CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: World Wide Fund for Nature - Turkey

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Integrated River Basin Management in the Turkish West Lesser Caucasus

Implementation Partners for this Project:

- Governorship of Rize
- Governorship of Camlihemsin
- Provincial Directorate of Environment and Forestry in Rize
- Rize University, Faculty of Water Products
- Artvin Coruh University, Faculty of Forestry
- Local community of the Firtina Valley
- Local NGOs (The Camlihemsin Foundation, The Trabzon Society for Environment & Culture, etc)

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): 1 July, 2006 – 31 December, 2008

Date of Report (month/year): February 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: Promote sustainable resource use through Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in the Firtina Valley and the Turkish part of the West Lesser Caucasus (WLC) Corridor by strengthening participatory mechanisms and increasing awareness on biodiversity conservation.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

| Indicator | Actual at Completion |
|--|--|
| Purpose-level: Promote sustainable resource use through Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in the Firtina Valley and the Turkish part of the West Lesser Caucasus (WLC) Corridor by strengthening participatory mechanisms and increasing awareness on biodiversity conservation. | Sustainable use of natural resources has been promoted both in the Firtina Valley and in the Turkish part of the West Lesser Caucasus (in broader scale) by strengthening participatory mechanisms and increasing awareness on biodiversity conservation. |
| 1. By the end of the project (2008), an Integrated River Basin Management process, in which the local stakeholders take part, is operating and being successfully implemented in the Firtina Valley. Stakeholders are aware of the global importance of biodiversity and have committed themselves for its conservation. | As of Dec 2008, the Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) Plan of the Firtina Valley is completed. The local stakeholders (including GOs and NGOs) have been part of the process. A local mechanism, led by the Governorship of Rize, is established to monitor its implementation. The parties have endorsed (signed) the plan and are committed to implement it in the years ahead. |

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

The overall project purpose which was formulated as "promoting sustainable resource use through Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) in the Firtina Valley and the Turkish part of the West Lesser Caucasus (WLC) Corridor by strengthening participatory mechanisms and increasing awareness on biodiversity conservation" has been generally met. An IRBM plan is now in place and endorsed by key stakeholders. The Governor of Rize is committed to be the champion of its implementation process. However, WWF-Turkey's catalyzing role is still crucial, in order to make sure that the process is safely going on at least in the next couple of years. So, WWF-Turkey seeks options to ensure its long term presence in the region.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

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

Planned vs. Actual Performance

| Indicator | Actual at Completion | |
|---|--|--|
| Output 1: - Institutional sustainability of WWF Turkey is ensured in the Turkish part of the WLC for effective conservation of biodiversity and sustainable resource use. | The project has reinforced WWF-Turkey's institutional presence in the Turkish part of the WLC and strengthened its relations with local GOs, NGOs and local communities. | |
| Indicator 1.1: By the end of 2006, WWF Turkey has an office in the Turkish WLC with full time staff, necessary logistics and sufficient funding to effectively operate in the region. | WWF-Turkey opened up a local office in Trabzon (the regional capital) with a local officer, office logistics and a vehicle. | |
| Indicator 1.2: By the end of project (2008), WWF Turkey office in the Turkish WLC is able to maintain at least one staff with necessary logistics and has secured sufficient funding from other sources to effectively operate in the region. | WWF-Turkey local office is operating with one full time staff and will continue operating after the end of this project (beyond 2008) with new funding. However, WWF-Turkey decided to move the local office to the neighboring province of Rize, 2009 onwards, as it seems more suitable. | |
| Output 2: - The Integrated River Basin Management process is developed in the Firtina Valley to demonstrate sustainable resource use, effective biodiversity conservation and good management practices. | The infrastructure for IRBM in the Firtina Valley has been established by creating awareness on the issue, training more than 50 key individuals, completing the Plan and creating the joint implementation and monitoring mechanism under the leadership of the Governor. | |
| Indicator 2.1: By the end of 2006, at least 20 persons around the Firtina Valley, representing NGOs, GOs and other stakeholders are trained on IRBM. | Along the entire project period between July 2006 and December 2008, at least 50 individuals have been trained on IRBM. | |
| Indicator 2.2: By mid 2007, the IRBM process in the Firtina Valley has started and the local Guidelines for sustainable resource use have been developed. | The IRBM process in Firtina Valley has started from 2007 and the IRBM Plan was completed with a final meeting (on 24 October 2008) with stakeholders and experts. It was endorsed by the Firtina IRBM Council, which has been established as a monitoring mechanism. The Guidelines for implementing sustainable tourism, water use, grazing and infrastructure development in the Firtina Valley are completed. | |
| Indicator 2.3: By the end of project (2008), at least 3 local initiatives for implementation of IRBM have been successfully completed. | As of the project end in Dec 2008, two local IRBM initiatives are ongoing in the Turkish WLC: Firtina (Rize) & Harsit (Giresun) Valleys. The IRBM | |

| | process in the Firtina Valley is more advanced as described above. |
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| Output 3: - An NGO network with sufficient technical capacity is established in the Turkish part of the WLC in order to stimulate the role and effectiveness of civil society in conservation of biodiversity and sustainable resource use. | Networking among local NGOs strengthened; they have become aware of the Caucasus Ecoregion Conservation Plan and their potential role in its effective implementation; a momentum has been created among them with regular gatherings and they made use of small grants or capacity building activities. |
| Indicator 3.1: By the end of 2006, at least 20,000 \$ raised to start up Output 3 activities. | A total of 168,000 \$ have been raised with the following breakdown: - Dutch Embassy for NGO networking (13,500 \$) in 2007 - WWF-Turkey Freshwater Program (22,000 \$) in 2007 - EU Capacity Bldg Workshop (23,000 \$ - approx) in 2008 - TESS Project (100,000 \$ - approx) in 2009 |
| Indicator 3.2: By mid 2007, a local NGO/GO Directory for Turkish Caucasus has been published and distributed among the stakeholders. Indicator 3.3: By the end of 2007, a local NGO/GO Council consisting of at least 10 partner organizations across the Turkish WLC has been created to follow up the local implementation of ECP. | The directory was prepared in electronic form, multiple-copied on CD and distributed in 2007. It is also uploaded on WWF-Turkey's web site. A local NGO/GO Council consisting of at least 10 partner organizations across the Turkish WLC is created to follow up the implementation of Caucasus ECP, which regularly gathers (twice a year) with a defined agenda. |
| Indicator 3.4: By the end of project (2008), at least 50 persons representing the local NGO/GO network have been exposed to new methodologies (such as IRBM, Rapid Response, Effective Communications) to take action against threats. | Along the entire project period, a total of about 70 persons have been trained with the following breakdown: - EU Nature Conservation (30 persons) in June 2008 - Project Cycle Management (18 persons) in May 2008 - Networking/Comm's&IRBM (20 persons) in Oct 2007 |
| Output 4: - The level of awareness about the biodiversity of the WLC and its global importance is increased among local people and key decision makers to advance the implementation of the Ecoregion Conservation Plan. | Introduction of the project in WWF-Turkey's web site, publication and distribution of two brochures and a poster, reproduction and distribution of the Caucasus Ecoregion Conservation Plan in Turkish, and the appearance in national and local media and press have all contributed to increasing the awareness and the sense of responsibility among local people and decision-makers on the importance of biodiversity in Turkish WLC. |
| Indicator 4.1: By the end of 2006, the project is introduced in the web site. | A new web page was created under the corporate web site of WWF-Turkey, describing the location, socio-economy, biodiversity values, conservation efforts in the Eastern Black Sea Region (Turkish WLC) and in particular the Firtina Valley. In-depth information about the issues, planned dams, technical reports, new developments from the region can be found in the web page: http://www.wwf.org.tr/wwf-tuerkiye-hakkinda/nerede-calisiyoruz/kafkasya-ekolojik-boelgesi/ |
| Indicator 4.2: By the end of 2007, at least three-thousand copies of publications (posters, booklets, brochures) have been produced and distributed among target groups. | More than 6000 copies of publications produced (all in Turkish) and distributed, during the project: - "Towards Integrated River Basin Management in the Eastern Black Sea" published and distributed in early 2007. This was a brochure introducing the project and the IRBM concept to stakeholders (2000 copies) - A second brochure, presenting the progress achieved, was produced and distributed in early 2008 (2000 copies). - The poster titled "The Country of Natural Wonders: Eastern Black Sea Region" intending to introduce the biological heritage of the Turkish WLC to the local public (2000 copies) produced in early 2008. |

| | The Turkish version of the Caucasus Ecoregion Conservation Plan, reproduced and distributed among relevant GOs, NGOs and other stakeholders (250 copies) in early 2008. |
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| Indicator 4.3: By the end of project (2008), at least 50 articles, news on project activities has appeared on local and national media. Indicator 4.4: By the end of project (2008), at least | The total media coverage recorded, during the entire project was more than 50, with the following breakdown: - At least 40 newspaper/magazine clips recorded in national and local press (12 in 2006 + 12 in 2007 + 15 in 2008) - At least 9 national/local TV coverage recorded (4 in 2006 + 5 in 2008) - At least 5 national/local radio coverage recorded (2 in 2006 + 2 in 2007 + 1 in 2008) See biannual Performance Tracking Reports for details. |
| one special event (i.e photo exhibiton, press trip, etc) has been organized to highlight the natural heritage of the WLC. | in the Indicator (photo exhibition, press trip, etc) the project team decided to take a proactive approach according to the developments in the region and has taken part or supported a number of activities described in the periodic Performance Tracking Reports. They include: - The World Water Day (22 March 2007, Giresun) jointly organized with the Provincial Directorate of Environment. - Joining the Environment Day celebration in Rize (5 June 2007), where WWF-Turkey received a prize from the Governor of Rize, due to its efforts for conservation. - Participation in the Public Meeting of the EIA process for planned hydro-electrical power plant in Pazar Hemsin (a neighbouring valley of Firtina) in Sept 2007; - Visiting the Black Sea Technical University Environmental Club in Trabzon in Dec 2007 to introduce WWF-Turkey's conservation work in the region and discuss potential cooperation - Presenting WWF-Turkey and its conservation work at a high school conference in Trabzon; - Participating in an activity in Artvin organized by local NGOs against gold-mining and presenting WWF-Turkey's position about the region; - joining the rally organized by local NGOs in Istanbul on 22 Jun 2008, against the threat of plannned hydropower plants on rapid flowing rivers (eg Ikizdere and others) in NE Turkey. - Supporting and joining the Environment Day activities in Giresun and presenting a paper on IRBM on 5 June 2008 and sharing the lessons-learned in Firtina Valley; - Joining an international Black Sea Conference in Trabzon on 13 June 2008 and presenting a paper on IRBM in the Firtina Valley; - Presenting a paper at a Conference in Istanbul Faculty of Forestry on IRBM in the Firtina Valley; - Presenting a paper at a Conference in Istanbul Faculty of Forestry on IRBM in the Firtina Valley; - Joining the local festival in the Ayder Pasture called "Snowman" on 23-24 Feb 2008 with local stakeholders; - Joining an international symposium in Giresun on the Impact of Investments on Environment (27-28 June 2008)introducing |

| | Fruits of WWF-Turkey's involvement (eg supporting the action led by local NGOs) in the previous periods have been collected: The Administrative Court of Rize decided (by the end of this reporting period) to stop two planned hydropower plants in Hemsin and Cayeli districts of the Rize province which was approved to be built without EIA report. |
|---|---|
| Indicator 4.5: By the end of project (2008), selected NGOs will have developed their own publications with financial support from WWF Turkey. | It was decided to expand the scope of this activity to cover conservation projects of local NGOs (without limiting it to publications). So, a small grant programme was launched and contracts signed with two local NGOs as below: - Project 1: "Protection of the Agacbasi Peatland", implemented by the Trabzon Society for Environment and Culture Project 2: "Investigation of Anthropogenic Impacts on Freshwater Habitats of the Firtina River and Conservation Measures for Protection of the Endemic Trout", by the Faculty of Freshwater Products in Rize. |
| | Both projects included field studies as well as awareness raising components in their respective themes and at their particular geographical locations. Brochures and leaflets produced and distributed among their own audiences. The projects were successfully completed in 2008 and their outcomes were evaluated during the meetings on 9-11 May in Cayeli (Rize) Additionally, the Trabzon Society for Environment and Culture was provided technical and financial assistance in publishing materials for the Environment Day activities (5 June 2008). |

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

As described above.

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

See above.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

- WWF-Turkey lobbied the local and central authorities (eg the Governorship of Rize, the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks: the central governmental authority in Ankara) for sustaining the legal status of the local Council in Firtina Valley and ensuring their recognition of the IRBM management plan.
- WWF-TR used special days, official celebrations (such as the Environment Day activities), national conferences as an opportunity to convey its message to key decisionmakers and local public.

- The project team joined and supported local NGO driven activities (rallies, local festivals, etc) to safeguard natural heritage of the region, as described in the periodic Performance Tracking Reports: eg. the rally organized by local NGOs in Istanbul in June 2008, against the threat of plannned hydropowerplants on rapid flowing rivers (eg Ikizdere and others); the local consultation meeting of the EIA process for planned hydro-electrical power plant in Pazar Hemsin (a neighbouring valley of Firtina); the activity in Artvin organized by local NGOs against gold-mining.
- Small grants were provided and networking among regional NGOs was encouraged to strengthen the local capacity to mobilize local NGOs/GOs for addressing social and environmental issues in their own territories. The Project Officer presented the Grants Programme to potential applicants across the region and guided them in making the applications. The project team also helped the shortlisted candidates to finalize their proposals. Two local organizations benefited from the Programme:
 - "Protection of the Agacbasi Peatland", implemented by the Trabzon Society for Environment and Culture.
 - II) "Investigation of Anthropogenic Impacts on Freshwater Habitats of the Firtina River and Conservation Measures for Protection of the Endemic Trout", by the Faculty of Freshwater Products in Rize.
- The EU Accession status of Turkey was used as an opportunity to introduce EU Acquis on nature conservation and water use which includes IRBM and participatory menegement. One of the seminars was held in the Firtina area, which was used as a case and majority of the beneficiaries were from the region. Representatives from the Turkish WLC were also invited to the other seminar on Water Framework Directive of the EU, which was held in Ankara.
- The environmental assets and their socio-economic benefits for local communities have been highlighted through media and press, to strengthen the environmental front against threats.
- The project officer closely worked with the Provincial Director of Environment and Forestry and the National Parks Engineer. While the preparation of the management plan of Kackar Mts N. Park (which is situated in the Firtina Valley) was simultaneously going on, WWF-TR acted as a loyal participant in the process and provided input. The NP management plan was finally completed and submitted to the Minister for his final approval, but kept pending for quite a while, as it was being considered a barrier against planned hydro-power plants in the region. Upon concerns raised by local NGOs, WWF-Turkey sent a letter to the Minister asking him to sign it asap. We have also encouraged a journalist to write a parallel article in his newspaper. The NP management plan was finally approved.
- When we became aware of the attempts for opening up a new road through a very intact gorge (the Palovit Waterfall) adjacent to the Kackar Mts N. Parks (upon demand by locals for a short cut access to the pastures), we proactively took a counter action and proposed this ecologically valuable spot to be declared a nature park with organized nature trails for environmental education. We sent a justification letter to the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and proposed working together in developing the park and the trail which could bring benefits for both conservation and local economy. We are still looking for a response.

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VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

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

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

We realized that we set an ambitious target during the design process while defining the number of completed local IRBM initiatives in the Turkish WLC as 3 - which requires some assumptions, such as the willingness and capacity of others. Implementation of these kind of innovative approaches, getting the stakeholders understand the concept and convincing them to implement it with their own efforts and resources require more time, and patience, especially in the unique social and political context of the region. It's also a learning process for all parties involved. Although the IRBM process has reached a certain level in the Firtina Valley (thanks to this project), its replication at other sites has been more modest than it was originally anticipated. There is an interest in the Harsit Valley of Giresun and WWF-Turkey shared its experience with the local stakeholders there. However, an effective local partner, more resources, better capacity and more time are needed to stimulate the process. We will try to maintain our presence with new similar projects in the region in the coming years to demonstrate effectively operating IRBM models, which will inspire others to replicate.

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

Initiation of the Project: It took some time until a momentum had been achieved in project initiation. Signing the project contract, hiring the project officer, establishing the project team and opening the local office costed us longer time than it was originally anticipated. So the project was actually launched in the end of December 2006. This was compensated with an extension of six months between July-December 2008 upon mutual agreement of WWF-Turkey and CEPF.

Commitment of the stakeholders: The official recognition and adoption of the IRBM concept and its implementation mechanism by stakeholders was very critical. The commitment of the Governor of Rize was instrumental in the successful completion of the project. The Project Officer worked with the Governor's office very closely. The meetings were organized together with the Provincial Directorate of Forest and Environment. In most cases, the stakeholders were personally visited and encouraged to join the IRBM meetings until they became acquainted. The leadership of the Governor of Rize still remains a crucial factor in the sustainability of this process.

Coordination with the central authorities: While working with the local authorities and directorates (Provincial Directorate of Forest and Environment), we tried to involve the central authorities (eg. General Directorate of Nature Conservation) and key individuals within the Ministry (in Ankara) in order to ensure a consistent approach at local and central levels. We regularly updated and invited them to the IRBM meetings.

Relationship management: The demands with potential threats on biodiversity still occur from time to time. For instance, some locals request new access roads through the intact forests of Firtina Valley and use local politicians to put pressure on local authorities. Another complaints from the area included helicopter skiing in the mountains disturbing wildlife and adoption of an orphan bear by a local resident. The local conservation NGOs expect WWF-Turkey's to take action in such cases. So the relationship with the authorities/decision-makers is double-sided (sometimes positive and sometimes negative). Letters were sent to the Governor to stop the new road construction and even offering a counter proposal of developing an education trail in the same place - which could bring benefits for both conservation and local economy.

Capacity building: As the contacts with local stakeholders intensify, the expectations from WWF-Turkey grow. It includes developing joint projects on a number of issues (eg, waste management, nature-trail construction, wildlife rehabilitation center, environmental education, etc), participation and/or financial contribution to their activities, etc. The sub-grants were helpful to a certain extent; however the volume of actual need seems far beyond. There is a great need of local capacity building. Almost all applications for sub-grants were poor, so we worked vis-à-vis with the proposers to bring them up to a certain standard, which took a great deal of time. The local stakeholders were also invited to benefit from WWF-Turkey's facilities (eg the online training module on IRBM, the Capacity Building Program on EU policies).

Field visit by CEPF: In June 2007, the Project Coordinator and the Project Officer accompanied a delegation from CEPF/CI (Jorgen Thomsen and Chris Holtz) and WWF-Caucasus PO (Nugzar Zazanashvili) in the project site to assess the progress and discuss the role of project in the region as well as future prospects. The field visit was very useful in clarifying certain the details of the project and the site between the two sides.

VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

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

| Donor | Type of Funding* | Amount in USD | Notes |
|---|------------------|---------------|---|
| Royal Dutch Embassy in Ankara / KNIP Programme | A | 13,500 | Used to cover the costs of activities under Output 3 (Regional NGO Networking) |
| WWF-Turkey (Freshwater Programme Budget) | A | 22,000 | Used to provide co-funding for local NGO grants and to cover excessive costs of certain budget items in the project |
| Royal Dutch Society for Conservation of Nature (KNNV) | В | 23,000 | The source of funding is the MATRA Programme of Dutch Government. The funding was used for building GO/NGO capacity on EU Acquis re wateruse and nature conservation. |
| European Union | С | 100,000 | The Firtina Valley is selected as the pilot site for implementing the Transactional Environmental Support Systems Project |

^{*}Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:

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

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

The follow up of the process which was initiated in Firtina Valley with the "Integrated River Basin Management in the Turkish West Lesser Caucasus Project" will continue in close cooperation with the Governorship of Rize (who will be the champion of IRBM in the area) and the Provincial Directorate of Environment and Forestry there.

The IRBM Plan of Firtina Valley, which was finalized with a final meeting with stakeholders and experts, is endorsed by the Firtina IRBM Council on 24 October 2008, which has been established as a monitoring mechanism thanks to this project. This was the last gathering of stakeholders (GOs/NGOs) before the closure of the project and the plan was undersigned by the members of IRBM Council who participated in the meeting.

During the same meeting, which was moderated by the Governor of Rize (the leader of the Council), the responsibility of the tasks listed in the plan were distributed among the partners. The local NGO and GOs also discussed the future steps and agreed to regularly get together (3-4 times a year) for reviewing the implementation of the plan as well as cooperating for protection of nature in the region.

WWF-Turkey has submitted a new project proposal to the KNIP Programme of the Dutch Embassy to cover the costs of regular stakeholder meetings for monitoring the implementation in 2009 (Budget: approx 15,000 US\$). On the other side, the Firtina Valley is selected as the pilot site of a new WWF-Turkey project called "Trans-Environmental Support Systems (TESS)", which has already started as of Jan 2009. It will produce data on the effectiveness of participatory decision-making processes in the area and help WWF-Turkey's physical presence there at least until the end of 2010 (Budget: approx 100,000 US\$). WWF-Turkey will cooperate with its local partners to raise more funds in the forthcoming years.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

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

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

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