CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Mabuwaya Foundation, Inc.

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Enlarged Scales: Strengthening Philippine Crocodile Conservation in the Sierra Madre Corridor

Implementation Partners for This Project:

1. The Protected area Superintendent (PASu) of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park
2. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (PAWS Region 02)
3. Local Government Units of Palanan, San Mariano, Maconacon and Divilacan
4. Isabela State University-Cabagan
5. Tanggol Kalikasan

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):
September 2004 – September 2005

Date of Report (month/year):
May 2006

***Picture 1**: The community-based Philippine crocodile recovery plan is discussed during a community consultation in barangay Didadungan in the municipality of Palanan.*

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

The main goal of this pilot project was to formulate a community-based Philippine crocodile recovery plan for the Sierra Madre corridor, and prepare a follow-up proposal for CEPF funding to implement this plan. As was reported in the January 2005 progress report, the main activity of the project was the regional Philippine crocodile conservation workshop that was organized in November 2004. Here, representatives of 18 barangays in the Sierra Madre made site-specific conservation action plans to protect crocodiles that can be implemented by communities. The proceedings of this workshop were published (see: Cureg et al. 2005) and distributed to all important stakeholders in the project. We have also forwarded a copy to CEPF. These site-specific actions plans were used to prepare a Crocodile Conservation Action Plan for the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park. We sincerely hope that CEPF will continue to support the conservation of the critically endangered Philippine crocodile in he Sierra Madre corridor by providing the financial support for the implementation of this plan.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

The goal of the pilot project was to scale up Philippine crocodile conservation efforts in the Sierra Madre corridor. In the municipality of San Mariano, the Mabuwaya Foundation is working with communities and the LGU to protect the endemic freshwater crocodile: with success! But the Mabuwaya Foundation is lacking the financial resources to work in other areas in the Sierra Madre. The foundation confirmed the presence of Philippine crocodiles in Palanan, Divilacan and Maconacon. The CEPF pilot project aimed to draft a participatory plan to work in these areas.

Three specific objectives were identified:
1. Improve linkages with stakeholders;
2. Strengthen communication and information sharing activities;
3. Design a corridor wide community-based Philippine crocodile conservation strategy.

These objectives were operationalized in 4 activities:
1. Presentation in barangay assembly meetings;
2. Organization of 2nd regional Philippine crocodile conservation workshop;
3. Formulation of a community-based crocodile recovery plan;
4. Receive feedback on the recovery plan and identify grassroots actions.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

The objectives of the pilot project did not change fundamentally during project implementation. There were some minor changes in the implementation of the activities. Instead of a poster the project made a calendar that was widely distributed in the target barangays in the Sierra Madre. The calendar contains 6 color pages with information about the Philippine crocodile (see also progress report). Also less T-shirts were produced that originally envisioned: the budget was used for field costs and the organization of the 2nd regional Philippine crocodile conservation workshop (see final budget).

3. How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

A detailed description about the activities was provided in the January 2005 progress report. Here we will shortly summarize the conclusions of that report and mention what has happened since then.

1. *Presentation of the background of crocodile conservation during the barangay assembly meeting: the project staff visited all target barangays and had a dialogue with community leaders about Philippine crocodile conservation.*
2. *Organization of the 2nd regional Philippine crocodile conservation workshop: the workshop was organized from 15-19 November 2005. The proceedings were locally published (Cureg et al. 2005). All barangays received a copy of the proceedings for the barangay file. An interesting spin-off activity of the 2nd crocodile workshop was that the Mabuwaya Foundation organized in cooperation with Tanggol Kalikasan (an environmental lawyer group) and the LGU of San Mariano a follow up workshop in March 2006 with funding of the Small Wetland Program of IUCN. This was done to tackle the identified problem that barangay officials often lack the technical capacity to effectively enforce the law.*
3. *Formulation of a community-based crocodile recovery plan for the Sierra Madre: the Crocodile Conservation Action Plan for the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park. A first draft was prepared in November 2004. The plan identifies low-cost interventions and actions that the community can undertake itself to protect crocodiles and wetlands. The role of the Mabuwaya Foundation and other external actors (for example the DENR) are kept to a minimum, in order to assure the continuity of crocodile conservation actions and local ownership and responsibility.*
4. *This document was discussed with community leaders in the barangays in the Sierra Madre. Corrections were made and their suggestions were incorporated in the plan. The CEPF project has enabled the Mabuwaya Foundation to establish links with community leaders in barangays in the Sierra Madre where crocodiles can be found (see for a complete list of localities the action plan for NSMNP). These people are championing the conservation of crocodiles and their habitats in their own barangay. They function as the primary guardians. These relationships have to be maintained over the coming years, and these local people need follow up support. The results are clear: not only did the barangays formulate local legislations (barangay ordinances) but, much more important they also implement these rules.*

The pilot project proposal identified the following project deliverables:

1. *a community-based Philippine recovery plan: this plan was drafted and discussed with barangay representatives and other stakeholders (the office of the PASu of NSMNP, the PAWS of DENR Region 02, the PAWB, PWRCC, the LGUs in the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, Conservation International, and others) at different occasions and localities (for example during the 3rd Sierra Madre Biodiversity Stakeholders Meeting organized by CI-Philippines, during the regional Philippine crocodile recovery meetings, and during the Wildlife Conservation Society of the Philippines meetings). This plan forms the basis for a long-term effort to assist local communities in the conservation of the Philippine crocodile and its habitat.*
2. *Local ordinances: The project aims to institutionalize crocodile conservation. Barangay councils can enact local legislation (barangay ordinances) to formalize their crocodile conservation action plan. These ordinances are discussed during barangay assembly meetings with the whole community. As a result people are well informed about the measures and generally support it: their concerns are often incorporated in the design of the ordinance. In barangay Didadungan (Palanan), for example, the barangay council prohibited the use of destructive fishing methods and created a crocodile sanctuary in Dikabulan Lake. In the other targeted barangays in the Sierra Madre local barangay governments have designed rules with the consent of their constituents in order to protect crocodiles and wetlands.*

3. *1000 Posters and 1000 T-shirts: it was envisioned to print 1000 informative posters. The project opted to print calendars instead. These are highly appreciated by the community as they are very useful and provide interesting information. The calendar consists of 6 pages with information about the Philippine crocodile and the conservation program. 3000 calendars were printed (in English and Tagalog) and distributed in the target barangays. Due to budget constraints no T-shirts were distributed in the community. Only the workshop participants and community leaders received a "Philippine crocodile-something to be proud of!" T-shirt.*

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

The institutionalization of local conservation action plans in barangay ordinances is a long process that has to be followed up constantly. In many instances, barangay council representatives enthusiastically designed an ordinance protecting crocodiles and wetlands during the 2nd crocodile workshop. However, after the workshop little was done to follow up the ordinance (i.e. discussing and presenting the draft ordinance in the community). The project observed this (during the quarterly monitoring activities of the Mabuwaya foundation), and subsequently put a lot of effort in the follow up visits to the communities. In most barangays this resulted in a barangay ordinance. In principle this ordinance has to be forwarded to the LGU. In many cases the LGU did not respond to the ordinance (which legally makes the ordinance effective but is not much of an encouragement for the barangay councils): another disappointment. But in many communities the lack of endorsement from the LGU means that the ordinance is hanging (in principle approved but not yet effective). So again, the project had to follow up constantly with the Sanguniang Bayan of the different LGUs. The lesson here is that the institutionalization of crocodile conservation at the barangay level is a long-term process that requires a lot of follow-up efforts. Interestingly, in communities where the Mabuwaya Foundation has worked for a long term and has intensive contacts with the barangay officials the conservation work has the strongest impact. In barangay San Jose (in the municipality of San Mariano) for example, the barangay captain penalized local farmers for violating the barangay ordinance on illegal fishing. It seems that a long term approach is required in order to create local ownership and sustainability of Philippine crocodile conservation.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

The most important lessons of the project are identified below:

1. *Need for a long term approach and continuity: time is necessary in order for the conservation effort to succeed (i.e. to be actively supported by the local community). Frequent visits to a site are necessary to know what goes on in the community and to gain the trust of the local people. Institutionalizing conservation measures at the local level (in barangay ordinances) requires a lot of time and effort. Several community consultations are needed and the process has to be monitored over a period of time to assure a positive outcome. In addition, a long term engagement is necessary to monitor the impact of the conservation measures on the Philippine crocodile population. Only by establishing a long-term monitoring program will we be able to determine whether the Philippine crocodile population is recovering, and assess the impact of conservation interventions.*
2. *Enforcement: the lack of law enforcement is a major problem for biodiversity conservation in the Philippines. The Philippine crocodile is protected by national law. In the project it was aimed to inform local communities about this and encourage them to design local*

ordinances in line with (or supported by) national law. These local ordinances are generally well respected and are considered legitimate by the majority of the people. The barangay officials are responsible to make sure everybody respects these local rules. So by devolving law enforcement to the barangay level the project made it more effective. Above all, it prevents the killing of crocodiles and the destruction of their habitats, makes everybody aware of the importance of these objectives and mobilizes local support for in-situ crocodile conservation (especially in combination with an intensive information campaign - see below).

3. *Communication Education and Public Awareness materials: awareness is a crucial factor to mobilize local support for crocodile conservation. Most people in the Sierra Madre did not know that crocodiles are protected under Philippine law. They were also not aware of their responsibilities to protect wetlands or about the reasons why to protect crocodiles. The project has succeeded in doing so, but this has to be followed up. There is a need for an intensive information campaign about wetland conservation and the role and responsibility of ordinary citizens in it.*
4. *Support from supra-local level: the project focused on the local (barangay level). However, it is also essential to mobilize support from the LGUs and the DENR. During the project it became clear that LGUs and DENR are often ill equipped to conserve crocodiles in their natural habitat. There is an urgent need to provide technical support to the office of the PASu of the NSMNP and to the LGUs of San Mariano, Palanan, Divilacan and Maconacon. This can be done in the form of workshops for the staff members of these agencies.*
5. *Need for clear protocols: for a critically endangered species every individual counts. In the Sierra Madre corridor crocodiles continue to be caught or killed. In many cases this is accidental (for example when people use nets or electricity for fishing) and the crocodile is still surviving but eventually dies because of maltreatment or stress. It is essential that local communities and local leaders know what to do in case a crocodile is accidentally captured (release the animal immediately). Likewise it is important that everybody is informed what to do when a nest is discovered, or when a crocodile attacks a human or livestock. The Mabuwaya Foundation is working on clear protocols for specific situations. These protocols have to be disseminated widely, as everybody should agree with it and know what to do.*

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

A crocodile conservation action plan for the NSMNP was prepared and discussed with barangay officials, the DENR, and LGUs. Local communities in the Sierra Madre are now implementing the conservation action plans. However, there is an urgent need to provide additional technical support to the communities (and to DENR and LGU). The Mabuwaya Foundation has continued to work in San Mariano (with funds from BP conservation program and IUCN). But additional funding is necessary to work in the coastal municipalities of the NSMNP. The Conservation Action Plan for the Northern Sierra Madre identifies several activities:

1. *Continue the CEPA campaigns;*
2. *Strengthen law enforcement;*
3. *Provide technical support to the office of the PASu and the LGUs;*
4. *Harmonization of policies in the protected area;*
5. *Establishment and visual delineation of crocodile sanctuaries in the multiple use zone of the NSMNP;*
6. *Provide logistical and financial support to the conservation action plans of the communities;*
7. *Establish a reward scheme for crocodile breeding;*
8. *Establish a protocol to deal with problem crocodiles;*
9. *Establish a protocol to release captured crocodiles;*
10. *Look into the possibility to establish a compensation mechanism for crocodile attacks on livestock;*

11. *Continue the annual monitoring of crocodile populations.*

The aim of the pilot project was to define actions that should be undertaken to conserve crocodiles in the Sierra Madre. We hope that the CEPF will continue its support to crocodile conservation in the corridor and will provide the financial support to the Mabuwaya Foundation to implement the Crocodile Conservation Action Plan for the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

The Mabuwaya Foundation aims to conserve the critically endangered Philippine crocodile in its natural habitat. Over the past five years we have established a community-based in-situ conservation program for the species in the municipality of San Mariano. The first results of this program are encouraging. The San Mariano case serves as an example (a model) for participatory crocodile conservation in the Sierra Madre. The CEPF pilot project enabled the foundation to scale up these conservation activities to a larger area, especially in the coastal areas of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, where we have identified remaining C. mindorensis populations. It was aimed to engage local communities and local governments in the protection of the crocodiles along the lines of the experiences in San Mariano. The first steps of the conservation program have been taken now. Communities are supporting the in-situ conservation of the Philippine crocodile. A community-based crocodile conservation action plan for the NSMNP was drafted. In the coming years the foundation has to continue to work with the local communities to protect crocodiles and their habitat in order to assure the continuity of conservation efforts and the recovery of crocodile populations. We sincerely hope that the CEPF will continue its support to the Mabuwaya Foundation in the implementation of the Crocodile Conservation Action Plan. The Mabuwaya Foundation would like to submit a follow up proposal to CEPF to continue the conservation activities in the coastal municipalities of the NSMNP.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Netherlands Committee for IUCN (NC-IUCN)	*Pilot grant of the Small Wetlands Program*	*€ 10,000*	*Funding was obtained for a pilot project to adapt a wetland ecosystem approach for the Disulap River Crocodile Sanctuary in San Mariano: "the environment is not a crocodile". These complementary funds were obtained as a direct result of the CEPF project. (This grant only covered the costs of the participants of the barangays Disulap and San Jose.)* *C: grantee and partner leveraging.*
WWF-Philippines	*Conservation contract of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park Conservation and Development project*	*PhP. 412,000*	*Funding was obtained to conduct a crocodile survey in the coastal municipalities of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural park. These surveys*

	(NSMNP-CDP)		*were necessary to obtain inputs for the conservation strategy and have directly contributed to the output of the pilot project* *B- WWF Philippines supported the Mabuwaya Foundation to gather additional information for a crocodile conservation strategy in the NSMNP*

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

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

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

The Philippine crocodile conservation activities of the Mabuwaya Foundation are funded by the BP Conservation Program and by the NC-IUCN Small Wetland Program (see above). However, funds are very limited, and are concentrated on the conservation of the crocodile populations in the municipality of San Mariano. The central aim of the CEPF pilot project was to develop a proposal to scale up community-based crocodile conservation activities in the Sierra Madre corridor, especially along the Pacific coast in the municipalities of Palanan, Maconacon and Divilacan. Transport costs in these remote areas are high. Local communities in these coastal communities have drafted conservation action plans that they can implement themselves. However, additional technical support is essential for the sustainability of the project (including technical support to the local government units and the office of the protected area superintendent). Therefore, the Mabuwaya Foundation aims to submit a follow up proposal (as was originally envisioned and discussed with CEPF and CI staff) to implement the community-based Crocodile Conservation Action Plan for the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park. Support to conservation work in the coastal areas of the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park is crucial in this point in time, especially since the termination of the WWF-Philippines NSMNP-CDP.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Please see the proceedings of the 2nd regional crocodile workshop that was held from 15-19 November 2004 at the ATI-RTC in Cabagan (Cureg et al. 2005). And see the crocodile conservation action plan for the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park.

Publications:

Cureg, M.C, A.M. Bagunu, H.P. Ponce, and J.G. Valencia (eds). 2005. *Strengthening sustainable management of wetlands for the benefit of people and crocodiles in the Sierra Madre*. CROC project. CVPED. Cabagan.

Mabuwaya Foundation. (2005a) *Crocodile Rehabilitation, Observance and Conservation (CROC) project.* Final report BP Conservation Program Top Follow Up *Award.* CROC project. CVPED. Cabagan.

Mabuwaya Foundation. (2005b) *The environment is not a crocodile: adopting an ecosystem approach for Philippine crocodile conservation in the municipality of San Mariano.* Final report on the wetland conservation pilot project in Disulap River funded by SWP of NC-IUCN. CROC project. CVPED. Cabagan.

VI. 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, 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, we agree

If yes, please also complete the following:

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