

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	Bahir Dar University
Project Title:	Rehabilitation and Sustainable Utilization of Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands
Grant Number:	65707
CEPF Region:	Eastern Afromontane
Strategic Direction:	2 Improve the protection and management of the KBA network throughout the hotspot.
Grant Amount:	\$149,307.00
Project Dates:	February 01, 2015 - July 31, 2017
Date of Report:	October 07, 2017

Implementation Partners

List each partner and explain how they were involved in the project

Bureaus of Agriculture; Environmental Protection and Land Use; Water and Energy Resources; Culture, Tourism and Parks Development: Gave legal recognition and directions to Kebeles (grass root level); endorsed the wetland management plan.

The Amhara Livestock Resources Development and Cooperatives Promotion Agencies: supporting and legalizing cooperatives; endorsing the wetland management plan.

NABU Project Office and Organization for Rehabilitation and Development in Amhara (ORDA): shared their best experiences; wrote endorsement letter; participated in workshops.

Amhara Mass Media Agency: promoting the project activities in TV and Radio programs

West Gojjam Administrative Zone and Districts offices Agriculture and Environmental Protection and Land Use Offices: actively involved overall implementation of the project

Estumet and Lijome Kebele Administrators and Experts: mobilizing and organizing the local communities; collecting baseline information, legalizing cooperatives.

The local communities: involved in consultation issues, data provision, training, endorsing the plan, papyrus plantation, management of the existing resources.

Bahir Dar University: provided some service; published the project activities as news in its monthly news paper (THE NILE) and budget for papyrus plantation.

Conservation Impacts

Summarize the overall impact of your project, describing how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile

Overall, the project managed to rehabilitate 25 ha of degraded land with papyrus and sustainably utilize the remnant papyrus vegetation at Little Abbai KBA. In addition, the project developed the Little Abbai River mouth wetland's management plan and created alternative livelihoods for fish and wetland resources development cooperatives and local communities to improve the protection status of the KBA. Generally, the project was able to meet almost all of the short-term impacts. However, impact like income increase of fish and wetlands resources development cooperatives from the sale of fish and crafting materials fell short of it.

Progress toward long-term impacts:

The project is progressing towards achieving the stated long-term objectives and goals. There is a clear indication that developed wetland management plan which focused on rehabilitation and sustainable utilization of the existing wetland resources and provision of alternative livelihoods has been accepted by the local administration and communities and appreciated by BDU officials (during site visits). It is currently achieving some progressive results. The local communities understood the consequences of losing the existing wetlands and are convinced with the protection and rehabilitation of the papyrus forest. The communities in the Little Abbai KBA are also interested to diversify their livelihoods through various means. The intervention made with this project clearly indicates sustainability use of the resources could be ensures in Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands. However, further intervention is needed. Bahir Dar University and the local administration shall work towards these goals in the coming years.

Progress toward short-term impacts:

From progress and other reports, and final monitoring and evaluation assessments, a new management plan for Little Abbai Mouth Wetlands has been developed and endorsed by stakeholders to guide the implementation and sustainable management of the 2000 ha Little Abbai river mouth wetlands. The management plan was developed after thorough understanding the biophysical and socioeconomic condition of the KBA. Overall, 160 local communities, administrators and experts speak in favor of biodiversity conservation as a result of the training given and discussions made. This could be evidenced from their engagement in convincing others to rehabilitate the existing natural resources. In project sites Kebeles, 150 local communities could be employed in different income generating activities such as papyrus plantation and fishing. Twenty women from the project sites developed skills of either fish processing or papyrus handcrafting by inviting local experts to train them. Ten leaders of the established fish and wetland resources cooperatives at Little Abbai got hands on experiences on fish marketing and management from experienced fish cooperatives at Bahir Dar. However, the income increase of cooperatives was not fully realized as the boats and gillnets were given in the last six months of the project period. During our project implementation, the fish and wetlands resources development cooperatives were involved at large in papyrus plantation and benefited in terms of income and skill of papyrus transplantation skills. The Estumet and Lijome Kebeles particularly the cooperatives were so happy to receive the boats as they can easily control the illegal fishing and papyrus cutting activities in the KBA.

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
The long-term implementation of the new management plan for Little Abbai River will lead	Implementing the new management plan for the Little Abbai KBA started since September 2015 and the plan

<p>to improved management of the KBA and a healthy and functional wetland ecosystem harboring diverse fauna and flora</p>	<p>is progressing towards achieving its goal as protection of the remnant wetland and rehabilitation of the degraded areas has been practiced with the full support of the local communities. Rigorous implementation of the major project components in the management plan eventually lead to a healthy ecosystem functioning of the Little Abbai River mouth wetlands in the KBA.</p>
<p>The management plan will contribute to institutionalize the sustainable wetland management practices through collaboration of the Estumet and Lijome Kebele leaders for the next twenty years</p>	<p>The great interest of local communities and Woreda administration to save and sustainably utilize the existing resources at the KBA is a clear indication of ownership which eventually leads to institutionalization. However, it is demanding phenomena to empower the local communities by providing extra support and capacity building.</p>
<p>The project will contribute for 300 local community (Estumet and Lijome Kebeles) to diversify their livelihoods and increase the income of 140 people from fishing and papyrus crafting by 75% for the next ten years</p>	<p>Indeed the project component that is meant for improving the livelihoods of the landless youth is achieving some encouraging results in the short period of the project implantation. In this project, 56 fish and wetlands resources development cooperative members and 150 local communities in both Kebeles of the project site increased their incomes from fish and handcraft sales and papyrus plantation. As mentioned before, further support and capacity building of local communities is needed to reach at high income levels.</p>
<p>The project will contribute to increase the abundance of endemic Labeobarbus species by 10% for the next twenty years in Lake Tana</p>	<p>The long-term implementation of the Little Abbai River Mouth wetlands management plan particularly the rehabilitation and protection of papyrus and abandoning the illegal fishing activities could reverse the ever shrinking Labeobarbus fish stocks in the KBA. However, realization of 10% increase in Labeobarbus spp. abundance in the KBA seems far reaching as it needs concerted effort and intervention.</p>
<p>The rehabilitated papyrus vegetation by this project will serve as a sink for about 3200 kg C m-2y-1 for the next fifteen years</p>	<p>Indeed the continued implementation of the existing management plan specially protecting the existing papyrus forest and planting 25 ha degraded land or more with papyrus and other indigenous macrophytes would greatly contribute to carbon sink roles of the existing macrophytes (papyrus) in the KBA.</p>
<p>The 20 ha rehabilitated wetlands by the project act as buffer for siltation and reduce sediment load by 2% from Lake Tana for the next twenty years</p>	<p>The 25 ha of land rehabilitated with papyrus is located at the river mouth of the Little Abbai River where large sediment is displacing the lake water and turning it bare land. It is easy recognize the buffering roles of the planted papyrus vegetation in the locality. If we continue planting the bare river mouth with papyrus and other indigenous macrophytes, reduction in sediment load would be greater than the indicated</p>

target.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal)

Impact Description	Impact Summary
A new management plan for Little Abbai Mouth Wetlands will be produced and will guide the implementation and sustainable management of 2000 hectares by mid 2017	In our project after thorough assessment and of the biophysical and socioeconomic situation of the area in the KBA, the Little Abbai River Mouth wetlands management plan was developed, endorsed and implemented to guide the wise use of 2000 ha wetland during the project period.
2 Hundred twenty individuals from the community and forty eight Kebele experts will start to advocate the importance of wetland and the need for conservation by mid 2017	During the project period, 160 local communities including experts already started to promote on wise use natural resources at different circumstances. For this, the driving forces are the discussions and trainings given by the project and their educational background and traditional knowledge on the use of natural experiences.
Seventy (60 from fish cooperative and ten from papyrus craft making) in both Kebeles will increase their income 75% by mid 2017	Actually 56 (20 women) fish and wetlands resources development cooperatives had been established (28 members in each Kebele) and engaged in papyrus plantation, handcraft making and fish harvesting. These cooperatives managed to mainly generate income from papyrus plantation and recently from handcraft and fish sales. However, income increase of 75% could not be met due late delivery of the boats and gillnets for cooperatives.
4 Hundred twenty local inhabitants will be employed for papyrus plantation, fishing and papyrus handcrafting from Estumet and Lijome Kebeles from 2015-2017	In Both Kebeles, hundred fifty local communities were employed in papyrus plantation and handcrafts and fishing activities from 2015 to 2017.
Ten women from the local inhabitants will develop the skill of fish gear making and processing by mid 2017	In this project, 10 women (5 from Estumet and another 5 from Lijome Kebele) as a member of cooperatives developed skills of fish as a result of the training given. They are members of the cooperatives.
Fifty individuals participated in the papyrus planting will develop vegetative propagation skills by mid 2017	Vegetative propagation was not undertaken since direct transplant from parent papyrus rhizomes was effect in the locality. Thus, 56 local communities (members of the cooperatives) good developed skills of papyrus transplantation during the project period.
Ten women from local inhabitants will develop the skill of papyrus handcrafting by mid 2017	Indeed, 10 women (5 Estumet and 5 Lijome) were recruited and trained on papyrus handcrafting by the two local Negede-Woito (husband and wife) residents. They got good practical training and managed to produce different products during the training. However, they were less interested in it. Rather they interested to become members of the cooperatives and it was done.


Ten fish cooperative leaders will develop the skill of fish marketing and personnel management by mid 2017	Ten (5 Estumet and 5 Lijome) fish and wetland resources development cooperative leaders visited one of the old and experienced fish cooperatives at Bahir Day and got the required skills on fish production, marketing and personnel management by the mid 2017.
The biophysical and socioeconomic status of Estumet and Lijome Kebeles will be identified from 2015-2017	In 2015, a comprehensive household survey questionnaire was developed, tested and improved. Based on this questionnaire, focus group discussion, key informant interviews and field observation, the biophysical and socioeconomic status of Estumet and Lijome Kebeles particularly the Abbay Dar (people who are living near Little Abbai River mouth) residents was assessed for developing the Little Abbai River Mouth wetlands management plan.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives

The main intent of the project was to rehabilitate and sustainable utilize the Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands. In doing so, the socioeconomic and biophysical status of the area was assessed thoroughly for developing the wetland’s management plan that guides the major activities to be undertaken in this KBA. It would have been possible to bring stakeholders onboard for cooperation on the conservation needs of the locality. Three training manuals were prepared for the success of the targeted trainings. Local communities (Negede Woito) and experts from research institutes involved in skill oriented trainings. The awareness creation and training made, let the local communities to discuss openly on the major threats of the lake and it resources in their locality and were convinced and committed to undertake corrective measures such as papyrus plantation of the degraded lands, protection of the existing papyrus forest form illegal activities and to stop illegal fishing activities in the KBA. They also agreed to minimize free grazing and eventually stop it. Through the active cooperation of the local administration and communities it would have been possible to rehabilitate 25 ha of degraded land with papyrus and to advocate on natural resources conservation. Thus, it would have been possible to let the local communities to undertake concerted efforts in averting the existing threats to the resource base.

In addition, the local communities actively involved in alternative livelihood opportunities like fish and fish processing, and papyrus plantation and crafting skills. The fish and wetlands resources development associations are enthusiastic in such activities and success could be realized gradually. The commitment shown by the Bahir Dar University to support the project activities by providing logistics during implementation and the interest shown by the research community service office to continue with the rehabilitation activities was also instrumental in achieving our results and sustaining the project in the long-term. In general, all these commitments and progress made could eventually improve the protection and management of the Little Abbai KBA.

Though the project site or area is hard to access easily due lack of boat transportation and recurrent strong waves at Little Abbai River Mouth and Lake Tana in the afternoon, the project staff managed to achieve the planned activities even at life threatening situations.



As mentioned in the progress reports we faced some challenges during project implementation. The first challenge we face was that people were suspicious of our project activities. Some of them were gossiping that we were there to take their lands for investment while others were thinking that we went there to displace them since the government tried to resettle them some years before. Later on through continuous open discussions and awareness creation, we managed to handle it. The second major challenge was free grazing. The Little Abbai River Mouth is a flooded area where large herd of cattle coming from all adjacent Kebeles is grazing in the whole dry season. When all the lush grass is over the uncontrolled herd destroys the papyrus vegetation through trampling and grazing. In one occasion, we lost 2 ha of degraded land planted with papyrus. The Woreda/Kebele administration and local communities promised to minimize it. Still it is a problem. The third challenge was the illegal fishing and papyrus harvesting activities in the area from outsiders. It was challenging to stop these people overnight but the cooperatives with full support of the local administration are trying to minimize these activities through surveillance and monitoring. The two previous challenges indicate that further intervention is needed. The fourth challenge is that the area or lake is at risk since the large sediment coming from the highlands is too much and it is reclaiming more land from the lake by displacing the water. The other challenges were the remoteness and risky nature of the site to undertake activities easily, less interest of women to engage in papyrus handcrafting and lengthy procurement procedures at Bahir Dar University.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The unexpected positive impact of our project was that immediately after endorsing the management plan i.e., in September 2015 the Estumet and Lijome Kebele administration and local communities organized themselves voluntary to rehabilitate the degraded lands with papyrus at Little Abbai River mouth wetlands. The fish and wetland resources development cooperatives were highly enthusiastic. In addition, the field visit was arranged for BDU officials to our project sites. It created opportunity for BDU to see the project activities on site and discuss with local communities. There was good appreciation of our project activities and as a result the Research and Community Services Office allocated \$4114.00 for papyrus plantation.

Project Components and Products/Deliverables

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Developing Communication Rapports	1.1	Established linkages or platform of communication among the 20 stakeholders by 2015	From 2015 onwards, using various means of communication more than 20 stakeholders (regional to grass root level) platform was established for successful implementation of this project and future collaboration. The beginning was good but it was not possible to keep the momentum as there was no budget allocated for it and busy schedules of stakeholders. Therefore, in this project, the stakeholders at Woreda/district and Kebele levels and local communities were active participants of the platform. The reality is that another project is needed to make such platforms vibrant.
2	Developing Wetland Management Plan	2.1	Prepared wetland management plan by 2015	The Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands Management plan was prepared in 2015 and communicated to CEPF and stakeholders.
2	Developing Wetland Management Plan	2.2	Approved wetland management plan 2015	On 5th September 2015, the Little Abbai River mouth wetland management plan was approved by stakeholders.
3	Awareness Creation	3.1	Six hundred thirty local inhabitants informed about wetland conservation by 2015	In this project, 118 local communities (farmers), 22 teachers and 1683 students were informed at schools about Lake Tana resources and conservation needs. This does not include the awareness creation made by the site coordinator through frequent school and church (Sundays) visits. For the last two years, the site coordinator made awareness creation (on wetlands, Lake Tana and the need for conservation) for 1550 local communities (820 men and 730 women), 1800 students (930 boys and 870 girls) and 38 Woreda and Kebele administrators, and Kebele experts (37 men and 11 women).
3	Awareness Creation	3.2	Hundred twenty local inhabitants trained in wetland conservation advocacy by 2015	In this project, 150 local inhabitants including experts in the locality were communicated, awared and trained about natural resources and conservation needs by 2016.

4	Wetland Rehabilitation with Cyprus papyrus (Papyrus)	4.1	Twenty hectares papyrus rehabilitated wetlands by mid 2017	Overall, 25 ha of the degraded Little Abbai River mouth planted and rehabilitated with papyrus by mid 2017.
4	Wetland Rehabilitation with Cyprus papyrus (Papyrus)	4.2	Ten trained local inhabitant women on papyrus crafting by 2017	As indicated in the short-term impacts, ten women (5 Estumet and 5 Lijome) were trained on papyrus crafting by 2017.
5	Establishing Fish Cooperatives	5.1	Two fish cooperatives established by 2016	Two (Estumet and Lijome) fish and wetland resources development cooperatives were established by 2017.
5	Establishing Fish Cooperatives	5.2	Four women trained on fish gear making by 2016	This was not done due to lack of threads (training materials) in the market. Rather they joined fish processing training.
5	Establishing Fish Cooperatives	5.3	Six women trained on fish processing by 2016	Ten women (5 Estumet and 5 Lijome) trained on fish processing by an expert from Bahir Dar Fish and other Aquatic Resources Research Center by February 2017.

Please describe and submit any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

A comprehensive household survey questionnaire was developed for assessing the socio-economic situation of the local communities at Little Abbai KBA. It was developed based on the previous experiences of the project staff. The design of the Little Abbai River Mouth Wetlands Management Plan was guided based on own experiences and works of the • Department of Environment and Conservation. 2008. Guidelines checklist for preparing a wetland management plan, Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth. • Fähser, L., Kretschmer, H., Pascall, M., and Kalmbach, E. 2015. Management plan Lake Tana biosphere.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building.

Consider lessons that would inform:

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

- Project Implementation (*aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings*)
- Describe any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

Overall, we learnt the following:

- During the project design, the finance people did not participate and we found that it would be helpful to let them participate.
- Before designing any project, it would be important to undertake baseline survey.
- During the household surveys, key informant interviews, field visits and trainings made we gained much traditional knowledge on the natural resources from local communities that helped us to design our management plan.
- It is important to take much more time in awareness creation and training when working local communities particularly women. During the training, it is important to include pictures and videos. It is also vital to let communities to speak about on issues of concern and solutions.
- It is important to get consent of the local administration and communities to undertake any project activity.
- Strong linkage with the major stakeholders particularly lower administration is a key to success of projects
- Working with communities on conservation issues is challenging and rewarding. So, patience, commitment and smart approach are needed.

Sustainability / Replication

Summarize the success or challenges in ensuring the project will be sustained or replicated, including any unplanned activities that are likely to result in increased sustainability or replicability.

We made clear that the local administration and communities are the owners of these project activities. During the closing workshop the major stakeholders promised to continue with rehabilitation activity in the area. There was strong ambition of local communities to use the existing resources for their own sake. Bahir Dar University in its outreach programs will continue working with the local administration. The enthusiastic cooperatives promised to work with papyrus plantation and control of illegal fishing and papyrus harvesting activities. The free grazing issues need strong enforcement by the Woreda and Kebele administrations and it is the agenda of both Woredas and Kebeles. With those engagement made, we feel that the project long-term goals will be realized, bringing sustainability of the natural resources in the area. However, more involvement expected from governmental and non-governmental organizations is needed.

Participation of women in conservation activities like this one is so important. We could not be able to address this issue in this project. There should be demand based capacity building for local communities. In the area, there should be other livelihood interventions that deserves due attention such as forage management, introducing improved animal breeds by reducing the unproductive local herds, eco-tourism for flora and fauna, fruit and vegetable production and oil and other commercial crop production.

Safeguards

If not listed as a separate Project Component and described above, summarize the implementation of any required action related to social, environmental, or pest management safeguards

The project mainly focused on implementation of a sustainable wetland management plan with full consent and involvement of local communities. The 25 ha papyrus rehabilitated river mouth is part of the Lake or wetland whereby local communities could not claim about it. Thus, all activities implemented under this project did not have any negative social and environmental impacts as stated in the original project plan.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Use this space to provide any further comments or recommendations in relation to your project or CEPF

Comments/recommendations • The KBA is worthy to invest. What has been done as a result of CEPF funding is very encouraging. • More hands on from the government and non-government organizations are needed. There are many other livelihood opportunities in the KBA which demands time, energy and money as to alleviate the pressure on the natural resources. • Trainings like conflict resolution on natural resources, livelihood vs. conservation, and leadership in natural resources management are needed for experts and then for local communities. • Further support on monitoring and capacity building is needed.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of CEPF investment

Total additional funding (US\$)

\$22,707.00

Type of funding

Please provide a breakdown of additional funding (counterpart funding and in-kind) by source, categorizing each contribution into one of the following categories:

- A Project Co-Financing (other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B 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)*
- C Regional/Portfolio Leveraging (other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project)*

Donor	Type of funding*	Amount	Notes
Bahir Dar University	B (in cash)	\$4114.00	Paid for papyrus rehabilitation participants
	B (in kind)	\$10,200.00	One pick up and/or minibus used for 85 days for the project period. If rented, 120 dollars/day since the road to Kunzilla (projects sites) is non-asphalted and harsh.
		\$3333.00	Around 10000 pages of training manuals, data collection sheets and letters were color printed or copied with a rate of 3 pages/dollar.
		\$5,060.00	If we rent project office at Bahir Dar, it may cost 140 dollars/month. If we rent a hall for the inception workshop, it may cost 20 dollars/day.
Total		\$22707.00	

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

1. Please include your full contact details (Name, Organization, Mailing address, Telephone number, E-mail address) below

Name: Minwyelet Mingist Organization: Bahir Dar University Mailing address, P.O. Box 5501, Bahir Dar, Zenzelma, Ethiopia Tel: +251 588 209300/1 (Office); +251 918 014808 (Cell Phone) E-mail address: minwyeming@gmail.com or minwyelet@yahoo.co