

## CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

<b>Organization Legal Name:</b>	Conservation International Foundation
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>Promoting Public Policies for Biodiversity Conservation in the Ecuadorian Chocó</b>
<b>Date of Report:</b>	March 13, 2014
<b>Report Author and Contact Information</b>	Roberto Ulloa (Environmental Policies Manager) Mailing address: P.O. Box17171388 – Quito Ecuador Tel: +593-2- 3979708 rulloa@conservation.org

**CEPF Region:** Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena (Ecuador)

**Strategic Direction:** 4. Consolidation

**Grant Amount:** \$309,999

**Project Dates:** September 1, 2010-December 31, 2013

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

### Conservation Impacts

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

The project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile in different ways, especially:

Working in different Choco-Manabi Conservation Corridor windows in priority areas has reinforced and sustain the conservation gains achieved as a result of previous CEPF investment in this Corridor.

A number of project activities have been focused on incorporating options for conservation and sustainable human welfare considerations into local and regional land use and development plans in the Choco Manabi Corridor.

To promote policies oriented to biodiversity conservation at the landscape scale, driving the design biocorridors at 4 provinces level, two of which included the Choco Manabí Corridor.

The project tried to improve the knowledge and perceptions of main stakeholders in the Choco Manabí Corridor about the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation, specially the conversion of areas of high biological value to African palm, and the solutions to those social conflicts and threats.

The project has strengthened key partners technical capacities and generate synergies between civil societies and governmental agencies trying to ensure the robustness of CEPF's conservation results and replicated and promote their scaling up.

To strengthen the organizational capacities of key actors in the management of natural resources and biodiversity, as the FECCHE (The Chachi Indigenous Federation of Esmeraldas), who own the last remaining forests in good condition in this province.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.***

Ecuador has focused its efforts on achieving the so-called "Good Living", Buen Vivir or SUMA KAWSAY, one of its pillars is the land use planning. The article 241 of the new Constitution requires that all decentralized and autonomous governments (GAD) perform territorial planning based on the development of land use plans (PDOT), in order to contribute to sustainable development policies. Through the PDOT, the local governments required to articulate all national, regional, cantonal and parish planning.

As a contribution to this land use planning process and to strengthen and incorporate key environmental aspects in local governments planning, the project supported the design of the proposal for Environmental Guidelines for Land Use Planning, which constitute a proposed policy to incorporate national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development into land use planning.

This initiative was developed with the participation of various institutions that joined the process at different stages and in different ways. The main participating institutions include the Ministry of Environment (MAE), the National Secretary of Planning and Development (SENPLADES), the Consortium of Autonomous Provincial Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE), the Association of Municipalities of Ecuador (AME), the National Rural Parish Council Governments of Ecuador (CONAGOPARE), the Regional Biodiversity Program of the Member Countries of the Andean Community (BioCAN) Ecuador and Conservation International (CI- Ecuador). Furthermore, the implementation of this initiative was achieved with the financial support of the Government of Finland, through the Program BioCAN of the Andean Community, and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) through the project "Promotion Public Policies for Biodiversity Conservation Choco".

Another greatest achievement of the project was to develop an environmental action plan based on biocorridors for Planning Area 1 (according to the mandatory territorial zoning for Ecuador defined by the National Planning Secretariat - SENPLADES) which includes the provinces of Esmeraldas, Imbabura ( the Choco Manabi Corridor is located in these provinces), Carchi and Sucumbios. This environmental plan, led by the Ministry of Environment Imbabura District was called "Biocorridors : a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity , land use and sustainable development in the Planning Area 1 ( Carchi , Imbabura , Esmeraldas and Sucumbios" and was design in a highly participatory process with support of the Biocorridors Technical Working Group, a social platform created with this purpose.

In parallel, the design of the strategy based on biocorridors improved the knowledge, perceptions and skills of the Biocorridors Technical Working Group about the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats. Likewise, the definition of this strategy allowed strengthened capacities and capabilities of the group through practical training in policy design.

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

The planned Long-term Impacts of the project were:

1. Through highly participatory actions involving key stakeholders, areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó – Manabí Corridor, especially in the Northwestern Coast of Esmeraldas Province in Ecuador, are maintained given that pressures and threats on them have been reduced.
2. Pressures and threats (especially from oil palm crops) in areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó Manabí Corridor have been reduced.

3. Environmental policies related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and other regional and/or sectoral planning instruments proposed with full participation of stakeholders in the Chocó Manabí Corridor.
4. Bi-national collaboration between the environmental authorities of Ecuador and Colombia, based upon a better mutual knowledge of institutional, political, administrative, and environmental issues has been strengthen facilitating integrated approaches and interventions.

**Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:**

Long-term Impacts	Level of fulfillment			
	Low (≤ 20%)	Little (21 - 60 %)	Partially (61 - 90 %)	Totally (≥ 91%)
1. Through highly participatory actions involving key stakeholders, areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó – Manabí Corridor, especially in the Northwestern Coast of Esmeraldas Province in Ecuador, are maintained given that pressures and threats on them have been reduced.			<p>Although the project, has generated information on the areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó - Manabí Corridor, and has supported the definition of conservation policies (aimed at implementing biocorridors as a land use planning mechanisms), no one could argue that the pressures and threats decrease in the region is exclusive and directly correlated with the achievements of this project.</p> <p>There are other factors that influence and are related , for example, a historic decline in the rate of deforestation in the country in general and in the Chocó - Manabí Corridor region, implementation of mandatory logging closure periods in Esmeraldas province, the decline in international prices of palm oil and its oversupply in international markets, the timing control felling of mangroves, among the most significant factors. However , the definition of policy proposals in a participatory manner ( the generation of a Technical Working Committee to</p>	

			<p>support the preparation of a strategy on biocorridors in Zone 1 , the Provincial Dialog Group discussions in Esmeraldas ) has generated greater awareness in the Corridor, especially in decision makers , who can positively influence the implementation of measures to reduce pressures and threats</p>	
<p>2. Pressures and threats (especially from oil palm crops) in areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó Manabí Corridor have been reduced.</p>			<p>As explained for result 1, lower pressures and threats in the areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó - Manabí Corridor, is related to several factors.</p> <p>In the case of the decrease of the pressure and threats due to the oil palm expansion in areas of high biodiversity conservation value in the Chocó Manabí Corridor, although it was not possible to develop the original proposal idea of a regulatory by laws in the municipalities of San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro due to political issues (see progress reports, 2012) , CI direct participation in the discussion of RSPO may have indirectly supported the decrease in the of oil palm expansion in Esmeraldas.</p> <p>Unquestionably, pressures in global markets (oil palm international prices declining or oversupply in international markets) and the controls exercised by the MAE to avoid illegal logging in Esmeraldas, may have had a concrete impact on the expansion of this crop.</p>	

<p>3. Environmental policies related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable development and other regional and/or sectoral planning instruments proposed with full participation of stakeholders in the Chocó Manabí Corridor.</p>			<p>This Long-term impacts had better results especially for the participatory definition of policies proposals such as environmental action plan based on biocorridors called "Biocorridors: a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity, land use and sustainable development in the Planning Area 1 (Carchi, Imbabura, Esmeraldas and Sucumbios) ". This environmental plan was developed with input from various entities participating in the Technical Working Committee, formed and led by MAE.</p> <p>The primary objective of the Biocorridors Technical Group of Work was to promote environmental and social organization of the territory in Zone 1 generating mechanisms for ecosystem connectivity - biocorridors - and its incorporation into GAD's land use plans. This connectivity will protect the vast biodiversity in Zone 1 of the multiple threats and control the deterioration of the associated natural resources, ensuring the continuity of ecological processes. Additionally, the Technical Group will widespread practices and technical knowledge and ancestral wisdom to strengthen local capacities on biocorridors, and increased sustainable rural livelihoods , especially for local communities and indigenous peoples and nationalities that live in this area .</p>
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<p>4. Bi-national collaboration between the environmental authorities of Ecuador and Colombia, based upon a better mutual knowledge of institutional, political, administrative, and environmental issues has been strengthen facilitating integrated approaches and interventions.</p>		<p>In a general way, this has been one of the long-term impacts that obtained the least practical results. However, interesting contributions have been made such as to generate a proposal for "Conformation of a Binational Biosphere Reserve for the conservation and sustainable management of the Pacific coast and Santiago - Cayapas Mataje - basins"; a working paper draft of Regional Plan of Action for the conservation of mangroves of Southeast Pacific (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama) has been developed with the support of the MAE, and have generated interesting interinstitutional synergies. However, it has not been able to influence processes to support binational biodiversity conservation, especially <i>in situ</i> conservation schemes. This issue has not been effective because the government of Ecuador prioritized government participation in bilateral meetings and not allowed the participation of civil society institutions.</p>		
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**Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):**

1. The Regional Development Plan (SENPLADES) and two other regional and/or planning and policy instruments (e.g., Esmeraldas Strategic Environmental Plan and/or Socio Bosque Program Implementation Plan in Esmeraldas) include biodiversity criteria.
2. At least 3 key stakeholders (federal and local level) in the Esmeraldas province have improved their knowledge and perceptions of the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats.
3. At least 3 key stakeholders working in the Esmeraldas province (federal and local level) have strengthened capacities and capabilities through practical training in policy design.
4. Environmental authorities in charge of biodiversity protection and national parks of Ecuador and Colombia have articulated common vision and agenda for transboundary conservation in the region.

**Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:**

Short-term Impacts	Level of fulfillment			
	Low (≤ 20%)	Little (21 - 60 %)	Parcially (61 - 90 %)	Totally (≥ 91%)
1. The Regional Development Plan (SENPLADES) and two other regional and/or planning and policy instruments (e.g., Esmeraldas Strategic Environmental Plan and/or Socio Bosque Program Implementation Plan in Esmeraldas) include biodiversity criteria.				The greatest achievement of the project was to agree with the Ministry of Environment the focus and scope of an environmental action plan based on biocorridors for Planning Area 1 (according to the mandatory territorial zoning for Ecuador defined by the National Planning Secretariat - SENPLADES) which includes the provinces of Esmeraldas, Imbabura ( the Choco Manabi Corridor is located in these provinces), Carchi and Sucumbios. This environmental plan was called "Biocorridors : a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity , land use and sustainable development in the Planning Area 1 ( Carchi , Imbabura , Esmeraldas and Sucumbios" .
2. At least 3 key			In the beginning of the	

<p>stakeholders (federal and local level) in the Esmeraldas province have improved their knowledge and perceptions of the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats.</p>			<p>project activities focused on capacity building of San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro municipalities and Esmeraldas Provincial Government level. Due to institutional problems, we could not conclude the actions planned with the municipalities; the work of the Provincial Government was develop according to the activities planning. During the last year of the project the work focused on supporting MAE of Imbabura in the development of a participatory policy landscape scale conservation design. Additionally, the project developed a process to strengthen the organizational capacities of the Federation of Chachi Indian of Esmeraldas , including an analysis of socio-environmental Impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats . During the execution of the communication strategy workshops were developed with selected Esmeraldas journalists where specialized modules were given related to socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation in Esmeraldas and the solutions to those threats.</p>	
<p>3. At least 3 key stakeholders working in the Esmeraldas province (federal and local level) have strengthened</p>				<p>In Esmeraldas, CI Ecuador was part of the Provincial Dialog Group which led the formulation of land use plans for 28 GADs. As part of this Group, CI provided technical support for the planning process,</p>

<p>capacities and capabilities through practical training in policy design.</p>				<p>during the phases of diagnosis, proposal and management model. That support was very useful to guide the work of facilitators and technicians who helped Local Planning Councils to elaborate their plans. The generated plans include sustainable development and conservation criteria like conservation of important sites to provide freshwater, integrated watershed management, coordinated protected areas management, reforestation, biodiversity management, sustainable production, spatial zoning, local protected areas declaration, natural resources surveys, training and capacity building in environmental issues, among others. Also, within the local planning process framework a common agenda was developed, by key stakeholders who work in Esmeraldas (UNDP, GIZ, OIM, AME, SENPLADES, CI Ecuador, CONGOPE, CONAGOPARE, MAE, ACNUR, CTB, AECID, IUCN), focused on the local government strengthening capacities and the design of technical management tools. CI Ecuador will lead the local protected areas and climate change components, which will include capacity building processes, provision of specific planning tools and support in the creation of key legal instruments. Another interesting example of capacity</p>	
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				strengthen is the creation of the Biocorridors Technical Group of Work, politically led by the MAE Provincial Environment Authority of in Imbabura and composed of representatives from the Carchi Provincial Department of Environment, the Cuyabeno Faunal Production Reserve, the Autonomous Decentralized Government of Imbabura and Carchi, NGOs as Altrópico Foundation, Conservation International - Ecuador, the Cofan Survival Foundation, the National Forest Association and Private Reserves of Ecuador and the social collective Chiles Mataje Life Corridor - GIZ.
4. Environmental authorities in charge of biodiversity protection and national parks of Ecuador and Colombia have articulated common vision and agenda for transboundary conservation in the region.		This short-term Impact has the least development in the project. Unfortunately, it was not possible to articulate a common agenda related to <i>in situ</i> conservation between Colombia and Ecuador authorities, with participation of the main stakeholders. The lessons learned section will explain in detail the reasons for the low performance of this impact.		

**Please provide the following information where relevant:**

**Hectares Protected:**

**Species Conserved:**

**Corridors Created:**

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

The long-term and short-term impact project objectives have different levels of compliance as mentioned in the various sections of this final report.

The greatest achievement of the project was the participative design and publication of the environmental plan called "Biocorridors: a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity, land use and sustainable development in the Planning Area 1 (Carchi , Imbabura , Esmeraldas and Sucumbios) developed with the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and participation of the Biocorridors Technical Round Table.

The work developed by the Biocorridors Technical Round Table made possible that key stakeholders working in the mentioned provinces, included Esmeraldas, at regional and local level, have strengthened capacities and capabilities through practical training in policy design.

In the other hand, it was not possible that environmental authorities in charge of biodiversity protection and national parks of Ecuador and Colombia articulated a common vision and a common agenda for transboundary conservation in the region. The challenges faced to achieve this impact relate to convince the external affairs offices of the countries that partnership between civil society and government can provide positive returns.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

A successful aspect relates to the inclusion of the concept of biocorridors in the regional and local planning processes, since this allowed to link other conservation actions consistent with the strategy of the biocorridors, leverage resources, and manages alliances that endure throughout the project and contribute to the Choco Manabi Corridor sustainability.

The term " biocorridor " will be used broadly to indicate the various mechanisms of habitats connectivity inked to schemes of wider landscape, which are an integral part of a regional land use strategy, based on landscape ecology of and conservation, rehabilitation and sustainable use of biodiversity and its environmental services.

## **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:** Strengthen local, regional, and national policies for conservation and sustainable development

**Component 1 Actual at Completion:**

1. To strengthen and incorporate key environmental aspects in local governments planning, the Ministry of Environment of Ecuador (MAE), with support from Conservation International Ecuador and BioCAN program of the Andean Community Nations (CAN), developed the proposal for Environmental Guidelines for Land Use Planning, which constitute a proposed

policy to incorporate national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development into land use planning.

In order to develop these products it has been generated the following documents:

- a) "Analysis and systematization of environmental content of 14 plans of decentralized autonomous governments (GADs)", including those developed for Esmeraldas province and Eloy Alfaro Canton, CEPF priority sites.
  - b) Draft document of " Ministerial Agreement to formal recognition of the environmental guidelines to be included in land use plans ", and,
  - c) Draft proposal of "Content structure for the application of the environmental guidelines Manual".
2. The greatest achievement of the project during was to develop with the leadership of the Ministry of Environment an environmental action plan based on biocorridors for Planning Area 1 (according to the mandatory territorial zoning for Ecuador defined by the National Planning Secretariat - SENPLADES) which includes the provinces of Esmeraldas, Imbabura, Carchi and Sucumbios . This environmental plan was called "Biocorridors : a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity , land use and sustainable development in the Planning Area 1 (Carchi , Imbabura , Esmeraldas and Sucumbios" .
  3. In terms of the work related to the implementation strategy of SocioBosque in Esmeraldas province , the following documents were developed:
    - a) - Draft proposal of "Geographical prioritization for implementation of incentives (conservation and recovery) of SocioBosque in Esmeraldas".
    - b) - Basic structure of the proposed strategy.
  4. A draft proposal of "Guidelines for Esmeraldas Environmental Agenda" it has been presented, as part of the presentation of CI's work in the Province. This draft proposal, have been discussed at two meetings with MAE and the different NGOs and projects working in Esmeraldas, focused on interchange experiences of the activities that projects, donors and NGO run in the province, in order to identify work synergies and joint cooperation between civil society and MAE and to discuss the possibility of developing the Esmeraldas Environmental Agenda. The agreements reached include developing meetings planning and working together for each of the 8 existing protected areas in Esmeraldas, work in biodiversity conservation priorities to be defined by the MAE and analyze the possibility of executing the environmental agenda. In addition, MAE and NGOs will work to define options to minimize Esmeraldas serious environmental problems, specially mining and the expansion of the African palm.
  5. CI Ecuador has signed agreements with some institutions (CONCOPE - Consortium of Provincial Governments in Ecuador, PUCESE - Catholic University in Esmeraldas, GPE - Provincial Government of Esmeraldas) for working together in the strengthening of capacities of public institutions and local stakeholders. Also, we have signed an agreement with a project led by the Art Program of the UNDP for supporting the planning process in the Esmeraldas province which includes all the government levels or GADs (province, counties, and parishes) our main technical support was focused on capacity building and communications issues.

**Component 2 Planned:** Improve knowledge and promote behavior change and perception among key stakeholders on the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation in northwestern Ecuador.

## **Component 2 Actual at Completion:**

1. A communication strategy and training on environmental issues in the province of Esmeraldas was implemented, in order to contribute to the policies design for biodiversity conservation to be included in the land use and developments plans (PDOT) and, at the same time, create opportunities for discussion and learning on key socio- environmental problems of the province. The strategy had two components: environmental communication and territorial planning. The environmental communication component focused on the implementation of the CEPF II project Communication Strategy based on designing and facilitating training workshops for key stakeholders (GADs representatives, selected journalists from the province, representatives of indigenous communities, etc.) and the communication materials design and printing to provide GAD with tools for internal and external communication processes of land use planning and initiating the environmental education program proposed in the communication strategy. Land use planning component focused on providing technical assistance to selected GADs (Provincial Council, and municipalities of San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro) in local planning processes, with emphasis on participatory mechanisms and generation of spaces for dialogue and environmental management coordination at provincial, cantonal and parish levels, in the context of planning and zoning driven by SENPLADES. A key theme was the strengthened capacity of journalist and reporters in order to improve their knowledge and perceptions of the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats; Chachis representatives also participate in the environmental education workshops organized by CI to promote conservation in the province.
2. The oil palm production in Ecuador is growing gradually year by year, for this reason the National Association of Oil Palm Growers (ANCUPA) and the Foundation for the Promotion of Palm Oil Exports and its National Origin derivatives (FEDAPAL) are trying to push sustainability principles proposed by RSPO in Ecuador, in order to guaranteed the highest social and environmental standards in this activity. ANCUPA and FEDAPAL began on 23 July 2013, the Public Consultation Process on the National Interpretation of the Principles and Criteria of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). This Public Consultation Process is made via a website created especially for this event, which is accessed through the website of FEDAPAL and ANCUPA ([www.ancupa.com](http://www.ancupa.com) / [www.fedapal.com](http://www.fedapal.com)). In order to improve knowledge and promote behavior change and perception among oil palm cultivators on the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion due by palm oil expansion in Esmeraldas the Guide to Compliance with the Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Production of Palm Oil and the Guidelines for Under Palm Growers Small Group Certification were analyzed and specific comments of both documents were prepared as part of CI's work activities on RSPO. CI Ecuador analysis and comments are focused on criteria related to environmental issues, specifically criteria 5 and 7 in the two above-mentioned guidelines.
3. During the implementation of the communication strategy workshops were held with Esmeraldas selected journalists, which had specialized modules on socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation in the province and the solutions to those threats.
4. The project developed a process to organizational capacities strengthen of the Federation of Chachi Indian of Esmeraldas, including an analysis of socio-environmental Impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats.
5. The greatest achievement of the project was the participative design and publication of the environmental plan called "Biocorridors: a strategy for the conservation of biodiversity, land use and sustainable development in the Planning Area 1 (Carchi, Imbabura, Esmeraldas and Sucumbios). Este documento contiene un capítulo específico muy detallado relacionado con socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation in northwestern Ecuador. This document contains a specific chapter on highly detailed socio-environmental impacts of

forest conversion and degradation in northwestern Ecuador. Likewise, throughout the document and in a special chapter, there is an atlas of information related to Zone 1 diagnosis and characteristics which include a variety of information of ecosystems impacts in this region.

6. There was a close working with EcoCiencia to understand in depth the Socio-environmental Management System (SIMSA) developed for the northern part of the Choco - Manabí Conservation Corridor. SIMSA includes the information generated by this entity in the Ecuadorian window of the Choco-Magdalena corridor, specifically in the area of the San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro cantons. SIMSA is an important mechanism to improve knowledge and promote behavior change and perception among key stakeholders on the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation in northwestern Ecuador.

**Component 3 Planned:** Strengthen governmental bi-national collaboration through a common environmental agenda for transboundary conservation in the region.

**Component 3 Actual at Completion:**

While an environmental agenda for transboundary conservation in the region could not be worked in the way it was planned, there have been significant steps towards this scheme, including:

1. CI Ecuador supported the IV Bi-national Forum of the Integration Area between Colombia and Ecuador developed in San Lorenzo – Ecuador in 2011. That dialog was very important to discuss, among a lot of local stakeholders, the options to get the regional sustainable development and effective conservation of natural resources. CI Ecuador promoted the participation of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian groups and key NGOs in this Forum. The most relevant proposals, related to the sustainable development of the region were: 1) the consolidation of trans-boundary conservation initiatives like “Chiles-Mataje Life Corridor” and 2) the creation of a Biosphere Reserve which protects the bi-national mangroves resources.
2. During the V Binational Forum of Strategic Development of the Pacific Area, developed in the municipality of Tumaco, Colombia in 2012, representatives of CI presented to the plenary a draft proposal called "Conformation of the Binational Biosphere Reserve for the conservation and sustainable management of the Pacific coast and Santiago - Cayapas Mataje - basins", in order to articulated common vision and agenda for transboundary conservation in the region. V Forum memories include this resolution. This resolution was also presented to the MAE Provincial Directorate for it analysis and follow up.
3. CI Ecuador Executive Director, Luis Suárez, hold a meeting in Bogotá with Julia Miranda, Director of the Department of Natural and National Parks of Colombia focuses in the opportunities and perspectives to build a common binational agenda and to promote actions to strengthen transboundary conservation in the region. Also, two specific transboundary initiatives, promoted by local stakeholders, where identified to be analyzed in this binational frame: ‘Chiles-Mataje Life Corridor’ and ‘Mangroves Biosphere Reserve’. Additionally, there were meetings with MAE Ecuador representatives to propose CI support in the review of a binational agenda of the Ecuador and Colombia governments to strengthen the environmental component, but no formal invitation to the binational discussions was received.
4. In the second half of 2013, the most significant activity of this component was the alliance between CI Ecuador with the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific (CPPS) and the UNESCO Regional Office for the preparation of the Regional Plan of Action for the Conservation of Southeast Pacific Mangroves (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama), with the support of the MAE. A first working paper has been developed and it is expected that the Plan is adopted by the countries of the CPPS in 2014.

5. In addition, actions are running in collaboration with HIVOS, a Dutch NGO working in Ecuador, in a binational initiative to promote the conservation and sustainable use of mangroves in the border area of Ecuador (San Lorenzo) and Colombia (Tumaco). The work in the San Lorenzo focuses specifically in the Cayapas Mataje Ecological Mangrove Reserve REMACAM, where CEPF has supported tourism activities. A GEF proposal has been prepared to dar continuidad al trabajo propuesto con HIVOS.

**Component 4 Planned:** Improve donors' collaboration in Esmeraldas Province, particularly including MacArthur, GEF, CEPF, USAID, and GTZ.

**Component 4 Actual at Completion:**

La colaboración entre donantes ha sido impulsada en los siguientes procesos.

1. During 2010 y 2011, a Provincial Dialogue Group (PDG-E) was created In Esmeraldas to focus on coordination and articulation of main stakeholders. This group acted as a mechanism for decision-making and prioritization of the prioritized activities that contribute to human and environmental development in the province. GDP-E provided a programmatic framework and decentralized management of international cooperation, generating synergies of efforts, stakeholders and resources. CI-E was invited to participate in this PDG-E and will support the group and involve other international cooperation stakeholders such as MacArthur, GEF and USAID.
2. The BIOCAN initiative was developed with the participation of various institutions that joined the process at different stages and in different ways. The main participating institutions include the Ministry of Environment (MAE), the National Secretary of Planning and Development (SENPLADES), the Consortium of Autonomous Provincial Governments of Ecuador (CONGOPE), the Association of Municipalities of Ecuador (AME), the National Rural Parish Council Governments of Ecuador (CONAGOPARE), the Regional Biodiversity Program of the Member Countries of the Andean Community (BioCAN) Ecuador and Conservation International (CI- Ecuador). Furthermore, the implementation of this initiative was achieved with the financial support of the Government of Finland, through the Program BioCAN of the Andean Community, and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.
3. Biocorridors Technical Group of Work, politically led by the MAE Provincial Environment Authority of Imbabura and composed of representatives from the Carchi Provincial Department of Environment, the Cuyabeno Faunal Production Reserve, the Autonomous Decentralized Government of Imbabura and Carchi, NGOs as Altrópico Foundation, Conservation International - Ecuador, the Cofan Survival Foundation, the National Forest Association and Private Reserves of Ecuador and the social collective Chiles Mataje Life Corridor - GIZ. Si bien no es una mesa de donantes, muchas de las entidades participantes reciben financiamiento de distintos donantes, y los mantiene informados sobre los avances de sus proyectos. Además, permitió la generación de sinergias entre entidades participantes.

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

There are no components unrealized. However, there are two activities in which the results have not been the expected.

The first one is related with the participation of representatives of indigenous and local groups in relevant meetings, and workshops related with the strengthening of conservation policy and consultation efforts in Esmeraldas province.

During this report period, and working in closely coordination with Altrópico Foundation, CI has tried to involve representatives especially from indigenous federations (Chachi and Awa and the Afro - Ecuadorian association, in the project activities. However, it should be noted that the participation of representatives of indigenous and local groups has been limited for several reasons, especially the fragile institutional situation being experienced by organizations like the Chachi Indigenous Federation of Esmeraldas (FECCHE), lack of funding to cover their mobilizing costs, their own agendas and interest and its activities prioritization, among others.

FECCHE has been invited to participate in all activities directly related with the CEPF execution project. As explained below, the project develop a specific consultancy for the FECCHE organizational strengthening; the diagnosis of this analysis indicates that the directorate, that has about a year of operation, has failed to generate sufficient financial resources to sponsor the participation of its members in different meetings and had to prioritize its intervention to strictly necessary topics.

The second activity with few advances was to evaluate the application of the Ecuador Colombia Bi -National Environmental Action Plan. This evaluation has not been possible because the Ecuadorian government prioritized governmental participation in the Ecuador - Colombia meetings organized to evaluate such Plan, limiting the participation of civil society.

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

The tools, products, and methodologies resulted from this project are on Google Drive specific files.

## **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)***

In general, it may be mentioned that the political and institutional environment in Esmeraldas during the project implementation has been changing. A lesson for the design and project implementation aspects is to apply the adaptive management fundamentals. As explained below, the project has had to adapt to complicated institutional and political changes that were not considered in the design phase of the project. The recommendation is to take into account these changes to incorporate additional time and budget required overcoming the delays that result from these changes. Significantly, there has been a good degree of flexibility from CEPF to understand the reasons and causes of these political and institutional changes, especially in Esmeraldas.

A lesson learned for the design phase is to take special care in selecting the type and number of impacts and components to be accomplished on the project. Concentrating efforts on areas that generate significant positive changes can be much more effective that select a greater number of activities and components. Fewer impacts based in realistic components would be the recommendation.

A good practice in the design and review phases of results of the CEPF projects has been to develop direct dialogue between the proponents in a region to create synergies and avoid activities duplication. Exchanging information between proponents allows not only achieve effective activities but is seen as a coordination work among proponents by the social partners and main stakeholders in the area or region where work activities are developed.

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

A revealing lesson has been to confirm the weakness of municipal institutions on environmental subjects. This weakness is reflected in the understaffed that exists in the municipalities of San Lorenzo and Eloy Alfaro with exclusive dedication to environmental components, especially those related to biodiversity conservation. The greater interest of the GADs focuses on “gray” themes, while the “green” aspects are relegated. This weakness is evident in the degree of participation of the municipalities and the limited availability of technical staff time to support and participate directly in the actions of the project, even when they are considered important.

During the Project, the Eloy Alfaro Mayor was removed from his position and in the municipality of San Lorenzo, the National Auditing General's Office conducted financial reviews by allegations of corruption. These factors forced not to continue with the planned project activities in these municipalities.

Another key player in Esmeraldas, the Ministry of the Environment (MAE) faces weaknesses, mainly limitations of human and financial resources and presence at provincial scale to control the high level of resources exploitation in a region with the highest biodiversity in the country.

Directly relate with the institutional weakness is the frequent political changes that occur at different levels in the region. During the project development there were various changes at the Ministry of Environment MAE in the province of Esmeraldas. These changes meant that many of the work's arrangements and coordination of actions that was agreed must be negotiated and approved again for the new authorities. These situations cause delays in the project activities and often change the scope of work, depending on the interest and political will of the new authorities.

Another significant political change in Esmeraldas province was the election of the Federation Chachi (FECCHE) authorities. In this process, align or take sides with any political camp, may represent losing or win the support of the new authorities for the development of the project. In addition, in election process, the interest on the implementation of the project activities or to participate in meetings, workshops and planned appointments is completely lost. FECCHE is facing a complicated situation by the lack of adequately trained members in leadership, conflict resolution and fundraising, lack of financial resources, and governance problems, especially the relationship between FECCHE and communities. This weakness is worrying since the FECCHE owns the last remaining tropical lowland forest in good condition in the north of Esmeraldas.

An important lesson learned is that there must have the political support and leadership of the authorities for the project impacts and activities and to generate synergies between government agencies and civil society to develop a joint work achieves lasting results.

The greatest achievement of the project was to agree with the Ministry of Environment the focus and scope of an environmental action plan based on biocorridors for Planning Area 1 (which includes the provinces of Esmeraldas, Imbabura (the Choco Manabi Corridor is located in these provinces), Carchi and Sucumbios).

The biocorridors for Planning Area 1 policy was participatory constructed by the Biocorridors Technical Group, composed of representatives from the Carchi Provincial Department of Environment, the Cuyabeno Faunal Production Reserve, the Autonomous Decentralized Government of Imbabura and Carchi, NGOs as Altrópico Foundation, Conservation International -

Ecuador, the Cofan Survival Foundation, the National Forest Association and Private Reserves of Ecuador and the social collective Chiles Mataje Life Corridor - GIZ. The synergies generated an interesting appropriation of the final product since the biocorridors document was built with direct input from the members.

There has been a clear leadership from MAE Imbabura, and Biocorridors Technical Group organizations members have collaborated according to the schedule agreed to move forward according to their objectives.

It is unquestionable that the implementation of biocorridors in Zone 1 has a long way to go, but it is also undeniable that it is necessary to articulate more entities and public and private actors to obtain more political will and achieve more technical and financial support. This is an ongoing process that must be strengthened to influence corporate policies and governance in the region, and it could be replicated in other areas. To achieve this objective, the Imbabura Environment Authority signed several letters of interest between the MAE and the provincial and municipal governments sectional where the main biocorridors identified in the study are located, in order to promote a coordinated work on the design and implementation of biocorridors. Similarly, these signed agreements included a commitment to incorporate biocorridors in land use plans of the autonomous governments.

It is necessary to promote mechanisms for technical and operational coordination between the government and the projects (approaches, methodologies and specific alliances strategies) working in similar areas in the Corridor. For this process, take into account that in the current political situation, the government has no oriented approach broader social participation, in this case is imperative to create a space of trust among local actors, NGOs, International Cooperation and State for the Chocó Manabi conservation process.

Generally, letters of interest and signed agreements between government authorities with different stakeholders will clarify roles and responsibilities, generate greater appropriation and force entities to comply coordinated actions. These mechanisms constitute good practice and an important lesson that should be incorporated by the organizations of civil society in its relationship with the government.

One of the most significant lessons learned has been to combine the common interests of entities such as the Ministry of Environment MAE, the local municipalities and the National Secretary of Planning SENPLADES on issues related to planning and land use management. When you build a project as BIOCAN, which define the environmental guidelines that the Ministry of the Environment proposes to be incorporated by municipalities into land use plans, you can have significant positive implications in the conservation of biodiversity in the region and generate interesting synergies with the activities proposed in the CEPF project. Although BIOCAN has a national character, the framework and guidelines developed for CI in this project will be incorporated into the land use plans in the CEPF priority cantons of Esmeraldas.

An important lesson learned was the relationship with ANCUPA and the CI Ecuador participation in the Conference on the implementation of the RSPO in Ecuador developed in 2012. Being an international entity, the possibility of bringing to Ecuador the CI Brazil experiences in the relationship with african palm companies in supporting the RSPO certification process of Agropalma, the Brazilian company with the largest area in active oil palm production in that country, was very rewarding and positive. The presence of Valmir Ortega (former CI's Brazil Environmental Policy Director) was very useful and significant in order to promote an alliance with the Ecuadorian palm oil sector, and start new actions to link conservation and development in Ecuador. Additionally, this initiative of south-south exchange, funded by CI's Americas Field Division and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), generate positive synergies and leverages in the joint work between these entities.

During the project there has been adequate coordination of activities and work complementarities with Altrópico Foundation, with whom collaborated directly on FECCHE strengthening management capabilities and the design of the biocorridors strategy. Several coordination meetings were developed and there were adequate joint planning activities.

***Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:***

Another lesson learned was that the CEPF funding enabled leverage funds based on direct inter-institutional relations. Examples of this situation are the work developed with BioCAN Program of the Andean Community Nations to design the Environmental Guidelines for Land Use Planning, which constitute a proposed policy to incorporate national biodiversity conservation and sustainable development into land use planning. Another example is the official relation with FAO - GEF, HIVOS, and GIZ to develop the Mangrove Chapter for Socio Bosque with support from MAE. A third example constitute the alliance with the Permanent Commission of the South Pacific (CPPS) and the UNESCO Regional Office for the preparation of the Regional Action Plan for the Conservation of Southeast Pacific Mangroves (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Panama), with the MAE political support.

To develop and maintain strategies and ongoing outreach and communication, design of materials, the use of different types of media according to the characteristics of local stakeholders, new communication mechanisms, etc.. are required for improved the knowledge and perceptions of the socio-environmental impacts of forest conversion and degradation and the solutions to those threats in the main stakeholders and decision makers.

**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.***

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
General Secretariat of the Andean Community	B. Grantee and Partner leveraging	61.272	The funds received from the Andean Community were related with a Regional Program called BioCAN. One of its components was Territorial Planning. in Ecuador, we received those funds to work with the Ministry of Environment to develop National Environmental Guidelines for Territorial Planning, in order to strengthen environmental considerations into planning instruments, land planning and management of local governments. Some CEPF funds we had were used as match funds for this initiative and vice versa. The National Planning Instrument developed includes considerations about

			biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, climate change, and sustainable development, among others. This was a key result for our CEPF funded project, especially for component 1: Strengthen local, regional, and national policies for conservation and sustainable development.
CI Ecuador	B. Grantee and Partner leveraging	90.000	Counterpart for the CEPF project
Fundación Altrópico	B. Grantee and Partner leveraging	1.000	Contribution for the biocorridors publication
MAE - Imbabura	B. Grantee and Partner leveraging	700	Contribution for the biocorridors publication

***\*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.***

One of the mechanisms that enable sustainability of project certain components is the degree of appropriation of the obtained results. The development of policy instruments that include biodiversity criteria, specifically the biocorridors policy for Zone 1, is expected to higher level of application since it have been prepared with the participation of diverse stakeholders in direct relationship with government and autonomous governments.

The Imbabura Environment Authority signed several letters of interest between the MAE and the provincial and municipal governments sectional where the main biocorridors identified in the policy are located, in order to promote a coordinated work on the design and implementation of biocorridors. Similarly, these signed agreements included a commitment to incorporate biocorridors in autonomous governments land use plans. This mechanism allows greater appropriation and sustainability of the actions.

On the issue of replication, the MAE Imbabura circulated the publication on policy biocorridors and discussed the process with the MAE highest authorities (Minister and Deputy Minister) and SENPLADES authorities (the National Planning Secretariat in charge of leading the land use planning schemes in the country) in order that this experience can be replicated in other Ecuador districts and provinces.

The long-term sustainability of certain components of the project, especially the development of biocorridors policies, would be given by the appropriation and strengthening of key local stakeholders, partnerships consolidation and the successful joint activities during project implementation.

***Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.***

In order to give continuity to the activities outlined in the Biocorridors policy in Zone 1, Conservation International has developed a proposal to be sent to the MacArthur Foundation, which has selected the Mira River Basin (provinces of Imbabura and Carchi) part of the Choco Manabí Corridor as a priority area. If the proposal is approved, CI will continue with the MAE Imbabura Authority, supporting the creation and management of biocorridors in Mira River Basin, in coordination with local governments, and in compliance with the recommendations made in the biocorridors study.

Imbabura Environment Authority based on the work experience of the Biocorridors Technical Group is creating a Donor Roundtable for Zone 1 in order to support the application of biocorridors policies in this area. This Donor Roundtable will have their first meeting in mid-March and this group acts as a support mechanism for prioritization of the proposals and activities that contribute to human and environmental development in the Zone 1. MAE - Imbabura provides the programmatic framework and decentralized management of international cooperation, generating synergies of efforts, stakeholders and resources.

**Safeguard Policy Assessment**

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

N/A

**Additional Comments/Recommendations**

During the preparation phase of the project, the insecurity in the Esmeraldas border area with Colombia was worrying, especially due to the presence of guerrillas and paramilitaries in the border zone. This atmosphere of uncertainty was identified in the project as one of the main risks to implement the proposed activities.

Unquestionably, in the execution of all activities was put special emphasis on the care of both personal safety and the stakeholders involved in the meetings, workshops, etc.. organized in Esmeraldas Province. At the end of the project the identified risk has been completely overcome.

It should be mentioned that during the period of project implementation, the formal agreement between CI Ecuador with government expired and the regulations for international NGOs working in Ecuador changed radically, resulting in a drastically field activities letup for about half of a year. This caused a delay in the project activities implementation in the field, which is why the project implementation period was extended for a similar period. Reprogramming of activities and a redistribution of the budget for the completion of this project was requested, and was approved by CEPF. So the results are oriented according to the approved reprogramming.

### **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](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

#### **Please include your full contact details below:**

**Name:** Roberto Ulloa (Environmental Policies Manager)  
**Organization name:** Conservation International - Ecuador (CI – Ecuador)  
**Mailing address:** P.O. Box17171388 – Quito Ecuador  
**Tel:** +593-2- 3979708  
**E-mail:** [rulloa@conservation.org](mailto:rulloa@conservation.org)

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

**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.**

<b>Project Results</b>	<b>Is this question relevant ?</b>	<b>If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.</b>	<b>Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.</b>	<b>Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	N/A			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?	N/A			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.	N/A			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	N/A			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	N/A			

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



**If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:**