

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	N/A
Project Title:	CSOs Capacity needs assessment in Eritrea, South Sudan and DR Congo
Date of Report:	July 31, 2015
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CEPF Region: Eastern Afromontane Hotspot (with a focus on Eritrea, South Sudan and Eastern DR Congo)

Strategic Direction: 3. Initiate and support sustainable financing and related actions for the conservation of priority KBAs and corridors.

Investment priority 3.4. Support the institutional development of CSOs in Eritrea, South Sudan, Yemen and DR Congo and their role in the conservation of KBAs in respective countries.

Grant Amount: 16,000 US Dollar

Project Dates: December 2013 – July 2015 (with extensions due delay caused by security issues in South Sudan)

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

- RIT – Birdlife Nairobi provided excellent guidance and assisted with contacts, published documents reporting protocols and feedback.
- Local CSOs in South Sudan and DR Congo – provided information regarding the status of their CSOs, strength, weakness and priority needs. They also assisted with necessary documentation travel and visa application
- Wetlands International, Nairobi – Collaborated in the implementation of the project in South Sudan, shared information and lessons learnt and trained selected CSOs in conservation
- University of Juba, Ministry of Tourism, Forum for National NGOs in South Sudan – assisted in the identification of local contacts in Juba and in the South Eastern of the country around Imatong and Kidepo areas.
- L’Institut Supérieur de Développement Rural (ISTD Mulungu) as well as CSOs in Goma, Rutshuru, Bukavu, and Uvira in Eastern DRC
- In particular, the contribution to the success of this project by CEPF, BirdLife International, IUCN and EWNHS are hereby greatly acknowledged.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

This project titled ‘Non-government organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) capacity needs assessment in Eritrea, South Sudan and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo’ was undertaken to fulfill the CEPF strategic direction 3 (Initiate and support sustainable financing and related actions for the conservation of priority Key Biodiversity Areas and corridors). The project was specifically aimed at contributing to the investment priority 3.4 (Support the institutional development of NGOs and CSOs in Eritrea, South Sudan, and DRC).

As the title of the project indicates, our main goal was to assess the capacity needs of local CSOs and provide training whenever possible. We first of all identified through contacts and web search local, national and international non-government organizations (NGOs) or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) operating in and near KBAs in the respective countries, second, visited the sites with the exception of Eritrea and Eastern D R Congo and assessed their capacity and their needs using the CEPF tracking tool. In Eastern DR Congo, two consultants were hired to contact CSOs and conduct the training workshop because of security situation in the area and limited funds. In South Sudan we identified and assessed 7 and trained CSOs. The training was conducted by Wetlands in October 2014 in Juba, South Sudan. The training focused on the management of conservation project and sustainability. In DRC, over 20 CSOs were identified but seven among them were trained in project implementation and fundraising. These trained CSOs were introduced to the aims of CEPF and how important it is for CEPF to empower local CSOs in the conservation and management of KBAs in South Sudan and KBAs and important Corridors in DR Congo. The main achievement of the assessment and training outcome are the identification of areas where CSOs need training so that they can undertake conservation and development actions sustainably, with skills and preparedness.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal:

In Eritrea, we expected to identified CSOs in and around each KBA, assess their capacity and agree on a capacity implementation plan for future training activities. Unfortunately, our most important finding was the lack of independent local CSOs and that the government is preoccupied by ensuring food security, reduction of poverty and sustainable development in order to mitigate the effects of drought and climate change, prevent/minimize loss of biodiversity. The government did not authorize any assessment since according to the ministry of environment, the government of Eritrea had already undertaken a National capacity needs self-assessment project in 2007 and did not find any reason for another assessment.

The 2007 assessment identified the following areas in which the government needs more support to implement the following items of the portfolio of the Rio Conventions to which Eritrea is a signatory:

- Improving human resource capacity in project and financial management, and coordination
- Training the personnel of the department of environment in biodiversity conservation and environmental management, sustainable land use planning, regulatory policies, EIA methods, information collection, management and reporting lesson learnt
- Training staff in international agreements, effective negotiations, and networking
- Increase the capacity in monitoring and evaluation
- Promoting a strong civil society concerned with environmental issues
- Promoting gender equity and the production of gender-sensitive material

The government intends to implement these goals with limited involvement of the CSOs. In fact there are no non-government organisations in Eritrea, the most representative organisations that we came across are government run (i.e. Workers, women and student unions) and these could not fit into the CEPF selection and collaboration criteria. Nevertheless, it was found that the country really needs support in capacity building and skills development for the conservation of identified KBAs in the country. This project suggested that a high level meeting between CEPF and Eritrea government (especially the ministry of Environment) be organized to lobby government for this important project and request collaboration with at least high education and training institutions such as the University of Asmara. With 9 identified KBAs in the country, CEPF cannot afford to exclude Eritrea in this important project.

In South Sudan, we had the same expectations and despite a civil war that broke up at the dawn of the project and delayed most of planned activities, dispersed several CSOs and caused the closedown of many of others, we were able to identify 7 CSOs and determine their capacity needs based on filled questionnaire. We found that CSOs in South Sudan lacked the ability to conduct activities in many areas and as a capacity implementation plan agreed to initiate training in:

- Conservation project design and management
- Human resource development
- Sustainability strategy and diversification of financial resources
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Networking and communication

As the main output of this project, 7 CSOs were trained in conservation, human resource development, and networking skills by our partner, Wetlands International. More training workshop and follow-ups are needed for South Sudanese CSOs that are new for the most part and always disrupted by this continuous civil unrest. We were not able to validate the capacity implementation plan for South Sudan, due to lack of communication with identified CSOs.

In Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the 16 assessed CSOs showed a poor score in human and financial resources and a higher score in management and strategic planning. The CSOs seem to have a good mission statement and entertain good collaboration and networks but despite the fact that some NGOs have over 20 years of experience, they lack staff experiences, sustainability, diversification of funding resources and human resource development.

Since CSOs in DRC were more open and communicated efficiently, we decided to take the project a step further despite limited funding and opted to conduct a strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis. The analysis demonstrated that CSOs in Eastern DRC would like to be trained mainly in:

- Programme and project design and management, and monitoring and evaluation
- Establishment and management of protected areas
- Fundraising and sustainability
- Training in GIS
- Training in climate change projects
- Environmental communication
- Setting up business and strategic plans.

Ten10 CSOs that were invited to participate in the training workshop in Bukavu. The workshop was attended by 9 CSOs between 22 and 23 June 2015. The CSO of Itombwe "Jeunes Methodistes Libre pour le Developpement" (JMLD) could not be reached during the preparation and therefore were not represented at the workshop. They were trained in project design, fundraising and project implementation. Participants appreciated the efforts of CEPF and BirdLife International in reaching out and empowering local CSOs. After the training in, participating CSOs also pledged to submit more project proposals to CEPF in the up coming calls for proposals and submit fund requests to other agencies in order to remain active in the conservation of their natural heritage in Eastern DR Congo in collaboration with local authorities and local communities.

In summary, short and long term impacts and results of this project include, the description of the truth situation regarding CSOs in Eritrea, 7 and 16 CSOs identified and 7 and 9 CSOs trained in project management South Sudan and Eastern DR Congo respectively. After these short training workshops, the CSOs are expected in the long term to set conservation action, conduct biological surveys and research in conservation, communicate conservation messages, advocate for change in public policies, conduct participatory appraisal with local stakeholders, develop GIS projects, develop standard operating manuals and mechanism to monitor logistics or procedures to deal with discipline and complaints, procurement and travel policies that were almost non existent for the majority of CSOs at the time we launched this project. CEPF will continue to support these CSOs and monitor their progress.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: N/A

Species Conserved: N/A

Corridors Created: N/A

Our project put more emphasis on training in much need skills such as project implementation, sustainability, monitoring and evaluation. The impact assessment of the impact of these lessons on the grounds will be shown in follow up projects. So, it is not possible to exactly tell how many hectares, species and corridors protected so far. What is expected is that the whole of Imatong KBA will be protected in South Sudan and about 11 KBAs in Eastern DR Congo with their respective species.

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

In Eritrea, the challenge has been that there is no recognized CSO in the country. Most of the so called-CSOs in Eritrea are actually government organization or unions. This situation forced CEPF to postpone activities in Eritrea. In the future, Eritrea government should be engaged and invited in participating in this project through high education and training institutions to safeguard the identified 9 KBAs in the country. CEPF would like to empower and collaborate with the CSOs but should find ways to work in Eritrea where nothing is done without the government hands-on involvement.

In South Sudan, despite the outbreak of a civil war at the beginning of the project in December 2013, we managed to liaise with local CSOs that are still active in Juba and identified their capacity needs and improved their skills in most needed domain such as conservation, human resource development, and networking skills during a workshop organized by Wetland International in October 2014. There are still many areas in which they need training, due mostly to the fact that South Sudan is a very new country (only 4 years old) and the country has been at war and still fighting for over the last two decades. In February 2015, we had planned another workshop on strategic planning but at the last minutes, many CSOs did not show interest and unfortunately the workshop was cancelled to the dismay of others and all of us. This usually happens to a country such as South Sudan where conservation actions are not their priorities during this time of civil war. The collaboration with Africa Wildlife Foundation and other international organisations that have solid bases in South Sudan will be a way forward in the next CEPF approach regarding South Sudan.

The project was well received in Eastern DR Congo where it had been shifted after experiences hindrances in South Sudan. Despite short notice, limited budget and large coverage (across 11 KBAs), over 20 CSOs were identified and 9 trained in strategic planning, project management and fundraising. CSOs in Eastern DR Cong are still requesting for more training from CEPF and hope that CEPF will be able to provide more skill-based training to them in the near future in French.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

We were surprised by the fact that there is no CSOs in Eritrea and that the government does not need foreign help to train its people. The war in South Sudan came obviously unexpectedly and completely delayed and disorganized our work and that of CSOs in the country to the point that we were not able to accomplish what we had planned. Communication was very difficult as many CSOs had closed doors and others were more involved in humanitarian activities rather than dealing with conservation issues. We were very please by the reception we got in Eastern DR

Congo despite the rampant civil wars and rebel movements that have taken place in this part of DR Congo for over the last 20 years.

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 projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- Collaboration has had a great impact of the success of the project since the beginning to the end. It is always important to get information and support from many angles. RIT in Nairobi was at the centre of this networks and information was shared and circulated quite easily. We contacted governments, UN agencies, International Organisations and even religious organization to get as much inputs as possible. The shortcomings that happened were attributed to the lack of information regarding national policies governing CSOs that we had overlooked especially in Eritrea and the insecurity that we could not anticipate in South Sudan. While in Eastern DR Congo, we were able to handle the later problem because the information was available and local CSOs were ore collaborative.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

- Sharing tasks was another key element of this project. In South Sudan, Wetland International was implementing a similar project in Imatong massif, so we shared information, delegated tasks and worked together.
- Delegating also characterized our successes in Eastern DR Congo in particular where local CSOs took the project in their hand and willingly participated with short notices and limited budget.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

- The CEPF approach of giving CSOs a choice and allowing them to lead and request where they need the most help is admirable. When CSOs are given the voice and feel responsible, they take the project as their own and move it forward. This was experienced in DR Congo. In Eritrea and South Sudan it was not the case because both countries have other priorities.
- Another aspect that works well for CEPF projects is avoiding duplication of work and funding same activities more than once. CEPF is able to avoid this scenario through coloration and information sharing mechanism.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
N/A	N/A	N/A	There was no additional funding.

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

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

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

Once CSOs are have qualified and motivated personnel, they can ensure the sustainability of their activity in their target areas. What handicap CSOs performance and sustainability is political instability, have so called suitcase NGOs (these run by single individuals) or family without constitution and auditing. With established in-country network and international support, CSOs can learn from each other, train each other and also exchange interns to further build their capacity. That will ensure sustainability and replicability as long as there is peace and security in the country.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

It is too early to talk about sustainability yet as most of CSOs were trained in the last month and unfortunately the follow up with CSOs in South Sudan did not materialize due to difficult communication with them. Follow up projects and establishment of social networks where CSOs can post their achievement and work stories will encourage information sharing and motivate them in achieving their goals. One of the most important tools in achieving sustainability is being able to secure and manage funds. CSOs are still struggling with this aspect. From the results of a SWOT analysis in DRC, there is no single CSO that have internal revenues such as membership fee on which they can rely on while applying for external funds.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

To safeguard environmental and social policies, CSOs need expertise. This is the target area of this project. Training empowers CSOs and gives them the voice to defend policies that will ensure environmental protection and the wellbeing of citizens. There should also be an emphasis on training environmental advocators and lawyers especially during this period in time where wildlife trade is becoming a big issue across the globe. Un-planed development is another area of concern especially in Africa. Training in environmental impact assessment (EIA) should also be included to the CEPF and partners' training priorities.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Knowledge is power. CEPF got it right and should continue applying this bottom up approach and get the grass-root organization to the level that they can plan, implement and sustain their own action working in close collaboration with local communities to improve their livelihood. It is also said that an empty belly has no ear, so to achieve

sustainable conservation of our precious identified and to be identified KBAs and corridors, the standard of living of local human population should be improved.

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 Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

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*****please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved for project from inception of CEPF support to date	Describe the principal results achieved during project period (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	N/A		Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	N/A		Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	N/A		
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	N/A		
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	N/A		

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.

The principal results achieved during project period

1. Since there are no CSOs in Eritrea, it was suggested to work with universities in achieving CEPF targets in the country.
2. In south Sudan, CEPF has already trained 7 CSOs in conservation project design and management, human resource development, monitoring and evaluation and networking and communication through a sister project coordinated by Wetland International. A follow up is needed and also training more CSOs should be a priority, adding other aspect of management such as sustainability strategies with training in strategic planning and diversification of financial resources. The environment is still not a priority for these CSOs recovering from a long civil war. Efforts have to be made to bring the environment in the mainstream and plans of government and CSOs as a whole.
3. In Eastern DRC. There are many CSOs interested in the environment. With 9 already trained in some aspect of project design and fundraising, it is a great opportunity for CEPF to involve them in safeguarding the rich natural heritage of Eastern DR Congo and eventually the whole country as a whole. CEPF project could also help other partners such as BirdLife International in identifying a potential partner that can collaborate in the efforts of improving environmental conservation and livelihood that BirdLife International is keen on for example. CSOs in Eastern DR Congo were trained in project design and management, strategic planning and fundraising. These CSOs are keen to become more sophisticated and technical and have shown during the SWOT analysis that they would like to be trained also in monitoring and evaluation, how to establish and manage protected areas, GIS, climate change mitigation, environmental communication etc. CEPF has these types of training in its pipeline and will be able to build their capacity in these areas in the near future as follow up project.