

## CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

### I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** World Wildlife Fund, Inc.

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** CEPF Grant Making Coordination and Partnership in the Eastern Himalayas

**Implementation Partners for this Project:**

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** January 1, 2006 - March 31, 2011

**Date of Report (month/year):**

### II. OPENING REMARKS

***Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.***

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) Program in the Eastern Himalayas began implementation officially in 2005 after approval of an ecosystem profile and an allocation of 5 m over 5 years. . However before actual field level implementation the program had to get government endorsement in all three implementing countries (Bhutan, India, and Nepal). This process took another year and thus the actual implementation started in 2006 when the Regional Implementation Team was established based out of WWF Nepal office in Kathmandu, Nepal. The calls for the first round of proposals were made in 2006 for all the three countries.

Stake holder consultations in 2004 while compiling this ecosystem profile emphasized the need for: a) large scale conservation for saving the region's megafauna and representative ecosystems; b) conservation efforts that transcend protected areas boundaries; c) innovative public private alliances and partnerships for conservation and; d) the participation of local people in natural resource management. Based on these the priority conservation outcomes for Eastern Himalayas hotspot comprised of 163 species outcomes, 175 site outcomes and 13 corridor outcomes. These were further prioritized during the consultations in the process of making an investment strategy for the hotspot. Thus CEPF in the Eastern Himalaya hotspot had 76 (out of 163) species outcomes, 60 (out of 175) site outcomes and 5 (out of 13) corridor outcomes. These were the spaces and species that the program would invest in. CEPF resources were to make the greatest incremental impact in the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex, the Kangchenjunga-Singalila Complex, and the North Bank Landscape. While all five priority corridors were eligible for CEPF support and were considered important for globally significant biodiversity, particular emphasis was to be placed on the Bhutan Biological

Conservation Complex, Kangchenjunga-Singalila Complex, and North Bank Landscape. CEPF support in the Terai Arc and Kaziranga-Karbi Anlong Landscape would be used for very targeted and strategic activities that would leverage, maximize and complement the existing funding already going to these landscapes. CEPF strategy was to invest the majority of its resources for the Eastern Himalayas toward building momentum in the lesser-funded landscapes in the region.

During the consultations it was found that national governments, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, and several international organizations were already providing financial support to environment-related programs in the priority landscapes. But the focus of these programs focused on natural resource management and lacked adequate biodiversity conservation components. Therefore the resources provided by CEPF were considered to be an opportunity to leverage matching funds and catalyze larger conservation programs. By collaborating with larger initiatives in the region, CEPF was expected to provide momentum for a long-term regional conservation initiative in the eastern Himalayas. CEPF would seek to build partnership approaches with grassroots NGOs capable of conducting species-specific conservation actions. Therefore, CEPF's niche in the region was to:

- influence and add synergy to existing biodiversity conservation programs through civil society;
- complement and leverage funds where large development projects do not directly address biodiversity conservation or where the investments are inadequate; and
- support and strengthen civil society's role in conservation, especially in species specific actions and in influencing biodiversity policies.

<b>III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE</b>
--

***Project Purpose:***

An effective, efficient and coordinated approach amongst stakeholders is established to achieve the CEPF conservation outcomes for the Eastern Himalayas biodiversity hotspot and ecoregion.

**Planned vs. Actual Performance**

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Purpose-level:</b>	

<p><i>1. 4 Community Forest User Groups in Kangchenjunga Singhalila Complex will initiate forest management that supports key species conservation by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>-Community Forests of Eastern Nepal have initiated activities that support forest management for biodiversity conservation thus the supporting conservation of key species like the Red panda          -In Terai Arc Landscape many community forest have initiated Vulture conservation through safe habitat programs.          -In India, around Singalaila National Park in West Bengal and Barsay Rhododendraon Sanctuary, Sikkim communities adopted environmental friendly strategies in their agricultural practices thus conserving the habitat of the Red Panda</p>
<p><i>2. Status of at least 2 key species well documented and conserved in community forests by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>-The status of Red Panda and Vultures documented and conserved in community forests in Nepal          -Status of the Black-necked Crane and White-bellied Heron both Endangered species were well documented and community involvement in their conservation was achieved.</p>
<p><i>3. Investment for biodiversity conservation initiated by at least 2 local governing bodies through establishment of strategic alliances by the end of the project</i></p>	<p>CEPF grantees (Civil Society Organizations) started investment for biodiversity conservation in Bhutan, India and Nepal</p>

***Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.***

The overall impact of CEPF's five years of investment can be summarized as follows:

1. CEPF played an instrumental role in improving the management of 1,000,000 hectares located across 11 key biodiversity areas. Within these areas, CEPF contributed to a reduction of agricultural encroachment and poor land use, as well as the recovery of degraded lands and wildlife populations. Included in this expanse are four protected areas that showed significant management improvements and renewed political commitment: Bumdeling and Sakteng in Bhutan, and Manas Tiger Reserve and Sonai Rupai in India.
2. Four national or local policies were adopted to support mainstreaming conservation into development policy at the local, state, and national levels. Through policy analysis, stakeholder consultations, media and community outreach, training and technical assistance, local civil society groups gained important new capacities that allowed them to work collaboratively with local and federal agencies to strengthen public policies. Grant partners achieved important policy results in the Bhutan Biological Corridor Complex and the Kangchenjunga-Sinagalila Complex. In Bhutan, CEPF funding provided the basis for a new Corridor Management Policy.
3. Field assessments for five Critically Endangered species and 16 Endangered species were conducted. A network of more than 30 experts and conservationists was established and new capacity for species conservation was built. During the period of CEPF investment, no known species were lost. These efforts have significantly expanded understanding of the

state of the Eastern Himalayas Critically Endangered species, especially for fish, plants, and reptiles, which were poorly studied before CEPF.

4. A total of \$1,195,110 was leveraged to support CEPF outcomes via grantee contributions of cash, labor and in-kind contributions from communities and host government agencies. (See Annex C for leveraging data.)
5. A total of 1,500 households benefited directly from CEPF projects across a broad array of activities, including alternative and sustainable livelihood programs, park management implementation, sustainable agriculture, watershed management and ecotourism.
6. Five multi-stakeholder collaborative networks were established and/or strengthened at various levels of decision-making and on numerous topics, signaling a new approach to conservation in a region that historically has been characterized by isolated and fragmented approaches to conservation. Through CEPF, local civil society groups worked collaboratively with their government counterparts to proactively seek solutions to pressing conservation and development problems.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

None

<b>IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>
----------------------------

***Project Outputs:***

**Planned vs. Actual Performance**

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Output 1.</b> An Eastern Himalayas Coordination Unit exists with an appropriate coordination mechanism to support all parts of CEPF grant making including solicit proposals, reviews, monitoring and reporting.	

<p><b>1.1.</b> Coordination team established with a Regional Coordinator, three country coordinators, a communication officer and a part time advisor with Terms of reference by Quarter 1 2006.</p>	<p>A Regional Implementation Team (RIT) was established in May 2006. The main coordination office was based in WWF Nepal in Kathmandu. The team was lead by the Regional Coordinator from WWF with a Regional Communication Officer also from WWF. The Nepal and Bhutan teams comprised of a Country Coordinator and a Small Grants Administrator all from WWF. In India the coordination was lead by Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) from their Field Office in Darjeeling, India and comprised of a National Coordinator and a Small Grants Coordinator. The administrative and management of the team was supported by WWF Nepal.</p>
<p><b>1.2.</b> Regional Coordinator hired by Quarter 1 2006.</p>	<p>The Terms of Reference of the Regional Coordinators was developed and finalized in March 2006 and the Regional Coordinator was selected and hired effective from April 14th 2006.</p>
<p><b>1.3.</b> Mechanism for efficient exchange of information and reporting established among the members of the coordination team and the CEPF Grant Director by Quarter 1 2006</p>	<p>Coordination team in the Eastern Himalayas was in regular contact through emails. The Regional Coordinator spent regular time with the team members in Bhutan, Nepal and India for coordinating the projects and helping civil society to be involved in biodiversity conservation. Regular contact and information exchange were maintained with the Grant Manager with regards to proposal development, implementation, reporting (program and financial) monitoring and closure of grants</p>
<p><b>1.4.</b> Coordination Unit meets on a quarterly basis</p>	<p>In addition regular planning and review meetings were held where all the team members were present and participated. These organized (2 in Bhutan, 2 in Nepal and 2 in India) were organized to share progress and streamline projects particularly in the trans boundary areas and re strategize the ecosystem profile of Eastern Himalayas.</p>
<p><b>1.5.</b> Coordination Unit briefed on CEPF process by mid March 2006 and first regional CEPF team meeting held by March 30, 2006.</p>	<p>First regional CEPF team meeting was organized in January 2008 due to delay in project launching (May 2006). The Eastern Himalaya Strategic Planning Meeting was also organized during this time.</p>

<p><b>1.6.</b> Establish an internal grant recommendation body to make decision on recommending projects for approval to CEPF and resolve issues relating to regional coordination. This body will include CEPF Grant director, regional coordinator and the WWF Himalayas director.</p>	<p>An in internal mechanism of recommending or short-listing proposals from those received through public announcement was developed. Each proposal was reviewed and recommended for the next phase by Regional Implementation Team and decisions were made after consultation with the Grant Director.</p>
<p><b>1.7.</b> Establish an advisory body in each country with members from key NGOs, experts and government to help review project proposals, share information, advise on new policy and donor sensitization etc. by November 2006 and meet once a year and as needed</p>	<p>In Nepal a National Advisory Committee (NAC) consisting of 9 members representing NGOs, government and experts was formed in June 2006. The NAC had ten meetings for review of proposals, facilitating selection of projects and share progress on projects.</p> <p>A National Advisory Committee was also established in Bhutan to guide the process of project approval, advise and guide implementation. The body was constituted of members from Government, NG O and civil society organizations.</p> <p>In India the selection process comprised of 2 Committees-a CEPF Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) was formed to review and recommend proposals for final selection. This comprised of government representatives from the states as well as experts. The other committee -CEPF Program Steering Committee Purpose was formed to ensure that the CEPF portfolio in India is transparent, strategic and the investment of CEPF reach the targeted audience comprising of local NGOs, civil society and community based groups. This comprised of government representatives from the central ministries.</p>
<p><b>Output 2.</b> CEPF grant making process, goals and achievements are communicated and shared in a systematic way among stakeholders within civil society and government in the hotspot.</p>	<p>.</p>

<p><b>2.1.</b> Communication strategy developed and implemented by June 30, 2006</p>	<p>A CEPF Eastern Himalaya communication strategy was developed by the Regional Communication officer in consultation with CEPF Regional Implementation Team. This communications strategy provided a framework and direction for communications to audiences of the program. It helped document how information will be disseminated to and received from stakeholders, and will need to be updated each year to ensure continued relevance.</p>
<p><b>2.2.</b> CEPF Launching event held in NE India, Bhutan and Nepal with stakeholders by April 2006</p>	<p>In Nepal, CEPF Launching event was organized on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2006 where key stakeholders representing the government and non-government sectors were presented. Similar to the inception workshop in Kathmandu another was organized on 26 June 2006 for local NGOs of Kangchenjunga area. This was necessitated to facilitate and encourage Non Governmental Originations based both at district head quarter and in the Village Development Committee levels.</p> <p>An inception workshop was held in Bhutan to launch the CEPF in Bhutan on 26 May 2006 and 26 representatives from various stakeholders participated in the even.</p> <p>In India the CEPF was launched through a workshop in Gangtok, Sikkim by the Minister of Environment and Forests of Sikkim. Government representatives from the state and NGO and research institute representatives from the northeast and other places were present in the workshop</p>
<p><b>2.3.</b> Publications and other media materials produced and disseminated for awareness raising by July 2006 and on annual basis</p>	<p>Media materials were regularly published in the national level news papers The grant making process was communicated through printed media, on hand orientations both at the national and local level</p>

<p><b>2.4.</b> Information sharing on lessons learned from project implementation among stakeholders developed and maintained annually</p>	<p>Annual grantee's meetings were organized annually in all the three countries to share progress and lessons learned from the project implementation among the grantees of each country. Besides many of the grantees also organized cross visits between projects across 2 countries for learning lessons and best practices. National Advisory Committee meetings were present in most of these meeting and these were also treated as review meetings for the RIT.</p>
<p><b>2.5.</b> Communication staff produces an electronic newsletter twice a year</p>	<p>An electronic news bulletin on the CEPF Eastern Himalaya was produced on a quarterly basis and disseminated to all applicants, grantees, advisory committee and to a wider audience. The bulletin contained information sent in by grantees from their field projects as well as those sent in by the CEPF country teams.</p>
<p><b>2.6.</b> baseline survey (sample) on Civil society attitudes towards biodiversity conservation conducted in year 1</p>	<p>A survey of the capacity of organizations in Nepal and Bhutan were conducted. However a survey on the attitudes of civil society organization was not considered in the prevailing situation.</p>
<p><b>Output 3: Threats to forests from encroachment, unsustainable harvesting of forest resources and conservation unfriendly practices like intensive grazing decreased</b></p>	
<p><b>3.1.</b> Strategy for supporting all potential applicants to CEPF developed by June 2006</p>	<p>Strategy developed and supported all potential applicants through orientations, publication and one to one communication. There were 147 applicants of which 29 were developed into proposals and funded by CEPF. Lol review, project review and budget development were all facilitated by the RIT.</p>



<p><b>3.2.</b> Training workshops conducted in three countries by Regional coordinators and country coordinators at least once a year.</p>	<p>Stakeholder orientations were organized at the beginning of the program in each country to make potential grantees aware about the investment priorities of the CEPF in the Eastern Himalayas. This was followed by trainings and workshops organized by RIT to facilitate the proposed grantees to develop good logical frameworks for their project proposals as well as budgets to support this. During implementation the RIT also held monitoring and review workshops to assess the progress of the projects and to share information on lessons learnt and best practices. This process also helped many projects to fine tune their designs even if they were in the middle of implementing their projects. Many times the RIT also held one on one working sessions with the grantees as a part of their capacity to be able to develop good project proposals.</p>
<p><b>3.3.</b> Applicants assisted with LOI and part 2 of applications</p>	<p>147 applicants from Bhutan, India and Nepal were assisted through the Lol process of which 29 were assisted through to the 2nd phase of final proposal development.</p>
<p><b>3.4.</b> Quarterly reviews of portfolio and ecosystem profile to assess implementation</p>	<p>Portfolio and ecosystem profile were reviewed quarterly to assess implementation of projects. In the mid-term phase of the program the portfolio was reviewed and the conservation outcomes identified in the ecosystem profile were re-strategized from the perspectives of priority. The conservation outcomes were re-prioritized based on the available resources, the scale of the area and feasibility and tightened rather than spreading them thin.</p>
<p><b>3.5.</b> Coordination Unit submits to CEPF grant director a set of proposals reviewed by a panel of experts on an agreed time line.</p>	<p>In all the three countries short-listed Lols were reviewed by the National Advisory Committees/Project Technical Review Committee and recommended for detail proposal development. This was submitted to the Grant Director and upon agreement detailed proposals were developed following an iterative process.</p>

<p><b>3.6.</b> Developed and operationalized Monitoring and Evaluation of all CEPF funded projects through field visits, portfolio reviews.</p>	<p>All CEPF funded projects proposals were developed using the logical framework and each project developed the Performance Tracking sheets. Projects were monitored, reviewed and evaluated using these tools. On site visits to all the project sites were made by the RIT and reports were submitted. Mid-term reviews of many of the projects were also held and in some instances the project designs were revised.</p>
<p><b>Output 4.</b> Civil society stakeholders supported to successfully leverage funds through innovative partnerships to increase grant funds by 50% over 5 years. This is to ensure CEPF projects are sustainable over long term to fully address CEPF Investment Portfolio and Strategic Direction.</p>	
<p><b>4.1.</b> Increase donor participation by 50% at 2005 baseline. Leverage funds from interested partners and donors that have strategic interests complementing CEPF Investment Portfolio.</p>	<p>Ten out of the 29 projects implemented in the eastern Himalaya were able to bring in the participation of other donors to support the work they had initiated with CEPF.</p>
<p><b>4.2.</b> database on Diverse number of stakeholders implementing CEPF projects in the hotspot.</p>	<p>A database on the diverse stakeholders was created as a matrix in all the three countries of CEPF implementation. Some of the features were-intervention themes, amount of resources spent, number of years of implementation, CEPF niche in such sites etc.</p>
<p><b>4.3.</b> secure at least 20% matching funds or new projects as a result of CEPF grants program on a yearly basis.</p>	<p>A total of \$1,195,110 was leveraged to support CEPF outcomes via grantee contributions of cash, labor and in-kind contributions from communities and host government agencies.</p>
<p><b>Output 5.</b> Bhutan Funds Management</p>	
<p><b>5.1.</b> Regular communication between WWF-US and CEPF takes place to ensure efficient management of funds for each grantee in Bhutan.</p>	<p>A quarterly fund disbursement system for Bhutan projects was agreed with funding for grantees to be routed to the grantees from CEPF through WWF-US, WWF Bhutan and GNH (formerly DADM).</p>

<b>5.2.</b> Funds for Bhutan grants are received by WWF-US from CEPF on a quarterly basis, and are transferred to DADM within two weeks of receipt subject to banking and holiday schedules.	All funds were received and transferred to GNHC within the agreed time.
<b>5.3.</b> WWF-US maintains records of all funds received and disbursed, that are destined for grantees in Bhutan.	Fund disbursements have been documented and copies of correspondence were also sent to the recipient grantees for every transfer.
<b>5.4.</b> WWF-US shall transfer the Ngultrum equivalent of the USD funds in total to DADM for payment to each grantee in Bhutan.	The prevailing Ngultrum equivalent was transferred to GNHC and the detail of the amounts for each grantee was clearly mentioned..
<b>Output 6.</b> Final Assessment Workshop conducted	
<b>6.1.</b> Workshop organized involving grantees and relevant government officials	The Final Assessment Workshop was held in Paro Bhutan from 6-8 December with participation from donor and government representatives and project grantees from Bhutan, Nepal and India

***Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.***

The CEPF in the Eastern Himalayas was formally coordinated via a grant to WWF-US, based in Washington, D.C. The program in Nepal has been active for more than 40 years and was the main secretariat for the program in the region. A Regional Team was established to coordinate the program in the region. The Regional Coordinator and Regional Communication Officer as well as the National Coordinator for Nepal and the Small Grants Administrator for Nepal were based in WWF Nepal. The Bhutan team comprised of the National Coordinator and the Small Grants Administrator who were part of WWF Bhutan. For India the coordination comprised of a Country Coordinator and Small Grants Administrator who were part of ATREE. The RIT as well as each staff in this team were guided by a clear Terms of reference. The three country teams were supported by the National Advisory Committee one each in Bhutan and Nepal comprising of representatives from the government, non-government organizations and donor agencies. These committees played an important role in selecting, recommending and evaluating project ideas for the second round of the CEPF process of developing into detailed implementable projects. Many times the committees also helped the implementation to review and monitor various projects supported by CEPF in Bhutan and Nepal. In India the team was supported by the Project Technical Committee which comprised of experts and government representatives who helped to review proposals from a technical perspective. The Program Steering Committee at the center was responsible for approving the projects and ensuring that they were according to the investment priority of CEPF. Finally the team comprising of the Grant Director and the RIT oversaw the project implementation, performance reporting, financial performance reporting, monitoring, review and lessons learnt.

The Communication officer with support from the other members of the team developed a communication strategy for the program in the region to share and collect information. CEPF grant making process, goals and achievements were communicated firstly to relevant stakeholders and potential grantees in all three countries by organizing launching workshops. Further the CEPF calls for Letter of Interest for proposals were published in national dailies explaining the purpose and goals of the program. Further inception workshops were organized which further detailed out the investment strategies of the program as well as the conservation outcomes that the program was trying to achieve. Selected grantees were trained further on developing logical detailed proposals. In the implementation stage all the projects comprised of an inception phase where the main objective was to communicate with field stakeholders about the over all purpose and goal of CEPF program and the project supported by CEPF. A CEPF brochure was developed in English and in Nepali and Dzongkha to further communicate the CEPF program in the region. A website was developed to share and collect information about the program and a quarterly news bulletin was produced based on the progress and stories from the field.

CEPF awarded 32 grants valued at \$4,988,763 during the investment period from February 2005 through January 2010. Four grants 1) the grant to WWF to serve as the Coordination Unit (\$947,381); a grant to WWF for a small grants program for Bhutan and Nepal (\$684,454); a grant to ATREE for a small grants program in India (\$667,350); and the grant to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the Save the Tiger Fund (\$648,952). Excluding these four, CEPF awarded 28 grants valued at \$2,040,627. Those grants ranged in size from \$4,000 to \$140,000 with a median of \$77,460 and an average of \$72,880. All projects were approved based on their ability to contribute in a direct way to the achievement of specific investment priorities identified in the ecosystem profile. All the grants supported by CEPF were aimed at building the capacity of civil society groups to become involved in biodiversity conservation in the region. Conservation of key habitat linkages, conserving threatened species and sites were the key results of the support to these organizations. All the projects tried to address threats like encroachment, unsustainable harvesting of forest resources and conservation unfriendly practices like intensive grazing.

Civil society stakeholders supported to successfully leverage funds through innovative partnerships to increase grant funds by 50% over 5 years. This is to ensure CEPF projects are sustainable over long term to fully address CEPF Investment Portfolio and Strategic Direction.

A total of \$1,195,110 was leveraged to support CEPF outcomes via grantee contributions of cash, labor and in-kind contributions from communities and host government agencies. This includes actual cash commitments, but also includes labor and materials. In Bhutan, this took the form of parallel UNDP/GEF small grant of \$25,380 for livelihood promotion that complemented WWF's biological corridor work in the eastern part of the country. It also took the form of the Tourism Corporation of Bhutan providing capacity building and marketing of a pilot site as part of the UWICE grant; the SNV (Netherlands Development Aid) providing professional services for training social forestry groups identified by the Royal Institute of Management; and the Embassy of Finland and the Bhutan Water Partnership providing support to groups identified by the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature.

In Nepal, each Village Development Committee allocated a total of Rp 50,000 (\$700) to biodiversity conservation in areas where CEPF grantees were active. This amount may seem small, but is significant in context. Similarly, District Livestock Offices provided veterinary

services and outreach promoting alternatives to the use of diclofenac. Further, international and national government-sponsored efforts made contributions to efforts that complemented those of CEPF grantees. WWF and CARE will be investing more than \$900,000 from 2010-2015 on pastureland management training as part of the Sustainable Conservation Approach for Priority Ecosystems (SCAPE) project in areas that overlap multiple CEPF KBAs. The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development is now focusing on enterprise development in the transboundary KBAs of the Upper and Lower Mai Valleys, while the Development Fund of Norway is supporting a community forestry program for the village development committees of Maimajhuwa and Jamuna, which overlap the KBAs of Singalila National Park (India).

There has been much work around the conservation of vultures. The CEPF coordination unit further worked with the United Kingdom's Darwin Initiative and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), along with Bird Conservation Nepal and the Bombay Natural History Society on a "Trans Boundary Solution to the Asian Vulture Crisis." RSPB has supported in monitoring in five project districts where CEPF also supported grantee work. At the same time, BCN was able to attract funds from the Conservation Leadership Award program (funded by Conservation International, Birdlife International, Fauna and Flora International, Wildlife Conservation Society and British Petroleum) to do further research on vultures in the Nawalparasi District. Lastly, the Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation program provided funds to sustain Vulture Safe Zones in two areas as well as some sensitization and research work.

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

**NA**

## **V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS**

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

Safeguard policies were communicated to all grantees and clarified in the grant making process, and included in the grant agreement. The projects have not resulted in any adverse environmental impacts, involuntary displacement or impacts on indigenous peoples.

## **VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT**

***Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.***

The CEPF portfolio in the Eastern Himalayas ultimately evolved into a relatively small number of grants in each of three countries that, while close geographically, are far apart in terms of

coordinated conservation management. As a result, lessons apply to each country, as well as to CEPF from a broader region management perspective.

1. CEPF has helped to expand the focus of organizations that have typically focused on development, helping them understand the role of conservation in their efforts. It has similarly impacted organizations that have typically focused on conservation, helping them understand the role of development. When first approached by potential grantees in the region, the coordination unit saw many proposals for “typical” programs of community forestry and fostering green cover. CEPF guided grantees into more targeted and specific conservation work. This dual focus on conservation and development made the efforts of grantees more acceptable at a local level, which is critical for sustainability. However, this may have come at the expense of greater gains strictly for conservation.
2. In regions like this, capacity is a limiting factor, and development aims will take precedence, at least in popular awareness. Addressing issues in turn becomes one approach: first provide training to stakeholders while also changing their perceptions of the value of conservation as integral to health and well-being, and only then directly address conservation issues. Of course, this requires more time than that allowed in a 5-year investment, 3.5-year implementation period.
3. The formal engagement of civil society in Bhutan, because of government controls, is necessarily a methodical process. On the one hand, this limits the breadth of organizations with whom donors like CEPF can work. On the other hand, once a partner is selected, we can expect broad government support at national and local levels. For a donor like CEPF, the lesson in Bhutan is that conservation gains are likely to be achieved, but not necessarily with the broadest or deepest level of civil society participation.
4. In India, the ongoing political tension in the northeast demands either patience or the ability to be nimble from donors and grantees. At the same time, the economic power of the country can dwarf even significant conservation efforts. A typical grant of two years and \$80,000 is small relative to the budgets managed by state-level and national park and forest managers, and is inconsequential relative to the budgets committed to infrastructure and urbanization. The risk is that a conservation effort can be viewed as irrelevant. The lesson is that further conservation efforts in the region need to be narrowly tailored and strategic.
5. Research for the ecosystem profile began in 2003 and the CEPF investment priorities focus on species, sites and corridors. Today, this is a region where people speak of development; of pressing economic, demographic, and political needs; and of the wholesale impacts of climate change. Over the period of seven years, the CEPF field team (the coordination unit) found that while the conservation outcomes had not changed, the priorities of their stakeholders perhaps had. Allowing for greater flexibility in investment priorities allows CEPF to stay germane to its grantees.
6. CEPF had a knowledgeable and effective field-based coordination team, yet the region is large, the tri-country scenario is very complex, and the number of sites and the size of the corridors made unqualified success hard to achieve. The result was that CEPF achieved small and localized success and catalyzed conservation action at a corridor level and for many sites, but more funding and time would have allowed for greater impact. In particular, CEPF was unable to reach important sites in Arunachal Pradesh and furthest eastern parts of India.

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

As this was a straight forward coordination project some of the key aspects for successful coordination were:

- Having a Regional Implementation Team that was totally devoted to the execution of the program in the region.
- Having a mechanism of screening proposal ideas and detailed proposals through an inclusive and transparent project
- Having a robust and effective communication mechanism to share the goals of the program as well as to monitor progress, iterate and learn lessons.
- The aspect of leverage was included in the program coordination design which helped atleast some of the project to leverage and give continuity to their programs.

**Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)**

- Coordination was lead by WWF which had an experience of more than 40 years in the region and had already got credibility from the government and other non-government organizations. In India ATREE which has been a major player in the field of conservation for the past decade played a key role as an institution in coordinating the grant and moving things for smooth implementation of the portfolio in northeast India which is considered "sensitive" by the government.
- Members of the RIT were knowledgable and had wide prior experience in the area of work. This helped in coordinating and networking with a large number of stakeholder. Knowledge and experience of working in conservation helped to design projects that were effective and feasible.

<b>VII. ADDITIONAL FUNDING</b>
--------------------------------

**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.**

All the coordination funds came from CEPF and additional funds were not raised.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Date Received	Notes

**\*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** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

**Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.**

NA

## VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CEPF faced a big challenge in the Eastern Himalayas. It had a relatively modest allocation of funding to spread over three countries coupled with a relatively short period of implementation, due to both the tragedy that struck WWF and the learning curve of working in countries—Bhutan and India—with unique administrative requirements. Despite these challenges, the suite of grants ultimately awarded, and the accomplishments of these grantees, provide significant progress toward the conservation outcomes originally identified by stakeholders in 2004.

Looking ahead, the CEPF grantees were not acting alone, and the continuum of conservation work will continue long beyond a donor-driven five-year investment period. CEPF created new knowledge on species, reached the grassroots in remote areas, and built capacity as the first step in a multi-year process. In Bhutan, we demonstrated that engaging civil society is a viable and non-controversial way of promoting conservation; in India we filled key conservation needs that otherwise would have remained unfunded; and in Nepal, CEPF allowed local stakeholders to promote conservation within a broader development framework.

In some cases, CEPF has bridged the gap between past efforts and a next step, and in others, we have laid the foundation for new work. Either way, there are several tasks ahead. The threats to the region have not changed. If anything, they are worse, with greater population pressure from Bangladesh, the roaring economic demands of China and India, and decreasing snowpack that is changing water regimes for tens of millions of people. Future donors must consider these, while still accepting the primacy of sites and corridors for the conservation of biological diversity. Civil society will continue to have a vital role in addressing these issues.



## VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

**Please include your full contact details below:**

Name: Subash Lohani

Organization name: World Wildlife Fund, Inc

Mailing address: 1250 24th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037

Tel: 1.202.293.4800

Fax: 1.202.293.9211

E-mail: [shubash.lohani@wwfus.org](mailto:shubash.lohani@wwfus.org)