

# CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** Rainforest Alliance

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** Sharing Experiences and Lessons Learned in Mesoamerica via the Eco-Index

**Implementation Partners for this Project:** US Fish and Wildlife Service; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; UNDP-GEF Small Grants Program of Costa Rica; Interamerican Development Bank.

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** May 1, 2005 – June 30, 2007

**Date of Report (month/year):** September, 2007

## II. OPENING REMARKS

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

Through this project, CEPF grantees improved the efficiency and effectiveness of wildlife and habitat conservation efforts in the Northern and Southern Mesoamerican hotspots by sharing their experiences in the Eco-Index, and engaging in an open exchange of information in our Conservation Dialogues. Therefore, they have the platform to build on each other's work, identify potential collaborators, avoid making missteps made by colleagues, replicate successes and just as important, contribute to the possibility that other NGOs can do the same.

## III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

**Project Purpose:** As a result of this project, those involved in management of CEPF projects in Mesoamerica will be able to both do their work more effectively and help colleagues do the same by: building on other projects with similar goals and objectives that are already underway and avoiding needless duplication; using more constructive monitoring and evaluation methodologies; ensuring that useful information about their projects will be permanently available to future conservationists, researchers, and policy-makers; helping to further public understanding of and therefore support for biodiversity conservation in the Neotropics.

### Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	

70% of CEPF grantees whose projects were added to the Eco-Index state that the communications tool has helped them in their work.	83% of survey respondents replied that the Eco-Index is a valuable tool that helps them in their work; the other respondent noted he did not refer to it, so couldn't respond appropriately.
At least 80% of CEPF grantees in Mesoamerica complete Eco-Index questionnaires or update those profiles already in the database.	Of the 102 projects listed in the Northern and Southern Mesoamerica "Grants Database" on CEPF.net, 78 (76%) grantees have participated. Worthy of note is that 12 (50%) of the projects that have not yet participated are CI projects. If those 12 CI projects were added, the percentage would have been 88%.
Number of visits to the Eco-Index increases an average of 5% quarterly.	<p>Visitation to the Eco-Index has increased cumulatively by 60% since the inception of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First quarter: 8.5% increase</li> <li>• Second quarter: -0.79% decrease</li> <li>• Third quarter: 100.9% increase</li> <li>• Fourth quarter: 14% decrease</li> <li>• Fifth quarter: 7% decrease</li> </ul>
Number of subscribers to the Monthly Update newsletter increases by 5% quarterly.	<p>Number of subscribers to the Monthly Update email newsletter has increased cumulatively by 64% since the beginning of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First quarter: 12.8% increase</li> <li>• Second quarter: 19.3% increase</li> <li>• Third quarter: 24% increase</li> <li>• Fourth quarter: 7.3% increase</li> <li>• Fifth quarter: 1.3% increase</li> </ul>
Number of people who open the Monthly Update and click through to project profiles increases or stays consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First quarter: 11% &amp; 22% increase</li> <li>• Second quarter: 12% &amp; 7.3% increase</li> <li>• Third quarter: 22% and 27% increase</li> <li>• Fourth quarter: 24% and 107% increase</li> <li>• Fifth quarter: 9% decrease and 11.5% increase.</li> </ul>
Number of times project reports and studies on CEPF grantee profiles are downloaded increases at least 5% each quarter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First quarter: 55% increase</li> <li>• Second quarter: 55% increase</li> <li>• Third quarter: 273% increase</li> <li>• Fourth quarter: 13.9% increase</li> <li>• Fifth quarter: 2% decrease</li> </ul>
We create 1-2 organizational Web pages, in English and Spanish, per quarter for groups	Total of 12 new pages created; 11 updated:

that do not have their own Web sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First quarter: 3 Web pages created; 3 updated</li> <li>• Second quarter: 1 new page created</li> <li>• Third quarter: Five new Web pages created</li> <li>• Fourth quarter: Updated four Web pages</li> <li>• Fifth quarter: Four Web pages updated; three new pages created.</li> </ul>
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***Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.***

We are very happy with the outcomes of this project; we had a strong level of participation from CEPF grantees, and the Eco-Index continued to maintain its strong visitation base. Each year, we experience fluctuations in visitation that coincide with the Christmas holiday season, and the summer field season, but overall, we are very happy with our statistics.

As mentioned in our final quarter report, we are experiencing some difficulties in obtaining PDF download statistics from our website server – we are working with the company to remedy this problem, and if it is not fixed, we will use an alternative reporting program.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

In addition to participating in the Eco-Index, Organización para el Desarrollo Sostenible Ecoturístico Naso (ODESEN) added a profile to our Eco-Index of Sustainable Tourism: [http://eco-indextourism.org/en/weckso\\_en](http://eco-indextourism.org/en/weckso_en). As with the Eco-Index, we solicit updates once a year to ensure that all content on the Eco-Index of Sustainable Tourism is current. ODESEN has not yet responded to our requests for an update, but we hope to receive information from them soon.

It is our impression that ODESEN is the only CEPF grantee that has a system in place to offer ecotourism services; other organizations have an ecotourism component within their project scope, but the questionnaires that we have received indicate that they do not yet have their services completely developed.

The majority of grantees have told us that they are happy to participate; in addition, many have received a great deal of email as a result of their Eco-Index profiles, and believe their participation in the Eco-Index to be a real benefit.

**IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS**

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

**Planned vs. Actual Performance**

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Output 1</b> Reviewed, researched, translated, edited profiles of up to 50 new CEPF funded projects in the Northern and Southern Mesoamerica hotspots in the Eco-Index, over three years.	See below

<p><b>1.1.</b> Project profiles of up to 50 CEPF grantees are thoroughly and professionally edited, translated and added to the database.</p>	<p>A total of 78 CEPF profiles in Northern and Southern Mesoamerican hotspots are listed in the Eco-Index database.</p>
<p><b>Output 2.</b> Annual updated profiles of CEPF-funded projects in Mesoamerica, also edited, translated, posted.</p>	<p>See below</p>
<p><b>2.1.</b> At least 80% of CEPF grantees whose projects are already in the database respond to requests for updates or conclusions.</p>	<p>Of the 78 total projects in the Eco-Index, 63 (81%) are current and 15 have not updated.</p>
<p><b>Output 3.</b> Promotion of CEPF-funded projects in Mesoamerica through various Eco-Index email bulletins, Web pages, special recognitions. Up to 15 Web sites, in English and Spanish, created for NGOs that do not have them.</p>	<p>See Below</p>
<p><b>3.1.</b> All CEPF-funded projects in Mesoamerica that have been added or updated are listed in the Monthly Update, both English and Spanish versions, and sent to all subscribers. At least two projects each quarter receives special recognition (Eco-Initiative of the Month, Best Lessons Learned, Are We Making Progress Yet? and/or highlight on the CEPF Web site). At least one initiative each quarter is featured in Eco-Exchange/Ambien-Tema or in Stories from the Field or On the Record, all frequently visited pages on the Eco-Index. A short description of at least 1 project per quarter is submitted for inclusion on the CEPF homepage. At least 2 NGOs supported by CEPF that have exceptionally information-rich Web sites are promoted in the "Recommended Links" page annually.</p>	<p>All deliverables met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All CEPF-funded projects added or updated in Eco-Index were included in the Monthly Update email newsletter, in English and Spanish.</li> <li>• 26 projects received special recognition.</li> <li>• Five projects featured in Eco-Exchange/Ambien-Tema.</li> <li>• Two projects featured in "On the Record"</li> <li>• One project featured in "Stories from the Field".</li> <li>• 13 projects featured on CEPF.net home page.</li> <li>• Six projects featured in "Recommended Links" feature.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2.</b> Organizational Web pages are created for up to 15 NGOs</p>	<p>Total of 13 new Web sites created, and 11 updated within grant period.</p>
<p><b>Output 4.</b> A monitoring and evaluation methodology that measures and analyzes visitation. An annual survey sent to CEPF grantees to help gauge usefulness of the Eco-Index and analyzed results.</p>	
<p><b>4.1.</b> Stats are tracked and reported quarterly; measures to more widely promote site are taken if stats consistently fall behind predictions.</p>	<p>Beginning in December of 2006, we noticed a drop in visitation and PDF downloads. We originally attributed this to our yearly decline in visitation during the holiday months; when this continued in January and February, we immediately contacted our Web hosting company. We then learned that our decline in visitation and downloads coincided with their implementing a new statistics program, and</p>

	this problem was also happening on the Rainforest Alliance Web site. Our Webmaster is continuing to work with our server company, and we are investigating using a new statistics program.
<b>4.2.</b> Surveys analyzed; follow-up action depends on results.	Survey sent; 83% replied that the Eco-Index is a valuable tool that helps them in their work; the other respondent noted he did not refer to it, so couldn't judge.
<b>Output 5.</b> Organize and hold a Southern Mesoamerica stakeholder conference of grantees, government partners, and other relevant participants designed to share lessons, foster coordination and cooperation, and develop joint strategies for conservation.	See below
<b>5.1.</b> Fulfill key steps required to organize the conference	The conference was held 27, 28, 29, 30 of Nov, with 95% of those invited attending. We feel we more than completed our objectives by helping CEPF create and compile an analytical questionnaire and handling the quite complicated logistics involved to make sure this encounter was successful.
<b>5.2.</b> At least 80% of Southern Meso projects attend meeting.	All but one project representative attended; 95% attendance.
<b>5.3.</b> Key steps achieved post-workshop	We successfully organized the Second Conservation Dialogues in Southern Mesoamerica, with 95% participation from CEPF grantees. Given the success of the first meeting, we had the opportunity to organize a second meeting to bring together CEPF funders to analyze the final report generated in the first workshop. Following both workshops, we updated the Conservation Dialogues Eco-Index profile to include information about this meeting; and assisted CEPF in the translation of the Southern Mesoamerica hotspot final report.

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

We exceeded every project output, having added 28 more projects that we had planned for; we exceeded our goal for receiving project updates; and highlighted more projects than planned in our project awards, interviews, and Eco-Exchange/Ambien-Tema newsletter.

The Dialogues were a huge success, having had 95% of grantees attend. Anecdotal evidence indicates that grantees thought it was a great experience for them. Such was the case for Don Enrique Castillo, a participant from Panama, who in spite of many complications on his trip to San

Jose for the Dialogues, made a huge effort to attend and arrived on time. All of the participants stated that they felt their projects – small or large – contributed to a larger initiative, and that this fostered a sense of pride for them.

After the meeting, Michele Zador indicated that she had received a huge amount of high-quality information to help her compile the Southern Mesoamerican hotspot final report – another indicator of the success of the event.

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

All outputs were realized.

## V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

n/a

## 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.***

In general, project directors appear to be putting more thought and time into their profiles, sending in continually higher quality content.

Most project directors also willingly update their project profiles (after a couple of email requests), and also thoroughly update their project profiles.

From the first workshop we learned that participants would all have different logistical needs or various travel problems that they needed our help to solve, so we were prepared to be patient and as helpful as possible. Nonetheless, you simply can't prepare for every eventuality. Flexibility and superb organization are key.

All participants expressed their gratitude for being included in the CEPF conference. We strongly agree with CEPF that it is important for grantees to feel that their work, results and opinions are part of something larger than their own initiatives.

Through this grant, and with other Eco-Index donors, we have found that the projects managed by large, international NGOs are less likely to participate in the Eco-Index; and small and medium-sized, Latin-American based NGOs are more likely to participate.

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

The Rainforest Alliance invested in the Eco-Index because we believe in the value of information sharing. We launched the site in the early days of the Internet because we believed the Internet would prove to be a tremendously effective means of communication. We are grateful that CEPF shares our vision and philosophy. CEPF support has allowed us to continually improve and expand the Eco-Index, as we believe this resource will only be valuable if we can continue to take

advantage of new technologies and provide a resource that is as easy for busy conservationists to use as possible.

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

We learned that coordinating with CEPF Coordination Units to get up-to-date information about new grants, grantee contact information, etc. is more effective than coordinating with the CEPF Web staff, as the Coordination Units have more comprehensive information -- they know whose project has been extended, whose project now goes by a different name, which project directors have left, etc.

**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.**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
US Fish and Wildlife Service – Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act	Adding all grantees to Eco-Index database; interviews and articles	\$50,000 for two years	Grant period from 8/28/06 - 8/28/08
US Fish and Wildlife Service International Division	Support of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Pathway ( <a href="http://www.eco-index.org/migratory">www.eco-index.org/migratory</a> )	\$15,000 in 2006; \$15,000 in 2007	Grant periods from 4/3/06 - 9/30/08.
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Coral Reef Conservation Fund	Adding all grantees to Eco-Index database; interviews and articles	\$30,000 for one year	Grant period from 8/28/06 – 8/28/07 28 <sup>th</sup> 2006.
Interamerican Development Bank	Support of the Eco-Index of Sustainable Tourism ( <a href="http://www.eco-index.org/tourism">www.eco-index.org/tourism</a> )	\$36,500 for two years	First grant ended; second phase with renewal funding to begin in October.
Summit Foundation	Adding all grantees to Eco-Index database; interviews and articles	\$5,000	Grant period from 1/1/06 - 12/31/06
Overbrook Foundation	Adding all grantees to Eco-Index database; interviews and articles	\$5,000	Grant period from 1/1/06 - 12/31/06
UNDP-GEF Small Grants Program of Costa Rica	Adding all grantees to Eco-Index database; support of Eco-Index of Sustainable Tourism; interviews and articles	\$10,000	Renewal grant proposal pending.

**\*Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** Project co-financing (Other donors contribute to the direct costs of this CEPF project)

- B** *Complementary funding (Other donors contribute to partner organizations that are working on a project linked with this CEPF funded project)*
- C** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- D** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

**Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.**

We envision that the Eco-Index will continue to be online indefinitely. For the coming year, we have secured support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, and International Divisions, as well as the Interamerican Development Bank. Grant proposals are pending with the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Program of Costa Rica, and the USAID Global Sustainable Tourism Alliance.

## VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We are extremely proud to have established ourselves in the Neotropical conservation community, and that the site has maintained such a strong, supportive audience; this is evidenced by the fact that visitation has remained consistent, and project directors continue to add and update their Eco-Index profiles. Because the Eco-Index has such a targeted audience and has experienced so many years of huge growth in visitation, we understand that visitation to the site will eventually level off. We also know that it is important to keep the site fresh, technologically updated, and current from a design perspective; with this in mind, we redesigned the Eco-Index this year to feature an updated design and to include projects from the US and Canada.

We have exciting plans for the Eco-Index in the coming year. First, we will be creating an online forum where grantees can come together in between conferences and meetings to discuss pertinent issues. We will also be expanding the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Pathway ([www.eco-index.org/migratory](http://www.eco-index.org/migratory)) to include a section where NGOs can share their public information materials about migratory species conservation with their colleagues – another way the Eco-Index avoids the duplication of efforts. Thanks to a renewal grant from the Inter-American Development bank, we will be building upon our successes with the Eco-Index of Sustainable Tourism ([www.eco-index.org/tourism](http://www.eco-index.org/tourism)) by completely redesigning the site's front end and database to be more user-friendly and technologically powerful, and will be greatly increasing the number of sustainable tourism businesses listed in our database.

We also hope to continue to provide our valuable information sharing services to CEPF grantees in the Northern Mesoamerica hotspot, and that CEPF can continue to help us maintain this increasingly valuable storehouse of data and experiences.

## VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by



marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

No  \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please also complete the following:

**For more information about this project, please contact:**

Name: Melissa Krenke

Mailing address: 665 Broadway Suite 500, New York, NY 10012

Tel: 312-315-8899

Fax: 212-677-2187

E-mail: [mkrenke@ra.org](mailto:mkrenke@ra.org)