

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Association for Nature Protection and Sustainable Development - ``MTA-BARI``

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Development of the Buffer Zone of Mtirala National Park: Initiation of Sustainable Resource Use Activities

Implementation Partners for this Project:

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): 1 July, 2008 – 31 July, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): September, 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

The proposed project closely relates to the CEPF's Strategic Direction 3.1 – "Evaluate and implement models for sustainable forestry, water use and range management" The main purpose of the project was to develop and implement three models of sustainable resource use within the support/buffer zone of Mtirala NP.

The project area covers the support/buffer zone and some surrounding area of Mtirala National Park. It is located within the West Lesser Caucasus Corridor, CEPF priority site # 94 – Mtirala. The particular project area is the Mtirala support/buffer zone located in the extreme south-western part of Georgia, on the west end of West Lesser Caucasus Corridor. The project area encompasses three districts: Kobuleti, Khelvachauri and Keda of Adjara Autonomous Republic, Georgia and 3 communities with 6 villages.

It should be highlighted that establishment of the MNP support/buffer zone in parallel of establishment of MNP (ongoing activity financed by the Norwegian Government) will be the first "real case" to show in practice how harmoniously are operating and functioning the National Park and its support zone which is the best approach for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use.

Territorial protection of Nature and Tourism development related to it should be considered as one of priorities in Adjara taking into account its biological diversity and tourism-recreational resources; in order to manage this activity successfully the process of spatial arrangement should be regulated (taking into account infrastructure development, cultural hereditary and requirements for environment protection), as well as the establishment of efficiently protected areas and their net.

Initially the main purpose of the project was *to establish effective management for the support/buffer zone of Mtirala National Park having a total area 35 000 hectares, of which 20 000 hectares are covered by forest.* At the initial phase of the project implementation and following consultations with key stakeholders, including local governmental authorities and local communities, new ideas and more reasonable and significant approaches in terms of long-term biodiversity conservation and transboundary cooperation, have arisen. These ideas have been

deeply discussed with all key stakeholders and resulted in more attractive outputs rather than originally planned and expected.

The Spatial / Territorial Planning Document - "Management Plan for Natural - Landscape Territory of Mtirala and Machakhela" was developed instead of the initially planned *Management Plan for the MNP support / buffer zone*. Of course, this was unexpected success having the following highlights:

- > Huge interest from local governmental authorities and local community representatives;
- > More area encompassed rather than initially planned;
- > Take a step forward in promoting the transboundary cooperation between Georgia and Turkey for biodiversity conservation;
- > Innovative "bottom-up" approach in establishing new protected area with immediate involvement of local / district level governmental representatives and communities. This approach fully excludes conflict with locals while establishing new protected area at the earliest convenience and also, makes sure to consider their interests at the beginning of the process.

Therefore, the MNP buffer/support zone sector of the Landscape Territory serves and functions as direct buffer for Mtirala NP, Machakhela sector - as one of key areas for creation of future network of PAs in South Colchic region and development of transboundary cooperation.

So, in the south Colchic region, namely in Adjara Autonomous Republic, there is two-stage approach used to found above mentioned protected areas

- at the first stage, "Natural-landscape territory of Mtirala and Machakhela" is established according to the Law of Georgia on "Spatial Arrangement and Town-Planning Basics";
- at the second stage "the MNP support / buffer zone" and "Machakhela protected landscape" are established according to Law of Georgia on "Protected Areas System"

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: Develop and implement three models of sustainable resource use within the support/buffer zone of Mtirala NP.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level: Develop and implement three models of sustainable resource use within the support/buffer zone of Mtirala NP.	Three models of sustainable resource use within the support/buffer zone of Mtirala NP were developed and implemented: (i) Beekeeping business centre, (ii) <i>Nursery for valuable plant species (chestnut and walnut) and local sorts (grape)</i> , and (iii) model of a horse-back riding tour

<p><i>1. Management plan for the support zone of Mtirala National Park developed and officially approved by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p><u><i>The Spatial / Territorial Planning Document - "Management Plan for Natural - Landscape Territory of Mtirala and Machakhela"</i></u> officially approved by Head of Adjara Autonomous Republic.</p>
<p><i>2. Key stakeholders and local communities are fully aware of importance and management principles of the support zone of Mtirala National Park by the end of the project.</i></p>	<p>Various meetings and consultations were held with local population, not only envisaged within project, but conducted by hired experts as well. Also meetings, consultation were held with different key stakeholders groups (NGO sector, local and central governments, tourism associations (Adjara region, Guria region etc.), tourism department, Mtirala National Park administration, local community representatives).</p> <p>Horse-back riding tours promoted with the key target groups: at least 500 copies of promo brochure published; TV advertisement program prepared and broadcasted and internet advertising banners set-up. two articles published in regional newspapers "Adjara".</p>

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

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Unexpected positive impacts were:

- Establishment of beekeeping business centre and its official functioning is novelty not only for the MNP buffer zone but also for the whole Georgia. About 100 beekeepers are involved in this process.
- The nursery for the Red List species (nut and chestnut) and aboriginal species grapes (Chkaveri) was established first time in Adjara and 12 farmers are employed there. These nurseries are used by 21 farmers of the MNP buffer zone in the framework of the project. The above mentioned activity sets more perspective for home-made wine production and growing alternative incomes for more local people in this area concerned.
- Horse riding tour is innovation for the protected territories of Adjara and has perspectives in terms of tourism development in this area. This is a community based model of horse riding in which two families are involved at this initial stage.

There are no negative impacts.

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: Local Business Centre established and run	
<i>Indicator 1.1: Association for development of PAs` support zones in Ajara (including beekeeping unit) legally established by September, 2008.</i>	Adjara Sustainable development Association "ASDA" (including beekeeping unit) was legally established. Potential members are 3 constituent and 21 beekeepers (local population of buffer zone).
<i>Indicator 1.2: Local Business Centre created and its functioning run by July, 2009.</i>	<p>The Local Business Centre was established, the Business Plan developed and agreed. The Center was built and its functioning run.</p> <p>The Business Centre involves 110 beekeepers, which have 3 600 hives within the buffer zone.</p> <p>To provide beekeepers with different consultations, standard hive and qualitative medication, on internal and international market (since legislative basis and possibility of certification of honey products and State standards are adopted).</p>
Output 2: Nursery for valuable plant species and local sorts established and well managed	
<i>Indicator 2.1: Nursery for valuable plant species (chestnut and walnut) and local sorts (grape) established by December, 2008.</i>	<p>The relevant technical means purchased and Nursery constructed. Organized 60m² hothouses and 2000m² open ground.</p> <p>The basic materials: seeds, chestnuts, walnut, and grape, purchased and artificial propagation started.</p>
<i>Indicator 2.2: The first propagated seedlings got and viability and productivity evaluated by April, 2009.</i>	<p>The first productivity and viability of the nursery evaluated.</p> <p>Guidelines on using nursery products in the Buffer Zone of Mtirala National Park provided to local communities.</p> <p>21 farmers of villages within the buffer / support zone were provided with 2000 saplings of aboriginal grapes species. 5000 saplings of walnut and 5000 saplings of chestnut were distributed to the forestry services of the buffer zones in order to</p>

	<p>cultivate degraded areas of the buffer zones.</p> <p>The nursery continues functioning to increase productivity of nut plants.</p>
<p>Output 3: Model horse-back riding tour developed based on community (ies) of Mtirala NP buffer / support zone</p>	
<p><i>Indicator 3.1: Tour routes defined and mapped by December, 2008.</i></p>	<p>During horse back riding tour planning more knowledge was gained on Mtirala National Park tourism potential and opportunities of tourism development in this area. This can be used in future too in order to plan some related tour products that will be beneficial for Park itself and local population.</p> <p>The practical stage of project realization was identified some other opportunities for sustainability of the horse-back riding tour product – during tourism season horses will be used mainly for Mtirala National Park tourists and visitors, but as reality shows - during the first stage (as Park in fact was open to tourist in this year and is relatively new), there are not much tourists everyday. So, in order to have some alternative sources of income - local community representatives to whom these horses was handled, can suggest the horse-back riding walking tours to tourists in neighbouring area - for ex: Chakvi and Kobuleti area – there are many tourists during summer, so can be offered to them 15 / 30 / 45 minutes riding by horses, taking pictures with horses etc. This will give some additional income to secure necessary financing for self-sustainability. But this will be of course planned during the days / time when there are not tourists visiting to Mtirala Park who need horse-back riding.</p>
<p><i>Indicator 3.2: Horse-back riding tours promoted with the key target groups by April, 2009: at least 500 copies of promo brochure published; TV advertisement spots prepared and broadcasted and internet advertising banners set-up.</i></p>	<p>During the project implementation period was done the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected and purchased horses – 6 horses with its equipment (saddles etc.) - Selected the family which will be taking care on maintenance of horses. - Stable prepared for horses - Questionnaire was prepared that can be used for tourists survey in order to identify customer needs, what they like and what they don't like, what changes are necessary to do etc. (see appendix 1) - Working meetings with local people was arranged for better planning of horse-back

	<p>riding tour product development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training/instructions provided to local community representatives how to develop horse-back riding tours - Meeting with potential interested parties was done to provide the information about new tourism product. - The two seminars were organized on issues of cooperation/networking between private sector, government and local communities in Mtirala Park to develop the sustainable tourism. During seminar participated tourism associations (Adjara region, Guria region etc.), tourism department, private sector, Mtirala park administration, local community representatives - Photo collection was prepared that can be used for various purposes for promotion of tour products. - Mtirala Park tourism potential highlighted on web-sites—www.visit-adjara.info, www.adjaratourism.org , www.davisvenot.ge (for few months). - Tour brochures prepared and distributed
--	--

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

All intended outputs were achieved and all details are presented above.

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

Not unrealized outputs.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

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.

- ⇒ Close cooperation with local governmental authorities and local communities.
- ⇒ Right communications on the ongoing project to key stakeholders concerned.

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

Involvement of key stakeholders at the earliest stage of the project design was like a strong base for the successful implementation of the project. .

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

Wide consultations and involvement of local people and local governors in the project implementation was a guarantee for its success.

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
Norwegian Government	A	Euro 30 000	
Poland Government	B	Euro 48 000	

****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 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.

- Implementation of this project provided support to buffer zone village programs of MNP (Mtirala National Park) by other funds (project "Amelioration and support to export economically important species of Adjara wild flora in the buffer zone of MNP") where nowadays 22 farmers of the MNP buffer zone are involved in decorative floriculture and marketing.

The given project will continue in future and there are several factors which will ensure its continuation:

- The local communities representatives to whom was handled the horses and were instructed in organizing the horse-back riding tours, are motivated and interested in its further development.

- Through assistance of local tourism organizations – Adjara Tourism Association, Guria Tourism Association, Georgian Tourism Association, interested private companies working in tourism sphere – it is anticipated that gradually will be increasing number of tourists in Mtirala Park which will provide the income source for local people to maintain the horse-back riding tours.
- Tourism Department of Adjara AR is also supporting the overall promotion of Mtirala National Park, and this will also positively influence tourist attraction
- In future it is planned to implement some ecotourism / agro-tourism project targeting Adjara region and this will include the Mtirala Park – so, some additional funding might be available for further promotion.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A

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, 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: Zurab Manvelidze

Organization name: “Mta-Bari”

Mailing address: 4 Baratashvili str. 6010 Batumi. Georgia

Tel: 899-542557

Fax:

E-mail: mta-bari@mail.ru

Zurab58@yahoo.com