

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	World Wide Fund for Nature
Project Title:	Engaging with key actors in reconciling biodiversity conservation and development objectives, using the critically endangered Mekong Giant Catfish as a flagship species for biodiversity conservation
Date of Report:	30/5/13
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CEPF Region: Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot

Strategic Direction: CEPF Investment Priority 3.1 Support Civil Society Efforts to Analyze Development Policies, Plans and Programs, Evaluate their Impact on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and Propose Alternative Development Scenarios and Appropriate Mitigating Measures.

Grant Amount: US\$120,000

Project Dates: 1 January 2011 – 31 December 2012, with a 3 month no cost extension to 31 March 2013

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner): Department of Livestock and Fisheries (DLF) - the national agency within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) responsible for fisheries, aquaculture and livestock development. The role of the DLF is to coordinate with line agencies at the provincial level on implementing the national policies and legal frameworks under its mandate. During this project period the DLF coordinated with WWF and provincial line agencies on disseminating and implementing the new fisheries law and other strategies and policies related to the project work plan. The DLF also is represented as chair of the project steering committee to oversee and monitor the progress of implementation. As such the DLF is a key agency in linking project outcomes to national policies and strategies of the government. This was a key factor in project success towards CEPF Investment Priority 3.1, where analysis of national development policies and plans, via project activities, were coordinated in partnership with a key department (DLF) within the Ministry.

Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) in Bokeo province - the provincial line agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF). PAFO was represented on the project steering committee (two officers) to monitor the progress of project activities. PAFO also nominated one staff to act as provincial coordinator for project implementation. The provincial coordinator liaised with project staff within WWF, target villages, District line agencies and counterparts, to implement activities. The provincial coordinator was also responsible for reporting on project progress to PAFO and the DLF. The role of a government staff as provincial coordinator ensures that project objectives and progress were communicated effectively to government decision makers, thereby contributing towards CEPF Investment Priority 3.1 on evaluation of development plans on ecosystem health and biodiversity, and how project activities have guided government partners towards possible solutions and alternatives to mitigate impacts to natural systems.

The approach was much the same in Thailand; where Department of Fisheries, at national, provincial (Chiang Rai) and Ampeur Muang (equivalent to district in Laos) levels were partners in all fishery co-management agreements, Fishery Law enforcement, providers of technical expertise, especially for scientific survey of ichthyoplankton. The last task in particular was a highly important contribution, even though the results were not what we would have hoped.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

- Facilitated the setting up of 4 Fish Conservation Zones (FCZs) in the mainstream Mekong on each side of the river, i.e. 4 in Laos and 5 in Thailand
- Contracted Zeb Hogan to undertake a desk study of the state of knowledge on the Mekong Giant Catfish; this has been shared with CEPF some time ago
- Moratorium on MGC catch achieved in Thailand, and the Lao Fishery Law implemented in Laos
- We now know a lot more about the fish species present in this stretch of the mainstream Mekong, as a result of both the ichthyoplankton survey and the fish catch monitoring.
- WWF participated in the CEPF Lao workshop to update your priority species and landscapes profile. We also presented the results of this MGC project to the CEPF Grantees Workshop - First Phase of Investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot in Phnom Penh, March 2013.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

Increase in the population of the Mekong Giant Catfish

Protection of wild fish stocks and aquatic biodiversity through increased community participation in the Mekong Giant Catfish conservation

Sustained access by rural people to affordable fish protein as the principle livelihood benefit of fisheries management

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

Progress was made during the 2 years & 3 months of project funding which itself built on the work done under a previous aquatic resources and livelihoods project in the project sites, funded via WWF Denmark. Unfortunately, WWF has no way to estimate if there has been an increase in the giant catfish population. This author recalls saying to CEPF at the time of finalizing the proposal that this impact would be impossible to measure, since we didn't know the numbers at the start.

However for the second two impacts, WWF is confident these have been achieved. Eight mainstream fish conservation zones and an agreement between the two countries on joint and sustainable management of the river and its aquatic resources will locally protect fish stocks (but not from up or downstream developments such as the Xayaburi dam. The results of the fish catch monitoring (to be provided in a stand-alone report) show both fish being caught for food, but a larger percentage being sold to market, providing income for other household uses. None of the fishing is done by businesses; it is all private members of the riverine communities.

Planned Short-term Impacts – 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

1. Reduce the overfishing threat to the Mekong Giant Catfish by calling for a moratorium in catch for scientific purpose in Thailand (Chiang Rai) and support the implementation of the Lao Fisheries Law, which bans the catch of the Mekong Giant Catfish in Laos (Bokeo)

2. Improve the understanding of the Mekong Giant Catfish life cycle and the conditions of the spawning site in Bokeo and Chiang Rai

3. Improved fisheries management in and around the spawning area via the establishment of fishery management committees and fish conservation zones.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

- The first one was achieved with the Thai moratorium being maintained throughout the project's duration (and very likely beyond it) and capacity building for provincial government and awareness developed in local communities (see outcomes of community attitude survey in a separate report)
- This second one was always going to be challenging but WWF continues to try achieve Improve the understanding of the Mekong Giant Catfish life cycle and the conditions of the spawning site. The state of knowledge report produced by Zeb Hogan and funded by this project has at least told us what is and is not known

- This impact has certainly been achieved. Nine FCZs and their associated management committees plus the transboundary agreement for sustainable fisher management are the evidence for that.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: There are now 9 mainstream FCZs set up and running in the project area through WWF support, on the Lao side 4 FCZs with a total area of 23.79ha and on the Thai side 5 FCZs with a total area of 9.14 ha.

We can be confident that their benefits are wider than that due to the migratory nature of many of the species.

Species Conserved: The fish catch monitoring, especially for those who fish in the mainstream has shown substantial presence in the Lao catch of *Hemibagrus wyckioides*. Although Red Listed as least concern, this species is given second level protection under Lao Law, so the fishery department should really be trying to monitor and if necessary control its catch.

Corridors Created:

This project was not involved in *creating* corridors, but it did contribute to the maintenance of the natural freshwater corridor of the Mekong river and its tributaries in the project area.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The setting up of eight FCZs, a transboundary sustainable fishery management agreement, the production of a state of knowledge report on the Mekong Giant Catfish, improved community awareness of the need to conserve that (and other) species, the continued moratorium on targeted catch of the MGC in Thailand and effective implementation of the Lao Fishery Law (which expressly prohibits MGC catch) are all successes. The challenge remains to find the exact location of spawning grounds; the ichthyoplankton survey for the 3rd year in succession failed to find MGC samples. WWF next intends to test eDNA methods for identifying locations where the MGC is present.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

None to report

Project Components

Project Components: Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.

Component 1. Planned

Fisheries co-management arrangements developed and extended to protect the Mekong Giant Catfish species and its habitats

Component 1 Actual at Completion: This has been achieved with the 9 new mainstream fish conservation zones and the transboundary sustainable fishery management agreement

Component 2 Planned:

A moratorium in catch of the MGC for scientific purposes in Thailand (Chiang Rai) is advocated for and the implementation of the Lao Fisheries Law, which bans the catch of the Mekong Giant Catfish in Laos (Bokeo), is enabled.

Component 2 Actual at Completion: The moratorium was advocated for and achieved; the Lao Fishery Law has been successfully implemented.

Component 3 Planned:

The spawning habitat for the Mekong Giant Catfish in the upper Mekong River Basin is determined by undertaking ichthyoplankton research

Component 3 Actual at Completion: The survey was done, but no MGC samples (eggs or larvae) were discovered, so the spawning location is still not precisely known.

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

As noted in the box above, there was no success with the egg/larvae survey. Thus WWF and the local governments have not been able to move to conserve and protect the spawning grounds, from over fishing or sand/gravel extraction.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

Most products have already been shared with CEPF, with the exception of the attitude survey results and the analysis of the fish catch monitoring. Both of those are accompanying this final completion report.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

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

The design was appropriate, perhaps because it built on previous WWF/government collaboration in the project site. It was not the fault of the design that the ichthyoplankton survey failed to find Mekong Giant Catfish.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The implementation was as effective as it could have been.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

This project confirmed that transboundary targets are possible to hit when the project is active in both countries. WWF has the MGC as a flagship species, and this has proved a successful way to access additional resources. For example, the project reported on here was chosen to be part of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria (EAZA) annual appeal in 2012 (now extended into 2013) and WWF has already received €30,000 as a result of this, all to be spent on future MGC conservation efforts. WWF Laos also attracted \$25,000 from the US Embassy in Vientiane to test satellite tagging of migratory catfish, with the intention of future use with MGC, if the methodology works.

One other lesson is that high tech approaches are not always successful in achieving conservation outcomes. The ichthyoplankton survey found no MGC samples, and the satellite tagging has so far proved unsuccessful, but more testing will happen in June 2013.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
WWF DE	WWF donor network (co-financing)	80,000	Enabled some extra fishery co-management work in Bokeo & Chiang Rai
DoF, Thailand	In kind contribution	Not known	Salaries for 4 Thai DoF staff for a month to do the ichthyoplankton survey and the DNA analysis in Bangkok

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

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

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

At the village level, the FCZs are sustainable, based on what we have seen in all similar WWF projects in the region. Replicability is already happening in the Oxfam Novib funded project in 3 central provinces of Laos, and the M&E and fish catch monitoring methods partly developed by this project are being used in WWF's new project in Siphandone.

The Mekong River Commission's Fishery Programme is about to start (July 2013) a transboundary fishery management project in essentially the same locations as the project reported on here. Most of the activities will be on the collection of baseline information for example, fish abundance and diversity, socio-economic (including fishers livelihood), impact of development etc. This information is needed for development of transboundary fisheries management plan. The project will be 3 years with an estimated budget of around 300,000 USD for both countries. MRC are happy if they can make use and top up WWF work and will be very happy to involve WWF into the project

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Nothing to report here

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

No action was required towards these policies, other than the day to day actions of the project team (both WWF and government)

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Comment [VC1]: The end date was 31 March – but I wonder if this statement refers to projects with a later end date than June 30 – guidance please about if the following tables need to be completed or note

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2011 to May 31, 2012. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.				Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?				Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.				

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics							Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit													
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Increased Income due to:				Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other
									Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services									
Thailand:																					
Ban Don Thee	X							X				X								X	
Ban Muang Khan	X							X				X								X	
Ban Hat Kai	X							X				X								X	
Ban Don	X							X				X								X	
Laos																					
Ban Nam Keung	X							X				X								X	
Ban Pak Ngao	X							X				X								X	
Ban Pa Oiy/Thin That	X							X				X								X	
Ban Pak Ing Thai	X							X				X								X	
Total																					
If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:																					

