respect to adaptive management, topics of interest include the ways in which the development of the grant portfolio was constrained by risks (political/institutional/ security/health), and how it took advantage of unanticipated opportunities. During the investment phase, CEPF and the RIT faced two significant challenges that required adaptive management modifications to the project. Most significantly, the COVID-19 pandemic that started in the beginning of 2020 led to portfolio-wide modifications to CEPF and RIT management. With travel and in-person meetings canceled or strictly curtailed, active and pending projects at this time required extensions/modifications to timelines and

¹⁸ Although registered as a national organization, WWF-Brazil, which received three large grants totaling \$615,000, does benefit from a global network of expertise and resources not available to most Brazilian CSOs, arguably making it more comparable to international organizations.



deliverables, while the investment phase was extended to June 2022 and the RIT's grant to November 2022 to fully accommodate the impacts from the pandemic. In addition to requiring extended timelines, many grantees required assistance in accessing IT platforms that would allow for continuation of project implementation, albeit in remote or virtual mode. Many projects, particularly at the community level, also lacked access to personal protective equipment, creating additional risks for grantees.

Interviews with CEPF, RIT and grantees largely support the conclusion that the collective adaptive management response to the pandemic was largely successful, allowing projects the additional time and resources needed to ensure continued success during an extraordinarily challenging environment. In particular, the flexibility shown in the extension of timelines, IT support for virtual exchanges, and skill in managing the budget to allow for over a year extension to the investment phase were all noted as exceptionally strong examples of how the RIT worked with CEPF to implement adaptive management to allow for the portfolio to continue moving forward. Moreover, the RIT successfully advocated for grantees to be able to use gains in the exchange rate from their funding to provide humanitarian assistance to the communities they were working with, including developing the required amendments to grants' project scopes.

A second challenge during the investment phase was the 2018 presidential election of Brazil. The elected president's policies and rhetoric on the environment and civil society created risks for many of CEPF's SDs, as federal agencies and state governments became increasingly unwilling to support measures that could result in a negative reaction from the president. Engaging the agribusiness sector, which was always going to be a challenge for CEPF, became even more difficult, as key stakeholders believed the government would support continued expansion of the agricultural frontier and related interests.

The adaptive management response to this challenge from CEPF and the RIT was varied. While work continued on all SDs, the focus of and balance among focal areas was modified to recognize these limitations. Some examples of adaptive management include: 1) substantive engagement with large-scale agribusiness was scaled back, with recognition that work with the public sector on financial incentives for supply chains was not likely to happen. Focus instead was directed at small- and medium-scale agribusinesses, notably cooperatives; 2) encouraging grantees involved in protected area creation and strengthening to direct their efforts to the municipal level, and; 3) support was encouraged for capacity building of CSOs and community leaders to better understand how the legal system could be used to ensure protection of rights.

Two additional notable examples of successful adaptive management during the investment phase include:

- *Increasing the small grant limit from US\$20,000 to US\$50,000*: In an effort to recognize the relatively expensive nature of working in Brazil and to attract more



- small grantees with projects that aligned with the investment's SDs, the RIT successfully advocated to the CEPF Secretariat early in the investment phase to increase the original small grant limit of US\$20,000 to US\$50,000;
- *Translation of key CEPF operational manuals*: language barriers made CEPF supporting documents unusable for the majority of potential grantees in the hotspot. Recognizing this barrier, the RIT worked with the CEPF Secretariat to make available translations of key documents in Portuguese.

Discussion

Document review and the preponderance of interviews indicate that IEB performed very well as RIT for the Cerrado biodiversity hotspot. During the initial part of the investment period, IEB and their counterparts in the CEPF Secretariat had to devote time and effort to align expectations with respect to reporting and communications; subsequently, the dynamic appears to have developed into an effective working relationship. With respect to relationships between the RIT and grantees, there appears to be a broad consensus that the RIT communicated well and effectively provided necessary guidance and support; moreover, IEB efforts to cultivate network links among grantees were successful, emphasized in several interviews as one of the most significant contributions. Some dissatisfaction was expressed by both small and large grantees with the application processes and reporting platforms, but aside from three terminated small grants, grantees were largely able to meet the requirements set forth by CEPF and RIT.

Some observers noted that, compared to other hotspots, the Cerrado investment benefited from being in a single country and operating in one language; the absence of active conflict; the presence of a number of potential grantees with considerable capacity; and Brazil's status as a middle-income country. The RIT's strong performance is nevertheless noteworthy given the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the coming into power of an administration hostile to conservation as well as Indigenous rights. Despite these challenges, program outcomes were successful, thanks in part to adaptation and reprioritization of strategic directions. Most of the portfolio targets have been met or exceeded. The preponderance of the grant portfolio has been implemented by local organizations, many of them recently established with quite limited initial capacity, which reflects an increase in civil society capacity in the hotspot. As the Cerrado is relatively disadvantaged compared to other hotspots in terms of donor attention and fundraising prospects (in part due to Brazil's aforementioned middle-income status), the CEPF investment has represented a significant contribution; a recurring theme in interviews was a strong desire to see a follow-up phase of CEPF investment.

The prominence of Indigenous and traditional community organizations (notably *quilombolas*) in the portfolio gives rise to reflections on the suitability of CEPF processes and requirements in such community settings. With RIT guidance and intermediation, all but three of these organizations ultimately succeeded as small grantees, such that CEPF's



standard processes and safeguards did not preclude participation by these communities. However, this required a disproportionate amount of effort on the part of the RIT; more generally, IEB's experience on this front suggests that there may be value to an exercise to consider how processes and requirements could be adjusted to better fit Indigenous and traditional peoples contexts, in line with wider global trends relating to Indigenous-led conservation.

Finally, feedback from the RIT and CEPF staff and a review of the portfolio's execution suggest two ways in which the overall portfolio strategy itself presented challenges to the RIT's coordination of the investment in the hotspot. Specifically: 1) CEPF's final Strategic Directions and priority corridors, including the KBAs, may have been overly ambitious given the timeframe and resources allocated to a hotspot that size confronting multiple threats, and; 2) the formidable challenges from the agribusiness sector in the Cerrado call into question whether CEPF is structurally configured and has an appropriate scale of resources to effectively address large-scale commodity producers.

Table 9: Summary of Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Element	Summary
RIT PERFORMANCE	
<i>Relevance</i>	
Were the activities undertaken relevant to the Ecosystem profile, RIT Terms of Reference, Hotspot geography, civil society capacity, CEPF global monitoring framework	The RIT's activities were very relevant for all noted areas. The portfolio aligned well with the Strategic Directions of the Ecosystem Profile, priority corridors and the RIT TOR. Grantees interviewed noted gains in capacity, some considerable, and there was broad consensus that CEPF and the RIT were able to elevate the hotspot's profile and create strong, synergistic networks that will endure after CEPF exits the region. Dedication to and focus on non-traditional protected areas, notably indigenous and traditional communities, were also widely noted as a highly relevant aspect of RIT's activities. Monitoring was also strong, with the RIT dedicated to diligent project oversight and management. Challenges were noted with regards to public policies and engagement of the agribusiness sector, but these did not diminish the overall relevance of the activities undertaken.
<i>Efficiency</i>	
How efficiently was the budget allocated to the RIT converted into results ?	Budgets for both large and small grants were efficiently allocated. Early changes to the maximum amount for small grants (\$20,000 to \$50,000) allowed for a more diverse set of small grants to be allocated. Most portfolio goals were achieved with the budget allocated, though SD's final allocated funding was 138% above the original amount. COVID-related restrictions in the beginning of 2020 provided considerable budgetary challenges, as the portfolio deadline had to be extended for over a year beyond what was originally envisioned. Cost savings from limited travel and events as well as exchange rate gains allowed for the portfolio budget to be extended for one year without any appreciable negative impacts on its performance.
<i>Effectiveness</i>	
What were the strengths and weaknesses	Strengths of the RIT included: 1) IEB has a strong regional presence



<p>of the RIT structure and capacities regarding effective delivery of results?</p>	<p>and institutional track record on building the capacity of people, organizations and communities in sustainable natural resource management, environmental protection, grant management and demarcation of territorial boundaries; 2) staff played key leadership and management roles, notably with the small grants portfolio. Its flexible response to the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly noteworthy; 3) dedication to capacity-building and creating a strong network of like-minded CSOs were key to the portfolio's success. Weaknesses in RIT structure and capacities were few, focusing mainly on differences in management style of the second RIT Team Leader. Initial perceptions of the relationship with CEPF also suggested more could have been done to foster a stronger working relationship with IEB. Financial management methodologies of IEB were also occasionally challenging, though eventually all financial reports were successfully completed with annual audits showing no material issues.</p>
<p>PORTFOLIO</p>	
<p><i>Coverage</i></p>	
<p>To what extent does the portfolio of grants awarded to date cover the strategic directions and investment priorities set out in the investment strategy for the hotspot?</p>	<p>The portfolio was able to cover multiple projects in the four priority corridors, though there were relatively fewer projects in the northeastern part of the hotspot because both capacity and opportunities were limited. One SD (SD1) had only around 65% of its original budget allocated by March 2022, while all other SDs had 80% or more allocated, with SD2 having 138% of its original budget allocated, indicating increased focus on the creation of non-traditional protected areas, including municipal and private reserves and indigenous and traditional peoples territories.</p>
<p><i>Impact</i></p>	
<p>To what extent have the targets set in the hotspot ecosystem profile for impacts on biodiversity conservation, human wellbeing, civil society capacity and enabling conditions been met?</p>	<p>As of June 2021, 21 of CEPF's 28 targets had been exceeded or met, while five were anticipated to be met by the end of the investment phase. Only two targets (financial incentives and sites with innovative restoration techniques), 7% of the total, were seen as unlikely to be completed by the end of the investment phase.</p>
<p><i>Accessibility</i></p>	
<p>Does the grant portfolio involve an appropriate balance of international and local grantees, considering the relative strengths of different organizations regarding delivery of the investment strategy and considering the priority given by CEPF to building the capacity of local civil society?</p>	<p>Over 96% of CEPF grants went to Brazilian organizations during the investment phase, with all small grants being awarded to Brazilian organizations. Two large grants totaling approximately \$226,000 went to two international organizations: Action Aid (\$152,000) and Conservation Strategy Fund (\$104,000).</p>
<p><i>Adaptive management</i></p>	
<p>In what ways has the development of the grant portfolio been constrained by risks (political/institutional/security/ health) or taken advantage of unanticipated opportunities?</p>	<p>The portfolio successfully addressed two considerable project risks during the implementation phase: the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the 2018 presidential election of Jair Bolsonaro, both of which required modifications to how the grant portfolio was developed, notably the former, which resulted in a 17 month extension. The opportunity to increase the limit on small grants from \$20,000 to \$50,000 allowed for a wider range of projects to be supported across the portfolio and early translation of key project documents into Portuguese allowed for wider accessibility to portfolio opportunities.</p>



Principal findings and lessons learned with respect to CEPF investment in the Cerrado include:

- CEPF's investment in the Cerrado coupled with the efforts of the RIT elevated the visibility of the hotspot to new levels, particularly among the international donor community. It also created a strong, synergistic network of like-minded CSOs, communities and individuals working towards conservation of the region. Multiple interviewees expressed that these would both greatly contribute to CEPF's gains in the region being sustained over the long-term.
- Overall, the relationship between the RIT and CEPF was positive and productive. Initial issues concerning the nature of the relationship between CEPF and the RIT ("donor-grantee") and addressing the "reality on the ground" in Brazil were eventually resolved through a strong shared commitment to work through management differences and measures like translating key documents into Portuguese and raising the small grant limit to \$50,000.
- IEB proved itself to be a professional, dedicated and engaged RIT with established institutional infrastructure, and was key to successfully managing CEPF investments, including LOIs, the application process, and reporting requirements from grantees. Staff turnover for the Cerrado RIT was minimal, and when it did occur, there were no noticeable gaps in the RIT's ability to manage the portfolio.
- Creation of a separate online monitoring system for small grants by the RIT could have contributed to grantee frustration with the reporting process, but it was created to ensure continuity of institutional knowledge and learning after CEPF exits the hotspot.
- The Cerrado portfolio faced an unprecedented crisis with the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and political risks brought on by the 2018 presidential election of Jair Bolsonaro, yet through a series of adaptive management measures, CEPF and RIT staff were able to extend the project by one year with no additional funding necessary and bring the project to a largely successful close.
- The single biggest driver of habitat destruction in the Cerrado is the agribusiness sector, which largely continues to resist large-scale adoption of measures to mitigate its impacts and promote conservation. Although CEPF's investment portfolio did make some progress in engaging this sector (specifically coffee), the SD that addressed the sector's impacts had the lowest final expenditure of funding against what was originally budgeted, with just over two-thirds of the initially allocated funding spent. The Long-term Vision document offered insights on how best to approach this sector in the future, focusing on water/ecosystem services as entry points for more successful engagement with the sector here and in other hotspots. Whether CEPF's current structure, approach and available resources can effectively engage large-scale commodity producers is also worth considering given the challenges it has faced in this and other hotspots.
- CEPF recognized early on in the Ecosystem Profile that there were limited opportunities to create and strengthen more conventional protected areas, like



national and state parks, in the Cerrado. Focusing protected area creation during the investment period efforts at the municipal, private and indigenous/traditional community levels helped the portfolio not only surpass its protected area goals for SD2, but also create and strengthen local capacity that will help promote sustainability after CEPF has exited the region. Moreover, it also created a new paradigm for the hotspot on how protected areas can be created and expanded despite adverse political and economic conditions, and could possibly serve as a case study for other hotspots facing similar obstacles to conventional protected areas.

- As a middle-income country, Brazil has high levels of capacity, but it is unevenly distributed, and the Cerrado is a vast ecosystem. While overall coverage of the portfolio was in line with the priority corridors and SDs of the Ecosystem Profile, there were fewer projects in the northeastern part of the hotspot, where capacity is lower, populations are smaller and infrastructure more challenging.
- A relatively small number of both large and small grants took a disproportionate amount of time to guide through the approval process and manage once approved. This is likely caused by CEPF's focus on supporting at times "riskier" CSOs and community-level groups with missions that fit a portfolio's SDs, but lack initial project management capacity and thus require relatively more time and attention from RIT and CEPF staff.
- Support for building capacity at the local/community level was highly appropriate and yielded concrete results.

Recommendations

Given the overall findings that the IEB was an effective RIT, IEB and CEPF developed an effective working relationship, and the investment portfolio performed well against targets, the evaluation generated little in the way of recommendations with respect to the RIT itself. Instead, most of the recommendations below that emerged from document review and interviews with the IEB, CEPF Secretariat, and grantees relate more to wider CEPF strategy and processes and how they impacted the RIT's ability to coordinate the investment in the hotspot. Specifically:

- The IEB has proven to be a strong RIT for the Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot, with the requisite administrative infrastructure, professionalism and dedication needed to ensure success in the hotspot. As such, they should be considered as the RIT for any future new investment by CEPF in the hotspot.
- For future investment in this and other portfolios, CEPF may want to consider whether circumstances warrant allowing RITs to manage longer project time frames and/or fewer projects with larger amounts of funding available, including an "umbrella" mechanism where a large grantee could make smaller grants to complementary projects. Consideration should also be given as to how future RITs



can still access project data after CEPF exits a hotspot, thereby ensuring continuity of institutional knowledge and lessons learned.

- Narrowing focus in terms of both strategic directions and geographic priority areas, including priority KBAs, merits consideration, particularly in a large hotspot like the Cerrado. Fewer SDs and priority corridors could increase overall impact and reduce the risk of spreading resources too thinly. Recommendations from the Long-term Vision could provide guidance on how future investments could be strategically focused for more optimal outcomes in the hotspot.
- CEPF could consider how to ensure that more deliberate “entry” and “exit” strategies are developed by/with RITs for their portfolio investments. For the “entry” strategy, consideration could be given to how to better inform key stakeholders and sectors on potential opportunities for CEPF investment prior to initiating activities, as well as whether or not more staff and resources should be allocated in the initial phases of the investment period. A more developed “exit” strategy could involve more emphasis on ensuring that grantees have clearly established paths for sustainability after CEPF ends its investment.
- CEPF’s investment and the RIT’s engagement at the local/community level were very strategic and highly successful. Municipal, private and indigenous/traditional community protected areas were elevated in the Cerrado in ways that were unprecedented, and building capacity at the local level yielded concrete, strategic results. A more explicit approach to assessing and managing risks relating to local grantees with lower levels of initial capacity could potentially enhance efficient grant management at individual grant as well as portfolio levels.
- Reassessment should be considered as to whether and how CEPF engages large-scale commodity producers in ecosystems like the Cerrado, where they are the biggest drivers of habitat destruction. As currently structured, CEPF may not have the appropriate structure, capacity or scale of resources necessary to support effective engagement of many large-scale commodity producers.
- Currently CEPF and RIT administrative policies and procedures may not be the most effective way of supporting indigenous and traditional community groups. If such support remains a priority for future CEPF investment, thought should be given as to how these communities could be supported in ways that are more appropriate to their cultures and responsive to their needs. Towards this end, both CEPF and IEB should consider adding staff with expertise relating to work with indigenous and traditional communities if they are going to continue working in such contexts.



Annexes

Annex A. List of Documents Reviewed

Annual Cerrado Portfolio Review 2017; 2018

CEPF Supervision Mission to the Cerrado Hotspot Reports 2016-2021

CEPF Operations Manual.

CEPF Cerrado Grant database (<https://cepfcerrado.iieb.org.br/en/>)

Ecosystem Profile Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot Revised February 2017.

Long-Term Strategic Vision for Graduating Civil Society from CEPF Support Cerrado Biodiversity Hotspot, June 2021.

Mid-Term Assessment: July 2016 - April 2019 CEPF Investment in the Cerrado Biodiversity hotspot May 2019

Project Proposal Regional Implementation Team: International Institute of Education in Brazil June 2016

RIT Financial Reports 2017-2022.

RIT Performance Reports July 2016-December 2021.



Annex B. Interview Guide

Questions for RIT

1. Discussion of key activities and challenges and successes associated with fulfilling TORs

- Could you describe your evaluation process for large grants including obtaining external reviews and communicating with grantees?
- Please describe how you conducted due diligence for grantees and sub-grantees?
- Describe the process of convening a panel of experts to evaluate small grants proposals
- How often did you visit stakeholders and grantees on average? What criteria did you use to choose who to visit?
- What were the main challenges in working with grantees? How did you overcome these challenges?
- What were the challenges involved in building grantee capacity? What were some successes?
- What was the process for dealing with grantee technical and financial performance issues?
- Can you comment on how your work contributed to coordination and collaboration among stakeholders (grantees, donors, other stakeholders) in the region?
- Was your organization able to leverage additional funding in this region? If so, can you provide example(s)?
- In hindsight, was the TOR appropriate and complete? Are there things you would change? Were there any budgetary challenges?
- What were the challenges in collecting data for portfolio-level indicators?
- How did you ensure the quality of performance data submitted by grantees?
- What were the main outcomes of the mid-term learning exchange workshop?

2. RIT structure and capacities

- Is the org chart up to date? Did it change over time? What worked, what didn't?
- If you were going to start over, is there anything you would change with the structure?
- What were the most important capacities that you brought to the table? What would be priorities to add or strengthen?

3. Grant portfolio

- What were the challenges with selecting a portfolio of grants that cover the strategic directions and investment priorities for the hotspot? What were the gaps in coverage? What was the reason for these gaps? What would have helped to fill these gaps?



- To what extent have the targets set in the hotspot ecosystem profile for impacts on biodiversity conservation, human wellbeing, civil society capacity and enabling conditions been met? Where they have not been met, what are the reasons?
- What were the challenges in balancing international and local grantees? How did you overcome these challenges?
- What risks (political/institutional/security/health) constrained the grant portfolio? How did you plan for or mitigate these risks? Were there any unanticipated risks? What about opportunities?

Questions for CEPF

1. Discussion of key activities and challenges and successes associated with fulfilling TORs

- Could you describe your evaluation process for large grants including obtaining external reviews and communicating with grantees?
- Please describe how you conducted due diligence for grantees and sub-grantees?
- Describe the process of convening a panel of experts to evaluate small grants proposals
- How often did you visit stakeholders and grantees on average? What criteria did you use to choose who to visit?
- What were the main challenges in working with grantees? How did you overcome these challenges?
- What were the challenges involved in building grantee capacity? What were some successes?
- What was the process for dealing with grantee technical and financial performance issues?
- Can you comment on how your work contributed to coordination and collaboration among stakeholders (grantees, donors, other stakeholders) in the region?
- Was your organization able to leverage additional funding in this region? If so, can you provide example(s)?
- In hindsight, was the TOR appropriate and complete? Are there things you would change? Were there any budgetary challenges?
- What were the challenges in collecting data for portfolio-level indicators?
- How did you ensure the quality of performance data submitted by grantees?
- What were the main outcomes of the mid-term learning exchange workshop?

2. RIT structure and capacities

- Is the org chart up to date? Did it change over time? What worked, what didn't?
- If you were going to start over, is there anything you would change with the structure?
- What were the most important capacities that you brought to the table? What would be priorities to add or strengthen?



3. Grant portfolio

- What were the challenges with selecting a portfolio of grants that cover the strategic directions and investment priorities for the hotspot? What were the gaps in coverage? What was the reason for these gaps? What would have helped to fill these gaps?
- To what extent have the targets set in the hotspot ecosystem profile for impacts on biodiversity conservation, human wellbeing, civil society capacity and enabling conditions been met? Where they have not been met, what are the reasons?
- What were the challenges in balancing international and local grantees? How did you overcome these challenges?
- What risks (political/institutional/security/health) constrained the grant portfolio? How did you plan for or mitigate these risks? Were there any unanticipated risks? What about opportunities?

Questions for Grantees

1. Interviewee info (name, institution name, email, phone #)

2. Knowledge about CEPF

- How did you find out about the CEPF program (e.g., word of mouth, workshop, Internet, etc.)? What is your level of knowledge of the CEPF program in the East Melanesian Islands?

3. Application process

- How was your experience with the proposal application and evaluation process?
- Did your organization design a new project to meet CEPF funding priorities or did you modify an existing project?
- Were you clear on what kinds of projects were being funded, and did this influence how you designed your project?
- Did you communicate with the IIEB or CEPF while you developed your proposal? What input did you receive?
- How long did it take from when you submitted the proposal to when you received a response? Were you satisfied with the response time?

4. Project implementation

- How were communications with the RIT and the national coordinator? Was it clear to you who you should reach out to for specific kinds of questions?
- How did IIEB contribute to the design of your organization's project? Were there any changes made to your project during the grant period?
- Did IIEB explain the concept of Safeguards to your organization and how you should address them within the implementation of your project?



- Did you attend any workshops conducted by IIEB? What topics were covered and were the workshops useful to your organization? In what way?
- Please describe ways in which you think your organization's capacity was improved due to the work of IIEB?
- How often did IIEB visit your organization? Were these visits helpful to your organization? In what way(s)?
- How did IIEB help you exchange information with other grantees? In what ways was this useful to the work of your organization?
- How was your experience with the technical and financial reporting process? Were there any issues?
- What were the main challenges that your project encountered during the grant period? How did these challenges affect your grant deliverables? How did you overcome these challenges? Was the RIT or CEPF helpful?
- In what ways did your project change after the grant period?
- Are there areas in which you would have liked more support from the RIT?

- Do you have any lessons learned relating to i) empowering local communities to protect and manage biodiversity at KBAs; ii) integrating biodiversity conservation into local land-use and development planning; iii) safeguarding species by addressing major threats and info gaps; iv) increasing local, national, and regional capacity to catalyze civil society partnerships

5. Overall experience

- What were the most successful aspects of working with IIEB? What were the main challenges?
- What were the most successful aspects of working with the national coordinator? What were the main challenges?
- Do you have any recommendations for how IIEB could have improved its work?
- Have you received funding from other regional grant programs? How did those funding mechanisms compare with your CEPF experience?
- Did you complete the Post-project Grantee Survey that is requested of all grantees upon completion of their project?

Additional Questions Important to Consider, but not necessarily as direct questions in interviews?

Were the activities undertaken relevant to the ecosystem profile, RIT terms of reference, the geography of the hotspot, the capacity of civil society there, and the global monitoring framework of CEPF?

What were the strengths and weakness of the RIT structure and capacities regarding effective delivery of results?



To what extent does the portfolio of grants awarded to date cover the strategic directions and investment priorities set out in the investment strategy for the hotspot?

To what extent have the targets set in the hotspot ecosystem profile for impacts on biodiversity conservation, human wellbeing, civil society capacity and enabling conditions been met?

Does the grant portfolio involve an appropriate balance of international and local grantees, considering the relative strengths of different organizations regarding delivery of the investment strategy and considering the priority given by CEPF to building the capacity of local civil society?

In what ways has the development of the grant portfolio been constrained by risks (political/institutional/security/health) or taken advantage of unanticipated opportunities?



Annex C. List of Key Informants Contacted and Interviewed

<i>Name</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>
Grantees		
Fabiane Almeida	Cerrado das Águas Consortium	6/21/2022
Fernando Moreira Fernandes	Society of Friends of the ZooBotânica Foundation of Belo Horizonte	6/24/2022
Mariana Ferreira	WWF-Brasil	6/22/2022
Ravi Moreno	Minas Gerais Environmental Defense Association (AMDA)	6/22/2022
Luiz Gustavo Nunes	Minas Gerais Environmental Defense Association (AMDA)	6/22/2022
Karla Oliviera	Foundation of Scientific and Technological Enterprises (FINATEC)	6/14/2022
Sulema Ribeiro	Jurumi Institute for Nature Conservation	6/22/2022
Damião Santos	Kalunga Quilombo Association	7/18/2022
Alex da Silva Souza	Hanaiti Yomo'omo Association	7/1/2022
Francisco Mourão Vasconcelos	Minas Gerais Environmental Defense Association (AMDA)	6/22/2022
CEPF Secretariat		
Antonia Cermak-Terzian	CEPF Secretariat, Director of Grants Management	6/1/2022
Olivier Landgrand	CEPF Secretariat, Executive Director	7/20/2021
Nina Marshall	CEPF Secretariat, Senior Director of M&E	5/26/2022
Deborah Muller	CEPF Secretariat, First Grant Manager	6/1/2022
Priscila Oliveira	CEPF Secretariat, Current Grant Manager	6/1/2022
Peggy Poncelet	CEPF Secretariat, Current Grant Director	5/18/2022
Julie Shaw	CEPF Secretariat, Communications Director	6/13/2022
Jack Tordoff	CEPF Secretariat, Managing Director	7/20/2021
Regional Implementation Team (IEB)		
Aryanne Amaral	Current RIT Team Leader/1st Small Grants Manager	6/7/2022
Michael Becker	RIT Team Leader	6/2/2022
Michael Jackson	RIT GIS/Project Assistant	6/3/2022
Magdalena Lambert	Financial Management (part-time)	6/8/2022
Claudia Sachetto	Socio-Environmental Analyst/2nd Small Grants Manager	5/27/2022



Annex D. RIT Terms of Reference

1. Coordinate CEPF investment in the hotspot.

- 1.1. Serve as the field-based technical representative for CEPF in relation to civil society groups, grantees, international donors, host country governments and agencies, and other potential partners within the hotspot.
- 1.2. Ensure coordination and collaboration with CEPF's donors, in coordination with the CEPF Secretariat and as appropriate in the hotspot.
- 1.3. Promote collaboration and coordination, and opportunities to leverage CEPF funds with local and international donors and governments investing in the region, via donor roundtables, experiential opportunities or other activities.
- 1.4. Engage conservation and development stakeholders to ensure collaboration and coordination.
- 1.5. Attend relevant conferences/events in the hotspot to promote synergy and coordination with other initiatives. • Build partnerships/networks among grantees in order to achieve the objectives of the ecosystem profile.

2. Support the mainstreaming of biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices.

- 2.1. Support civil society to engage with government and the private sector and share their results, recommendations, and best practice models. Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.
- 2.2. Engage directly with private sector partners and government officials and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies.

3. Communicate the CEPF investment throughout the hotspot.

- 3.1. Communicate regularly with CEPF and partners about the portfolio through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, the internet (website and electronic newsletter) and reports to forums and structures.
- 3.2. Prepare a range of communications products to ensure that ecosystem profiles are accessible to grant applicants and other stakeholders.
- 3.3. Disseminate results via multiple and appropriate media.
- 3.4. Provide lessons learned and other information to the Secretariat to be communicated via the CEPF website.
- 3.5. Conduct exchange visits with other RITs to share lessons learnt and best practices.



3.6. In coordination with the CEPF Secretariat, ensure communication with local representatives of CEPF's donors. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications.

4. Build the capacity of local civil society.

4.1. Undertake a capacity needs assessment for local civil society.

4.2. Support implementation of a long-term strategic vision for the hotspot geared toward enabling civil society to "graduate" from CEPF support.

4.3. Assist civil society groups in designing projects that contribute to the achievement of objectives specified in the ecosystem profile and a coherent portfolio of mutually supportive grants.

4.4. Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation.

4.5. Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence government agencies.

4.6. Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence the private sector.

5. Establish and coordinate a process for large grant proposal solicitation and review.

5.1. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of applications.

5.2. Announce the availability of CEPF grants.

5.3. Publicize the contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process.

5.4. With the CEPF Secretariat, establish schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates.

5.5. Establish and coordinate a process for evaluation of applications.

5.6. Evaluate all letters of inquiry.

5.7. Facilitate technical review of applications (including, where appropriate, convening a panel of experts).

5.8. Obtain external reviews of all applications over US\$250,000.

5.9. Decide jointly with the CEPF Secretariat on the award of all grant applications.



5.10. Communicate with applicants throughout the application process to ensure applicants are informed and fully understand the process.

6. Manage a program of small grants of US\$20,000 (US\$50,000 or less in select approved regions).

6.1. Establish and coordinate a process for solicitation of small grant applications. • Announce the availability of CEPF small grants.

6.2. Conduct due diligence to ensure sub-grantee applicant eligibility and capacity to comply with CEPF funding terms.

6.3. Convene a panel of experts to evaluate proposals.

6.4. Decide on the award of all grant applications of US\$20,000 or less (US\$50,000 or less in select approved regions).

6.5. Manage the contracting of these awards. • Manage disbursement of funds to grantees. • Ensure small grant compliance with CEPF funding terms. • Monitor, track, and document small grant technical and financial performance. • Assist the Secretariat in maintaining the accuracy of the CEPF grants management database. • Open a dedicated bank account in which the funding allocated by CEPF for small grants will be deposited, and report on the status of the account throughout the project. • Ensure that grantees complete regular (based on length of the project) technical and financial progress reports. • Prepare semi-annual summary report to the CEPF Secretariat with detailed information the small-grants program, including names and contact information for all grantees, grant title or summary of grant, time period of grants, award amounts, disbursed amounts, and disbursement schedules.

7. Monitor and evaluate the impact of CEPF's large and small grants.

7.1. Collect and report on data for portfolio-level indicators (from large and small grantees) annually as these relate to the logical framework in the ecosystem profile.

7.2. Collect and report on relevant data in relation to CEPF graduation criteria for the hotspot.

7.3. Collect and report on relevant data for CEPF's global monitoring indicators.

7.4. Ensure quality of performance data submitted by large and small grantees.

7.5. Verify completion of products, deliverables, and short-term impacts by grantees, as described in their proposals.

7.6. Support grantees to comply with requirements for completion of tracking tools, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool.



7.7. In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a mid-term assessment and a final assessment of portfolio progress (covering large and small grants). • Conduct regular site visits to large and small grantees to monitor their progress and ensure outreach, verify compliance and support capacity building.

7.8. Provide guidance to grantees for the effective design and implementation of safeguard policies to ensure that these activities comply with the guidelines detailed in the CEPF Operations Manual and with the World Bank's environmental and social safeguard policies. Provide additional support and guidance during the implementation and evaluation cycles at regular field visits to projects.

7.9. In coordination with CEPF Secretariat, conduct a final assessment of portfolio progress and assist with preparation of report documentation.

8. Lead the process to develop, over a three-month period, a long-term strategic vision for CEPF investment.

8.1. Mobilize expertise and establish an advisory group to ensure that the long-term vision engages with appropriate stakeholders.

8.2. Undertake a review of relevant literature to ensure alignment of the long-term vision with other initiatives and avoid duplication of effort.

8.3. Consult with key stakeholders to solicit their input into the development of the long-term vision. • Synthesize the results of the literature review and stakeholder consultations into a long-term strategic vision document.

8.4. Present the draft long-term vision to key stakeholders and revise the document according to their comments.

8.5. Prepare a progress report for presentation to the CEPF donors' working group.

9. Reporting

9.1. Participate in initial week of RIT training.

9.2. Participate in two "supervision missions" per year; each to include at least two days in the office and a visit to grantees in the field (approximately two weeks).

9.3. Prepare quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports.

9.4. Respond to CEPF Secretariat requests for information, travel, hosting of donors and attendance at a range of events to promote CEPF.

