

**Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
28th Meeting of the Donor Council
Brussels, Belgium**

20 January 2016

2:00–5:00 p.m. CET

Approved Minutes

1. Welcome and introductions (Doc. CEPF/DC28/1)

Donor Council Chairperson Jean-Michel Severino welcomed Donor Council members and representatives participating in the meeting.

- Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director-General for Environment for the European Commission, welcomed the Donor Council to Brussels, noting the importance of the work done so far through CEPF and the commitment of the EU to sustainability and development.
- The Executive Director thanked the group as well, and especially Japan for participating so late in their day.

2. Adoption of agenda (Doc. CEPF/DC28/2)

The Donor Council approved the agenda.

3. Adoption of Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Donor Council (Doc. CEPF/DC28/3)

The Donor Council adopted the minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Donor Council, which took place on 24 June 2015.

4. Report from the Executive Director

Report on key developments since the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Donor Council (Doc. CEPF/DC28/4a)

The Executive Director reviewed highlights from his written report on activities since the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Donor Council on 24 June 2015. Those highlights included:

- CEPF's participation in Green Night event organized by French Embassy in Washington, D.C. CEPF was invited to make a presentation, display the "Wonders of the World" photo exhibit and share information about CEPF and its role in nature-based solutions to climate change at a table display. CI played an important role in the event as well. The celebration was held in conjunction with the discussions taking place in Paris about COP21.

- Connections made with existing and potential donors:
 - The Secretariat is exploring opportunities to expand or reconfirm commitments from the World Bank, the GEF, the McArthur Foundation, AFD and the EU.
 - The Executive Director visited the new team at Ministry of Finance in Tokyo, Japan. The Executive Director said he greatly appreciated the opportunity to meet the team. He also gave a presentation at United Nations University in Tokyo, sharing the CEPF story and describing what is being achieved with the tax money from Japanese citizens through the Government of Japan's investment. This is an important point and the CEPF Secretariat will work with the Government of Japan to reinforce this message on a regular basis.
 - The Secretariat submitted recent funding applications:
 - 1) \$2.8 million proposal to Margaret A. Cargill Foundation for Indo-Burma. The potential co-funding would make an important difference for this region. The relationship with the Foundation has been championed by Jack Tordoff, and we hope to expand it even further.
 - 2) \$9.8 million proposal to the GEF to enhance the mainstreaming of biodiversity conservation factors into development decision making and expand and increase the effectiveness of CEPF grantee learning opportunities. The grant will help CEPF pilot elements of the Phase III strategy.
- Assessments
 - The Executive Director participated in the mid-term assessment for the Eastern Afromontane Hotspot, which brought together 50 participants, including grantees and members of the RIT and Secretariat to discuss progress in the region and lessons learned.
 - The Executive Director also attended the final assessments for the five-year investment in the Caribbean Islands, which ended in 2015. The meetings, held in Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, gathered 100 stakeholders (grantees, government representatives and donors), including representatives of AFD, the Government of Japan, the EU and the GEF.
 - 1) Results include the first municipal reserve in Haiti, innovative conservation approaches in the Dominican Republic (private protected reserve and carbon funding), and partnerships between governments, private sector and communities that demonstrate the value of natural ecosystems.
- Photo exhibit
 - The "Wonders of World" exhibit continues to travel around the world. It was presented at the French Embassy in D.C., and at venues in Lebanon, Montenegro and Canada. In Montenegro, 2,500 students have seen the exhibit.
- Follow-up to decisions
 - The Secretariat worked with the IUCN profiling team to finalize the draft of Guinean Forests profile to be discussed later in today's meeting. The Secretariat also worked with the profiling team for the Cerrado to prepare that profile for today's discussion.

- The CEPF governance document was revised after the discussion with the Donor Council last year, and a new version is being presented today that reflects the comments from the Working Group meeting in November 2015.
- The fundraising plan has been finalized and will be presented today.
- Financial report
 - The Executive Director shared slides presenting preliminary figures for six months ending December 31, 2015.
 - 1) Remaining balance yet unspent = \$29.4 million
 - 2) The \$51 million in pledged funding includes the recent pledge from CI, the GEF proposal, outstanding funds committed by Japan, and the final payment from World Bank.
 - 3) Secretariat operations cost is at 15 percent.
 - Second slide detailed activities so far this fiscal year. The grant award target for the year is \$16.6 million. Progress toward the target was low by the end of the calendar year, but that is typical and reflects the schedule for proposals. The Secretariat knew in advance that 90 percent of the grants for the year would be awarded in the fourth quarter.
 - 1) Similarly, expenses and profiling costs are low so far, but will increase.
- Questions from the Donor Council:
 - How much from Government of Japan has been disbursed to the World Bank?
 - 1) Kevin McNulty, CEPF's Senior Director of Finance and Operations explained that it was not clear how much had been disbursed, and noted that the Secretariat has been told the remaining funds committed from Japan will fall under a new agreement with the World Bank, for which the negotiation process had not started.
 - What is the burn rate for grants?
 - 1) The Secretariat saw in advance that grant commitments would take place largely in the last quarter due to the grant cycle. Five hotspots have calls for proposals concluding this month or next. The Secretariat is also issuing payments on existing grants as planned.
 - A Donor Council member noted the loss of nearly \$3 million due to the exchange rates, primarily from the unpaid balance on the EU contribution.
 - 1) Mr. McNulty pointed out that the footnote in the income statement explains that the outstanding amount not yet paid is subject to exchange rates between the euro and U.S. dollar. CEPF accounts this for every quarter and records gain or loss based on the exchange rate. By the end of the grant, this loss may decrease based on possible gains in the exchange rate.

5. Update on Phase III Business Plan (Doc. CEPF/DC28/5)

The Donor Council was asked to review and approve the proposed changes to CEPF's governance arrangements for CEPF's third phase.

The Donor Council was also asked to review and approve the fundraising plan for CEPF's third phase.

Governance: Nina Marshall, CEPF Senior Director for Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach, gave the presentation on proposed changes to CEPF’s governance arrangements.

Revisions to the governance arrangements were first discussed at the June 2015 Donor Council meeting. The Donor Council suggested revisions, and the revised version of the governance document was submitted to the Working Group for review in November. Current document under consideration is the new proposal reflecting donor input.

Ms. Marshall reviewed what had already been approved by the donors, and decisions to still be made.

- **Regarding the Chairperson**, two questions were raised by the Working Group.

Question 1: Should the chair be independent of any global donor?

- Some members of the Donor Council indicated that having an independent chairperson is important, providing a perspective that is helpful in the event of disagreements among council members.
- It was suggested that an independent chairperson might be the source of some tensions for the Executive Director, and a council member cautioned against have a “super director.”
- The chairperson should be someone who can dedicate significant time to the role, council members noted, especially helping to communicate the Donor Council agenda.
- A Donor Council member asked what happens if the proposed independent chairperson is unavailable for a meeting? Would another Council member step in, as has been the case? It was suggested that a vice chair could be designated to stand in for the chairperson under such circumstances.
- The Donor Council agreed that the chairperson should be independent.

Question 2: Can a Donor Council chairperson be renewed for non-consecutive terms? The question was raised by the Working Group.

- The Chairperson suggested that it would be good to maintain some flexibility.
- It was decided that renewal of the chairperson’s term will be permissible if the term is consecutive.

- **Regarding Donor Council composition**, the Working Group provided suggestions for new text, and raised some questions. Seven points were drafted to add as preamble. The Donor Council was asked to review the proposed new text, and consider two questions raised by the Working Group: 1) What is the justification for a \$20 million minimum contribution for membership, and should that be revisited? 2) What is the preferred number of years of membership associated with the financial commitment?

The \$20 million minimum:

- Some Council members said the \$20 million minimum seemed arbitrary and may discourage donors, and suggested the Council build in some flexibility in order to meet fundraising targets.
- Others on the Council argued that the Council should be careful not to set the investment minimum too low, as it would be potentially unfair to give the same membership and voting rights to entities that invest much less than others at the table.
- Ms. Marshall pointed out that CEPF has provisions for regional donors. She recommended that CEPF develop some criteria for voting rights and participation to respect the powers that come with being a global donor at a high contribution level.
- The Executive Director said the Secretariat would propose criteria and submit it to the Working Group, then to the Donor Council for electronic approval.
- A Donor Council member objected to addressing the issue via the electronic approval process, saying the issue is too important and requires discussion and consensus building.
- It was decided that the proposal would instead be on the agenda for the Donor Council meeting in June.

Membership timeframe:

- Some Donor Council members suggested seven years as the timeframe for Donor Council membership per global investment.
 - Another suggestion was three years after the end of the investment timeframe. It was noted that most CEPF grants are completed within three years, which would make three years after the end of the investment an appropriate point to end Donor Council participation.
 - Some Donor Council members indicated that it could take a donor more than three years to decide on a new commitment.
 - The Chairperson said a shorter timeframe would be a stronger incentive for making a new commitment.
 - A Donor Council member suggested members get seven years on the Donor Council per global investment, plus a three-year grace period, but another questioned whether, in that scenario, the donor should retain voting rights during the proposed grace period.
 - Recognizing that the issue required further discussion, the Donor Council decided to return to the matter of membership timeframe at a later date, and decided to do the same for the question of Working Group membership.
- **Regarding arrangements for regional donors**, the Donor Council was asked to review new text and consider the minimum investment for participating in Working Group meetings. The Working Group had suggested regional donors investing at least \$500,000 could participate in the Working Group, but the Secretariat recommended that the minimum be \$1 million.
 - The Donor Council approved the \$1 million minimum for Working Group participation.

- **Regarding the Donor Council decision-making process**, the Donor Council previously approved new text, but the Working Group raised one question: if we have more than 10 global donors, how will we make decisions? At present, this is done by consensus, but if the Donor Council has a large number of participants, should we move to majority vote?
 - A Donor Council member asked whether voting could be weighted by contribution amount.
 - Other Donor Council members suggested keeping the consensus-based process, regardless of the number of members since this process has been working well.
 - The Donor Council decided to maintain decision-making based on consensus.

Fundraising plan: The Executive Director gave a presentation on the Fundraising Plan for Phase III, covering re-engagement of existing donors, and engagement of new bilateral, multilateral and private foundation donors. Donor Council discussion followed on:

- **Re-engagement of existing donors**
 - The World Bank representative clarified that while immediate re-investment may not be possible, it is not a permanent situation. The Bank has been cutting back on expenses, and it has severely impacted budgets for activities like CEPF. The cutback is slated to end by 2017, so a more normal funding situation may resume after fiscal year 2018. The timing is unfortunate in relation to CEPF's cycle. The Bank wants to remain engaged when current funding restraints are worked through, and would be keen to continue commitment to CEPF, which has an important role to play in ensuring biodiversity remains at center of international frameworks.
 - The GEF representative corrected the total amount of the GEF grant proposed for bridging CEPF to Phase III. The total amount of the grant is \$10.682 million.
 - Representatives from the European Union offered to assist with fundraising, and noted that the EU is including CEPF in its 2017 action plan in an effort to continue engagement. While it is not guaranteed, it is possible there will be additional global funding in 2017. It was also suggested that there may be opportunities to engage with EU programs at the regional or national levels in areas such as the Guinean Forests.
- **New donors**
 - The Executive Director asked for an indication from the Donor Council as to whether they agree with the stated donor targets, and if anyone is willing to help engage them. He noted that Conservation International is helping CEPF connect with Switzerland and the Government of Norway. He also noted that regarding bilateral engagements, talks with Germany are well advanced, but others listed in the plan are prospects. As for multi-laterals, there has been some discussion with Green Climate Fund, but it has been introductory. In regard to private foundations, there are existing relationships with the Helmsley Charitable Trust and the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation. The relationship with Cargill is already expanding, and there may be potential for engaging with them in other geographies or as a global donor.

- The Chairperson suggested Donor Council members talk directly with the Executive director about how they can support fundraising, and asked whether any Donor Council members had any reluctance regarding targets or had suggestions for additional targets.
- A Donor Council member also suggested that the Executive Director provide specific potential-donor contact suggestions to Council members so they can more effectively support the fundraising effort.

The Donor Council approved the fundraising plan.

6. Selection of new hotspots for investment (Doc. CEPF/DC28/6)

The Donor Council was asked to approve the selection of the Mediterranean Basin and the Mountains of Central Asia as the next hotspots for investment.

CEPF Managing Director Jack Tordoff gave the Secretariat's presentation regarding selection of new regions for investment.

- Mr. Tordoff noted that in 2014, the Donor Council adopted the Phase III strategy for CEPF, including ambitious fundraising targets. CEPF is grateful for Conservation International's recent new commitment, the first contribution from an existing global donor to CEPF Phase III at \$25 million. This funding will allow CEPF to develop ecosystem profiles for up to three hotspots, either reinvestment or new hotspots. The Secretariat would like to begin with two new profiles as soon as possible to keep grants in pipeline continually, and to address challenges on the ground in these regions.
- The Secretariat proposed selection of the Mediterranean Basin and the Mountains of Central Asia hotspots as the next to be profiled and to receive investment. This would be the first time CEPF is investing in Central Asia, and would be a reinvestment in the Mediterranean Basin. If approved, the Secretariat would move immediately to begin the profiling process, and would be positioned to have a Regional Implementation Team in place for the Mediterranean Basin by June of 2017 and begin grant making there by July 2017, and to proceed over a slightly longer timeframe in the Mountains of Central Asia, where CEPF has no history of prior investment.
- Mr. Tordoff noted that the strategic framework calls for investment in 12 hotspots during Phase III. He also noted that there is serious interest from the MAVA Foundation, the Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation, and *Fundación Biodiversidade* of Spain to co-fund the Mediterranean Basin profile and hopefully join as regional donors.
- It was also noted that when the Donor Council met in June 2013, when the Council discussed potential new hotspots for investment, it chose Wallacea and Cerrado, and said it would revisit the Mountains of Central Asia once CEPF had new resources. There are three countries in the hotspot that offer ready opportunities to work with civil society, while other countries in the hotspot are more challenging. CEPF would like to take on achievable goals for the central part of the hotspot, while exploring opportunities to give other countries funding through transnational efforts.

Discussion

- Donor Council members expressed support for the hotspots recommended by the Secretariat, but raised the following issues:
 - The European Union urged the Secretariat to take note of the wealth of EU delegations in the region and work to generate interaction between CEPF and other development programs in the same areas.
 - Questions were raised about how CEPF will interact with the Chinese part of the hotspot, and it was noted that the Chinese have sufficient monetary resources.
 - A Donor Council member asked whether a baseline assessment of civil society in the Mountains of Central Asia had been conducted, and what has been done to evaluate current investment in the Mediterranean Basin and lessons learned prior to new investment.
 - Another Donor Council member asked how CEPF plans to react to the political situations in the countries in the Mediterranean Basin, and requested a broad stroke assessment of previous investments and those areas that haven't been invested in yet.
 - Other Donor Council members encouraged CEPF staff involved in developing the profile to embed the investment strategy in ongoing regional/national activities. Members also asked how CEPF plans to build in flexibility to deal with challenging political situations, and whether CEPF will take into account long-term trajectories for climate change when doing profiles. They also expressed interested in gathering lessons learned from other entities working in the regions.
 - A representative from the World Bank offered to provide information on the large-scale investments the Bank is making in Central Asia, especially a project on climate change and water scarcity in the area.

Mr. Tordoff thanked the Donor Council for consensus on the choice of hotspots, and addressed the Donor Council questions:

- In regard to China, the initial impression is that we can see if we can provide basic support to the emergence of civil society organizations. A number have begun to emerge, and we could assist, which would be important. The Chinese government has resources for biodiversity conservation, but not for civil society. CEPF funding would be small scale and complementary.
- A baseline assessment for Central Asia was done in 2013. It is on the website and referred to in the documents for today's meeting. The Secretariat had discussions with donor staff in the region, and intends to reopen communications with regional staff from global donors to ensure awareness and alignment.
- Regarding lessons learned from the current investment in the Mediterranean, the midterm assessment was completed. That documentation is available and the Secretariat will take the lessons learned into account for the new profile.

- As for political instability in these regions, CEPF has faced instability during first investments in many places. Libya for example. The best response is to be adaptive and have faster feedback loops to respond to quickly changing conditions.
- In regard to national or donor strategies, CEPF will continue to look for and make the most of opportunities provided by synergies with these strategies.

At this point, the representatives of the Government of Japan had to leave the conference call, and the Chairperson thanked them for their participation, and asked that they send comments and questions on other agenda items to the Executive Director by email.

7. Presentation and approval of the ecosystem profile for Cerrado Hotspot (Doc. CEPF/DC28/7)

The Donor Council was asked to approve the ecosystem profile for the Cerrado biodiversity hotspot, and to increase CEPF's spending authority by \$8 million for the implementation of this profile.

CEPF Grant Director Peggy Poncelet gave a presentation on the key points of the ecosystem profile for the Cerrado and the stakeholder-consultation process that led to its development.

The process included five workshops, one Senior Advisory Group meeting, and more than 170 participants from more than 130 public and private institutions.

The profile identifies four priority corridors: Mirador-Mesas, Central de Matopiba, Veadeiros-Pouso Alto-Kalungas, and Sertão Veredas-Peruaçu. There are also 62 priority Key Biodiversity Areas. The profile proposes the following strategic directions:

- 1) Promote the adoption of best practices in agriculture in the priority corridors.
- 2) Support the creation/expansion and effective management of protected areas in the priority corridors.
- 3) Promote and strengthen supply chains associated with the sustainable use of natural resources and ecological restoration in the hotspot.
- 4) Support the protection of threatened species in the hotspot.
- 5) Support the implementation of tools to integrate and to share data on monitoring to better inform decision-making processes in the hotspot.
- 6) Strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations to promote better management of territories and of natural resources and to support other investment priorities in the hotspot.
- 7) Coordinate the implementation of the investment strategy of CEPF in the hotspot through a Regional Implementation Team.

The Chairperson suggested that, due to the tight schedule for the meeting, any feedback that there wasn't time for during the meeting should go directly to CEPF. The Executive Director also noted the importance of the Working Group's comments on the profile, which are reflected in the draft profile shared with the Donor Council.

Discussion

- Donor Council members thanked the Secretariat and profiling team for their good work.
- Representatives of the European Union emphasized making biodiversity and natural capital tools for progress, and working with the private sector and agribusiness in a strategic and sustainable way, and asked what the strategy is for factoring this into the CEPF investment. It was recommended that CEPF coordinate with CGIAR, a partnership that focuses on food security. The EU is providing about \$1 billion to CGIAR, and actions should be coordinated. EU representatives also noted that the profile fits nicely with international agenda and priorities of the next Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. A representative said the more CEPF can do related to human development, the more successful the investment will be, and recommended that the profile factor in the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Lastly, it was noted that the EU will have a project that borders the hotspot, and there will be opportunities for synergy.
- The representative from the GEF noted that the GEF has several projects in the region and emphasized the opportunity for joint efforts.
- A representative from the World Bank noted that there was a lot of collaboration with the World Bank office in Brazil, and World Bank staff appreciated the collegial relationship and the full integration of World Bank comments.
- Ms. Poncelet pointed out that the profile reflects CEPF's Phase III strategy to build more partnerships with the private sector. A main focus of the strategy is working with the private sector through civil society organizations to improve practices. Some work has already been done to reach out to the private sector and create networks. In terms of collaboration, CEPF can have an influence here in communicating with the private sector, sharing lessons learned from piloting processes, helping with replication and enabling other stakeholders to take on these practices and further disseminate them.

Donor Council members approved the profile.

8. Presentation and approval of the ecosystem profile for Guinean Forests of West Africa Hotspot (Doc. CEPF/DC28/8)

The Donor Council was asked to approve the ecosystem profile for the Guinean Forests of West Africa biodiversity hotspot, and to increase CEPF's spending authority by \$9 million for the implementation of this profile.

Kenneth Angu Angu of IUCN-PACO, who was part of the profiling team, gave a presentation on key points of the profile and the stakeholder engagement process that led to its development.

He noted that CEPF previously invested in the hotspot, through a five-year investment that started in January 2001 that provided \$6.2 million in funding through 72 grants, and through a three-year consolidation phase that began in 2008 and provided an additional \$2.1 million. These investments

focused on the Upper Guinean Forests sub region. Lessons learned from those investments were compiled and factored into the new profile.

The profiling process included engagement of an advisory group that met in Ghana, consultation meetings in Togo and Cameroon, smaller workshops in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana, remote consultations that yielded 67 completed questionnaires, and two final stakeholder workshops in Liberia and Cameroon.

The profile identifies nine priority corridors and 40 priority Key Biodiversity Areas. The strategic directions are:

- 1) Empower local communities to engage in sustainable management of 40 priority sites and consolidate ecological connectivity at the landscape scale.
- 2) Mainstream biodiversity conservation into public policy and private sector practice in the nine conservation corridors, at local, subnational and national levels.
- 3) Safeguard priority globally threatened species by identifying and addressing major threats and information gaps.
- 4) Build the capacity of local civil society organizations including indigenous people's, women's and youth groups, to conserve and manage globally important biodiversity.
- 5) Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through a regional implementation team.

Discussion:

- Donor Council members thanked Mr. Angu for the presentation.
- A representative of the World Bank expressed appreciation that the Bank's comments during the Working Group review of the profile were taken into account. The Bank representative noted that it will not be an easy hotspot to work in, and noted that the Bank hopes CEPF grants can further enrich REDD+ efforts in the region, which is fragile and under extreme threat. The sustainability aspect for outcomes and impacts will be crucial to ensuring a successful investment, the representative said.
- A representative of Conservation International asked how old the data sets for the key biodiversity area KBA were, and whether that was a source of concern. The representative noted that not much was said about oil, gas and mining in the presentation. Does the profile take these into account?
- A representative of the GEF noted that historically, investments have been quite low in this area so CEPF can make a great difference. The GEF appreciated the Working Group comments being integrated into the profile, but said it could still be improved in regard to the drivers of degradation. Looking more at the drivers in profiles can help in development of stronger indicators.
- A representative of the EU noted that, like the Cerrado profile, the Guinean Forest profile needed to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals, especially related to biodiversity and forestry, which is focus of some of the EU's activities in the region. It is crucial to link up

with the EU efforts there, the representative said. The development of a major iron ore mine in Guinea also could have an impact. Lastly, the EU has just launched its strategy for wildlife conservation in Africa, “Larger than Elephants”. This strategy has strong focus on wildlife and biodiversity and presents priority conservation actions.

- Mr. Angu thanked the Donor Council, and noted that oil and mining activities and impact are included in the profile, though they were not highlighted in the presentation given for this meeting.

- The Donor Council approved the profile.

9. Update on GEF bridge grant (Doc. CEPF/DC28/9)

The Donor Council was asked to approve an increase of CEPF’s spending authority by \$5 million for implementation of the GEF bridging grant.

Mr. McNulty gave a presentation on the latest developments related to the proposed GEF bridge grant to CEPF, and the associated need to increase CEPF’s spending authority to prepare for implementation. He told the Council that CEPF presented the its proposal to the GEF in November, and was awaiting GEF CEO endorsement. The proposal was shared with the Working Group for their comments in November.

The grant will fund activities in Cerrado, Eastern Afromontane and Indo-Burma. Components include:

- Developing long-term conservation visions, financing plans and associated strategies for biodiversity hotspots
- Ensuring the financial and institutional sustainability of multi-sector conservation programs
- Amplifying the impacts of CEPF investments through enhanced and innovative public and private sector partnerships
- Replicating success through knowledge products and tools

The Donor Council was asked to increase spending authority and increase the time for investment for each of the regions involved.

Donor Council members approved the increase in spending authority and period of investment. A representative of the GEF noted that the grant proposal is strong and that they hoped to have endorsement soon.

10. Update on Phase III Communications Strategy* (Doc. CEPF/DC28/10)

The Secretariat provided an update on the Phase III Communications Strategy.

The Executive Director emphasized that the Secretariat was not seeking approval of the communications strategy at this meeting, but instead was requesting comments and input from the Donor Council. This input can be shared today or through the next week, and it will be incorporated into the strategy, which will then be sent to the Donor Council for electronic approval.

Director of Communications Julie Shaw gave a brief presentation on the strategy, which is designed to evolve CEPF's communications to provide strategic support to Phase III.

Building on donor feedback, CEPF hired the communications firm Big Duck to help the CEPF communications team build a sound strategy for Phase III that refines communications practices, improves efficiency and better supports the fund to become truly transformational. (A one-page summary of the strategy was included in the Donor Council documents.)

To develop the strategy, interviews were conducted with Working Group members, donor communicators, grantees and members of regional implementation teams. These interviews and other research revealed that:

- 1) CEPF struggles with name recognition and defining our niche.
- 2) Our audiences appreciate high-quality content, but they have limited time for our materials.
- 3) Our communications activities are impressive, especially given the size of our team.

The goal of the strategy: Use strategic communications to increase CEPF's reach and better address the biodiversity crisis.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that CEPF is recognized widely in the conservation community.
2. Deepen alignment between CEPF communications and priorities of key audiences.
3. Streamline communication practices and optimize based on data and best practices.

Guiding strategies:

- Express a strong vision
- Demonstrate progress
- Show more heart
- Make content easy to digest
- Highlight people

Several recommended actions are included in the strategy, such as completing an audience-centric website redesign, increasing email frequency, cultivating supporters and community through events, using infographics, meeting with Working Group members and donor communicators, and decreasing the amount and length of print pieces, social media activities and videos.

The strategy also emphasizes the role for donors as brand ambassadors for CEPF.

Discussion: The Chairperson noted that due to the schedule, discussion had to be limited to 10 minutes.

- A representative from the EU expressed appreciation for the work done on the strategy, and acknowledged the challenges of communications. He noted, however, that more needs to be done to increase the reach of CEPF communications and make CEPF's projects and initiatives better known.
- Donor Council members asked what it would cost to implement the strategy, and requested details on the associated expense.
- Council members emphasized the value of visibility of CEPF results and the role of donors, and that visibility is appealing to potential new donors.
- Donor Council members pointed out the challenges of just communicating CEPF's name, and the lack of appeal of the CEPF acronym, and some recommended rebranding CEPF.
- A representative from the GEF said they found the strategy very comprehensive and well analyzed. However, the representative also said the activities recommended seem quite business as usual, and suggested considering more out-of-the-box activities to attract media and visibility.
- A representative of the World Bank said they would send in written comments, and stressed need for communicating on results. Important to make CEPF known in terms of results, at the hotspot level and on the whole, to convince new donors to join. The representative offered to share ideas on how to make CEPF better known, such as photo contests or a photo exhibition at the World Bank building.
- CI congratulated the Secretariat on the strategy, and agreed with the recommendation for decreased use of social media. The representative emphasized the need to make visible links to the Sustainable Development Goals and CBD Aichi targets. The representative also noted that the private sector was not included as an audience, but should be.
- Another representative from the EU emphasized concentrating on a few important activities and audiences, and suggested focusing on universities and the private sector. He noted that in terms of cost effectiveness, EU trust funds run at 4 percent overhead, and EU organizations operated at 7 percent, but CEPF is at 15 percent. There are ways and means to do things without a big budget.
- The Executive Director thanked the Donor Council for the initial feedback and asked that any additional input be sent via email during the following week. He also noted that CEPF is a point of intersection with grantees, the donors and the public, and it is not easy to define how we should communicate. The strategy has helped us see our communications more clearly. Regarding communications about impact and results, he noted that the Secretariat is aware of the importance of communicating impact on biodiversity, poverty, the Sustainable Development Goals and Aichi targets. CEPF's new Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach program will enhance our ability to produce and share this information.
- Ms. Shaw also pointed out that a learning strategy for CEPF was under development, and was being closely coordinated with communications. She also noted that regarding costs, the Secretariat was planning implementation within current resources, and that the plan is scalable

so that, as we get new donors, we can scale up. The strategy also complements the long-term visions being developed for the hotspots, and related increases in RIT communications.

- The Chairperson added that it is extremely difficult to have a successful communications strategy, and it will be important for donors to communicate about CEPF as well and promote it to potential donors.

11. Other business

The Executive Director noted that the representative from the MacArthur Foundation had sent email comments and approvals for the Secretariat requests.

The Executive Director thanked the Donor Council members and representatives for their participation.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting, noting that the date and time of the next meeting had not yet be established. He asked that suggestions be sent to the Executive Director.

**For information only.*

Summary of decisions and follow-up actions

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1. Decisions Reached

The Donor Council reached the following decisions:

- The agenda of the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Donor Council was approved.
- The minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Donor Council Meeting were adopted.
- The CEPF Governance Arrangements for Phase III for Donor Council Chair, Donor Council Terms of Reference, Working Group Terms of Reference, Working Group Membership and Composition, Regional Donors Role and Decision-Making Process were approved, with several points decided, including the Donor Council Chair should be independent and renewal of the three year term is permissible if term is consecutive; the length of the phase for global donors contributing funds for a single CEPF phase is seven years; Donor Council membership ends three years after the end of the commitment period; and if the number of donors increases beyond 10, decision-making should remain on a consensus basis.
- The Fundraising Plan for CEPF Phase III was approved.
- The Mediterranean Basin and the Mountains of Central Asia were approved as the next hotspots for CEPF investment.
- The ecosystem profile for the Cerrado biodiversity hotspot was approved, with an increase in CEPF's spending authority by \$8 million for the implementation of this profile.
- The ecosystem profile for the Guinean Forests of West Africa biodiversity hotspot was approved, with an increase in CEPF's spending authority by \$9 million for the implementation of this profile.
- An increase in CEPF's spending authority by \$5 million for implementation of the GEF bridging grant was approved.

2. Follow-up actions

The Secretariat was asked to:

- Include a summary in the Executive Director's Report detailing conservation results and the impact of CEPF's achievements.
- Rework the criteria for Donor Council membership and composition contained in the proposed Governance Arrangements for Phase III, and specifically consider Donor Council comments pertaining to the minimum size of contribution of global donors over a single CEPF phase, and to governance powers reflecting the size of contribution. The revised Governance Arrangements for Donor Council membership and composition will be presented at the Twenty-Ninth Donor Council Meeting.
- Refer to the GEF bridging grant as \$10.682 million in total, including the fee that Conservation International receives, rather than the \$9.8 million that goes directly to the CEPF project.
- Follow up with the Donor Council members to determine which potential new and existing donors each member could help CEPF engage with.
- Prepare an analysis of hotspots, including new ones, that CEPF would like the Donor Council members to consider for the next round of investment.

- Integrate lessons learned from CEPF's initial investment in the Mediterranean Basin within the updated ecosystem profile for the new investment phase.
- Present future ecosystem profiles in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The Donor Council was asked to:

- Share additional feedback on the draft Communications Strategy with the Secretariat via email. After revising the strategy based on Donor Council comments, the Secretariat will share the draft Communications Strategy with the Donor Council for electronic no-objection approval.

List of Attendees

Donor Council Members

Jean-Michel Severino	CEPF Donor Council
Laurence Breton-Moyet, Executive Director, Operations	l'Agence Française de Développement
Jennifer Morris, Chief Operating Officer	Conservation International
Daniel Calleja Crespo, Director-General for Environment	European Commission
Roberto Ridolfi, Director, Sustainable Growth, (DG DEVCO)	European Commission
Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson	Global Environment Facility
Masaaki Iizuka, Director of Development Issues International Bureau, Ministry of Finance of Japan	Government of Japan
Jørgen Thomsen, Director, Conservation and Development	MacArthur Foundation
Paula Caballero Senior Director, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practices	The World Bank

Working Group Members and Donor Staff

Conservation International

Jennifer Morris, Chief Operating Officer
Yves Pinsonneault, Vice President, Field Program Management
Yasushi Hibi, Vice President, CI-Japan

European Commission

General for Development and Cooperation-EuropeAid (DEVCO)
Anne-Theo Seinen, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for the Environment
Philippe Mayaux, Head of Sector, Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, DEVCO
Arnold Jacques de Dixmude, DEVCO

Global Environment Facility

Gustavo Fonseca, Director of Programs, Natural Resources
Yoko Watanabe, Senior Biodiversity Specialist

Government of Japan

Akiko Tabata, Nature Conservation Bureau, Ministry of the Environment

MacArthur Foundation

Christopher Holtz, Asia Program Officer

World Bank

Andrea Kutter, Senior Operations Officer, Environment and Natural Resources Global Practice

Sachin Shahria, Environmental Specialist

CEPF

Olivier Langrand, Executive Director

Jack Tordoff, Managing Director

Nina Marshall, Senior Director, Monitoring, Evaluation and Outreach

Kevin McNulty, Senior Director, Finance and Operations

Pierre Carret, Grant Director

Peggy Poncelet, Grant Director

Julie Shaw, Communications Director

Mandy DeVine, Communications Manager