CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Albertine Rift Conservation Society
Project Title:	Civil Society Alliance for Enhanced Implementation of Environmental Impact Assessments in Key Biodiversity Areas of the Albertine Rift Region
Date of Report:	28/02/2014
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CEPF Region: Eastern Afromontane

Strategic Direction: Strategic Direction 2: 2. Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot.

Grant Amount: $57,310.00

Project Dates: June 1, 2013 - December 31, 2013

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

ARCOS signed an MOU with 4 NGO Partners: Association Burundaise pour la Protection des Oiseaux (ABO) in Burundi; Association pour la Conservation de la Nature au Rwanda (ACNR) in Rwanda, Innovation pour le Développement et Protection de l'Environnement (IDPE) in North Kivu AND Organisation pour la Biodiversité et Conservation au Congo Kinshasa (OBICOK).

NGOs partners were involved in the project as direct beneficiaries for the training, but also participated directly in project implementation and as part of the project Steering Committee. They were responsible for specific activities as part of the sub-grants, focusing on 1) Collecting information on training needs assessment; 2) EIA data and information collection in respective countries on EIA policy and EIA practice, and 3) conducting case study on EIA Audit analysis.4) Participate in regional workshops to share results and contribute to training other NGOs.

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

The project addresses the Strategic Direction 2.2. of the CEPF Afromontane Ecosystem Profile: "Strategic Direction 2; P*riority 2.2: Support the role of civil society organizations in the application of site safeguard policies and procedures, including the strengthening of environmental impact assessment implementation in order to address ongoing and emerging threats to all terrestrial KBAs (including freshwater KBAs).*

One of the major weaknesses in the current protection and management of KBAs of the region as identified by the ecosystem profile is that despite recognition and in many cases legal protection, many KBAs are threatened by projects with powerful interests and without adequate planning, impact assessments or regard for existing legal and policy safeguards, leading even to the degazettement and removal of protected areas.

The project aims to minimize the adverse impacts of development activities to key biodiversity areas of the Central Albertine Rift through enhanced civil society participation in EIA process and to promote an experience sharing framework in the region and encourage synergies in the EIA development and implementation.

This pilot phase has built a solid foundation towards the following pillars of the strategic direction:

1.   Capacity Building:

One of the big problems in the EIA process in the Albertine Rift is that the capacity to conduct EIA is still very low, and the civil society also does not have the capacity to understand the EIA requirements and standards in order to contribute effectively. Two training workshops were facilitated involving 18 and 40 participants respectively. The project contributed to the capacity building of civil society organisations in different fields of EIA, including: EIA Process, EIA and SEA, key emerging issues in EIA such as integrating ecosystem services, climate change and information management, Public consultations, Environmental Audit, and advocacy.

2.   Building rapport between government agencies and civil society organisations

One of the problems in the Albertine Rift has been that governments consider NGOs activities as opposing development. The workshops involved representatives from EIA Authorities from focal countries who don't only benefited technically from the training, but also realized the potential offered by civil society in providing technical input to the EIA process.

3.   Technical input to EIAs

After the workshops, ARCOS was asked to provide technical input to two EIA reports in Rwanda, and ARCOS invited contributions from the workshop participants. This was well received by the government and we plan to strengthen this role in the future.

4.   Building civil society alliance for advocacy

The *Albertine Rift Environmental Assessment Alliance (AREALA)* was established as regional platform bringing together everybody interested in EIA issues in the region, for information sharing, learning from one another and creating a bigger voice to advocate for participatory and transparent EIA and generally integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into development plans. Nearly 30 organizations have joined this alliance since its launch during the second Training held in Kigali in October 2013.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

The three most important expected results from this project were:

a) -E*nabling Civil Society Organizations from the Central Albertine Rift to actively participate and influence decision making done on development affecting key biodiversity areas.*

This project has provided environmental Impact assessment and advocacy skills to 17 civil society organizations; these skills were considered as starting point for these organizations to be involved in EIA process. As most of them didn't have the same training before. As it was suggested in the training needs assessment. Focus was made in important steps of EIA which require public participation such as scoping and approval of the report. A Training Manual was developed on EIA Review and EIA report critique. This will improve the effectiveness of civil society involvement in EIA processes in their respective countries.

b)   EIA Policy and Local EIA Expertise Analysis:

ARCOS has undertaken preliminary policy analysis for public participation in Burundi, Rwanda and DRC and a preliminary list of experts who undertake EIA in those countries. This analysis will help in future advocacy activities aimed at improving the EIA Policy and regulations in the region, as well as public participation. For example, SEA and integrating ecosystem services and climate change are not well covered by all EIA policy documents in the region. Also, while the policy documents mention public consultation, this is not happening effectively. Civil society can refer to the EIA legislation in their advocacy activities. The list of experts will also be useful in promoting good standards, lessons sharing with EIA experts in the region

c) *The third expected result was to enhance experience and information sharing in the region and encourage synergies in EIA development and implementation.*

ARCOS is in the process to establish a regional *web/portal* with one component to focus on EIA R*elated information.* This exercise will be completed by in the middle of this year. In the meantime, ARCOS website has provision for EIA information, including all materials during the training workshops and other information. The *web/portal will help a wide range of stakeholder to easily access EIA news and knowledge.*

The project has also facilitated the establishment of AREALA as mechanism for experience and information sharing in the region and joint advocacy for transparent environmental impact assessment. AREALA aims at providing an advocacy platform and to foster dialogue when issues arise, to share information on EIA processes and case studies which need regional attention. Since the initiative is still at its stating point, it's too soon to realize its impact. However some positive impacts were realized even before the end of the project when we saw some involvement of this group in commenting two projects that were under process to be carried out in 2 KBAs in Rwanda.

Finally, discussions engaged between ARCOS and government to have formal partnerships, but we couldn't secure a MoU at this stage. Further discussions are required to convince governments on the importance of civil society engagement in environmental assessment. Though formal partnerships have yet to be signed, informal relationships have been developed with the RDB and Province Nord/Sud Kivu. On the other hand, we were able to sign an MOU with the Secretariat pour les Etudes Environnementales en Afrique Centrale (SEEAC), an experienced organization in EIA in the region, and member of the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA).

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

The Civil Society Organisations in the Central Albertine Rift are enabled and work collective*y and effectively to advocate for the application of site safeguard policies and procedures through transparent EIAs in key terrestrial KBAs of the central Albertine Rift.*

Actual Progress Towards Long-term Impacts at Completion:

ARCOS has initiated the Albertine Rift Alliance for Environmental Assessment Leadership Alliance (AREALA). Civil Society Organizations were trained in environmental assessment advocacy strategies and ARCOS has established an information system, supported by a regional Newsletter, through which AREALA Network and other stakeholders will benefit from information and tools to guide decisions.

AREALA Members come from different background (see table below): civil society organisations, experts, local community organizations, donors, media and private sector, reflecting the necessity to involve different stakeholders in the EIA process.

Country	Burundi	Rwanda	DRC/NK	DRC/SK	Other NGOs	Total
NGOs	**ABO**	**ACNR**	**IDPE**	**OBICOK**	NatureUganda	
	ABEIE	**APEIER**	**CIDOPY**	**HOR. NAT**	URP	
	ODEB	ARECO	CADRE	AMIS	NECF	
		RECOR		COPEILLE	WECSZ	
		REDO		JPE	**ARCOS**	
		RENGOF				
TOTAL NGOs	3	6	3	5	5	22
Governments		**RDB**	**CPECN-NK**	**CPECN-SK**		4
		NEMA				
Aid Agencies		Swedish Embassy				1
Private Sector		PSF				
Media		**New Times**				1
TOTAL	*3*	*11*	*4*	*6*	*5*	*29*

In bold are the NGOs who attended the 1st and 2nd Training Workshops

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

*At l*east 20 NGOs (4 in Rwanda,4 in Burundi,4 in North Kivu,4 in south Kivu and 4 from the wider Albertine Rift have skills in EIA and advocate together by end of 2013)

Actual Progress toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

ARCOS has undertaken two trainings in EIA, involving 17 environments and development NGOs from Rwanda, Burundi, DRC Uganda and Zambia acquired important skills in Environmental impact assessment and advocacy. Five NGOs attended the two trainings but in the second training, they served as trainers where they provided case studies of threats to KBAs in their countries as well as EIA process (e.g Road construction in Eastern DRC). Participants from Uganda and Zambia were invited in the second training to share best practices especially on public participation (Uganda) and Strategic environmental assessment (Zambia). Details of these training sessions have been reported in separate documents. The training sessions achieved the goal of creating a network of NGOs, stimulating regional conversation. The training sessions have given attendees a better understanding of the EIA process. However, translating this into practical action will take further time and efforts.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares   Protected: N/A
Species   Conserved: N/A
Corridors Created: N/A

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

Generally the project has been implemented successfully. ARCOS had already an established network of environmental conservation NGOs in the central Albertine Rift. In fact, the project idea originated from the NGO Network Forum. It didn't appear difficult to mobilize them and thereafter to create an Alliance around EIA issues.

The training sessions went well the trainees showed enthusiasm in the topics. However, due to limited budget, we had to limit the discussions to general aspects. Also, for most of the trainees, it was their first time to have trainings on EIA. In order to make an impact, there is a need of further training. The feedback from participants showed that more practical knowledge is needed.

Activities which involved contacting government institutions were challenging because their willingness to share information is still limited; some of them still think that EIA reports are their own property and therefore not for sharing. This affected our plan for case studies analysis because most of targeted reports (in mining and oil development) were held by government agencies. Formal partnerships with governments seemed to require further discussion as it was new for countries where we operated from to formally involve civil society organizations in EIA process. We were able to have formal partnership with recognized Organization which promotes EIA in central Africa (SEEAC) which can help in further training and advocacy given their experience in Central Africa (MoU attached). This also affected expertise assessment and analysis because the available information was limited in some countries such as Burundi and DRC. We also conducted a preliminary policy analysis with focus on public participation for Rwanda Burundi and DRC (Document attached), we also had a preliminary list of experts who undertake EIA in those countries (document attached) as we hope this to be a continuous process. Finally it was as the development of ARCOS Regional Portal is an overall initiative with the EIA being part of the project, a specific information system for EIA/SEA has been limited to uploading documents on ARCOS Website. Initial steps for the development of the portal with a component on EIA are going well, the portal will be ready around July 2014. For this activity, the challenge was that the ARCOS web/portal was being developed and the EIA system would be hosted there. Therefore the accomplishment of this objective would depend on the development process of the whole web portal

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

We have realized that all stakeholders are interested in EIA. We approached some aid agencies for example, including the European Union, the Netherlands Embassy, they were all keen to attend the workshops.

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned: *NGO skills enhanced for effective engagement in in EIA advocacy in the Central Albertine Rift region.*

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

Two trainings were carried out; the first one was for trainers which took one week (Training report attached) and the second was for a wider range of NGOs which took three days (Training reports are available).

Component 2 Planned: *EIA policy, pool of expertise and practices in the region assessed and strategic partnerships developed within and outside the Central Rift for effective NGO engagement in EIA advocacy*

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

The assessment of EIA expertise was done with the help from NGOs partners in the three countries. A report with a list of experts in the three countries was produced. A report on policy analysis about the inclusion of Public participation and Strategic Impact assessment was produced (Attached). A partnership with SEAAC in terms of capacity building was engaged already and MoU was signed (attached).

Component 3 Planned:

Regional EIA knowledge and information management system established in the region and networking and alliance building towards joint NGO advocacy in EIA issues across the region promoted

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

The information Management System was established through ARCOS website with an; EIA link to the database available on ARCOS website with information continuously posted. However the final

completion of this web portal is expected in July 2014.The NGO Alliance (AREALA) was initiated to help in information sharing and advocacy (NGO declaration).

Component 4: Project coordination and Management of NGOs sub-Grant

Small grants were disbursed and the reports from partner NGOs were sent to ARCOS on how grants were used (Compiled NGO reports).

Component 5: NGO sub-grantee task implemented

NGOs partners helped in providing information which was used to compile different reports such as training needs assessment, policy analysis and list of experts. They helped also in mobilizing governments and put them in touch with ARCOS.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

All components were generally realized; however some activities were not achieved due to some reasons; **Audit Reports**. The governments in the region are still protective of the information on EIA. We realized that it will take some time to build relationships with EIA Authorities in each country with a possibility to conduct EIA Audit. Our strategy has been to involve government officials in the training workshops. So far, this has proved very useful.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

1. *Training need assessment report*
2. *Training Workshop Report 1*
3. *Training Workshop Report 2, including NGO Declaration on AREALA*
4. *Policy Analysis Report*
5. *AREALA Communications Strategy*
6. *AREALA Advocacy Strategy*
7. *EIA Review Manual*
8. *MoU with SEEAC*
9. *EIA Expertise in the Central Albertine Rift*
10. *ARCOS Website Link (for access to EIA Resource)*

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)

The decision for the project was participatory. In October 2011, Heads and Representatives of NGOs operating in the Albertine Rift region and members of ARCOS Network, met in Musanze to discuss common issues affecting biodiversity conservation across the countries of the region. One of the recommendations from this meeting was to advocate for the better Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines on development activities taking place in the Albertine Rift region.

The Albertine Rift is much targeted for many development activities; many of them such as mining, intensive agriculture, oil exploration are targeting Key Biodiversity Areas. Even if it's said that EIAs/SEAs are done before the approval of project, it does not reflect the reality on the ground where the habitat degradation is continuously increasing.

The main challenge was that, policies in all of the Albertine Rift countries recognize the importance of conducting EIA prior to any development activities that are likely to affect the environment. However, there is a big gap between written policies on paper and the practice on the ground. Indeed, development is sometimes seen as so urgent that its sustainability facet is overlooked.

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

-The lack of human resources with EIA expertise in not only for civil society, but also in government institutions in charge of EIA assessment. Hence, the high need for more and deep trainings in EIA process.

- Experts are still few and in some countries, they are not recognized by any authority. This explains why EIA is sometime undertaken by some people just because they have skills in environmental issues.

-The high pressure of governments on EIA Authorities causes poor decision-making on development projects, with a less consideration of environmental issues towards development.

- Some countries in the Albertine Rift region are much ahead in environmental evaluation; public participation in Uganda is much considerable (e.g.: EIA reports are accessible in library for comments before decision making), and ZAMBIA is ahead in institutionalization of the Strategic Impact Assessment. In Zambia, the public can comment on EIA Reports from the EIA Authority.

-Policies and strategies on EIA consider less the ecosystem services, which make some KBAs to be vulnerable to some development projects

- The governments in the region are still protective of the information on EIA. This has constrained the possibility to conduct EIA Audit.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Community knowledge is very important in the conservation of any ecosystem. That is why EIA for development projects carried out on any ecosystem should necessary consider community views. Community might have special knowledge on some important aspects on the survival of any ecosystem. When those knowledge are not captured, the EIA might go wrong and lead to the bad decision making.

Additional Funding

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

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
ARCOS	A	6204 USD	Staff time (Dr Sam Kanyamibwa and Claudien Nsabagasani) for training facilitation as trainers and (8 days compiled for two trainings). Also for office supply.

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

A Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)
   Co-funding from MacArthur

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.)
   NGO Partners contributed their time beyond agreed financial support

C Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)
   International partners contributed to the training witout payment of staff time. This is for example SEECA and WRI.

Sustainability/Replicability

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

The project has involved mainly local environmental conservation NGOs in the three countries (Burundi, DRC and Rwanda) but also some government institutions, to build their capacity in environmental evaluation. The knowledge acquired will help to improve the EIA process.

The information system created will continuously help to raise awareness and capacity of stakeholders and be used in advocacy for transparent and participatory EIA.
The NGOs Alliance AREALA will be continuously used in advocacy for transparent EIA and regional framework for bringing together all NGOs and practitioners interested in EIA.
ARCOS developed a follow up project in order to continue with the capacity building and networking of NGOs in the Albertine Rift.

The improvement of transparent EIA and participation in EIA process is a long term process, requiring more the political will of countries. Building trust with technical government institutions to provide EIA information but at the same time being independent from government will be a key focus in the future.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

The Training provided general understanding of the requirement for the environmental and social safeguard policies, particularly the 2012 IFC Performance Standard 6 on "maintain the benefits from ecosystem services" and "identify (…) those services on which the project is directly dependent for its operations"

Advocacy techniques on transparent EIA and integration of emerging issues were shared with the participants.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

This was a pilot phase aimed at building a foundation for future activities and it was a good plan. There is a good network of NGOs in the Central Albertine Rift with good understanding of EIA concept and standards, they have the expertise to participate actively in EIA review and advocacy. We have developed good relationships with EIA experts and other organisations involved in EIA. We feel that all the key ingredients to implement successively a major project phase are in place.

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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If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages

CEPF Global Targets				
(Enter Grant Term)				
Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant. Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.				
Project Results	**Is this question relevant?**	**If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.**	**Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.**	**Describe the principal results achieved from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. (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.				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?				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.				
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.				
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1below.				

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

Table 1. Socioeconomic Benefits to Target Communities

Please complete this table if your project provided concrete socioeconomic benefits to local communities. List the name of each community in column one. In the subsequent columns under Community Characteristics and Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit, place an X in all relevant boxes. In the bottom row, provide the totals of the Xs for each column.

Name of Community	Community Characteristics								Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit												
									Increased Income due to:												
	Small landowners	Subsistence economy	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists/nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Communities falling below the poverty rate	Other	Adoption of sustainable natural resources management practices	Ecotourism revenues	Park management activities	Payment for environmental services	Increased food security due to the adoption of sustainable fishing, hunting, or agricultural practices	More secure access to water resources	Improved tenure in land or other natural resource due to titling, reduction of colonization, etc.	Reduced risk of natural disasters (fires, landslides, flooding, etc)	More secure sources of energy	Increased access to public services, such as education, health, or credit	Improved use of traditional knowledge for environmental management	More participatory decision-making due to strengthened civil society and governance.	Other
Total																					

If you marked "Other", please provide detail on the nature of the Community Characteristic and Socioeconomic Benefit:

EIA Training participants visit a Project site on Cable car in Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda