

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	University of Gondar
Project Title:	Strengthen emerging conservation efforts in Mount Guna through Community Based Ecotourism and Agroforestry: Capacity building and responsible eco-tourism marketing project.
Date of Report:	June, 23, 2016
Report Author and Contact Information	Yibeltal Walle, Mobile: +251915862011, +251911814407 Email: Yibeltal_walle@yahoo.com , sgsintouch@gmail.com, dagfsm@gmail.com

CEPF Region: Eastern Afromontane

Strategic Direction: “Mainstream biodiversity into wider development policies, plans and projects to deliver the co-benefits of biodiversity conservation, improved local livelihoods and economic development in priority corridors”.

Grant Amount: \$ 18662.6

Project Dates: 1, January 2015 – 30, June 2016

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

1. **South Gondar Zone culture and tourism department:** fully involved in facilitation of the project from inception to its successful completion. Provide information, process permit, monitor/review the project progress to follow existing legal and institutional structures, organize workshops, demarcation of buffer and core zones, select trainees for managing and utilize Guna mountains for the project. Moreover, the office takes a responsibility and signed a conservation cooperation agreement to continue and sustain the project along with other stake holders.
2. **Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA):** share information, provide vehicle for occasional field visit, jointly provide training on agroforestry practices, and participate on consultative meetings, assist the potential tourism resource survey & eco-tourism trekking sites identification process.
3. **South Gondar Zone environmental protection & land administration department:** participate in consultative meetings, assist the identification of eco-tourism camping sites (less fragile environment), share good environmental practices for 12 Community Based Natural Resources Management Organizations (CBNRMO) came from the 3 woredas (project target), and suggest ideas to strengthen the agroforestry practice along with the eco-tourism.
4. **Debretabor University:** share information, collaborate on conservation practices to reduce duplication of efforts, help to review the project progress, take a responsibility to continue and sustain the project along with other stake holders.
5. **Schools:** participate in the ecotourism association launched by the project.

Conservation Impacts

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

In general the project has managed to achieve what it set out to do. Incorporating stake holders' view and the local knowledge, natural resource management, agroforestry and ecotourism practices and benefits have been highly communicated; most importantly ecotourism has become recognized by majority of the farming community as important to supplement and diversify their means of living. The training and experience sharing organized by the project have bearing to the biodiversity sustainability and develop a socio economics appraisal of the communities. Hence, CEPF achieves the delivery of co-benefits of biodiversity conservation in mount Guna, improved local community livelihoods and develop the economy (reduce poverty) of the mountains community through ecotourism. Thereby, CEPF achieved the environmental conservation and livelihood improvement goals in mount Guna, one of the world's biologically rich and most threatened places.

The itinerary/tourist route designed by the project helps much to protect the mountain's ecosystem: such as Wattled Ibis, Angur Buzzard, Ethiopian Wolf, Blak Kits, Blue Winged Goose, White Billed Starling, Gelada Baboon, Giant Lobellia, Erborica...

Also, the CEPF ecosystem profile has been introduced and promoted to our university community & the rest of the world through the website created for the Guna Mountains by the project.

Above all it has been a privilege to have observed some of the beneficiaries/mt.Guna community (trained by the project) being witness and advocators of eco-tourism establishment on the regional meeting held at guna and were broadcasted on television to the public.

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

Long-term impact(s):

Expected result	Overall result/impact of the project
Livelihood of the community will be improved, and there will be sustained conservation status of natural resources in and around mount Guna	Achieved: for the first time in the area the local community has started participating in ecotourism, such as being a member of the ecotourism association. The agroforestry practices in this short period of time look promising to upscale both the livelihood and nature conservation efforts.

Short-term impact(s):

Expected result	Overall result/impact of the project
-----------------	--------------------------------------

1.By the end of the project, awareness will be created on technical capacity in resource management planning will for 12 CBNRMOs	Achieved: Awareness on natural resource management has been created and the 12 CBNRMOs and the mountain community are now actively engaged in natural resource conservation practices.
2.Concerned government offices Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Culture, Tourism & Parks and Development (ANRSBCTPD, zonal tourism office...) & travel agencies realize economic & environmental benefits of Ecotourism.	Achieved: South Gondar zone culture and tourism department and ANRSBCTPD relay on the benefits of ecotourism (ECT) and put efforts on further extension on the implementation of the project/ECT as alternative livelihood option for the mountain community
3.Community Based Ecotourism(CBET) concepts will be introduced for the community to get involved in future	Achieved: CBET association established and the members are pushing the community to start providing environmentally friendly tourism services & facilities for potential visitors/eco-tourists
4.Enabling environment created for adoption and development of agroforestry land use system	Achieved: Increased tree integration in farming system has been realized in the 3 woredas and, hence, the project met its objective.

Expected outputs/results:

Expected result	Overall result/impact of the project
1.CBNRMO obtained knowledge and skills in resource management planning, and aware of biodiversity (BD) and ecotourism/ECT	Achieved: The local community fully supported the introduction of ecotourism in the area. Both the training workshop and experience sharing program conducted were successful. This has been assured by the feed-back obtained from the community participants before and after training/experience sharing program.
2.ECT opportunities explored and better promoted for the wider government and private community	Achieved: Itinerary of the sites, tourist map, Promotional brochures and official website promoting the ecotourism resources and services to be rendered at mount Guna were designed and currently in use. Local travel agents have been communicated to put this information on their site.
3. Local community aware of ECT benefits, tourism business & established CBET associations.	Achieved: the local community took practical trainings and showed an interest to participate in tourism businesses. CBET association has been officially established to enhance conservation of natural resources and better functioning of the eco-tourism.
4. Local community better understand benefits of and component management in Agroforestry land use system.	Achieved: Farmers identified suitable tree integration for their farm lands and aggressively planted Apple, Mango and fodder. Hence, wise uses of resources have been

	implemented and the environment is getting conserved.
--	---

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: About 760 sq.km

Species Conserved: Though it is difficult to tell what species of fauna and flora were conserved. The project team had information on the good progress of the Guna community awareness and daily contribution on the conservation of the mountain resources. Therefore, it's assumed that the project contributed for the indirect conservation of fauna and flora, though, it's difficult to list names of animals and plant species conserved with this 18 months capacity building project.

Corridors Created: based on the efforts made by the project and stakeholders, Buffer, Transition and Core areas of the mountain has been created and the legal document is under development. This document will be finalized and produced by the regional government soon.

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

Success:	Challenges:
<p>In the implementation of the project there have been strong cooperation from stake holders and the local community. It has a greater impact to enhance the existing ecotourism and agroforestry practices in which the local community will continue having an alternative livelihood and develop sense of responsibility to conserve the natural resources in the long term.</p> <p>The project established a base to promote the conservation and ecotourism practices of the mountain (Brochures, TV & Official website). Moreover, in support of the project idea the regional government is developing boundary demarcation manual to extend the conservation of the remaining biodiversity.</p>	<p>Having broad project objectives, time was limited to see the effects of the agroforestry practices (trees planted) and to analyze the effect of marketing of the ecotourism sites.</p> <p>The community argued much and demand a clear benefit sharing strategy, howsoever, such strategy requires the area to have identified all the possible benefits for a year or so first.</p> <p>The biggest challenge of the project is a need for serious coordination of the <u>future</u> project activities until all stakeholders were convinced and took over their responsibility.</p> <p>May be, soon after this project is phased out, the ecotourism project partners are required a full time follow-up and provide trainings until the local community get used to the provision of tourism services and ensure the ecotourism services don't harm the environment in the long-term.</p> <p>Hence, it might be financially tough for the association and the community participated in eco-tourism and agroforestry to monitor and improve their activities until additional stake holders give hand like the CEPF did in the last 18 months or until the association raise/collect adequate finance from the eco-tourism(more sustainable).</p> <p>There were low rate of interest and response by the national travel agencies to accept our request of putting Mt.Guna on their tour packages and promotional campaign.</p>

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Positive: The regional government has started providing of a management structure and demarcation of buffer and core zones that will ensure a strong commitment to promote environmental conservation efforts initiated by the project.

Negative: though training and experience sharing organized helped much to obtain consent from the local community, their serious demand for an equal benefit sharing document/mechanism (which was not an objective of this project) put much pressure on the project implementation process. Cultural eco-tourism products require further development & organization.

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.

It has been found important to quickly have shared our project idea for key stakeholders to share resources to have achieved similar objectives and avoid duplication of conservation efforts.

Besides, our experience sharing program has been found a more powerful tool to get the local community consent to launch ecotourism in Mount Guna than trainings and consultative workshops organized by the project.

Moreover, frequent sharing of the project progress to the coordination office/EWNHS was vital to benefit from their environment conservation and project management experiences.

It was fortunate for the project team being from a university to propose the project site to be a research site and have organized educational tours for our undergraduate and postgraduate students to give a lesson on environmental conservation, ecotourism & agroforestry practices. It's believed that these future researchers and prospective graduates had learnt much and will contribute to meet objectives of the project site and/or to any other hotspots in future. Thereby, not only this project goal, but also the world's demand for a better tomorrow will be achieved.

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

The project was designed with an identified need of the community and in collaboration with tourism, environmental conservation & other relevant stake holders. As a result, the awareness creation and ecotourism establishment was implemented at high level. Culture and Tourism Department of the zone and Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA) act as a team and promised to collaborate in taking over the project moves in future.

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

Our engagement with the local community mainly with farmers established strong ties to work with our project beneficiaries, to develop sense of ownership and sustain the project idea in the area. Unlike other times, our involvement with the ecotourism project idea funded by CEPF got acceptance and community members have actively participated and supported the project team.

Thus, the future success of this eco-tourism project is more promising than other projects run by University of Gondar due to the local support.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Stake holders engagement in the project activities were important to share ideas and aware the local community and got trust to have implemented the project.

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

****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.

The local community is equipped with necessary awareness and skills to actively engage in ecotourism and agroforestry to supplement the local community livelihood soon in future with the development of ecotourism in the area. Possible engagement areas for the local community to benefit from ecotourism; tourist guiding, mule hiring, preparing meals, agroforestry and other environmental initiative activities were identified and started up.

Besides, the development of conservation manual by the local government, and the Agroforestry re-initiative by ORDA is promising to sustain the project.

Together with the culture and tourism department of the area and Amhara region mass media members of the ecotourism association have started facilitating awareness campaigns on ecotourism and conservation related issues.

Most importantly, similar projects recently launched in the project site have been communicated and showed an interest to collaborate on the same long-term objectives in sustaining the project. Moreover, official website of the area has been established. It shows all the project activities implemented, ecotourism resources, services and agroforestry practices so that visitors, project designers, other hotspot areas and environmental initiative donors would easily reach, visit the area and cooperate with the local community.

It had also been realized that the local community members started participating in ecotourism & agroforestry to have improved their livelihood in future. In effect, the conservation of the mountain is on its way to be improved so that the farming community will keep benefiting from the conservation efforts.

Above all, selected experts from culture & tourism department, environmental protection & land administration department, and the ecotourism association were provided trainers of training (ToT) by the project to refresh and provide trainings and make the most of on the mountain community's awareness and skills to conserve the area and benefit from it in future.

Identification of the cultural ecotourism products was time taking and requires additional time to develop and ready it for ecotourism marketing

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

The commitment of the regional government in producing the official land demarcation of the area in to core, transition and buffer zones was found to be vital to sustain the existing success on conservation and the eco-tourism goals of the project in future.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

With full participation of local communities, zonation of MG's area, into three zones, Core, Buffer and Transition zones, has been carried out since May 2013. Hence, the implementation of the project so far was based on local bylaw. The institutional capacity building activities implemented on the existing resource use regulations by the project team and the ongoing conservation manual preparation of the project site in collaboration with the regional government & community representatives is on voluntary bases and participatory. Thus, benefits from ecotourism and Agroforestry interventions will be a means of incentives for the community whose access to exploitation might be denied in core areas of the mountain.

In general, sustainability of the project and implementation of the conservation manual initiated by the local government should be accompanied with ecotourism benefit sharing document of the area to enhance sense of ownership of the community.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

To sustain the conservation efforts, the project team strongly recommends the urgent need of continuation of the ecotourism products marketing/promotion and further provision of practical trainings for the local community to continue participating in ecotourism service provision & eco friendly businesses. The future training areas should focus on;

- Possible credit sources
- Small business/entrepreneurship
- Village tourism product development (coffee ceremony, cultural dances, horse riding..)
- Website management (to continually manage the functioning of Guna mountain website created by the project)
- Reinvestment options (incase, the future community earnings has to be spent on environmentally friendly business ventures such as schools, clinics, souvenirs shops etc.

More specifically,

- ❖ Continuation of the capacity building program to the community & associations
- ❖ Establish local guide, cook & mule porter associations in consultation with the ecotourism association established by this project.
- ❖ Develop cultural satellite centre with in the tourist route designed by this project; this will help to develop, display and sell cultural tourism products such as

handicrafts, local food & drinks, perform traditional music/sports. This is assumed to benefit women & youth living in the mountain.

- ❖ Mt.Guna requires a strong marketing strategy. Both the existing and future tourism products (natural & cultural) of the mountain has to be communicated and promoted among local travel agents, foreign tour operators & potential clients in a continued manner. Updating of the existing website (publish monthly news, for instance), sending of electronic email for national and foreign tour operators association, participating and representing of Mt.Guna eco-tourism resources on national and international travel fares, and organizing of fam-trips would benefit much to bring visitors...so that these clients who are going to experience the mountain and enjoy the scenery can assist in promoting the site by word-of-mouth.
- ❖ Follow-up of the existing agroforestry practices and further planting of trees usable for fodder, fuel wood and eco-tourism consumption (fruits, vegetables...) is necessary to sustain the environmental conservation and ecotourism benefits to the mountain community.
- ❖ Production of official documents is vital. The type of documents which shall be produced are;
 - Natural resource and tourism development & marketing Bylaw
 - Benefit sharing by law
 - Stakeholders role and contributions guideline
 - Association establishments manual
 - Conservation guideline

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

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

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Yibeltal Walle, Seleshi Girma, Dagim Fikir
Organization name: University of Gondar
Mailing address: University of Gondar, P.O.Box 196
Tel: +251915862011, +251911814407
Fax:

E-mail: Yibeltal_walle@yahoo.com , sgsintouch@gmail.com, dagfsm@gmail.com

*****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		The Guna mountains had no management plan yet. However, the project implemented is believed to have contributed on the sustainable conservation of the area following the awareness created by the project.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	Yes	760 sq.km	The Guna mountains community has decided to protect the 760 sq.km. However, the legal declaration is yet in process as it's implemented in collaboration with the regional government.
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	760 sq.km	While developing trekking routes, the project implementation gave maximum care on the conservation of fragile environments. Such as core areas where red fox, monkeys, klipspringer and endemic flora like wattled ibis, Angur Buzzard, Ethiopian Wolf, Black Kits, Blue winged Goose, White Billed starling, Gelada Baboon, Giant Lobellia, Erborica.....were considered to be free from human touch. Moreover, farmers have engaged in agroforestry, whereby, their need for fodder, fuel food...had been met.
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes	About 100sq.km	Some 50 sq.km land outside the protected area was still in the hands of the community this project consulted. Thus, it is assumed that the project training program might have an indirect contribution on the conservation of the areas outside the protected area.
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	Yes	With the project's collaboration efforts with ORDA 40 households participate (most of them are in East Estie) in Agroforestry . Eco-tourism Association (represents the entire community and is presumed to benefit a minimum of 500 households).	Community members practiced agroforestry which created additional income. Besides, the eco-tourism practice initiated is assumed to involve more than 500 households who will obtain income from hiring of horses, guide services, provision of meals and camping.

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

