

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Miriam-Public Education and Awareness Campaign for the Environment

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Framework for Eco-Historical Tourism in the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor

Implementation Partners for This Project:

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): December 1, 2004 – January 31, 2006

Date of Report (month/year): April, 2006

II. OPENING REMARKS

Miriam-P.E.A.C.E. successfully completed, in cooperation with selected stakeholders, the development of a framework plan for the Sierra Madre Trail as a unifying strategy in ecohistorical tourism at the key conservation sites of the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor. At the end of the project period, the plan was launched to the general public. At this point, initial stages of implementation are done by various stakeholders and additional funds are sought to proceed with the implementation of the plan.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

The initial objectives of the project are the following:

- a. To develop a 10-Year Ecohistorical Framework Plan for the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor, developed by key stakeholders, that may provide a sustaining mechanisms for the financing of the protected areas, alternative livelihood of members of people's organizations, and educational tool for constituency building for conservation; and
- b. To involve chosen stakeholders in various workshops and consultations to formulate the plan.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

The project objectives of our project did not change during implementation.

3. How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

The project successfully generated the Sierra Madre Trail: a 10-Year Comprehensive Plan for Ecohistorical Tourism in the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor that was crafted by various stakeholders, supported through A Joint Memorandum of Agreement, and launched in an event that was covered by the national media.

To achieve this end, various activities were conducted:

a. Initial Meetings to establish the Technical Working Group Members.

The TWG are composed of Miriam College faculty and graduates whose different levels of expertise are needed in the formulation of the 10-Year Ecohistorical Framework Plan for Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor. The Sierra Madre Trail, patterned after the Appalachian Trail of the U.S, became the product name of the unifying package to connect the conservation sites in the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor into a single destination. The Sierra Madre Trail eventually evolved into a three-pronged trail consisting of an upland foot trail, lowland road trail and coastal trail.

Several overarching themes were identified. An Expanded Technical Working Group was formed, consisting of about 20 government offices, NGOs and POs to represent geographic areas and special interests. To gather baseline data, groups were tasked to research on various overarching themes.

b. Initial Planning Workshop

An initial list was given by Conservation International Philippines to the various local NGO partners working strategically in the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor. They were invited to attend an Initial Planning Workshop was held last February 21, 2005. Participants included other local major partners from the Department of Environment, Department of Tourism, NGOs/POs, and civil society groups and private individuals. Activities during the planning workshop included short messages from Mr. Michael Atrigenio of CEPF and Dr. Artemio Antolin of CI-Philippines, presentations on various topics such as Charting the Sierra Madre Trail: Ecohistorical Tourism Framework Plan for SMBC, Ecohistorical Tourism Potential of Sierra Madre Trail, and Plan Outline. During the workshop proper, participants were divided into sectoral groups for Vision-Mission formulation, SWOT analysis, and identification of short, medium and long-term plans.

c. Research

The CEPF initially identified 14 conservation priority sites as the focal points of this project. Various local NGO partners were identified to do the research on specific

conservation priority sites depending on their mandate area. Sub-grants were given to them in order to facilitate the special research. Topics for the special research include but not limited to the ecological profiles, issues and concerns, ecotourism and cultural and heritage situations. Sub-grants were also given to the Expanded Technical Working Group Members to conduct special research on overarching themes.

d. Submission of Reports

Local partners submitted their research output and related literature that contain the needed basic information for the framework plan.

e. Site Consultations/Travel

After the NGO partners have submitted their respective research, site consultations among various stakeholders/partners were conducted from September to October. Most on the site consultations consist of 2-day ocular inspection and 1-day planning workshop for data validation and charting of existing and potential destinations.

f. TWG Initial Writeshop

From the various site consultations made, the TWG members spent time to compile and complete the draft comprehensive plan, which were then be presented during the Second Planning Workshop for final validation by the stakeholders. The need to incorporate the management aspect was then identified. Thus, the Expanded TWG sat down together and wrote the various sections of the management aspect. Finally, the draft comprehensive plan was completed.

g. Second Planning Workshop

The Second Workshop was held on November 8, 2005. Major partners attended the terminal workshop for final consultation on the draft comprehensive plan. Activities during the second planning workshop included the presentation of the draft framework plan, classification of destination according to status whether existing or potential, prioritizing destinations per province for the SMT Summer Season, identification of *kalaw* (*Rufus sp.*) as the flagship species and the Sierra Madre Day on Feb. 19, to start the summer ecohistorical tourism season. Various stakeholders gave their comments and suggestions to complete the comprehensive plan. Miriam-P.E.A.C.E. also discussed the participation of the organizations in the upcoming SMT Launch scheduled on Nov. 29, 2005.

h. TWG Second Writeshop

Another TWG writeshop was done to incorporate all comments and suggestions raised during the second planning workshop in the completion of the comprehensive

plan. Additional information was researched and the final Sierra Madre Trail Comprehensive Plan was completed.

i. Sierra Madre Trail Launch: *Viva, Sierra Madre!*

The SMT Launch was held last Nov. 29, 2005. Various stakeholders attended the event. This served as a venue to promote the entire project plan to the general public. It started with photo exhibit showcasing the various ecohistorical destinations in Sierra Madre as well as the various flora and fauna that exemplify the richness of the SMBC in terms of biodiversity.

During the program were the unveiling of the Sierra Madre Trail Map, singing of the official SMT song, delivery of messages from various partners and the signing the Joint MOA that forged the collaboration of the various stakeholders that will support the development of the Sierra Madre Trail.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

Some of the challenges that the team experienced during the project implementation were:

Difficulty in following up, compiling, writing and editing the comprehensive plan. Since the plan was greatly derived from the output of the local partners, we had to rely on their input and address late submissions. To solve this problem, we conducted several write shops and hired section writers and an editor.

Limited access of some destinations due to bad road conditions during the rainy season. The condition was noted as a given and thus an SMT summer season was promoted. It is expected that accessibility will eventually improve and a year-long tourism promotions will eventually take place.

Varied enthusiasm levels of stakeholders. Various strategies were employed to obtain support eg. additional visits and meetings. However, some key stakeholders have yet to sign the joint Memorandum of Agreement.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

The positive lessons that we learned from this project are:

- Ecohistorical tourism is accepted by the key partners as a low impact, viable and sustainable livelihood and economic activity in a biodiversity corridor such as SMBC.

- The trail model e.g. Appalachian, SMT, can connect various protected areas along the corridor. It is also a very graphic representation of how these protected areas and other destinations are interconnected.
- Previous positive collaboration of Miriam-P.E.A.C.E with key stakeholders e.g. government agencies, NGOs, LGUs, facilitated their support for this project.
- A multi-disciplinary team consisting of resource managers, environmental planners, environmental educators, media practitioners, facilitated better understanding of the various facets of the project.
- A flexible and open attitude enabled the formulation of a plan that included the concerns of various stakeholders. For instance, the issues of participation and community-based approaches in the conservation of destinations and their natural resources were important for the civil society groups.

It was also noted that multi-stakeholder participation can slow down and complicate the planning process. The over-all result of getting their support not only for the project implementation but also for ecohistorical tourism and conservation in general, is worth the effort.

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

There are follow –up activities to implement the SMT Comprehensive Plan developed during the project duration:

- a) The product development of SMT including site preparations of destinations and pilot testing of tour packages:
 - *A treeplanting activity dubbed as “80 stewards of the Earth” held in the Southern Sierra Madre Wildlife Center in Tanay, Rizal.* The project involves 80 organizations from academe, NGOs, civic groups, corporations, media and others who will be visiting the Kaliwa Watershed, one of SMT’s key destinations. The initial activity was held on April 26, 2006.
 - *Aguinaldo Trail Expedition in the province of Isabela.* Preparatory meetings and activities has been done by the local government, outdoor groups and Miriam-P.E.A.C.E. Originally scheduled on May 1-9, 2006 as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of the province, the trip has been postponed due to a security-related incident concerning rebel groups and the military.
 - *Cagayan North Ecotour Package.* Spearheaded by the provincial government, the target market is the young professionals from urban

areas. Various destinations included in the comprehensive plan are part of the itinerary.

- *Nature Awareness Club Tour Packages in Penablanca Protected Landscape and Aurora Province.* This NGO who also operates tours have offered two new packages in the SMBC during the summer season.
- b) continuous coordination with various stakeholders of Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor on how to actualize the different components of the framework plan.
- Consultation meeting with Higher Educational Institutions held on April 9, 2006 at the Isabela State University to further outlined the role of schools in the SMT.
 - Meetings with the Wildbird Club of the Philippines to make specific plans on the bird watching trips.
- c) Local endorsement of the SMT at the local level. The Regional Development Council of Region 2 and the Province of Cagayan have endorsed the SMT.
- d) presentation and submission of project proposals to funding agencies to seek support for the implementation phase of SMT have been done since January 2006.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

The Sierra Madre Trail is a bigger project than what we had originally envisioned. Aside from the initial protected areas that remain the core of the SMT, other nature and historical destinations have been included. The SMT Framework Plan also incorporated environmental education, capacity-building at the community level, the promotion of kalaw (a bird) as its flagship species, green accreditation and standards – all of which will bring about an increased awareness of conservation among stakeholders and visitors.

IV. 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
Department of Environment and Natural Resources –	A	P 20,000	Contribution was made during local workshops and visits both as cash donations and manpower

Nueva Vizcaya			
CVPED	B	10,000	Research counterpart
Conservation International			Made the map of the Sierra Madre Trail
FRENDS	A	5,000	Site visits
ARDIAI	A	5,000	Manpower contribution
'80 Stewards of the Earth' project of Miriam-P.E.A.C.E.	C	100,000	Site development and capacity-building in Kaliwa Watershed
Province of Isabela	C	10,000	Development of the Aguinaldo Trail
Province of Cagayan	B	10,000	Counterpart in venue, transportation and other logistical support
CVPED	C	5,000	Conduct of consultation meeting of HEI's in Isabela
Regional Development Council – Region 2	D	undetermined	Endorsement of SMT in the region

***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** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

**** Estimated value**

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

This project will continue in the future. Media releases in national dailies have announced the SMT to the general public. The partners who have signed the Joint MOA are already making preparations at the ground level. Project proposals have already been presented. Many government, non-governmental organization, corporate, civic groups and even individuals have signified their support. However, delays in obtaining additional funds for such a huge project have slowed down its implementation.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We hope that CEPF will continue to be a founding partner of the *Sierra Madre Trail*.

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes _____

No _____

If yes, please also complete the following:

For more information about this project, please contact:

Name:

Mailing address:

Tel:

Fax:

E-mail: