CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Instructions to grantees: please complete all fields, and respond to all questions, below.

Organization Legal Name	IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
Project Title	Freshwater Key Biodiversity Area refinement: Mediterranean Hotspot
CEPF GEM No.	Offline reporting
Date of Report	02/12/2016

CEPF Hotspot: Mediterranean

Strategic Direction:
SD3 "Improve the conservation and protection status of 44 priority key biodiversity areas." 3.1. Establish new protected areas and promote improved management of existing protected areas by developing and implementing sustainable management plans, and; 3.3. Raise awareness of the importance of priority key biodiversity areas, including those that have irreplaceable plant and marine biodiversity

Grant Amount: US$19,705

Project Dates: 01/06/2016 – 31/12/2016

1. **Implementation Partners for this Project *(list each partner and explain how they were involved in the project)***

No partners.

<u>Conservation Impacts</u>

2. **Describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF investment strategy set out in the ecosystem profile**

This project has refined subset those freshwater KBAs previously identified throughout those parts of the CEPF Mediterranean Biodiversity Hotspot that are eligible for CEPF funding (CEPF Grant Number: 61452). The refinements were required to ensure those previously confirmed Freshwater KBAs meet the new global KBA Standard (published in 2016), in particular in terms of boundary delineation. This work allows a much stronger future focus on conservation of freshwater ecosystems and species. Given the importance of KBAs within mechanisms such as the environmental safeguards applied by major donors and the private sector this work represents a major step forwards in the recognition and protection of freshwater ecosystems and species.

The timeline for this work was, however, extremely challenging, especially given the parallel work to update the CEPF Mediterranean Hotspot Profile. Consequently, as discussed below,

additional work is still needed to ensure all freshwater KBAs are correctly delineated and validated.

3. Summarize the overall results/impact of your project

Following extensive discussions with members of the IUCN Joint Task Force on Biodiversity and Protected Areas, as tasked to develop the global Standard for the Identification of KBAs, a methodology was agreed for refining the boundaries of Freshwater KBAs within larger river/lake catchments, previously confirmed as the KBAs themselves. As the outcomes of this work were also required for input to the updated CEPF profile for the Mediterranean Hotspot efforts were taken to try and also meet the deadlines for the profile. GIS data layers were compiled and conveyed to BirdLife for inclusion within the Microsite released on Tuesday 20th of September and developed to elicit online feedback from experts. The very nicely designed microsite allowed experts to provide feedback on KBA boundaries in relation to pre-existing Protected Areas and KBAs. Experts were also asked to identify small parts of catchments representing species focal areas – these would become the new KBA boundaries. The microsite was most impressive in its design but unfortunately the very tight deadlines for feedback combined with a reluctance by experts to provide feedback rapidly enough to fit the timelines meant that almost no feedback on freshwater KBAs was obtained in this manner. We therefore decided to rely instead upon feedback from the CEPF profiling National Workshops (one in each country) and the required spatial data sets were again prepared for presentation. This approach also proved to be unsatisfactory as the Freshwater KBA data sets were, for some reason, never presented at the workshops. Finally, we decided to use all the available information, mainly within the detailed species accounts on the IUCN Red List, combined with the information previously obtained on KBA trigger species, to refine the previous freshwater KBAs to the focal areas within them which would then become the new KBA boundaries. This work was conducted as an effective desktop exercise and 40 of the 167 originally defined Freshwater KBAs were refined. At this late stage in the project there was unfortunately now insufficient time to obtain any stakeholder feedback on these proposed new KBA boundaries.

The existing 59 freshwater KBAs in Greece, Slovenia and Croatia were not reviewed as these are no longer CEPF eligible countries and thus, they were not included in the consultation and refinement processes.

In conclusion, a total of 27 Freshwater KBAs required no change in their original boundaries, 40 KBAs were refined through the identification of focal areas, and 41 KBAs still require boundary revisions to be confirmed through future consultation with experts. These KBAs were presented at a final workshop to draft the CEPF profile chapters. At this stage in the process there were some concerns raised that a few site boundaries still required revisions. This was effectively the first and only stakeholder feedback obtained through this process. As a solution, and to ensure the required focus on freshwater species and ecosystems is to be adequately recognized within the profile, it was decided by the workshop participants (we were not at the workshop) to maintain recognition of the original 108 previously identified freshwater KBAs (now called KBA Catchment Management Zones - CMZs) either as newly validated freshwater KBAs (if approved through the final stakeholder regional workshop) or as CMZs. There will be a single CEPF strategic priority for freshwater ecosystems based on the geographic locations of CMZs only.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)
List each long-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

1) The validated "confirmed" freshwater KBAs will provide fundamental information to inform a wide range of decision-making contexts and end-users.

4. Actual progress toward long-term impacts at completion

Progress towards this goal has not been as satisfactory as originally hoped. This is largely due to the lack of any expert feedback through the CEPF Profile Microsite or through the National stakeholder workshops. This is largely a product of the very tight time lines and the apparent reluctance of experts to provide online feedback at such short notice. As mentioned above no feedback was obtained through the National Workshops as the freshwater KBA datasets, despite a tremendous effort to ensure they were provided in good time, were not presented for expert review – we are not sure why this decision was taken. The timings for these processes to obtain expert feedback were outside of our control being part of the parallel CEPF Profile updating process. A number of refined freshwater KBAs have now been delineated but they still need to be validated through expert feedback. Unfortunately there was insufficient time remaining to obtain this feedback through other channels as part of this project.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)
List each short-term impact from Grant Writer proposal

1) Freshwater KBAs are included in the updated CEPF Ecosystem Profile so providing input for CEPF strategic funding for conservation action at these sites.
2) Freshwater KBAs are included in IBAT so informing private sector and donor community Environmental Safeguards.

5. Actual progress toward short-term impacts at completion

1) Freshwater KBAs are now recognized within the revised draft CEPF profile in various forms (e.g. as Corridors) so providing a significant new focus on freshwater species and ecosystems. This is therefore a very satisfactory outcome.
2) Freshwater KBAs are unfortunately not yet included in IBAT as the facility for uploading the refined freshwater KBAs with their accompanying KBA CMZ factsheets to the WBDB is still not operational. We are hoping that this current and longstanding block to inclusion of freshwater KBAs and their CMZs in the database can be solved rapidly.

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

The key challenge to achieving the short-term and long-term impacts was the requirement to work within the very tight time lines imposed by CEPF for updating the Hotspot profile with the inclusion of newly refined and validated freshwater KBAs. The procedures developed to obtain expert feedback, and which we were obliged to work with, did not unfortunately provide the necessary expert feedback. It has become clear that, to be fully effective in obtaining the necessary expert feedback for validating KBAs, a workshop format is the only suitable approach

if the information is to be obtained in a relatively short time period – as for this project. Potentially, if time had permitted, following our own desktop refinement of KBA boundaries, we might have obtained the necessary expert validation through targeting identified experts and sending them the refined KBA boundaries for comment. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to employ this approach after waiting for feedback through the microsite and national workshops both of which failed to provide the required feedback. Moreover, the Freshwater KBA Datazone was offline for a number of days which limited the access to freshwater data and slowed down the refinement process.

7. Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

It is clear from this process, the first attempt to refine KBA boundaries to meet the new global KBA Standard, that practical implementation of the KBA standard needs to be addressed at a dedicated workshop. This is a strong recommendation from our project team. Many issues were raised through the process here – in particular relating to site boundary delineation and harmonization of boundaries with pre-existing KBAs and Protected Areas. It is also apparent that the inclusion of KBAs for an increasing range of taxonomic groups risks KBA devaluation as large parts of the region become confirmed as KBAs. At the National Workshops it appears that the experts simply merged overlapping sites which also resulted in very large KBAs. Within this context the main purpose for the freshwater KBA boundary refinement is to try and address this issue as previously many people felt the total area covered was too large to help in the process of focusing conservation efforts to those sites most in need.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Component 1 (as stated in the approved proposal)
List each component and product/deliverable from Grant Writer

8. Describe the results from Component 1 and each product/deliverable

1) *Redefine the boundaries of existing freshwater KBAs as CMZs*

This has been completed. All the original Freshwater KBAs are now either re-classified as Catchment Management Zones (CMZs) or as KBAs where no boundary refinement was required.

2) *Within the CMZs delineate the new KBA boundaries, confirm, revised freshwater KBA and CMZ site boundaries and generate an associated dataset of basic information on trigger species and major threat.*

Focal Areas within CMZs have been identified and delineated as KBAs where information has been obtained on the distribution of trigger species as given in the IUCN Red List species accounts. In many cases information was sufficient to do this although there were difficulties in identifying locations of sites referenced. An expert workshop would help to address this issue.

3) *Stakeholder Consultation (through a combination of remote consultation and CEPF Ecosystem Profile workshops as possible)*

As mentioned above, the two approaches to obtain stakeholder feedback were determined by the parallel project to update the CEPF Hotspot Profile. Unfortunately neither approach was successful in providing expert feedback on the proposed KBAs. This part of the project methodology was outside of our control.

4) *Collate additional information from stakeholders (employing the online google document) sufficient to create the accompanying factsheets for each KBA and CMZ and subsequent upload to the World Biodiversity Database (WBDB) with assistance from Birdlife International*

As mentioned above, we were asked to use the microsite developed to obtain feedback on KBA boundaries. By the time this approach was found to not effectively provide the feedback we needed it was too late to try using a google doc as an alternative approach. In hind sight we now believe that a face-to-face workshop is most likely to provide the feedback needed.

5) *Summary analysis and report production*

The project results will be presented as an annex to the original report on Mediterranean Freshwater KBAs and will present a summary of the methodology and a new map of confirmed and provisional freshwater KBAs. This information will also be presented in tabular format identifying: i) KBAs for which no boundary modification was required; ii) refined KBAs based on Focal Areas identified within the original CMZ boundaries, and iii) CMZs where expert opinion is still required to identify focal areas as the new KBA boundaries.

9. Repeat point 8 above for each Component in your approved proposal

10. If you did not complete any component or deliverable, how did this affect the overall impact of the project?

Components 3 & 4 were implemented but not successfully for the reasons given above. The overall impact is that we are not able to yet present a full set of validated freshwater KBAs for the hotspot. The work has been completed to provide the necessary data sets for expert feedback and validation but, for reasons beyond our control, it was not possible to obtain this feedback though the current project. In order to complete the project we still need to hold a workshop (ideally one for each of the three regions of the hotspot) to obtain the necessary expert validation. According to the new global KBA Standard pre-existing KBAs identified under previous KBA methodologies still stand as valid priority sites for persistence of biodiversity but they should be refined as soon as possible. In the case of previously validated Freshwater KBAs we are reluctant to present all of them as being still valid as the delineation approach has been significantly refined, not only to meet the new KBA Standard, but also to minimize the areas within catchments where the trigger species are not physically present. In strict terms the catchment boundary can still be used to define KBA boundaries but we prefer to focus the KBA to sites within the catchment (potentially as smaller sub-catchments) where possible.

11. Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results

N/A

Benefits to Communities

12. Please describe the communities that have benefited from CEPF support

*Please report on the size and characteristics of communities and the benefits that they have received, as a result of CEPF investment. Please provide information for all communities that have benefited **from project start to project completion**.*

N/A

	Community Characteristics											Nature of Socioeconomic Benefit								
								Size of Community												
Community Name	Subsistence economy	Small landowners	Indigenous/ ethnic peoples	Pastoralists / nomadic peoples	Recent migrants	Urban communities	Other*	50-250 people	251-500 people	501-1,000 people	Over 1,001 people	Increased access to clean water	Increased food security	Increased access to energy	Increased access to public services (e.g. health care, education)	Increased resilience to climate change	Improved land tenure	Improved recognition of traditional knowledge	Improved representation and decision-making in governance forums/structures	Improved access to ecosystem services

*If you marked "Other" to describe the community characteristic, please explain:

Lessons Learned

13. Describe any lessons learned related to organizational development and capacity building.

The main lesson here for IUCN and Birdlife is that the methodology for implementation of the new KBA guidelines on site delineation and boundary harmonization still needs to be determined through testing on real data sets as done here. This process has revealed the many uncertainties on how to practically implement the KBA standard.

14. Describe any lessons learned related to project Design Process *(aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)*

It is clear that it is difficult to obtain expert feedback through online means alone when such a large and complex task is presented within a very short timeframe. A workshop setting is almost certainly required for this to be fully successful, especially within such a short timeframe.

15. Describe any lesson learned related to project Implementation *(aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)*

The project time frame was always going to be tight but it may have been feasible if we didn't have to also follow the procedures and timetable for the profile update. In this case the procedures used for the profile update did not prove suitable for refining freshwater KBAs. With more time the microsite might have produced results but as the process of harmonizing KBA boundaries with other KBAs and /or Protected Area is yet to be worked out in practice we think face-to-face discussions will be needed.

16. Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

N/A

Sustainability / Replication

17. Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated

We hope that an opportunity will arise soon to complete the work of validating the freshwater KBAs. We also hope that the procedures for uploading these new KBAs into the KBA database will be resolved soon so that the KBAs can be published on IBAT. Once published on IBAT the next task is to ensure National KBA focal points are established to ensure the process of maintaining and updating the information over the longer-term is in place.

18. **Summarize any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability**

N/A

Safeguards

19. If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social and environmental safeguards that your project may have triggered

Once the freshwater KBAs are all validated and - uploaded to the KBA database they can be published on IBAT. Once in IBAT these site will trigger environmental safeguards for many user groups such as the World Bank and IFC. It is therefore a priority to complete this work and to get these freshwater KBAs validated and uploaded.

Additional Funding

20. 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 CEPF investment

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes

** Categorize the type of funding as:*

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)

Additional Comments/Recommendations

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

Although the project was unable to meet all of it's objectives I think it has served very well to highlight the many issues arising in relation to the new KBA processes. This in it's own right has been particularly useful. In this case the very tight timelines associated with the CEPF Profile revision might be addressed in the future as it is likely that the final profile could have been more robust with a little more time.

Finally, we are hoping to have the opportunity to hold an expert workshop to complete the project under the next round of CEPF funding.

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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FW KBA REFINEMENT – CEPF MEDITERRANEAN HOTSPOT UPDATE.

Table 1. Freshwater KBAs in the Eastern Mediterranean Countries.
In the Eastern Mediterranean sub-region there were a total number of 47 validated Freshwater KBAs (Darwall *et al*, 2014). To meet the new KBA standard (IUCN 2016) the boundaries of 26 FW KBAs were refined while 4 FW KBAs didn't need a boundary modification. The remaining 17 FW KBAs need further consultation in a workshop with the regional experts but meanwhile they can be used as corridors.

COUNTRY	FW KBA NAME (2014)	NO CHANGE	REFINED	NOT YET REFINED - ADD AS CORRIDOR
Turkey	Aksu River		Yes	
Turkey	Akyaka springs		Yes	
Turkey	Bakirçay			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Burdur lake and catchments		Yes	
Turkey	Büyük Menderes river			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Duden river		Yes	
Turkey	Eğirdir Lake catchment		Yes	
Turkey	Gökdere (Yeşildere) stream	Yes		
Turkey	Işıklı/Çivril lake and catchment		Yes	
Turkey	Karpuzçay stream		Yes	
Turkey	Köprü Çay			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Korkuteli and Elmali plains			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Küçük Menderes		Yes	
Turkey	Lake Beyşehir and catchments		Yes	
Turkey	Lake Iznik and catchment	Yes		
Turkey	Lakes Acıgöl and Salda		Yes	
Turkey	Lakes Akşehir - Eber system		Yes	
Turkey	Lower Asi drainage		Yes	
Turkey	Lower Gediz river		Yes	
Turkey	Main stem of the Tigris River			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Manavgat River			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Middle and lower Seyhan river		Yes	
Turkey	Qweik		Yes	
Turkey	Savrun catchment (Ceyhan drainage)			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Sultan Sazlığı Marshes	Yes		
Turkey	Upper Dalaman			Needs expert consultation
Turkey	Yarpuz and Hamus catchment (in Ceyhan basin)			Needs expert consultation

COUNTRY	FW KBA NAME (2014)	NO CHANGE	REFINED	NOT YET REFINED - ADD AS CORRIDOR
Jordan	Amman			Needs expert consultation
Jordan	Upper Mujib			Needs expert consultation
Jordan	Wadi Shuaib		Yes	
Jordan	Zarqa River		Yes	
Jordan, Israel, Palesinian OT	Central Jordan River			Needs expert consultation
Jordan, Syria, Israel	Lower Yarmouk			Needs expert consultation
Jordan, Israel	Wadi Karak Basin			Needs expert consultation
Syria, Lebanon	Lake Homs (Qatinah)		Yes	
Syria	Upper Khabour	Yes		
Syria	Middle Orontes			Needs expert consultation
Syria	Nahr al Aouaj		Yes	
Syria	Nahr al Kabir			Needs expert consultation
Syria	Nahr al Marqiya		Yes	
Syria, Turkey	Northern Coastal Streams of Syria		Yes	
Syria, Lebanon	Spring of Barada (En Fidje)		Yes	
Syria, Lebanon, Israel	Upper Jordan Valley		Yes	
Syria, Jordan	Yarmuk basin		Yes	
Lebanon, Syria	Upper Asi Lebanon		Yes	
Lebanon, Syria	Litani River		Yes	
Palestinian Occupied Territories	Jerico catchment			Needs expert consultation

Table 2. Freshwater KBAs in North Africa.
In the North African sub-region there were a total number of 43 validated Freshwater KBAs (Darwall *et al*, 2014). To meet the new KBA standard (IUCN 2016), the boundaries of 9 FW KBAs were refined while 16 FW KBAs didn't need a boundary modification. The remaining 18 FW KBAs need further consultation in a workshop with the regional experts but meanwhile they can be used as corridors.

COUNTRY	FW KBA NAME (2014)	NO CHANGE	REFINED	NOT YET REFINED – ADD AS CORRIDOR
Morocco	Arhreme river	Yes		
Morocco	Assif El Mal			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Assif El Mal east			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Assif Meloul river			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Abid river Downstream	Yes		
Morocco	Le Grand Nador			Needs expert consultation

COUNTRY	FW KBA NAME (2014)	NO CHANGE	REFINED	NOT YET REFINED – ADD AS CORRIDOR
Morocco	Lower Moulouya		Yes	
Morocco	Lower Souss and tributaries	Yes		
Morocco	M'Goun river basin	Yes		
Morocco	Middle N'Fiss river	Yes		
Morocco	Middle Oum Er Rbia - Beni Mellal	Yes		
Morocco	Middlelt Upper Moulouya	Yes		
Morocco	Oued Amizmiz	Yes		
Morocco	Oued Bouhlou		Yes	
Morocco	Oued Bouregreg			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Oued Imouzzer Kandar		Yes	
Morocco	Oued Ksob - Igrounzar			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Oued Lakhdar			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Oued Laou			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Oued Massa	Yes		
Morocco	Oued Tizguite and Oued Ouaslane		Yes	
Morocco	Oued Ziz Errachidia			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Saidia Coastal Plain	Yes		
Morocco	Sehb El Majnoune			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Tifnout basin		Yes	
Morocco	Tigrigra stream	Yes		
Morocco	Upper Dades			Needs expert consultation
Morocco	Upper Oued N'Fiss	Yes		
Morocco	Upper Oum Er Rbia	Yes		
Morocco	Upper Oum Er Rbia above Kasba Tadla			Needs expert consultation
Algeria	Beni Belaid			Needs expert consultation
Algeria, Morocco	Figuig oasis and Oued Saoura			Needs expert consultation
Algeria	Hauts Plateaux			Needs expert consultation
Algeria	Oued el Harrach			Needs expert consultation
Algeria	Oued Zhour	Yes		
Algeria	Seybouse catchment		Yes	

COUNTRY	FW KBA NAME (2014)	NO CHANGE	REFINED	NOT YET REFINED – ADD AS CORRIDOR
Algeria	Tafna Catchment			Needs expert consultation
Algeria	Western Numidia		Yes	
Tunisia	Cap Serrat - Cap Blanc - Parc national de l'Ichkeul		Yes	
Tunisia	Maden River	Yes		
Tunisia, Algeria	Upper Medjarda River	Yes		
Tunisia, Algeria	El Kala - Les Tourbieres de Dar Fatma Transboundary site			Needs expert consultation
Tunisia, Algeria	Eastern Numidia		Yes	

Table 3. Freshwater KBAs in the Balkans.
In the Balkans sub-region there were a total number of 18 validated Freshwater KBAs (Darwall *et al*, 2014) without counting the freshwater KBAs in Greece, Croatia and Slovenia –which are no longer eligible CEPF countries. To meet the new KBA standard (IUCN 2016), the boundaries of 5 FW KBAs were refined while 7 FW KBAs didn't need a boundary modification. The remaining 6 FW KBAs need further consultation in a workshop with the regional experts but meanwhile they can be used as corridors.

Country	FW KBA NAME (2014)	NO CHANGE	REFINED	NOT YET REFINED – ADD AS CORRIDOR
Albania	Butrint	Yes		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lake Bilecko			Needs expert consultation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lake Busko	Yes		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Listica River and Mostarsko blato			Needs expert consultation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nevesinjsko polje, Gatacko polje, Cernicko polje, Fatnicko polje and Dabarsko polje			Needs expert consultation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Part of the Neretva upper catchment			Needs expert consultation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Part of the Neretva upper catchment - eastern mid catchment	Yes		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Popovo polje and Trebišnjica			Needs expert consultation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Tributaries of lower and middle Neretva	Yes		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	West Karst poljes		Yes	

Montenegro	Catchment surrounding Niksic	Yes		
Albania, FYR Macedonia	Lake Ohrid		Yes	
Albania, FYR Macedonia, Greece	Transboundary Prespa Park	Yes		
Albania, Montenegro	Lake Skadar	Yes		
Albania, Montenegro	Lower Bojana river basin		Yes	
Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Neretva Delta and associated springs/lakes including Hutovo Blato		Yes	
Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Trebizat drainage including Imotsko polje			Needs expert consultation
FYR Macedonia, Greece	Doirani		Yes	