

## CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

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| <b>Organization Legal Name:</b>              | Applied Environmental Decision Analysis (AEDA)                                    |
| <b>Project Title:</b>                        | Evaluating outcomes from conservation actions in the Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot |
| <b>Date of Report:</b>                       | 21 January 2010   |
| <b>Report Author and Contact Information</b> | Madeleine Bottrill, m.bottrill@uq.edu.au  |

**CEPF Region:** Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot

**Strategic Direction: #2:** To strengthen the conservation status and management of 60 key biodiversity areas in the Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot

**Grant Amount:** US\$6000

**Project Dates:** 1 February 2009 – 31 January 2010

**Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):**

The Secretariat of Regional Environment Programme and Conservation International's Pacific Islands Program both provided logistical and technical support to the researcher during her trips to Samoa. The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in Samoa, in particular, the Department of Environment and Conservation, also provided logistical support and gave permission for the researcher to interview Ministry staff.



## Conservation Impacts

***Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.***

This project links to strategy 2.2: To strengthen the conservation status and management of 60 key biodiversity areas; in particular in assisting improvement of management. The project attempted to measure the shortfall between existing outcomes from current management and desired objectives of current and future objectives, including KBA priorities. The results of our study highlight some of the challenges faced by project managers in meeting objectives due to capacity and funding constraints. Our project therefore help estimate the effort required to progress towards the goals of CEPF ecosystem profile.

***Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project against the expected results detailed in the approved proposal.***

The overall purpose of this project was to collect data on project outcomes from a subset of conservation activities which would provide a knowledge base for future decision making. In particular, the project anticipated the following outputs:

- **Data on management effectiveness to inform resource allocation and priority-setting**  
Through the evaluation of 29 conservation projects completed in Samoa, we generated data on outputs and outcomes from project activities. We also collected data on perceptions of success among project proponents, those staff or community leaders responsible for implementing, managing and monitoring projects. These qualitative data were invaluable due to the lack of empirical quantitative data available among projects. The information has been organized into a database of which open-access copies will be housed at SPREP, CI-PIP and MNRE.
- **List of appropriate conservation tools**  
We reviewed some of the resources and approaches needed to strengthen monitoring and evaluation among Samoa conservation projects in our extended final report (Bottrill, Hockings & Possingham 2010).
- **Indices for monitoring partial progress towards conservation objectives**  
Most of the projects which were evaluated did not identify their own indicators for tracking progress, or collect data on changes to these indicators as a result of project activities. It would be inappropriate to extrapolate our own indicators for this study. Resources were also not available to collect new data on stated indicators. For the purpose of our evaluation, we chose three more generic indicators to measure partial progress towards conservation objectives. The three indicators were: 1) extent of implementation of activities; 2) perception of project success by proponent; 3) the quality and extent of evidence of measurable outcomes.

***Please provide the following information where relevant:***

**Hectares Protected:** n/a  
**Species Conserved:** n/a  
**Corridors Created:** n/a

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

The short-term objectives of this project were to collate knowledge and improve understanding about the biological, social and institutional outcomes of conservation activities across three Pacific countries(i.e., Samoa, Fiji and FSM). The main challenge that this project faced was the scope of the project. It was not possible to achieve this objective for three countries. The time,

funds and capacity needed to develop contacts and collect data on projects across multiple countries, each a unique ecological and socio-economic, exceeded our available resources. Instead we focused on activities from just one country - Samoa. We successfully collated and generated information on conservation outputs and outcomes from over 30 projects completed in the past 20 years. Accessibility and availability of data was a considerable challenge as few projects comprehensively monitored activities and catalogued observations in documents. In a presentation to a national environment forum and subsequent discussion with key proponents in Samoa, we have highlighted some of the main issues associated with tracking success and failure among conservation activities. We hope that some of our recommendations on how to close the gap in monitoring and evaluation will be realized by projects in the future.

The long-term impact objective of this project is for project proponents to use results from past experiences, collated in this study, to guide their future decision-making and project management. In particular, we hope that at a national scale, that monitoring data in the future will be organized centrally and shared openly among the key organizations and agencies working in conservation. The key challenge will be to sustain motivation for project follow-up among proponents which often will come down to appropriate incentives provided by donor agencies. Some preliminary discussion with a bilateral agency about the findings of this project has helped to highlight the gaps in their existing approach to monitoring and evaluation. Hopefully, future projects in Samoa by this agency will be able to integrate M&E more comprehensively in their management frameworks.

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

n/a

|                        |
|------------------------|
| <b>Lessons Learned</b> |
|------------------------|

***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 projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.***

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

One of the major shortcomings of the design process was that the original scope was too broad. By refining the scope of the project to a single country, instead of three countries as intended, we are unable to make general statements about the efficacy of conservation actions in the Pacific. The advantages of working in a single country were that we were able to gain a more detailed picture of the systems in which conservation actions were applied. In reality, our original approach to evaluation was perhaps naïve in assuming that more information would be available on project outcomes. One of the lessons from this experience would be to review other evaluations and develop an evaluation design based on an evaluation that has been tested in a similar context.

One of the other challenges in the design phase was the time needed to understand the context for conservation in Samoa. A lesson for future evaluations would be to host a focus group meeting at the outset of the project, inviting all the key participants in the system to attend. This type of forum would help facilitate greater understanding of the rationale for the project, the value of doing this type of research and also hopefully get people motivated to be involved. In addition, a more user-driven evaluation would also instill a greater sense of ownership in the findings of the evaluation.

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

One of the crucial elements that enabled successful implementation of the project was assistance and support to the researcher by well-connected organizations in Samoa. A valuable lesson for future evaluations by external researchers is the importance of a “gatekeeper” organization. The gatekeeper was essential to introduce the researcher to other stakeholders in Samoa, and also gave greater credibility to the project by their involvement.

Another important aspect that affected and ultimately enabled project implementation was the collaborative and welcoming nature of people working in the Samoan conservation sector. We had limited time to meet and conduct interviews and people were very accommodating in giving their time and following-up with further information.

The scope and time allocated for the project meant that project implementation did not allow for extended interaction with the study participants. The data were gathered over 3 relatively short visits. The project implementation could have been improved if the researcher stayed longer (perhaps with making two rather than three visits) which might have enabled more active and sustained engagement of the project partners.

**Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:**

One of the lessons learned by the researcher was the reality of implementing academic theory into a practical application. While conservation evaluation has received substantial attention in the academic literature, there remains a disconnect between what is optimal or desirable and what is achievable in evaluation application on the ground.

**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>               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Northcote Children's Emigration Fund. | A                       | US\$9000      | Scholarship provided to MB |
|                                       |                         |               |                            |
|                                       |                         |               |                            |
|                                       |                         |               |                            |

**\*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** Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF project.)
- C** Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)

## **Sustainability/Replicability**

***Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.***

It is uncertain at this point whether the outcomes of the projects will be sustained or that some of its key findings will be taken onboard and replicated. However, the presentation of the final report at the Samoa National Environment Forum and feedback from the extended report have provided some encouragement that practitioners in Samoa are interested in the results of this project. Some indication has been given that some of the recommendations will be adopted in future projects. The final report also provides a methodology for replicating the evaluation process and hopefully this framework might be improved and applied in future project monitoring and evaluation.

The main challenge facing sustainability of the project outcomes are motivation of proponents and donors to actively take on recommendations and put more effort (and funds) into monitoring and evaluation. This challenge is not unique to Samoa, and as highlighted in our extended report is an issue that pervades conservation and development projects globally. Reinforcing the value of knowledge on what actions work and did not work is essential to engage more people in applying evaluation. We hope that this project has gone some way in supporting this effort.

***Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.***

## **Safeguard Policy Assessment**

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

n/a

## Performance Tracking Report Addendum

| <b>CEPF Global Targets</b>  |                            |  |   |   |
|---|----------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>(Enter Grant Term)</b>   |                            |  |   |   |
| Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.<br>Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.  |                            |  |   |   |
| <b>Project Results</b>  | Is this question relevant? | If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period. | Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date. | <b>Describe the principal results achieved from Feb 1, 2009 to Jan 31, 2010. (Attach annexes if necessary)</b>  |
| 1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.   | No                         |  |   |   |
| 2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?   | No                         |  |   |   |
| 3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares. | Yes                        | N/A  | N/A   | Data collected from our project has increased the knowledge base about the effectiveness of conservation actions being applied in the three terrestrial KBAs in Samoa. The presentation of our findings and the dissemination of our report will raise awareness among conservation managers on issues related to monitoring and evaluation of conservation outcomes.   |
| 4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.                                    | Yes                        | N/A  | N/A   | Data collected from our project has increased the knowledge base about the effectiveness of conservation actions being applied in other terrestrial ecosystems in Samoa. The presentation of our findings and the dissemination of our report will raise awareness among conservation managers on issues related to monitoring and evaluation of conservation outcomes. |
| 5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.  | No                         |  |   |   |

**If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table.**



## **Additional Comments/Recommendations**

## **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](http://www.cepf.net), and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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