

CEPF Final Project Completion Report

Organization Legal Name:	IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
Project Title:	Indo-Burma II-2: Regional Implementation Team-Programs
Grant Number:	62996
CEPF Region:	Indo-Burma II
Strategic Direction:	11 Provide strategic leadership and effective coordination of conservation investment through a regional implementation team
Grant Amount:	
Project Dates:	July 01, 2013 - April 30, 2020
Date of Report:	July 14, 2020

IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS

List each partner and explain how they were involved with the project.

Our primary implementation partners were the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Gardens (KFBG), based in Hong Kong, and the Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN), based in Yangon. KFBG is a leading conservation NGO in China, with a particularly strong presence in Hainan and the southern part of the country; it performed the RIT functions in the China portion of the hotspot throughout most of the duration of Phase 2 investment. MERN is a network of 29 environmental and social non-governmental organisations, first created in 2009 to help coordinate responses to the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis; it performed the RIT functions in Myanmar until mid-2018, when IUCN established its own country office in the country. Even after its formal role as the RIT had ended, MERN continued to be an important partner, assisting with networking and monitoring.

CONSERVATION IMPACTS

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

The project made a significant contribution to the delivery of Strategic Directions 1, 2, 4, 6 and 8 in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. Amongst other achievements, the small and large grants facilitated by the project succeeded in accomplishing the following:

- **SD 1: Supported interventions to conserve core populations of 32 priority species identified in the Ecosystem Profile;**
- **SD 2: Supported multiple initiatives to address the illegal wildlife trade, including the unraveling of a IWT network, development of innovative programmes to reduce consumer demand, and securing voluntary commitments from leading courier companies not to transport illegal wildlife products;**
- **SD 4: Piloted/replicated 17 community forests, community fisheries and community-managed protected areas;**
- **SD 6: Mainstreamed biodiversity by piloting six, biodiversity-friendly production initiatives (including certification and eco-labeling), such as "Ibis rice";**
- **SD 8: Significantly enhanced the capacity of local CSOs, through the provision of small grants, training, mentoring during monitoring missions, and the promotion of partnerships between international and local organisations.**

In addition, the project enabled the establishment of a robust RIT with a presence in all six countries of the hotspot, which drew upon IUCN's unique strengths, including its membership structure and the technical expertise available within its scientific commissions (Strategic Direction 11).

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of the goals of CEPF, as represented in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. 	<p>Through its grant making programme, the RIT made a significant contribution to the delivery of Strategic Directions 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 11 in the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile. The RIT also helped raise awareness of CEPF and the Ecosystem Profile through the mid-term and final assessment workshops, the participation of RIT staff in national, regional and international fora, and through the RIT's communications activities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of strategic leadership and effective coordination of CEPF investment in Indo-Burma through a Regional Implementation Team. 	<p>IUCN drew upon its unique structures and strengths to establish an effective and strategic Regional Implementation Team. The core team was based in the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok, and consisted of the RIT Manager and Senior Advisor, supported by a Communications Officer and a Finance Officer. At the country level, National Coordinators (native language speakers) based within IUCN's country offices (or partner organisations) were identified to support and monitor the grant making process. National Advisory Committees were also established to help advise on the selection of grantees, composed of representatives from government, civil society, academia and funding organisations. Additional technical inputs (for example, related to the conservation of particular species or ecosystems) were sought when necessary from IUCN's global thematic programmes and the IUCN Species Survival Commission, the world's largest network of species experts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The establishment of a Long-term Implementation Structure with a mandate to guide civil society in the region towards the goals and objectives of the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile and Long-term Vision 	<p>Although this impact was not achieved in the way in which it was originally envisioned, the creation of the Lower Mekong Network and the establishment of the National Advisory Committees in each country have partially fulfilled this objective.</p>

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

Impact Description	Impact Summary
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A network of civil society partners supports implementation of the Indo-Burma Long-Term Vision 	<p>The RIT played an important role in facilitating the preparation of the Long-Term Vision for Indo-Burma. This was subsequently approved by the CEPF Secretariat and formally endorsed by both IUCN and MERN. The RIT actively supported the development and operations of the Lower Mekong Network, and it is anticipated that this network could play an important role in taking forward the objectives of the Long-Term Vision.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEPF investment in Indo-Burma is widely communicated to a broad audience both within the hotspot and internationally, through a variety of media. 	<p>CEPF investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot was successfully communicated through a wide variety of means, including web stories, photo essays and videos. These were disseminated through IUCN's website, newsletters and social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter) as well as the CEPF Secretariat's own channels. RIT staff engaged with local journalists to ensure that CEPF-funded projects were highlighted in national media. RIT staff also highlighted CEPF through their participation in a large number of national, regional and global events (e.g., the IUCN World Conservation Congress).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEPF investment in the hotspot is efficiently and effectively coordinated among grantees, donors and other key partners (governments, private sector, media, etc.). 	<p>Effective coordination of CEPF investment in the hotspot was ensured through: regular communication with grantees and partners; the participation of CSOs, donors and government representatives in meetings of the National Advisory Committees; the organisation of the mid-term and final assessment workshops; the organisation of capacity building events; the participation of RIT staff in relevant national and regional events and fora; and regular meetings with donors and government departments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key private sector partners are more engaged in biodiversity conservation initiatives. 	<p>This was not a major focus of the RIT per se. However, several grants sought to engage private sector partners in biodiversity conservation. Examples include FFI's work on karst ecosystems in Myanmar (which sought to engage with the cement industry) and the work of WCS in Cambodia on "ibis rice".</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local civil society organizations are better able to engage with and influence government and private sector partners. 	<p>Some small grants included a focus on building capacity to engage with and influence government partners. The work of the RIT also included workshops for civil society organisations on this topic. The National Advisory Committees also provided a forum in which local and international civil society organisations could engage with government partners.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local civil society organizations have improved ability to anticipate and respond to future threats and opportunities in relation to biodiversity conservation. 	<p>The RIT contributed towards this objective by sharing information with grantees, organising the mid-term and final assessment workshops and supporting the development of the Lower Mekong Network. The two assessment workshops were particularly successful; they brought together a large number of grantees and enabled the sharing of a tremendous amount of information about the status of conservation in the hotspot, as well as threats and opportunities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local civil society organizations have increased capacity in project cycle management, proposal writing, and financial management. 	<p>The RIT adopted a number of different strategies to build the capacity of local civil society, including the organisation of formal training events and the provision of informal guidance during MLE visits. Formal training events in project cycle management, proposal writing and financial management were held in Myanmar and Thailand, where the need for capacity building was felt to be particularly acute. In addition, many monitoring missions conducted by the RIT included finance staff, and incorporated sessions to build grantees' capacity for financial management. All local grantees were required to complete the Civil Society Tracking Tool at the start and end of their CEPF-funded projects; although this is an imprecise measure, CSTT scores indicate that there has been an increase in grantee capacity as a result of CEPF support. In addition, over 55 per cent of the small grants awarded over the course of the investment phase focused on Strategic Direction 8 (civil society capacity building). Many of these grants supported core capacity building, in areas such</p>

	as project cycle management, proposal writing and financial management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships are built between grantees and other stakeholders (such as between local and international NGOs), in order to mobilize capacity and facilitate information exchange. 	The RIT actively encouraged the development of partnerships between grantees working on similar topics or in the same geographical area. For example, a number of grants were specifically designed so as to enable local groups to receive mentoring and support from international NGOs. The RIT also supported the establishment of the Lower Mekong Network, which has played a valuable role in fostering relationships among local NGOs, between local NGOs and international NGOs, and between NGOs and donor organisations.

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

The RIT met or exceeded the majority of its targets. In particular, the RIT:

- **Issued ten calls for proposals over the life of the programme;**
- **Received and reviewed 1,056 LOIs;**
- **Awarded 105 small grant contracts, with a total value of US\$1.9 million. A particularly high proportion of the small grants (nearly 80%) went to local organisations;**
- **Facilitated the award of 83 large grants, with a total value of US\$13.7 million;**
- **Built the capacity of local grantees, both through small grants targeted at Strategic Direction 8 and through the organisation of custom-designed capacity building events. Some 76 per cent of local grantees reported an increase in capacity;**
- **Played a key role in establishing and supporting the Lower Mekong Network.**

A particular success of the project was the extent to which it was able to communicate the availability of grant funding to a very wide array of organisations in the Indo-Burma Hotspot, by working through IUCN's country offices, membership structure and commissions, as well through the use of the IUCN website and social media. As a result, we received a very large number of LOIs, and were able to award a particularly high number of grants to local organisations. This did, however, lead to challenges further down the line; we under-estimated the amount of support and capacity building that were required by local CSOs, and also under-estimated the amount of time required to administer and service grants. This, in turn, led to bottlenecks and a turn-around time that was longer than we had first envisioned. These lessons have been taken on board and will be incorporated into the design of any future phases of CEPF in the region. The RIT also found it challenging to engage with the private sector. Targets relating to the private sector were among the few targets not met by the project. One unexpected development which impacted negatively on the project was the introduction in 2018 of new legislation in China, which significantly restricted the ability of local CSOs to receive international funding. This ultimately led to the cancellation of five small grants in China.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

A number of unexpected positive impacts arose from the project. Perhaps the most important of these was the creation of the Lower Mekong Network, which provides a forum for information exchange and learning among some 50+ CSOs, international NGOs and funding agencies. The RIT played a key role in facilitating and supporting the creation of the network. For example, the RIT Manager served on the Working Group and participated in the annual meetings of the network. The RIT also provided substantial logistical and financial support with the organisation of the annual meetings.

Another important positive impact was the relationship that was fostered between the RIT and the McConnell Foundation. This ultimately led to the launch of a small grants programme in Lao PDR, modelled upon the CEPF experience.

PROJECT COMPONENTS AND PRODUCTS/DELIVERABLES

Describe the results from each product/deliverable:

Component		Deliverable		
#	Description	#	Description	Results for Deliverable
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.1	Serve as the lead point of contact for CEPF in relation to international donors, host country governments and agencies, and other potential partners within the hotspot	The RIT served as the lead CEPF focal point in Indo-Burma throughout the period of investment. This included: organising a smooth transition from the previous RIT; developing an extensive mailing list; representing CEPF in meetings with government representatives and donors; responding to requests for information about CEPF from interested parties; representing CEPF at national, regional and international fora; and maintaining regular communication with the CEPF Secretariat via email and Skype.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.2	Facilitate information exchange among stakeholders	<p>CEPF grantees and stakeholders were provided with particularly valuable opportunities to exchange information and lessons learned during the mid-term and final assessment workshops; all grantees were given a chance to present the key results and recommendations from their projects. The annual meetings of the Lower Mekong Network have also been a very important mechanism for information sharing; although not solely dedicated to CEPF grantees, many LMN members have been involved with CEPF in different ways. The National Advisory Committees also provided important opportunities for a sub-set of CEPF stakeholders to meet and exchange information.</p> <p>In Thailand, a special meeting of ten CEPF grantees and other stakeholders was organised in December 2017. This was designed to enable grantees to share experiences and lessons learned, and to promote collaboration and partnerships among the grantees, the Thai government and the private sector. The discussions focussed on three thematic areas: species conservation; freshwater ecosystems; and coastal ecosystems.</p> <p>Finally, throughout the course of the project, web stories, videos and other communication products were shared with grantees via the IUCN Indo-Burma newsletter and the IUCN Asia newsletter, as</p>

				well as via social media.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.3	Communicate regularly with CEPF and partners about the portfolio through face-to-face meetings, phone calls, the internet (website and electronic newsletter) and reports to forums and structures	Close communication was maintained between the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat (particularly the Grant Director) throughout the life of the project. This included frequent emails and Skype calls, as well as face-to-face meetings with CEPF Secretariat staff during their visits to the region. As described in other sections of this report, information about CEPF and the project was widely shared through IUCN's newsletters, websites and social media, and by RIT staff during their participation in national, regional and global forums.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.4	Provide regular communications and reports to the CEPF Grant Director on the progress of the project	The RIT communicated regularly with the CEPF Grant Director throughout the life of the project. This took the form of regular email exchanges and Skype calls, as well as face-to-face meetings during supervision missions. The RIT Manager also joined the Grant Director in carrying out field monitoring missions to selected grantees.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.5	Provide lessons learned and other information to the Secretariat to be communicated via the CEPF website	Web stories, short videos and other communications projects summarising grantees' projects and the lessons learned were shared with the CEPF Secretariat throughout the course of the project. Many of these were included in the CEPF newsletter. In addition, the RIT worked with a number of grantees to develop case studies about their grants, for publication on the PANORAMA platform.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.6	Disseminate results via multiple and appropriate media	A comprehensive communications strategy was prepared at the start of the project, identifying key audiences, key messages and the media to be used. Project results were widely disseminated via the IUCN Indo-Burma newsletter, the IUCN Asia newsletter, the IUCN website, social media (Twitter and Facebook), press releases, presentations at national and international fora, and the PANORAMA Solutions platform.
1	Coordinate and	1.7	Facilitate	The RIT adopted a number of strategies to facilitate

	communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot		partnerships between stakeholders in order to achieve the objectives of the ecosystem profile	partnerships among stakeholders. For example, international NGOs were encouraged to provide mentoring and technical support to local CSOs (where appropriate). This model was used with particular success in Myanmar, where international organisations such as FFI and the Harrison Institute supported local CSOs such as MBNS, COA and Inn Chit Thui. The National Advisory Committees also promoted partnerships, by facilitating information sharing among different stakeholder groups. In Thailand, a special meeting of ten CEPF grantees was held in December 2017, with the specific aim of promoting information exchange and partnerships. Finally, a key objective of the Lower Mekong Network, in which the RIT was actively involved, is to promote partnerships among organisations working in the Lower Mekong countries.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.8	Build partnerships between and among grantees and other stakeholders	As noted above, the RIT adopted a number of different strategies to encourage partnerships. These included: encouraging the submission of joint LOIs involving local and international organisations; facilitating the sharing of information among different stakeholders at meetings of the National Advisory Committees; and supporting the development of the Lower Mekong Network. In some countries (e.g., Thailand), special meetings of CEPF grantees were also organised.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.9	Promote collaboration and coordination among local or international donors	The RIT facilitated donor collaboration and coordination by inviting funding organisations to participate in meetings of the National Advisory Committees, the mid-term and final assessment workshops, and the annual meetings of the Lower Mekong Network. In addition, IUCN sought to promote coordination of CEPF investment with other donors through its involvement with other grant-making programmes, including IUCN's Save our Species (SOS) programme, the Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP), Mangroves for the Future (MFF) and others. The RIT Manager also served on the Governing Council of the Asia Species Action Partnership (ASAP), which recently initiated a grant making programme for threatened vertebrate species.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote	1.10	In coordination with CEPF's Secretariat, ensure communication and	The RIT worked closely with the CEPF Secretariat to ensure that global and regional donors were kept well-informed of progress in the Indo-Burma Hotspot. This included: responding to ad hoc queries for information and updates; facilitating a number of evaluations and reviews, including an intensive evaluation by GEF which involved grantee

	information exchange in the hotspot		collaboration with CEPF's global and regional donors	interviews, site visits and the organisation of a small workshop; and ensuring that CEPF's donors were invited to the mid-term and final assessment workshops as well as NAC meetings.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.11	Promote opportunities to leverage CEPF funds with donors and governments investing in the region	The RIT worked closely with the CEPF Secretariat to leverage additional funding. Amongst other achievements: the Small Grant Mechanism was successfully expanded to US\$ 2,000,000, from its initial size of US\$ 1,000,000; an agreement for US\$ 97,000 was signed with Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, for the identification of freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas in the Indo-Burma Hotspot (this information was subsequently fed directly into the revision and updating of the Ecosystem Profile); and a new, five-year small grants programme modelled on the CEPF experience was launched in Lao PDR, with support from the McConnell Foundation (US\$ 435,000).
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.12	Visit stakeholders, and attend meetings and events to ensure collaboration , coordination and outreach	The RIT maintained regular contact with grantees and other stakeholders throughout the course of the project, using a combination of email, Skype, site visits and formal Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation (MLE) visits. IUCN's country offices and partners (KFBG and MERN) played a particularly important role in fostering these relationships. In addition, members of the RIT frequently represented CEPF at national, regional and global events. This included giving a presentation on CEPF at the ASEAN Heritage Parks conference and participating in a special session on small grant programmes held at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai'i.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.13	Collect and make available information about current and potential investment in the region	The RIT produced a range of communications products over the course of the project, including an information flyer, web stories, press releases, postings on social media (Twitter and Facebook), and a number of short videos. Although the original intention had been to produce a quarterly newsletter dedicated to CEPF investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot, we were advised against this by the IUCN communications team, who were concerned about the proliferation of project-specific newsletters; as an alternative, the RIT made sure to contribute stories to IUCN's regular regional newsletter as well as the IUCN Asia annual report.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build	1.14	Publicize the objectives of the long-term vision, and promote	The RIT publicised the Long-Term Vision by sharing the report with all CEPF grantees and giving presentations about the Vision at various forums. The RIT also obtained formal endorsement of the Vision from both MERN and the IUCN Asia Regional

	partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot		awareness of opportunities for engagement to drive the vision	Office.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.15	Create a network of partners to support implementation of the long-term vision	The RIT was instrumental in supporting the development and operations of the Lower Mekong Network (LMN). The network is composed of over 50 local and international CSOs working in the Indo-Burma Hotspot, as well as a number of funding agencies and philanthropic organisations. Although the Long-Term Vision has not been formally adopted by the LMN, the aims of the network are well-aligned with the Vision's rationale and objectives; the LMN thus provides a potentially valuable mechanism for supporting implementation.
1	Coordinate and communicate CEPF investment, build partnerships, and promote information exchange in the hotspot	1.16	Maintain the network by facilitating engagement, participation and opportunities for partners to lead on issues and topics where relevant	The loose network of CEPF grantees was maintained by organising periodic training events, holding the mid-term and final assessment workshops, and regularly sharing information through the mailing list. The Lower Mekong Network was maintained through the activities of the LMN Working Group (in which the RIT Manager played an active role), the organisation of regular Skype calls and virtual learning events amongst LMN members, and the holding of annual meetings. Five annual meetings of the network were held over the course of the project with the logistical assistance of the RIT, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2016: Inception meeting, Bangkok - 2017: Phnom Penh, Cambodia - 2018: Hoi An, Vietnam - 2019: Phnom Penh, Cambodia - 2020: Chiang Mai, Thailand
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.1	Assist civil society groups in designing projects that contribute to the achievement of objectives specified in the Ecosystem Profile and a coherent	Early in the project, the RIT took a strategic decision to focus much of its capacity building on Myanmar, where there was a particular need to support a nascent civil society sector after decades of military rule. Three, 4-day workshops were organised in 2015, with the aim of building "upstream" capacity to conduct situation analyses and design and develop sound project proposals. The workshops used a combination of classroom style presentations and site visits, and included dedicated sessions on CEPF. In total, over 60 participants from some 40 different organisations received training.

			portfolio of mutually supportive grants	<p>These workshops were followed-up with a second series of training events in 2016, organised under the auspices of an EU NSA project, with additional CEPF support. In total, six workshops were held (in Yangon, Mandalay, Dawei and Taung Gyi) involving some 158 participants from 24 organisations.</p> <p>More informal and ad hoc assistance with project design was provided to CSOs throughout the Indo-Burma Hotspot during the course of finalising their grant contracts for CEPF funding. In particular, the RIT worked closely with many CSOs to strengthen their logframes, to ensure that there were clear linkages between activities, outputs and outcomes, and that deliverables were quantified where possible.</p>
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.2	Build institutional capacity of grantees to ensure efficient and effective project implementation	<p>The RIT adopted a number of strategies to build the institutional capacity of grantees, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formal training run by the RIT itself, such as the Myanmar capacity building workshops described above. In addition to project design and development, workshop sessions addressed institutional development issues such as governance, the role of Boards of Directors, etc; - the provision of grants under Strategic Direction 8 for capacity building. These included grants to CSOs to develop their own institutional capacity, as well as grants for larger and better-established organisations to provide training and support to smaller NGOs; for example, a CEPF grant to SADP was used to provide training and support in financial management and accounting to a range of civil society organisations in Cambodia; - encouragement of partnerships and mentoring between international NGOs and local CSOs, e.g., through the submission of joint LOIs; - monitoring missions conducted by the RIT. Many monitoring missions included an IUCN finance officer, who would provide advice and guidance on financial management and accounting systems.
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.3	Provide guidance to grantees on the effective implementation of safeguard policies	<p>All projects that triggered one or more of CEPF's environmental or social safeguards were required to develop appropriate mitigation measures. The most commonly triggered safeguards were those on Indigenous Peoples, and on involuntary resettlement and restrictions on access to natural resources. In response, grantees were provided guidance on the preparation of social assessments</p>

				and process frameworks, that described the potential negative impacts, the steps that would be taken to prevent and/or minimise and mitigate these impacts, and the ways in which these measures would be monitored. Where necessary, RIT staff advised and assisted grantees with the preparation of these documents and the integration of safeguard measures into project design. Nearly 40 per cent of small grants triggered one or more safeguards.
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.4	Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence government agencies	Many grants were made to organisations working to influence government agencies. In addition, in July 2017, a joint MFF and CEPF communications workshop was held for over 40 participants from 13 countries. This three-day workshop was designed and facilitated by experts from IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC), and aimed to equip participants with a set of communication tools and techniques to engage and influence key target audiences. A special session was held during the workshop on engaging with government.
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.5	Build capacity of civil society to engage with and influence the private sector	Several grants were made to organisations working to influence the private sector. In addition, in July 2017, a joint MFF and CEPF workshop was held for over 40 participants from 13 countries. This three-day workshop was designed and facilitated by experts from IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC). It aimed to equip participants with a set of communication tools and techniques to help engage and influence key target audiences. A special session was held during the workshop on engaging with the private sector.
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.6	Conduct exchange visits with other RITs to share lessons learnt and best practices	<p>Members of the RIT participated in three RIT exchange events organised by the CEPF Secretariat over the course of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sept 2013, in Arlington, Virginia, attended by Bosco Chan (KFBG), Aung Tan Zin (MERN) and Scott Perkin (IUCN); - May 2017, in Athens, Greece, attended by Angela Joehl Cadena (IUCN Asia Regional Office), Michelle Wong (KFBG) and Zin Myo Thu (IUCN Myanmar Country Office); - Feb 2019, in Arlington, Virginia, attended by Alessandro Badalotti (IUCN). <p>These exchanges were particularly valuable for: learning from the experiences of RITs in other hotspots; receiving further training and updates on CEPF policies, procedures and processes; and building relationships with the CEPF Secretariat.</p>

				In addition to participating in these exchanges, the RIT facilitated a special study tour for CSOs working on the conservation of Bengal florican, Lesser florican and Great Indian bustard in the Himalaya Hotspot to visit Cambodia and learn from the experiences of WCS, Sam Veasna Centre and Samsom Mlup Preah's programmes to conserve Bengal florican.
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.7	Collaborate with CEPF Secretariat to implement a Learning Program that builds civil society resilience and ability to address future conservation challenges	No specific activities were undertaken to address this particular deliverable per se, but many of the RIT's activities contributed to this objective, e.g., its capacity building activities and the grants provided under Strategic Direction 8.
2	Build the capacity of grantees	2.8	Monitor social, economic and political trends with bearing on biodiversity conservation, and share findings with civil society to improve their ability to anticipate and respond to future threats and opportunities	The original intention of the RIT was to monitor emerging social, economic and environmental trends in the Indo-Burma Hotspot with particular implications for biodiversity conservation, and to prepare thematic briefs to be shared with CEPF grantees and other stakeholders. Although this did not take place in the regular, structured format that had originally been envisioned (because of the RIT's other competing commitments and heavy workload), a wide range of information was shared by the RIT on an ad hoc basis via emails to the CEPF mailing list, web stories and the IUCN Asia regional newsletter.
3	MERN (sub-grantee)	3.1	RIT PROGRAMS functions delivered in Myanmar	RIT functions in Myanmar were initially delivered via a sub-grant to the Myanmar Environmental Rehabilitation-conservation Network (MERN). MERN is a network of 29 environmental and social non-governmental organisations, first created in 2009 to help coordinate responses to the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis; it performed the RIT functions in Myanmar until mid-2018, when IUCN established its own country office in the country. Even after its formal role as the RIT had ended,

				MERN continued to be an important partner, assisting with networking and monitoring.
4	KFBG (sub-grantee)	4.1	RIT PROGRAMS functions delivered in the China portion of the Indo-Burma Hotspot	RIT functions in China were delivered via a sub-grant to the Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden (KFBG), a well-established and highly regarded Hong Kong-based organisation, with a particularly strong presence in Hainan and southern China. Supplementary support was also provided by IUCN's country office in China, based in Beijing.
5	Mainstream biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices	5.1	Support civil society to engage with government and the private sector and share their results, recommendations, and best practice models	<p>The RIT commissioned a special study on innovative, non-traditional funding sources for conservation; this had a particular focus on strategies for engaging with the private sector. The report was shared with CEPF grantees via the distribution list and was also featured in a dedicated web story.</p> <p>Interactions with government were encouraged through the National Advisory Committees, which were composed of representatives from CSOs, international organisations, academia and government departments.</p>
5	Mainstream biodiversity into public policies and private sector business practices	5.2	Engage directly with private sector partners and ensure their participation in implementation of key strategies	The RIT commissioned a special study on non-traditional funding sources for conservation in the Indo-Burma Hotspot; the study had a particular focus on the opportunities offered by the private sector. The RIT itself did not engage directly with private sector partners, although a number of grantees received support to work with private sector companies.

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

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)
- Any other lessons learned relevant to the conservation community

A number of important lessons emerged from this second phase of investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot. In particular, although IUCN was very successful at reaching out and engaging with a wide and diverse audience (including many local organisations), the large volume of proposals that this generated led to backlogs and delays in the review and contracting processes. In addition, although IUCN welcomed the fact that a high proportion of local CSOs received funding, it became apparent that many groups required significantly more support and guidance than had been envisioned. As a result of the high administrative burden on the RIT, a number of important activities that had originally been planned - such as thematic workshops to enable grantees working on similar issues to share experiences and lessons learned - could not be implemented.

To help address these concerns, it is recommended that future CEPF investment in the Indo-Burma Hotspot:

- Adopt a more decentralised approach to proposal review and contracting, by making greater use of the National Coordinators and the National Advisory Committees in each country;**
- Reduce the number of grants provided, and consider increasing the maximum funding ceiling for small grants from \$20,000 to \$30,000 or higher;**
- Devote significantly more time to capacity building, through formal training, mentoring, and more frequent monitoring visits.**

SUSTAINABILITY/REPLICATION

Summarize the successes 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.

Ultimately, the sustainability of conservation in the Indo-Burma Hotspot will require that biodiversity considerations be more fully incorporated into government policies, legislation, programmes and plans; that new and innovative ways of funding conservation (such as PES) be implemented at scale; and that a strong, vibrant local civil society sector be established. There has been encouraging progress on many of these fronts, including many achievements supported or facilitated by this phase of CEPF investment. However, as was made clear by participants at the final CEPF assessment workshop held in Siem Reap in 2019 - the hotspot is still very far from reaching these goals. There will be a need for substantial external funding support for conservation for a significant time to come. This situation is likely to be severely exacerbated by the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has not only caused a dramatic reduction in tourism revenue for conservation, but also, has started to lead to a shift in government (and donor) priorities, with an increasing emphasis on addressing the immediate social and economic impacts of the disease. Given this situation, IUCN was very pleased to learn that CEPF is planning an unprecedented third phase of investment in Indo-Burma.

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.

All grants were carefully screened for potential environmental and social impacts; in total, nearly 40 per cent of small grants triggered one or more safeguards. All projects that triggered one or more of CEPF's environmental or social safeguards were required to develop appropriate mitigation measures. The most commonly triggered safeguards were those on Indigenous Peoples, and on involuntary resettlement and restrictions on access to natural resources. The RIT provided grantees with guidance on the preparation of social assessments and process frameworks, which described potential negative impacts, the steps that would be taken to prevent and/or minimise and mitigate these impacts, and the ways in which these measures would be monitored. Particular attention was paid to reviewing the implementation of safeguard measures during monitoring missions carried out by the RIT and the CEPF Secretariat.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

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

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

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

Total additional funding (US\$)

\$770,991.00

Type of funding

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)

Category A: US\$ 158,773 from multiple donors (Chino Cienega Foundation, McKnight Foundation, Margaret A Cargill Philanthropies, and MacArthur Foundation) for the annual meetings of the Lower Mekong Network.

Category A: US\$ 46,560 from the MacArthur Foundation and Margaret A. Cargill Foundation for the mid-term assessment workshop held in July 2015 in Siem Reap.

Category A: US\$ 33,658 from multiple donors (MacArthur Foundation, Margaret A Cargill Philanthropies, McConnell Foundation, McKnight Foundation) for the final CEPF assessment workshop in Siem Reap in 2019.

Category B: US\$ 97,000 from the Margaret A Cargill Foundation for the identification of freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas in the Lower Mekong. The results fed into the revision of the Indo-Burma Ecosystem Profile.

Category B: US\$ 435,000 from the McConnell Foundation for the launch of a small grants programme in Lao PDR, inspired by and modeled upon CEPF.

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 website, www.cepf.net, and may be publicized in our e-newsletter and other communications.

1. Please include your full contact details (name, organization, mailing address, telephone number, email address) below.

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