CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Global Species Programme; Freshwater Biodiversity Unit)
Project Title:	Freshwater Biodiversity Assessment and Conservation Priorities for the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot
Date of Report:	15th May 2015
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CEPF Region: Mediterranean Basin Hotspot

Strategic Direction: 2. Establish the sustainable management of water catchments and the wise use of water resources with a focus on the priority corridors of the (1) Atlas Mountains, (2) Taurus Mountains, (3) Orontes Valley and Lebanon Mountains and (4) Southwest Balkans

Grant Amount: **USD 248,332**

Project Dates: **01/07/2012 – 31/12/2014**

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

1) IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation: Staff at IUCN Mediterranean have collaborated with the IUCN Global Species Programme on several previous biodiversity assessment projects. They have specific experience of coordinating the workshops and workplans necessary for biodiversity assessments, and they are familiar with IUCN's rationale for designating Key Biodiversity Areas. The IUCN Mediterranean Office used its close links with the many specialists who assisted in developing the assessments and in preparing reports, as well as the relevant stakeholders who will now use the biodiversity assessment data in regional development activities and for the validation of KBAs. The IUCN Mediterranean Office provided the logistical support for all KBA workshops in the region, helped with workshop facilitation, and contributed to the development of associated outputs. Our points of contact were Catherine Numa and Violeta Barrios. The IUCN Mediterranean Office also provided counterpart funding to the project.

2) Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN), Jordon. Staff of the RSCN have previously contributed to IUCN led biodiversity assessment processes in Arabia, and the Society has developed some important wetlands projects in collaboration with the Ramsar Convention. Therefore, RSCN was in a good position to provide critical support to coordinating the biodiversity assessment review workshop and the Key Biodiversity Area validation workshop for the eastern Mediterranean. Members of the RSCN have detailed knowledge about the freshwater biodiversity of the eastern Mediterranean and freshwater ecosystem management processes in the region. They were therefore able to make significant contributions to the scientific and management applications of this project. Our point of contact was Dr. Nashat Hamidan.

3) BioFresh Consortium/Leibniz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries. Dr. Jörg Freyhof, an expert in freshwater fish biology for the Mediterranean region, and a member of IUCN/SSC's Freshwater Fish Specialist Group, contributed to this project by preparing data for biodiversity assessments of freshwater fishes for the eastern Mediterranean Basin hotspot. Dr. Freyhof who has contributed to several previous IUCN biodiversity assessments provided significant input to the final report on the Red List status of freshwater species in the eastern Mediterranean part of the Hotspot. Dr. Freyhof also attended and contributed significantly to all of the stakeholder validation workshops and contributed to the final KBA report.

Conservation Impacts

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

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Overall Results

A) Red List Assessments – eastern Mediterranean:

- A total of 960 new freshwater species assessments were completed for the eastern part of the Mediterranean Hotspot and are now published and freely available through the IUCN Red List website (www.iucnredlist.org). The taxonomic groups newly assessed are freshwater fishes, molluscs, odonates, and plants. This includes all known described valid species in these taxonomic groups from this region.
- When the Red List assessments for the freshwater groups assessed through the project (fishes, molluscs, odonates, and plants) are combined with the additional comprehensively assessed groups (freshwater species of birds, mammals, amphibians, and decapods) 19.2% (224 species) of extant species for which sufficient data are available are threatened with extinction.
- Of the freshwater groups in the eastern Mediterranean, three groups have exceptionally high levels of threat, the molluscs (45.8%), decapods (44.4 %), and fishes (41.0%), reflecting their limited dispersal ability and high proportion of restricted range species.
- Almost one third (29.8%) of the freshwater species assessed are endemic to the eastern Mediterranean region of which 58.2% are threatened with extinction. 76% (63 spp.) of endemic molluscs and 55.1% (108 spp.) of endemic fishes are threatened.
- The greatest numbers of globally threatened freshwater species (between 18–20 species per sub-basin) are found in the lower Orontes/Asi catchment in Turkey, the lower and middle Tigris/Euphrates including the Hammar marshes, the Shatt al Arab River, Ras al-Ain spring area and outflowing Khabur/Khabour River (part of the Euphrates catchment) in northern Syria, and the lower Aras/Kura River in Azerbaijan.
- A tributary to the Simav/Susurluk River which flows into the Sea of Marmara in north-western Turkey holds 10% of the species complement of each taxonomic grouping making it a most important center of freshwater species diversity.
- The environmental pressures that accompany the rapid economic development of the region's water resources pose the greatest current threat to its freshwater biodiversity. The widespread abstraction of water (primarily for agricultural irrigation), coupled with the damming of rivers (for hydropower and water storage), is compounded by increasing severity of droughts leading to reduced flows in rivers, in some cases leaving rivers and wetlands totally dry and an alarming rate of reduction in ground waters.
- Freshwater habitats such as deltas and marshes are widely considered as vacant or worthless land often being converted for more 'productive' uses such as for agriculture, urban expansion, and industrial developments such as power plants and oil refineries.
- Freshwater habitats are also heavily degraded by pollution, particularly near to urban areas and intensive agriculture.

B) Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas:

- Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are areas contributing significantly to the global persistence of biodiversity.
- Freshwater KBAs were validated through 3 stakeholder validation workshops involving 40 people, from 38 separate organisations, for the NE, S, and E parts of the Hotspot. Countries of the NW region of the Hotspot were not eligible for CEPF funding so KBAs for this region will be determined through alternative processes.
- One hundred and sixty-seven freshwater KBAs, covering a total area of 302,557 km^2 were confirmed as valid freshwater KBAs. Of these, 40 KBAs also meet the criteria qualifying them as Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites where immediate conservation actions are required if a species present in the KBA is not to become globally extinct in the near future.
- All confirmed freshwater KBAs are now publicly available for viewing on the World Biodiversity Database website (www.birdlife.org/datazone/freshwater).
- Seventy-five per cent of the total area of these KBAs was found to lie outside the boundaries of any pre-existing protected areas or other KBAs, including 15 freshwater KBAs for which there is no

overlap at all. Current levels of inclusion of important freshwater biodiversity sites within existing protected areas are therefore found to be extremely low.
- One hundred and eighty-eight potential Site Champions have been identified by stakeholders as individuals/organizations best placed to raise awareness of the existence of the KBAs and the issues faced with respect to threats to biodiversity, and to help implement the required actions to safeguard these globally important sites.

In conclusion, through this project we find that the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot is most important for its freshwater biodiversity. This biodiversity is highly threatened largely due to the conflicting demands upon a diminishing supply of fresh water which is further exacerbated by the increased severity of drought across the region. Unless the recommendations given in the project reports are followed, and Site Champions are mobilized to raise awareness of these globally important freshwater KBAs, species will almost certainly be lost in the very near future. Solutions are available but the willingness to adopt them has to be encouraged. Freshwater species are most often out of sight and out of mind so raising awareness of their presence, the threats they face, and the necessary conservation actions are fundamental to the persistence of freshwater biodiversity in the Mediterranean Hotspot.

Impacts

- Baseline information on the status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity has been significantly improved through completion of the eastern Mediterranean assessment, leading to a now comprehensive data set for the complete Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. The Red List species assessments are very widely used, such as to: i) inform donor priorities for funding, ii) enable governments to track progress towards national and internationally agreed targets for conservation of biodiversity, and iii) to inform conservation NGO priorities.
- The most important sites where site based and catchment based management actions can benefit threatened and restricted range species have now been identified and they now provide the foundations for an improved/expanded Protected Areas network for the region and provide new guidance and recommendations for site based conservation actions for freshwater species and their habitats.
- Freshwater KBAs have now also been published in IBAT and are now presented alongside existing priority sites such as Important Bird Areas and AZE sites. As IBAT is a tool consulted by many in both the conservation and private sectors this is effectively helping to put freshwater biodiversity on the map for greater consideration within conservation and development planning processes.
- At least 40 individuals are now familiar with the IUCN Red List and KBAs leading to increased capacity and awareness for freshwater conservation across the region. A number of these individuals have now been connected to the international SSC network and to colleagues in neighboring countries following introductions at the four project workshops.
- The launch and dissemination of project outputs through the published reports, press releases and presentations at workshops and conferences has helped to raise general awareness of the high levels of threat to freshwater species and habitats and the urgency of the need for conservation action.
- Some immediate follow up activities have been stimulated as a direct result of this project including success in obtaining funding for a workshop to complete the stakeholder validation of freshwater KBAs in the NE Mediterranean (MAVA Foundation).
- The long-term impacts will depend to a great extent upon the actions of the Site Champions in helping to generate the necessary awareness of the importance of the KBAs and the conservation actions required. It is hoped that their actions will help to stimulate the generation of new projects / actions to take forward the recommendations of the project reports. In this regard we encourage CEPF to support any future projects proposing to work on conservation of specific species and KBAs, and projects aimed at influencing government thinking and actions with regard to: i) conservation of freshwater biodiversity, ii) greater representation of freshwater species and habitats within protected area networks, and iii) greater consideration for the long-term sustainability of freshwater species and habitats within the context of development planning decisions.

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

This project will lead to improved conservation and sustainable use of wetland ecosystems and their associated species, throughout the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot and associated river catchments, thereby

safeguarding the food security and livelihoods of millions of people throughout the region dependent upon biodiversity in inland waters. This will be achieved in the following ways.
1) The Biodiversity Assessment will provide new species information to better inform decision making relating to the conservation and development of wetland ecosystems within the eastern part of the Mediterranean Biodiversity Hotspot and its associated river catchments. As this information is delivered at the scale of sub-catchments it is directly applicable to informing decisions relating to on-the-ground conservation and site scale developments impacting wetlands.
2) At the international scale information on the status (IUCN Red List) and distribution of freshwater species will assist governments to monitor their progress towards meeting targets of the international conventions, such as CBD and Ramsar in particular. The baseline information on freshwater biodiversity (species level), will, for example, enable governments to better meet (through provision of the relevant species information) CBD Aichi Targets 11 (17% inland waters protected) and 12 (by 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained). It will also be more possible to hold to account those Governments not meeting these targets.
3) The identification of new sites for freshwater KBAs, in particular in the eastern Mediterranean, will assist governments to expand the Ramsar network of internationally important wetlands making it more inclusive of the wider range of taxonomic groups for which information is provided through this project – thus strengthening wetland conservation and wise use throughout the Hotspot.
4) Conservation action to conserve and manage freshwater biodiversity at the site scale in KBAs within the CEPF conservation corridors will be greatly enhanced through outputs of the KBA workshops which will include specific actions for biodiversity conservation within these sites and identified organisations to take ownership of these management actions.
5) Consideration for the impacts of water resource planning and development to freshwater biodiversity throughout the region will better balance the use of water by people with the water requirements of healthy functioning wetland ecosystems.
6) The KBA workshops will help to raise general awareness of the importance of wetland ecosystems as "natural infrastructures" delivering many vital services to people.
7) Cross-sectoral application of the results to national development strategies and legislation (e.g., National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans) and multilateral agreements such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [CITES] will be facilitated.
8) Finally, the project will strengthen the capacity of IUCN, its members, and other project partners throughout the region, in the development of polices for natural resource management for human well-being, by integrating terrestrial, freshwater and marine approaches.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

1) The information provided through the eastern Mediterranean assessment has been collated at the scale of river and lake sub-catchments specifically to ensure its relevance to management at the catchment scale. Catchment scale management is considered essential given the high degree of connectivity within catchments such that impacts can spread fast and far. A total of 960 new species have been assessed in this way.

2) Information held in the IUCN Red List, or generated from information within the Red List, is directly relevant to 11 of the CBD Aichi Targets. The new information provided through this project on freshwater species is relevant to 10 of the Aichi Targets. All this information is now freely accessible to governments through the IUCN Red List website so that they can now better monitor their progress towards meeting these internationally agreed targets and also national targets in relation to freshwater biodiversity in this region.

3) The freshwater species assessments can also be used to help identify new Ramsar sites and to evaluate and monitor the ecological condition of existing Ramsar sites. This new dataset will therefore help enable the Ramsar site network to be expanded to cover a wider breadth of freshwater taxa than previously and will specifically help towards meeting the aims of Criterion 9 (site holding at least 1% of the global population of non-avian taxa). It will also help to ensure Ramsar sites originally designated for birds, but which also contain other important freshwater species, are now managed to also benefit non-avian species. The Ramsar Secretariat is also keen to delineate new sites to match catchment boundaries so the information provided here will be particularly useful in that regard.

4) The fact sheets accompanying each KBA include a list of recommended conservation actions specific to the site and a list of those individuals or organisations with an interest in the site - they are proposed as Site

Champions. It is hoped that the Site Champions will generate the interest and momentum to ensure these actions are implemented over the long-term.

5) Through effectively putting freshwater species “on the map” by mapping individual species and important sites where they occur it is hoped that decision makers will now become more aware of their presence and will build this into their decisions. Given that this information on species and their critical habitats is now publicly available it should not be acceptable to ignore their environmental and conservation requirements where development planning decisions are required.

6) The 40 people who attended the various workshops were briefed on the importance of wetland ecosystems as “natural infrastructure” and this message is also conveyed through the two published reports and within the press releases. It is hoped that this messaging will lead to more informed decisions on the use of wetlands.

7) The information now freely available to governments is suitable for directly informing NBSAPS and has potential for bringing attention to freshwater species as candidates for future focus on MEAs such as CMS and CITES.

8) Freshwater KBAs are already being used by decision makers and stakeholders from the water resources sector in the Mediterranean to guide discussions and develop strategic plans. IUCN collaboration agreements with Mediterranean countries and government agencies recently signed or under negotiation include KBAs as a cooperation working area. At national level, Algeria is already using freshwater KBAs as a reference for making decisions on the formulation of a Water National Plan (plan national de l’eau). On 2 February 2015 the Secretary General of the Moroccan High Commission for Water, Forests and the Fight against Desertification (HCEFLCD) also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation for the development and implementation of a project to support the conservation and sustainable management of wetlands in Morocco.

At regional level, KBA information is empowering civil society organizations to make claims as to the environmental impacts of infrastructure development projects. At subregional level, KBAs will be also considered at the next North Africa IUCN Members Forum during the discussions on the programmatic lines of IUCN for the next 4 years.

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

Impacts (1-3 Years)
The short-term impacts of the project are:
1) Regional professional development for conservation assessment, through the formation of a network of at least twenty specialists, mainly from within the eastern Mediterranean region, who are trained in the process of conducting rigorous biodiversity assessments according to the internationally recognized methods of IUCN’s species database and Red List of Threatened Species.
2) Expansion of the global network of practitioners who form the core of IUCN’s Species Survival Commission and have the competence to review and update IUCN’s species database and Red List (provided by the network of specialists noted in (1) above).
3) An improved set of resources for conservation planning and sustainable management, provided by the database of information on the distribution, conservation status, threats, and livelihood values for all known described species of freshwater fishes (323), freshwater molluscs (250), dragonflies and damselflies (180), and species from selected families of freshwater plants (400) in the eastern Mediterranean and associated river catchments - thus completing the first baseline data set on the status of freshwater biodiversity throughout the entire Mediterranean hotspot.
4) Quantified measures of the geographic distribution and severity of threats to freshwater species in the eastern Mediterranean and associated river catchments, through analysis and publication of the results of the project that are included in the database.
5) Identification of species at greatest risk of extinction in the eastern Mediterranean part of the hotspot and associated river catchments, through analysis and publication of the results of the project.
6) Identification of new Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas as priority sites for conservation throughout the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot.
7) Validation of KBA locations and boundaries throughout the Mediterranean hotspot by stakeholders during the KBA workshops, as mapped through the current desktop identification of sub-catchments qualifying as Freshwater KBAs.

8) Provision, through the KBA stakeholder workshops, of a set of management recommendations to improve the conservation status of freshwater species within freshwater KBA sites within the CEPF conservation corridors throughout the Mediterranean hotspot.
9) Online and freely available presentation of all information coming from the KBA stakeholder workshops within the current database holding the global information on KBAs – the World Biodiversity Database. This will allow information on Freshwater KBAs to be presented alongside that currently available for Important Birds Areas, Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, and terrestrial KBAs as identified by Conservation International.
10) Raised awareness of important sites of freshwater biodiversity both at the local scale (through wide involvement of local organisations in the KBA workshops) and at the national scale through targeted dissemination of the workshop outputs in multiple languages.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

1) & 2) At least 40 people from 38 separate organisations were directly involved in at least one of the four regional workshops. Through attending these workshops they will have gained a greater understanding of the IUCN Red List process and its potential applications to conservation and development decision making. They will also have learned about the KBA methodologies and their application to species and habitat conservation. Many of those involved will now also be affiliated with the IUCN SSC international network.

3) The baseline assessment of the status and distribution of freshwater species in the eastern Mediterranean has been completed with more than 960 species now assessed and published on the IUCN Red List in 2014. This work also now completes the baseline assessment of all known, described species of freshwater fishes, molluscs, dragonflies and damselflies, crayfish, shrimps, crabs, amphibians, mammals, and birds for the entire Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. All species have been mapped to their presence within individual river or lake sub-catchments so facilitating access to relevant information on species within catchments.

4) Through the combination of species Red Listing and the KBA site identifications and delineation the project has successfully collated information on the distribution and severity of threats for freshwater biodiversity and habitats throughout those parts of the Hotspot covered through the project. An analysis of this information is presented within the two published project reports and includes a spatial map of the centers of threatened species in the Eastern Mediterranean. Threats to specific KBAs are documented in the fact sheets that accompany each site as available through here: http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/freshwater and also through links from IBAT (https://www.ibat-alliance.org/ibat-conservation/login).

5) The Red List status has now been determined for 1,236 freshwater species in the eastern Mediterranean and is presented to reveal the numbers of species in each Red List Category for each of the three overlapping Hotspots: Mediterranean Basin; Caucasus; Irano-Anatolian. A total of 19.2% of these species are assessed as being threatened and a map of the spatial distribution of threatened species richness is presented. The status of each species, along with all the supporting documentation, is available through the IUCN Red List website (www.iucnredlist.org). This work highlights the very high level of threat to the freshwater fishes (41%), molluscs (45.5%) and decapods (44.4%) in particular. Even more striking is the high level of threat now identified to the species endemic to the region with 58.2% of these species being threatened - including 76.8% of molluscs and 55.1% of fishes.

6) Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) have been identified and delineated according to sub-catchment boundaries throughout the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, with the exception of the NE countries not eligible for CEPF funding. This gap in coverage is due to be filled through a follow-on project (funded through MAVA) later in 2015. It should be noted that the new global guidelines for the identification and delineation of KBAs are expected to be finalized later in 2015 and that the freshwater KBAs identified here will ultimately need to be harmonized with these new guidelines over time. Potentially this can be achieved through National efforts to focus attention on KBAs.

7) One hundred and sixty-seven freshwater KBAs, covering a total area of 302,557 km^2 were confirmed by the stakeholders who participated in the three KBA stakeholder validation workshops as valid freshwater KBAs. Of these, 40 KBAs also meet the criteria qualifying them as Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites where immediate conservation actions are required if a species present in the KBA is not to become globally extinct in the near future.

8) A site factsheet has been compiled for each Confirmed KBA to include a general description of the sites itself and information on the trigger species present, general threats, site champions and the recommended conservation actions.

9) KBA site fact sheets can be viewed for each site searchable through an interactive map or through a standard search engine on the World Biodiversity Database (WBDB) here: www.birdlife.org/datazone/freshwater and can able be accessed through links from IBAT (https://www.ibat-alliance.org/ibat-conservation/login).

10) The products of the workshops have been published in two reports. Each report has an executive summary in multiple languages and the KBA report has been published in both English and French. The reports have now been disseminated to 251 separate recipients. Ninety one of the recipients were directly involved in the project and a further 160 were key stakeholders or had been identified as Site Champions. 65% of the recipients corresponded to governmental institutions, universities and research centres. The remaining recipients were international organisations and related conventions.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: N/A
Species Conserved: N/A
Corridors Created: N/A

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

The main challenge the project faced was the availability of species experts to complete the species assessments within the timeframe of the project. This stems from a rapidly declining flexibility in the work patterns of most experts who are no longer able to incorporate this work into their regular work plans unless full funding is provided. In the case of this project (and others) the budgets don't allow us to fully compensate the experts for their time such that they effectively have to co-finance this part of the work. This model has worked for many years but the increased budget pressure within many institutions is now making this more difficult to achieve. We would therefore encourage CEPF to allow for budgets in future projects that accommodate slightly increased compensation for the time of these experts.

Achievement of the projects long-term objectives is highly dependent upon implementation of follow-on projects that either focus on conservation actions for specific species or KBAs, or that aim to influence environmental policy and public awareness. The materials for developing such projects have been made available through this current project so we would encourage CEPF and other donors to support proposals that aim to capitalize on the availability of these data sets and help towards meeting the long-term goals.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

As the north-west Mediterranean was not eligible for funding under the CEPF framework, a more detailed assessment for this area is still needed through other mechanisms.

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 (as stated in the approved proposal):

Professional capacity to assess and monitor the status and distribution of freshwater biodiversity throughout the eastern Mediterranean and associated river catchments increased through assembling a network of conservation experts familiarized with the use of the data entry system

(IUCN's 'Species Information Service' [SIS]) for IUCN's species database, species mapping protocols, and the use of IUCN's Red List Categories and Criteria.

Component 1 Actual at Completion:
At least 40 people from 38 separate organisations were directly involved in at least one of the four regional workshops. Through attending these workshops they will have gained a greater understanding of the IUCN Red List process and its potential applications to conservation and development decision making. They will also have learned about the KBA methodologies and their application to species and habitat conservation. Many of those involved will now also be affiliated with the IUCN SSC international network.

Component 2 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

A repository of information made widely and freely available and summarizing the taxonomy, distribution, ecology, utilisation, livelihoods values, threats, conservation measures (in place and/or needed), and associated bibliographic citations for freshwater fishes (323 species), molluscs (250 species), odonates (180 species), and selected freshwater plant species (400 species) for the eastern Mediterranean region and associated river catchments

Component 2 Actual at Completion:
Information on the status and distribution of all known, described valid species of freshwater fishes, molluscs, odonates and selected aquatic plants in the eastern Mediterranean (960 species) has been completed and entered within the IUCN SIS database. Each species account includes information summarizing the species taxonomy, distribution, ecology, utilisation, livelihoods values, threats, conservation measures (in place and/or needed), and associated bibliographic citations. This information is available to those who request access to SIS and is also available publicly through the online IUCN Red List (www.iucnrelist.org).

Component 3 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

Risk of species extinction assessed (according to internationally recognized Categories and Criteria of threat set out by the IUCN Red List) and made widely and freely available, for all freshwater fishes, molluscs, odonates, and selected freshwater plant species for the eastern Mediterranean region and associated river catchments.

Component 3 Actual at Completion:
The Red List status has now been determined for 1,236 freshwater species, including all known, described valid species of freshwater fishes, molluscs, odonates and selected aquatic plants in the eastern Mediterranean and is presented to reveal the numbers of species in each Red List Category for each of the three overlapping Hotspots: Mediterranean Basin; Caucasus; Irano-Anatolian. A total of 19.2% of these species are assessed as being threatened and a map of the spatial distribution of threatened species richness is presented. The status of each species, along with all the supporting documentation, is available through the IUCN Red List website (www.iucnredlist.org).

Component 4 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

The conservation status, and distribution of freshwater species, centres of species richness and threat along with the major threats and modes of utilisation by people, and priority areas for conservation (Key Biodiversity Areas) throughout the eastern Mediterranean region and associated river catchments are determined, and the information made widely and freely available via the IUCN Red List and associated publications.

Component 4 Actual at Completion:
The baseline assessment of the conservation status and distribution of freshwater species in the eastern Mediterranean has been completed with more than 960 species now assessed and published on the IUCN Red List in 2014. This work also now completes the baseline assessment of all known, described species of

freshwater fishes, molluscs, dragonflies and damselflies, crayfish, shrimps, crabs, amphibians, mammals, and birds for the entire Mediterranean Basin Hotspot. All species have been mapped to their presence within individual river or lake sub-catchments so facilitating access to relevant information on species within catchments. Maps of centers of species diversity and centers of threatened species have been published within the two project reports. The main threats to freshwater species in the eastern Mediterranean have been analysed and presented in the Red List report. The Red List report, published in the IUCN Red List report series is publicly available through here:
https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/RL-262.2-001.pdf

The Freshwater KBA have been identified and confirmed by stakeholders and the main threats to each KBA are documented in the fact sheets for each site. The KBA fact sheets are publicly available for each site and can been accessed through here: www.birdlife.org/datazone/freshwater
The report can be accessed here: https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/SSC-OP-052.pdf

The two reports are also available through the IUCN Mediterranean website:
http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/iucnmed/resources/publications/
and the IUCN FBU website: www.iucn.org/species/freshwater

The project findings were also publicized widely through a global press release during the IUCN World Parks Congress which was also published on the IUCN Home Pages for several weeks. A further regional press release and story were published on World Wetlands Day. Finally, the project reports were officially launched at the regional workshop on the role of the monitoring the conservation and management of key areas for biodiversity, in Tunisia (March 3-4 2015).

The dissemination of the project results has promoted the interest of various countries to improve the knowledge on species biodiversity status as a valuable tool to identify priority areas to conserve biodiversity. North African countries have informally requested IUCN to organize a special module on KBAs during the first North Africa Conservation Congress to be held in Egypt in September 2015.

Component 5 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

Conservation and sustainable management of freshwater biodiversity throughout the Mediterranean Hotspot and associated river catchments is improved in response to recommendations by stakeholders for conservation actions within the Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas throughout the Hotspot, with the exception of Cape Verde.

Component 5 Actual at Completion:
Conservation recommendations have been provided by stakeholders for each of the 167 KBAs confirmed. In the case of Croatia it is hoped that the direct involvement of experts in the stakeholder workshop for the Balkans who are also involved in the designation of the country's Natura2000 site network will help to ensure good representation of freshwater KBAs.

Component 6 Planned (as stated in the approved proposal):

Strong regional support for the project and implementation of project information outputs and management recommendations ensured through direct involvement of the IUCN Mediterranean office (based in Malaga) in all aspects of project planning, implementation, and subsequent application to regional policy, and conservation and development programmes.

Component 6 Actual at Completion:

IUCN Mediterranean has now added valuable new information to guide freshwater biodiversity conservation in the Mediterranean. Thanks to the successful results of the assessment of KBAs for freshwater, KBA identification and management has become a programmatic line in the office strategy. In order to complete the analysis of Freshwater KBAs in the region, funds have been already secured by IUCN Mediterranean to fill the gap in the NW Mediterranean. IUCN Mediterranean is also collaborating with the Mediterranean Wetland Observatory-Tour du Valat for the protection of freshwater biodiversity**.**

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

No components were unrealized.

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

The two project reports have already been sent to CEPF in hard copy and as pdf's.

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)

Strengths:
The project design was greatly helped by the extensive network of species experts available to the project through the IUCN Species Survival Commissions Specialist Group network. The expertise provided by these people was invaluable to the project planning stage, especially with respect to the likely numbers of species to be assessed and the availability of suitable experts.

Shortcomings:
As mentioned above, it would have been good to allocate more time to complete the species assessments, given the apparent increasing limitations on availability of experts. It would also have been useful to include an additional budget and time period at the end of the project to maximize dissemination and uptake of project findings through direct meetings with key stakeholders.

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

Strengths:
The extensive regional network of contacts available through the IUCN Mediterranean Office greatly increased our ability to involve a wide range of key stakeholders in the project and to ensure wide dissemination of project outcomes through mailing, press releases and the final presentation at a regional meeting where many key stakeholders were present.

Shortcomings:
As above, one clear shortcoming was the insufficient time to ensure all the key species expertise were able to complete assessments in time – this led to a 6 month no-cost extension being required. Again as above, it would have been useful to have more time to further engage with key stakeholders to discuss the project findings and recommendations.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Regional projects should benefit from national (and even site-based) efforts to improve biodiversity knowledge. To the extent that countries can provide information about their biodiversity status, a better regional priority analysis can now be conducted. Donors in the region should promote and encourage the collection and provision of high quality, standardized and freely available information on biodiversity at national level. In addition, the involvement and active participation of key stakeholders (decision makers for policy making as well as the various sectoral communities as direct users) in the valuation and appraisal of Mediterranean freshwater biodiversity remains a key factor for a successful protection of KBAs in the region.

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
MAVA Foundation	A	US$ 65,000	To cover workshop costs, especially where not eligible under CEPF and 60% of an IUCN Med Staff members time.
BioFresh Project	A	US$15,000	To cover the costs for Dr Freyhof to attend almost all of the workshops, and staff time for IUCN FBU staff to conduct the data analyses.
AECID	A	US$23,000	To cover consultant contracts where not eligible under CEPF
MAVA Foundation	B	US$25,000	To fund a KBA validation workshop for the NW region of the Hotspot – so completing coverage for the entire Hotspot.

****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.

Sustainability:
The Red List information compiled through the project will continue to be made publicly available through the IUCN Red List website which is maintained as a key product of IUCN. The KBAs are also to become a key IUCN knowledge product with long-term support from IUCN. The two main products of this project will therefore remain freely available within the public domain for the long-term.

Within their new programmatic line on KBAs, IUCN Mediterranean expects to develop an initiative to promote the inclusion of KBA information in national hydrologic plans, and to transfer KBA information available to major financial sources of infrastructure development projects in the Mediterranean (e.g. World Bank, European Commission, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) to lobby for the integration of freshwater biodiversity considerations in their projects.

Replicability:
The project has great potential for replication in other regions and this has already been demonstrated through a similar project in the Western Ghats (funded by CEPF), a project which is underway in the Tropical Andes (MacArthur funded) and a project just initiated in the Lake Victoria Catchment (MacArthur funded). In all these cases we are able to learn, and continue to learn, from the experiences of this project in the Mediterranean Basin.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

N/A

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

Our thoughts and recommendations are covered in the sections above.

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:

Name: Dr William Darwall
Organization name: IUCN
Mailing address: IUCN Global Species Programme, Sheraton House, Castle Park, Cambridge CB30AX
Tel: ++44(0)1223 370031
Fax:
E-mail: William.darwall@iucn.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.

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, 2013 to May 30, 2014. (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.	No			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?	No			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.	No			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1below.	No			

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												
									Increased Income due to:												
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services	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
Total																					

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