

# CEPF Mediterranean Basin Hotspot Mid-term Assessment National Meeting Report

<b>Organization:</b>	Université Saint-Joseph
<b>Country:</b>	Lebanon
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	Wednesday, February 11, 2015

## Objectives

The National Meeting will:

- i) Give the platform for CEPF grantees to assess the CEPF investment within their country and discuss challenges and the future of CEPF investment on a national scale.
- ii) Give the opportunity to exchange experiences and networking between national organizations.
- iii) Produce a national report summarizing the discussions and decisions taken collectively, which will feed into the overall Mid-Term Assessment for CEPF's investment in the Mediterranean Hotspot

## Meeting minutes:

*All the grantees were present (please refer to participant list, annex 1). The meeting began with a "tour de table" where everyone introduced himself and the institution he belongs to. Dr. Magda Bou dagher Kharrat, who was animating the workshop welcomed the attendees and explained the purpose of the meeting.*

### **1) Challenges grantees have in implementing their projects**

#### ***Challenges on- the- ground issues level:***

- *Difficulty in accessing territories near the political borders because of the conflict in Syria like Fekha and Litani River.*
- *SPNL: Need to postpone community event for security reasons due to explosions.*
- *For Al Shouf reserve: economic value for biodiversity was never applied in Lebanon thus no literature available. They are going from scratch. It is time consuming and a difficult task to accomplish.*
- *Students and volunteers must have had insurance while travelling to the field, due to the long distance and the time they are taking to arrive.*
- *Lack of awareness of the importance of biodiversity caused difficulties in changing people's culture and minds towards nature.*
- *One of the biggest challenges was that we couldn't find a legal and a legislative framework that goes well with our perspectives.*

#### ***Challenges on the stakeholder/partner participation level:***

- *Change of mandate in some ministries and municipalities created a delay in some projects.*

- *Unreliability of local partners and stakeholders. They started with lots of enthusiasm and support but quickly get unresponsive and passive.*
- *Participation of municipality officers and security forces required time and permission.*
- *Difficulties to get locals involved especially women, in handcraft production for example, due to stigmatizing attitudes of manual workers in rural areas.*
- *Distrust of landowners in the current Protected Area law and in the State in general, hinders the declaration of new protected areas on private lands.*

**Challenges on the financial issues level:**

- *The small grants suffered mainly from a short funding compared to the activities they are conducting and the results to be achieved.*
- *Short time for project implementation and unexpected fees for transportation and implementation on the field.*
- *Prices and needs vary between the period of budget writing and implementation.*

**Challenges on the operational issues level:**

- *Difficulty in gathering all the Lebanese organisations in one place when for a national meeting.*

**Challenges on the external factors level:**

- *Syrian conflict*
- *Security issues*

**i) 3 top challenges faced:**

- *Security reasons (internal, Syrian conflict)*
- *Lack of environmental awareness*
- *Absence of legal frame and appropriate legislations.*

**2) Exercise on the national position to CEPF long-term goals**

- *Implementation Models taking into consideration ground reality and the different actors to be involved should be a requirement in a proposal to be accepted by the CEPF.*
- *Organizing one big workshop to present CEPF and its grantees in Lebanon to the public (ministries, municipalities, and Council for development and reconstruction). CEPF should gain more visibility among the local administrations.*
- *Merging projects with the same targets. Early coordination with a leading organization is required.*
- *Most of the projects discovered during the implementation phase, new insights and perspectives that were not predicted or taken into account during early planning stages. Very often, grantees began to explore these new opportunities but didn't have time to achieve their targets during the implementation period. It would be beneficial to everyone (more impact for sustainability) if such projects could be continued through an amendment of the initial project (extension) or if priority could be given to these projects when new calls for proposals will be launched.*

<b>Collective Civil Society Assessment Tool Worksheet</b>	2012		2015	
<b>Human resources.</b> Local and national civil society groups collectively possess technical competencies of critical importance to conservation.	X	Not met		Not met
		Partially met	x	Partially met
		Fully met		Fully met
<b>Management systems and strategic planning.</b> Local and national civil society groups collectively possess sufficient institutional and operational capacity and structures to raise funds for conservation and to ensure the efficient management of conservation projects and strategies.	x	Not met	x	Not met
		Partially met		Partially met
		Fully met		Fully met
<b>Partnerships.</b> Effective mechanisms exist for conservation-focused civil society groups to work in partnership with one another, and through networks with local communities, governments, the private sector, donors, and other important stakeholders, in pursuit of common objectives	x	Not met		Not met
		Partially met	x	Partially met
		Fully met		Fully met
<b>Financial resources.</b> Local civil society organizations have access to long-term funding sources to maintain the conservation results achieved via CEPF grants and/or other initiatives, through access to new donor funds, conservation enterprises, memberships, endowments, and/or other funding mechanisms.  <i>For some municipalities, it will be possible soon. They made great achievements but they are not autonomous yet.</i>	x	Not met		Not met
		Partially met	x	Partially met
		Fully met		Fully met
<b>Transboundary cooperation.</b> In multi-country hotspots, mechanisms exist for collaboration across political boundaries at site, corridor and/or national scales. <i>Israel or Syria? ☺</i>	x	Not met	x	Not met
		Partially met		Partially met
		Fully met		Fully met

### 3) Co-funding discussion

#### 1) The different funding sources available:

- International organisations: GEF, UNDP (SGP), EU, under projects already ongoing... ex USAID, EUAID (ENPI,), UN agencies (UNESCO, UNDP), World bank.
- inter-NGO cooperation having already their funding
- Some municipalities has budget for environmental issues.
- Research private or public institutions (universities, CNRSL,... )
- In kind contributions: ..... Ministries, universities, civil protection, embassies (experts, ...) ...
- Banks under CSR programs (HSBC, BLC, Byblos Bank, ...)
- Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund

#### 2) We found about them through:

- Web
- Management experience

- *Networks*
- *Newsletters*
- *Through universities or research institutions*

**3) the challenges and obstacles to fundraising:**

- *To know about the calls on time*
- *Proposal Writing skills*
- *Difficulty to dedicated time for fundraising*
- *Lack of nature conservation awareness*
- *Lack of allocations for biodiversity conservation in general*
- *Absence of dedicated person to fundraise and skilled to write proposals*

ii) **Conclusion of discussion:**

It is hoped that CEPF can bring to its grantees community, through its website or its newsletter, announcements and opportunities of funding, related to biodiversity conservation.

**4) Communications: discussion covering how grantees are communicating conservation activities in KBAs to the wider audience, what is working, what tools are being used and how CEPF can help**

**1) How do you communicate about your conservation activities**

- *Mass media*
- *Dedicated events (exhibitions)*
- *Meetings (seminars, workshops, brainstorming sessions)*
- *Communication officer*
- *Through other Networks channels*
- *Focal point on site (NGO, municipality, churches and mosques, visitors' centres)*

**2) Who are the target audiences**

- *Wide public (youth, students), dependant from the project: (women, hunters, grazers ...)*
- *Private sector – corporate, professional syndicates, NGOs*
- *Stakeholders (municipalities, Decision makers, policy makers ...)*
- *Service providers*

**3) What works well, what does not work**

*The following factors helped to work well:*

- *Local language*
- *Messages through various entertainment activities*
- *Adapt communication tools to each targeted audience*
- *Leaflets in the appropriate places*
- *Illustrations and short messages*
- *Ethical approach with stakeholders and target groups*
- *Link conservation issues with family health*
- *When applicable, use economic and social incentives*
- *highlight the uniqueness of the natural resources*
- *Avoid negative messages*
- *Raising awareness related to existing laws without coercion*

#### **4) What are the obstacles to communication**

- Lack of specific dedicated persons
- Weakness of Internet access in some rural areas
- High cost of communication services
- Demand on Sophisticated design by end consumers
- High cost of professional communication expertise
- Lack of communication strategy

#### **iii) how CEPF can help grantees in the future with communications:**

- Spare some funds in each project funded for communication purposes. .
- In the official letters addressed by CEPF to the Ministry of Environment as GEF focal point, CEPF can solicit the Ministry of Environment to promote national CEPF projects through their communication channels.

#### **5) Networking and collaboration**

##### **1) what stages in a project need collaboration**

- While preparing the project proposal (early beginning)
- During the implementation & monitoring
- During the final evaluation phase

##### **2) who needs to communicate with each other**

- Partners, Stakeholders (beneficiaries, experts, local community, authorities, ...)

##### **3) How do you start the conversation**

- Bilateral contact
- Find key people to connect us
- Field visit
- Invite them to brainstorming session – scoping meeting

##### **4) Obstacles to networking**

- Bureaucracy
- Conflict of interest
- Mistrust between stakeholders
- Competition between candidates
- Lack of interest, lack of commitments
- Miscommunication

##### **5) Opportunities for civil society to engage in National projects and programmes in the next year**

- Existing conventions and agreements signed and ratified by the governments highlighting the role of civil society
- Implication of the civil society in the NBSAP (National Biodiversity Strategy & Action Plan....)
- Success of previous CEPF projects (workshops ...)
- Increase of protected areas number (intention of the Ministry of Environment to increase the number of protected areas to 30)
- Trust from the Ministry of Environment towards local NGOs.

- Laying on existing networks and consortiums between NGOs and academic institutes...forums of ...environmental NGOs.
- Awareness is rising
- NGOs are getting more specialized & Professional.
- More and more university degrees on environmental science.

ii) Conclusion of discussion:

- Put in contact people working on the same topics
- Create a Data Base with previous projects where one can find potential collaborators who worked on the same topic (searchable by country and by topic).
- Regional or international event where CEPF grantees can meet and discuss.

## 6) National Conservation Priorities

Please summarize and state the overall opinion of meeting participants on the Investment Priorities:

i) Are these still relevant nationally? **YES**

ii) Are there any new factors to consider? **NO**

iii) What is the biggest challenge? **Conservation is relegated to secondary priority in front of humanitarian crisis of Syrian refugees which in return, is having very negative impact on natural resources.**

iv) What should be prioritised? **Basic knowledge about biodiversity; Inventories are needed for different taxonomic groups: ferns, mosses, mammals, insects, amphibians etc. in addition to the conservation of natural resources involving local communities for sustainability.**

Please outline any other points raised:

## 7) Changes in priority Key Biodiversity Areas

Please provide any information on the suggestions made by participants to add or remove current KBAs.

- ✚ The participants wondered how the previous key biodiversity areas were chosen? On which criteria?
- ✚ When overlapping IBA (especially With A1 and A4 criteria's) with IPA (on-going project), several zones are covered by both.

All the grantees and the stakeholders present in the meeting were favourable in considering the following (thus broadening the scope of the eligible Key priority biodiversity areas for



Lebanon:

- All the summits of Mt Lebanon >1400m and anti-Lebanon as key zone especially that numerous projects are working to rehabilitate it as a biological corridor.
- Coastal area (Marine protected area)
- Riparian ecosystems
- Considering IBAs/KBAs (criteria A1 for globally threatened species, and criteria A4 for bottlenecks for soaring birds' migration). This is highly important as Lebanon lies on the second most important flyway for bird migration in the world.

## **8) Additional points raised in the meeting**

Many participants raised the question about the reasons for limiting Lebanon to only strategic directions 3.

The meeting participants see that Lebanon is rich in water resources but on the other hand, suffers from great threats on quality & quantity level in addition to climate change impacts. Further, there is the impact of development on the coastal zone which is affecting the marine biodiversity.

Thus, they are suggesting:

- ✚ Include coastal zone as key priority biodiversity areas and consider Lebanon as eligible for strategic direction 1.
- ✚ Include all riparian areas in Lebanon as key priority biodiversity areas, so that Lebanon can work on strategic direction 2 on the watershed level.

## **Meeting conclusions**

### **General meeting conclusion**

Please summarise a general meeting overview and record the general feedback from stakeholders

Grantees had very positive considerations about their CEPF grants and felt very happy even with the administrative staff like reporting and dealing with deadlines etc. They found the support needed in the follow up committee of this project. Communication and sustainability of the projects (longer term projects will be more comfortable to conduct in order to realise bigger achievements).

### **Feedback from meeting organizer**

Please add any comments to CEPF about the meeting logistics or content – suggested areas of improvement, challenges faced etc.

We were very happy with the commitment of the grantees and very rich discussions. This kind of meeting is very important at the National level.

## Annexes:

Annex 1: List of Participants

Annex 2: CEPF long-term goals – Civil Society worksheet [inside this document](#)

Annex 3: Photographs from the meeting (Maximum 4 imbedded in the document)

Annexe 1:

### **List of Participants:**

Name	Institution
Dr. Saleem Hamadeh	UNDP - EFL
Bassima Khatib	SPNL
Nour Zouhairy	UNDP – MSB
Lara Samaha	Ministry of environment
Sandra Saba	Horsh Ehden Nature Reserve
Nizar Hani	Ministry of environment
Romen Bruder	Association Protection Jabal Moussa (APJM)
Carla Khater	CNRS
Youssef Matta	Bentael Nature Reserve
Nabigha Dakik	Tyre coast Nature reserve
Daniela Doumet	APJM
Nissrine Machaka	Freelance Consultant
Mirna Riman	Shouf Biosphere reserve
Samer Zebian	Shouf Biosphere reserve
Rebecca baissari	Lebanese environment Forum
Pascal Abdallah	SPNL
Joelle Barakat	Association Protection Jabal Moussa (APJM)
Jean Stephan	Lebanese University



### Annex 3: Photographs from the meeting



