

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
Project Title:	Indo-Burma II-1: Regional Implementation Team-Administration
Grant Number:	62997
CEPF Region:	Indo-Burma II
Strategic Direction:	11 Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through a regional implementation team
Grant Amount:	
Project Dates:	July 01, 2013 - April 30, 2020
Date of Report:	July 14, 2020

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

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

Our primary implementation partners were the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens (KFBG), based in Hong Kong, and the Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN), based in Yangon. KFBG is a leading conservation NGO in China, with a particularly strong presence in Hainan and the southern part of the country; it performed the RIT functions in the China portion of the hotspot throughout most of the duration of Phase 2 investment. MERN is a network of 29 environmental and social non-governmental organisations, first created in 2009 to help coordinate responses to the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis; it performed the RIT functions in Myanmar until mid-2018, when IUCN established its own country office in the country. Even after its formal role as the RIT had ended, MERN continued to be an important partner, assisting with networking and monitoring.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

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

The project made a significant contribution to the delivery of Strategic Directions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. Amongst other achievements, the small and large grants facilitated by the project accomplished the following:

- **SD 1: Supported interventions to conserve core populations of 32 priority species identified in the Ecosystem Profile;**
- **SD 2: Supported multiple initiatives to address the illegal wildlife trade, including the unraveling of a IWT network, development of innovative programmes to reduce consumer demand, and securing voluntary commitments from leading courier companies not to transport illegal wildlife products;**
- **SD 4: Piloted/replicated 17 community forests, community fisheries and community-managed protected areas;**
- **SD 6: Mainstreamed biodiversity by piloting six, biodiversity-friendly production initiatives (including certification and eco-labeling), such as "Ibis rice";**
- **SD 8: Significantly enhanced the capacity of local CSOs, through the provision of small grants, training, mentoring during monitoring missions, and the promotion of partnerships between international and local organisations.**

In addition, the project enabled the establishment of a robust RIT with a presence in all six countries of the hotspot, which drew upon IUCN's unique strengths, including its membership structure and the technical expertise available within its scientific commissions (Strategic Direction 11).

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of the goals of CEPF, as represented in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. 	Through its grant making programme, the RIT made a significant contribution to the delivery of Strategic Directions 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 11 in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. The RIT also helped raise awareness of CEPF and the Ecosystem Profile through the mid-term and final assessment workshops, the participation of RIT staff in national, regional and international fora, and through the RIT's communications activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment in Indo-Burma through a Regional Implementation Team. 	IUCN drew upon its unique structures and strengths to establish an effective and strategic Regional Implementation Team. The core team was based in the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, and consisted of the RIT Manager and Senior Advisor, supported by a Communications Officer and a Finance Officer. At the country level, National Coordinators (native language speakers) based within IUCN's country offices (or partner organisations) were identified to support and monitor the grant making process. National Advisory Committees were also established to help advise on the selection of grantees, composed of representatives from government, civil society, academia and funding organisations. Additional technical inputs (for example, related to the conservation of particular species or ecosystems) were sought when necessary from IUCN's global thematic programmes and the IUCN Species Survival Commission, the world's largest network of species experts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a Long-term Implementation Structure with a mandate to guide civil society in the region towards the goals and objectives of the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile and Long-term Vision 	Although this impact was not achieved in the way in which it was originally envisioned, the creation of the Lower Mekong Network and the establishment of the National Advisory Committees in each country have partially fulfilled this objective.

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective, transparent, and coordinated system for proposal solicitation and review 	The RIT established an effective and transparent systems for soliciting and reviewing proposals. Calls for proposals were

<p>implemented, which creates in-country ownership of the grant portfolio and engages a diverse range of local and international civil society organizations.</p>	<p>translated into the six national languages of the hotspot, and widely circulated via IUCN's networks. Proposals were initially screened by the RIT Manager. Proposals that did not meet basic eligibility criteria were rejected. All proposals received from IUCN Member organisations were sent for external review; in addition, some proposals were sent for external review when they addressed technical issues on which the RIT did not possess sufficient knowledge. National Advisory Committees (NACs) were constituted in each country, composed of government and civil society organisations. The NACs reviewed a subset of proposals where the RIT felt that there was a particular need for additional local knowledge and guidance. Based on all the information obtained, the RIT Manager then compiled a final shortlist, for review and endorsement by the RIT Senior Advisor and the CEPF Grants Director. In total, the RIT issued ten calls for proposals over the life of the project, and received and reviewed 1,056 LOIs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 100 small grants (each less than \$20,000) successfully awarded to a diverse range of local and international civil society organizations, addressing the investment priorities identified in the Ecosystem Profile. 	<p>The RIT awarded a total of 105 small grant contracts over the life of the project, with a cumulative value of US\$1.9 million. A particularly high proportion of the small grants (nearly 80%) went to local organisations.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impacts of funded projects in the region are effectively monitored. High-quality performance data, results, methodologies, and lessons learned are captured, synthesized, and distributed to key stakeholders. 	<p>The RIT carried out numerous Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MLE) missions to small grantees over the life of the project; these were designed to assess progress and monitor impacts, provide guidance and support as needed, and capture lessons learned. Grantees also reported impacts in the final technical reports, and contributions towards CEPF's global targets reported to the Secretariat. Project results and lessons learned were widely shared through a variety of media, including IUCN newsletters, the IUCN website, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and the dedicated knowledge sharing platform PANORAMA.</p>

Describe the successes or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The RIT met or exceeded the majority of its targets. In particular, the RIT:

- **Issued ten calls for proposals over the life of the programme;**
- **Received and reviewed 1,056 LOIs;**
- **Awarded 105 small grant contracts, with a total value of US\$1.9 million. A particularly high proportion of the small grants (nearly 80%) went to local organisations;**
- **Facilitated the award of 83 large grants, with a total value of US\$13.7 million;**
- **Built the capacity of local grantees, both through small grants targeted at Strategic Direction 8 and through the organisation of custom-designed capacity building events. Some 76 per cent of local grantees reported an increase in capacity;**
- **Played a key role in establishing and supporting the Lower Mekong Network.**

A particular success of the project was the extent to which it was able to communicate the availability of grant funding to a very wide array of organisations in the Indo-Burma Hotspot, by working through IUCN's country offices, membership structure and commissions, as well through the use of the IUCN website and social media. As a result, we received a very large number of LOIs, and were able to award a particularly high number of grants to local organisations. This did, however, lead to challenges further down the line; we

under-estimated the amount of support and capacity building that were required by local CSOs, and also under-estimated the amount of time required to administer and service grants. This, in turn, led to bottlenecks and a turn-around time that was longer than we had first envisioned. These lessons have been taken on board and will be incorporated into the design of any future phases of CEPF in the region. The RIT also found it challenging to engage with the private sector. Targets relating to the private sector were among the few targets not met by the project. One unexpected development which impacted negatively on the project was the introduction in 2018 of new legislation in China, which significantly restricted the ability of local CSOs to receive international funding. This ultimately led to the cancellation of five small grants in China.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

A number of unexpected positive impacts arose from the project. Perhaps the most important of these was the creation of the Lower Mekong Network, which provides a forum for information exchange and learning among some 50+ CSOs, international NGOs and funding agencies. The RIT played a key role in facilitating and supporting the creation of the network. For example, the RIT Manager served on the Working Group and participated in the annual meetings of the network. The RIT also provided substantial logistical and financial support with the organisation of the annual meetings.

Another important positive impact was the relationship that was fostered between the RIT and the McConnell Foundation. This ultimately led to the launch of a small grants programme in Lao PDR, modelled upon the CEPF experience.

PROJECT COMPONENTS AND PRODUCTS/DELIVERABLES

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.1	Established and coordinated process for solicitation of applications	<p>A full meeting of the RIT, including National Coordinators and representatives from KFBG and MERN, was organised in Bangkok at the start of the investment phase. This enabled all members of the RIT to understand their roles and responsibilities in project cycle management, from the solicitation of applications through to implementation and monitoring. Staff from the CEPF Secretariat also participated in the workshop, and provided an overview of CEPF, an introduction to the Ecosystem Profile, and initial training in the application of the environmental and social safeguards.</p> <p>As part of the solicitation process, a comprehensive contacts list was also prepared.</p>
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.2	Announcements of the availability of CEPF grants	<p>Calls for proposals were translated into the six national languages of the hotspot, and widely announced via the RIT's contact list and through IUCN's networks, country offices and a variety of media. As a result of these efforts, the RIT succeeded in reaching a particularly large and diverse audience. Over 1,000 proposals were received over the course of the project, the majority of them from local organisations.</p>
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.3	Publicized contents of the ecosystem profile and information about the application process	<p>Information about the Ecosystem Profile and the grant application process was made available on the IUCN and CEPF websites, and widely circulated through IUCN's networks, country offices and communications channels.</p>
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.4	Established schedules for the consideration of proposals at pre-determined intervals, including decision dates	<p>The dates, geographic scope, and thematic focus of the calls for proposals were jointly identified by the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat. Clear deadlines for the submission of proposals were established. Although the RIT originally had a goal of reaching a final decision on all proposals and issuing contracts within three to six months of the receipt of applications, the unexpectedly large volume of proposals made it infeasible to achieve this target.</p>

1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.5	Established and coordinated process for evaluation of applications	A robust and participatory process for evaluating proposals was established. All received proposals were initially screened by the RIT Manager for eligibility. A subset of the received proposals was subsequently shared with the National Advisory Committees (NACs) that were established in each of the six countries of the hotspot, composed of both government and civil society representatives; the NAC members reviewed the proposals together during a dedicated meeting, and provided recommendations on those that should receive funding. Some proposals, including all proposals from IUCN members as well as proposals of a highly technical or specialised nature, were sent to external experts for additional review.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.6	Evaluated Letters of Inquiry	On the basis of all the information received through the evaluation process described above, a final shortlist of evaluated LOIs was drawn up by the RIT Manager and discussed/agreed with the Senior Advisor and the CEPF Secretariat.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.7	Evaluated proposals	Full proposals (as opposed to LOIs) were only required in the case of large grants in excess of US\$ 20,000. The evaluation of these proposals was conducted by the CEPF Secretariat. The final shortlist was drawn up by the CEPF Grant Director and discussed and agreed with the RIT Manager.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.8	Facilitated technical advisory committee review, where appropriate (including convening a panel of experts)	In each country of the hotspot, National Advisory Committees were formed to assist with proposal review, composed of government and civil society representatives. Additional external reviews were arranged for proposals from IUCN members and proposals of a particularly technical nature.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.9	External reviews of all applications over \$250,000 or from IUCN members.	External reviews were arranged for all proposals received from IUCN members as well as for all proposals over \$250,000. In arranging these reviews, the RIT often drew upon the expertise available in IUCN's expert commissions, in particular, the Species Survival Commission.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.8	Demonstration of separate investment account in which the funding	As required, a separate bank account for the Small Grant Mechanism was established by IUCN at the beginning of the investment phase. Quarterly bank statements were submitted alongside the quarterly SGM financial reports.

			allocated by CEPF for Small Grants is deposited, and reports on the status of the account throughout the project	
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.9	Panel of experts to evaluate proposals	In each country, National Advisory Committees composed of government and civil society representatives were established to assist with the proposal review process. For selected proposals (e.g., those from IUCN Members and those requiring specialist technical knowledge) external reviews by independent experts were arranged.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.10	Documentation of regular project site visits to monitor and document grantee technical and financial performance. (Site visit approach, including method for project selection, to be agreed with CEPF Grant Director).	A Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MLE) template was developed at the start of the project and shared with all National Coordinators.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.11	Regular communication with grantees via email and telephone	The RIT Manager established regular communications with grantees, using a combination of email and Skype. In addition, IUCN's country offices and RIT partners (MERN and KFBG) played a particularly important role in liaising with grantees and communicating in their native languages.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.12	Sub-grantee technical and financial progress reports	Technical and financial progress reports from the project's two sub-grantees (MERN and KFBG) were received and reviewed by the RIT.
2	Manage a program of	2.13	Quarterly summary	Quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports were prepared and submitted by

	small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000		reports to the CEPF Secretariat	the RIT for review and approval by the CEPF Secretariat.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.1	Reports on data for portfolio-level indicators	Data on portfolio-level indicators was collated from grantees' reports and shared with the CEPF Secretariat on a regular basis.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.2	High quality performance data from grantees	Grantees submitted performance data largely through their technical progress reports. Additional information was gathered during the mid-term and final assessment workshops, as well as MLE missions.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.3	Inputs to CEPF Secretariat to monitor programmatic performance of grantees	Grantees' final reports were uploaded to the small grants records on Conservation Grants. Additional information on grantee performance was gathered by the CEPF Secretariat during its monitoring missions.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.4	Verified completion of products, deliverables, and short-term impacts by grantees	Deliverables were largely self-reported by grantees. However, deliverables were also monitored during MLE missions. Grantees were also requested to submit supplementary documents such as meeting minutes and workshop reports with their progress reports.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.10	Application information linked into the CEPF automated grants management system	Full proposals for large grants were submitted online via Conservation Grants. Although small grant applications were simply submitted by email and did not have to use the online system, subsequent documentation - including progress reports and tracking tools - were all uploaded to Conservation Grants.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and review	1.11	Decisions with the CEPF Secretariat on the award of all grant applications of \$20,000 and above	All decisions regarding the award of large grants (i.e., those in excess of \$20,000) were taken through a joint decision-making process involving the CEPF Secretariat and the RIT.
1	Establish and coordinate a process for proposal solicitation and	1.12	Communication with applicants that ensures applicants	The RIT responded to all queries received during the application process. In a number of countries (e.g., China), "road shows" were organised to provide potential applicants with information about CEPF and the application procedures. A set of

	review		are informed and fully understand the process	"Frequently Asked Questions" was also prepared and posted on the CEPF section of the IUCN website.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.1	Announced availability of CEPF small grants	Calls for proposals were translated into the six national languages of the hotspot, and widely announced through IUCN's networks, country offices and a variety of media. As a result of these efforts, the RIT succeeded in reaching a particularly large and diverse audience. Over 1,000 proposals were received over the course of the project, the majority of them from local organisations.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.2	Due diligence documentation ensuring sub-grantee applicant eligibility and capacity to comply with CEPF funding terms	Prior to receiving a grant, successful applicants were required to complete due diligence documentation using the standard IUCN due diligence template. Due diligence forms were reviewed by IUCN's Head of Finance in the Asia Regional Office. Additional measures were put into place for those grantees deemed to be of high risk (e.g., more frequent monitoring missions, more detailed financial reporting with copies of receipts).
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.3	Contracts of sub-grant awards	Contracts for all small grantees were prepared, reviewed and issued by the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, using IUCN's standard template for implementing partners. As part of this process, a considerable amount of time was spent working with grantees to refine their project logframes, so that there were clear, hierarchical linkages between activities, outputs and outcomes, and clearly defined (and where possible, quantified) deliverables.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.4	Demonstrated disbursement of funds to grantees	The RIT handled the disbursement of funds to all small grantees over the life of the project. Quarterly bank statements from the Small Grants Mechanism account were submitted to the CEPF Secretariat along with the quarterly financial reports.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.5	Demonstrated sub-grantee compliance with CEPF funding terms	Sub-grantee compliance was monitored through the review of technical and financial progress reports.
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.6	Documentation (monitoring, tracking) of grantee technical and	Small grantees were required to submit quarterly financial reports and six-monthly technical reports to the RIT.

			financial performance	
2	Manage a program of small grants, that is, grants of less than \$20,000	2.7	Inputs to the Secretariat to maintain the accuracy of the CEPF grants management database	For each small grant, the RIT uploaded progress reports, tracking tools, safeguard documents and other materials to Conservation Grants. Documentation was reviewed by the Grants Director to ensure completeness.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.5	Reviews of grantee financial reports in relation to programmatic performance	Grantees' financial reports were reviewed by IUCN's in-country finance officers and by the RIT Manager.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.6	Support to grantees to comply with requirements for completion of GEF tracking tools, including the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool	The RIT provided substantial support to grantees with the completion of relevant tracking tools. All small grantees were required to complete the Civil Society Tracking Tool at the start and end of their projects; this tool provided valuable insights into CEPF's capacity building achievements. In addition, all small grantees were required to complete the Gender Tracking Tool at the start and end of their grants. Those grantees working to improve the management of protected areas were required to complete the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT).
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.7	Support for a mid-term and final assessment of the CEPF portfolio	<p>The mid-term assessment workshop was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in March 2015. More than 130 people attended, representing civil society organisations, government agencies and donors; nearly all CEPF grantees from the second investment phase participated.</p> <p>The final assessment workshop was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 28 to 30 May 2019. This three-day workshop was attended by a total of 136 people, including grantees, donor representatives, government representatives, members of National Advisory Committees and the CEPF Secretariat, as well as the RIT and other IUCN support staff. A number of grantees supported by the Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, the MacArthur Foundation and the McKnight Foundation also attended the workshop. Short presentations from all grantees in attendance provided an overview of work in the hotspot, whilst a series of working group sessions</p>

				helped to revise and update the strategic directions, investment priorities and threats in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. The degree to which the outcomes in the Ecosystem Profile had been achieved was also collectively assessed.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.8	Visits to grantees to monitor their progress and ensure outreach, verify compliance, and support capacity building	A large number of monitoring missions to small grantees were carried out by the RIT over the course of the project. Monitoring missions focussed on assessing progress, ensuring that safeguards were being implemented, and providing support, capacity building and guidance as needed. IUCN finance officers frequently took part in monitoring missions in order to review financial records and to provide advice and support with the implementation of accounting and financial management systems. Members of the RIT also helped to facilitate - and participated in - monitoring missions to large grantees undertaken by the CEPF Secretariat.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.9	Guidance to grantees for the effective design and implementation of safeguard policies to ensure that these activities comply with the guidelines detailed in the CEPF Operations Manual and with the World Bank's safeguard policies.	All projects that triggered one or more of CEPF's environmental or social safeguards were required to develop appropriate mitigation measures. The most commonly triggered safeguards were those on Indigenous Peoples, and on involuntary resettlement and restrictions on access to natural resources. In response, grantees were provided guidance on the preparation of social assessments and process frameworks, that described the potential negative impacts, the steps that would be taken to prevent and/or minimise and mitigate these impacts, and the ways in which these measures would be monitored. Where necessary, RIT staff advised and assisted grantees with the preparation of these documents and the integration of safeguard measures into project design. Nearly 40 per cent of small grants triggered one or more safeguards.
3	Reporting and monitoring	3.10	Support and guidance during the implementation and evaluation cycles at regular field visits to projects	Support and guidance were provided to grantees during monitoring visits. In addition to technical guidance, many monitoring missions also included a finance officer from IUCN, who provided grantees with advice on accounting and financial management systems.

3	Reporting and monitoring	3.11	Coordinate with the CEPF Secretariat to produce and disseminate products to communicate CEPF's impact and results	<p>A detailed communications strategy was developed at the start of the project. Guided by the strategy, the results and lessons learned from the small grants were widely communicated through a variety of means, including IUCN newsletters, the IUCN website and social media (Facebook and Twitter). A number of case studies were also published on the PANORAMA knowledge sharing platform.</p> <p>Close coordination was maintained with the CEPF Secretariat. Grantees' stories were regularly shared with the Secretariat and included in the CEPF newsletter; similarly, CEPF stories were frequently posted on IUCN's Facebook page.</p>
4	MERN (sub-grantee)	4.1	Sub-grant to MERN awarded and monitored via quarterly reports and semi-annual progress meetings.	The sub-grant to MERN came into effect on 1 January 2014 and ran until 30 June 2018. In drawing up the sub-grant, care was taken to ensure that key terms and conditions from the CEPF contract with the RIT "flowed down" through IUCN to MERN, including provisions related to financial management, procurement, and prevention of fraud and corruption. The support from MERN was particularly valuable in the early days of the project, when Myanmar was only just beginning to "open up" after a long period of military rule, and when IUCN did not have an in-country presence.
4	MERN (sub-grantee)	4.2	RIT ADMIN functions delivered in Myanmar	RIT functions in Myanmar were initially delivered via a sub-grant to the Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN). MERN is a network of 29 environmental and social non-governmental organisations, first created in 2009 to help coordinate responses to the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis; it performed the RIT functions in Myanmar until mid-2018, when IUCN established its own country office in the country. Even after its formal role as the RIT had ended, MERN continued to be an important partner, assisting with networking and monitoring.
5	KFBG (sub-grantee)	5.1	Sub-grant to KFBG awarded and monitored via quarterly reports and semi-annual progress meetings.	The sub-grant to KFBG was awarded on 28 January 2014 and ran until 30 November 2019. In drawing up the sub-grant, care was taken to ensure that key terms and conditions from the CEPF contract with the RIT "flowed down" through IUCN to KFBG, including provisions related to financial management, procurement, and prevention of fraud and corruption.
5	KFBG (sub-grantee)	5.2	RIT ADMIN functions delivered in	RIT functions in China were delivered via a sub-grant to the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG), a well-established and highly regarded

			the China portion of the Indo-Burma Hotspot	Hong Kong-based organisation, with a particularly strong presence in Hainan and southern China. Supplementary support was also provided by IUCN's country office in China, based in Beijing.
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Describe and submit any tools, products or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

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

A number of important lessons emerged from this second phase of investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot. In particular, although IUCN was very successful at reaching out and engaging with a wide and diverse audience (including many local organisations), the large volume of proposals that this generated led to backlogs and delays in the review and contracting processes. In addition, although IUCN welcomed the fact that a high proportion of local CSOs received funding, it became apparent that many groups required significantly more support and guidance than had been envisioned. As a result of the high administrative burden on the RIT, a number of important activities that had originally been planned - such as thematic workshops to enable grantees working on similar issues to share experiences and lessons learned - could not be implemented.

To help address these concerns, it is recommended that future CEPF investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot:

- **Adopt a more decentralised approach to proposal review and contracting, by making greater use of the National Coordinators and the National Advisory Committees in each country;**
- **Reduce the number of grants provided, and consider increasing the maximum funding ceiling for small grants from \$20,000 to \$30,000 or higher;**
- **Devote significantly more time to capacity building, through formal training, mentoring, and more frequent monitoring visits.**

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.

Ultimately, the sustainability of conservation in the Indo-Burma Hotspot will require that biodiversity considerations be more fully incorporated into government policies, legislation, programmes and plans; that new and innovative ways of funding conservation (such as PES) be implemented at scale; and that a strong, vibrant local civil society sector be established. There has been encouraging progress on many of these fronts, including many achievements supported or facilitated by this phase of CEPF investment. However, as was made clear by participants at the final CEPF assessment workshop held in Siem Reap in 2019 - the hotspot is still very far from reaching these goals. There will be a need for substantial external funding support for conservation for a significant time to come. This situation is likely to be severely exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has not only caused a dramatic reduction in tourism revenue for conservation, but also, has started to lead to a shift in government (and donor) priorities, with an increasing emphasis on addressing the immediate social and economic impacts of the disease. Given this situation, IUCN was very pleased to learn that CEPF is planning an unprecedented third phase of investment in Indo-Burma.

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.

The project itself did not trigger any environmental or social safeguards. However, all grants were carefully screened for potential environmental and social impacts. All projects that triggered one or more of CEPF's environmental or social safeguards were required to develop appropriate mitigation measures. The most commonly triggered safeguards were those on Indigenous Peoples, and on involuntary resettlement and restrictions on access to natural resources. The RIT provided grantees with guidance on the preparation of social assessments and process frameworks, which described potential negative impacts, the steps that would be taken to prevent and/or minimise and mitigate these impacts, and the ways in which these measures would be monitored. Particular attention was paid to reviewing the implementation of safeguard measures during monitoring missions carried out by the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat. In total, nearly 40 per cent of small grants triggered one or more safeguards.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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\$)

\$770,991.00

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)

Category A: US\$ 158,773 from multiple donors (Chino Cienega Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, and MacArthur Foundation) for the annual meetings of the Lower Mekong Network.

Category A: US\$ 46,560 from the MacArthur Foundation and Margaret A. Cargill Foundation for the mid-term assessment workshop held in July 2015 in Siem Reap.

Category A: US\$ 33,658 from multiple donors (MacArthur Foundation, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, McConnell Foundation, McKnight Foundation) for the final CEPF assessment workshop in Siem Reap in 2019.

Category B: US\$ 97,000 from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation for the identification of freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas in the Lower Mekong. The results fed into the revision of the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile.

Category B: US\$ 435,000 from the McConnell Foundation for the launch of a small grants programme in Lao PDR, inspired by and modeled upon CEPF.

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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