

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund
33rd Meeting of the CEPF Donor Council
Agence Française de Développement
5 Rue Roland Barthes, 75012 Paris
10 September 2018
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Central European Standard Time

Effectively Leveraging Results from CEPF for Wider Impact

Recommended Action Item

The Donor Council is asked to provide strategic guidance to the Secretariat on how CEPF can most effectively leverage results from its grant portfolio to have a wider impact through influencing larger donor-funded programs, public policy, private sector practice, other partnerships, etc.

Background

Since inception, CEPF has invested more than US\$231 million in grants to civil society organizations. These grants have supported more than 2,280 grantees in 93 countries and territories. The emergence of new civil society organizations and the strengthening of existing organizations has been a major success story, with leading local conservation organizations in countries as diverse as Haiti, Madagascar, Tunisia, and Vietnam attributing their success to CEPF support. CEPF's grantees have, in turn, delivered significant conservation impacts on the ground, such as strengthening management of 46 million hectares within Key Biodiversity Areas: a combined area larger than Japan. These results, while impressive in themselves, need to be viewed in context of the overall scale of the biodiversity crisis. For example, while CEPF has supported the conservation of 1,250 globally threatened species, these represent only 5 percent of the 26,197 threatened species on the IUCN Red List.

With a modest budget and a business model that emphasizes working through local actors, CEPF has consistently punched above its weight in terms of impact per unit investment. For example, CEPF has supported the creation and expansion of 15 million hectares of new protected areas since 2000, accounting for around 4 percent of the total global expansion of terrestrial protected areas over that period; this was achieved with less than 0.25 percent of annual bilateral biodiversity-related Official Development Assistance from OECD DAC members.

The challenge is how to achieve impact at scale. In FY18, a typical year for the fund, 83 large grants and 53 small grants were awarded across nine biodiversity hotspots, with a total value of US\$14 million. Even if the size of the CEPF program were to be scaled up two or three times, it would still represent only a small fraction of the total investment in biodiversity conservation in developing countries. While the CEPF Secretariat and donors continue to explore opportunities to grow the fund, there is a need for complementary actions aimed at amplifying the fund's impact through influencing other actors.

The entry point for CEPF investments is civil society. Civil society organizations are growing in experience, credibility and influence in the hotspots where CEPF is active. CEPF's grantees have proven to be effective at: (i) bringing global experience and good practice to local contexts; (ii) catalyzing innovation, testing new approaches and responding to emerging challenges and opportunities; and (iii) transferring skills and knowledge to government conservation agencies and the private sector, leading to better public policy and business practices. While there have been notable successes in these areas, many of the civil society partners that CEPF works with lack the capacity to effectively engage with actors in other sectors. As a result, broader uptake or amplification of effective conservation models demonstrated by CEPF grantees has, to date, been opportunistic and limited.

Examples

One of the most significant policy-level impacts from the grant portfolio in the Western Ghats, India, came from a grant to Care Earth Trust, which mainstreamed the experience of CEPF grantees in Tamil Nadu into state and district government plans and policies. Specifically, the grant promoted uptake of experience and recommendations from the conservation community into a dedicated Special Area Development Programme for the Western Ghats of Tamil Nadu, which received an annual budget allocation from the state government of INR US\$11.25 million. This enabled the amplification of approaches piloted by CEPF grantees and their incorporation into the state budget.

In South America, in the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena Hotspot, CEPF support for an innovative pilot project laid the basis for the government of Ecuador's Socio Bosque Program, which incentivizes poor rural indigenous, mestizo and Afro-descendant communities to conserve land threatened with deforestation. CEPF's role was to demonstrate the conservation agreements approach with Chachi indigenous communities across 7,200 hectares of Gran Chachi Reserve. This became the model for the program. Since its establishment in 2008, the Socio Bosque Program has signed 2,723 conservation agreements and provided over US\$10 million in annual incentive payments. Over 1.4 million hectares have been conserved, and more than 187,000 people have directly benefited.

A good example of a CEPF grant with wider impacts on private sector practices came from the Indo-Burma Hotspot, where TRAFFIC engaged the Chinese logistics industry to amplify efforts to combat illegal trade in wildlife. In collaboration with China's Postal Bureau and CITES Management Authority, TRAFFIC successfully engaged 17 leading courier companies (including SF-Express, DHL, FedEx and TNT), accounting for around 95 percent of the market, to make a public declaration of zero tolerance towards illegal wildlife trade. This was followed by training for these companies in CITES regulations, species identification and illegal online sale of wildlife.

Discussion

One of the four outcomes for the third phase of CEPF is "an improved delivery model with more efficient operations, stronger communication products and more effective impact reporting, which facilitates learning, adaptive management and amplification of demonstration models." A key question for CEPF as it puts this delivery model in place is how it can most effectively leverage results from its grant portfolio to have a wider and more lasting impact.

Suggested discussion points:

1. What are the key actors that CEPF and its grantees need to engage with in order to leverage the results of CEPF investments (e.g., large donor-funded programs, public policy, private sector practice, other partnerships, etc.)?
2. How could CEPF modify its grant solicitation and design process to increase the potential for wider amplification of results?
3. Should CEPF develop new modalities (e.g., study tours, secondment, policy briefings, external evaluations, etc.) to facilitate uptake of experience by other actors?