

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	African Wildlife Foundation
Project Title:	Protecting Murchison Falls National Park's Buffer Zone through Conservancy Management.
Grant Number:	CEPF-109072
CEPF Region:	Eastern Afromontane
Strategic Direction:	2 Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot.
Grant Amount:	
Project Dates:	July 01, 2018 - October 31, 2019
Date of Report:	November 30, 2019

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

List each partner and explain how they were involved with the project.

The following partners were engaged, and a description of how they were involved is attached to this report.

- 1. Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)**
- 2. Local Government**
- 3. Murchison Community Conservancy (MCC) Members**
- 4. Youth (Men & Women):**
- 5. Local landowners (non-MCC members):**
- 6. Women and Men:**
- 7. Other development partners in the landscape**
- 8. Cultural Leaders (Elders) (Men & Women)**
- 9. Settlers (legal) (Men & Women):**

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

In 2015, when a group of landowners neighboring MFNP approached AWF for help in establishing a conservancy on their land, the thought to them then was it would be a straight forward process as the main asset required was the land, which they had and had offered. During the initial discussions, it became clear to them that a lot more was involved. There needed to have a governance system in place with a guiding constitution, management plan, business plan and as it's a wildlife-based conservancy there was a need for a wildlife

monitoring and reporting plan. To have all these in place takes time and most importantly resources both technical and financial. AWF with the funds then managed to facilitate the election of a 9-member interim Conservancy Executive Committee (CEC) and also led the landowners through the process of developing and ratifying the constitution. This was however the furthest the process could be pushed with the available support.

With the CEPF funding through the *"Protecting Murchison Falls National Park's Buffer Zones through Conservancy Management"* grant, the conservancy was greatly boosted and now has a fully instituted and trained management team, with a managerial capacity of 15 executive committee members up from the previous 9 interim committee team, with a general management and business plans, recruited and trained community scouts who are protecting wildlife, environment, and resources within the conservancy, and outside the protected area in general. The community scouts were also trained to boost the operations of the conservancy especially in stemming illegal activities (including wildlife poaching) and conducting ecological monitoring. The conservancy was also supported to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Murchison Falls National Park which spells out the relationship between the two on the conservation of the area and also on joint monitoring. This MoU is also a crucial document for the conservancy as it makes the conservancy a recognized entity with the Uganda Wildlife Authority, as a partner in conservation. The conservancy was also legally registered with the local government and at National level as a community-based organization. As a result of all this, Murchison Community Conservancy habitat now boost of better protection and is now a secure buffer zone, dispersal area for Murchison Falls National Park. This area is a migratory corridor for wildlife, especially elephants from MFNP and other key species, and with the status quo created by this project, this would stay the same which will lead to landowners directly benefitting for the wildlife as spelled out by the business plan which is hinged on wildlife presence within the conservancy.

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Memorandum of Understanding between UWA/MFNP and MAFC signed and operational by October 2021	The project facilitated the process and the signing of an MoU that is to guide on conservation issues that MCC and the park can support each other on and eventually lead to the conservation of the buffer zone that MCC provides for the MFNP Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). The MoU also specifically outlines how UWA rangers who patrol MFNP will work in collaboration with conservancy scouts by conducting joint patrols, aimed at strengthening the collaboration between the Park and the Conservancy as well as develop the skills and capacity of the community scouts as they patrol alongside well-trained and experienced UWA rangers.
Enhanced conservation of Murchison Falls National Park, as a result of the better management of MAFC	The conservancy management was enhanced and now has a fully instituted and trained management team, with a managerial capacity of 15 executive committee members up from the previous 9 interim committee team, with a general management and business plans, recruited and trained community scouts who are protecting wildlife, environment, and resources within the conservancy, and outside the protected area in general. The community scouts were also trained to boost the operations of the conservancy especially in stemming illegal activities and conducting ecological monitoring. The conservancy was also supported to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Murchison

	Falls National Park which spells out the relationship between the two on the conservation of the area and also on joint monitoring. As a result of all this, Murchison Community Conservancy habitat now boost of better protection and is now a secure buffer zone, dispersal area for Murchison Falls National Park. This area is now a safe a migratory corridor for wildlife, especially elephants from MFNP and other key species.
Accrual of revenue from tourism and tourism enterprises for MAFC	As this is a long term impact, there was no revenue generated during the project life but the project facilitated process that would guarantee the conservancy generates incomes for its members and also ensuring equitable sharing. The business (enterprise) plan was developed with a goal of developing and promoting wildlife tourism-based enterprises that enhance wildlife conservation and peoples' livelihoods in and around the Murchison Community Conservancy. The majority of the activities for the proposed wildlife-based enterprises need the private sector involvement and availability of external funds. One of the key enterprises envisaged is the setting up of an 80 beds accommodation facility to target mainly students visiting the area, an enterprise the AWF is supporting with a parallel grant. The community will also be encouraged to take advantage of the presence of local and international guests expected in the area, to share cultural experiences, sell curio items, and offer guiding services. The financial projections show that these are viable projects if implemented and well managed.
Institutional capacity of MAFC improved	All the structures and guiding documents have been set up and developed respectively for the conservancy. The conservancy by the end of the project life was being governed basing on these guiding documents which were developed and ratified by the membership. What is now left, and which is out of the project life, is whether the instituted checks and balances will continue to be adhered too.

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
Improved governance of the MAFC leadership committee, a clear business plan for the MAFC, trained scouts, and conducting patrols lead to the improved management of 11,000 hectares of the conservancy by October 2019	Murchison Community Conservancy now boos of all its structures functional with a governance system in place with a guiding constitution, management plan, business plan and as it's a wildlife-based conservancy it also boosts of a SMART/ CyberTracker wildlife monitoring and reporting system. This improved governance system instituted by this project has led to an increase in the subscription of membership to the conservancy from the initial 53 members at the star of the project to now 164 landowners owning land totaling up to 27,245ha from the initial 11,000ha, an increase of over 40% in just two years.
Institutional, managerial, and operational capacity of MAFC improved, as indicated by a business plan, training for 15 management committee members, and training for 15 scouts	A 15 member conservancy executive committee underwent trainings in fiance management and auditing, as well as leadership and management training, and are now capably running the affaires of the conservancy guided by the management and business plans. support is recruitment of wildlife scouts and building the capacity to stem illegal activities (including wildlife poaching) and conducting ecological monitoring. A total of 15 community wildlife scouts were also recruited, (on an equal employer and non discriminatory against/basing on gender, religion, age or any other characteristics as stipulated by The Uganda Employment Act, 2006) trained in wildlife and related legislation; monitoring and survey techniques; anti-poaching and patrolling techniques; prevention of illegal activities (e.g. wildlife poaching, illegal farming/grazing); data recording; map reading and use of compass/GPS; and community

	<p>relations. The Community wildlife Scouts were also trained in using SMART/Cybertracker, - an ecological monitoring tool AWF is using across the continent (including Uganda), designed to help protected area and conservancy managers to better plan, evaluate and implement their activities pro-actively and to promote good governance.</p>
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Describe the successes or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

One of the main successes of the project was the institution of the scouting system. Since June 2019, the MCC scouts have been conducting patrols as part of efforts stem illegal activities (including wildlife poaching) and conducting ecological monitoring to monitor and protect wildlife, ensure that zonation schemes and by-laws under the General Management Plan are adhered to, while simultaneously educating and engaging with the local population. The community has embraced the scouts and are now always called upon for a response during wildlife, especially elephants, incursions into their farmlands. This is eventually securing the buffer zone for the MFNP KBA by protecting important wildlife habitat/dispersal area/corridor.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Because of the efforts to establish the Murchison Community Conservancy, a private entity called Paragon Group initiated the establishment of Uganda’s first ever privately-owned conservancy called River Aswa Wildlife Conservancy. The conservancy measures 18sq km in size and is located on the northern bank of Aswa River at Arana village, Nyamokino Sub County, Nwoya District, on the immediate north of the Murchison Community Conservancy. This initiative was a result of activities implemented in the MCC like the governance training and business plan development process which had representation from the River Aswa Wildlife Conservancy team. This, therefore, increased the total land brought under improved management by protecting the wildlife habitat to 29,045 hectares.

PROJECT COMPONENTS AND PRODUCTS/DELIVERABLES

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Capacity building for 15 MAFC committee Members	1.1	Report on training for 15 conservancy members in governance and wildlife management , including agenda, date, time, and participants (by gender)	<p>15 community members were selected and recruited as MAFC Community scouts. These were then given training by UWA instructors in basic tactics and patrol training (wildlife and related legislation, anti-poaching and patrolling techniques, prevention of illegal activities, and community relations) over series of 4 days. At the end of the training, the scouts were passed out in a ceremony graced by the MAFC executive committee, AWF country director and the MFCA Chief Warden. The scouts were also equipped with field items to help them in performing their new roles as Murchison Aswa Falls Conservancy Community Wildlife scouts, which include; field boots and stockings, rain coats, hats, whistles (assortment), torches with dry cells, water bottles, back packs.</p> <p>Please refer to training report and materials attached.</p>
1	Capacity building for 15 MAFC committee Members	1.2	Report on training of 15 Conservancy Committee members in financial management , including agenda, date, location, and participants (by gender)	<p>15 MCC conservancy executive members were assisted to develop knowledge and skills in the finance field as it relates to conservancy governance responsibilities. From this training, the committee members were introduced to the following management skills; basics of financial management; planning and controlling tools in financial management; decision making in financial management; finance in relation to procurement; procurement and financial controls in practice; financial contracts and agreements; grants and grant accounting; compliance and audit; and analysis beyond financial statements.</p> <p>The training was structured to cover two days and it provided valuable insight on important financial areas and extremely relevant for decision making. Workshop took place in Anaka, located in Murchison which is central location and easily accessible by all the members. Day 1 members were trained about financial managements and Day 2 covered the compliance requirements in Procurement and contracts and agreements</p> <p>Please find attached the training report for more details.</p>

2	Developing a MAFC business plan	2.1	Procurement documentation on recruitment of business planning consultant	An enterprise and business plan development consultant was procured who guided the conservancy executive and members in the development of the conservancy business plan. The consultant was procured with in the stipulated CEPF guidelines, as per details attached this report
2	Developing a MAFC business plan	2.2	Business plan for MAFC	<p>The business plan for MCC was developed from targeted document reviews and a consultative process involving key stakeholders within and outside Murchison Community Conservancy, Anaka district. The key stakeholders consulted were: Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) field and Headquarters management staff, AWF staff, district and sub-county local governments of Anaka, private hotel owners and safaris, MAFC management committee and members of the conservancy.</p> <p>The vision of this business plan is: "A financially self-sustaining conservancy with well-protected natural resources, wildlife and landscape attracting many tourists and where communities derive high incomes". The mission is "To develop and promote wildlife tourism, based enterprises that enhance wildlife conservation and peoples' livelihoods in and around Rurambira conservancy".</p> <p>This plan was however developed with funding from a parallel project called "Support in the Development of Community Conservancies in Uganda in collaboration with the US Forest Service," which is supporting two pioneer conservancies in Uganda, i.e. Rurambira Conservancy and Karenga Community Wildlife Area, which is now being managed as a conservancy.</p> <p>Please find a copy of the developed business plan attached to this report.</p>
3	Capacity enhancement of community scouts	3.1	Report on recruitment/selection of 15 Community wildlife scouts, including process of selection, names,	The project, in partnership with the UWA/MFNP Warden community conservation, supported the conservancy executive committee on the recruitment and selection of youth, women, and men from Murchison Community conservancy to work as conservancy community scouts. A total of 15 scouts were selected in a non-discriminatory and equal employer manner and emphasis was put not to discriminate against; gender, religion, age or any other characteristics as stipulated by The Uganda Employment Act, 2006. The key qualities

			gender	<p>considered during recruitment included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to commit oneself to the job • Responsible, mature and respected by the local community • Able to follow instructions, training and guidelines • Able to accurately report facts and events • Know the Murchison Aswa Falls Conservancy area well enough to return to any site • In a position to freely receive information from the local community. • Able to use a smartphone • Have preferably an Ordinary Level Uganda Certificate of Education or equivalent <p>Please find attached the recruitment notice and training report.</p>
3	Capacity enhancement of community scouts	3.2	15 MAFC wildlife scouts equipped/supplied.	<p>The project supported the conservancy community wildlife scouts with these items to help them in performing their new roles as Murchison Community Conservancy Wildlife scouts, which included; Field boots and stockings, Rain Coats, Hats, Whistles (Assortment), Torches with Dry cells, Water bottles and Back Packs. After the second training in using SMART/Cybertracker, the project also provided the scouts with these items to better carry their your monitoring tasks; Field Rugged smart phones for recording data, Laptop and external hard disk drive for field data analysis and reporting, Garmin GPS handsets, Binoculars, Cameras and Field First aid kits.</p> <p>Please find attached the procurement documents and hand over pictures.</p>
3	Capacity enhancement of community scouts	3.3	15 MAFC wildlife scouts trained in basic patrol techniques and ecological monitoring.	<p>As part of building the capacity of the MCC wildlife scouts to stem illegal activities (including wildlife poaching) and conducting ecological monitoring, The community wildlife scouts were trained in wildlife and related legislation; monitoring and survey techniques; anti-poaching and patrolling techniques; prevention of illegal activities (e.g. wildlife poaching, illegal farming/grazing); data recording; map reading and use of compass/GPS; and community relations. The Community wildlife Scouts were also trained in using SMART/Cybertracker, - an ecological monitoring tool AWF is using across the continent (including Uganda), designed to help protected area and conservancy managers to better plan, evaluate and implement their activities pro-actively and to promote good governance.</p>

				The trainings were divided into two of basic patrol techniques and ecological monitoring. Please refer to the attached reports for details.
4	Developing Operational procedures and implementing patrols in MAFC	4.1	One Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) developed for MAFC scouts and patrols.	<p>Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) were developed for the operation of scouts patrols, printed and handed over. These were based on a monitoring system that uses the SMART/ Cybertracker tool for field monitoring and data management. These procedures emphasize the three key pillars that the community scouts need to know planning and conducting patrols, which are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. understand the need for patrols (why) and what to know when planning protection activities (what)? 2. Understand the type of data required. 3. Understand what the data model in CyberTracker captures. <p>Attached is a copy of the SOPs.</p>
4	Developing Operational procedures and implementing patrols in MAFC	4.2	Summary of patrol reports (results from SMART program)	<p>Since June 2019, the MCC scouts have been conducting patrols as part of efforts to stem illegal activities (incl. wildlife poaching) and conducting ecological monitoring to monitor and protect wildlife, ensure that zonation schemes and by-laws under the General Management Plan are adhered to, while simultaneously educating and engaging with the local population.</p> <p>Please find attached summary reports from patrol data run from the SMART program.</p>
4	Developing Operational procedures and implementing patrols in MAFC	4.3	AWF report on best practice and lessons learnt shared on MAFC and UWA MFNP collaboration	As the MoU on collaboration between MCC and UWA/MFNP was signed towards the end of the project, there have been no opportunity to implement and report on some of the collaboration areas and lessons from there in, apart from the MoU itself. A copy of the MoU detailing this collaboration is attached.
5	Process Framework	5.1	Semi-Annual Report on Process Framework	This report was drafted and is attached to this report too.
6	Strengthening of AWF Uganda.	6.1	Completion of baseline and endline CEPF Gender tracking Tool.	This tool was filled and is attached as part of this report.
6	Strengthening	6.2	Completion	These baseline were completed and attached to this

	of AWF Uganda.		of Baseline and Endline CEPF CSTT	report.
6	Strengthening of AWF Uganda.	6.3	Article Submitted to RIT	This article was done and submitted to RIT. A copy is attached to this report.

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

- 1. Murchison Community Business Plan.**
- 2. Leadership and management training report.**
- 3. Finance training for non-finance managers.**
- 4. Murchison Community Conservancy General Management Plan (2019 - 2029).**
- 5. Community Scouts Standard Operating Procedures and Cybertracker booklet.**
- 6. Murchison Community Conservancy Community Scout Programme Training Manual.**
- 7. 5-year Memorandum of Understanding between UWA (MFNP) and Murchison Community. Conservancy on collaboration in wildlife conservation in Murchison Community Conservancy area and environs.**

LESSONS LEARNED

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building.

Consider lessons that would inform:

- Project design process (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)
- Project implementation (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)
- Any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

- 1. Consider the problem facing the community. Human-wildlife conflict is a serious issue affecting communities living with wildlife that a conservancy can provide long term solutions. For example, if there is a direct conflict between humans and wildlife (e.g., elephants entering a garden; bush animals bringing ticks/disease/water hole competition to stock animals), a conservancy can offer a solution: accounting, compensation, patrols. Conservancies that only, indirectly, lead to community benefits, are less likely to succeed as people need to see how a conservancy will solve their problem directly.**
- 2. Consider existing organizational structures in place. Murchison Community Conservancy had a five-member sport hunting association that had to be co-opted into the broader body that became the conservancy. In another landscape, Kidepo, where AWF is also setting up a Karenga Community**

Wildlife Area to be managed as a conservancy, there exists a community structure on which the conservancy is being built. AWF has a blueprint for what the "conservancy organization" should be, but you adapt it to what is already present

- 3. Consider how we "sell" the concept of conservancies to government and communities. With high population growth in Uganda, the classic model for the creation of a gazetted park is not a politically viable option. The conservancy approach provides a "soft landing" that allows UWA to gain community support. Conservancy allows for a harmonious relationship instead of strict boundaries, fences, involuntary restrictions on access to resources**
- 4. Consider breaking down the many pieces of "conservancy creation" into fundable pieces, or into pieces that AWF could train others to do. For example, the creation of a conservancy might be a 5-year, \$500,000 effort. But one piece is that assessment of existing organizational structures (e.g., sport hunting association). A law school or business school could work on that. Another piece is the "selling" of the conservancy concept to the community – a local CBO could do this.**
- 5. The governance structure and rules of the conservancy will depend on the land tenure; i.e. Gazetted under the state, Leasehold or Freehold**
- 6. Consider the social make-up of the people on the potential conservancy site – homogeneity makes it easier to create a functioning conservancy. Similar in; Wealth, Ethnicity, Political affiliation, Religion, Land-ownership and Source of income**

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

Summarize the successes or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

With the development of various documents during the project implementation lifetime, i.e a) Murchison Community Business Plan, b) Leadership and management training report, c) Murchison Community Conservancy General Management Plan, d) Community Scouts Standard Operating Procedures and Cybertracker booklet, e) Murchison Community Conservancy Community Scout Programme Training Manual and f) 5-year Memorandum of Understanding between UWA (MFNP) and Murchison Community Conservancy on collaboration, these form very key replication guides for similar wildlife based conservancies in Uganda and also offer guidance in other landscapes as well. These are already being used by a private entity called Paragon Group that has initiated the establishment of Uganda's first ever privately-owned conservancy called River Aswa Wildlife Conservancy. The conservancy measures 18sqkm in size, and is located on the northern bank of Aswa River at Arana village, Nyamokino Sub County, Nwoya District, on the immediate north of Murchison Community Conservancy. This initiative was as a result of activities implemented in the MCC like the governance trainings and business plan development process which had representation from the River Aswa Wildlife Conservancy team. This therefore increased the total land brought under improved management by protecting the wildlife habitat to 29,045 hectares

The community scouting system has been very effective with increasing support from the community, which is shown by the community's reliance on the conservancy scouts for addressing the Human-Wildlife conflicts especially caused by elephants, as opposed to retaliation attacks. This is a clear indication of sustainability of these efforts post-project life as the community has embraced the activities.

SAFEGUARDS

If not listed as a separate project component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental or pest management safeguards.

This is listed as a separate project document, and is attached.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Given that CEPF has a maximum period of 2 years for its large grants, it would be very helpful for the beneficiaries to be allowed to lock any unutilized funds at the end of the grants period to future activities. This will enable implementation of any pending activities whose implementation would have been as a result of out of control circumstances for the implementing partner or beneficiary.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

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

Total additional funding (US\$)

Type of funding

Provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of the following categories:

- A. Project co-financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)
- B. Grantee and partner leveraging (other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF-funded project)
- C. Regional/portfolio leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)

INFORMATION SHARING AND CEPF POLICY

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

1. Please include your full contact details (name, organization, mailing address, telephone number, email address) below.

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