

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Botanic Gardens Conservation International
Project Title:	Verifying the Biological Importance of the Sof Omar KBA
Date of Report:	September 2017
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CEPF Region: Eastern Afromontane Hotspot

Strategic Direction:

Strategic Direction 2 - Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot
Strategic Direction 2.3 - Advance the identification and prioritization of KBAs in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula

Grant Amount: \$17,600

Project Dates: July 2016 – August 2017

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

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) – BGCI has been leading a capacity building programme for Ethiopian botanic gardens, in collaboration with the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute, since 2014. Practical experience in plant identification, survey techniques and seed collection have been identified as technical capacity gaps that need to be addressed. BGCI therefore developed this project idea which aimed to verify the status of the plant species of the Sof Omar KBA, identify appropriate protection measures for the plant species in the KBA and build capacity for survey work in Ethiopia. BGCI managed project implementation, took part in the first week of survey work and was responsible for project reporting.

The University of Oxford Plant Sciences Department – Dr. William Hawthorne developed the Rapid Botanic Survey methodology that was used for survey work. Oxford analyzed data obtained from survey work in Sof Omar and identified preliminary conservation status of all plant species found.

The University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum (OBGA) – Delivered training in Rapid Botanic Survey to the survey team in Sof Omar, took part in the first week of survey work and supported analysis of survey work and production of the plant register.

Wondo Genet College Arboretum (WGCA) – Two staff members were trained to conduct Rapid Botanic Survey work and took part in the first week of survey work.

Gullele Botanic Garden (GBG) – One staff member was trained to conduct Rapid Botanic Survey work, took part in the first week of survey work and led the second week of survey work in March 2017 and further survey work in August 2017, and helped with identification of plant specimens and production of the plant register. GBG are propagating *Euphorbia baleensis* and *Commiphora monoica* which were collected during the survey work in March 2017 and August 2017 respectively, and will distribute propagated plants to other Ethiopian botanic gardens.

Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) – Two staff members (one from EBI's office in Robe and one from EBI's office in Addis Ababa with knowledge of the Sof Omar area) were trained to conduct Rapid Botanic Survey work and took part in the first week of survey work. One staff member jointly led the second week of survey work in March 2017 and further survey work in August 2017.

The National Herbarium, Addis Ababa University (AAU) – Staff from AAU verified specimens collected during survey work.

Local guides at the Sof Omar Caves were involved in survey work to enhance their understanding of the importance of the KBA and its flora. The report and plant register will be shared with local guides, community groups and conservation bodies to improve their knowledge of the plant species and Biological Importance of the KBA.

Conservation Impacts

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

This project has verified the status of the Sof Omar KBA, which is part of the Eastern Afromontane hotspot, contributing to Strategic Direction 2.3 of the CEPF ecosystem profile. The project proposes upgrading the status of the Sof Omar KBA from Biological Priority 3 to Biological Priority 1.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.

Survey work confirmed the presence of two Critically Endangered plant species in the Sof Omar KBA. These species qualify as trigger species and result in there being four trigger species in this KBA. The two surveyed species: *Commiphora monoica* and *Euphorbia baleensis* are Critically Endangered and endemic to the Sof Omar KBA, which justifies upgrading the KBA to Biological Priority 1.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: Recommendations made to protect KBA (18,218km²).

Species Conserved: Improved knowledge generated of the status of two Critically Endangered plant species to inform future conservation work. These two Critically Endangered plant species have been brought into *ex situ* conservation collections at Gullele Botanic Garden and are undergoing propagation trials. Propagated material will be distributed to other Ethiopian botanic gardens. Recommendations made for the conservation of all plants within the KBA.

Corridors Created: N/A

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

The short-term goals were successfully achieved: The KBA status was verified, immediate conservation actions were put in place for the two target species, appropriate conservation actions were identified for plant species within the KBA, project team members were able to independently lead Rapid Botanic Survey work independently as a result of training, and a report and plant register were produced to raise awareness of the diversity and status of the plant species in the Sof Omar KBA and the status of the KBA overall. Long-term impact will be achieved when the recommendations of the report on KBA status and priority conservation actions are implemented. Funding has been secured from the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund to continue survey work and expand *ex situ* conservation activities for priority species.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

N/A

Lessons Learned

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

A repeat survey trip was undertaken in August 2017 to verify identification of *Commiphora monoica*, one of the target species which could not be verified in March as no leaves, flowers or seeds were present due to a lack of rainfall in the area. As the survey results were delayed, analysis of survey results, finalising the plant register and report were also delayed. This is a common occurrence and projects should be aware of this. CEPF provided a project extension on request to enable further survey work to go ahead.

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

The project design was ambitious, but project goals were achieved. Timing of some activities had to be adjusted. The capacity building element was successful and an important part of this project. The Rapid Botanic Survey methodology was a successful tool for achieving this project's aims: from three weeks' of survey work, 640 herbarium vouchers were collected, a plant register was produced, a database was created of plant species found in the Sof Omar KBA and their conservation status, an assessment of bioquality of the KBA was achieved, and useful information that can be used to guide future seed collection and other conservation efforts was obtained. Information was collected to carry out IUCN Red List assessments of the two target species and to justify upgrading the Biological Priority of the KBA.

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

The success of the project and achievement of the short-term goals is in large part a result of the commitment and capacity of trained staff from Gullele Botanic Garden and the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute's office in Robe.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

The project initially planned to produce an online register of plants found in the Sof Omar KBA, but there is very limited internet access or use in the Sof Omar region. The project team therefore made a decision to produce a printed plant register instead.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Fondation Franklinia	A	\$12,000	Matched funding contributed from other BGCI sources for project implementation
University of Oxford	A	\$15,000	In-kind staff time contributed for survey work and analysis of results
Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund	B	\$20,000	Partial funding secured

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

- A** Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF 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 project.)
- C** Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

Sustainability/Replicability

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

This project could be repeated to verify the status of other KBAs. The Rapid Botanic Survey methodology was a successful tool for this purpose.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

N/A

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

Permits were obtained and a Health & Safety plan developed before survey work was carried out.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

This project could be repeated to verify the status of other KBAs. The Rapid Botanic Survey methodology was a successful tool for this purpose and produced a lot of additional information about the plant species and status of the KBA. BGCI and the University of Oxford would be pleased to be part of future project teams to verify the status of other KBAs. The full project report will be available from <http://www.bgci.org/where-we-work/ethiopia/>

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

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

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved for project from inception of CEPF support to date	Describe the principal results achieved during project period (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	No		Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	No		Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes	2 target species	Improved information on population and threats facing the two target species (<i>Commiphora monoica</i> and <i>Euphorbia baleensis</i>) was gathered. Both species qualify as Critically Endangered according to IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. <i>Ex situ</i> collections of the two species were established as a result of this project. Improved information was obtained on other plant species present in the Sof Omar KBA and their conservation status. This information has enabled a reassessment of the KBA status and recommendations were made for conservation of priority plant species within the KBA.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	No		
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	No		

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

