

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Instructions to grantees: please complete all fields, and respond to all questions, below.

Organization Legal Name	Montenegrin Ecologists Society (MES)
Project Title	Actions for ecological valorisation of Buljarica cove
CEPF GEM No.	
Date of Report	December 28 th , 2016

CEPF Hotspot: 778 Buljarica

Strategic Direction: 3 (investment priority number 3.3.)

Grant Amount: US \$19,980

Project Dates: April 1st, 2016 – December 31st, 2016

1. Implementation Partners for this Project (*list each partner and explain how they were involved in the project*)

Partnering organizations NGO “Society for ecological development” from Buljarica and NGO “Environmental programme” from Podgorica were involved from the very beginning of the within project idea and proposal design activities.

Further on, NGO “Society for ecological development” has been involved in preparation of the following activities: initial ecological assessment and assessment of gaps, development of methodology, situation analyses organization of excursions for pupils and students, meetings with local stakeholders and local level logistic. Intensive cooperation with this partner was ensured as part of the educational and awareness raising activities in Buljarica.

NGO “Environmental programme” has been involved in providing constant support to project management, coordination and technical aspects of networking, ecosystem - based assessments and study development activities. This partner was leading on interdisciplinary approaches in analyses, strategic planning and in discussions on way forward.

Conservation Impacts

2. Describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF investment strategy set out in the ecosystem profile

The main achievements that contribute to accomplishment of the investment strategy SD 3: 3.3. “Raise awareness of the importance of priority key biodiversity areas, including those that have irreplaceable plant and marine biodiversity” are:

Comprehensive scientific based findings that set arguments for protection of Buljarica cove according to its values relevant for protection as Natura 2000 site (due to biodiversity assets compliant with Birds and Habitat EU Directives) are well elaborated and presented within Study “Ecosystem-based assessment of biodiversity values and threats in Buljarica”.

The finalization of this Study which is under way, will further allow presentation and promotion of the results in order to advocate for and integrate them in relevant policies.

Excursions for pupils of local elementary school and students from Faculty of Science, meetings and workshops conducted with experts, decision makers and with local SHs contributed to raising of knowledge and awareness on the values and opportunities that Buljarica cove uphold.

Further activities will be focused on promotion of the findings, advocacy and further raising knowledge and awareness in order to argue better for protection and management of Buljarica cove in relation to national and international conservation obligations and targets.

3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project

The overall achievements are reflected in the following results: produced Comprehensive study of biodiversity values and threats in Buljarica, compatible with international standards, allowing spatial analyses (GIS), and assessment against national and international criteria for protection.

The future efforts will be directed toward incorporating findings from the Study in the local and national strategic and planning documents.

More work need to be done in order to achieve commitment of local and national stakeholders to protect Buljarica and engage them in alternative sustainable development opportunities.

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

List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

Buljarica cove is well managed protected area according to the national and European legislation

4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion

Since amendments of the Law on Protection of Nature from 2014, Coastal zone management body “Javno Preduzece Morsko dobro” is tasked with the management of the protected areas (in majority Monuments of Nature) in the coastal zone, and therefore Buljarica beach, too. However, for this area (as for many others proclaimed in 1968), borders are not defined, zoning is not established, there is no assessment or feasibility study that defines biodiversity values and conservation objectives, nor are Management plans developed. Due to lack of management activities and *de facto* protection, revalidation of the site remains necessary for the evaluation of the state of biodiversity. Its protection status is currently at risk of not being confirmed, due to most prominent issues of long term concession plan for state land and building of tourism complexes and facilities at the spot.

The project activities resulted in a first comprehensive ecosystem-based research of biodiversity of Buljarica, with the focus on the protection of the high priority habitats and species important on both, local and European level, aiming at strengthening scientific basis for national and international protection and management of this site.

The further activities, relying on the production of the comprehensive study and its findings, will be focused at advocacy education and awareness raising and will aim strengthening the progress toward long – term impact and integration of the scientific findings in the national and local policies and work on support by local stakeholders.

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

List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

The impacts of the project were set as follows:

- To ensure scientific base for the protection and sustainable development of the Buljarica cove.
- To strengthen institutional protection and management of Buljarica cave.
- To raise knowledge and public awareness of high ecological values of Buljarica cove among the local communities and citizens of Montenegro.

5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion

The scientific base for protection and sustainable development is ensured through production of the Ecosystem-based comprehensive study on values and threats at Buljarica cove.

The institutional protection and management is yet to be strengthened by presentation of the study findings to decision makers and work on its integration in policies, action and management plans.

The knowledge and awareness raising is achieved to some extent through educational excursions for pupils and students, meetings with stakeholders and workshop on joint visioning with locals. Publication and promotion of the study finding is planned to be done in next months which will contribute to this impact too. However, this is a long term process that requires continuous work, complemented by showcasing on good practices and on the site realization of some potentials for sustainable growth in line with conservation objectives.

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

The success is reflected in producing comprehensive study on values and threats following most contemporary methodology and approaches of international practices and ecosystem-based assessment applying MARISCO¹ model², first study of this kind in Montenegro.

¹ MARISCO is an acronym which stands for adaptive Management of vulnerability and RiSk at COnservation sites.

² For more information, please visit: www.marisco.training; Ibisch, P. L. & P. R. Hobson (eds.) 2014. MARISCO. Adaptive Management of vulnerability and RiSk at COnservation sites. A guidebook for risk-robust, adaptive and ecosystem-based conservation of biodiversity. Centre for Economics and Ecosystem Management, Eberswalde (ISBN 978-3-00-043244-6).

The challenges were many:

- Introducing new methodology and approaches in biodiversity assessment which are not working just with static data (species diversity and richness), but also more dynamic and interdisciplinary complex analyses was a demanding task for experts and researchers.
- Reluctance of national and local decision makers toward nature protection is vast. Environment is seen as burden, rather than asset and capital for long term sustainable growth.
- Low interest of locals for protection, versus short term gain achieved by selling land.
- High interest of the national institutions to issue Buljarica state land for long term concession and development of luxury tourism complex with marina, despite its natural values recognized also in different national strategic documents.
- Lack of sustainable development successful story in Montenegro impede close and easy example to relate, which could showcase the benefits of ecologically, economically and socially sound long term opportunities for usage of natural resources.

7. Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

There are no unexpected impacts so far.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)

List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

Component 1: Comprehensive Study of biodiversity values and threats in Buljarica

Component 2: Incorporation of the Study in the local and national strategic and planning documents

Component 3.: Raising awareness of Buljarica values and threats among local communities and wider public

8. Describe the results from Component 1 and each product/deliverable

Comprehensive study of biodiversity values and threats produced (final draft ready, final version is in progress).

Deliverables:

- The study is in majority prepared by experts from the NGO MES, and few external consultant, volunteers and hired international backstopping consultant engaged for methodological and quality assessment guidance.
- The study is consisted of following chapters: Introduction; Methodology and Planning process; Ecosystem diagnostic analyses and ecosystem approach; Systemic situation analyses; Ecosystem services and human wellbeing objects. These contain: species/ecosystem related results, connected with stress, threats and ecosystem services (for habitats, marine ecosystems, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish, invertebrate), contributing factors analyses, GIS spatial presentation maps of these, socio-economic analyses, cultural heritage assessment, and trends of change identification, obtained mainly by in the field research and complex analyses. The development of the final version is under way, and will additionally contain chapters on:

Conservation design and strategies and Conclusions. It is planned to be reviewed, proofread for English, translated and designed, ready for printing in January, 2017.

- The findings of the study are to be published on the dedicated Buljarica cove web site and NGO MES Facebook page, and after finalization, it will be printed, it will be uploaded and distributed to medias, distributed to local and national authorities, presented on scientific meetings, round tables, relevant spatial planning processes and partnering NGOs.

9. Repeat point 8 above for each Component in your approved proposal

Component 3.: Raising awareness of Buljarica values and threats among local communities and wider public.

Deliverables:

- Mapping of local stakeholders and their influences and interest is conducted through socio-economic assessment which was used for the analyses within produced Study.
- The workshop on joint visioning was organized for presentation of the biodiversity values and alternative sustainable livelihoods and discussion on the scenarios for Buljarica cove protection and development with 30 local stakeholders.
- Involvement and educative excursions for the pupils from Budva municipality were organized. Also educative excursion was organized for 85 students of the Faculty of science from Podgorica.

10. If you did not complete any component or deliverable, how did this affect the overall impact of the project?

The deliverable from Component 3: “The short non-technical version” will not be made available in printed form as planned. However, the Study in its full form will be produced and printed, and made available and presented to local community and stakeholders. Press/PR events and open TV discussions and social networks communication are to be organised. This will affect the impact associated with the raising awareness and knowledge connected to component 3.

Due to delays in producing final version of the Study Component 2. “Findings from the Study incorporated in the future local and national strategic and planning documents” was not completed. It is planned to deliver this component outputs in the later stage, having NGO MES committed to this project long term impact. In that respect already planned by project, following will be performed:

- The advocacy for science and policy interface (in this case calling for accountability to target the strategic directions set by and committed through National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan of Montenegro, that relays on CBD goals for expansion of protected areas territory to 17% terrestrial and freshwater and 10% marine; Sustainable development strategy to 2030; Conventions that lay the ground for Natura 2000 ecological network, Barcelona and Ramsar convention, as well as other national and international obligations.
- The decision makers of national and local levels were already informed about the project. It is planned for February 2017 to organize round table, possibly open to medias for project presentation of the findings.

- Next steps and continuation of the activities are somewhat planned, and will be continuously updated in order to improve likelihood of achieving long term impact.

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

Following products and tools have been the results of the project implementation:

- The final methodology for Ecosystem assessment based approach (submitted).
- The standard data sheets and forms for collecting the biodiversity and with it related information (ecosystem services, well-being, stress, threats, contributing factors) for ecosystem-assessment (submitted).
- GIS database (submitted).
- Socio-economic analyses questionnaire and methodological approach (submitted).
- The draft final version of the Ecosystem-based study on values and threats of Buljarica cove (submitted).

Benefits to Communities

12. Please describe the communities that have benefited from CEPF support

Please report on the size and characteristics of communities and the benefits that they have received, as a result of CEPF investment. Please provide information for all communities that have benefited **from project start to project completion**.

Community Name	Community Characteristics							Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
	Subsistence economy	Small landowners	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists / nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Other*	Size of Community				Increased access to clean water	Increased food security	Increased access to energy	Increased access to public services (e.g. health care, education)	Increased resilience to climate change	Improved land tenure	Improved recognition of traditional knowledge	Improved representation and decision-making in governance forums/structures	Improved access to ecosystem services
								50-250 people	251-500 people	501-1,000 people	Over 1,001 people									
Land owners in Buljarica	x	x			x	x	x	x										x	x	

*If you marked "Other" to describe the community characteristic, please explain:

Pupils of local elementary school (from Buljarica and nearby urban settlement Petrovac)

Lessons Learned

13. Describe any lessons learned related to organizational development and capacity building.

Introducing most contemporary practices and new methodological approaches such as ecosystem-based (in this case MARISCO) approach, and related interdisciplinary research and analyses is a challenging tasks. We were faced with reluctance of the experts, who are used to deliver static data sets on species diversity and distribution. Here they had to work together and come jointly to findings and conclusions during open discussion. Dedication and learning by doing was required by each team member involved. Additional time to introduce new methodology, to test it and to verify the data, to learn and adjust was required and this delayed the delivery of the results. Ecosystem-based approach calls for broad understanding of ecological processes and with it associated services, human well beings, stresses that ecosystems are exposed to, threats that cause it, contributing factors that might be embedded in institutional, economic, social, natural and many other forms and aspects of the problem and therefore call for improvement of capacities in the short run at many levels. Therefore, working on these significantly increase required time for delivering the analyses and assessment and requires strong dedication and willingness for learning and improving.

There is a need for improvement of project management and advocacy capacities of the lead NGO, as well as need for creating coherent network of NGOs that could provide necessary support in order to raise capacities and efforts toward joint goals. This especially when it comes to advocacy, where joint acting is needed in order to achieve impact and raise attention of many other important subject, all needed to create force for positive change.

14. Describe any lessons learned related to project Design Process (*aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)

The project was designed very ambitiously, considering timeframe and resources, risks identified at the start and the complex intervention planned and needed for achieving long term impact. Long term technical and financial support is needed in order to achieve positive change.

15. Describe any lesson learned related to project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)

Engagement of the international backstopping technical consultant, support and monitoring of CEPF staff, partnership with other NGOs very technical at implementing projects and in contemporary practices, as well as NGOs which are proficient in advocacy or have local knowledge and network, are the elements of success for efficient and effective execution of activities.

Shortage of core resources, permanently employed staff of the leading NGO MES are constrains for intensive full time dedication to this ambitiously planned project, which is to rely on the enthusiasm, internal capacities and commitment of the NGO MES members.

16. Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

Conservation community is in most cases declaratively arguing for protection, acting in opportunistic manner, complying with ad hock development plans, intervention and politics. Scientific community is weak, having low influence at decision making. NGOs are also weak and donor dependent. Enforcement

of laws and regulations are weak and administrative capacities remain substantial challenge. Valorisation³ of state property is of a prime concern and a priority that steer development directions on national level and generate proactive efforts.

Having said this, social and economic factors that are uprooting the problems for protection of Buljarica cove has to be accounted for with more care and strategic consideration. The undisputable ecological value of Buljarica cove is jet unleashed potential and opportunity for sustainable development that might be seen as hard and enduring objective for local stakeholders, and for decision makers. The likeliness and presence of short term gain seems more appealing for both groups of stakeholders.

In the given circumstances it is very important to develop scenarios for economic opportunities affiliated with conservation of the site. This requires substantial resources in terms of time, capacities and funding to work on ensuring multidisciplinary approach, create synergies and coherence around joint and long term vision, that goes beyond short – term gain. Raising knowledge and awareness, and moreover changing attitudes and behavior, creating joint ideas and vision allied with commitment is long term process.

Interdisciplinary approaches are therefore necessary for achieving success in conserving and managing natural resources.

Sustainability / Replication

17. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated

This challenging task of ensuring protection of Buljarica cove is connected to many risks: construction of tourism facilities by both state concession project and local real-estate market, poverty issues and lack of alternatives, low interest in nature protection and sustainable long term development alternatives.

Sustainability of the achievements and overcoming of challenges in this respect will remain continuous and long term mission of NGO MES. Replication of methodological approach used for the assessment is jet to be planned.

18. Summarize any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability

Engagement of watchdog organization NGO MANS supported by CEPF, should increase possibility to halt the risk of long term concession and issuing of Buljarica’s state land for construction and development, for which tender procedure have started. The mentioned NGO, proficient in legal matters and corruption will follow this process closely and argue for institutional and legal compliance, which is currently not in place.

Safeguards

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³ The term frequently used is ‘valorization’ refers to any process of generating economic benefits by using nature and natural assets (very often this refers to concession, selling of land, extraction of materials and use of resources).

19. If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social and environmental safeguards that your project may have triggered

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Additional Funding

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

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

** Categorize the type of funding as:*

- A Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B Grantee and Partner Leveraging (other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project)*
- C Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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

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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.

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