

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	Environment for Life - EFL
Project Title:	Raising awareness on hunting & biodiversity conservation in Al Shouf Cedars Nature Reserve KBA - Niha Fort
Date of Report:	31 July, 2014
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CEPF Region: Lebanon

Strategic Direction: 3. Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas

Grant Amount: 16,000 USD

Project Dates: 1 Year (Spring & Autumn migration seasons) / Project Start Date: July 20, 2013

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

- 1) *Environment for Life Association (EFL)* – is the management implementing party. Through its well established network, EFL coordinated closely with the Shouf Cedar Society and the Municipality of Niha to ensure:
 - The proper training of the municipality police, Internal Security forces, the Reserve Rangers as well as the essential members of the local community in the Biosphere on monitoring of illegal hunting.
 - Conduct two workshops on differentiation between game birds allowed for hunting and non-game birds. The condensed bird identification training workshops should include a section on the hunting law, in relation to allowed and not allowed species to be hunted.
 - Raising Awareness on the level of the local community.
 - Promote the idea of decentralization of monitoring power through the capacity building of the local authority.
 - Creation of skilled municipality members who can become trainers themselves.
- 2) *Al-Shouf Cedar Society (ASC)* - cooperated with EFL on the proposed scope of work and supported EFL's initiative, through motivating the local communities in the ASC biosphere and encouraging them to attend the workshop due to the subject importance.
- 3) *Municipality of Niha (MN)* – expressed its readiness to host the workshops believing that there is an essential need to raise awareness in its district area. The MN considered its site as a pilot one, for experiencing the results of the awareness two workshops on hunting issue. MN allowed the project to train its police on implementing and monitoring the implementation of the hunting law.

Both ASC and MN assisted EFL in conducting the two workshops, covering the following needs:

- Lunch and coffee breaks.
- Video Projector and workshop material (Printing of material is not exclusive).
- Transportation of participants.
- Rent of binoculars, caps and other field needs during the field session for Bird identification.

Conservation Impacts

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

The Project's relation to CEPF Ecosystem Profile is:

- Project's location is Lebanon, a country with a priority in investment according to the Ecosystem Profile – Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot
- Project impacts “Orontes Valley and Lebanon Mountain” corridor, one of the six biodiversity conservation corridors which has been identified as having an overwhelming importance
- Project targets key threat on corridor number 4 (Table 23. p. 119) which is illegal hunting in Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey
- Project location falls within Al Shouf Cedars Nature Reserve, a key biodiversity area in Lebanon as identified in the Ecosystem Profile – Mediterranean Basin Biodiversity Hotspot (Table 25. p.122)
- Project targets critically endangered, and vulnerable species and allows to differentiate them from game birds allowed for hunting
- Project targets strategic direction number 3 which is: “ Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas
- Project targets investment priority 3.3 through raising the awareness on a key biodiversity area and a key bottleneck site which is Shouf Reserve – Niha Castle region and through raising awareness on illegal hunting, an act that if it hits endangered species, they are irreplaceable

It was obvious from the results that the last three targets were fully achieved in this project in all aspects related bird identification knowledge, improvement of conservation in this particular key biodiversity area – Niha Fort, and raising awareness on illegal hunting.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

- Municipality police, internal security forces, forest guards, guards or protected areas, and essential members of the local community were properly trained on monitoring of illegal hunting.
- Two workshops were conducted on differentiation between game birds allowed for hunting and non-game birds.
- Condensed workshops illuminated the moments of the hunting law in Lebanon.
- Awareness on the level of the local community was raised.
- The Local community was lead to the importance of decentralization, in terms of monitoring power through the capacity building of the local authority.
- The two workshops helped in creation of skilled municipality members who can become trainers themselves.

- The role of important role of Media with regards to the issue of hunting and birds' protection was properly highlighted.
- More sustainable hunting practices were promoted.
- Threats to migratory birds within the area of the Shouf nature Reserve's Biosphere decreased.
- The Arabic version of EFL's Website has been launched (the English version is in progress).

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: 39 km.sq (the municipality of Niha took a municipal decision to ban hunting in it biosphere Municipal area.

Species Conserved: All kind of Migratory and residential species that are not allowed to be hunted based on the law 580/2004.

Corridors Created: N/A

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

The project concluded its awareness workshops by informing the local authority with a “needs” vision on how the local community can benefit from birds, particularly from bird watching activities, and thus creates income generating activities and promote awareness related to this promising eco-tourism sector. The advice given to Niha municipality is to link their efforts to those efforts done by the ministry of environment, UNDP and MSB project, to be informed about the tendency of bird watching and trainings that are going to take place in different occasions in Lebanon towards implementing a new national eco-tourism strategy. The project will leave the knowledge and expertise of monitoring and implementing the hunting law to a phase beyond the project's duration. This crucial knowledge might be gained by the municipality police, forest rangers, and guards of protected areas, who can later become trainers themselves to others, through attending special trainings similar to the training initiative that was quickly undertaken by the ISF (Internal Security Forces) as a sign of respect and belief in the project's concern. The developed website by the project will shed the light on the progress of disseminating this knowledge in the future.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

- 1- The prompt undertaken decision of the Niha Municipality Council to Ban hunting in its district area was an unexpected achievement. After the 1st workshop, this particular result was submitted to the workshop's narrative report in Annex 4.
- 2- The strict follow-up done after the 1st workshop was highly appreciated. It took place according to the following steps:
 - The Lebanese Internal Security Forces, the municipality police and forest rangers increased their patrolling to enforce the hunting law in the project's targeted areas. Results of these “inspections” are not being ignored, on the contrary there are certain hunters that are being handed over to the concerned authorities and legal measures are being taken. (Violations list since November 2013 till present report time is attached- Patrolling is taking place in Niha and surrounding areas as it is indicated in the attached list).

- Public broadcasting of awareness messages took place in the entire Shouf Caza and Niha district.
- 20 Striking banners (10m x3m) were designed and distributed in several Shouf villages placed in critical “hunting” areas, these banners directly address the “barbarian” act of hunting. These banners served as an impressive awareness campaign regarding the hunting issue, they were also posted on social media networks (Facebook...) and the website of the Shouf cedars reserve. (Fb page: **Shouf cedars reserve** and **Shouf Biosphere reserve** <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201377861800566&set=pb.1594692971.-2207520000.1411988071.&type=3&theater>).
- The Lebanese Internal Security Forces, motivated by the snowball effect of Niha workshops and the recommendations of the MSB project in Lebanon, took a fast initiative to train the protected areas rangers on how to enforce the hunting law in Lebanon. This means that the tendency to train the “Al Shouf Cedars Reserve” rangers was actually transferred to be implemented on national level. This impact is a very important and milestone in the future progress of the hunting law enforcement tendency.
- The willingness of the partners to meet the expectations of the two workshops was translated to an in-kind contribution amounted to 16,990 USDs, which is exceeding the donation itself (Annex 5 to the 2nd workshop narrative report).
- No negative un-expected results were indicated.

Project Components

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: All results by component are listed in narrative report 1 & 2, previously attached to CEPF management.

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

Component 2 Planned:

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

Component 3 Planned:

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

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

There were no unrealized components.

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

Contributed tools and products:

- The manual for the hunting exam (issued by UNDP, MOE and the MSB project).

Contributed methodology:

- Sample of Hunting exam questions and answers.

Resulted tools:

- Municipal decision to ban hunting in Niha district area.
- Banners issued by the Shouf Nature Reserve.
- EFL website – www.efl-leb.org

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.

In fact, the case of Niha and the strong participation of its mayor can be considered as a success story in the Lebanese community regarding hunting issues. This active participation and follow up came after intensive coordination between the municipality itself and the EFL project management, in which useful awareness information was shared. Therefore this “success story” can and will definitely be repeated with other municipalities in Shouf district and other Lebanese districts, knowing that the municipality board in Niha has adopted the decision of completely banning hunting even in the private areas. (Annex 4 in the 1st workshop narrative report).

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

The adopted methodology during the workshops showed an impressive result in getting to participants minds, in terms of setting the proper agenda, selecting the targeted groups, dissemination of agenda to the groups and selection of the right experts.

However, it was sensed a minor lack of interactive communication between the 3 main “controlling” parties: ISF, municipality police officers and Forest rangers. This lack of interaction was due to some gaps in the comprehension of the hunting law which imposes on the project partners a new responsibility in finding communication bridges. EFL opened to those target groups such kind of bridges.

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

The Project coordinated during its implementation period with the ministry of Environment (MOE), as well as MOE is the responsible party for the hunting sector in Lebanon (Law 580/2004). Also at MOE, and under the direct supervision of the Minister of Environment, the Higher Hunting Council is very active in issuing all the rest of decrees needed for the law to be fully implemented. In addition, at the Ministry of Environment, and in coordination with UNDP, the Migratory Soaring Birds Project is active in communication with different stakeholders concerned in the implementation of the hunting law and in Minimizing threats against Migratory Soaring Birds. EFL was able, through these particular channels, to form a vision on how to attract the Municipality of Niha and AL Shouf Cedars Society and motivate their boards to organize this very important workshop in Niha Fort. Direct connections were also established with the internal security forces in Al Shouf Caza to illuminate the importance in training their staff, for them to be able to identify birds and thus be able to implement

the Law. The participation of some responsible hunters in the workshops, that were invited through the efforts of SPNL partners (the society for the protection of nature in Lebanon), gave an added value to the ceremony, and made a clear difference between hunters and shooters. The involvement of well-known environmental journalists gave a push to the project in the Lebanese media.

In conclusion, a mutual understanding and agreement was sensed during the 1st and 2nd workshops between the Internal Security Forces, the municipalities and the civil society in tackling the issue of illegal and random hunting at the entrances of Niha fort. This is in order to effectively put into practice the hunting law and its related decrees through organizing hunting in Lebanon.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

The main learnt lesson, relevant to conservation community, was that no solution for the hunting confusion in Lebanon without involving all the sector players, though transferring the hunting issue to be on the level of a National concern. It was obviously understood that responsible hunting could be a replacement for disorganized hunting. It is also clear that it is not too hard to take initiatives, similar to the conducted workshop, towards a responsible hunting activity though a future modification of the Lebanese hunting law, where Public hunting areas could be a solution. Taking this initiative with BirdLife, put EFL in a position of coordination with the sector parties which will open new horizons of cooperation and creativity in this aspect.

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
Al -Shouf Cedars Reserve & Niha Municipality	In-cash contribution to activities related to this particular project	16,990 USD	The document is attached to Annex 5 in the 2 nd workshop narrative report

****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.

This was done through management of certain risks such as:

Political risk: was managed through choosing the date of the workshops where the political situation was more or less stable in the Country. For this purpose a follow up through the national media minimized the risk of conducting the workshops in these particular months/days.

Security risk: a coordination with the security forces took place in advance to secure that all attendees will be safe in reaching the location and returning home. This issue was coordinated also with the municipality police that were accompanying the birdwatchers during the bird watching activity.

Risk of not attending: the project management ran two levels of coordination with the attendees: the invitation level and the phone confirmation level.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

There was no special unplanned sustainability or replicability issues even though risk assumptions were on place in case of unexpected surprises:

Risk Assumptions: There were two assumptions that were taken into consideration while organizing the workshop related to political risk and weather conditions during the bird watching activity. With regards to political risk there was a decision that if any incident will take place in the country prior to running the workshop the management will inform RIT to shift the workshop dates to a proper safe one. Other measures were foreseen in case of a rainy or bad weather conditions in Niha fort through the contribution of Niha Municipality and Al Shouf Cedars Society that undertook on their behalf the matter of Umbrellas and 4x4 jeeps.

Again, the “success story” in Niha Municipality can and will definitely be repeated with other municipalities in Shouf district and other Lebanese districts, knowing that the municipality board in Niha has adopted the decision of completely banning hunting even in the private areas. (Annex 4 in the 1st workshop narrative report)

Since all the work that has been done requires a certain level of community awareness in order to be sustainable, it is important to mention that EFL is still in contact with Niha municipality and the efforts that have been done during the workshops are now still progressing. (Patrolling, capturing hunting violations...).

The approach used in this particular village can be replicated in other villages in which illegal hunting is taking place by going through the same procedures, knowing that this approach involves the whole community including controlling parties (ISF, forest rangers and municipality police) and on the other hand, it also holds the citizens of this village responsible of sustaining biodiversity.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

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

N/A

Additional Comments/Recommendations

- The Shouf Cedar Reserve’s should be the typical model in implementing the hunting law, thus a serious support should be given to this area to pilot it’s experience on how to organize hunting and protect migratory birds.

- EFL will recommend to the Ministry of Interior the establishment of the sustainable training center for the enforcement of the hunting law in Lebanon. The target groups that will be exposed for training are: the ISF, the forest rangers, the protected areas Guards, and the Municipality Police.
- Due to the fact that EFL didn't spend all the donation, and 10% of the same is still pending at CEPF, we suggest building a website for EFL in partnership with CEPF, with a budget not exceeding 1600 USDs in addition to the remaining balance from advance payments amounted to 369 USD (Total = 1969 USD), where the achievement of the workshop will be posted and where EFL can start evolving its mission on the level of hunting law enforcement and follow-up. This website can serve as a main tool for project sustainability and further partnership.

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.

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