

CEPF Final Completion and Impact Report

Organization's Legal Name:	International Union for Conservation of Nature - Fiji
Project Title:	CEPF Regional Implementation Team in the East Melanesia Islands-Programmatic
Grant Number:	63281
Hotspot:	East Melanesian Islands
Strategic Direction:	5 Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through a Regional Implementation Team
Grant Amount:	\$915,151.71
Project Dates:	July 01, 2013 - March 31, 2022
Date of Report:	May 22, 2022

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

1. The Regional Implementation Team

The RIT was made up of staff based at IUCN Oceania in Fiji. As well, 3 National Country Coordinators were recruited as consultants to assist the RIT in each of the three EMI countries.

2. Grantees

The RIT facilitated the contracting of 58 small grants between 2013 and 2021. CEPF and the RIT facilitated the contracting of 57 large grants in the same time period.

The grantees were CSOs (non-government, academic, private sector) who implemented these grants which formed a major component of the CEPF portfolio, helping to achieve the targets for the EMI investment. The RIT worked with individual grantees at all stages of the process – from assisting with the writing of proposals, to contracting the grantees through this Small Grant Mechanism process, to monitoring and implementation of active grants.

3. Host Governments

The Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and PNG governments (through the respective Ministries of Environment) were key partners, assisting in the review and monitoring of projects, and hosting the National Country Coordinators by providing office space and support.

4. The Technical Advisory Groups

A national TAG was formed in each country, and comprised of persons appointed in their individual capacity from government agencies, local and international civil society organisations, academia, technical assistance agencies and donors actively working in conservation in the East Melanesian Islands, and whose main purpose was to advise the RIT on LOIs and help to review all LOIs, recommending projects to be funded or rejected.

5. Donors

The GEF Focal Points in all countries with whom CEPF secured endorsement of the Ecosystem Profile strategy, and whom RIT members kept up-dated on the progress of CEPF investment, were partners from the outset. UNDP Small Grants programme representatives. RIT members established close working contacts with these reps in each country throughout the investment.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
As a result of CEPF's investment, awareness of biodiversity issues is improved, and protection and management of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) is prioritized in the 3 EMI countries	<p>Nine grants, with a value of almost \$350,000, were awarded that specifically aimed to raise awareness of biodiversity and its threat, and the investment strategy's goal was to raise awareness in 10 of the priority sites.</p> <p>In fact, almost all of the grants awarded under SD 1, 2 and 3 and some element of awareness raising included, and as a result, awareness of biodiversity and the importance of conservation and management was raised in all 20 priority sites.</p>
A sustainable landscape of CSOs exists in the 3 EMI countries, through which biodiversity conservation projects can be maintained and undertaken in the future.	<p>Over the 8 year investment, the RIT helped to strengthen the CSO network in EMI by directly funding 66 CSOs working in the 3 EMI countries (this figure does not include IUCN as the RIT). 41 of these organizations were classed as national or domestic organizations, and 25 were international (5 of these had an office presence in one or more of the EMI countries).</p> <p>The RIT aimed to form at least 10 new networks and partnerships among civil society groups, government and communities to enable collective responses to threats and actively participate in conservation actions. Over the 8 year period, 10 new networks and 12 formal partnerships were formed.</p> <p>The increased and more capable landscape of CSOs, networks and partnerships leaves the EMI hotspot in a position to increase and sustain conservation in the future.</p> <p>An estimated 38 grantees leveraged additional funding for implementation of their projects, amounting to at least \$1.8 million, which is close to a third of the total amount granted by CEPF (estimated as recorded through self-declaration of the grantees).</p>
DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<p>At least 10 of the priority Key Biodiversity Areas in East Melanesia have designated Protected Areas under sustainable management, providing local communities with sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem services by July 2021</p>	<p>19 Protected Areas have been formally declared in 4 priority KBA sites (Santo Mountain Chain, Gaua, Mt Maetambe-Kolombangara River and Central Manus), covering 29,009 hectares</p> <p>1 Protected Area covering 15200 hectares has been formally declared in a non-priority KBA site (Arnavon Community Marine Park)</p> <p>Therefore, 17 Protected Areas have been formally declared covering 44,209 hectares.</p> <p>Additional PAs are in process, in Marovo-Kavachi, Kolombangara Island, East Makira, Central Manus and Mt Maetambe-Kolombangara River, covering 33,500 hectares.</p> <p>The expected overall result from CEPF investment is approximate 100,000 hectares.</p> <p>Overall, 222,063 hectares in 24 KBAs (13 priority KBAs) have new or strengthened protection or management as a result of their CEPF projects. Local communities are exploring and implementing alternative livelihood options within these sites, some of which are formally protected, and some which are under community management or going through the PA process. For instance, through carbon credit trading (Choiseul), bee-keeping (Kolombangara), ngali nut farming (Marovo), eco-tourism (Tanna, Santo, Kolombangara) and small scale agricultural cash crops like vanilla and fruits (Gizo, Kolombangara, Malaita).</p>
<p>At least 15 of the priority Key Biodiversity Areas see a reduction in threats (e.g. from logging, agriculture) by July 2021</p>	<p>22 grants were specifically funded under Investment Priority 1.3, which aimed to empower communities to carry out conservation actions to reduce threats in priority KBAs. Conservation actions were carried out in 14 priority KBA site and 1 non-priority KBA site with the aim of protecting biodiversity from logging, mining and other land use incompatible with biodiversity protection.</p> <p>Actions included: supporting communities in preparing management plans for their conservation areas (Kunua Plains/Mt Balbi, Cape St George, Gaua), supporting communities through the PA Process (Marovo-Kavachi, Santo, Manus, East Makira), enhancing livelihoods through agroforestry and agriculture to encourage and enable communities to protect land and resources rather than resorting to destructive practices (Gizo, Marovo-Kavachi, Kolombangara, Manus).</p>
<p>At least 20 of the priority species have increased information on their distribution and status, and improved conservation status due</p>	<p>Information and data have been gathered for 35 of the priority species. Amending a species' conservation status is more difficult, as the data has to be fed into the IUCN Red List Unit, and the</p>

Impact Description	Impact Summary
to the existence and implementation of species recovery plans by July 2021	<p>species then has to be re-assessed taking into account the new data. This is not an automatic process. For example, the New Georgia Monkey-faced bat, <i>Pteralopex taki</i>, has been re-assessed from EN to VU.</p> <p>Species Recovery plans are only really possible to generate, and then implement, with enough data to feed into such a plan. Therefore, the development of recovery plans is not as straight forward as CEPF anticipated. There must also be community ownership of the plans, otherwise they will not be implemented. For instance, recovery plans have been produced for the priority monkey-faced bats and flying foxes in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and for giant rats in Solomon Islands, Bougainville and Manus, but implementation varies depending on the extent of the plans being incorporated into local conservation area management plans.</p>
At least 5 new partnerships and networks are formed among civil society, government and communities to enable information exchange, sharing of lessons, and successfully manage conservation projects, by July 2021	<p>The EMI investment aimed to form at least 10 new networks and partnerships among civil society, government and communities to enable collective responses to threats. Over the 8 year period, 13 new networks and 15 formal partnerships were created as a result of CEPF funding. The partnerships included under this target do not include those partnerships established only for the purpose of CEPF grant implementation, rather they are partnerships set up for longer term collaboration, beyond CEPF funding, often indicated with the development of a formal partnership agreement or MoU.</p>
At least 40 civil society organizations, including at least 30 domestic organizations, see an increased capacity in project management, proposal writing, strategic planning, gender considerations, and financial management so that they are equipped with skills to manage grants and projects.	<p>Naturally, over the 8 year investment, and through the various country visits and one-on-one site visits and interactions with grantees, the RIT became more aware of key issues within Strategic Directions, as well as challenges faced by grantees and the capability of organizations to implement their projects.</p> <p>The RIT provided key capacity building to 66 unique CSOs in EMI.</p> <p>Capacity support was provided by the RIT in informal and formal ways. Each small grantee, and some large domestic grantees, were given support in project and financial management as their projects progressed, and in project planning and strategic planning. This was generally done one-on-one in person by the NCC, or other RIT staff during country visits, or over the phone or email.</p> <p>Before and after reporting periods, each grantee was supported to submit their reports in a correct and timely way, and structured feedback was provided following, to ensure that (especially lower capacity</p>

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	<p>or new) grantees were learning how to properly manage and implement their projects and compile reports at standards required by CEPF and other donors.</p> <p>29 domestic CSOs showed an increase in their organizational capacity as evidenced by their Civil Society Tracking Tool scores at the end of their projects.</p>
<p>80% of CEPF beneficiaries deliver their financial and programmatic reports and project delivery on time as a result of training and support from the RIT and CEPF (through support in project management, proposal writing, strategic planning, and financial management)</p>	<p>The RIT saw significant improvements in the standard and efficiency of reporting over time. In the earlier years, a few issues arose with late reporting and with inaccurate or incomplete reports. As the investment progressed, the RIT and grantees became more familiar with the requirements, and more confident in their own reporting abilities. As well, the amount of time that the RIT spent with small grantees (and domestic large grantees) resulted in better reporting and better implementation. In large part this came down to better communication and partnerships, which meant that grantees were comfortable to come to the RIT with any issues, and the RIT regularly (at least monthly) checked in with each grantee.</p> <p>By the last years of the programme, almost all reports from small grantees were submitted on time. Large grant reports were often a little harder to receive on time. Sometimes this was because of a slight disconnect between project managers and finance departments, especially with the larger (generally international) grantees, with finance reports and progress reports being submitted separately by different people.</p>
<p>\$7million in grants for civil society for biodiversity conservation in the EMI hotspot is contracted by July 2021</p>	<p>Grants covering all strategic directions were funded within the 3 EMI countries and with a grant amount of just under \$7 million (minus the RIT budget).</p> <p>The RIT, with CEPF, planned and held 10 Calls for Proposals, which included explaining CEPF's Investment Strategy to stakeholders and supporting the receipt of eligible applications - receiving a total of 394 Letters of Inquiry (227 for Large Grants and 167 for Small Grants).</p> <p>A review process was set up to ensure all accepted LOIs and contracted projects were in line with the Investment Strategy, and were reviewed by the RIT, the national TAGs, CEPF and external reviewers if necessary.</p> <p>During project implementation, the RIT monitored / the activities of each grantee to ensure they were</p>

Impact Description	Impact Summary
	<p>in-line with their logframe and with the EMI strategy.</p> <p>National TAGs were created to review and advise on grants for contracting. They also offered insight on the implementation of projects and national conservation issues of relevance to the conservation community.</p> <p>A mid-term and final assessment were conducted to evaluate the performance of the programme and look at sustaining conservation through the civil society network in each EMI country</p>

Unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

POSITIVE

For IUCN Oceania:

- IUCN Oceania expanded its network, reach, and reputation across East Melanesia through the work of the RIT. Through partnerships and project implementation, links have been created and strengthened with the TAG members, host governments, grantees, and others working in East Melanesia to achieve biodiversity conservation through civil society.
- RIT staff learned from other RITs and CEPF in order to increase their capacities in reviewing proposals, budget management, grant making and project monitoring. Managing a multi-faceted programme with many stakeholders was an enormous challenge and learning curve for staff, and many skills have been learned and improved.
- IUCN Oceania increased its capacity as a grant-making mechanism through the small grant programme. Through the RIT’s creation and development of tools and systems, IUCN Oceania have benefitted and become more effective in grant-making. Therefore although a great deal of capacity and tools have been produced which will remain at IUCN.

For grantees and the EMI countries:

- Expanded networks and reach through the RIT with individual countries and throughout the EMI region. Synergies have been created through the Technical Advisory Groups, through partnerships with and amongst grantees, and through contacts in governments to help foster engagement on biodiversity conservation issues.
- The relationship between the RIT and grantees has been developed and strengthened, with capacity building for grantees, the sharing of knowledge between organizations and widening networks for all parties with new contacts and experts from a variety of fields.

NEGATIVE

For IUCN Oceania:

- Being flexible with grantees was seen as positive at the outset. However, it became clear that while some flexibility is welcomed and necessary, this also meant that grantees were late with reporting and not always as detailed with their reports as expected. As well, this flexibility in our approach led to some more serious problems, such as a small number of small grantees not following procurement and contracts.

- Receiving reports late also meant that the timeline and workload of the RIT was disrupted. Over time, the RIT gradually tried to become stricter with topics like financial reports and meeting deadlines in order to prevent problems arising. Since these more rigorous systems were put in place in 2018, the portfolio became more robust and successful.

For grantees

- Weak governance structures were obstacles to project implementation and management for a number of grantees, particularly some of the smaller and newer domestic groups. The impact of this was evident in the bureaucratic management of projects and delayed activities in some cases.

There were two areas of the hotspot/programme where we feel we did not fully meet the Ecosystem Profile's goals.

- 1) To build national leaders in PNG. It was difficult to do this effectively when the hotspot boundaries meant focusing only on the islands region of PNG rather than the entire country.
- 2) Under IP 2.3: "Explore partnerships with private companies to promote sustainable development in natural resource sectors". It was challenging to find grantees to work on this topic of business partnerships for biodiversity. The opportunity for CSOs to include and influence businesses on their projects was small, and the RIT also struggled to engage with businesses as intended in the Ecosystem Profile. We did raise this in meetings of the TAG, and with CEPF, and at the Mid-term review, but with limited grantees to take this forward, the ability and reach of the RIT was seen as minimal.

During the lifetime of the programme, projects were impacted by natural disasters, as expected in such a disaster prone region. Vanuatu especially saw projects suspended or deferred due to the impacts of cyclones such as Pam, Harold and Yasa.

Solomon Islands was impacted by political unrest late in the programme, when riots broke out in Honiara causing disruptions to daily life and project implementation.

The covid-19 pandemic also impacted projects. The EMI countries, as the rest of the Pacific, remained fairly spared from covid-19 disruptions and restrictions during 2020, which meant that in-country activities could carry on as planned. The disruptions at this time came to those projects that relied upon international personnel for implementation, as travel into the EMI countries was restricted. By late 2021, the EMI countries were affected by increasing covid cases and lockdowns as restrictions were imposed, which led to activities being rescheduled or cancelled. Unfortunately, this coincided with the wrapping up of projects in some cases, leading to disruptions in final activities.

Despite these challenges and disruptions, locally based grantees managed to keep their projects on track, without taking any unnecessary risks, which is highly commendable. It shows that, even when countries suffer from natural disasters and political issues, it may not mean withdrawing funds from an area and stopping investment in local civil society. What we saw is that continuing these projects meant that people remained employed at a time when jobs were being lost, and organizations and work were able to continue.

PROJECT RESULTS/DELIVERABLES

Overall results of the project:

The portfolio achieved concrete conservation results which are detailed in the Final Report against the Logframe (attached), which demonstrates the achievements of the RIT in meeting CEPF's portfolio targets from 2013 – 2021.

In summary:

1. A Regional Implementation Team was put in place to provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF.

Three grants were awarded at a value of \$2.5 million – 2 for the functioning of the RIT (merged late in the investment for ease of implementation) and one for the small grants mechanism.

The RIT (IUCN Oceania) helped civil society and local partners design and implement 115 grants at a value of \$8.5 million in all 3 countries of the hotspot between 2013 and 2021.

2. A small grant programme was implemented in the hotspot.

The RIT directly contracted 58 small grants with a total value of \$973,292 in all 3 countries of the hotspot. The small grants contracted and completed are listed under the Final Completion Report for Grant 63285: "CEPF Small Grant Mechanism".

3. A large grant programme was implemented in the hotspot.

The RIT assisted CEPF with the contracting and implementation of 55 large grants with a total of \$5,943,326 in all 3 countries of the hotspot. (This total does not include the 2 grants with a combined total of \$1,500,000 contracted to IUCN as the RIT).

4. Projects were supported under each of the Strategic Directions outlined in the Ecosystem Profile:

- 44 projects were funded under SD 1, with a value of \$3.5million
- 8 projects were funded under SD 2, with a value of \$302,000
- 14 projects were funded under SD 3, with a value of \$800,000
- 45 projects were funded under SD 4, with a value of \$1.92million

5. It has been a long and often challenging process, but advances and achievements have been made towards the setting up of Protected Areas across the hotspot, with 20 new protected area sites declared across the 3 EMI countries as a result of CEPF's funding. This will have significant and lasting impacts for biodiversity and for the communities who are the custodians of these important sites. The ability and engagement of civil society in this process demonstrates their crucial role in informing and influencing decision-making at local and national levels.

6. 154 Civil society groups were engaged to actively participate in the conservation of threatened biodiversity in EMI. Grants were made to 26 international CSOs (including IUCN) and 41 local/national CSOs who implemented projects to meet CEPF's strategy as outlined in the Ecosystem Profile.

7. An important role of the RIT was initiating national and island level partnerships, facilitating knowledge and skills exchange, encouraging the creation of networks and providing platforms for CSOs to engage with other partners, decision-makers and government personnel. This promotion of collaborative action has set the building blocks for long-term impacts, and the RIT is proud to leave the region with a network of dedicated, capable people working together for biodiversity conservation. In a remote and isolated region such as EMI, these partnerships are vital to long term conservation success. Over the 8 year period, 13 new networks and 15 formal partnerships were created as a result of CEPF funding.

8. Long-term impacts of CEPF's investment require that civil society groups are playing a key role in conservation actions. This has been achieved through the provision of targeted capacity building support for CSOs and individuals. CSOs were able to grow their organizations, sometimes from scratch, and put in necessary systems and policies for future work to be carried out. Staff also gained training and skills for developing their organization's strengths and technical knowledge, and in project management. Organizational capacity strengthening was measured using the Civil Society Tracking Tool, to record progress and monitor changes in capacity. 32 CSOs (29 of them domestic or nationally based) have shown improvements in their scores between the beginning and end of their projects. 20 domestic CSOs have seen an increase of over 15% in their CSTT scores over the course of their project. CEPF funding was also directed towards strengthening individual capacity for conservation management. Short courses were funded for individuals at academic and research institutions, training over 60 participants in scientific and ecological techniques, monitoring and conservation practices. An additional 60 rangers have been trained in similar topics and more practical applications in the field.

Summary of conservation results in EMI.

Site level:

- Grantees have implemented projects in 41 of the 95 KBAs in EMI, 20 of which are priority sites
- Strengthened management, predominantly as community tabus and monitoring of sites, is in place for 24 KBAs, covering 222,063 hectares.
- 20 new Protected Areas have been created, covering 44,209 hectares. Another 8 sites are in progress, covering at least 33,500 hectares.
- 10,246 hectares in production landscapes are being managed for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use.
- CSOs were supported to integrate biodiversity conservation into 6 local land-use and development plans.
- Awareness of biodiversity conservation issues was raised in all 20 priority sites
- 15 priority sites have seen threat levels reduced through conservation actions implemented by local communities
- Conservation incentives (ecotourism, payments for ecosystem services, conservation agreements, etc.) have been implemented at 5 priority sites and 1 other KBA
- Land boundary mapping and clarification of ownership and tenure carried out in customary lands at 7 priority KBA sites and 1 non-priority site
- At least 20 communities and 1000 landowners have been provided with legal support and training at 11 priority sites and 2 non-priority sites

Species level

- 35 of the 48 priority species have improved knowledge and information on their status, distribution, ecology or threats as a result of CEPF funding. Species and habitat data has specifically been improved at 17 of the priority KBA sites through surveys
- 6 of the 48 threatened priority species were listed as potentially extinct, and therefore needed research on whether or not they are extant before any conservation actions could be undertaken. Funding was provided to CSOs to undertake surveys for all 6 of these species
- 8 species recovery plans are in production or have been produced, for 14 species:
- Science-based harvest management plans were introduced for 3 of the priority species important to local food security

CSO organizational and networking impacts

- 13 new networks and 15 formal partnerships were created as a result of CEPF funding
- 66 different organizations as grant recipients throughout EMI: 25 unique international organizations and 41 unique local organizations have received 115 grants. An additional 88 CSOs were directly involved in the implementation of grantee projects, as a sub-grantee, or major project partner; of these, 80 are domestic/local groups.
- 17 new organizations and conservation committees have been established
- 29 of the domestic grantees have shown improvements to their organizations, as indicated by their Civil Society Tracking Tool scores. Of these, 20 CSOs have recorded greater than a 15% increase in scores from the start of their CEPF funded project, to the end.
- 6 projects were funded for 182 short course attendees with the aim of strengthening the capacity of conservation practitioners (conservation area managers, tutors, rangers) in conservation management, science and leadership
- 18 local CSO recipients of CEPF funds have secured further funding for future projects

Results for each deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.1	Support grantees to prepare and finalize proposals ready for contracting by 31 May 2020 (grants contracted)	<p>The RIT members worked with applicants whose initial LOIs were accepted, and who were invited to the full proposal stage.</p> <p>For large grants, the RIT worked in partnership with CEPF to refine and finalise large grant proposals, and assist in gathering any supporting documentation.</p> <p>For small grants, the RIT Members (National Country Coordinator and/or Project Manager worked directly with the applicant).</p> <p>This took the form of reviewing the developing drafts of the proposal, advising and assisting the production and gathering of required supporting documents, and meeting in person and talking over the phone to answer questions and provide support.</p> <p>From the final call, 6 large grant applicants and 5 small grant applicants were assisted in this process.</p> <p>Over the course of the investment, there have been 10 Calls for Proposals, resulting in 182 large grant applications (30% of applications were successfully translated into a project) and 172 small grant applications (33% of</p>

Component		Deliverable		
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				<p>applications were successfully translated into a project).</p> <p>In addition, 8 of the awarded grants were contracted through the grant by invitation process (2 large grants and 6 small grants).</p>
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.2	Support grantees and the Secretariat to monitor and track grantee technical and financial performance and address any implementation or compliance issues (reviewed reports in online reporting system; documents uploaded in database; projects successfully c	<p>At the start of the project, the RIT worked with CEPF to agree on systems and procedures to monitor and track each grantee's technical and financial progress. For large grantees, the report templates are set, and the procedures referred to the RIT and CEPF personnel's roles. This was fluid, and changed at times in order to improve efficiency. RIT members reminded and helped large grantees with their quarterly financial report submissions and bi-annual progress report submissions. RIT members reviewed reports within 7-14 days of submission by each grantee, and wrote comments into the CEPF online database, prior to discussion between the RIT and CEPF on what was submitted.</p> <p>Likewise, the RIT supported grantees with the successful submission of their final reports and safeguard documents and tracking tools. The review of these documents was carried out within 14 days of submission. This timeline was generally adhered to by the RIT, although inevitably over 8 years, there were some times when the amount of time required was greater than this.</p>

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				The RIT saw significant improvements in the standard and efficiency of reporting over time, as the RIT and grantees became more familiar with the requirements, and more confident in reporting abilities. 57 projects were successfully closed.
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.3	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.4	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.5	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.6	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.7	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.8	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.9	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.10	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.11	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
1.0	Support CEPF grantees and the Secretariat in the management of the EMI large grant program (grants >\$20,000)	1.12	DELETED UPON AMENDMENT	
2.0	Management of a small grants program (<\$20,000)	2.1	Contracting of small grant agreements by June 2020 (signed contracts between IUCN and applicants)	RIT members (Finance Officer and Project Manager) carried out due diligence to ensure small grant applicant eligibility and their capacity to comply with CEPF and IUCN funding terms. Feedback was given to and responses requested, so that IUCN could

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				<p>make an informed and accurate decision on whether or not to fund the applicant, and if any conditions need to be placed on the grantee in order for them to comply with terms.</p> <p>The RIT members (Project Manager and/or National Country Coordinator) worked with the applicants to refine and finalise the LOI, and assisted in gathering supporting documentation – safeguards, Civil Society Tracking Tool and Gender Tracking Tool. Applicants were assisted in person, and over the phone and email to answer questions and provide support.</p> <p>Once the proposal and supporting documents were finalised, the small grant agreements were drafted by the Project Manager and these were sent for internal review by IUCN. Once approved, the agreements were signed by both Parties and the grant became active.</p> <p>In the final scheduled year of the investment, and after the final call for proposals, 5 small grant projects were contracted.</p>
2.0	Management of a small grants program (<\$20,000)	2.2	Monitor and track grantee technical and financial performance and address any implementation or compliance issues until July	At the start of the project, the RIT put in place systems and procedures to monitor and track each grantee's technical and financial progress. This was put together into a Manual for the RIT (for internal IUCN use, but

Component		Deliverable		
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			2021 (reports reviewed, documents including site visit reports uploaded to IUCN and CEPF databases, projects successfully complete	<p>submitted to CEPF). Over the course of the project, some procedures did change, as certain processes became redundant or required alteration for efficiency. RIT members reminded and helped grantees with their quarterly financial and progress report submissions and reviewed reports within 7 days of submission prior to providing feedback.</p> <p>RIT members conducted site visits to grantees, so that assistance could be provided in person or over the phone.</p> <p>The RIT saw significant improvements in the standard and efficiency of reporting over time, as the RIT and grantees became more familiar with the requirements, and more confident in reporting abilities.</p> <p>The RIT also supported grantees with the successful submission of their final reports and project documents and 58 small grant projects were successfully closed.</p>
2.0	Management of a small grants program (<\$20,000)	2.3	Monitor and report on the status of the Small Grant bank account quarterly from October 31st 2019 until July 31st 2021 (bank account statements)	The finance officer for the RIT, in partnership with the Project Manager, and other IUCN finance staff if required, prepared quarterly reports for the Small Grant Mechanism. The bank account and expenditures were monitored, and reports were extracted as DTRs and bank statements for submission to CEPF.

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				<p>Further information on this can be seen in the "Final Completion Report for Grant 63285: "CEPF Small Grant Mechanism".</p> <p>Funds were dispersed based upon timely and accurate report submissions. This also led to better reporting from grantees as they knew no further funds would be dispersed if reports were outstanding.</p>
3.0	Monitor and assess the impact of CEPF's large and small grants	3.1	Compile data and prepare draft "Annual report on the Logframe" for EMI by July 2020 and July 2021 (updated logframe)	<p>Every year, the Project Manager assisted CEPF with the gathering of information on relevant hotspot-level and portfolio-level indicators for compilation into the "Annual report on the logframe".</p> <p>The RIT used grantee performance reports and final reports, as well as any other relevant deliverables produced by projects, and through direct communication with grantees, to prepare this.</p> <p>The amount of input did vary depending on the Grant Director. For one of the directors, the Project Manager was expected to draft the document, while for the other two, the Project Manager was only expected to review and edit it.</p>
3.0	Monitor and assess the impact of CEPF's large and small grants	3.2	Compile data for lessons learned from the EMI hotspot by July 2021	Over the course of the project, a master spreadsheet has been kept by the RIT Project Manager which captures all of the project outcomes, including lessons. Information on

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
			(inclusion in quarterly highlights communications)	<p>positive and negative lessons learned has been gathered from grantee performance reports and final reports, other relevant deliverables produced by projects and through direct communication with grantees. This was shared with CEPF for inclusion in global communications products when required.</p> <p>The final compilation of lessons learned is the focus and outcome of a large grant to the Tropical Biology Association, who were contracted to assist the RIT and CEPF with this large task.</p>
3.0	Monitor and assess the impact of CEPF's large and small grants	3.3	Support a final assessment workshop and report for EMI by May 2021 (final assessment report)	<p>This deliverable was amended somewhat, due to 2 main reasons. First of all, the covid-19 travel restrictions, meant that travel was not possible as planned in the final 2 years of the investment. Secondly, the task was included in the large grant to the Tropical Biology Association. The RIT did provide support to the process, but in slightly different ways than initially envisaged.</p> <p>As well, the CEPF contract to IUCN was not extended in line with the TBA grant (this RIT grant ended in March 2022 and the TBA grant ended in April 2022). This all meant that the RIT were not contracted to help with the final write up after the end of the grant contract. All of the former NCCs were contracted</p>

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				independently by TBA and therefore assisted in the execution of the final assessments and the write-up, even after the Project Manager was no longer part of the project team.
4.0	Provide capacity support to grantees, especially domestic CSOs, in order to ensure efficient and effective project implementation and future sustainability	4.1	Identify existing capacity gaps among potential and current grantees and generate a schedule of capacity building workshops and training until July 2021, by May 2020 (report on capacity needs; timeline for training and workshops)	<p>Gaps in capacity of current and potential grantees were identified – largely through the CSTT scores, conversations with and direct requests from grantees, and from the issues raised at the mid-term review. A schedule for carrying out financial training and organizational capacity support was put together, but unfortunately did not eventuate as anticipated due to the covid-19 travel restrictions. Travel was not possible as planned in the final 2 years of the investment, and it was not very easy to conduct training workshops over zoom.</p> <p>In Solomon Islands, it was possible to bring some grantees together in Malaita and in Honiara for formal financial training in a workshop setting prior to the lockdowns and travel restrictions being enforced.</p>
4.0	Provide capacity support to grantees, especially domestic CSOs, in order to ensure efficient and effective project implementation and future sustainability	4.2	Provide mentoring in financial and administrative management to at least 20 lower capacity grantees through visits/calls/training to enable efficient project implementation/monitoring (records of calls, site visit	<p>RIT members aimed to conduct at least quarterly project site visits and calls to grantees to give necessary support and guidance for project implementation and monitoring.</p> <p>This was achieved for the majority of small grantees, particularly those based in the</p>

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
			reports, training reports, successful imp	<p>countries. The difficulties arose with grantees based in PNG (without a country coordinator) and outside of the hotspot.</p> <p>Technical support was provided to domestic CSOs, on a one on one basis, especially for financial and administrative aspects of grant implementation and management.</p>
5.0	Strengthen networking, partnership building and information exchange amongst all EMI stakeholders	5.1	Promote collaboration and partnerships among grantees and stakeholders in EMI through the hosting of at least two grantee exchange meetings in each country before July 2021 (workshop report, joint submissions, new networks)	<p>As with capacity building workshops, a schedule for hosting network exchange meetings was put together, but unfortunately did not eventuate as anticipated due to the covid-19 travel restrictions. Travel was not possible as planned in the final 2 years of the investment, and it was not very easy to conduct training workshops over zoom.</p> <p>However, a national workshop was conducted online and in person from Port Vila, and likewise from Honiara and Gizo. Although not exactly as planned, they nevertheless enabled grantees to share lessons, discuss opportunities for collaboration, forge and strengthen partnerships and discuss lessons learned.</p>
5.0	Strengthen networking, partnership building and information exchange amongst all EMI stakeholders	5.2	Build and maintain links with CEPF's donors and other international donors before July 2021 (meeting summaries)	A spreadsheet of relevant conservation and environment donors in each country was developed, maintained and amended over the course of the project. This enabled the RIT to keep track of other donors investing in EMI,

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				<p>and other donors supporting the same grantees CEPF supported.</p> <p>Visits were regularly made to some donors (e.g. UNDP and GEF) while it proved harder to maintain links with others (e.g. Japanese government, AFD). Donors were always informed of CEPF progress, but communications were generally fairly scant, despite visits being made to the donors by NCCs and by the RIT and CEPF When in the region.</p>
5.0	Strengthen networking, partnership building and information exchange amongst all EMI stakeholders	5.3	Maintain good relationships with host country governments and provide quarterly updates on CEPF progress until July 2021 (written reports submitted, presentations given)	<p>The National Country Coordinators were generously hosted by respective environment departments in each country: CEPA in PNG, MECDM in Solomon Islands and DEPC in Vanuatu.</p> <p>This was one of the most positive impacts of the investment, and one of the key reasons for CEPF's success in EMI.</p> <p>Not only did this arrangement improve the relationship, trust and communications, between the RIT and governments, it also enabled both parties to be fully informed about conservation progress in the EMI countries.</p> <p>The NCC role and link here was pivotal as they were trusted by the governments and include</p>

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				in government meetings and office discussions. The NCC provided regular updates (written and verbal) on CEPFs investment to the government host departments.
5.0	Strengthen networking, partnership building and information exchange amongst all EMI stakeholders	5.4	Assist with preparation and implementation of Long Term Strategic Vision for EMI developed through consultations by February 2021 (long term vision report)	This activity was cancelled.
6.0	Communicate CEPF's investment in the East Melanesian Islands	6.1	EMI project results and news stories circulated via quarterly newsletter, email EMI facebook page, powerpoint presentations (quarterly newsletter, facebook stories, photos, ppt presentations)	We used the following communication tools over the course of the investment to communicate about CEPF: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email. A dedicated email account was created for the RIT so potential applicants and other stakeholders could contact the RIT for information, and for the RIT to use as a generic email address: cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org. • Regular e-newsletter – Conservation East Melanesia • A dedicated EMI facebook page to share stories from grantees, share best practices, announce Calls for Proposals and other fundraising opportunities, and showcase new grants. • IUCN Oceania website which contains information on the profile and investment strategy, Call for Proposal announcements and

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				<p>guidelines, RIT contact details and other useful documents and news updates. With the growth of facebook, we stopped focusing on this page for news, and instead used it as more of a homepage for CEPF in EMI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEPF website • EMI YouTube channel • Special editions of MelanesianGeo magazine • Presentations by RIT members at sub-national and national meetings and conferences
7.0	Coordinate and manage CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot with the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat	7.1	Bi-monthly coordination meetings between the RIT and CEPF until July 2021 (meeting minutes).	<p>Regular communications were maintained between RIT members – in Suva, between Suva and the NCCs, and between the RIT and CEPF.</p> <p>Communications between RIT members was at least weekly, and often daily. Communications between the RIT and CEPF were at least fortnightly, and also depended on issues arising.</p>
7.0	Coordinate and manage CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot with the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat	7.2	Annual Operational Plan for the RIT and CEPF drafted in partnership with CEPF by November 2020 for 2021 (Annual Plans)	<p>Workplans were prepared annually. An annual operational plan was made for the CEPF programme overall, A workplan was put together for the RIT overall, and for individual members of the RIT. These were monitored by the Project Manager, line managers in IUCN, and the finance officer prior to any payments being made to RIT members.</p>

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
7.0	Coordinate and manage CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot with the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat	7.3	At least 2 supervision missions per year carried out by the CEPF Secretariat until July 2021 (supervision mission report)	Supervision missions did not eventuate as anticipated during the last 2 years of the investment, due to the covid-19 travel restrictions. Regular communication was maintained through skype and zoom, and the Grant Director and Project Manager ensured that planning, monitoring and implementation was carried out through these other means.
7.0	Coordinate and manage CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot with the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat	7.4	Financial reports submitted on time and accurately every quarter until July 2021 (Reports submitted)	CEPF financial reports were submitted on time and accurately by the quarterly due dates of January 30, April 30, July 30 and October 30, in CEPF's grant database, Conservation Grants.
7.0	Coordinate and manage CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot with the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat	7.5	Programmatic reports submitted on time and accurately bi-annually until July 2021 (Reports submitted)	CEPF programmatic reports were submitted on time and accurately by the due dates of January 30 and July 30, in CEPF's grant database, Conservation Grants.
7.0	Coordinate and manage CEPF's investment in the EMI hotspot with the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat	7.6	Final reports submitted to CEPF by September 2021 (Reports submitted)	Final reports were due 60 days after the project's end date of 31st March, i.e. on 31st May 2022. There is a need for CEPF to build a reporting period into contracts so that project managers can continue to work for the project to complete final reports. These extra 2 months after the CEPF project finished at the end of March.ject. It can be difficult to complete the reports during the contracted period, as the

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
				Project Manager's time is taken up managing and closing grants, and implementing the final project deliverables.

Tools, products or methodologies that resulted from the project or contributed to the results:

1. Operational Manual for IUCN as the RIT

When IUCN was contracted as the RIT in 2013, we were a little daunted and underprepared for the task ahead. Our IUCN colleagues in Bangkok, Thailand were the RIT for the Indo Burma hotspot, and we were able to hear about their experiences and given advice on how to manage the project. This was especially helpful given that they already knew which IUCN processes needed to be followed.

The other RITs from other hotspots were also incredibly willing to help and offer advice and support, and answer questions we had in navigating the new world of CEPF.

We reviewed the different administrative and financial processes, templates, M and E, proposal review processes, capacity building ideas, in order to see how we might shape the EMI RIT.

As with any long term project, some processes have been modified and adapted over time, but the initial help was imperative. It is recommended that CEPF provide more standardized guidance and policies to ensure that RITs are uniform across the hotspots.

The RIT operational manual was drafted and added to over time to include detailed information on all of IUCN's internal processes required for grant management.

A copy of this internal manual has been shared with CEPF.

2. Manual for IUCN Small Grantees

This manual was put together over the years, with the particular aim of being useful for small grantees. However, many of the topics and processes should be of use to all CEPF's grantees. The manual contains guidance for organizations who are recipients of CEPF funding through the CEPF Small Grant programme, and it is divided into 4 main sections, each of which can be read as stand-alone, or taken together as part of the larger manual. It covers setting up an organization, relevant financial processes and procedures, how to apply for funding, and how to manage and monitor the CEPF small grant. It is available on the IUCN website: <https://www.iucn.org/regions/oceania/our-work/critical-ecosystem-partnership-fund-cepf/emi-resources>, and has been shared with CEPF.

PORTFOLIO INDICATORS

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
1	Hectares in a key biodiversity area (KBA) with new or strengthened protection and management.				
2	At least 100,000 hectares within production landscapes are managed for biodiversity conservation or sustainable use.				
3	At least 5 local land-use or development plans influenced to accommodate biodiversity.				
4	48 globally threatened species have improved conservation status and/or available information on status and distribution.				
5	At least 10 partnerships and networks formed among civil society, government and				

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	communities to leverage complementary capacities and maximize impact in support of the ecosystem profile.				
6	At least 40 civil society organizations, including at least 30 domestic organizations, actively participate in conservation actions guided by the ecosystem profile.				
1.1	Baseline surveys completed for at least 10 priority sites.				
1.2	Awareness of the values of biodiversity and the nature of threats and drivers raised among local communities within at least 10 priority sites.				
1.3	Threat levels to at least 15 priority sites reduced through locally				

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	relevant conservation actions implemented by local communities.				
1.4	Conservation incentives (ecotourism, payments for ecosystem services, conservation agreements, etc.) demonstrated for at least 5 priority sites.				
1.5	Number of communities targeted by site-based projects that show tangible well-being benefits.				
2.1	Number of CEPF priority sites where ownership and tenure rights within customary lands have been mapped				
2.2	Number of communities affected by incompatible development projects provided with legal training and support				
2.3	Number of partnerships				

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	catalyzed between civil society organizations and natural resource companies to promote sustainable development through better environmental and social practices.				
2.4	Number of CEPF priority sites where biodiversity and ecosystem service values are integrated into land-use and/or development plans and policies.				
3.1	Number of CEPF priority species with improved knowledge of their status and distribution.				
3.2	Number of priority species with recovery plans developed, implemented and monitored.				
3.3	Number of priority species with science-based harvest management plans that are introduced				

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	for local food security.				
4.1	Number of civil society networks that enable collective responses to priority and emerging threats				
4.2	Number of local civil society organizations that demonstrate improvements in organizational capacity.				
4.3	Number of civil society organizations that emerge as national conservation leaders in each hotspot country.				
4.4	Number of conservationists that demonstrate strengthened capacity in conservation management, science and leadership.				
5.1	Number of civil society organizations that actively participate in conservation actions				

Portfolio Indicator Number	Portfolio Indicator Description	Expected Numerical Contribution	Expected Contribution Description	Actual Numerical Contribution	Actual Contribution Description
	guided by the ecosystem profile.				
5.2	Number of domestic civil society organizations receiving CEPF grants that demonstrate more effective capacity to design and implement conservation actions.				
5.3	Number of civil society organizations supported by CEPF that secure follow-up funding from conservation trust funds and/or the GEF Small Grants Programme.				
5.4	Number of participatory assessments undertaken with lessons learned and best practices documented.				

GLOBAL INDICATORS

Protected Areas

Protected areas that have been created and/or expanded as a result of the project. Protected areas may include private or community reserves, municipal or provincial parks, or other designations where biodiversity conservation is an official management goal.

Name of Protected Area	WDPA ID*	Latitude	Longitude	Country	Original Total Size (Hectares) **	New Protected Hectares ***	Year of Legal Declaration or Expansion
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*World Database of Protected Areas

**If this is a new protected area, 0 should appear in this column

*** This column excludes the original total size of the protected area.

Key Biodiversity Area Management

Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) under improved management—where tangible results have been achieved to support conservation—as a result of the project.

KBA Name	KBA Code	Size of KBA	Number of Hectares with Improved Management

Production Landscapes

Production landscapes with strengthened management of biodiversity as a result of the project.

A production landscape is defined as a site outside a protected area where commercial agriculture, forestry or natural product exploitation occurs.

Name of Production Landscape	Latitude	Longitude	Hectares Strengthened	Intervention

Benefits to Individuals

- **Structured Training:**

Number of Men Trained	Number of Women Trained	Topics of Training
		Proposal Writing; Financial policies, procedures and management; Organizational administrative procedures; Project management

- **Cash Benefits:**

Number of Men – Cash Benefits	Number of Women – Cash Benefits	Description of Benefits

Benefits to Communities

View the characteristics column below with the following corresponding codes:	View the benefits column below with the following corresponding codes:
1- Small Landowners	a. Increased Access to Clean Water
2- Subsistence Economy	b. Increased Food Security
3- Indigenous/ Ethnic Peoples	c. Increased Access to Energy
4- Pastoralists / Nomadic Peoples	d. Increased Access to Public Services
5- Recent Migrants	e. Increased Resilience to Climate Change
6- Urban Communities	f. Improved Land Tenure
7- Other	g. Improved Use of Traditional Knowledge
	h. Improved Decision-Making
	i. Improved Access to Ecosystem Services

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Type of Benefit									Country	Number of Males Benefitting	Number of Females Benefitting
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i			

Characteristics of "Other" Communities:

Policies, Laws and Regulations

View the topics column below with the following corresponding codes:			
A- Agriculture	E- Energy	I- Planning/Zoning	M- Tourism
B- Climate	F- Fisheries	J- Pollution	N- Transportation
C- Ecosystem Management	G- Forestry	K- Protected Areas	O- Wildlife Trade
D- Education	H- Mining and Quarrying	L- Species Protection	P- Other

No.	Name of Law	Scope	Topics															
			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P

“Other” Topics Addressed by the Policy, Law or Regulation:

No.	Country/ Countries	Date Enacted/ Amended	Expected impact	Action Performed to Achieve the Enactment/ Amendment
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Companies Adopting Biodiversity-friendly Practices

A company is defined as a for-profit business entity. A biodiversity-friendly practice is one that conserves or uses natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Name of Company	Description of Biodiversity-Friendly Practice	Country/Countries where Practice was Adopted
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Networks and Partnerships

Networks/partnerships should have some lasting benefit beyond immediate project implementation. Informal networks/partnerships are acceptable.

Name of Network/Partnership	Year Established	Country/ Countries	Established by Project?	Purpose
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Sustainable Financing

Sustainable financing mechanisms generate funding for the long-term (generally five or more years). These include, but are not limited to, conservation trust funds, debt-for-nature swaps, payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, and other revenue, fee or tax schemes that generate long-term funding for conservation.

Name of Mechanism	Purpose	Date Established	Description	Country/Countries	Project Intervention	Delivery of Funds?
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Globally Threatened Species

Globally threatened species (CR, EN, VU) on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, benefitting from the project.

Genus	Species	Common Name (English)	Status	Intervention	Population Trend at Site
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LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons related to the RIT project design, role and structure:

1. CEPF involving the RIT from the Ecosystem Profiling stage, or at least earlier in the process would be helpful. We hit the ground running when we did not fully understand the programme. Instead of spending the first year learning on the job, it would be beneficial to everyone if the RIT has a better understanding from the outset. We found that often applicants and grantees would ask us why the strategy focused on this or that and we were not always able to answer. The RIT would have greater ownership and respect from partners if we were able to speak with confidence and expertise.

2. Related to this, is the capacity support. As donors (or the link between donor and grantee), we need to understand from the outset what capacity needs exist, and what capacity issues each applicant/grantee has. Many grantees needed hand-holding through all stages of the process from preparation of proposals to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This took more time than anticipated, and being aware of this would allow for a dedicated person or more staff time devoted to grantee support.

We improved on the amount of support, ideas for support, and confidence in delivering support as we progressed. It would have been beneficial to carry out capacity workshops earlier on. The manual for small grantees also would have been useful earlier on. I hope that the manual produced by the Project Manager can be used/adapted by future hotspot investments or other donor programmes.

3. The budget needs to be realistic and increased by CEPF if need be.

- IUCN was lucky to be able to share costs with other programmes for items such as rent, telecommunications and utilities, and actual costs were not always charged to CEPF. As well, the high travel costs of the region should be well budgeted for.
- In terms of staffing, the RIT model was good in theory. However, due to internal IUCN processes, we were unable to employ the NCCs as staff, which we did not know at the time of our contracting. This led to many issues over the years, and a lot of time spent by the Project Manager and Team Leader-Admin working out the best ways to recruit according to IUCN and CEPF procurement. Having NCCs on board as consultants was not always practical or easy in terms of line manager monitoring.
- Having a dedicated finance staff from the beginning would have been useful. As well, a communications person would have allowed for more communications products, which were essentially all led by the Project Manager.

4. As the programme was rolled out, and as a result of a couple of grants that didn't go as planned, it became apparent that it would be beneficial to meet with all new grantees at the start of their grant, to discuss their project, advise them about CEPF reporting requirements, review their technical/administrative/financial set-up and skills, and to provide assistance to make sure their projects get off to a good start.

We therefore started to initiate courtesy calls upon grant signing. For many of the grantees, we did meet with them prior to signing as well, during the application process. However this was generally informal and one-on-one. Our colleagues in the Eastern Afro-Montane hotspot developed "Master classes" for all grantees, which we would recommend running if there was a repeat of the EMI investment. The idea being to bring together staff from shortlisted applicants (1 financial staff, 1 technical), and teach practical exercises in project design, financial management and budgeting, safeguards, gender, ethics, communications, and achieving impact.

Lessons relevant to the greater conservation community:

5. Having a detailed and locally driven strategy like CEPF's makes the grant selection process easier. The CEPF Investment is a targeted way to address specific biodiversity and species actions identified through a logically and structured approach through the Ecosystem profile and strategic directions. Although it took time for people to learn about it and understand it, having the Ecosystem Profile and background information on why CEPF is funding certain issues was helpful to everyone involved in the programme.
6. Putting effort into assisting local CSOs pays off. Focusing on setting up of financial and administrative policies and procedures is absolutely vital to the sustainability and success of a CSO. Once CSOs were successfully set up, and had completed a small grant with us, they were generally more confident and able to attempt the large grant process. This meant that they were able to continue their work in conservation and also assist CEPF in meeting its strategy. Having said that, some small grantees preferred to re-apply for small grants, as a result of the difficulty in applying for and managing CEPF's large grants.
7. Focusing on networking and learning lessons and outcomes from each other is paramount to success in isolated communities. Investing in network meetings and grantee exchanges is a good use of donor money for future conservation success.

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

Successes:

- i, Creating networks and partnerships, hosting grantee exchanges and look and learns, pooling resources (including cost sharing of donor funds), learning from each other and organizations who have carried out similar work already are vital to success. There is increasing support and interest from communities for conservation work, and networks and partnerships are one way to nurture and grow this interest and achieve the buy-in required for conservation success.
- ii. Through the new networks created, there is greater opportunity for information exchange, sharing best practices and testing new ideas. The networks are diverse, from research and exchange of experience to coordination of actions at site level. Supporting collaborative approaches between organizations and communities at the site level, and encouraging the exchange of experience and mentoring between CSOs proved a successful model for strengthening organizational capacities and achieving conservation outcomes.
- iii. Involving communities from the start and carrying out the FPIC process prior to the project starting leads to transparency and trust and therefore gives projects a much greater chance of succeeding.
- iv. Involving government at all stages, and communicating project results to them, including data generated, is imperative.
- v. Strengthening CSOs into robust groups prior to carrying out conservation action makes it less likely that an organization will collapse or find itself in financial or administrative difficulties, and more likely that donors will invest in them in the future. Investing in CSOs first and foremost is what made the EMI portfolio an overall success.

Challenges:

- i. Resource extraction and land disputes - The nature of underlying threats in EMI, particularly through resource extraction, and especially from logging, creates enormous pressure on the land, as well as social unrest and disputes. Expected and unexpected land disputes and contention over land ownership continue to slow down Protected Area processes and negatively impact conservation efforts.
e.g. in Solomon Islands, there are concerns over logging encroachments along boundaries that might impact on already established Protected Areas.
- ii. Funding availability – Continuous funding to support conservation work is important. This is crucial for sustainability of project work going forward. Of the 115 projects funded by CEPF, 47 reported that they received co-financing to increase the budget of the CEPF-funded projects, and 32 have obtained additional or follow up funding as a result of the project that was funded by CEPF. The RIT has assisted grantees throughout their projects to ensure that they are always thinking about financial sustainability. For instance, we paid staff time to write new proposals, and added deliverables into grants to submit proposals during the CEPF project period.
- iii. Organisational capacity – in terms of the number of available staff, and the qualifications/expertise/skill set of those employed. Donors must fund salaries that enable the retention of good staff in order to sustain project activities. Having said this, even the bigger NGOs and CSOs do not always follow this advice and organizational policy. A case in point being the RIT itself, who have not retained project staff from the RIT and utilised their wealth of experience, expertise and networks, for similar initiatives within the IUCN Oceania office.
- iv. Government capacity and will – Although governments are supporting conservation actions, sometimes (e.g. Solomon Islands and PNG) their commitment and ability to concretely provide support is limited. In particular, once a site is protected, it appears to be difficult for departments to assist with sustaining these newly protected areas. As well, the government’s role in providing development consents for logging also hinder conservation work and are a major threat to sustaining biodiversity conservation.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS/STANDARDS

Of the 115 projects funded by CEPF, almost all triggered a safeguard. This is because the hotspot is one inhabited by indigenous people. This means that projects operating in any area will trigger the indigenous peoples safeguard. The projects that did not trigger this were capacity-building office-based grants.

Safeguards triggered:

- environmental assessment: 11
- involuntary resettlement (restricted access to resources): 16
- forests: 1
- indigenous people: 90
- stakeholder engagement: 15
- health and safety: 3

When it was clear that a safeguard would be triggered, the Team Leader-Admin, and later the Project Manager, worked with the applicant to explain the idea of safeguards, share examples, and ensure that all documentation would be in place and of sufficient quality. The

applicant was also guided to understand that safeguards were monitored throughout their project, not just at the contracting stage. During courtesy and site visits and other training given to grantees, RIT members ensured that the grantees were applying their safeguards, and should issues arise, these were dealt with according to the grievance mechanism in place.

All safeguard documents were uploaded to CEPF's online system, and shared with CEPF upon request.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There are overwhelming requests coming from local environmental groups to access funding from CEPF. We urge CEPF to consider a second phase of funding for the East Melanesian Islands hotspot to support the conservation of imminently threatened KBAs.
2. The NCCs suggest that IUCN Oceania, as the RIT, should act as or set up a coordinating body to be a platform for discussion and information sharing into the future.
3. CEPF's investment in EMI region was perhaps the first of its kind to directly concentrate on supporting civil society to carry out programs related to biodiversity conservation. As is the case in most Pacific island countries, the EMI governments, and especially the environment departments, do not have enough budget, human resources and technical capacity to service the national population and reach throughout the country. CEPF therefore provided a crucial and unique avenue to conservation through civil society, thereby taking some pressure and reliance off governments. In addition, this support assisted governments in meeting national biodiversity and conservation priorities as captured under NBSAPs. This approach can strengthen the EMI countries' resilience in the face of oncoming challenges the biggest of which include climate change, human population growth and pressures, and future pandemics. The flexible, hands on approach CEPF undertook with the RIT and grantees was very well suited to the EMI/Pacific Island context.
4. We did try to engage CEPF and non-CEPF donors, including GEF focal points, GEF/UNDP small grant programmes, and local Embassies/delegations, with varying degrees of success. We had the most success with the non-CEPF donors. As these other donors have their own strategies, we found that there was limited ability to try and align objectives and co-fund work. Some found it hard to understand the programme's complexities (donor council, CEPF secretariat, RIT, grantees, ecosystem profile, etc). However, we found donors like Bread for the World, USAid, Rainforest Trust and UNDP Small Grants to be responsive and interested in trying to collaborate – for instance, with joint trainings on proposal writing, and introducing each others' funding opportunities at nationally held workshops. The NCCs especially forged good linkages and a good working relationship with the UNDP Small Grant programme.

For CEPF donors, the experience was a little different. We generally found it difficult to engage with representatives. We are not sure if this is because out-posted staff are not aware of the CEPF programme, or whether they are simply too busy to engage. Even when we would inform them (we were, after all, spending their money), they did not appear very interested.

We therefore recommend that CEPF staff and the donor council in particular, make a point of introducing the RIT staff to regional/national representatives from the outset and encourage them to attend CEPF and grantee events, and take an active interest in the grants supported by them through CEPF in their respective countries.

5. Over the course of the investment, some challenges arose with regards to the relationship between the RIT and CEPF. Generally, we found that reporting on our grants, although somewhat cumbersome at times, was straight forward. However, due to the 9

different grant managers IUCN had over the years, the RIT was faced with having to change processes according to the preferred methodologies of the grant manager at any given time.

As an example, at one point, IUCN was not able to receive its next tranche of funding for the RIT (amounting to almost \$100,000), due to a discrepancy and misunderstanding of how and where to record \$250 of bank fees. Monies should not be held up to grantees over small discrepancies that can be resolved separately. A system of dispute resolution that can resolve issues between CEPF and RITs should be established so that matters are resolved and do not carry over to future implementation processes.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Total Amount of Additional Funding Actually Secured (USD)	
Breakdown of Additional Funding	

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. For more information about this project, you may contact the organization and/or individual listed below.

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