CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Conservation International Foundation – Mesoamerica CBC

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Consolidation of a Strategy to Protect Globally Critically Endangered Species in Northern Mesoamerica

Implementation Partners for this Project: CONABIO, SMBC MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA, SEMARNAT, CONANP, CONAP, MARN GUATEMALA, MUSHNAT, DEFENSORES DE LA NATURALEZA, FUNDAECO, CEMEC, WCS, BALAM, FCD, FD, WILDTRACKS, VIRGINIA TECH UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, ZAMORANO, CCAD, IRBIO, SERNA, MARN EL SALVADOR, JOHN LAMOREAUX, IUCN.

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): November 1, 2005 - December 31, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): Jan 2010, delivered by Carlos Rodriguez on May 4, 2010 (sorry for delay but was not my responsibility to deliver this report, main responsibility was for Jaime Garcia Moreno).

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

The key biodiversity areas (KBAs by its initials in English - Key Biodiversity Areas) are sites of global importance for biodiversity conservation, which also handled - or have the potential to handle, as units for conservation. The KBAs containing species requiring conservation action at sites to prevent their extinction in the short to medium term: endangered species worldwide, geographically restricted species, and species of congregatory habits. Endangered species are those which are classified as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered on the Red List of Threatened Species compiled by the IUCN in its 2008 version of the endangered species list covers 722 for Central America, of which 678 are terrestrial vertebrates. The range-restricted species are those that occupy a small geographic area, often arbitrarily defined as less than 50,000 km2. Congregatory species are those that, in at least one phase of its life cycle (eg, reproduction), a significant portion of world population gathers in one place.

CEPF has supported the efforts of conservation of species through key partners in the region, and has also supported the CI and its units of science and Biodiversity (BASC) through the project "Definition and refinement of conservation objectives and monitoring in Mesoamerica "(Outcomes Monitoring), and the project" Strengthening of a strategy to protect critically endangered species in northern Mesoamerica "(Species). These supports have been to:

- Produce information on key areas for biodiversity protection
- Generate and build alliances between key partners to produce, generate, discuss, exchange data on global and critically endangered species.
- Accompany processes concerning the prioritization of key biodiversity areas such as NISP, and their process of analysis of gaps in conservation, eco-regional plans portfolio prioritization of key sites for biodiversity
- Develop actions creating portfolios for AZE (Alliance for Zero Extinction) in coordination with regional, national and local
- Develop networks related for the conservation species along the region in Mesoamerica
- Look for the sustainability of a trust fund as a seed for the species conservation in coordination with key partners.

This report explained in detail the achievements, obstacles for implementation and the challenges for the future when CEPF will be no longer contributing in this region.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

***Project Purpose**:* Critically endangered species in Northern Meso are correctly identified and their conservation needs assessed. A strategy to protect globally critically endangered species in the region is developed. NGOs, governments and donors invest toward the implementation of conservation action plans for those species.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
Percentage of critically endangered species in the region that have their conservation needs assessed.	100% of terrestrial vertebrates and fresh water fish, plus all trees from Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras have had their conservation needs assessed
Strategy to protect critically endangered species developed and adopted by partners	The Global Mammal Assessment conducted by IUCN, and supported by CEPF, identified the major problems affecting threatened mammals in the region. A strategy to protect Critically endangered amphibians for all of Mexico and Central America is being developed under the leadership of Zamorano, as is a more local strategy for the amphibians of Chiapas (by the Instituto de Historia Natural). Strategies for protection of trees and epiphytes in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Belize were produced by Zamorano. Overall, a greater awareness of Alliance for Zero Extinction species and sites has been achieved throughout the region, and one key partner in Mexico – Pronatura – has now become a signatory of the alliance
CEPFs Northern Mesoamerica strategic direction 4 investments leveraged by the BASC	Resources to protect species to leverage those of CEPF were provided as co-funding

unit and partners	for the implementation of the different projects supported by CEPF, e.g., for the $84,635 allocated to FUNDAECO, there was a match of $30,450 from local institutions plus $250,000 from UC-Berkeley; the $19,989 allocated to John Lamoreux resulted in match from ECOSUR and National Geographic; the $51,524 granted to Wildtracks resulted in leverage of $121,209 from local institutions; the $92,600 granted to Zamorano for a tree conservation strategy resulted in match of $88,176 from other partners; the $19,449 invested in the Global Mammal Assessment were matched by $42,000 from other stakeholders; an investment of $100,000 to Salvanatura resulted in match of $22,800; funds to Virginia Polytechnic Institute ($33,900) were matched by an almost equal amount ($36,345); the grant to Zamorano to help prepare a strategy to conserve CR species was matched by $6,968 from that institution; $38,533 allocated to the University of Southern Mississippi were matched by $30,735 from that same institution. Projects of the SD4 directly leveraged $378701 (excluding $250,000 from UC-Berkeley). BASC proposed the creation of a species conservation fund that would provide continuity to the funding and attract additional investing from partners, but the idea was not approved by CEPF. It also submitted a substantial proposal (300,000 euros) to the Prince of Albert foundation in Monaco but was rejected (the foundation decided to focus locally on marine species)

Percentage of critically endangered species upon which conservation measures have been launched or supported	The largest group of critically endangered species in the region is the amphibians. 100% of them have conservation measures launched or supported through 1) field surveys of AZE sites in Chiapas-Oaxaca, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras; 2) draft of a regional amphibian conservation strategy for all of Mexico and Central America, including a discussion with CCAD to use amphibians as monitoring indicators; 3) draft of a local amphibian conservation strategy for Chiapas state in Mexico, and in Belize. In addition, specific actions on target species are being implemented now in Honduras through Salvanatura and local partners. Strategies for tree and epiphyte conservation have been drafted for Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador and Honduras, which have led to pilot conservation programs at least in Honduras. A Population Viability study was done for some bats from Belize, resulting in a revaluation of their threat status. The area of occurrence of several freshwater fish species, particularly in Honduras, are now known and recommendations were made for their proper management.

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

In general, the intention of this project to achieve regional, national and local deliverables was accomplished at 90 %, the construction of regional networks composed basically by academia, scientist, politicians, local ngos, regional stakeholders as CCAD, ZAMORANO, IRBIO, INBIO gave this project the opportunity to influence governmental decisions at that level, at a national level the inclusion of national partners as CEMEC CONAP in Guatemala and CONABIO in Mexico was representative of the quality of work that this project developed, at international level, IUCN, CI, UNIVERSITIES IN FLORIDA, MISSISIPI, VIRGINIA TECH reflect the importance of the species conservation at a global level, at a local level the inclusion of the Grupo Promotor Pueblos Indigenas y Conservacion and the Grupo Promotor de Tierras Comunales in Guatemala gave this project the opportunity to be successfully socialized at a community level. Those are only a few examples on the need to generate, compile and socialize data for making decision at all levels.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Positive:

- The inclusion of sacred sites and communal lands on the gap analysis exercise in Guatemala was the most important topics at a social level for this project.
- The creation of a large network of stakeholders working together with a long term vision on species conservation topics.

- The governmental perspective and leadership to this project was amazing, IRBIO, CCAD in coordination with ZAMORANO, CATIE and other partners were a successful combination of efforts to deliver the political will to take this project in account and its products for a making decision process.
- Engagement of different level of stakeholders (international, regional, national and local) had a tremendous impact on the implementation of this project. The management and facilitator role that CI provided to this project was wonderful in terms of science, technical support, financial and political coordination with CU leaders in the region working with CCAD and ZAMORANO.

Negative:

- We have to recognize that this project could not achieve the sustainability level needed to continue with efforts for long term. It was not capacity to facilitate the process in which CEPF and CI will leverage external funding from MAR FUND to capitalize the seed funding for the species conservation trust.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs*: Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Action plan for conserving critically endangered species developed and operationalized.	A plan was developed at a meeting in Zamorano in early June 2006. This became the blueprint for managing the portfolio the remaining years and was operationalised through grants from CEPF to other partners to achieve the goals set on the plan. The call for proposals issued in October 2006 reflects the outcome of the meeting and the plan itself.
1.1. Internal workplan of BASC unit, PACC unit, CABS, Fundraising unit and CBC Corridor directors to coordinate activities related to species conservation	An internal agreement with other CI units was reached as soon as there was an opportunity to organize a CBC-structure in the region.
1.2. Meeting of experts at the Escuela Agrcola Panamericana (El Zamorano) to assess the condition and needs of globally threatened species that occur in Northern Mesoamerica	This took place in June 2006 with the assistance of over 30 experts. They reached a consensus and made recommendations with regards to species conservation in the region, and they were made public as the Memorias del Taller, published by Zamorano, and through the call for proposals to conserve CR species issued by CEPF in October 2006
1.3. Workplan agreed upon between CEPF and BASC unit	Between 2006 and 2009, every year the activities of BASC were inserted into the larger Coordination Unit yearly workplan.
Output 2. Key partners engaged in critically endangered species protection through an alliance	For the purposes of this project it was decided that rather than starting a new alliance we should gear partners and stakeholders to support existing alliances dedicated to the protection of critically endangered species – and more specifically the Alliance for Zero

	Extinctions. For two consecutive years we supported meetings at the annual meetings of the Mesoamerican Society for Biology and Conservation in order to promote conservation of AZE sites and species, and to promote exchanges of experiences and networking opportunities for people facing common problems in different countries (e.g., amphibian extinctions)
2.1. Alliance established to address the conservation needs of Northern Mesoamericas globally threatened species	No formal alliance was established. Instead, throughout the project we promoted the support of the Alliance for Zero Extinctions and the conservation of AZE species and sites
Output 3. Small grants program established and operationalized to implement the species action plan	Together with the coordination unit of Northern Mesoamerica, this project managed a grants program to implement species research that supports conservation, as well as the conservation actions themselves, throughout the entire region of Northern Mesoamerica
3.1. Coordination of the establishment of a small grants program focused on gathering information and conserving globally critically endangered species in the region	Coordination between CI's Biodiversity Analysis and Species Conservation Unit and CEPF's Coordination Unit resulted in an effective small grants program focused on gathering information and conserving the most critically endangered species in the region. A special emphasis was put into amphibians, as this region of the world is one of the most affected by amphibian declines – we funded projects on amphibians in Mexico (AZE sites in Oaxaca and Chiapas, Amphibian Conservation strategy for Chiapas state) and coordinated with another project funded through the Arizona State University (also with CEPF funds); supported inventories in remote regions of the Maya mountains in Belize; and supported field work to confirm the existence (or absence) of AZE species at AZE sites in Guatemala and Honduras. Also, an effort was made to set the foundations for plant conservation. A knowledge gap exists in terms of plant biodiversity in the region, so we promoted the collaboration between different botanical institutions in the region to gather information about trees and epyphites, and to produce strategies for their conservation. In addition, we also supported work on bats in Belize and Fresh Water Fish in Honduras, as well as the efforts of the Global Mammal Assessment to evaluate species in this region
3.2. Percentage of resources disbursed from the fund to support projects that gather information about critically endangered species and implement conservation action plans upon	100% - all funds were disbursed from the fund to support projects.

them.	
Output 4. Additional funds leveraged for species conservation	Nearly $380,000 were leveraged from different sources, plus $250,000 put forward by the University of California – Berkeley, directly for species conservation.
4.1. Number of additional funding sources leveraged in support of Strategic Direction 4	We leveraged resources mostly locally through match of the small grants awarded in the region. The institutions that explicitly contributed to these efforts are FUNDAECO, UC Berkeley, Museum of Natural History of Guatemala, Fundacion Defensores de la Naturaleza (Guatemala), CECON, ECOSUR, National Geographic, Belize Protected Areas Conservation Trust, Wildtracks, Columbus Zoo, Escuela Agricola Panamericana, Instituto Regional de Biodiversidad, IUCN, USFWS, and the University of Southern Mississippi.
Output 5. All phases of CEPF grant making supported for proposals and grants related to species conservation and biodiversity science	All phases of the CEPF grant making process were supported by both BASC unit and CEPF's Coordination Unit
5.1. Percentage of proposals evaluated by BASC unit within eight weeks of submission	All proposals were evaluated within two weeks of submission
5.2. Number of key applicants receiving support with the design of projects to be submitted to CEPF	All applicants received support with the design of projects prior to their submission to CEPF
5.3. Number of CEPF projects requesting BASC unit support that are receiving it	All CEPF projects received support from the BASC unit whenever they requested it.
5.4. Percentage of technical and financial reports submitted on time to CEPF	All reports were submitted on time to CEPF

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

- Regional network for species conservation created (regional, international, national levels)
- KBAs maps used as a base for making decision in Belize, Guatemala, Mexico
- Cover forest maps used as an important input on gap analysis exercises
- AZE network consolidated and still working in the region through committed partners as CONABIO in Mexico and MUSHNAT in Guatemala.
- All proposals from grantees implemented successfully
- All information and data generated was socialized and documented properly and finally in hands of politicians, academy, NGOs and community base organizations
- All CEPF allocated in strategic initiatives
- Action plan for long term was developed by ZAMORANO and CI in coordination with the network

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

- This project loose the opportunity to create and endowment or at least a seed funding to create a trust fund for species in coordination with MAR FUND, the possibility was there but finally it was not possible to establish this financial mechanism as a initial step for long term sustainability for the effort.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

NA

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 project design was a nice experience in which the project combined CEPF perspectives and priorities but also includes the governmental and scientist community perspective to deliver important products and opinion for the conservation of critical species in the region.
- The way that the project was implemented combining the political experience in CCAD, the academic support from ZAMORANO and the support that the Coordination Unit provided to BASC was a perfect example of coordination internally at CI.
- Usually we think in sustainability at the end of the projects and this project was not the exemption, because we could not implement the financial mechanism as a seed for the long term, this initiative is still running but in isolated in Guatemala and Mexico.
- Having the opportunity to get politicians, academy sector, NGOs and community base organizations as part of the generation, analysis and production of materials to disseminate information about critical endangered species was an incredible experience in the field
- Because this project engage several organizations through external grants, it was difficult to coordinate with all of them and specially working with people working in remote areas provoque that sometimes get the reports on time was a difficult experience for BASC and CU in CI.

VII. 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 in USD	Notes
IBAT	A	25,000	
ZAMORANO	A	80,000	
HOLANDA	B	30,000	
CONABIO	B	20,000	

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 funded 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 funded 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.

- MUSHNAT in Guatemala is still working with salamanders and frogs species in the Sierra de las Minas area, a recent visit from CI scientist committed $ 35,000 for land purchase in the short term, securing some of the critical areas for this species.
- TFCA GUATEMALA ENDOWMENT DEBT SWAP for the next 10 years at least $ 4.9 M will be spend on the critical species in the Cuchumatanes area as part of the agreement signed by CI, TNC, USAID and the Government of Guatemala.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- I want to give an apologize to CEPF for delay on this report, is something that was outside of my control, the person who was in charge to produce this report left CI and it was so difficult to produce this report without his support. (Carlos Rodriguez Olivet).

VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.
Yes ____X___
No _____

If yes, please also complete the following:

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