

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Ecotourism Association Public Organization

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Assistance to establishment of new protected area Arevik in Southern Armenia

Implementation Partners for this Project: Ministry of Nature protection, Syunik Regional Administration, Armenian Forestry ("Hayantar") SNCO, Institute of Botany, Institute of Zoology, Fund for Biodiversity Conservation of Armenian Highland, Khustup NGO.

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): 1 December, 2005 – 30 November, 2009

Date of Report (month/year): January 25, 2010

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

As a result of the project the new protected area "Arevik" National Park was established in Syunik Marz (Province) of Armenia on the base of the Meghri State Forestry; it included also "Boghakhar" Sanctuary. The aim of the NP establishment is to preserve the unique biodiversity of Meghri and Zangezur mountain ranges.

Brief information on Arevik National Park

Area: 34,401.8 ha, including "Boghakar" Sanctuary

Purpose: protection of ecosystem (broad leaf forest, Juniper open woodlands, subalpine and alpine meadows, semidesert, mountain steppe), natural and historical heritage sites, conservation of endemic, rare and threatened flora and fauna species (Caucasian leopard, bezoar goat, Armenian mouflon, brown bear, otter, Caspian snowcock, Caucasian black grouse, Armenian viper and others).

Biodiversity: more than 1500 species of vascular plants including 24 registered in the RDBA and 19 endemics; about 245 species of vertebrate animals including 49 registered in the RDBA and 12 – IUCN Red Data List

The project implementation took longer than it was planned by initial project design. Despite the efforts of the project team some delays occurred at different stages of the project due to seasonal reasons and other circumstances beyond our control, such as delayed governmental decision upon establishment of the NP. For details, please refer to the section *IV. Lessons Learned from the Project* for more details.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: *Successfully and effectively operates the established new SPNA Arevik that contributes to persistence of ecosystems and biodiversity in this area.*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level: Successfully and effectively operates the established new SPNA Arevik that contributes to persistence of ecosystems and biodiversity in this area.	Successfully and effectively operates the established new Arevik NP that contributes to persistence of ecosystems and biodiversity in this area.
1. SPNA "Arevik" established and operates by end of 2008.	"Arevik" NP was established by the Republic of Armenia Governmental decision in October 2009 with the aim protect ecosystems (broad leaf forest, Juniper open woodlands, subalpine and alpine meadows, semidesert, mountain steppe), natural and historical heritage sites, conserve endemic, rare and threatened flora and fauna species (Caucasian leopard, bezoar goat, Armenian mouflon, brown bear, otter, Caspian snowcock, Caucasian black grouse, Armenian viper and others). The same governmental decision established a management body – "Arevik" State Non-Commercial Organization to manage the NP, as well as approved the charters of both "Arevik" NP and "Arevik NP" SNCO
2. A special protection regime operates on the whole territory of established SPNA by end 2008.	A special protection regime started to be operated on the whole territory of established SPNA right after official establishment of "Arevik" NP in October 2009. Some staff was appointed after establishment of the NP, the recruitment of the rest of the planned staff will be continued in 2010. The special protection regime was set up for the whole territory of the NP by the Governmental decision.
3. The natural reproduction of flora and fauna species increased by the end 2010	The main prerequisites for improvement of natural reproduction of flora and fauna are in place: the protected area was officially created, the basic infrastructure was established, some staff was recruited. So there are all preconditions to ensure effective protection of the area and increased reproduction of flora and fauna.
4. The key habitats are preserved on the SPNA territory by the end 2010	"Arevik" National Park is a very important protected area in the south of Armenia as a territory of key habitats for such species as Caucasian leopards, Bezoar goats and Armenian mouflon, brown bears, lynx and wild cats. The NP started functioning in the end of 2009 and the intensity of activities will be gradually increased during coming years, which will result in effective protection of key habitats on the territory of the NP.

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

The Arevik National Park with 34401.8 ha total area was established by decision of the Government of Armenia (N 1209-N from 15 October 2009). This is the biggest terrestrial Protected Area in Armenia which is the habitat for more than 1,500 species of vascular plants including 24 registered in the Red Data Book of Armenia (RDBA) and 19 endemics, about 245 species of vertebrate animals including 49 registered in the RDBA and 12 – IUCN Red Data List, which will be protected.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Unexpected positive impact is that the Government in addition to 26426 ha of the forestry allocated 7975.8 ha from the state reserve lands to "Arevik" National Park. There were no unexpected negative impacts, except delays in obtaining governmental decision on establishment of the NP.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: The project is provided with human and technical resources	The project was provided with human and technical resources
<i>Indicator 1.1: The office is rented, the furniture, equipment and supplies are purchased and installed by February 2006</i>	The office was rented, the furniture, equipment and supplies were purchased and installed by February 2006. The purchase the off road (4x4) car was completed in early April of 2006.
<i>Indicator 1.2: The key project staff including the project director, administrator and accountant is established by February 2006 with defined roles and responsibilities. The Labor Contracts and Terms of References are signed.</i>	The key project staff including the project director, administrator and accountant was established by February 2006 with defined roles and responsibilities.
<i>Indicator 1.3: The staff successfully accomplishes the management and monitoring of the project. The financial and technical progress reports (quarterly, annual and final) are composed and submitted to the CEPF.</i>	The staff has successfully accomplished the management and monitoring of the project. The financial and technical progress reports (quarterly, annual and final) have been composed and submitted to the CEPF.
Output 2: The research and inventory on flora and fauna species diversity (including the endemic, rare and endangered species) of the proposed area and surroundings, as well as mapping (in GIS) their habitats are implemented.	The research and inventory on flora and fauna species diversity (including the endemic, rare and endangered species) of the proposed area and surroundings, as well as mapping (in GIS) their habitats have been implemented
<i>Indicator 2.1: The research on flora and fauna species diversity in the territory of the planned SPNA is mainly completed by September 2006</i>	The selected and hired local specialists, scientists from the Institutes of Academy of Sciences (botanists, mammologist, ornithologist, herpetologist and entomologist) conducted field research and inventory on flora and fauna species diversity (including the endemic, rare and endangered species) of the proposed area and surroundings.
<i>Indicator 2.2: The mapping of flora and fauna distribution is completed by October 2006</i>	Based on the field works the researchers drew the flora and fauna critical habitats maps by October 2006. Distribution, borders and description of individual populations were shown.
<i>Indicator 2.3: The 2.1-2.2 indicators results analysis is done and the flora and fauna distribution is generalized and a map with the proposed SPNA boundaries is drawn by October 2006</i>	Digitalization of the preliminary basic maps of the area was done by the hired mapping specialist. The mapping specialist together with the researchers analyzed the research results, drew the flora and fauna distribution and generalized the data obtained in a maps for clarification of the proposed SPNA boundaries and zoning by October 2006.
Output 3: Based on the results of the Output 2 the clarification and drafting of the boundaries as well as creation of the digital map for the area are implemented with consideration for all land users.	Based on the results of the Output 2 the clarification and drafting of the boundaries as well as creation of the digital map for the area were implemented with consideration for all land users.
<i>Indicator 3.1: Field works aimed to clarification of the SPNA boundaries are accomplished by February</i>	The mapping organization was selected and the area cadastral, topographic and geodetic materials

2007	<p>were purchased.</p> <p>The mapping organization together with the local consultant on Protected areas implemented survey of the area, refined and updated the area topographic map in 1:10000 scale, mapped the build-up areas, natural and cultural monument, etc. The field works aimed at clarification of the SPNA boundaries was accomplished by May 2007</p>
<i>Indicator 3.2: The boundary-posts pointers are fixed up by February 2007</i>	<p>Meetings for discussions and negotiations were held by the project staff, local consultant on Protected Areas, CEPF Country Coordinator and mapping organization with land users from the communities Nyuvadi, Aldara, Shvanidzor and Arevik.</p> <p>The boundaries were refined and agreed with neighboring land users and the boundary-posts pointers were fixed up by June 2007.</p>
<i>Indicator 3.3: The creation of the digital map and the description of boundaries for the area are implemented with consideration for all land users by February 2007</i>	<p>The cartographic materials were digitalized by February 2007.</p> <p>The mapping organization prepared the description of boundaries for the area with consideration for all land users by September 2007.</p>
<i>Indicator 3.4: All the necessary documents on the boundaries description and the map, as well as the Draft Governmental Decision on the SPNA Map Approval are prepared by February 2007</i>	<p>The mapping organization prepared all the necessary documents on the boundaries description and the map, as well as the Draft Governmental Decision on the SPNA Map Approval by September 2007.</p>
Output 4: The management plan of SPNA Arevik is developed.	The management plan of SPNA Arevik was developed.
<i>Indicator 4.1: The working group consisting of different specialists is established by March 2007</i>	<p>A working group was formed for the management plan development. The group consisted of 3 specialists (1 group leader and 2 specialists) was established by March 2007 to work for 6 month.</p>
<i>Indicator 4.2: The description of the territory and available resources is prepared by August 2007</i>	<p>Working group prepared the description of the territory and available resources by August 2007.</p>
<i>Indicator 4.3: The biodiversity conservation problems are defined by August 2007.</i>	<p>Several workshops were organized with local communities and municipal authorities for identification of conservation problems and discussion of necessary activities. The biodiversity conservation problems were defined by August 2007.</p>
<i>Indicator 4.4: The biodiversity conservation activities are proposed by August 2007.</i>	<p>The biodiversity conservation activities were proposed by November 2007.</p>
<i>Indicator 4.5: The generalizations and analysis is done and the management plan is developed by August 2007</i>	<p>The generalizations and analysis were done and the draft management plan developed by December 2007</p>
Output 5: The Draft Decision on Establishment of the SPNA Arevik and the Non-profit State Organization SPNA Arevik, as well as their Charters are prepared. The Governmental Decision and approval of Charters are obtained.	The draft decision on Establishment of the Arevik NP and Arevik NP State Non Commercial Organization, as well as their Charters were prepared. The Governmental Decision and approval of Charters were obtained.
<i>Indicator 5.1: The Charters of : a/ the SPNA Arevik and b/ the Non-profit State Organization SPNA Arevik is prepared by August 2007</i>	<p>The draft Charters of "Arevik" NP and "Arevik NP" State Non Commercial Organization were prepared by September 2007.</p>
<i>Indicator 5.2: The Draft Decision on Establishment of the SPNA Arevik and on approval of Charters , as well as all the regular documents are prepared by August 2007</i>	<p>The Draft Decision on Establishment of the Arevik NP and on approval of Charters , as well as all the regular documents were prepared by September 2007</p>
<i>Indicator 5.3: The procedure of coordination of all</i>	<p>All the regular documents were prepared for</p>

documents with stakeholders is completed by October 2007	coordination with stakeholders: all departments of the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finances and Economy and others. The procedure of coordination of all documents with stakeholders was completed by September 2008
Indicator 5.4: The coordinated documents on establishment of new protected area "Arevik " are submitted to the Government by October 2007	The coordinated documents on establishment of new "Arevik" NP and "Arevik NP" State Non Commercial Organization were submitted to the Government by September 2008
Indicator 5.5: The Decision on Establishment of the SPNA Arevik and the Non-profit State Organization SPNA Arevik, as well as on approval their Charters are obtained from the Government by December 2007	The Decision on Establishment of the "Arevik" NP and "Arevik National Park" State Non Commercial Organization (SNCO) as well as on approval of their Charters was obtained from the Government by November 2009.
Output 6: The management plan of the SPNA Arevik is agreed and approved by all stakeholders	The management plan of the SPNA Arevik was agreed and approved by all stakeholders
Indicator 6.1: The seminars and consultations with stakeholders in Syunik Marz is held by January 2008	The seminars and consultations with stakeholders in Syunik Marz were held by May 2008.
Indicator 6.2: The seminars (public discussions) with participation of all stakeholders (Ministries, Scientific Institutes, NGOs, etc.) are held by January 2008	The seminars (public discussions) with participation of all stakeholders in Yerevan (Ministries, Scientific Institutes, NGOs, etc.) were held by June 2008
Indicator 6.3: The final version of management plan considered all consultation results is ready by February 2008	The final version of management plan considered all consultation results was developed by September 2008
Indicator 6.4: The official approval of the SPNA Arevik management plan from the authorized state bodies is obtained by March 2008	The final version of the draft management plan was submitted to the Ministry of Nature Protection for official approval by September 2008
Output 7: The boundaries and the map for the SPNA Arevik are approved by the Government. The map is registered in the State Cadastre of Armenia.	The boundaries and the map for the SPNA Arevik were approved by the Government. The map approved by the Government has been submitted by Arevik NP SNCO to the State Cadastre for registration.
Indicator 7.1: All the necessary documents on the boundaries description and the map, as well as the Draft Governmental Decision on the SPNA Map Approval (see Output 3.4) are coordinated with stakeholders by February 2008	A series of meetings with stakeholders in Syunik Marz organized : 1 meeting with Marz Administration and 4 meetings with local authorities (Meghri town, as well as Aldara, Shvanidzor and Nyuvadi communities). The regular agreement procedures were implemented with stakeholders for all the necessary documents on the boundaries description and the map, as well as the Draft Governmental Decision on the SPNA Map approval .The agreed documents to obtain the Governmental Decision on the NP Boundaries and Map Approval were submitted to the Government by September 2008.
Indicator 7.2: The Governmental Decision on the SPNA Boundaries and Map Approval is received by March 2008	The Governmental Decision on the "Arevik" NP Boundaries and Map Approval was received by November 2009
Indicator 7.3: The SPNA map approved from the Government is registered in the State Cadastre of Armenia by April 2008	This indicator has been not longer planned according to the Amendment to the CEPF Grant Agreement signed on 10/01/2009. The map approved by the Government has been submitted by "Arevik NP" State Non Commercial Organization (SNCO) to the State Cadastre for registration.
Output 8: The infrastructure for the SPNA Arevik	The infrastructure for the SPNA "Arevik"

is established on the base of the Meghri State Forestry	was established on the basis of the Meghri State Forestry. Some indicators for this Output have been changed according to the Amendment to the CEPF Grant Agreement signed on 10/01/2009.
<i>Indicator 8.1: The Meghri State Forestry office building is renovated by May 2008</i>	This activity has not been longer planned.
<i>Indicator 8.2: The office of SPNA "Arevik" is fully equipped by May 2008</i>	The hardware/computer supplies for the established "Arevik" NP (laptop, printer and copier) were purchased by November 2009.
<i>Indicator 8.3: The ranger shelters are established by May 2008</i>	Two lodges were purchased and fixed up to be used as ranger shelters by November 2009. One of them was established in "Boghakar" Sanctuary, the second one - on Meghri mountain range.
<i>Indicator 8.4: An off-road (4x4) car as well as 2 motorcycles are purchased by May 2008</i>	1. The vehicle MITSUBISHI PAJERO V63.0 for anti-poaching unit was purchased by November 2009. 2. The vehicle for anti-fire unit (an off -road Vehicle UAZ 23632-231 with anti-fire equipment installed) was purchased by November 2009.
<i>Indicator 8.5: 5 horses and saddles are purchased by May 2008</i>	Vehicle UAZ 23632-231 with anti-fire equipment installed was purchased by November 2009.
<i>Indicator 8.6: Equipment for rangers is purchased by May 2008</i>	1. The equipment for ranger stations (desks, wardrobes, bookcases, beds) was purchased by November 2009. 2. The equipment and outfit for rangers (uniforms, tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, binoculars, photo-cameras, GPSs, mobile phones) was purchased by November 2009.
<i>Indicator 8.7: The SPNA territory infrastructure (barriers, gates, landmarks (posts), signs etc) is prepared and fixed up by May 2008</i>	5 road signs and 3 blocks and barriers were prepared and fixed up by November 2009. 3 road signs were installed on the Yerevan-Meghri highway in the vicinity of the National Park. 2 road signs were installed inside the Park. Barriers were installed in "Boghakar" Sanctuary (near the ranger's station) and in Meghri and Zangezour mountain ranges.
<i>Indicator 8.8: The building of new roads and repair of existing roads inside the SPNA is completed by May 2008</i>	Works on construction of new roads and repair of existing roads inside "Arevik" National Park were implemented by November 2009. Overall about 3 km. of roads were constructed/renovated in different areas of the National Park.
Output 9: The professional development and trainings for protected area staff are provided.	The professional development and trainings for protected area staff were provided
<i>Indicator 9.1: The trainings program, as well as the Terms of Reference for trainers is ready by May 2008</i>	The trainings program, as well as the Terms of Reference for trainers were designed by September 2008. The trainings program includes the topics of protection of biodiversity, map of the territory, use of field equipment, fire management, field monitoring, work with visitors and other related topics.
<i>Indicator 9.2: The team of trainers is defined by May 2008</i>	The team of trainers (1 botanist and 1 zoologist) defined by September 2009.
<i>Indicator 9.3: The training auditory materials are prepared by trainers according to Terms of Reference by May 2008</i>	The training materials were prepared by trainers according to Terms of Reference by October 2009.
<i>Indicator 9.4: The trainings are held by May 2008</i>	The trainings were held by November 2009.

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

Almost all intended outputs were successfully delivered, though with some delays due to different reasons.

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

Part of the Output 7, i.e. “*The map registered in the State Cadastre of Armenia*” was not realized. It was agreed by the Amendment to the CEPF Grant Agreement signed on 10/01/2009 not to implement this activity.

The reason was that as the Governmental Decision on Establishment of the SPNA “Arevik” and approval of Charters was obtained only in October 2009, it was not realistic to manage registration of the map in State Cadastre by the end of the project (November 30) as usually it takes longer time.

However this did not affect the overall impact of the project. The map approved by the Government was submitted by “Arevik NP” SNCO to the State Cadastre for registration.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

The project has no adverse environmental impacts.

Besides the project area has a great potential for tourism development, particularly for nature-based tourism, which is one of the fastest growing industries worldwide. Ecotourism is included in the draft Management Plan of the new National Park. It will raise the capacity of local people to be involved in alternative tourism activities, as well as provide more income and employment for local communities.

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.

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

The project design has been well done in terms of the necessity and sequence of planned actions. The planned specific activities were essential and adequate to meet the case of establishing a new specially protected nature area.

However the experience showed that some of the activities planned for the project took more time than it was initially planned.

While the initial activities of the project such as research and inventory of biological resources of the proposed area and surroundings, mapping their critical habitats have been completed in time,

the necessary time for generalizations and analysis based on the extensive field data for the management plan development took much more time than it was planned.

The planned time for identification of the boundaries of the new protected area with consideration of all land users, as well as for coordination of all documents with stakeholders proved to be insufficient.

There were also some seasonal problems. Due to seasonal reason (stable snow cover) some activities connected with field works have not been possible to accomplish in time.

However, the main reason of project interruption was the delay in obtaining the Governmental Decision on Establishment of "Arevik" National Park. The problem was that governmental approval usually takes some time to coordinate the documents with all governmental stakeholders. This includes comments and final approval from the main governmental stakeholders: all departments of the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finances and Economy and others. The approval process was additionally postponed due to presidential elections in the country and forming the new government (in 2008). Only upon obtaining Governmental Decision in 2009 we were able to proceed with implementation of the next activity on establishment of protected area infrastructure, which covers almost half of the total grant funds.

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

The selection process (negotiation with suppliers, bidding procedures) for big equipments like vehicles must be started far in advance before the planned time for purchase.

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	Notes
The Government of Armenia	A	60,000 USD	The Government has allocated annual budget for the operational cost of the NP

****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.

As a result of the project implementation “Arevik National Park” State Non Commercial Organization (SNCO) was established. This SNCO will be financed from the state budget and will manage “Arevik” National Park. WWF Armenia will provide financial support to the park through different donor projects for development of tourism program, tourism infrastructure and renovation of headquarters (about 220,000 USD) in 2010. The Caucasus Protected Areas Fund is possible contributor for co-financing the Park’s operational cost in upcoming years.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Arevik” National Park is located in the southernmost Armenia and has common borders with “Shikahogh” Reserve and “Zangezur” Sanctuary (established with support of CEPF grant) in Armenia as well as with “Kyamaki” Biosphere Reserve in Iran and “Ordubad” National Park in Azerbaijan which created an effective network of Protected Areas in this Priority Conservation Area (Ecoregional Conservation Plan) and Key Biodiversity Area (Ecosystem Profile: Caucasus Biodiversity hotspot). The entire area has a great potential for trans-boundary collaboration for conservation of a unique biodiversity of the site including Caucasian leopard, Armenian mouflon, bezoar goat, brown bear, lynx, otter, Caucasian black grouse, Caspian snowcock, Armenian viper, Mediterranean tortoise and many other threatened species.

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.

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