

## **An Overview of CEPF's Consolidation Portfolio in the Caucasus Hotspot**

November 2012

### **Introduction**

The Caucasus Hotspot covers a total area of 580,000 square kilometers, between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, including Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, the North Caucasus portion of the Russian Federation, and parts of northeastern Turkey and northwestern Iran. The Caucasus supports more than 6,500 species of vascular plants, a quarter of which are found nowhere else on Earth, and, as such, has the highest level of floral endemism in the temperate world. In addition to outstanding biological values, the Caucasus supports great cultural diversity, with a multitude of ethnic groups, languages and religions intermingled over a relatively small area.

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) engagement in the Caucasus Hotspot began with the development of an ecosystem profile<sup>1</sup> for the region in 2003. This was followed by a five-year investment program, under which CEPF awarded 42 large and 87 small grants to civil society groups, with a total investment of \$8.5 million.

CEPF adopted a unique approach to investing in the biodiversity of the Caucasus, by focusing on biological areas rather than political units, and targeting corridors rich in biological value that straddled national borders. This approach required a focus on transboundary conservation, and emphasized regional collaboration, in contrast to the isolated, national efforts that had hitherto been the norm. To this end, CEPF investment was concentrated within five transboundary corridors, covering 14.2 million hectares, or 25 percent of the hotspot.

In addition to these geographic priorities, four strategic directions for CEPF investment were identified through extensive consultations with stakeholders:

- Support civil society efforts to promote transboundary cooperation and improve protected area systems in five target corridors.
- Strengthen mechanisms to conserve biodiversity of the Caucasus Hotspot with emphasis on species, site and corridor outcomes.
- Implement models demonstrating sustainable resource use in five target corridors.
- Increase the awareness and commitment of decision makers to biodiversity conservation in five target corridors.

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<sup>1</sup> Caucasus Ecosystem Profile: English, [www.cepf.net/Documents/final.caucasus.ep.pdf](http://www.cepf.net/Documents/final.caucasus.ep.pdf) (PDF - 3.5 MB) / Russian, [www.cepf.net/Documents/final.russian.caucasus.ep.pdf](http://www.cepf.net/Documents/final.russian.caucasus.ep.pdf) (PDF - 4.8 MB)

The initial CEPF investment phase in the Caucasus Hotspot commenced in August 2003, and concluded in September 2009 with a final assessment workshop. Over the six-year period, CEPF invested heavily in the region's protected area system, on which other conservation efforts are anchored. CEPF grants contributed to system-level planning, expansion and creation of new protected areas, strengthening of management in existing protected areas, and development of sustainable financing mechanisms. All of these grants adopted participatory approaches, developing alternative livelihoods for local communities and engaging them in protected area management.

## **CEPF Consolidation Phase**

### *Overview*

Much was achieved under the initial CEPF investment in the Caucasus Hotspot in terms of delivery of conservation outcomes on the ground. Moreover, CEPF investment helped establish an enabling environment for biodiversity conservation, with more compatible policy frameworks, a stronger, better coordinated civil society, and greater awareness of and support for conservation issues among decision makers and the general public. In this way, CEPF helped to create conditions under which its achievements could be sustained and replicated.

Protected areas are the foundation on which biodiversity conservation efforts in the Caucasus are built. During the initial phase, CEPF investment focused on expanding and strengthening protected area coverage within five landscape-scale conservation corridors. One of these was the Greater Caucasus, where CEPF invested heavily in strengthening the overall integrity and long-term ecological resilience of the corridor, including by expanding three reserves in the Russian part of the corridor, and strengthening management of several protected areas in Russia and Azerbaijan. CEPF also supported preliminary work to establish a protected area at Khevsureti: a high mountain area in Georgia, which forms a pivotal link between Tusheti National Park in the east and Kazbegi National Park in the west. By the end of the investment phase, it was determined that additional investment would be needed to complete the formal gazettal process, establish protected area management capacity on the ground, and expand the constituency of support among local stakeholders.

Another corridor where CEPF funding helped significantly to consolidate protected area coverage and enhance ecological resilience was the East Lesser Caucasus, by supporting the establishment of three new protected areas in southern Armenia, along the international border with Azerbaijan. Two of these areas, Arevik National Park and Zangezour Sanctuary, were declared during the investment phase, while the third area, Gnishik Community Managed Sanctuary remained at the feasibility study stage. It was determined that additional resources were needed to rapidly complete the gazettal of this protected area, in order to enhance connectivity between the northern and southern sections of the corridor, establish a foundation for sustainable livelihoods for the local populace, and mitigate the impacts of unregulated tourism development.

In order to sustain its investments in expanding and strengthening management of the hotspot's protected area system, CEPF supported the operational costs of the Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF; previously known as the Caucasus Protected Areas Fund or CPAF), which is mandated to support the operational costs of protected areas in the southern Caucasus countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. CEPF's support was decisive in CNF being able to enlarge its endowment and successfully support pilot projects in Georgia and Armenia. At the end of the initial phase, CNF still needed to raise additional endowment funds to ensure long-term financial sustainability, and to expand its operations into Azerbaijan. It was determined that a relatively small additional investment by CEPF to support CNF's operating and fundraising costs would

help leverage the very significant resources needed to underpin the long-term maintenance of CEPF’s achievements in strengthening the region’s protected area systems.

During the initial investment phase, CEPF also supported a major regional initiative to undertake IUCN Red List assessments of over 1,100 endemic plant taxa. This four-year study envisioned two outputs: *the Red List of the Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region*, which would be the first reference manual on the conservation status of Caucasian endemic plants; and the *Caucasus Plants Conservation Strategy*, a comprehensive regional strategy for the conservation and sustainable use of the region’s endemic plant diversity, developed through exhaustive consultations with stakeholders throughout the region. Because of several factors outside of the control of this project, it was not possible to publish these resources during the initial investment period. It was decided, therefore, to support the completion of these publications during the consolidation phase, and thereby secure CEPF investments in filling a huge information gap, with respect to the conservation status of endemic plant species.

The CEPF consolidation program, therefore, proposed to solidify gains with regard to conservation outcomes at the species (endemic plants), site (protected areas) and corridor (Greater Caucasus and East Lesser Caucasus) scales, targeting those achievements from the initial investment phase for which additional funding has not been secured and giving priority to the highest priority investments. The CEPF consolidation program was finalized in December 2010, with a total allocation of \$1 million. The program was scheduled to run for three years, from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2014. The program is directly administered by the CEPF Secretariat.

**Portfolio Status**

The CEPF investment program began on July 1, 2011, with the award of the consolidation grants. Four grants were awarded, totaling \$1 million, which all began simultaneously. As this was a consolidation program, the grant review and contracting process was coordinated by the CEPF Secretariat. In each case, the entire process, from submission of letter of inquiry to contracting took around six months. This was considered to be an acceptable performance, considering the number of steps in the process.

**Table 1: CEPF Consolidation Grants in the Caucasus Hotspot**

<b>Grantee</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Grant amount</b>
Caucasus Nature Fund	Supporting the Operations of the Caucasus Nature Fund – Phase 2	\$360,000
World Wide Fund for Nature	Enhancing the Landscape and Ecological Integrity of the Greater Caucasus Corridor through Establishment of Khevsureti National Park, Georgia	\$440,000
World Wide Fund for Nature	Enhancing the Integrity of the East Lesser Caucasus Corridor through the Establishment of Gnishik Community Managed Sanctuary, Armenia	\$160,000
Missouri Botanical Garden	Publication of the “Red List of the Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region” and “Caucasus Plant Initiative” (Caucasus Regional Plant Conservation Strategy)	\$40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,000,000</b>

The four grants covered all four outcomes of the consolidation program, namely: (1) CEPF investments in expanding and strengthening the protected area systems of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia sustained through consolidation of CPAF [CNF] as a long-term financing mechanism; (2) CEPF investments in the Greater Caucasus corridor sustained through gazettal of Khevsureti as a protected area, and establishment of essential management plans, structures and capacity; (3) CEPF investments in the East Lesser Caucasus corridor sustained through gazettal of Gnishik as the first model community-managed sanctuary in the corridor, and establishment of essential management plans, structures and capacity; and (4) CEPF investments in filling major knowledge gaps with regard to endemic plant species consolidated by publishing the Red List of the Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region and the Caucasus Plants Conservation Strategy, and communicating them to all key stakeholders in the hotspot. In this regard, there were no gaps in the coverage of the portfolio from the outset. Thus, achieving the goals of the program is contingent only on successful implementation of the four grants.

### ***Performance Assessment***

The CEPF Secretariat was able to solicit and process the four grant applications swiftly and efficiently. This was aided, no doubt, by the small size of the consolidation portfolio, the familiarity of the CEPF Secretariat with the applicants (and of them with CEPF's processes), and the ability of all applicants to work in English. Monitoring of grant implementation has also proceeded smoothly to date. All grantees are up to date with their financial and programmatic performance, and a site visit to three of the grantees (the Missouri Botanical Garden grant was considered a lower priority for a site visit, due to its size) was conducted during June-July 2012. All three projects visited were found to meet targets with regard to performance, and in every case, the CEPF Secretariat remains confident in the grantee's ability to deliver the results committed to in the project proposal.

### **Portfolio Investment Highlights by Strategic Direction**

Of the four consolidation grants, only one (to CNF) had ended as of November 1, 2012. The other three grants had been under implementation for 17 months, and were midway through implementation. While a picture of the overall impact of the consolidation portfolio is emerging, it is an incomplete one, because some grants require more time to deliver key results. Overall, however, the consolidation portfolio is moving in the right direction, and there are encouraging signs of progress in all areas. Grants appear to be strategic, and to consolidate results from a significant part of the initial investment phase. Beyond the specific bounds of the consolidation portfolio, grantees report that conservation gains made under the initial investment phase continue to be sustained, built upon and taken up by governments and other donor agencies. For example, Machakhela National Park was declared in June 2012 by the government of Georgia, based upon a spatial planning document for the Natural-Landscape Territory of Mtirala and Machakhela supported under the initial investment phase.

The grant to CNF ended on September 30, 2012, and, while the final completion report is not yet due, the site visit conducted in June 2012 found that the project was on track to meet its objectives. CNF's mission is to protect the network of national parks and nature reserves in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia by assuring recurring funding for their operations on a sustainable basis and promoting sustainable development around these protected areas. The fund was formally established in 2007, following funding commitments from WWF Germany, Conservation International (through the Global Conservation Fund), and the German government (through KfW and BMZ). During the initial start-up and fundraising phase, support to CNF operations was provided by CEPF. CNF awarded its first grants to protected areas in 2010, starting with projects in Armenia and Georgia.

The CEPF consolidation grant contributed towards the operating costs of CNF for a 15-month period, allowing the fund to conserve its endowment for grant making, and making investing in the fund a more attractive prospect to other donors, because a greater proportion of their funding would go to grant making. During 2012, with the additional support from CEPF and other donors, CNF was able to ramp up its grant making to €810,000, matched by €975,000 in co-financing from national governments in the southern Caucasus and tourism receipts. The fund supported 11 protected areas, comprising six in Armenia, four in Georgia and one in Azerbaijan (Shirvan National Park). The grant in Azerbaijan was very significant, as it marked an extension of the fund's operations into this country for the first time. The 11 protected areas supported in 2012 represent 22 percent of the 48 protected areas in the three countries, and cover 441,414 hectares out of the total 1.4 million hectare protected area network in the southern Caucasus.

In addition to supporting the operations of CNF, the CEPF grant also supported its fundraising efforts, to grow the fund and allow it to support a greater proportion of the protected areas in the southern Caucasus countries. The main focus of CNF's fundraising efforts over the project period was European bilateral and multilateral donor agencies. In 2011, the fund secured €5.5 million from the German government, in the form of a 20-year sinking fund. Over the project period, the fund pursued other funding opportunities, and is on the verge of securing €7 million from a bilateral agency, and in exploratory discussions with a number of others.

CEPF support also enabled the fund to explore funding opportunities with individual and corporate donors. While the potential of these donors as a long term funding source has not yet been fully realized, CNF has had modest success, with contributions by two banks in Georgia and one in Armenia, plus a single individual donor. The main target of the fund remains the hydrocarbon industry in Azerbaijan, which is now a more realistic target with the recent expansion of the fund's grant making into this country. Overall, the fund is moving in the right direction, in the face of a challenging economic climate. CNF's endowment had reached €16 million by June 2012, having started at €7 million.

CEPF has awarded two consolidation grants to World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which is the international conservation NGO with the largest program in the hotspot. The largest of these grants aims to enhance the ecological integrity of the Greater Caucasus corridor by establishing Khevsureti Key Biodiversity Area as a national park. At the landscape level, the establishment of Khevsureti National Park would create a connecting bridge between Tusheti National Park in the east and Kazbegi National Park in the west. This would be the final link in an unbroken chain of protected areas that would span over 300 kilometers of the central section of the Greater Caucasus corridor, and provide a protected area landscape of sufficient scale to maintain large-scale ecosystem processes, support viable populations of landscape species (such as Caucasian leopard, brown bear, bezoar goat and European lynx) and provide resilience to the future impacts of climate change. The new national park would also link to Ingushsky Sanctuary and Erzi Nature Reserve to the north, in the Russian part of the corridor, thereby facilitating movement of wildlife across the international border and creating opportunities for transboundary cooperation.

The formal gazettal process for Khevsureti National Park was not completed during the initial investment period, and, consequently, it remains the only site in the pivotal central section of the Greater Caucasus corridor to lack basic infrastructure and management systems. Part of the explanation for the slower progress with protected area establishment at Khevsureti is the fact that baseline socio-economic surveys revealed the presence of around 250 families in the wider area, which argued for a gradual, consultative approach, to ensure that conservation goals were pursued in ways supportive of the livelihood needs of local communities. Following extensive consultations with the relevant authorities and the communities themselves, it was decided to

propose the 30,000 hectare core of the 117,000 hectare Pshav-Khevsureti planning territory as a national park, and the consolidation grant is supporting the necessary activities, including consultations with concerned stakeholders to develop a management and zoning plan, demarcation of boundaries, capacity building for the new national park management authority and provision of alternative livelihoods for local communities as a trust-building measure.

Over the first year of the project, the focus has been on conducting the necessary surveys, planning and consultations to develop a formal proposal for establishment of Khevsureti National Park, in the form of a draft law for submission to the Georgian parliament. Consultations have been undertaken on multiple occasions with concerned communities and local authorities. The local communities and authorities strongly support the national park proposal, as they view it as an opportunity to bring tourism to a remote area with few alternative development options. The regional authorities are also supportive and, fortunately, there are no conflicting development projects. Based on these consultations, a draft law was prepared but it was not submitted to parliament immediately, pending the outcome of the general election in October 2012.

A draft boundary and zoning plan has been prepared for the national park, and a GIS map prepared and agreed with local stakeholders. The park boundary excludes all villages and their arable land. The next step will be for the boundaries to be demarcated on the ground and registered with the State Cadastral Department but this can only take place after the law on establishment of Khevsureti National Park has been passed. Also in the next period, a management plan will be developed for the national plan and capacity building will be provided to its staff. These activities will be complemented by outreach and trust building activities for inhabitants of the buffer zone. A baseline socio-economic assessment suggests that bee-keeping and tourism development may be suitable activities for CEPF support but this will be subject to feasibility studies and market assessments.

The second CEPF consolidation grant to WWF has similar goals to the first in that it aims to enhance the integrity of the East Lesser Caucasus corridor by establishing Gnishik Community Managed Sanctuary. During the initial investment phase, CEPF made significant investments in the Armenia part of the East Lesser Caucasus corridor, including strengthening the management of two existing nature reserves (Khosrov and Shikahogh), and supporting the establishment of two new protected areas (Arevik National Park and Zangezur Sanctuary). To link these investments together, a feasibility assessment was carried out for the establishment of a new protected area within Noravank Key Biodiversity Area, called Gnishik.

The formal gazettal process for Gnishik protected area was not completed during the initial investment period, and, consequently, it remains the only one of the five sites where CEPF invested in the corridor to lack basic infrastructure and management systems. Following extensive consultations with the relevant authorities and four communities that use the site for livestock grazing, cultivation and other purposes, it was agreed to pursue a new management model: a community-managed sanctuary. The purpose of the consolidation grant is to establish Gnishik Sanctuary as a model community-managed protected area, and thereby reinforce and sustain the results of earlier CEPF investments in the East Lesser Caucasus corridor.

Over the first year, the focus of the project has been on baseline data collection and community consultations regarding the boundaries, zoning plan and management plan for the protected area. This work appears to be progressing well, although the real tests will come in the second year of the project, when the communities will be asked to endorse the establishment of the sanctuary and agree on ownership arrangements for the land within it. To facilitate community engagement during the establishment process and as a basis for community management of the protected area

in the long term, the project has assisted the four local communities to set up the ‘Gnishik Inter-community Nature Protection Fund’, which is intended ultimately to become the legal landowner of the sanctuary. The project has also assisted the four communities to develop a support zone development plan, which provides a platform for other donors to invest in livelihood improvement. While WWF is exploring options to leverage support from donors for the implementation of the plan, the CEPF consolidation grant will fund some initial activities under the plan, as a trust-building measure. The activities to be supported with CEPF funding will be selected in consultation with the communities before the end of 2012.

The scope of the fourth consolidation grant, to Missouri Botanical Garden, is relatively modest compared with the other three. It aims to publish two documents prepared during the initial investment phase: a Red List of the endemic plants of the Caucasus Region; and a regional plant conservation strategy for the Caucasus. When the initial investment period began, only a single species of plant was assessed as globally threatened on the IUCN Red List. This is surprising because the Caucasus is designated as a hotspot because of its importance for plant conservation. The major information gap that existed with regard to the conservation status of plants was a major barrier to effective conservation action for the region’s botanical diversity, and it was to address this gap that CEPF supported a project to undertake plant Red List assessments. The project made tremendous progress: Red List assessments were completed for 1,164 Caucasus endemic plant taxa, of which three-fifths were evaluated as globally threatened.

According to the project design, it was intended that a hard-copy of the Red List of the endemic plants of the Caucasus be printed and disseminated among key audiences in the region. However, the project encountered a number of delays, and it was not possible to complete the final project outputs within the lifetime of the project. To make the results of the project as widely accessible as possible the consolidation grant was awarded. It will support the preparation and publication of the two main outputs of original CEPF grant, namely a hard copy of the Red List of Caucasus endemic plants and a regional plant conservation strategy for the hotspot. The Red List will be an indispensable reference for conservationists, researchers and government planners on the conservation status of Caucasus endemic plants, whereas the regional plant conservation strategy will be a valuable advocacy tool, which can be used to galvanize conservation action, promote strengthened legal protection of threatened plant species, and leverage funding for plant conservation.

The text, images, maps and appendices of both documents have been finalized, with input from botanists in the six countries of the hotspot, brought together as the IUCN/SSC Caucasus Plant Red List Authority. The contents have also been thoroughly edited, for consistency and scientific content, by Missouri Botanical Garden staff. The Red List is currently in the publication queue at Missouri Botanical Garden press, and is expected to be published during the first half of 2013. Progress with the regional plant conservation strategy is a little less far advanced: a draft of the strategy has been circulated to stakeholders for comment but still requires final editing and graphic design before it can be published.

## **Collaboration with CEPF Donor Partners**

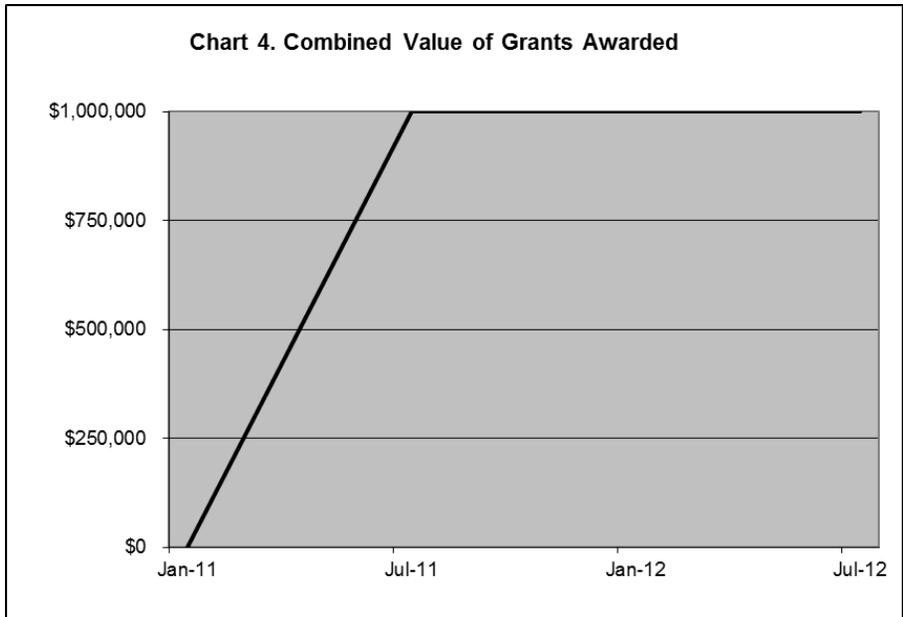
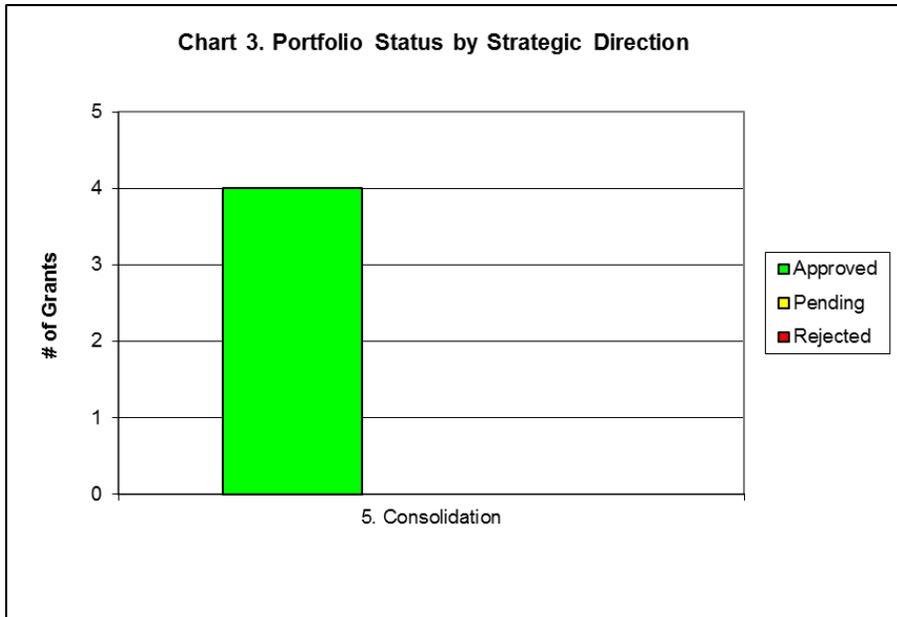
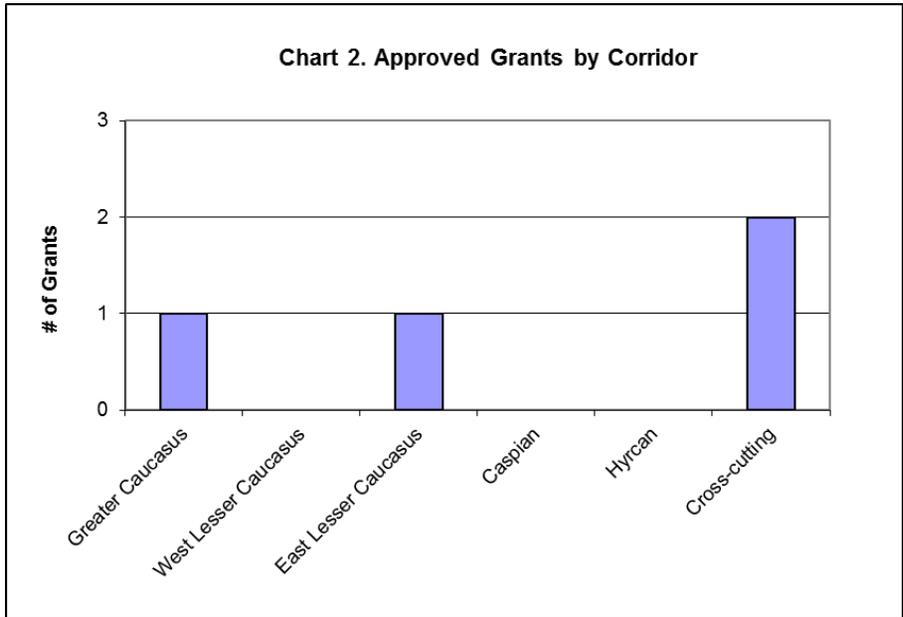
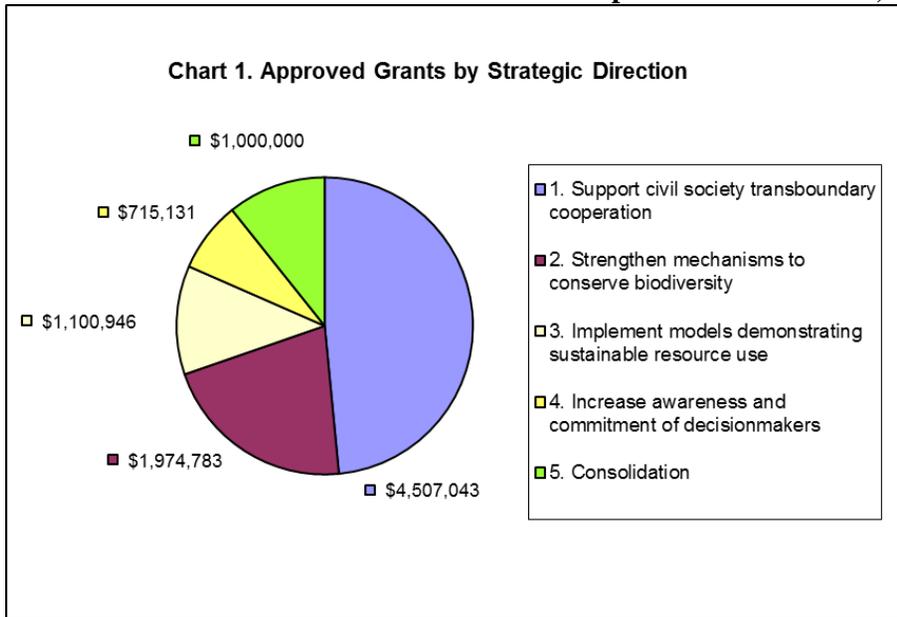
Two of the consolidation grants have close links to investments by CEPF donors. The grant to CNF helped support the operating and fundraising costs of the fund, which was capitalized in part by the Global Conservation Fund at Conservation International. The consolidation grant helped CNF implement a successful fundraising strategy, thereby helping leverage the investment by the Global Conservation Fund significantly. The consolidation grant to WWF for the project at Gnishik Sanctuary helped leverage an investment at the same site under the GEF-funded

Developing the Protected Area System of Armenia project, managed by UNDP. The GEF funds are targeted towards strengthening the capacity and management of the new protected area, including through construction of key infrastructure, such as a visitors center and headquarters building, and implementation of a visitor education program.

## **Conclusion**

In spite of a delay between the close of the initial investment period and the start of the consolidation phase, as soon as the consolidation program for the Caucasus Hotspot had been finalized, solicitation and award of consolidation grants proceeded rapidly and the grants are all making good progress. The one grant to have ended thus far appears to have achieved its objectives, and helped underpin the long-term financial sustainability of many CEPF investments in the establishment and strengthening of protected areas in the southern Caucasus. The three grants that remain active all appear to be on target and to be making important contributions to securing the results of CEPF investments during the initial phase. Overall, anecdotal evidence, supported by observations during the site visits, indicates that CEPF investments to date have made significant, enduring impacts, both in terms of strengthened conservation on the ground, at site and landscape scales, and in terms of the capacity of civil society organizations to engage in biodiversity conservation. A more systematic assessment of the sustained impacts of CEPF investment in the Caucasus should be undertaken towards the end of the consolidation phase, after 10 years of CEPF investments in the hotspot.

**Charts – CEPF Investment in the Caucasus Hotspot as of November 1, 2012**



## Annex 1 – Update of the Logical Framework for Consolidation in the Caucasus Biodiversity Hotspot

Objective	Targets	Progress
<p>Reinforce and sustain the conservation gains achieved as a result of previous CEPF investment in the Caucasus Hotspot.</p>	<p>Long-term financing mechanism for Southern Caucasus protected areas in place and providing grants to at least three CEPF priority sites per year.</p> <p>Two protected areas totaling around 68,000 hectares legally designated, with essential management structures and capacity in place.</p> <p>Two publications on endemic plant conservation published and disseminated to at least 200 stakeholders in government, civil society and the private sector.</p> <p>At least \$1 million leveraged for long-term financing of CEPF conservation outcomes.</p>	<p>A long-term financing mechanism is in place for Southern Caucasus protected areas, providing grants to 11 protected areas (including eight CEPF priority sites), covering a total of 441,414 hectares.</p> <p>Work is underway to designate and establish two protected areas: Khevsureti National Park (approx. 30,000 hectares); and Gnishik Community Managed Sanctuary (12,200 hectares).</p> <p>Advanced drafts of a Red List of the Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region and a Caucasus Plants Conservation Strategy have been prepared, and both will be published and disseminated in 2013.</p> <p>No reported progress yet.</p>
Intermediate Outcomes	Intermediate Indicators	Progress
<p><b>Outcome 1:</b> CEPF investments in expanding and strengthening the protected area systems of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia sustained through consolidation of CPAF as a long-term financing mechanism.</p> <p>Allocation: \$360,000</p>	<p>Program development of CPAF complete, and fund operational in Azerbaijan.</p> <p>Multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental funding agencies contribute at least €5 million towards CPAF's endowment.</p> <p>Private sector companies contribute at least €500,000 towards CPAF's endowment.</p> <p>CEPF priority sites in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan receive at least two, two and one CPAF grants, respectively.</p>	<p>Program development of the renamed Caucasus Nature Fund (CNF) is complete and the fund is operational in Azerbaijan.</p> <p>CNF has secured €5.5 million and is close to securing a further €7 million in new funding from bilateral agencies.</p> <p>During 2012, CNF raised €210,000 from private and corporate donors.</p> <p>During 2012, CNF awarded €281,000 to six protected areas in Armenia, €437,000 to four protected areas in Georgia and €92,000 to one protected area in Azerbaijan; all but three of these (Erebuni State Reserve, Lake Arpi National Park and Zikatar Sanctuary in Armenia) are CEPF priority sites.</p>

<p><b>Outcome 2:</b> CEPF investments in the Greater Caucasus corridor sustained through gazettal of Khevsureti as a protected area, and establishment of essential management plans, structures and capacity.</p> <p>Allocation: \$440,000</p>	<p>All communities and local authorities covered by Khevsureti protected area and buffer zone consulted about and approve establishment of new protected area.</p> <p>Khevsureti National Park formally gazetted under the Georgian Law on the Protected Area System.</p> <p>Protected area boundaries agreed with local stakeholders, demarcated on the ground and registered with the State Cadastre.</p> <p>Basic management capacity in place for the new protected area, including staff capacity, essential equipment, nature trails and interpretation materials.</p> <p>Protected area management plan and three-year operational plan approved by the relevant governmental bodies.</p> <p>At least 40 percent of buffer zone inhabitants show increased support for protected area compared with start of project.</p>	<p>All concerned communities and local authorities have been consulted about the establishment of the new protected area and are supportive</p> <p>A draft law on establishment and management of Khevsureti National Park has been prepared but not yet submitted to parliament, pending results of the general election.</p> <p>A GIS map showing national park boundaries has been prepared and agreed with local stakeholders. The boundaries have not yet been demarcated or registered, pending passing of the law.</p> <p>Capacity building will only take place after the protected area has been formally gazetted.</p> <p>Protected area management planning will only proceed after the protected area has been formally gazetted.</p> <p>Outreach activities for buffer zone inhabitants only began in 2012 and trust-building activities will begin only in 2013; there has not been sufficient time to observe changes in support.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 3:</b> CEPF investments in the East Lesser Caucasus corridor sustained through gazettal of Gnishik as the first model community-managed sanctuary in the corridor, and establishment of essential management plans, structures and capacity.</p> <p>Allocation: \$160,000</p>	<p>All communities and local authorities covered by Gnishik protected area and buffer zone consulted about and approve establishment of new protected area.</p> <p>Community-based protected area management plan, zoning plan and sustainable natural resource use plans approved by local communities and relevant government bodies.</p>	<p>All concerned communities and local authorities have been consulted about the establishment of the new protected area and are supportive in principle.</p> <p>Draft management, zoning and buffer zone development plans have been prepared but still need to be finalized to incorporate feedback from communities and local authorities and approved by them.</p>

	<p>Gnishik Community Managed Sanctuary formally gazetted under Armenia’s protected area law.</p> <p>Basic management capacity in place for the new protected area, including community ranger capacity and essential equipment.</p> <p>At least 40 percent of buffer zone inhabitants show increased support for protected area compared with start of project.</p> <p>Nature trails opened to the public and interpretation materials published.</p>	<p>A final decision on the management category (sanctuary or protected landscape) has not yet made by stakeholders; formal gazettal is only required for sanctuaries.</p> <p>Training and equipment provision will only proceed once the protected area has been established.</p> <p>Outreach and awareness raising activities for buffer zone activities only began in mid-2012; there has not been sufficient time to observe changes in support.</p> <p>Nature trails and interpretation materials will only be developed once the protected area has been established.</p>
<p><b>Outcome 4:</b> CEPF investments in filling major knowledge gaps with regard to endemic plant species consolidated by publishing the Red List of the Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region and the Caucasus Plants Conservation Strategy, and communicating them to all key stakeholders in the hotspot.</p> <p>Allocation: \$40,000</p>	<p>Red List of the Endemic Plants of the Caucasus Region published.</p> <p>Caucasus Plants Conservation Strategy published.</p> <p>At least 200 key stakeholders in the Caucasus receive copies of the publications.</p>	<p>The final editing of the text and appendices has been completed and the book is currently in a publication queue at Missouri Botanical Garden Press.</p> <p>A draft of the strategy has been circulated to stakeholders in the region for comment before moving to final editing, graphic design and printing.</p> <p>Neither publication has yet been printed.</p>
<b>Strategic Funding Summary</b>	<b>Amount</b>	
<b>Spending Authority</b>	\$1,000,000	