

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, Oceania Regional Office
Project Title:	Moving from science to conservation action: sharing lessons learned and setting future priorities through the hosting of a Pacific Islands Species Forum
Date of Report:	August 8 th 2012
Report Author and Contact Information	Helen Pippard, Species Focal Point, IUCN Oceania Regional Office, 5 Ma'afu Street, Suva, Fiji Phone +679 331 9084; email helen.pippard@iucn.org

CEPF Region: Polynesia-Micronesia

Strategic Direction: 3. Build awareness and participation of local leaders and community members in the implementation of protection and recovery plans for threatened species
Strengthen leadership and effectiveness of local conservation organizations by developing peer-learning networks and promoting exchanges and study tours

Grant Amount: \$19,980

Project Dates: January 1st - June 30th 2012

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

Birdlife International and **SPREP** provided major technical support for the preparation of the Forum.

In addition to **Birdlife International** and **SPREP**, other members and partners of the **Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation (PIRT)** provided advice on the content, themes, structure and logistics of the Forum, as part of the organizing Steering Committee: these included the **University of the South Pacific, Conservation International, the PIRT Coordinator** and members of the **Species Working Group of the PIRT**. The Chair of the IUCN **Species Survival Commission (SSC)** and members of various Specialist Groups of the SSC were also involved in providing guidance on content and structure.

The **Solomon Islands government** was part of the Steering Committee and additionally provided on-the-ground logistical support in Honiara.

Conservation Impacts

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

This project aimed to improve our knowledge of Pacific Island species of fauna and flora, as the CEPF ecosystem profile for Polynesia-Micronesia identifies the lack of existing biodiversity information data as a constraint to effective conservation in the region. The Pacific Islands Species Forum brought together a range of people to discuss, share and promote research being carried out on species in the region. By doing so, newly available information was brought to the arena, which can be used by governments, policy makers, scientists, NGOs and community members for a variety of uses: for example, to help meet regional conservation objectives, to develop species recovery plans, and to input to conservation management of species' populations. Specifically, this project therefore linked directly to CEPF's Strategic Direction 3, to "Build awareness and participation of local leaders and community members in the implementation of protection and recovery plans for threatened species". In addition, by bringing

together the diverse number of attendees from different backgrounds to stimulate networking and exchange of knowledge, the Species Forum also provided input to Priority 3.2: to “Strengthen leadership and effectiveness of local conservation organizations by developing peer-learning networks and promoting exchanges and study tours”.

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

The inaugural Pacific Islands Species Forum (“Species Forum”) took place from April 25th - 27th 2012 in Honiara, Solomon Islands, at the Heritage Park Hotel. The Species Forum aimed to provide the first opportunity for scientists, researchers, policy-makers, and conservation practitioners to convene and share scientific knowledge and research relating specifically to species conservation in the Pacific. The small island states of the Pacific are isolated, with distance proving a major barrier to the spread of knowledge and facilitation of support networks. As such, there has been a lack of consolidated approaches on species issues within the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) and species conservation is often low on the agenda. The Species Forum provided a unique opportunity for people to come together and network on species issues. It enabled experts to realize that a support network can and does exist, and re-injected much enthusiasm for those scientists working in isolation in remote locations of the Pacific.

Following discussions amongst the Steering Committee, the overall theme for the inaugural Species Forum was decided as “Moving from science to action”, drawing on the Aichi Targets (especially Target 12) as the underlying focus for discussions. A call for submissions was circulated utilizing the extensive networks held by IUCN and the PIRT, and the Species Forum webpages were hosted by IUCN ORO to promote the event and manage online registration. The Species Forum aimed at targeting approximately 100 participants working on species conservation in the region. Over 70 registered participants from twelve countries attended the three day meeting, along with additional NGO and government representatives from the Solomon Islands who attended sessions wherever possible. There was representation from various different types of organizations including universities, NGOs, zoos and herbaria, and governments. Regional and national media also attended, as did Pacific Island leaders such as Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo, Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands, in the hope of raising the profile of species issues beyond the scientific community and highlight to the general public the importance of species to ecosystems and livelihoods. IUCN Daily Press Releases accompanied the Species Forum, and participants also gave interviews on Radio Australia during the Species Forum (Press Releases are attached to this report, and other media are available for download from IUCN Oceania’s website:

http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/oceania/oro_getinvolved/speciesforum/speciesforum_media/).

The Species Forum consisted of presentations, discussions and break out groups structured around four themes: Knowledge and Research; Continuing Challenges; Celebrating Success; and The Way Forward. Participants shared a diverse range of information on Pacific Island species including data gaps, results of implementation on the ground, lessons learned and the way forward in determining the status of species, their conservation needs and how regional policies could protect them. The Proceedings of the Forum (attached) outline the results of the three day meeting in greater detail.

As well as sharing scientific knowledge and conservation efforts, the other major aim of the Species Forum was to assist in moving towards further action for halting biodiversity loss. A set of recommendations directed at governments and organizations working on species conservation in the Pacific were drafted by the participants. It is anticipated that these will contribute to national and regional planning, as well as understanding of the Convention on Biological Diversity Aichi Targets. In particular, the recommendations can be used to assist governments in achieving Target 12: *By 2020 the extinction of known threatened species has been prevented and their conservation status, particularly of those most in decline, has been improved and sustained.* However, much of the information shared over the three day Species Forum can also feed into other targets. For example: Target 5, which relates to the reduction of habitat loss; Target 9, which aims to control and eradicate invasive species; Target 11, concerning the establishment of terrestrial and marine protected areas; and Target 20, which seeks to share and apply biodiversity knowledge.

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.

In the short-term, the Species Forum was successfully delivered in relation to the objectives. This can largely be attributed to the commitment shown by the established Steering Committee, and by utilizing the extensive existing networks held by IUCN and the PIRT.

In the longer-term, the challenge will be maintaining the momentum generated by the Species Forum, and expanding a sustainable network of relevant species practitioners in order to keep information exchange active and dynamic. Ensuring that information and knowledge feeds into relevant policies, databases and action plans will also be a major challenge.

The University of the South Pacific has expressed strong interest in leading the second Pacific Islands Species Forum. Initial discussions have indicated that the University sees the event as “core” business and would aim to host such an event every two years.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

There have been no negative impacts experienced as far as is known.

The level of response, enthusiasm and positive support shown by all of the participants was extremely encouraging, and quite unexpected. The amount of information and knowledge held by participants was also far greater than anticipated, and the challenge now is to ensure that this information is directed into relevant policies, strategies, work plans and databases.

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.

Planning and preparation for this Forum was made harder by the organizers not being based in the Host country. Whilst local in-country assistance was available, it was difficult to plan events, catering, venue etc from afar. In the future, it would be recommended to have in-country staff taking the lead on all logistical arrangements.

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

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

As there were many organizations involved in the execution of this project, assigning clearer responsibilities and roles was vital to the success of the project. It would have been helpful to have had letters of agreement to this effect, as often the responsibilities were left to only one or two key personnel/organizations, meaning that many organizations were not as involved as they had committed to being. The role and function of the Steering Committee would need careful consideration and clarification prior to the next Species Forum taking place.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

There is an enormous amount of species research and conservation work taking place in the region, and the scientific community is enthusiastic, passionate and willing to collaborate. Species conservation efforts must be communicated widely, especially outside of the scientific community in order to raise the necessary funds and capacity to continue with such conservation action.

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
Fonds Pacifique	A	10,000	Participation of attendees from French Territories
IUCN ORO	A	30,000	Staff time, in kind contributions, participation of IUCN staff, and meeting costs
Birdlife International	A	5,000	In kind contributions and participation of staff
SPREP	A	10,000	In kind contributions and participation of staff

***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.

It is anticipated that the Pacific Islands Species Forum will become a regular event, to be held at least biennially. The success of this Forum is good preparation for a Pacific presence at IUCN's World Species Forum, expected to be held sometime before 2016. The Species Forum and its resulting networks can therefore provide vital support essential to enable Pacific countries and organizations to attend and participate in larger scale initiatives such as the World Species Forum. The attendance of the Chair of IUCN's Species Survival Commission, Dr. Simon Stuart, will enable the sharing of lessons and challenges in managing and protecting the uniqueness of Pacific Island Species amongst the global network.

The establishment of networks can also assist in effectively utilizing scientific data when implementing existing regional species conservation strategies and projects. For example, data can be submitted to the IUCN Red List (identified as a priority for species conservation in the region), data can contribute to meeting objectives set out in NBSAPs, and data can assist in delivering the programme of work of contributing organizations and regional policies such as the *Action Strategy for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Pacific 2008-2012*.

The major challenges will be to ensure that the Species Working Group of the PIRT, and the wider established networks, remain invigorated, useful, and a major contributor to implementing outcomes. As the need for such a gathering of species researchers and experts is extremely high, and because the information generated is so valuable for governments and communities to use in conservation planning and species conservation, it is imperative that the organizations of the PIRT take responsibility to maintain the momentum created.

The continued success of the Species Forum (i.e. conservation and sustainable management of Pacific Island species) requires support from all stakeholders in the region. The networks now exist and the success of the resulting recommendations and outcomes are in the hands of the many practitioners, NGOs, governments, academics and private sector who made the idea of a regional gathering of species experts into a reality.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Resulting discussions suggest that there is strong support for the Pacific Island Species Forum becoming a permanent “species” feature of the Pacific. Thus, it is anticipated that it will be replicated in the future.

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

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:

Name: Helen Pippard
Organization name: IUCN Oceania Regional Office
Mailing address: 5 Ma'afu Street, Private Mailbag, Suva, Fiji
Tel: +679 331 9084
Fax: +679 310 0128
E-mail: helen.pippard@iucn.org

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

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

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 1 below.				

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

