CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	BirdLife International
Project Title:	Eastern Afromontane-1, RIT Administration
Grant Number:	61682
CEPF Region:	Eastern Afromontane
Strategic Direction:	4 Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team.
Grant Amount:	
Project Dates:	September 01, 2012 - March 31, 2020
Date of Report:	March 24, 2020

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

List each partner and explain how they were involved with the project.

Main partners in this project were the following:
1. BirdLife Middle East office - supported the grants programme in Yemen, and assisted with attempts to raise funds for the hotspot in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
2. The Ethiopia Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS, BirdLife in Ethiopia) - supported the implementation of the CEPF programme in Ethiopia.
3. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) through their ESARO (Eastern and Southern Africa) office in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Maputo office in Mozambique - supported the implementation of the CEPF programme in Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique; also provided technical advice in the areas of M&E, species and site conservation, and METT. Additionally, the programme was supported by:
- a high-level Board of Advisors (including representatives from donors, civil society, private sector and academia);
- 188 external reviewers (LOI/proposal reviews) from 26 countries; and
- RITs from other hotspots (best practices, experience exchange, and encouragement).

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The Administration component of the CEPF investment in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot consisted of three main areas:

1. managing the grant-making programme: CEPF and the RIT issued 19 calls for proposals, 10 of which requested for large grants, and 13 of which requested for small grants (i.e. some included both large and small grants). We received almost 1100 applications, and made 164 grants to 103 grantees (who sub-contracted an additional 12 sub-grantees). USD 8.1 million was allocated to large grants, and almost USD 1.9 million to small grants.

2. reviewing and submitting reports: all small grant reports (financial and technical) and most of the large grant reports (financial and technical) were reviewed by the RIT. All final completion and impact reports have been reviewed and impact data have been validated before inclusion in the global/portfolio impact sheets. The RIT itself has submitted all 131 requested reports to CEPF, and contributed to at least 30+ others.

3. monitoring and evaluation: the RIT organised 187 field visits and 235 office visits to grantees, which were implemented by the RIT and/or CEPF and/or CEPF donors. In addition, the RIT met with grantees during (CEPF- and non-CEPF-funded) trainings, meetings and events, and/or through on-line meetings (e.g. the capacity building programme with CLP, FFI and TBA was discussed during monthly skype meetings between 2015 and 2017).

Overall, the 164 CEPF-funded projects, implemented by 115 CSOs, delivered conservation at 83 KBAs, strengthened management of almost 5m ha of land, created 1.4m ha of new protected area, produced 50 management plans and 74 policies/bylaws, planted almost 2m trees, supported the EIA process at 14 KBAs under threat, assessed 25 KBAs using the new KBA criteria, and identified 7 new KBAs (designation in process). Grantees carried out 114 surveys, covering 7 taxa, implemented conservation action for 29 species, and discovered 5 new species (most are still being described). The programme also created/strengthened 77 networks, facilitated the creation of 33 new Civil Society Organisations, and trained about 35,000 people in new conservation-related skills across the hotspot.

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
To contribute to strengthening the involvement and effectiveness of civil society in achieving conservation and management of globally important biodiversity in the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot through the implementation of a coherent investment strategy	The ecosystem profile's investment strategy includes the following goals and targets: - work with 60 grantees (achieved: 115) - develop grantee capacity (51 of 75 CSOs with start/end CSTTs reported an increase in capacity = 68%) - all grantees received positive scorecard (achieved: 90% of large grants, 93% of small grants) - work at 25 priority KBAs (achieved: 37 out of 47); total nr of KBAs touched by investment: 83 out of 317, including 7 new KBAs - improve management of 1.2 million hectares at pKBAs (achieved: 3.1m ha at pKBAs, 4.8 million across the hotspot) - expand/create 500,000 ha of new protected areas at pKBAs (achieved: 1.4m at pKBAs, 1.43m across the hotspot) - bring 1.7m ha of production landscape under improved management (achieved: 1.5m ha) - develop management plans (achieved: 50, covering almost 3.3m ha) - establish 8 sustainable financing schemes (achieved: 11) - produce local/national policies/plans (achieved: 74) - develop private sector ventures for biodiversity and livelihoods (achieved: 9) - engage in safeguards (EIA) activities (achieved: 21 engagement by 16 grantees at 14 KBAs) - support conservation community in Eritrea, South Sudan and Yemen (partly achieved) - USD 15m leveraged over the USD 9.8m portfolio (achieved: USD 27.7m)
Provision of strategic leadership and effective	The RIT was deployed, at any given time, in person in

coordination of CEPF investment through a regional implementation team.	Amman, Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Kigali, and Maputo and thus able to engage with hundreds of applicants/partners and with scores of government agencies and donors in all relevant hotspot countries. The team participated in conferences that set the agenda for conservation (including IUCN WCC, World Parks Congress, Rwanda Water and Development conference etc). BirdLife International and IUCN, as literally two of the leading biodiversity conservation organizations in the world, provided legitimacy to many of the smaller organizations receiving grants.
Promulgation of the goals of CEPF, as represented in the Ecosystem Profile.	The goals of CEPF, as represented in the EAM ecosystem profile, were to: - implement a large grant programme in the hotspot (achieved: 67 large grants - including 3 to the RIT - at a value of USD 10.09m) - implement a small grant programme in the hotspot (achieved: 97 small grants at a value of USD 1.88m; the available small grants fund was used for 99.9%) - enable civil society to engage in conservation: grants were made to 27 international CSOs, 85 local/national CSOs, and 3 individuals (total: 115 including sub-grantees) - support projects under SD1: Mainstream biodiversity into wider development policies, plans and projects to deliver the co-benefits of biodiversity conservation, improved local livelihoods and economic development (achieved: 60 projects, USD 3.48m) - support projects under SD2: Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot (achieved: 75 projects, USD 4.71m) - support projects under SD3: Initiate and support sustainable financing and related actions for the conservation of KBAs and corridors (achieved: 26 projects, USD 1.84m) - support projects under SD4: Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF through a regional implementation team (achieved: 3 projects, USD 1.94m)

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
The Administrative component of the EAM RIT is well managed and delivers all components and expected results.	(1) Grant-making: The RIT implemented an open, competitive, and fair grant-making process which included 19 widely advertised calls for proposals (resulting in 1100+ applications); a rigorous internal and external review process (engaging 188 experts from 26 different countries, who produced 353 independent reviews for 169 projects); a continuous advisory service to applicants (answering more than 1,000 questions); and extensive support to 103 grantees in project design, implementation, technical and financial management (including gender and safeguards), and reporting. The RIT organised 860 field/office visits and meetings with grantees, covering 164 projects in 13 countries. (2) RIT management: The RIT managed both the subcontract with IUCN, and the contract between CEPF and EWNHS, through monthly Skype calls, annual RIT meetings and regular office/site visits. CEPF carried out 15 RIT supervision missions to the region, we were externally audited 3 times (2015, 2017, 2020), as well as by CI (2016), and by the World Bank (in-depth fiduciary assessment in 2017, field visits in 2018). We were visited by the Japanese government (2014) and CI-GEF (2019). We were externally assessed by FFI in 2015 and 2017, and by a consultant in 2018 (GEF MTA) and 2019-2020 (final assessment).

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

Trying to protect biodiversity is generally an uphill task. The threats are immense: agriculture, mining, infrastructure, climate change... to name just a few. At the same time the challenges are enormous: governments have set other priorities and/or do not enforce their own environmental laws, there is limited conservation capacity and even less funding, and the political climate seems to be getting worse, not better, for what's left to protect - in general, one can say that there is too much to do in too little time with too few people and not enough cash. In this context, one would think that at least conservation donors and practitioners would be willing to work together to get as much done as possible, but this is not always the case. Donors seem to have their own strategies and objectives, and are not very flexible when it comes to 'collaboration' (including at practical level, i.e. in terms of their administrative processes). Applicants have to compete with each other to get their hands on the limited funding streams available, so instead of working together, they rather try to 'differentiate' themselves from others, showcasing their successes and keeping quiet about their mistakes (which is also not helpful). As a result, the conservation field is fragmented, instead of joined; lessons are not shared (nor learned); and conservation successes are 'protected' by their 'owners', instead of amplified by other organisations. This may lead to short-term, individual gains for the more successful groups, but in the long term, this lack of collaboration will ultimately be detrimental to achieving our conservation objectives.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

One un-planned area of work related to incorporating gender considerations into the CEPF project cycle. Using the CEPF Gender Toolkit and the Gender Tracking Tool (GTT, introduced in 2017), the RIT, together with partners, trained CEPF grantees in gender mainstreaming during the Master Classes (with TBA), and specificaly during the 'Corporate/government mainstreaming, Gender mainstreaming and Safeguards' training in March 2019 (with FFI, Kenya). Eleven men and eight women from 19 CEPF grantees attended this training and 15 of them produced 'gender action plans'. As part of an end or project survey, 100% or respondents (16) stated that they are taking steps to mainstream gender into their projects. The RIT (with TBA) also facilitated a 'gender exchange programme' (April 2019, Tanzania), where three CSOs with limited experience visited a grantee with extensive experience in gender mainstreaming. The gender focal point at the CEPF Secretariat also attended this event. The selection of visiting grantees and the host grantee was made on the basis of their GTT scores. Together with the CEPF communications department, the RIT produced the following article: https://www.cepf.net/stories/five-ways-cepf-grantees-eastern-africa-are-considering-gender
Between 2017 and 2019, 21 grantees submitted start/end GTTs to the RIT with the following main results:
  - **10 small grant grantees completed the GTT, with an average score of 8.8 at the start of their project, and 13.1 at the end of their project (an average increase of 49%).**
  - **11 large grant grantees completed the GTT, with an average score of 12.1 at the start of their project, and 15 at the end of their project (an average increase of 20%).**

- **Combined, 2 of the 21 grantees increased their GTT score with more than 10%; 9 with more than 20%; 3 with more than 50% and 2 with more than 100%.**
- **At least 5 grantees started or completed the production of a gender policy for their organisations during this period.**

PROJECT COMPONENTS AND PRODUCTS/DELIVERABLES

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Main grants program is established, implemented and coordinated.	1.1	A minimum of 50-100 main grants disbursed, managed and coordinated	Between 2012 and 2018, ten calls for proposals were issued to solicit large grants. 464 applications were received, each of which was reviewed by at least two members of the RIT to check eligibility, quality, and fit with the Profile. A special process was designed for cases when there could be (the perception of) a conflict of interest. The RIT and the CEPF Grant Director(s) then discussed which applications would be shortlisted. Shortlisted applications underwent an external review by one or more independent experts, to check whether applicants had the necessary capacity, and to make sure that funded projects would be feasible, technically sound, fit within local context, and would deliver conservation outcomes. In addition, nine large grants were solicited directly through a 'sole-sourcing' exercise, to continue ongoing work or to seize special opportunities. As a result of these grant-making processes, 64 main / large grants were contracted through the CEPF Secretariat, supported by the RIT. These grants totalled USD 8,147,079, with an average grant size of USD 127,298 per grant. All large grants were closed by 19 February 2020, besides the two RIT grants to BirdLife. All results and impacts were checked and included in the Global / Portfolio Impact Tables.
1	Main grants program is established, implemented and coordinated.	1.2	USD 7.3 million disbursed in main grants across the five year investments	The original investment in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot was USD 9.8 million, including USD 7.3 million for large grants. The timeline for this disbursement was 5 years. In April 2016, the Eastern Afromontane hotspot benefitted from an additional USD 2.2 million obtained by CEPF from the GEF, which led to (1) more time to make grants (from an initial endline of 31 August 2017 to a new endline of 31 March 2020) and (2) more funding (an additional USD 1,757,805 for large and small grants). In the end, between September 2012 (start of the investment period) and 31 March 2020 (end of the investment period), CEPF - supported by the RIT - disbursed USD 8,147,079 through 64 main grants.
2	Small grants program is established,	2.1	A minimum of 50-100 small grants	Between 2012 and 2018, thirteen calls for proposals were issued to solicit small grants (4 additional small grants were received erroneously

	implemented and coordinated.		disbursed, managed and coordinated	under the first large grant call). 633 applications were received, each of which was reviewed by at least two members of the RIT to check eligibility, quality, and fit with the Profile. A special process was designed for cases when there could be (the perception of) a conflict of interest. The RIT then discussed internally which applications would be shortlisted. Shortlisted applications underwent an external review by one or more independent experts, to check whether applicants had the necessary capacity, and to make sure that funded projects would be feasible, technically sound, fit within local context, and would deliver conservation outcomes. In addition, twelve small grants were solicited directly through a 'sole-sourcing' exercise, to continue ongoing work or to seize special opportunities. As a result of these grant-making processes, 97 small grants were contracted through the RIT (BirdLife and EWNHS) directly. These grants totalled USD 1,886,377, with an average grant size of USD 19,447 per grant. All small grants were closed by 15 March 2020. All results and impacts were checked and included in the Global / Portfolio Impact Tables.
2	Small grants program is established, implemented and coordinated.	2.2	USD 1 million disbursed in small grants	The original investment in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot was USD 9.8 million, including USD 1 million for small grants. The timeline for this disbursement was 5 years. Small grants were to be disbursed by EWNHS in Ethiopia (initially estimated to total USD 250,000) and by BirdLife in the rest of the hotspot (initially estimated to total USD 750,000). In April 2016, the Eastern Afromontane hotspot benefitted from an additional USD 2.2 million obtained by CEPF from the GEF, which led to (1) more time to make grants (from an initial endline of 31 August 2017 to a new endline of 31 March 2020) and (2) more funding (an additional USD 1,757,805 for large and small grants). By October 2017, when the contract between CEPF and EWNHS ended, EWNHS had contracted 15 small grants, for a total amount of USD 272,087. By March 2020, when the contract between CEPF and BirdLife ended, BirdLife had disbursed USD 1,613,598, covering 82 small grants. In the end, between September 2012 (start of the investment period) and 31 March 2020 (end of the investment period), a total of USD 1,885,685 was disbursed to 97 small grants across the hotspot.
3	Monitoring and reporting	3.1	Grantee project	Large grant grantees delivered their reports in the CEPF system, following a fixed reporting schedule

	systems are in place and functioning.		reports submitted and of good quality; results achieved	(quarterly financial reports, 6-monthly technical reports, final reports, start-end CSTTs/GTTs, etc). Between the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat, all reports were reviewed and if there were issues of concern, we would discuss them and follow-up with the grantee. For small grants, the reporting schedule depended on the results of the risk assessments that were carried out by the RIT at the start of each grant. They could vary from quarterly to 6-monthly for both technical and financial reports. Again, all reports were reviewed, and many were sent back for revision if the reports were of insufficient quality / incorrect. Large grant grantees reported on activities, deliverables and impacts, but did not define their own indicators. Small grant grantees had to produce a logical framework as part of their final proposal, which included activities, results/outputs, and impacts. Indicators and means of verification were set at results and short-term impacts level, and grantees had to report to the RIT using their own indicators. This way the RIT could track progress towards achieving results/impacts, and make sure they happened within the project period. This was mostly successful.
3	Monitoring and reporting systems are in place and functioning.	3.2	Regular monitoring visits to sites are being conducted	Between 2012 and 2020, the RIT, CEPF Secretariat staff and/or donor representatives (notably the World Bank, CI and CI-GEF) had 860 'live' interactions with the grantees, including 187 field visits, 235 office visits, 333 meetings during trainings and other events, and 105 other types of interactions. On average, this means that every project (164) was visited at least once in the field, and that every grantee (103) was visited at least twice at their offices. Combining field and office visits, most visits were made in Rwanda (63 visits, covering 15 projects and 11 grantees), followed by Ethiopia (60 visits - 32 projects, 18 grantees), Mozambique (52 visits - 17 projects, 13 grantees), Kenya (48 visits - 16 projects 10 grantees), and Tanzania (45 visits - 21 projects, 15 grantees). Most visited was Forest of Hope Association in Rwanda (14 field visits + 13 office visits, covering 3 projects), followed by KENVO in Kenya (6 field visits + 5 office visits, 2 projects), MICAIA in Mozambique (5 field visits + 6 office visits, 3 projects) and LUPA in Mozambique (2 field visits, 9 office visits, 3 projects).

				The RIT co-organised and participated in each training organised by TBA, FFI, CLP and ZESMAN, and attended most major events organised by grantees.
3	Monitoring and reporting systems are in place and functioning.	3.3	Reports to CEPF produced in time and of high quality	Between 2012 and 2020, all reports to CEPF were submitted in time, unless there were external circumstances that prevented us to do so (in those cases, we would request for - and receive - an extension). We aimed to make all technical reports as interesting and informative as possible, and all financial reports accurate and complete. We started reporting in GEM, moved to LEAF, and ended in Conservation Grants.

Overall, we submitted 131 reports (2012-2020), as follows:
- 30 biannual technical reports (15 for 61681 and 15 for 61682)
- 62 quarterly financial reports (31 for 61681 and 31 for 61682)
- 31 quarterly SGM reports (62385)
- 3 audit reports (each covering 61681, 61682 and 62385)
- 3 final completion reports (one for 61681, one for 61682, one for 62385)
- 2 impact reports (one for 61681, one for 61682)

In addition, we supported the production of:
- 7 APOs (2013-2019)
- 15 supervision mission reports (2012-2020)
- 2 external assessment reports (FFI, 2015/2017)
- the final assessment report (2020)
- various reports under the GEF 'bridge' programme, as well as ad-hoc reports as and when requested.

In the rare occasions that questions were asked about our reports, we could always answer them swiftly and appropriately. No major concerns were ever raised. |
| 4 | Subgrant to IUCN and separate contract to EWNHS are well implemented and supervised | 4.1 | IUCN implements agreed activities according to ToR (subgrant) | IUCN was contracted by BirdLife to assist in the following main areas: (1) to develop robust M&E systems for the portfolio, using in-house capacity; (2) to support the implementation of the CEPF programme in Mozambique through their Maputo office; (3) to provide general technical support (species/sites) with a focus on the Northern Lake Nyasa mountains corridor and the Southern 'montane islands'; and (4) ['high-level'] outreach through the IUCN networks. |

				IUCN produced:
				(1) a local-to-global monitoring tool, linking impacts at grantee/project level, through the Portfolio Monitoring Plan, to the CEPF global indicators. Senior IUCN staff also trained the RIT in theory of change / M&E techniques.
				(2) launch events in Mozambique; lead on grant-making process for Mozambique (including set-up of a local review committee); support to 6 large and 11 small grants; regular monitoring visits; and attendance of local and regional events.
				(3) outreach event in Zimbabwe; support to grant-making process for Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe; monitoring visits to Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; METT training to RIT.
				(4) donor outreach, information sharing (e.g. about calls for proposals), strategic linkages [see 61681 report].
				The IUCN contract was successfully completed in 2017.
4	Subgrant to IUCN and separate contract to EWNHS are well implemented and supervised	4.2	EWNHS implements agreed activities according to ToR (CEPF contract)	EWNHS was contracted directly by CEPF, to implement the small grants programme in Ethiopia, and to support the large grants programme and the wider objectives of the profile. BirdLife, as the lead RIT organisation, agreed on a scope of work with EWNHS, and oversaw its implementation.
				Of the 19 calls for proposals issued in the hotspot, 11 included (or specifically focused on) Ethiopia as an eligible country for grant-making. In total, 32 grants were made in the country, including 11 large grants (contracted through CEPF) and 21 small grants. Of these small grants, 6 were contracted through BirdLife [3 because they involved an international NGO, and EWNHS could not send USD out of the country; 2 because they happened after the contract with EWNHS had ended; and 1 because the services were delivered to BirdLife directly.] The remaining 15 small grants, with a total value of USD 272,087, were contracted and managed by EWNHS. EWNHS, supported by a BirdLife volunteer, and later by ZESMAN, also organised the Ethiopian programme launch, hosted two CEPF grantee meetings (large + small grants), visited grantees at their offices/in the field, maintained contact with CEPF donors, and participated in regional (RIT) events.
				The programme in Ethiopia was successfully completed in 2017.

| 5 | Manage CEPF bridge funding 2017-2019 | 5.1 | Technical reports on bridge funding submitted | The RIT provided inputs on a quarterly basis to the CEPF Managing Director as he submitted combined reports on the EAM, Indo-Burma, and Cerrado to CI-GEF. The RIT also hosted the Managing Director and GEF programme supervisor on a field visit to Rwanda in 2019, and contributed to the mid-term assessment of the GEF-funded programme. |

Describe and submit any tools, products or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

1. M&E toolkit: supported by a senior M&E expert at IUCN, the EAM RIT developed an "M&E toolkit" which combined grantee-level, portfolio-level and global-level impact monitoring. This toolkit included some basic guidance on M&E (tools and techniques), the reporting formats for large and small grant grantees, the portfolio and global indicators, and two sets of monitoring sheets for the grantee to complete: one sheet combined the CEPF portfolio and impact indicators, with project-specific indicators, baselines and targets for the grantees; and the other sheet described the grantee's M&E process (who, what, when, how, where to store data, who to share it with, etc). Due to changing processes within CEPF (new indicators, new systems, new reporting formats etc) we never managed to roll this system out consistently, though we did test it during our first try-out Master Class in 2016. The participants reported that the sheets were useful, but as they were not part of the 'official' CEPF reporting requirements, they were not used to the extent that they would be helpful for the grantee (to keep track of their own project's impacts) nor for the RIT/CEPF (to keep track of aggregated impact at portfolio and global levels). We did share the toolkit with the CEPF Secretariat in case this may of use in the future.
2. Solutions Worth Sharing: this is a tool that was developed by one of our grantees, and which is strongly recommended as a second 'CEPF knowledge product' (see also 61681 for the 'Master Class knowledge product'). Combined with the crash course on the Psychology of Change (http://resilience.ngo/resources/crash-course/), this approach to encourage local people to enhance their resilience and choose for sustainability, has proven to be extremely effective: http://resilience.ngo/rn-projects/sharing-the-solutions-project/.

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:
- Project design process (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)
- Project implementation (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)
- Any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

The Eastern Afromontane RIT worked in three CEPF grants management systems: GEM, LEAF, and Conservation Grants (CG). We were amongst the pilots for both LEAF and CG. While test-running LEAF and CG, we shared a lot of lessons, experiences, and suggestions with the team that was developing these new systems. The EAM RIT had tried to build an on-line application system for small grants, which almost worked, but in the end we couldn't get it fully together - and as much as our system would only cover part of what a proper grants management system would need to do, we already experienced ourselves how difficult it is to do this. In the end, we learned that if the choice is to develop a new system from scratch (tailor made, like LEAF), or within an off-the-shelf package (such as SalesForce for Conservation Grants), probably the best option is to use the off-the shelf package (if affordable), because then you will be able to benefit from (on-line) support systems. CEPF grantees who worked with on-line data and information portals seemed to make a similar recommendation for hosting and building such web-based solutions.

As a component of the above lesson, we learned that the quality of the proposals (and reports) a donor receives from their applicants/grantees, depends to a large extent on the questions they ask in the application/reporting format, and how they ask them. Almost every donor has its own application formats, and uses different words for more or less the same things - such as 'intervention strategy', 'logical framework', 'theory of change', etc. CEPF's format and wording is again unique, including Impacts, Components, Deliverables and Activities, and this often confused the applicants. To guide shortlisted applicants through this process, we decided to train them in the logical framework approach (we used this for our small grants as well, and it is generally used more widely than the CEPF approach), and then translated that into CEPF language. We also provided individual guidance on what exactly was required under each section of the proposals/reports, noting that not many people read the guidelines/manuals that are provided by the donor.

With regards to languages, we learned that it was extremely helpful to have all the main languages that are spoken in the hotspot (Arabic, Amharic, English, French, kiSwahili and Portuguese) available within the RIT. This enabled easy communications with grantees across the hotspot. We tried to make critical documentation available in all these languages as well, if this was not yet available, but we did not manage to do this for everything. More and more CEPF materials are now available in multiple languages, which facilitates the grant-making, project implementation and reporting in all hotspots, and it would be helpful if this would also apply to the on-line systems.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

Summarize the successes or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

For a report on financial and programmatic sustainability/replicability, please see our report under 61681.
With regards to environmental sustainability, we aimed to 'walk the talk' and become a 'green' RIT, as follows:
- When we organised workshops/meetings/events, we did not use plastic document wallets, tried to avoid printing too many papers, and did not produce

event-specific banners or similar. We would provide name tags, but would collect them again at the end of the meeting and re-use them during a next event. We also always picked up (partly/not used) notebooks, pens, cards, flipcharts and other workshop materials at the end of the meeting, and take them back for future use. We also trained our partners and grantees in the same principles.
- At our office, we used eco-friendly cleaning materials, recycled/FSC-certified paper, recycled toilet paper, recycled furniture made of old packaging crates; and we tried to save paper, water and energy as much as possible. We tried to raise awareness about eco-friendly procurement and behaviour among our colleagues, grantees and suppliers.
- We produced various CEPF/RIT-branded materials, including bags that were made out of recycled banners, and re-usable water bottles to avoid single-use plastics. We discussed the production of unneccesary waste, pollution and other environmental hazards with the grantees, and promoted the idea to focus on organic food and materials, and to re-use, reduce and recycle.
- We tried to avoid air travel as much as we could, but as this was a regional project, flying was unavoidable. To offset our CO2 emissions, we regularly planted trees e.g. during the annual RIT meeting in 2013, after moving to Kigali in 2017; after the Conservation Agreements workshop in 2018; and at the end of the grant-making programme in November 2019. We also received two certificates for voluntary carbon offsetting through a certified agency.

SAFEGUARDS

If not listed as a separate project component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental or pest management safeguards.

Of the 164 projects funded by CEPF in the EAM programme, 66 triggered some form of safeguard:
- environmental assessment: 5
- involuntary resettlement (restricted access to resources): 21
- indigenous people: 17
- stakeholder engagement: 15
- health and safety: 23
- gender mainstreaming: 21
[see also report 61681 about how we trained grantees in the application of these safeguards.]
The RIT implemented the following activities towards the application of safeguards by grantees:
1. determination which safeguards applied: this happened after an LOI had passed both the internal and external review process, and was shortlisted for funding. The RIT safeguard expert ran all shortlisted LOIs through the 'safeguard check' and would identify which safeguards applied to which project, and which documentation was required.
2. inclusion in project design / contract: after the safeguard check, the applicant would enter a 'stage 2' process which included the production of a logical framework, a detailed budget, and all relevant safeguard documents. The RIT would make sure that the safeguards would be included in the project proposal/contract, both in terms of implementation, and in terms of reporting. A 'safeguard tab' would be included in the reporting template for the grantees.

3. production of necessary documents: all documents would be received, checked, and approved by the RIT safeguard focal person. They are also uploaded in the Conservation Grants system.

4. monitoring of implementation/adherance: the safeguards focal person reviewed all progress reports from grantees on the implementation of the safeguard. All RIT staff would check the application of safeguards during monitoring visits, including the visibility of 'grievance procedures' posters etc.

5. final reports: at some point, grantees whose project had triggered a safeguard were requested to submit a separate final report on the implementation of these safeguards. These reports were also reviewed and, once acceptable, approved by the RIT and uploaded in the Conservation Grants system, together with supporting documents such as permits, pictures etc.

The RIT, which is listed in the general grievance procedure 'list of contacts', has never received a grievance under any grant in the Eastern Afromontane hotspot. The RIT contracts did not include safeguard provisions, but the RIT has always tried to follow the overriding principle of 'do no harm', anywhere and anytime.

ADDITONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF.

Based on the feedback we received from applicants/grantees, many find the CEPF application process quite involving - especially with regards to the number of documents they need to complete and produce. Some of these documents relate to the actual grant (proposals, budgets, safeguard documents). Others aim to 'track' CEPF's impact on the grantee organisation (institutional capacity, gender). Many of these documents relate to institutional and financial risk management, which seems to become an increasingly important issue in the grant-making process.

It is obvious that we want to make grants to credible organisations, with strong financial and management systems, strong ethics, and strong technical skills. However, CEPF also aims to work with less-developed grantees, whose capacities can be built during project implementation. We should not lose sight of that target group, as they form one of CEPF's unique corner stones.

Most critically, we should not lose the ultimate focus on achieving our conservation objectives, as a result of increasing demands to avoid risk. Risk should not be avoided, it should be managed.

Attached are:
- all internal/external review sheets for calls for proposals 1-19, with the exception of calls 11 (seperate process to identify support in Ethiopia), and 17 and 18 (reviews were done on-line in Conservation Grants)
- the complete dashboard with all grant information (including M&E) about the 164 grants in the EAM hotspot
- the complete impact sheets for the portfolio, including a summary sheet with portfolio data

ADDITONAL FUNDING

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

Total additional funding (US$)
$500,000.00

Type of funding
Provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of 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)

The RIT estimates that USD 500,000 has been raised under category A (project co-financing) consisting of:
- support to the programme launches in Saudi Arabia (including production of ecosystem profile summary in Arabic) and in Rwanda (joint event with MacArthur Foundation)
- attendance of third party events by BirdLife, EWNHS and IUCN staff, used to promote CEPF but funded through other means
- staff time from non-RIT BirdLife, EWNHS and IUCN staff, who supported the programme (LOI reviews, scientific advice, etc)
- staff time from external reviewers, Board of Advisors, long-term vision advisory group members and other volunteers
- synergies with other projects and programmes, including for site monitoring (staff/travel expenses) and capacity building (linking to existing events)

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 website, www.cepf.net, and may be publicized in our e-newsletter and other communications.

1. Please include your full contact details (name, organization, mailing address, telephone number, email address) below.

Maaike Manten, BirdLife International, birdlife-africa@birdlife.org